

KEY SKILLS UNIT

Information technology

What is this unit about?

This unit is about focusing on your information technology (IT) skills and applying them to meet work demands over an extended period of time.

You will show you can:

- develop a strategy for using a variety of IT skills;
- monitor and critically reflect on progress;
- evaluate your overall strategy and present the outcomes from your work.

How do I use the information in this unit?

There are three parts to this unit: what you need to know, what you must do and guidance.



Part A

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This tells you what you need to learn and practise to feel confident about applying IT skills in your studies, work or other aspects of your life.

Part A
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

In developing a strategy, you need to know how to:

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

In evaluating strategy and presenting outcomes, you need to know how to:

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

In monitoring progress, you need to know how to:

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

Part B

WHAT YOU MUST DO

This describes the skills you must show. You must have evidence that you can do all the things listed in the bullet points.

Part B
WHAT YOU MUST DO

You must:

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

Evidence must show you can:

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

Part C

GUIDANCE

This describes some activities you might like to use. It also contains examples of the sort of evidence you could produce to prove you have the skills required.

Part C
GUIDANCE

Examples of activities you might use

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

Examples of evidence

- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy
- identify the information you need to gather to develop a strategy

Part A

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

In developing a strategy,

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- establish opportunities for using IT skills over an extended period of time (*eg in a programme of study, project or work to be carried out over three months or so*);
- identify the outcomes you hope to achieve (*eg improved access to information, faster communication, more efficient design or problem solving capability*);
- identify relevant sources of information, including people and reference material (*eg line manager, specialists, customers, colleagues; manuals, CD-ROMs, databases, the internet, on-line help*) and research the information needed for planning purposes;
- plan your use of IT skills (*eg options, sequence of work, resources, level of expertise needed*), taking into account factors that may affect your plans (*eg patterns of work, health and safety, social, economic, ethical and moral issues raised by the use of IT*);
- make a reasoned selection of methods for achieving the quality of outcomes required (*eg internet search engines, e-conferencing, CAD/CAM techniques*).

In monitoring progress,

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- prepare IT (*eg create macros, link spreadsheets, define styles, create database structures, customised query routines, set up control equipment to monitor experiment results and generate readings for a report, organise e-conferencing*) and use IT to aid:
 - efficient searching, evaluation and selection of information (*eg to assist in finding, organising and comparing information, consulting others on its reliability and quality*);
 - exploration of alternative lines of enquiry (*eg varying rules within models to make predictions and test hypotheses*);
- develop and exchange relevant information to meet your purpose (*eg use e-mail, shared access to documents, video conferences*);

- derive new information (*eg make calculations, synthesise information from a variety of sources to reach own conclusions, predict trends, create a new design*);
- monitor and critically reflect on your use of IT skills, including:
 - obtaining feedback from others (*eg colleagues, tutor, project supervisor, line manager*);
 - noting choices made and judging their effectiveness (*eg impact on quality of work*);
- adapt your strategy to overcome difficulties and produce the quality of outcomes required.

In evaluating strategy and presenting outcomes,

YOU NEED TO KNOW HOW TO:

- develop the structure for presenting your work, integrating different types of information to ensure consistency in changes to the display of text, numbers and images;
- use the views of others to guide refinements to content and design;
- present information effectively, using a format and style (*eg a single form or multi-media*) to suit your purpose, subject and audience, and ensure that:
 - it is accurate in terms of content and conventions (*eg spelling, punctuation and grammar, labelling of charts, diagrams and graphs, house style for design features*);
 - it makes sense (*eg proof-read and amend where necessary*);
- assess the effectiveness of your strategy, identifying factors that had an impact on the outcomes (*eg availability and quality of resources, features of the working environment, level of own expertise*);
- identify ways of further developing your IT skills.

Part B

WHAT YOU MUST DO

You must:

Provide at least **one** extended example of meeting the standard for IT4.1, IT4.2 and IT4.3 (your example must show you can use IT to handle text, images and numbers).

IT4.1

Develop a strategy for using IT skills over an extended period of time.

Evidence must show you can:

- establish opportunities for using IT skills and clearly identify the outcomes you hope to achieve;
- identify relevant sources and research the information needed for planning purposes; and
- plan your use of IT skills, making a reasoned selection of methods for achieving the quality of outcomes required.

IT4.2

Monitor progress and adapt your strategy, as necessary, to achieve the quality of outcomes required in work involving the use of IT for **two** different, complex purposes.

- prepare, and use, IT to aid efficient searching, evaluation and selection of information, exploring alternative lines of enquiry where appropriate;
- develop and exchange relevant information, and derive new information, to meet your purpose; and
- monitor and critically reflect on your use of IT skills, adapting your strategy as necessary to produce the quality of outcomes required.

IT4.3

Evaluate your overall strategy and present the outcomes from your work using at least **one** presentation, showing integration of text, images and number.

- develop the structure for presenting your work, integrating different types of information and using the views of others, where appropriate, to guide refinements;
- present information effectively, using a format and style to suit your purpose, subject and audience, and ensure it is accurate and makes sense; and
- assess the effectiveness of your strategy, including factors that had an impact on the outcomes, and identify ways of further developing your IT skills.

Part

GUIDANCE



Examples of activities you might use

You will need to identify opportunities for using your IT skills during work, studies, or other activities taking place over a period of three months or so. For example, when:

- managing and presenting outcomes of a project at work or in higher education;
- designing and presenting a product;
- contributing to community activities, such as editing a newsletter;
- investigating and implementing ways to improve a service or work practice.

It is likely that you will use other key skills. For example, working with others when analysing and planning activities, application of number skills when interpreting information from charts and diagrams and problem solving skills when adapting your strategy to overcome difficulties. Communication skills will be useful when searching for, organising and presenting information and the evaluation process should help you improve your own learning and performance. All of these skills could be recorded in a progress file or appraisal record.

For this unit, you will need to think about the quality of your IT skills and check that your evidence covers all the requirements in Part B.

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Examples of evidence

IT4.1 DEVELOP A STRATEGY

An outline of your strategy, supported by:

- records of your information research;
- records of your planning process;
- statements on the expected quality of outcomes, with notes of selected methods.

IT4.2 MONITOR PROGRESS

A variety of records (eg screen displays, with statements from an observer, annotated print-outs of working drafts) showing how you:

- prepared IT, searched for information and explored alternative lines of enquiry;
- developed and exchanged information;
- derived new information.

A commentary noting choices you made and reflections on their effectiveness, including any changes to your strategy.

IT4.3 EVALUATE STRATEGY AND PRESENT OUTCOMES

Working drafts, or a record from someone who observed your screen displays, showing how you developed your presentation.

Print-outs, or a static or dynamic screen display of your final work, including integration of text, numbers and images.

An evaluation on the effectiveness of your overall strategy, noting ways of further developing your IT skills.

If producing certain types of evidence creates difficulties, through disability or for another reason, you may be able to use other ways to show your achievement. Ask your tutor or supervisor for further information.