Study Skills

For

BTEC Health & Social Care

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“To be skilled is to be able to perform a learned activity well and at will” – the study skills you learn and develop will assist you in achieving the best possible grades.

**“To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail”.**

Studying at level 3 requires you to be more independent than at school, there are some skills that you need to develop to be successful at this level of study.

These include:

The ability to organise your time

Producing a well presented piece of work



Planning & completing coursework assignments

Referencing your work and constructing a bibliography

Independence

Research skills

Effective Learning and studying is all about developing skills and will contribute to your success.

There are five crucial skill areas that you will **continue** to develop during the course of your Health and Social Care studies. These will help you to achieve your full potential. These will be referred to as **VESPA:**

**Vision:** How well do you know what you want to achieve?

**Effort:** How many hours of independent work do you do?

**Systems:** How do you organise your learning and organise your time?

**Practice:** What kind of work do you do to practice your skills?

**Attitude:** How do you respond to setbacks?

**How do you rate your current skills?**

Column A - Tick if the statement is generally true of you.

Column B - Rate how important it is to acquire this skill. (1 being very important - 5 not relevant)

Column C - Rate how good you think you are at this skill (1 being excellent to 5 I have no experience in this)

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Study skill statements** | **A****This is true** | **B****Skill needed?** | **C****Current ability** | **Where can I get help with this?** |
| I am aware of how I learn best |  |  |  | Learning mentors |
| I am well motivated and know how to set myself manageable goals |  |  |  | Learning mentors |
| I am always prepared for lessons. |  |  |  | Subject tutorLearning Mentors |
| I have good time management skills & am able to organise my workload |  |  |  | Learning mentors |
| I am confident in my ability to find information in the library |  |  |  | Library staff |
| I am confident in my research skills |  |  |  | Learning mentors |
| I know how to structure an essay or assignment |  |  |  | Subject tutorLearning mentor |
| I always proof read my work and check for errors in Spelling & grammar |  |  |  | Learning mentors |
| I am able to make organise store and find my subject notes. |  |  |  | Subject tutor Learning mentors |
| I have good revision strategies. |  |  |  | Subject tutorLearning mentors |
| I know how to reference work and produce a bibliography. |  |  |  | Subject tutor Learning mentors |

Time Management & Organisation

At this level of study you will find yourself juggling to meet deadlines for several subjects with your family life, social life and maybe paid employment or voluntary work.

Think about

How well do I manage my time now?

 I usually turn up on time. Yes No

I manage to fit in most things that I need to do. Yes No

I always know what tasks I have to complete. Yes No

 I find I often rush things at the last minute. Yes No

I meet deadlines. Yes No

Have I got time for myself & to relax? Yes No

*What do your answers to the above tell you?*

Use this space to reflect on your current systems ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\L3F73IXA\MM900356774[1].gif]()

**Organising yourself for college**

**Be prepared:**

* Arrive to college on time – do you need to catch an earlier bus if using public transport to ensure you always arrive on time?
* Make sure you have plenty of paper for notes - ideally A4 ready punched paper that can then be placed in your file.
* Make sure you have a supply of pens, pencils etc.
* Have a bag sufficiently large to carry all your files & books. Pack this the night before - No excuses for not having the right books & equipment. Checkyour planner – have you got everything eg completed homework.

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**Keep everything in order:**

* Don't lose handouts - Get a filing system in place - it is useful to have a ring binder with dividers or plastic wallets - one for each subject to keep any handouts and notes together.
* USE your planner - write down what your homework is for each lesson when you are given it, also make a note of the hand in date. Some people also find it handy to write a note on the date when it is due in.

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**Organise your computer work**

* Name a new file as soon as you open it. ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\SDZZ197O\MP900402786[1].jpg]()
* Put your name in the footer or header of the page.
* Use a different file for each draft adding a number can indicate which draft eg introduction2.doc
* Save your work every few minutes - if the computer losses power you may lose all the work you have done since you last saved or opened the document – don’t rely on auto save.
* Save your work in several places to ensure you have a backup in case anything goes wrong – save to your **college user area**, **One Drive** (far better than losing that USB) and it is also worth **emailing** yourself a copy.

**Time Management.** ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\L3F73IXA\MM900286775[1].gif]()

Time management is about organising your time so that you can fit in all your necessary tasks and activities. Most of us will have more than one thing to do, so we need to make decisions about what to focus on, when to do it, and how long to spend on it.

Think about how many hours there are in a day? …………………………

How many things do you have to fit into those hours? ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\36EHSOAJ\MC900441938[1].wmf]()

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How many hours are there in a week? ……………………………………………..

***To manage your time effectively requires planning especially when you will have several subject deadlines to meet.***

Look in your college planner, how many hours per week is it suggested you should be spending per subject? ………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Number of subjects …………. X recommended hours ………………… = ……………… hours

How are you going to fit these hours into your week? ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\VA1Z6II0\MC900215726[1].wmf]()

*Plan out this using your planner, or use the chart you have been given to identify study time that you have within your week. It may be best to complete this in pencil at first as you may need to alter this.*

You should now have an idea about when you have time available for study.

*How you included your independent study periods in college? - Remember not all these may be free as tutors may want you to attend a tutorial in these sessions.*

**Make effective use of your Study Time.**

**Use your college planner effectively**

* Write in all assignment deadlines, exam dates, college trips
* Carry your diary at all times
* Check it several times a day, especially at night and first thing in a morning look at the week ahead for deadlines that maybe approaching.

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Produce a list on a piece of paper or post it of work that needs to be completed

* Divide the list into TODAY and SOON so you are aware of upcoming deadlines.
* Now identify the work you need to complete in order of deadlines.
* Tick off when you complete as task.

***Top tip – set yourself mini goals for larger tasks.***

To do this start working backwards from the deadline and think about how long each part will take you.

Eg Research and reading around the topic

 Grouping and organising the information collected

 Writing the draft

Proof reading

Checking the bibliography

Final deadline

***In Health & Social Care you will find your assignment tasks are broken into smaller parts to assist you.***

**Finding Information for Assignments (Research Skills)**

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Before launching into research for any assignment you need to make sure you know what is required.

* Carefully read your assignment scenario and task.
* Find out what you need in order to achieve the higher criteria.
* Look for key words
* Refer to your glossary of terms used for internally assessed units which should be kept at the front of your working A4 Lever arch file.

**Searching for information **

You will use information from several sources to assist you in writing assignments.

Make a list of where you think you could find out information.

It is important that you use the Learning Resource Centre within college effectively to assist you finding information. You will have an induction session with the library staff in your first week.

You might also like to try and complete the following in your free time.

**Library Exercise**

How will this task help me?

Learning how to find material will improve the quality of the work you produce

****

In your assignments you will need to source information to inform and support your work. It is important to use a variety of sources and not to just rely on the internet for all your information. This exercise is devised to help you in using the library.

Have you checked out the library information on Connect? *If not do so now; see if you can find the answers to the questions below.*

How many items can you take can you take out at once? ……………………………………………

For how long can you take books out? …………………………………………………………………………….

Can you reserve books?..........................................................................................................

Are there fines? …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

Find the journals – Can you identify 2 journals that may assist with your Health & Social Care work?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………….

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***Now you know where to gather your information what’s next?***

**Identifying & Selecting Information ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\SDZZ197O\MC900289960[1].wmf]()**

Look for the information that relates to your assignment. Check the contents list and the index to see what the book covers.

Select material by reliability - Is the source a recognised textbook?

* Is the website reliable or is it likely to be biased?

When gathering information make sure you keep a record of the sources you have found.

**Don’t just copy sections or cut & paste from the internet** – you need to read the information and note down the information in your own words. – This is important to avoid PLAGIARISM.

See Plagiarism & Avoiding it on Connect

**What is Plagiarism?**

Basically this is using other peoples work without acknowledging them as the source. This includes:

* **Using words more or less exactly as they have been used.**
* **Using other people’s ideas or theories without saying whose ideas they are**
* **Paraphrasing what you have read without stating where it has come from.**

Even if you change words or sentences or put them in a different order, the result is still plagiarism which is taken very seriously.

You can use quotations from sources but these should be:

* Used sparingly and only if the words are worth quoting
* Brief usually only a few words or at the most a few lines

If you want to use a quotation

* Write it exactly including any punctuation
* Use 3 dots to indicate any missing words
* Put quotation marks around it
* *![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\SDZZ197O\MC900440424[1].wmf]()*Say exactly where it has come from

**Avoid plagiarism by**

Reading the piece without taking any notes

When you have read it cover the page

Try to sum up what was said either in your head or out aloud. *(sometimes you may have to read the piece again to be able to sum it up)*

Once you can say what the piece is saying write it in your own words.

Keep a full record of the source of the information so that you can reference the work and include it in the bibliography. (see the next section)

**Referencing your work and making a bibliography**

**Reference** – A short note which shows you have used a source of information or a quote

**Bibliography** – A list of books, articles, websites that have been used in your work

The link below will introduce you to referencing

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/extra/module6/1.shtml>

Referencing your work shows that you have researched the subject.

You should include references to all the books and websites that you have read to write your essay or report.

Authors don't mind students quoting them, as long as they get some recognition. To provide this recognition, you have to mention the author's name within the text, whenever you refer to their work. You also need to include them in your bibliography. (BBC Key skills 2006).

If you don't reference original works, you'll be guilty of plagiarism. (BBC Key skills 2006)

“…..you'll find that you want to include information from sources you have come across in your research.” (BBCi 2006)

The previous box shows how work is referenced including using a quotation.

To be able to reference and create a bibliography from books, journals etc. you will need to collect the following when you are gathering information

* **Name(s) of the author(s) or editor(s)**
* **Date of the publication**
* **Title of book or title of article and name of publication**, if from a magazine or journal.
* **Place published**
* **Name of the publisher**
* **Chapter and page numbers**, where relevant (if you quote directly from a book or journal)

For internet sources you will need the following information

* **Author** (Sometimes you cannot find out who wrote the web page, you reference to the owner of the site.)
* **Date** - this should be written in brackets
* **Title** - this should be written in italics
* **Retrieved date** - this is the date you viewed the web page
* **Uniform Resource Locator** (web address)

**Assembling a Bibliography ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\SDZZ197O\MP900446602[1].jpg]()**

An easy way to do this is to create the bibliography as you develop your assignment.

1. Have a second word document open and add the reference to your bibliography as you use it – this will ensure you don’t miss any!
2. Once you have finished your assignment your bibliography will need to be put into alphabetical order by author’s surnames. (see the example below)

**Bibliography**

BBCi (2006) *Compiling a bibliography.* Retrieved 24th November 2004

 from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/keyskills/extra/module6/3.shtml>

Nursing Times (2009) Editorial, Nursing Times. Vol 69. No 50 13 Dec 2009 pg3

Stretch B & Whitehouse M (eds) (2010) Health &Social Care Level 3 Book 2 BTEC National.

 Harlow. Pearson Education.

***Try it out select some books and use these to write a bibliography. You might also want to select a website and try to put this in the bibliography.***

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**![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\36EHSOAJ\MC900233457[1].wmf]()Producing a well presented assignment**

**Good Practice**

Your work may be marked by several people, so it is important that it is clearly presented.

Your units will usually be made up of several tasks.

Good presentation includes:

* Word processed text with your name, the unit and the task criteria in the Header or Footer of each page
* Pages numbered
* A common font and size throughout all your work

**Approaching an assignment task.**

To undertake an assignment task you will use several steps as shown below however not in the sequence given.

*Rearrange the steps into an order that you would be likely to carry them out.*

|  |
| --- |
| 1. Decide how you would do better next time
 |
| 1. Make an outline plan
 |
| 1. Put the ideas in order
 |
| 1. Research the subject
 |
| 1. Examine the title and decide what you are being asked to produce
 |
| 1. Produce a rough draft
 |
| 1. Take notes from your reading
 |
| 1. Select information to include
 |
| 1. Write the final draft
 |
| 1. Check your bibliography
 |
| 1. Proof read and check for spelling & grammar
 |
| 1. Plan your time available to complete the task
 |

The information already covered in this guide will assist you in undertaking the initial parts of writing the assignment task

***The main stages you have already covered are:***

Understanding the task

Planning your time

Reading & researching

![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\L3F73IXA\MC900156991[1].wmf]()**Here are some tips for the draft stage – getting your ideas down**

* Allow yourself plenty of time
* Re read your assignment brief and answer plan
* Jot down the main points you will be covering
* Turn these into a plan
* Start and write out sections you are confident about – sometimes it’s easier to leave the introduction to a piece until last
* Always save your work to your college user area / home computer and back up your work to USB and do this as you go along – see earlier advice.
* Remember to create your bibliography as you go along.

Once you have written your draft, read your work (proofread) ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\VA1Z6II0\MC900233448[1].wmf]()– see next section

* Do you need to move paragraphs around to improve the flow – Does it make sense?
* Check the assessment criteria – can you honestly tick each assessment criteria?
* Spell check using a UK spell check not American
* When you have made any changes save this draft as a different file eg. Adding 2 to the end
* Re- read your work and repeat the process again if necessary.

 When you are happy with the content of your work – PROOF READ FOR A FINAL TIME!

**Proof reading – Get into the habit! ![C:\Users\annh\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\L3F73IXA\MM900283740[1].gif]()**

Never write anything without re-reading and checking it.

Read you work out aloud – does it make sense? This will help you to read every word and spot if any words have been left out.

Check you spelling – if you find a spelling you are unsure of, underline it in pencil. Don’t just rely on the computer spellcheck. The sentence below has been spellchecked.

**Spellcheck is nice, butt ewe still knead two proofread!**

The spellchecker will not pick up errors such as bean instead of been.

**Some common mistakes**

1. **Putting the wrong word in the wrong place especially when using homophones.-** There, their and they’re
2. **Using a small i as a pronoun -** When I is used on its own use a capital letter
3. **Missing words out altogether –**most people think faster than they type so it is easy to miss out words. Careful proofreading can help you spot these mistakes.
4. **Using ‘should of’ –** A common mistake ‘I should of gone to the party’ instead of ‘I should have gone to the party’
5. **Do not contract words** – don’t, can’t

**Hopefully following this guidance will produce this**

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**“…..all of us do not have equal talent but all of us should have an equal opportunity to develop our talents.”** JF Kennedy 1963

**It is up to us how we use these opportunities!**