

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

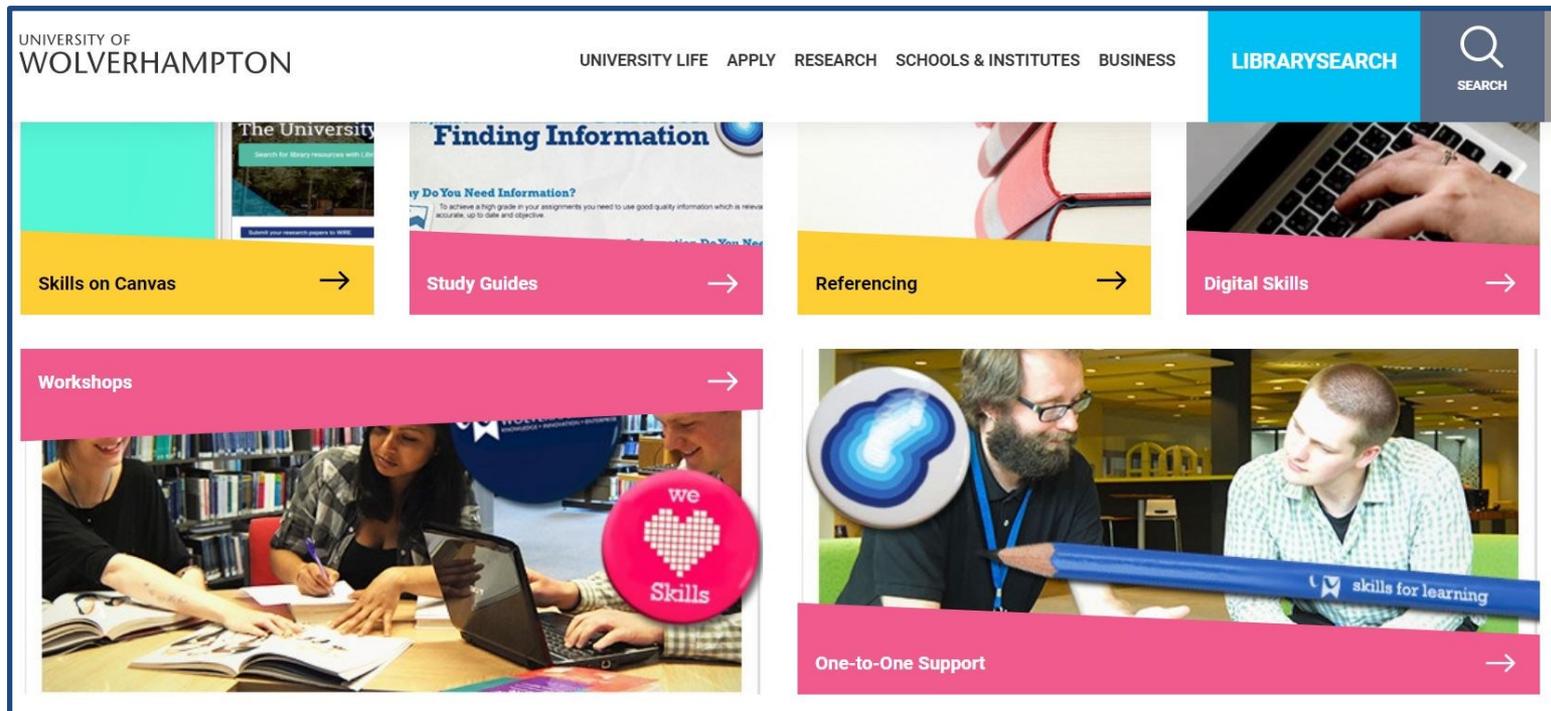
**Joe Carey**

Learning & Skills

Development Manager



# Skills for Learning



The screenshot displays the Skills for Learning website interface. At the top left is the University of Wolverhampton logo. The navigation menu includes: UNIVERSITY LIFE, APPLY, RESEARCH, SCHOOLS & INSTITUTES, BUSINESS, LIBRARYSEARCH, and a SEARCH button with a magnifying glass icon. The main content area features several service tiles:

- Skills on Canvas**: A yellow tile with a right-pointing arrow.
- Study Guides**: A pink tile with a right-pointing arrow. The background image shows a document titled "Finding Information" with the question "Why Do You Need Information?" and the text: "To achieve a high grade in your assignments you need to use good quality information which is relevant, accurate, up to date and objective."
- Referencing**: A yellow tile with a right-pointing arrow. The background image shows a red book.
- Digital Skills**: A pink tile with a right-pointing arrow. The background image shows hands typing on a laptop keyboard.
- Workshops**: A pink tile with a right-pointing arrow. The background image shows three students in a library setting working together at a table with a laptop. A circular graphic with a heart shape and the text "we Skills" is overlaid on the image.
- One-to-One Support**: A pink tile with a right-pointing arrow. The background image shows a staff member with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue lanyard, holding a large blue pencil and talking to a student. A circular graphic with a blue brain shape is overlaid on the image. The text "skills for learning" is visible on the pencil.



## 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?**

**Joe Carey, [j.carey@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:j.carey@wlv.ac.uk)**