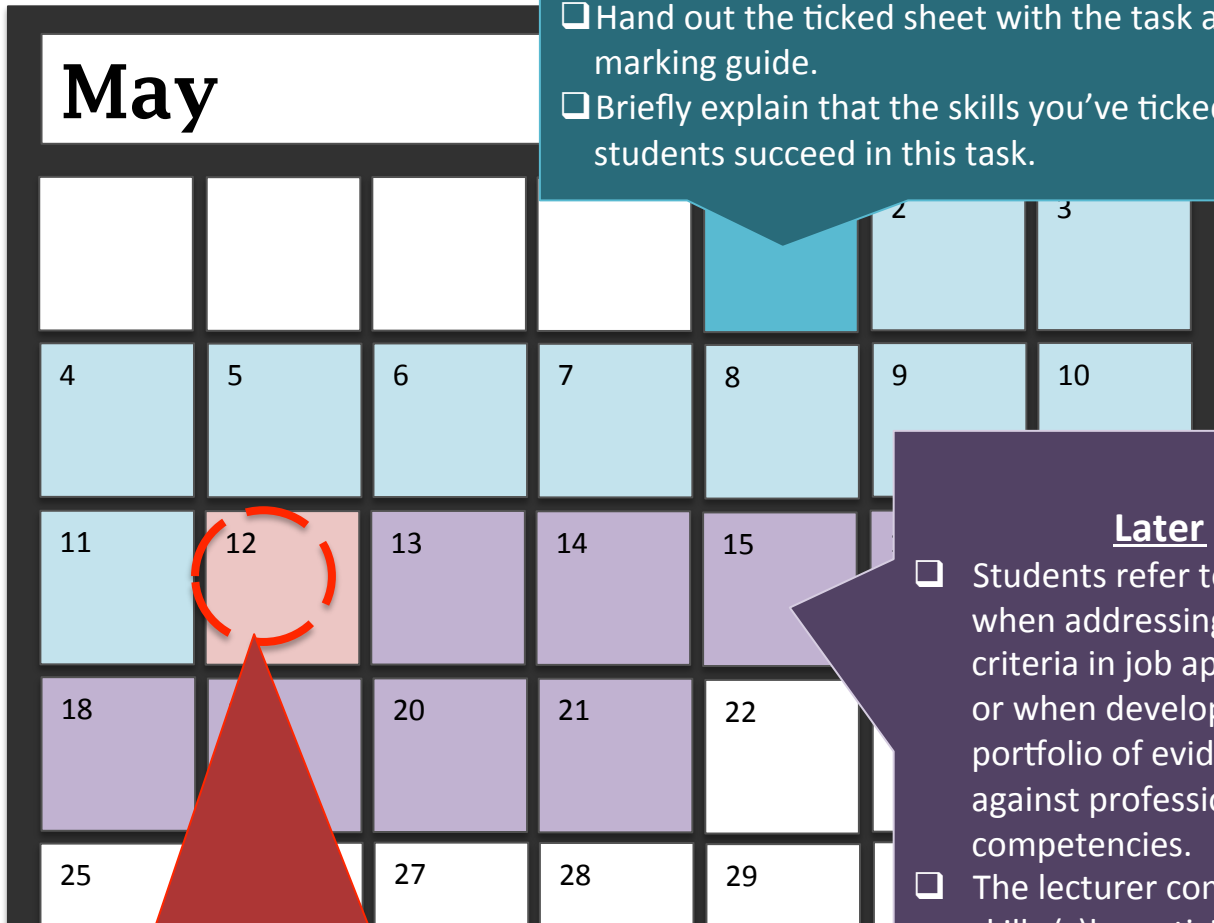


Skills for Success: From Academic to Professional

Employability skills such as communication, self-management, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration are necessary for success in academia, but students are often not aware of these and other skills they've used to achieve success in academic tasks. A simple method to address this is to add a *Skills for Success* checklist to assessment tasks.

It does not take the place of grading criteria, but offers students guidance about the generic skills that may be embedded in each academic task.



Before the Task

- ☐ Tick skills you think students will use to complete the task on a *Skills* sheet.
- ☐ Hand out the ticked sheet with the task and marking guide.
- ☐ Briefly explain that the skills you've ticked will help students succeed in this task.

Later

- ☐ Students refer to the task when addressing selection criteria in job applications, or when developing a portfolio of evidence against professional competencies.
- ☐ The lecturer compares the skills (s)he anticipated would be important with those the students found to be important and uses the feedback for future tasks.

On Task Due Date

- ☐ Students tick the skills they believe they used on a clean *Skills* sheet.
- ☐ Students share what they have identified and how the skills were used. This helps them articulate the skill in the context of a specific task.

For details on the *Skills* checklist and scholarship on this transfer of skills, visit
oakland.edu/teachingtips

Skills for Success

Universities have always been institutions that develop and celebrate high levels of academic achievement. Yet society (and students themselves) also ranks universities by the ease with which graduates find fulfilling employment. Interestingly, employability skills such as communication, self-management, critical thinking, problem solving and collaboration are equally necessary for success in academia, but students are often not aware of these and other skills they've used to achieve success in particular academic tasks. As a result they miss out on opportunities to use their academic experiences to effectively substantiate any claims against job selection criteria.

A simple method to address this is to add a *Skills for Success* checklist to assessment tasks. It does not take the place of marking criteria, but offers students guidance about the generic skills that may be embedded in each academic task. The document I have developed fits on one page (front and back), has skills arranged according to graduate attributes, and has checkboxes down the right. The same document can be used for all tasks in all units of the course and serves as an organizer for student portfolios. In accredited courses with professional competencies the list could be adapted to reflect those competencies.

So how does it work?

1. Before the task

- Tick skills you think students will use to complete the task.
- Hand out the ticked sheet with the task and marking guide.
- Briefly explain that, in your experience, the skills you've ticked will help students to achieve well in this task, and discuss why that might be. Ask students to consider the extent to which they already have the skills, or perhaps need to acquire them, and resources or support they could access.

2. On task due date

- Students tick the skills they believe they used on a clean *Skills* sheet.
- Students share what they have identified and how the skills were used. This helps them articulate the skill in the context of a specific task.

3. Later

- The student can refer to the task when addressing selection criteria in job applications, or when developing a portfolio of evidence against professional competencies.
- The lecturer can compare the skills he/she anticipated would be important with those the students found to be important and use the feedback for future tasks and to inform teaching and learning activities.

I have found that using the *Skills for Success* document raises awareness (for lecturers and students) of employability skills or professional competencies that are embedded in specific tasks, identifies links to graduate attributes, offers a basis for organization of students' portfolios, and helps students address job selection criteria. And best of all, it only takes a few minutes for each assessment task!

For a copy of the *Skills for Success* document just email your request to c.moore@ecu.edu.au.

Submitted by:

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