# Transition Skills and Strategies

Phase 2 - Resources Available for the Identified Skills

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# Introduction

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The main transition skills identified in Phase 1 were: self-efficacy (re-named as 'self-belief' following feedback from student focus groups); critical self-reflection; independent learning; managing expectations; social skills; dealing with stress; critical thinking; academic and information literacy. As part of Phase 1 a leaflet for use by students and a set of slides for use by staff were created (and published) for the self-belief transition skill.

Following on from Phase 1 of the project, QAA Scotland identified a number of additional evidence-based skills which may support student transitions and, in discussion with the Theme Leaders' Group, the following five skills were considered useful to explore further in Phase 2 of the project:

- resilience/academic buoyancy
- social skills for embracing diversity including social belonging
- self-management of expectations
- academic and digital literacy
- mindset.

Based on an initial review of the literature at the start of Phase 2 and the experience of the authors it was considered reasonable to conclude that there are already significant resources available to support the following transition skills areas:

- social skills for embracing diversity including social belonging
- academic and digital literacy.

It was also decided that the Phase 2 workshop events (to expose students and staff to the new resources created by the project) would be used to gather feedback in order to check that there are indeed existing resources readily available to students and staff in these two areas. The feedback gathered at the events did, as expected, confirm this to be the case. Examples of resources used to enhance social skills for embracing diversity including social belonging are often incorporated into student induction resources that are produced and used in various ways by most institutions. Examples of resources for academic and digital literacy include materials to help develop academic writing skills and are provided in many institutions by specialist staff and centres/units. In some cases existing resources are hosted within the intranets of institutions and are not directly available for open access. Further details and examples of some relevant resources are given in the report 'Transition Skills and Strategies, Phase 2 - Research Background Outline'.

It was considered appropriate to utilise Phase 2 mainly for the creation of resources to support the remaining three skill areas (resilience/academic buoyancy, mindset and self-management of expectations) since there was little or no evidence that such resources were currently readily available to students and staff. Furthermore, one area which has been shown to underlie and indeed facilitate a number of key transition skills is being able to effectively manage self-study time and to prioritise and plan. Therefore, we thought it worthwhile to create new resources in time management.

Finally, we also created resources in the area of critical self-reflection which was identified in Phase 1 along with two further student interactive activities in self-efficacy to complete the full set of resources in the project, Tetaransition skills and strategies.

Feedback gathered from the three Phase 2 workshop events was compiled, analysed and used to edit and amend some of the final versions of resources, which are presented below. Please email etadmin@qaa.ac.uk if you have further feedback on any of the materials. In addition, please email to let us know how you used the materials in your particular setting with suggestions for improvements for future users.

Please note most student activities below are in a PDF format and are interactive. This is where users can type text directly into the document or select from choices available on the pull-down menus. The user can save the PDF file with their answers intact. If you wish to edit these resources before using with a student, you will need to do so using PDF editing tools such as Adobe Acrobat Pro DC or one of the online PDF editors. PDF 'readers' don't allow editing. Your IT (or similar) department in your institution will be able to provide support for PDF document editing. All other files are presented in Word or PowerPoint to allow you to edit/customise according to your particular setting.

## Resilience/academic buoyancy

Student academic resilience is a complex issue that is influenced by many different factors. For example, when reviewing the literature in this area, aspects which have been considered important to the self-development of resilience are, amongst others, self-efficacy, planning, commitment (Martin et al 2010) as well as having clear goals and aspirations (Jowkar et al 2014) and being, or becoming, independent learners. Academic resilience also comes from encouraging self-belief and fostering awareness of the different approaches students can have when responding to adversity.

In order to make practical progress with a contribution to the development of resources for students and staff in the area of resilience it was decided that materials should be developed to make students aware of the concept of resilience and some of the ways they can develop this. This was by creating eight scenarios showing examples of students who have experienced various kinds of setbacks. In a workshop session, the student's task is to identify possible strategies which can overcome the various setbacks. There is also space for students to identify setbacks in their current life and to actively work with their tutor in developing strategies which can overcome these. The range of strategies can be wide-ranging, for example, applying good study skills, communicating well, using peer support and working with other students. Tutors are provided with detailed guidance notes to support students in their answers.

The following editable resources have been created for use by students and staff in this skill area:

- Avoiding and overcoming setbacks - student activity
- Avoiding and overcoming setbacks - tutor guidelines

These, along with improving goal setting and self-belief, may help students to become more academically resilient (see resources in self-management of expectations and self-efficacy for the other skills).

## Mindset

An important successful student strategy for mindset can be to convince students that their academic ability can improve. This could potentially be facilitated by providing them with evidence from the literature and samples of fixed mindset and growth mindset statements to compare. The following editable resources have been created for use by students and staff in this skill area:

- Mindset card sort activity (paper-based) - students
- Mindset card sort activity (paper-based) - tutor guidelines
- Mindset workshop - student activities (interactive)
    - Includes the card sort activity in an interactive format along with two further reflection exercises (Apply change mindset process and Suggest alternative approach).
- Mindset workshop - tutor guidelines

## Self-management of expectations

The literature reviews of both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the project indicated that student self-management of expectations could potentially be enhanced by encouraging them to become more effective at setting and achieving goals. The following editable resources have been created for use by students and staff in this skill area:

- Self-management of expectations - staff slides
- Managing my expectations at university - student leaflet
- Establishing and achieving my goals - student activity
- Establishing and achieving my goals with vision board - student activity

## Time management

- Time management - staff slides
- Managing my time to become an effective independent learner - student leaflet
- Baseline time tracker - student activity
- Time management grid - student activity

## Critical self-reflection

- Critical self-reflection - staff slides
- Self-reflection - student leaflet
- Encouraging self-reflection - student activity
- Structured journal entry - student activity
- Less structured journal entry - student activity
- Identifying levels of writing - student activity

## Self-efficacy*

Two additional interactive student activities were created to support the materials already developed in Phase 1 for self-efficacy*:

- Current levels of self-belief - student activity
- Developing my self-belief - student activity

*www.enhancementthemes.ac.uk/enhancement-themes/current-enhancement-theme/transition-skills-phase-1

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