

Essential Skills Strategies

Document Use

- Scan for headings to find information quickly.
- Look for visual cues (font size, bolded) that may emphasize important information.
- Write legibly and stay within provided spaces.
- Read instructions, labels and headings carefully before responding to forms or questionnaires.
- Follow the sequence of questions, and respond in the recommended order.
- If there is something you do not understand, ask someone.

Working with Others

- Maintain good communication with team members.
- Be accountable for your actions.
- Support the ideas of all group or team members
- Do not act superior and treat everyone with respect
- Listen actively when someone else is speaking and allow everyone a turn to speak.
- Participate in sharing ideas and accepting tasks and duties.
- Do what you say you are going to do, and do it on time.
- Acknowledge the contributions of others, offer praise and thanks when you have the opportunity

Writing

- Organize thoughts and ideas before beginning to write (make a list)
- Be concise; keep it short and to the point.
- Use a dictionary or spell check to make sure spelling is correct.
- Proofread your documents a number of times.
- Read out loud to ensure things are clear and flow well.
- Avoid using the same word over and over, look for synonyms.

Oral Communication

- Do not speak too quickly, pronounce your words clearly.
- Avoid filler words (um, ah, like, well).
- Organize your thoughts before speaking.
- Listen attentively to others and do not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- Make eye contact with people when you are listening or talking.
- If you do not understand what is being said, ask questions.

Computer Use

- Press Ctrl + Alt + Delete to open the task manager and select “End Task” to close frozen programs.
- Restart if your computer’s performance slows down or stops responding.
- Minimize your number of desktop shortcuts to help your computer run more efficiently.
- Do not use passwords that may be easy for others to figure out (e.g. your birthday).
- Do not open email attachments from unknown or suspicious sources – delete them immediately.
- Centre your monitor in front of you, at eye level, approximately an arm’s length (18-30 inches) away to avoid eye strain and body discomfort.

Reading

- Use your finger or a bookmark as a guide to help you focus on the part of the text you are reading.
- Avoid distractions by reading in a quiet place whenever possible.
- Use a dictionary to look up unfamiliar words.
- Highlight or underline important points or key information.
- Read books, magazines, or articles that interest you.
- Read as much as you can.

