



Self-study material for students | © University of Helsinki Career Services

IDENTIFY YOUR SKILLS GAINED THROUGH WORK EXPERIENCE

Why?

You constantly accumulate new skills in not only your studies, but also other domains of life. If you already have work experience, it is extremely important to recognise the skills gained through it so that you can describe them when looking for a job. The identification of skills also helps you understand your career options: by describing what you are good at, you will gain a better understanding of the kinds of roles you could be interested in and suited for.

It is important that the person reading for example your CV understands the kinds of skills you have used and picked up in your previous positions. So instead of simply listing your job titles, describe your duties in enough detail – regardless of the nature of the job or the field it was in.

How?

1. Go through your work history and consider the following questions for each of your jobs. When documenting your answers, try to consider different skills categories as broadly as possible (e.g., subject-specific expertise, general career skills, self-leadership and self-management skills).
 - What did you do (verbs)? What were your responsibilities?
 - What topics, phenomena and issues did you work with (the substance of your work)?
 - What did your duties require of you (understanding, skills, characteristics, strengths)?
 - What feedback did you receive from others (your supervisor, colleagues, clients)?
2. You have now listed many different kinds of skills. The next step is to rank them in order of importance: which skills do you think are the most important and which do you want to use in the future?
3. Use the notes you wrote in step 1 and describe at least your main skills and experiences as concretely as possible in your CV and, for example, in your LinkedIn profile. An excellent tool for compiling this description is the so-called STAR model. You can find detailed instructions on how to apply the model on the page [Tools for planning your career and future](#) in the assignment file "**Verbalise your skills with the STAR model**".