Slide 1 – Introduction
Hi and welcome to this short podcast designed to help you to develop the skills needed in order to produce assignments to the required standard.

Slide 2 – Communicating Effectively
You may think that communication is one of your strengths, but in order to pass the wide range of assignments you will need to develop your communication skills.

WHY? You need to be able to give a structured, evidenced based, academic response in order to:-
✓ demonstrate your ability to apply your knowledge and understanding
✓ answer the question/solve a problem

Slide 3 – Skills Involved
You will develop a wide range of skills but this podcast will focus on the main 4 communication skills: Academic Reading, Academic Writing, Speaking and Presentation Skills and Listening.

Slide 4 – Academic Reading
An essential skill in order to understand new concepts and theories and gain supporting evidence.

You will need to develop a mixture of techniques to deal with large amounts of text and save time (for example: skimming, scanning and search tools for online resources.

TIPS: some possible questions to ensure that you read actively and stay focused and selective:-
✓ authority of the author
✓ why are you reading
✓ what are you trying to learn
✓ how has the evidence been collected
✓ does the information link to any theory
✓ compare/contrast findings with other authors

Slide 5 – Academic Writing
Depending on your subject, your written assignments will be in a variety of formats – this will be explained in your Module Handbooks.

The principles of academic writing remain the same and you will develop this style as you progress.

TIP: In your first year it is important not to get overwhelmed by academic writing. Try to get to grips with your subject and learn how to write about it.
Slide 6 – Academic Writing – Key Features
It maybe helpful to outline 6 of the key features:-

✓ Shows that you understand the learning outcomes and follows direction words (eg discuss, analyse etc)
✓ Is logical and well structured
✓ Uses formal and subject specific language to make clear points
✓ Demonstrates application of knowledge and understanding
✓ Proof read to ensure accuracy, with correct spelling, punctuation and grammar
✓ Objective and uses examples from theory and research.
✓ Referenced using the correct subject style

Slide 7 – Presentation Skills
If you think this involves just IT skills and powerpoint – read this!

Presenting information requires a set of skills including:-

✓ preparation and research
✓ concise writing style
✓ speaking skills
✓ persuasive language backed by evidence
✓ audience engagement
✓ body language
✓ controlling nerves

Slide 8 – Listening
Finally, a skill which many of us don’t even think about. Listening ...

Does your mind wander?
Do you have difficulty in recalling important facts?
Do you prefer to do the talking when in groups?

If so, it is essential that you develop your “hearing” skills and engage in “active listening” to ensure you get the most out of lectures, tutorials and seminars.

TIPS

✓ Concentrate
✓ Be prepared – read any notes in advance
✓ Use handouts to break the information into sections and make notes
✓ Get involved – ask questions
✓ Focus on the content and not the presenter
✓ Realise why the information is important to your subject knowledge and future assignments
Don’t forget that developing your skills is as important as increasing your knowledge.

Our Team have compiled a range of resources to suit different/individual needs. These include:

- Factsheets
- Online
- Books

We realise that this is a lot of information to take in.

Want to know more?

For more information and resources or to book an appointment please contact our team:

- ask@staffs.ac.uk
- Use our online system to book an appointment – available at http://libguides.staffs.ac.uk/appointments
- During term time pop into see us in the Skills Space, Ground Floor, Thompson Library between 10am and 4pm
- Attend one of our Get A Better Grade Workshops. Information available at http://libguides.staffs.ac.uk/bettergrade

All information is available on our main web page www.staffs.ac.uk/library

Thank you for listening and hope to see you soon.