



# Health T Level

## *Essential Skills Guide*

This guide has been produced by [Skills Builder Partnership](#) to support teachers with identifying and utilising opportunities within the T Level curriculum to develop and progress their students' essential skills. It can be used in a variety of ways including in curriculum planning, schemes of learning and/or lesson plans.

## What are essential skills?

At Skills Builder, we define a skill as a repeatable action whereby the more you do it, the better you become. It's something that can be taught.

Essential skills are those highly transferable skills that everyone needs to do almost any job, which make specific knowledge and technical skills fully productive. They are therefore distinct from basic skills (literacy, numeracy and digital skills) and technical skills (specific to a particular sector or role, sometimes drawing off a particular body of knowledge).

Essential skills can unlock learning in the classroom, boosting academic outcomes, perseverance and self belief. They halve the likelihood of being out of work, and increase earnings across a lifetime. They even boost wellbeing and life satisfaction. You can read more on the research around essential skills on the [Skills Builder website](#).



**The Universal Framework:** The Skills Builder Universal Framework is a tool for measuring and building essential skills. It breaks the 8 essential skills down into a sequence of steps, starting from absolute beginner through to mastery. It is supported by research and was developed with leading businesses, academics and educators. It consolidates an array of different skills frameworks into something comprehensive and practical.



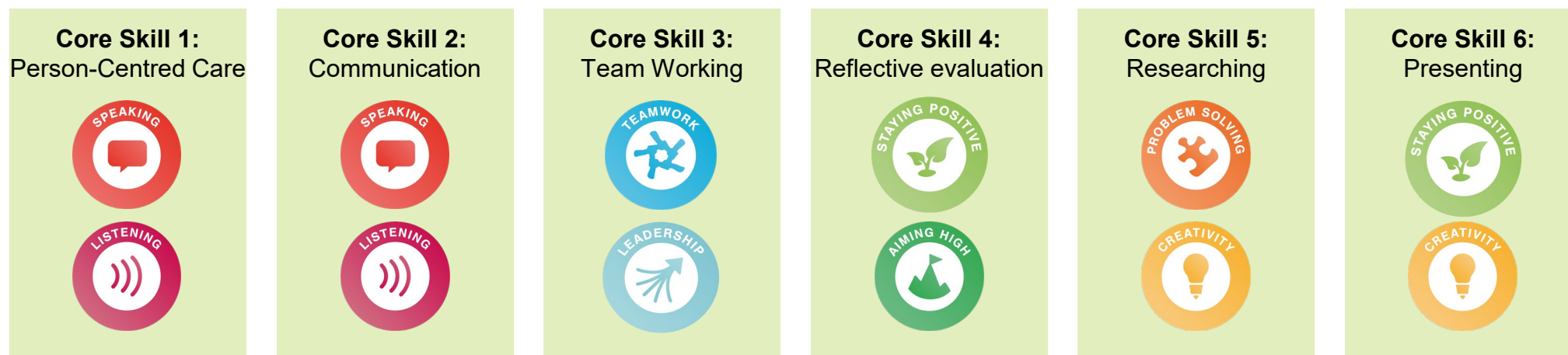
*The Universal Framework was Developed by the Essential Skills Taskforce: for more information see [Towards a Universal Framework for Essential Skills](#)*

### Building your students' essential skills:

Students can complete an online self-assessment using the [Skills Builder Benchmark tool](#) to discover their initial skill score. Alternatively, you can use the [Universal Framework](#) as a useful tool to explore what progress in a particular skill might look like for your students.

- You may find that your students have different starting points and will develop their essential skills at different rates and through different experiences, such as industry placements and classroom activities. Students' progress through the skill steps may not be linear.
- You may wish to use some of the suggested activities in this guide to support your students in their learning journey and to build their essential skills as they progress through the T Level course.
- The activities suggested in this guide are not an exhaustive list and there will be other ways to develop these core skills.

In the T Level specification for **Health**, there are six core skills identified, with the main essential skills supporting development of these core skills below:





## Why delivering person-centred care is important for students to develop to progress in their future career:

- **Patient outcomes:** Person-centred care can lead to more tailored treatments and better health results by addressing each patient's unique needs and circumstances.
- **Professional growth:** This approach helps students develop crucial skills like empathy, communication, and adaptability, making them more effective healthcare practitioners.
- **Meeting industry standards:** Person-centred care is increasingly recognised as a best practice in healthcare, making it an essential skill for career advancement and success in the field.

# Core Skill 1: Developing person-centred care

*To develop person-centred care, building essential skills in speaking and listening are important.*

## Examples this may be evidenced through:

- communicating with service users and their families;
- gathering information to inform the care plan and choices;
- establishing mutual expectations for individuals, their families and carers and setting goals;
- demonstrating compassion through language used and acknowledgement of patient's condition by asking questions about how they feel.

SPEAKING



## Build students' [Speaking](#) skills

### Can students speak effectively by making points in a logical order?

STEP 3

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **create** a presentation to explain the options for a care plan. This could be aimed at a patient or health care practitioner.
- Students **focus** on the order in which they present information and how this might impact their audience's understanding.

### Can students speak effectively by using appropriate language?

STEP 5

Example activities to develop this:

- Students use **tailored language** appropriate for the audience and only use technical terms when appropriate in the care of a service user.
- Students **participate** in a role play with different healthcare scenarios. Students **consider** the language they are using and **practice** both technical and non-technical language depending on the targeted audience.

### Can students speak effectively by using appropriate tone, expression and gesture?

STEP 6

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **participate** in role play scenarios and **practice** using different expressions, tones and gestures to convey different emotions and meanings.

LISTENING



## Build students' [Listening](#) skills

### Can students listen to others and record important information?

STEP 5

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **listen** to a practitioner discussion about a care plan or a patient requirements briefing and **record** the key pieces of information.
- Students **compare** the information they recorded and **discuss** the different methods they can use to take notes.

### Can students use open questions to deepen their understanding of what they heard?

STEP 7

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **categorise** questions as open or closed.
- Students **listen** to a practitioner discussion about a care plan or patient briefing and **create** a list of open questions to improve their understanding and gain further information.

### Can students show they are listening by summarising or rephrasing what they have heard?

STEP 8

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **listen** to a set of instructions for a patient's care and **summarise** what they heard.
- In pairs students **role play**, one student has a set of instructions they share and the other must rephrase what they heard. Student then swap roles.



### Why developing communication skills is important for students to progress in their future career:

- **Patient care:** Effective communication enables healthcare professionals to accurately understand patient needs, explain treatments clearly, and build trust, which can lead to better health outcomes and patient satisfaction.
- **Improved teamwork:** Strong communication skills are essential for collaborating with colleagues, coordinating care, and preventing errors in the multidisciplinary environment of modern healthcare.
- **Career development:** Excellent communication abilities are highly valued in healthcare, facilitating leadership roles, successful patient advocacy, and overall career progression in the sector.

# Core Skill 2: Communication

To develop communication skills, building essential skills in speaking and listening are important.

## Examples this may be evidenced through:

- communicating clearly and effectively with a variety of stakeholders in the health setting;
- communicating in a clear and unambiguous way, tailoring language and technical information to the audience;
- selecting the most appropriate way of presenting data;
- using a range of techniques to overcome communication barriers.

SPEAKING



## Build students' Speaking skills

Can students speak clearly to groups of people they know and don't know?

STEP 1

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **discuss** and **create** a set of success criteria for speaking clearly to groups that they know and don't know.
- Students **present** on a topic of their choice to the class. If the opportunity is available, students could also present to a different class.
- Students **peer assess** based on the decided success criteria.

STEP 2

Can students speak engagingly by using facts, visual aids and examples to support their points?

STEP 7

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **prepare** a presentation about healthcare related issue or topic.
- Students use visual aids and facts to **support** their presentation.
- Students **peer assess** focusing on how the visual aids supported the presentation.

STEP 8

LISTENING



## Build students' Listening skills

Can students show they are listening by how they use body language and eye contact?

STEP 6

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **create** a list of behaviours and actions that demonstrate positive body language and active listening for healthcare practitioners.
- Students work in pairs to **practice** these techniques and **give peer feedback**.

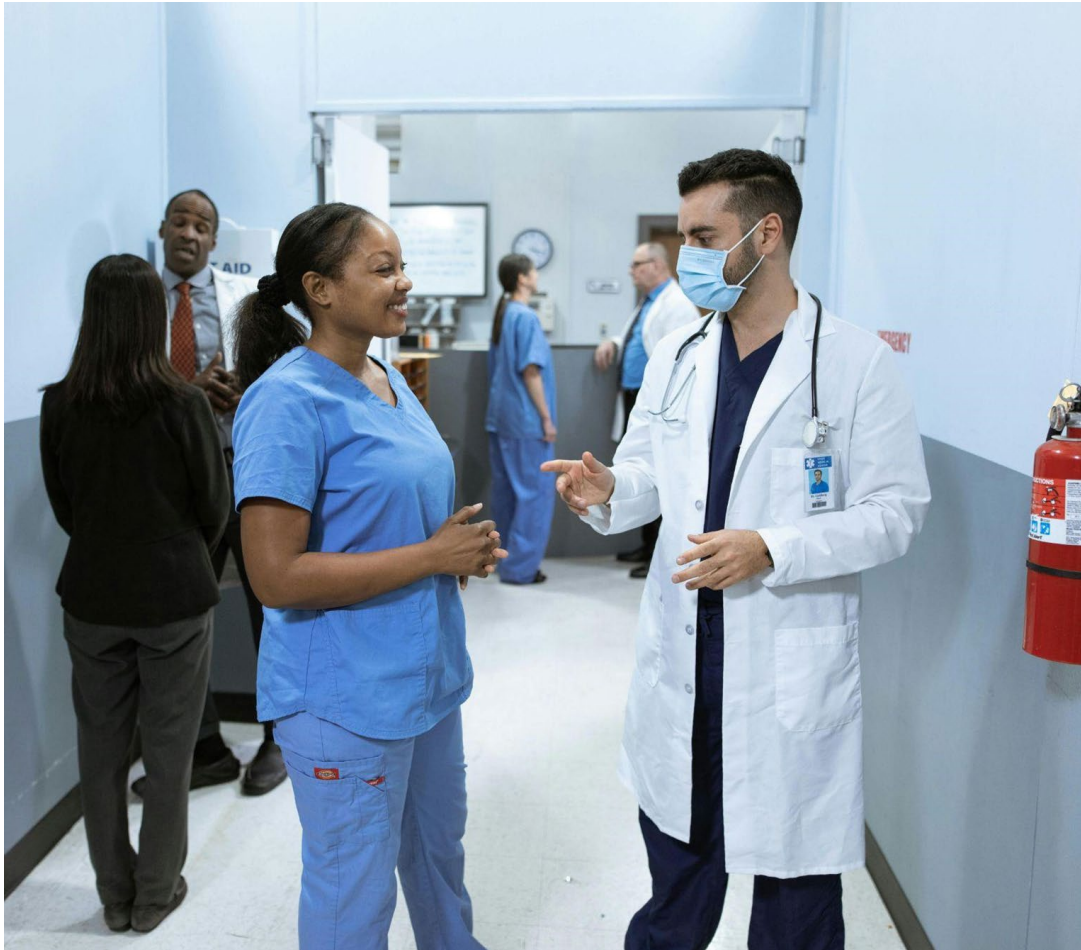
Can students listen critically and compare different perspectives?

STEP 11

Example activities to develop this:

- Students are given healthcare stakeholder **role play cards** (with prompts) and **discuss** a healthcare topic.
- Students **discuss** why different stakeholders might have different perspectives on a topic and **compare** discussion points.
- Students **listen** to two talks from different stakeholders on the same healthcare topic and **compare** their perspectives.





**Why developing the ability to work with others is important for students to progress in their future career:**

- **Multidisciplinary care delivery:** Healthcare often requires collaboration among various specialists and professionals, making teamwork essential for providing comprehensive and effective patient care.
- **Improved patient outcomes:** When healthcare professionals work well together, it can lead to better coordination of care, fewer errors, and ultimately better outcomes for patients.
- **Career development:** Strong teamwork skills are highly valued in healthcare settings, often leading to leadership opportunities and career progression.

# Core Skill 3: Team working

To develop team working skills, building essential skills in teamwork and leadership are important.

## Examples this may be evidenced through:

- identifying the functions of different teams/team members as well as their own role in the wider team;
- undertaking collaborative work;
- working within the organisation's defined processes;
- encouraging contributions from other participants;
- making decisions, show reliability, demonstrate respect and trust towards other team members and work together to find solutions and problem solve.



## Build students' Teamwork skills

Can students work well with others by taking responsibility for their tasks?

STEP 3

Example activities to develop this:

- Students are each given one aspect of a project or care plan to **plan**.
- As a group they must **combine** all the different aspects to come up with an overall plan.

Can students work with others by supporting others if they can do so?

STEP 4

Example activities to develop this:

- **Create a group task** with clearly defined roles and tasks, ensuring that some tasks will take longer or are more complicated.
- Set a time limit for the group to complete the task. Once the time limit is over, ask students to **reflect** on how the task went and if those who completed their tasks supported others in their role.

Can students contribute to group decision making?

STEP 6

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **research** a case study of a specific service user(s).
- Students **share**, in groups, what they have learnt.
- Given a specific scenario, groups must **reach a unanimous consensus** on the most appropriate care based on their understanding of the case study.



## Build students' Leadership skills

Can students manage time and share resources to support completing tasks?

STEP 4

Example activities to develop this:

- In groups students are tasked with a scenario of **managing** a healthcare setting and allocated a certain number of staff and resources.
- Each group must **produce** a plan for how the required weekly and daily tasks will be managed, specifying how they will use their resources.

Can students recognise their own strengths and weaknesses as a leader?

STEP 7

Example activities to develop this:

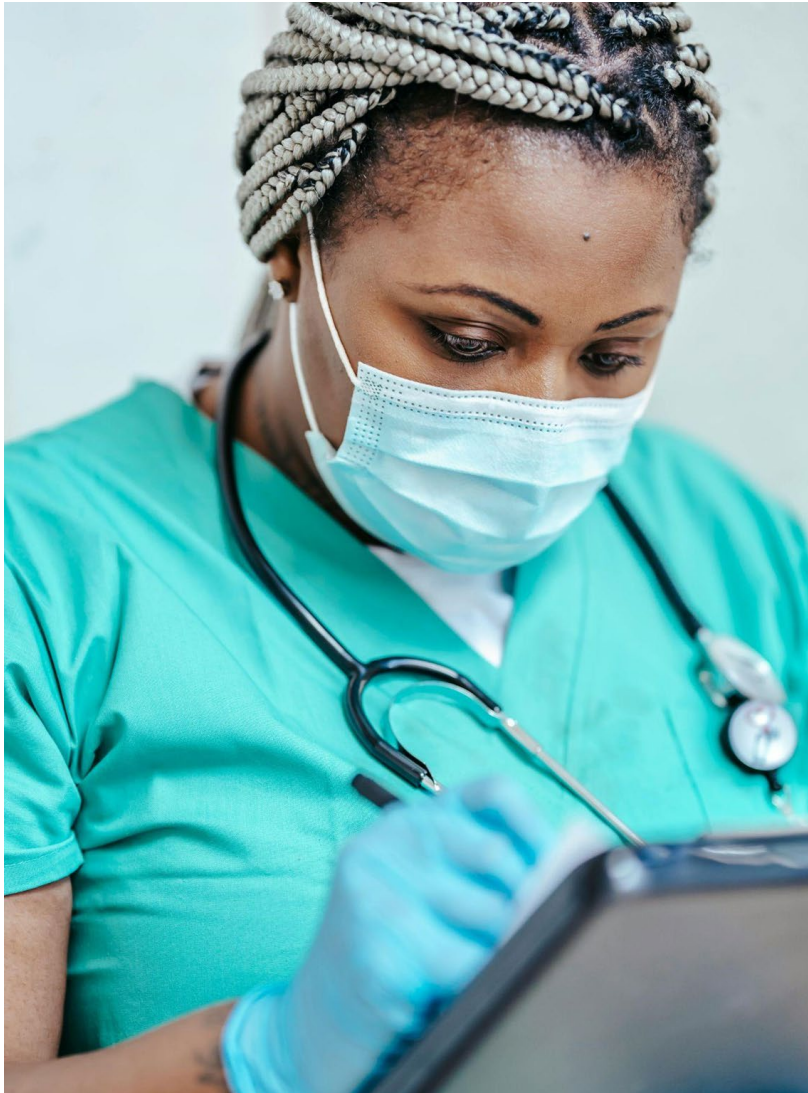
- Students **reflect** on a strong leader of their choice and **consider** the strengths and weaknesses of their chosen leader.
- Students **self reflect** on their own strengths and weaknesses as a leader and **consider** activities to help them develop their weaknesses.

Can students recognise the strengths and weaknesses of others in their team and allocate roles accordingly?

STEP 9

Example activities to develop this:

- Students are given a set of staff profiles and available jobs.
- Students **match** the staff profiles to the jobs they are most suited for and **justify** their choice.



### Why developing reflective evaluation skills is important for students to progress in their future career:

- **Continuous improvement:** Reflective evaluation enables healthcare professionals to critically assess their performance, learn from experiences, and continuously enhance their skills and knowledge throughout their careers.
- **Patient care:** By reflecting on their practice, healthcare workers can identify areas for improvement in patient care, leading to better outcomes and increased patient satisfaction.
- **Professional growth:** Reflective evaluation fosters self-awareness, adaptability, and resilience, essential qualities for career advancement and leadership roles in the ever-evolving healthcare sector.

## Core Skill 4: Reflective evaluation

*To develop reflective evaluation, building essential skills in staying positive and aiming high are important.*

### Examples this may be evidenced through:

- undertaking reflective practice and record reflections and experiences;
- making improvements to own practice;
- being able to identify and seek out opportunities for continuing professional development and prevent future failings;
- considering own performance against job specification or objectives.



### Build students' [Staying Positive](#) skills

**Can students keep trying when something goes wrong and think about what happened?**

STEP  
4

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **reflect** on an experience when something went wrong or were presented with a challenge during their course (or could share an example one).
- Students **analyse** what happened, **consider** if anything could have prevented it and **consolidate** what learning they can take from it for the future.

**Can students look for opportunities in difficult situations?**

STEP  
7

Example activities to develop this:

- **Present** students with a scenario, e.g., there has been a miscommunication around a client's care plan leading to ineffective care.
- Students **identify** opportunities that could be explored when dealing with the situation including how this was dealt with.
- Students **create** a list of lessons learnt and **exchange** in pairs to **suggest** potential opportunities identified.



### Build students' [Aiming High](#) skills

**Can students work with a positive approach to new challenges?**

STEP  
4

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **reflect** on a time they have succeeded at something new.
- Students **discuss** what factors may have contributed to their success or what they learnt.
- Students **create** a toolbox of strategies they can use when facing new challenges.

**Can students create plans that include clear targets to make progress tangible?**

STEP  
11

Example activities to develop this:

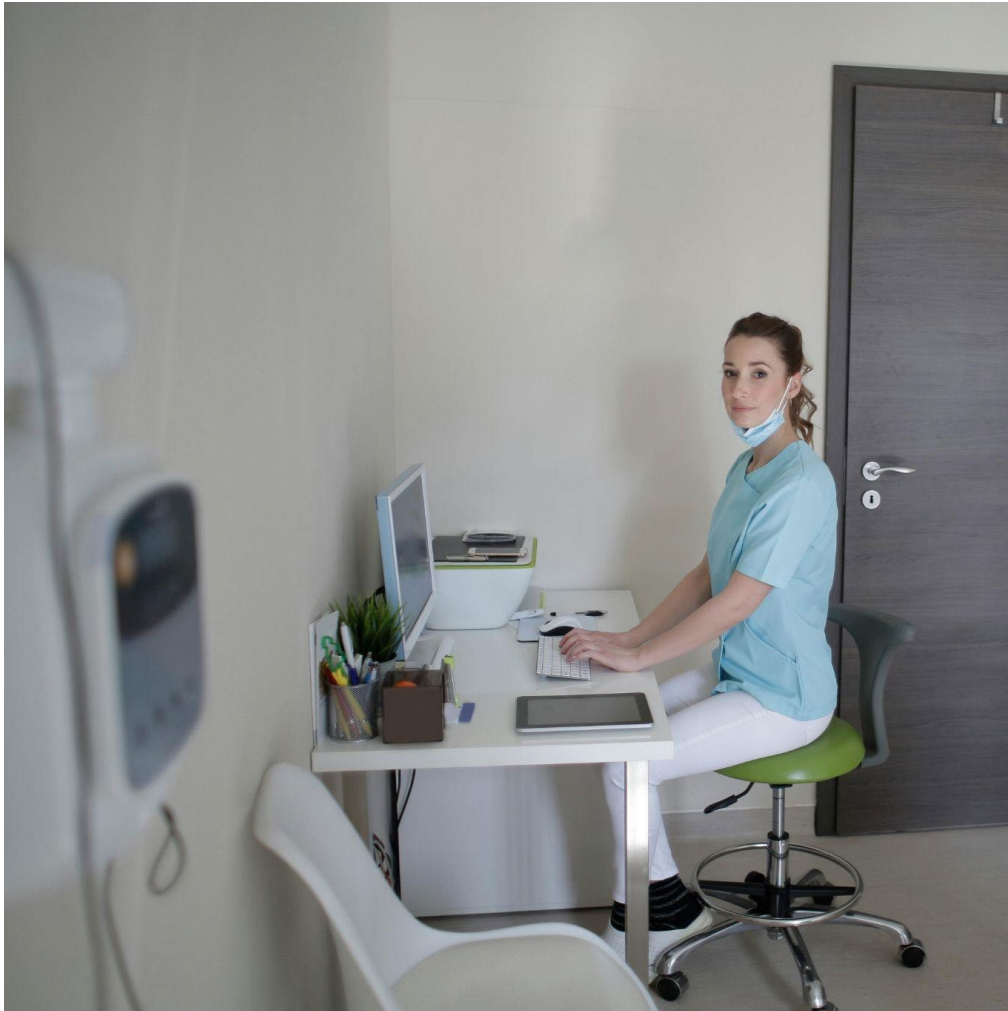
- Students **create** SMART targets for an aspect of their practice and **discuss** what success will look like for them.

**Can students create plans that are informed by external views, including constructive criticism?**

STEP  
12

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **role play** how to ask for, give and receive constructive feedback.
- Students could **take the roles** of managers, clients and healthcare assistant in a variety of different scenarios.



### Why developing research skills is important for students to progress in their future career:

- **Evidence-based practice:** Strong research skills enable healthcare professionals to critically evaluate and apply the latest scientific evidence, ensuring they provide the most effective and up-to-date care to patients.
- **Contribution to healthcare sector advancements:** Research skills allow healthcare workers to participate in or lead studies that contribute to new knowledge, potentially improving treatments and patient outcomes on a broader scale.
- **Career development:** Proficiency in research is highly valued in healthcare, opening doors to specialized roles, academic positions, and leadership opportunities that drive innovation in the field.

# Core Skill 5: Researching

*To develop researching skills, building essential skills in problem solving and creativity are important.*

## Examples this may be evidenced through:

- applying research skills and principles for evidence-based practice to contribute to research and innovation within a specific area;
- contributing to innovation within a specific area;
- being able to identify the need for change or improvement in relation to specific areas of practice;
- being able to carry out a detailed investigation into a specific problem by gathering information from independently sourced materials, originating from autonomous investigation.



## Build students' Problem Solving skills

**Can students explore complex problems by building their understanding through research?**

STEP  
7

Example activities to develop this:

- Set students a **complex problem**, e.g., recoding a physiological measurement.
- Students **identify** a set of smaller steps that will help them address the larger problem.
- Students **research** the different stages needed and **discuss** how this supports solving the overall problem.

**Can students explore complex problems by analysing cause and effects?**

STEP  
8

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **examine** a process and **discuss** how a set of proposed changes may affect this.
- Students **discuss** the potential positive and negative effects the proposed changes could have.

**Can students create solutions for complex problems by generating a range of options?**

STEP  
9

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **identify** a problem they may be faced with on an industry placement.
- Students **produce** at least 3 different possible solutions for the problem.
- Students **discuss** the potential outcomes the different solutions could produce and **choose** their preferred option.



## Build students' Creativity skills

**Can students generate ideas to improve something?**

STEP  
4

Example activities to develop this:

- Students take an existing clinical procedure, process or product and **produce** multiple ways to improve it. Students **evaluate** the suggested improvements against a set of success criteria.

**Can students develop ideas by asking themselves questions?**

STEP  
9

Example activities to develop this:

- **Present** students with a healthcare related challenge.
- Students **produce** a range of initial ideas to tackle the challenge.
- Students **peer review** their ideas and come up with 5-10 questions to **challenge** their work.
- Students use the questions to **redraft** and **improve** their ideas.

**Can students develop ideas by considering different perspectives?**

STEP  
10

Example activities to develop this:

- **Share** a process or healthcare procedure with students.
- Students **consider** the priorities of different stakeholders and **discuss** how these priorities might affect the process.



## Why developing presentation skills is important for students to progress in their future career:

- **Effective patient education:** Strong presentation skills enable healthcare professionals to clearly explain complex medical information to patients and their families, improving understanding and compliance with treatment plans.
- **Professional development:** Presentation skills are crucial for sharing research findings, best practices, and case studies with colleagues at conferences and meetings, contributing to the advancement of medical knowledge and one's own career.
- **Leadership and advocacy:** Proficient presentation abilities enhance a healthcare professional's capacity to advocate for patients, influence policy decisions, and take on leadership roles that require communicating vision and strategy effectively.

# Core Skill 6: Presenting

To develop presentation skills, building essential skills in speaking and creativity is important.

## Examples this may be evidenced through:

- presenting project findings in a range of formats;
- presenting outcomes to a range of different stakeholders and applying considerations for adapting presentation style when presenting to a range of stakeholders.

SPEAKING



## Build students' Speaking skills

Can students speak engagingly by using facts, visual aids and examples to support their points?

STEP  
7

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **prepare** a presentation about a healthcare setting.
- Students **suggest improvements** that could be made in the setting using visual aids and facts to **support** their suggestions.

STEP  
8

Can students speak adaptively by changing their language, tone and expression depending on the response of listeners?

STEP  
10

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **take part in a role play**, for example new staff starting in a healthcare workplace,
- Students **take on the roles** of different stakeholders.
- **Set** questions for the 'audience' to ask that will **challenge** the students to adapt/expand their answers.



## Build students' Creativity skills

Can students generate ideas when they have been given a clear brief?

STEP  
3

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **produce** notes based on a healthcare scenario and then **compare** the notes made between different groups.

Can students generate ideas to improve something?

STEP  
4

Example activities to develop this:

- Students take an existing care plan and **create a list** of suggestions to improve it.
- Students **make changes** to the care plan and **evaluate** it against a set of success criteria.

Can students generate ideas by combining different concepts?

STEP  
5

Example activities to develop this:

- Students **produce** outlines of the skills and qualities needed in different roles in the health sector.
- In pairs, students **combine** the different roles in the health sector into common themes for skills and qualities that exist over multiple roles.



For more information on building your student essential skills please visit the Skills Builder website at <https://www.skillsbuilder.org/>

For more resources and support for this T Level please visit <https://www.technicaleducationnetworks.org.uk/health-science/>

