Academic skills in an online world: lesson recap for the 'new normal'
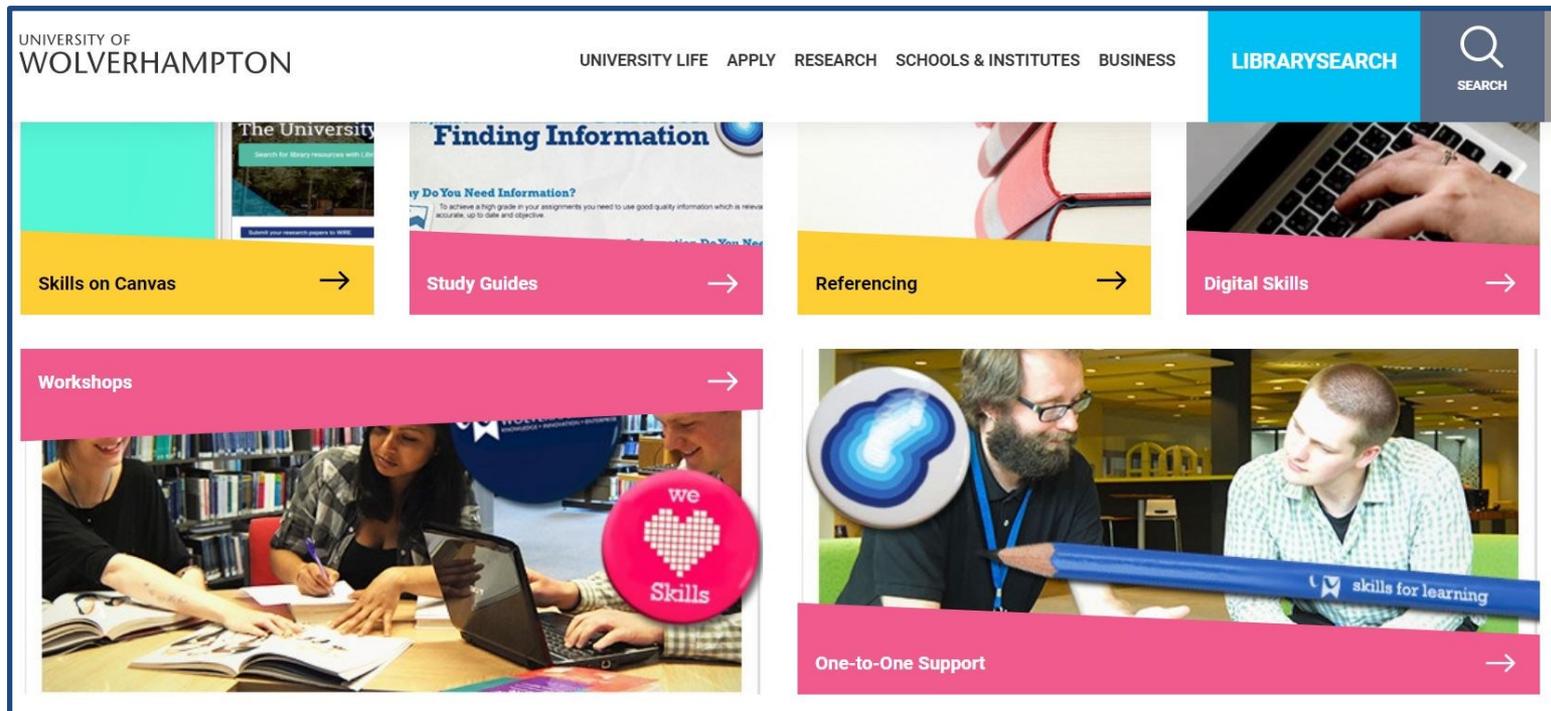
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Skills for Learning

Pre-COVID

- Positive but vague feedback

- Unclear online support policy

- Limited by physical constraints

New feedback process

- Online survey

- Requested via email every 4 weeks

- Collated into quarterly reports

Finding 1 – Flexibility is key

- "Very convenient, I could access at a time that suited me. No pressure."

- "[T]he availability of sessions online is very beneficial to providing support to part time students."

- "Really time effective and very useful."

What next?

- Prioritise the online format

- Make in-person support an accessible alternative

- Experiment with different timings

Finding 2 – Staff matter

- *37% of respondents specifically mentioned **knowledgeable, supportive and friendly staff who explained things clearly and thoroughly.***

- "They are never frustrated by some repetitive questions."

- "She responded well even with multipl[e] people posting questions she got to everything."

- "Opportunity to ask questions, to have interaction - not just a handout posted online or a book/website that can seem impenetrable."

What next?

- Be visible!

- Don't over-rely on resources

- Collaborate across your institution

Finding 3 – Digital skills gap

- *7% of respondents specifically requested support with Canvas, Microsoft Office and general I.T. skills*

- Moving online also caused us to lose a portion of our 'regular' students

- International and mature students seem more likely to avoid digital learning, or at least have low confidence

What next?

- Maintain a strong on-site presence.

- Speak with Student Reps about digital confidence.

- Offer 'inductions' to online resources, netiquette etc (both in-person and online).

Overall

- Online learning is a positive for many.

- A 'human' presence is as essential as ever.

- Balance and flexibility are key.

Thank you for listening – questions?

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