

Skills snapshot guide



What do I need to do?

The first part of your Futures Award is to **evidence the 3 skills** you have chosen to develop. The best way to do this is using the **STAR** framework, which is also a good way to evidence competences on a job application form. The **STAR** framework is a tried and tested way of demonstrating your abilities and providing examples of your experience and is about being **specific** and **structured** in your response. Here's how it works:

Situation: Explain the situation you are using for your example.

*This should be a **short** description such as 'whilst studying abroad' or 'when I worked at a bar'.*

Task: Describe the task and objective

For example if you were working as a group explain what the overall task of the group was but be clear about your own role.

Action: Outline the actions you took to complete the task.

This should be the most substantial section (50-70%) as you will need to evidence:

- [What you did](#)
- [Why you did it](#)
- [How you did it](#)
- [What skills you used](#)

Result: Explain what happened as a direct result of your action?

Always try to include a result, and link it back to the skill you are demonstrating. What did you learn; is there anything you would do differently in the future; what was achieved; what was the direct result of the action you took; was the outcome expected or unexpected?

Please note you don't need to use the STAR headings when evidencing your skills. What you should do is apply the method, but write your example as short, flowing paragraphs. As a guide each example should be around 200 - 300 words.

See the end of this document for information about how to format your Skills Snapshot.

Applying the STAR Method - Examples

Skill	STAR Example
Communication	<p>My role as a Course Rep required me to communicate effectively with staff and students at the university to act as a bridge between the Students' Union and the university. I was responsible for listening to my peers and recording their concerns about aspects of their course, and then collating the feedback to present at Course Rep meetings.</p> <p>I collated all the feedback I had received from students and used it to construct a document which clearly outlined the key points and issues that students wanted staff to address. I presented this document at a Staff Student Liaison meeting and explained clearly what students wanted to change and why it would enhance their university experience. The document also acted as a way of being able to monitor the progress on proposed changes.</p> <p>By communicating clearly and effectively I was able to work with faculty staff to ensure that all lecture content was uploaded to Moodle at the end of each term so that students could use it for revision. This was the largest complaint I received from students throughout the year, so by communicating effectively with staff and students and acting as mediator I was able to facilitate the resolution of this important issue.</p>
Teamwork	<p>During my second year I signed up to take part in the BBC and Barclay's University Technology Challenge. Our task was to work as a team to design an app which met a specific brief. We then had to pitch our app to a panel of judges at the university, in competition with another team, to determine which of us would present at the final at Media City.</p>

As a team we worked together to determine the individual strengths within the group and delegated tasks based on these strengths. I was chosen to be responsible for team communication and the project plan due to my project management experience and task-focused approach, so as well as agreeing and drawing up a project plan, I also had to ensure that the team worked well together, keeping in regular contact and staying informed of progress.

To do this I set up weekly meetings at a time which suited us all, along with a Facebook group. Communicating well was key to completing this task as we all had other commitments and deadlines to consider alongside the project. By ensuring that we kept in regular contact and had flexible ways of communicating I was able to ensure that we had the means of asking and answering any queries which arose, and this enabled us to complete the project on time. We were able to deliver a strong presentation and were successful in going through to the final.

We delivered our presentation at Media City in front of a panel of four judges from the BBC and Barclays and were awarded second place out of eight competitor universities. I was so pleased with the outcome as it really boosted my confidence of working in teams, and helped me to recognise the importance of good communication for successful team working.

Networking

During my first year I attended the part-time jobs fair to find paid work alongside my studies. Before I attended the fair I researched the companies attending to identify which roles I was interested in and to ensure that my CV was up-to-date to give to the employers. I also read the Careers guide 'making the most of careers fairs' and attended the networking workshop to ensure that I was as prepared as possible before attending the fair, and knew what to expect and how to approach employers. I also took my CV to the JobsHub to be checked and received some really useful advice on the best way to make my CV stand out. At the fair I ensured that I asked relevant questions, such as what their company culture was like, to show that I had done my research.

I followed up on a conversation I had with an employer at the fair and was able to secure a part-time job at Pizza Express to earn additional income and work experience alongside my studies. By attending this fair I was able to build my confidence in approaching employers, and now know how important it is to conduct thorough research to prepare for networking events so that I come across in the best possible way.

Conflict management

Whilst at University I decided to become a Residential Advisor to develop my confidence and gain some additional experience outside my course. The role involved offering support and advice to other students living in student accommodation, ensuring that their time was enriching and helping new students to settle in.

During my time as an RA I found myself having to deal with a number of conflict issues. One example was a complaint received from a number of students about the untidiness of a particular flatmate. In this case I arranged a meeting with the student to explain why their behaviour was causing an issue to their flatmates. I discovered that they were being untidy due to being stressed with the amount of university work they had on, so cleaning was at the bottom of their priority list. I therefore put the student in touch with their Student Support Officer so they could discuss the issues they were having with their coursework. I dealt with this in a tactful and respectful way to the student by informing their housemates, after receiving permission from the student who had received the complaints, that it was not due to laziness, and a cleaning rota was then agreed to share the burden.

After checking back in with the flat one month later I was informed that the issue had been resolved and that the new rota was working really well to help share the responsibility for cleaning. I was therefore able to use my initiative and mediation skills in this situation to resolve the conflict and to help a student who needed assistance.

Public speaking and presenting

For my final project I was required to deliver a ten-minute presentation based on my dissertation proposal to students and my personal tutor. I had to prepare and deliver a presentation which outlined the key themes of my dissertation, and then received feedback from students and my tutor on where I could improve.

I was nervous about giving the presentation and receiving the feedback so to prepare I attended the 'presentations: from terrified to confident' Careers workshop to help prepare me for this task. I ensured that the presentation had a clear beginning, middle and end, and that the format of the slides were clear

and that I fully answered the question. I also practiced the presentation several times before the day to ensure I was completely familiar with it, and also did a full run-through in front of a couple of my class-mates.

I felt much more confident delivering the presentation as a result of the preparation and practice I had done, and received a First for the assignment which boosted my confidence in delivering future presentations. I also received some really useful feedback on my dissertation which I was able to implement.

Leadership

Being a fully trained tour guide and fresher's representative gave me an opportunity to practice my leadership skills.

When tour guiding, it is my responsibility to lead and direct parents and potential students around the University campus as well as answer any questions they may have. My time being a fresher's representative meant I was responsible for groups of eight new students.

Whilst doing both tasks it was important for me to confer regularly with the group, whether it be negotiating a particular campus route, or finding out which local amenities they needed to visit. Throughout all leadership tasks it was important to be clear and direct, and to ensure everyone in the group was happy

with what was going on. I found being co-operative and having an approachable and friendly manner to be an effective way of managing these groups.

As a result my fresher's had a brilliant first week and I was pleased with the fact that I had successfully been responsible for a group of young people. After tour guiding many of the parents personally thanked me which was very rewarding. Both leadership tasks have given me experience in answering spontaneous questions competently and professionally so I am better able to respond to queries under pressure.

Format

You can use Wakelet (see below) to create an online portfolio for your reflective piece, or you can upload a word document. The choice is yours! As long as you clearly meet the criteria, we are happy for you choose the format. You may even choose to use a video, blog or website for your submission.

Wakelet

Consider submitting your reflection using [Wakelet](#). Wakelet is a very exciting and easy to use tool which allows you to collect, curate and share content online.

Check out this really useful [‘Wake’](#) which gives an overview of how to use Wakelet to its full potential.

Here are some examples of how you might use Wakelet to share your Futures Skills Award Reflection: [example one](#) and [example two](#).

Check your settings: Setting your Wakelet to *unlisted* or *public* will allow us to view your collection. If you choose unlisted, simply send us the link. Please note that public collections are available for others to view, so you may wish to retain privacy by choosing the unlisted option.

Watch this short [Video](#) to show you how.