

Think Like a Second Year Toolkit

Landing page

Welcome to this **UniSkills toolkit**, which has been designed to help you **develop your academic skills** while studying at Edge Hill University. However you are joining us, and whatever your academic journey so far, we really hope you enjoy exploring this toolkit.

We recommend completing this toolkit in the order it is presented, but **feel free to access however suits you best**. You will be able to [revisit this toolkit](#) whenever you need and there's no expectation to complete it all in one go.

Getting the most out of this toolkit

About this toolkit

As exciting as it can be to study at university, we know that transitioning between years can sometimes feel daunting. This **Think Like a Second Year** toolkit is designed for undergraduate students transitioning from first to second year (often called Level 4 to Level 5). Building on what you learned in your first year, it will help you **strengthen key academic skills, develop new ones**, and approach the next stage of your studies with **confidence**.

Accessibility

As an Edge Hill student you'll be joining an incredibly **diverse learning community** and we are committed to ensuring an **equitable** and **inclusive** experience for all. This toolkit has been designed with accessibility in mind throughout, and **alternative formats** are available, to ensure that everyone can access the information they need.

How to navigate this toolkit

To really get the most out of your toolkit we recommend completing it in the order it's presented, however please **feel free to access however suits you best**. You can select the most relevant headings and even **search for keywords** using the magnifying glass in the top left corner of the **navigation menu**.

All the **information**, and **interactive elements**, in this toolkit are an **invitation for you to engage** and you can choose how much you want to explore. There's also no requirement to work through all the information in one go as this [toolkit will always be available for you](#) to revisit and review any of the support, whenever you need it.

This toolkit aims to:

1. Explain the **transition** from first to second year.
2. Clarify which **academic skills** are important for you in second year.
3. Signpost you to further **academic skills support** from UniSkills.

This toolkit supports the following graduate attributes:

Resilience: Resilience is the **ability to recover quickly from setbacks**. It encompasses aspects of self-awareness, motivation and perspective.

Digital proficiency: Digital proficiency is about **confident** and **capable** use of digital tools and technologies. This includes your **ability to access information** and **use software**, as well as creating and sharing content and **communicating effectively online**.

Adaptability: Adaptability is an important skill to develop in our fast-paced and ever-changing world. Many experts predict that today's graduates could have 3+ careers and 15-20 roles in their working life, so the **ability to be flexible** and recognise **transferable skills** is an important career (and life) skill.

Critical thinking: Critical thinking is **your ability to discover, understand, critique, manage** and **absorb information**, and curate, copyright and disseminate knowledge to the wider community.

[You can learn more about graduate attributes and employability by visiting the Careers web pages.](#)

What is UniSkills?

Meet UniSkills

Hello, we are your Student Engagement team - you may come to know us more as [UniSkills](#)! We support all undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate taught (PGT) students in developing their academic skills.

Most of the team you'll work with are **Academic Skills Advisors**, who can help you build your academic skills and confidence throughout your time at Edge Hill University.

*You've made it through first year - well done! Now it's time to **sharpen** your skills. Explore this toolkit to help **boost** your confidence and **make the most of** your second year.*

Welcome to your Think Like a Second Year toolkit

Everyone arrives at Edge Hill with their own level of skills and abilities and **you are not expected to know everything when you arrive**. All of the topics you will explore in this toolkit can be **developed through practice** and there is **lots of support available** to help you along the way.

Remember, you don't need to complete everything at once and there are no tests or grades. Take your time, **explore what feels useful**, and you can revisit this toolkit whenever you need.

Play the welcome video below to **meet your Academic Skills Advisor, Emily**, as she introduces you to this toolkit.

[Play 'Welcome to Your Think Like a Second Year Toolkit' video.](#)

Video Transcript

Hi, my name is Emily, and I am an Academic Skills Advisor with UniSkills here at Edge Hill University.

This toolkit has been designed to support you transition into your second year of university study.

But you might be wondering...what actually changes?

Whilst the first year is all about finding your feet, the second year can bring a different set of expectations.

You'll probably notice your work becomes more challenging; you'll dive deeper into your subject, engage more critically with content, and hopefully start developing your own academic voice. For many courses, second-year marks now count towards your final degree classification. That can feel like extra pressure, but it's also a great chance to build strong habits early.

This can also be the year when many students experience the 'second-year slump': motivation dips, work increases, and things feel tougher. If that happens, remember — you're not alone. It's completely normal, and there's support available.

So yes...second year is different — more demanding, more independent, and more rewarding.

But remember, UniSkills are here to help you every step of the way.

So, let's get started with exploring how to navigate this transition.

Rest, review, and reflect

This section is all about **learning from your first year experience**. You are encouraged to reflect on your **strengths**, identify areas for **improvement**, and consider how you can develop **more effective study habits**. Rather than focusing on mistakes, the section promotes a **growth mindset**, viewing challenges as opportunities for development. It reinforces that second year is about becoming a more **independent, confident, and reflective** learner.

*Learn from your first year, build on your **strengths**, and develop the **confidence** to **thrive** in second year.*

Rest and reset

Moving into second year is a **big step**. Before you rush ahead, it's worth hitting pause. After navigating your first year, it's important to give yourself time to **rest** and **recover**.

This might mean switching off from study for a while, taking time to unwind, spending time on hobbies, and/or catching up with friends and family. Remember: rest isn't wasted time - it is **necessary** in order to return more **focused** and **energised**.

If you have had a longer break between first and second year, why not come along to our Returning to Learning drop-in. For more information, visit your [UniSkills Workshops Page](#).

Review and reflect

A quick think back to your first year now can help you spot **what worked, what didn't**, and what you'd like to **change**. This isn't about judging yourself - it's about learning what helps you **thrive**.

First year is often a time of **adjustment**, whereas second year brings **higher expectations**, more **independent learning**, and assessments that **contribute more** to your final degree. Reflecting now can help you **build stronger habits** and **avoid repeating challenges**.

This isn't about criticising yourself. It's about understanding your learning and making **small, realistic improvements**.

Activity: Take a moment to think about **what worked well** in first year. Explore the list below to give you some ideas.

- Study habits:
 - Developing a study routine that works for you.
 - Learning how to manage your time more effectively.
 - Using the library and other learning tools more confidently.
- Developing understanding:
 - Learning more about different areas of your topic.
 - Becoming familiar with academic language.
 - Noticing connections between different modules and theories.
- Approaching assignments:
 - Learning more about different areas of your topic.
 - Becoming familiar with academic language.
 - Noticing connections between different modules and theories.
- Personal growth:
 - Learning more about different areas of your topic.
 - Becoming familiar with academic language.
 - Noticing connections between different modules and theories.
- Using feedback:
 - Learning more about different areas of your topic.
 - Becoming familiar with academic language.
 - Noticing connections between different modules and theories.

Using feedback

Let's think a little more about feedback now. Getting feedback - especially if it is not what you hoped for - can be tough. But it is important to recognise that this **emotional reaction** is part of the **feedback process**.

Not all feedback will be positive, and there may be times when you find it **challenging**. Ironically, those challenging bits are often the ones that help you **grow the most**. When you can step back, reframe the emotion, and look at the **message underneath**, that's when real **progress** happens.

Understanding feedback as useful **guidance**, rather than criticism, can help you effectively **reflect** and **action plan** (or feed forward) to improve future assignments. Taking **action** is what will help you **progress** in your academic journey.

Take some time to explore your [Focus on Feedback](#) toolkit for more support.

"Try to keep track of the themes that emerge from your feedback, and review these with every assignment to pick out key areas to focus on and target. One way of doing this is by making a spreadsheet to note down assessment types, grades, and feedback concerns. You could then start tallying the common feedback themes and pick them as a key area to work on in your next assignments" - Lauren, Year 3 BA (Hons) Media

It is also good idea to review the second year **marking criteria** in your **Module** or **Programme Handbook** and compare this with the first year criteria. Use feedback to identify how well you are meeting the marking criteria. Pay attention to directive words such as **analyse**, **critically evaluate**, **synthesise**, **justify**, and **apply**. Use these to guide your focus in second year.

Recap

Your first year is where you build the **foundational skills** that make second year (and beyond!) much more manageable. So don't forget the **essentials**:

- Organise your time and your ideas.
- Ensure you know what is expected of you.
- Keep track of submission and exam dates.

- Engage with wider research.
- Find study habits that work for you.
- Use your feedback to help you improve.
- Ask for help when you need it.

Moving forward

Second year is not about being perfect - it's about becoming a more **confident, independent** learner. By reflecting on your skills now, you're building a **strong foundation** for the rest of your degree.

Prepare to progress

The best way to make real progress in second year is to **prepare** for it. Even if first year didn't go exactly as you hoped, second year offers a **fresh opportunity** to **reset, rebuild**, and **strengthen** the skills you've already begun developing.

This section will help you to recognise some of the **changes** and **challenges** you may meet in second year, and to prepare for them in **pragmatic** and **positive** ways.

*Second year is a **fresh start**. **Prepare** for what's ahead, **strengthen** your skills, and set yourself up for **success**.*

Moving up to second year

Here we explore how you can get to grips with the **key changes** you'll encounter in second year - what shifts, what becomes more demanding, and what new expectations you'll be working towards.

Activity: Explore the list below to familiarise yourself with what's coming and to start thinking about how you can adapt your approach.

Marks Count

Grades often now start to contribute to your final degree classification, so your work has a **bigger impact**. This is not to say your first year **did not matter** - the skills you built then absolutely do matter. It's just that now they start to count toward your final degree.

Workload Grows

Yes, workload will increase, but so will your ability to handle it! You'll juggle more **tasks** and **deadlines**, so **planning** and **time management** will be even more essential now.

Complexity Intensifies

Assignments do become more complex, so expect **larger word counts**, **deeper critical thinking**, and a **greater amount of research**.

Independence Increases

Your tutors will still be here to guide you, but there will be more onus on you to decide **how**, **when**, and **where** you complete your work and achieve your goals.

Your Voice is Stronger

You'll start to develop your own **ideas**, **arguments**, and **perspectives** with more confidence. You will also begin to make **critical judgements** on the perspectives you engage with.

Second year brings new **expectations**, but it also brings new **opportunities**. Your workload expands and your assignments become more challenging, yet you're also building the skills to meet these demands head-on. Every step you take builds on the foundations you laid in first year and helps you rise to the challenges of second year.

Finding your place

So now you know the expectations, but you might be thinking, "how do I actually make this work in my everyday life?".

Well, a good starting point is to think about **where** you study. As you move into second year, your **living situation** may have changed, so it's worth considering whether your current environment supports your **study** and **focus**.

If it doesn't always work for you, you're not limited to studying at home. [Catalyst](#) offers a range of spaces, including [bookable rooms](#) for quieter or group study. You might also try a change of scenery - a local café, park, or any spot that helps you focus. Finding a place that

suits how you work can make a real difference and can help you think more **intentionally** about how you use your time.

Planning

Second year requires stronger **time-management** and **forward planning**. You might start by mapping out any assignment **deadlines** (including time for planning, drafting, and submitting your work). Using a calendar, diary, planner, or digital tools such as [Trello](#) or [Todoist](#) can help. Generative AI can also be useful for drafting timetables, but do bear in mind your **Student Guide to Ethical Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence** (available on the [UniSkills GenAI web page](#)).

Whatever tool you choose, the goal here is to help you to stay **organised**, **meet deadlines**, and maintain a **healthy study-life balance**.

For help with planning your actual assignments, do visit the Focus and Planning lesson in your [Academic Writing](#) toolkit.

You're not expected to get everything perfect straight away. Mistakes, learning curves, and moments of uncertainty are all part of the process, and [support](#) is always available when you need it.

Research skills

You may have spent some time in first year gaining familiarity with the **research process**, and starting to develop skills in finding **academic information**. In second year, you will be asked to delve deeper into this process - to further refine your use of dedicated search tools in order to find **top quality** information. This will entail **wider** and **more critical** reading.

If you need a refresher on any of these terms, do revisit your [Preparing to Study Toolkit](#).

*Second year is your chance to **read** wider, **think** deeper, and **grow** academically.*

Remember that your [Reading Lists](#) exist to help you make a start on your research. They are a great platform from which to jump off into wider reading. If you have not accessed them previously, now is the time!

Why?

You may already be familiar with the Edge Hill online library, [Discover More](#). If you are not, or need help using it, you can visit your [Finding Academic Information](#) toolkit for guidance.

Much like your Reading Lists, Discover More is a great place to start your research. As you progress, though, you will be encouraged to explore **more widely** - both within Discover More and further afield. Before we turn to where you might conduct these explorations, it is firstly worth considering **why** expectations increase as you move forward:

Greater Understanding

You will now be moving beyond **introductory** material, so need to engage with more reading to help you understand more **complex information**.

Critical Thinking

An essential component of critical thinking is showing an awareness of **different viewpoints**, which you will encounter through wider reading.

Strengthening Skills

Wider reading supports the development of high-level skills such as **analysis, synthesis, and application**.

Confidence

The more you read, the more **fluent** you become in the language of your discipline. This makes it much easier to **participate** and **progress**.

Better Marks

Wider reading enables **critical** and **independent** thinking - skills which are rewarded in higher-grade work.

Preparation for Third Year

Second year can lay the **groundwork** for your final year research project - engaging in wider reading now can only help.

Activity: Take a moment to think about whether there are any other reasons you might engage in wider research. Consider whether there are any **discipline-specific** factors. For instance: needing to stay up-to-date with current research; engaging with real-life examples; tracking trends; or simply that you are interested and curious!

Make a note of some of these reasons - they can be helpful reminders if things start to feel overwhelming.

Where?

Textbooks and eBooks remain essential foundations to your studies, but at this stage you will want to be relying more heavily on **journal articles** and other, more current, research (e.g. conference papers, government and professional reports, systematic reviews). This is essential in all subjects - even creative and/or interpretive fields - as new scholarship **continually reframes** what we think and know.

Explore your [Subject Resources](#) pages for lists of appropriate journals, databases, and additional resources. [Google Scholar](#) is also a broad and valuable search tool (just be mindful that some journals are not peer-reviewed).

You might also find a research technique called '**snowballing**' useful here. This is where you use **one strong academic source** in order to find others. This might include looking at the source's **reference list** ('backward snowballing'), or using the '**cited by**' function on Google Scholar to find who has cited that source ('forward snowballing').

How?

It is helpful to note that academic databases don't understand full questions in the same way we do. Instead, we need to break a question into **key concepts** and think of **alternative words/phrases** for each one. Building on your use of key words from your Learning Outcomes (LOs) and assignment titles, you will now want to be using **synonyms** and **varied combinations** of terms to widen your search. This will include techniques such as "phrasal searching" and using Boolean operators (AND/OR/NOT). Again, access your [Finding Academic Information](#) toolkit for more information.

The examples in the following activity show how a single assignment title can be unpacked and turned into an effective search strategy.

Activity: Briefly study the assignment titles below. What key words, synonyms, phrases, and combinations might you use? Move on to our suggestions to check whether you are on the right track.

Titles

"Critically analyse the interpretation of social themes in musical theatre"

"An evaluation of soundtrack influence in animation"

"A comparative study of AI-driven decision-making models"

"Exploring the nurse's role in managing long-term conditions"

"Reflecting on professional identity in teaching diverse learners"

Titles and Search Strings

"Critically analyse the interpretation of social themes in musical theatre"

"Critical analysis" OR "performance analysis" OR "narrative analysis"

AND

Interpretation/understanding/representation/presentation/depiction

AND

"Social themes"/"sociocultural themes"/"social justice"

AND

"Musical theatre"/performance/musicals/"performance studies"/"theatre studies"

"An evaluation of soundtrack influence in animation"

evaluation OR analysis OR critique

AND

soundtrack/score/music/soundscape/"musical cues"

AND

influence/effect/role/contribution

AND

animation/"animated film"/"animated short"/"motion graphics"

"A comparative study of AI-driven decision-making models"

comparative OR "comparative analysis" OR evaluation

AND

AI-driven/machine-learning-driven/algorithmic/data-driven

AND

"decision-making models"/"predictive models"/"intelligent decision systems"

"Exploring the nurse's role in managing long-term conditions"

exploring OR investigating OR evaluating OR assessing

AND

"nurse's role"/"nursing responsibilities"/"nurse-led practice"

AND

managing/"coordinating care"/implementing/overseeing

AND

"long-term conditions"/"chronic diseases"/"persistent conditions"

"Reflecting on professional identity in teaching diverse learners"

reflecting OR examining OR "critical reflection"

AND

"professional identity"/"professional self-concept"/"teacher persona"

AND

teaching/pedagogy/"teacher training"/education

AND

"diverse learners"/"mixed cohorts"/"varied learner group"

Critical reading

In addition to reading **wider**, in second year you will be expected to read **deeper**. In essence, to read more **critically**.

In your first year, reading is mostly about building a basic **understanding** of your subject and becoming familiar with **core concepts**. Whilst you may have been expected to incorporate some criticality, this expectation grows in your second year.

When you are asked to read critically, you are essentially being asked to **actively engage** with what you are reading. This means **interpreting**, **evaluating**, and **questioning** what you are reading, rather than just gleaning surface information.

For more support with critical reading, do visit the following [UniSkills toolkits](#):

- Academic Reading
- Being Critical

"I found that reading books or listening to podcasts I was genuinely interested in (that also linked to my degree) helped me identify areas I was particularly drawn to, and bridge the gap between my personal and academic life. If something really stood out, I'd take a picture or note it down so I built up a bank of literature to draw on later, reducing the mad rush to find relevant resources when it came to writing!" - Mollie, Year 3 BA (Hons) Counselling and Psychotherapy

The increased expectations for reading can feel **overwhelming**, especially in our time-poor world. Please know you are **not alone** if you feel this. Do visit your [Time Management](#) toolkit for some practical tips, and remember that the [Student Support and Wellbeing Teams](#) are also always here for you.

Academic writing

Now that you have explored how to **read** more critically in your second year, it is time to put those skills to work in your **writing**. The same habits (questioning, evaluating, and analysing) are still central, but now you need to **apply** them - to turn your insights into **clear, well-developed** arguments.

In the next sections, you will explore how to use evidence in more **sophisticated** ways; how to prioritise **depth** over breadth; and how to refine your adherence to **academic conventions** so that your writing feels more accomplished.

"When I write, I feel more. When I write, I feel beautiful. When I write, I feel I am finally partaking in reality" - Min-Ah Cho, South Korean theologian.

Before exploring the features of critical writing in detail, it's important to clarify the demands of academic tasks to understand exactly what is being asked of you. Explore the table below to discover the correct definitions for each directive term.

Directive Term	Definition
Analyse	Explain and explore.
Evaluate	Weigh strengths and weaknesses.
Discuss	Show balance and other views.

Synthesise	Bring multiple sources together.
Justify	Defend a position.
Critique	Question and investigate.
Apply	Use theory in practice.

More critical use of evidence

In second year, you are expected not only to include sources, but to **demonstrate judgement** in how you use them. Critical use of evidence is about showing the reader that you are making **deliberate choices** about which sources to use.

This involves demonstrating **depth** in your academic writing. However, this shift towards depth does not mean reading less; writing critically still requires **reading widely**. What changes at this level is not how much you read, but how you **use** your reading. Strong academic writing demonstrates critical awareness through careful **selection, evaluation, and commentary**, rather than through volume alone.

Activity: Explore the list below to identify some key ways you can use your evidence more critically.

- Purpose: use evidence to support, develop, justify, or challenge a point - rather than because it simply seems relevant.
- Comment: explain why something matters/is important, rather than just presenting it.
- Limitations: recognise any shortcomings or oversights in a method or argument.
- Language: choose your words carefully to reflect a critical stance. Visit the [Being Critical](#) section of the [Academic Phrasebank](#) for more information.
- Position: present a well-supported perspective on the topic/issue.
- Context: acknowledge the context of a piece, and how it fits in the wider academic discussion.

More complex use of evidence

The way you are expected to use information also becomes more **complex** in second year. You are not only expected to **identify** relevant sources, but also to **engage** with them. In other words - to **join the conversation**.

This means that you will usually rely more on **paraphrasing** than quoting. For more information on this please access the Quoting and Paraphrasing lesson in your [Academic Writing](#) toolkit.

Two key skills can help you here: **integration** (bringing together theory, policy, practice, and academic literature) and **synthesis** (inferring a relationship between sources). The next activity will assist you with solidifying your understanding of these.

Activity: Work through the examples below to help solidify your understanding of these. Please note: all references are presented in [Edge Hill Harvard Referencing](#) style. Your subject may use a different style, and you should always check in your Module or Programme Handbooks and with your tutor if you are unsure.

Synthesis

Recent scholarship highlights growing uncertainty around how culpability is defined in modern criminal law (Child and Hunt, 2021; Creim and Burrow, 2025; Islahuddin, 2026).

Note: this is classed as synthesis because the example combines three different sources who make the same or similar point.

Integration

Recent research on how genes switch on and off has led to more precise tools for studying this process. For example, scientists have developed new ways to look closely at how RNA and proteins interact (Ducoli et al., 2026), alongside national policies that underscore the role of genomics in informing diagnosis and treatment decisions (NHS England, 2025).

Note: this example integrates academic literature with national policy in order to develop the point being made.

Synthesis and Integration

Studies show that managing training load is vital for improving performance and preventing injuries (Branquinho et al., 2025; Penichet-Tomás, 2024), while evidence also indicates that athletes who build up higher chronic workloads tend to experience fewer injuries than those who train less (Gabbett, 2012).

Note: this example draws together Branquinho et al. and Penichet-Tomás to make the first point (synthesis) which is then integrated with support from Gabbett.

Neither

Revolutions can be influenced by clashes between social groups (Skocpol, 1979).

Note: This example does not integrate or synthesise sources. It is important to note that this does not automatically make it poor academic writing. However, in this case the source use is weak because the information provided is vague and overly general, with no further detail or explanation. It is also unclear whether the material has been paraphrased or directly quoted, which further reduces its clarity and potentially risks plagiarism.

Neither

Jenkins's concept of participatory culture shows how online platforms encourage audiences to become active contributors, rather than passive consumers, thus transforming traditional media relationships (Jenkins, 2006).

Note: Whilst this paragraph does not use integration or synthesis, it is still a strong example because it shows clear understanding and thoughtful development. This demonstrates that integrating and synthesising sources is not always essential for producing high-quality academic writing; rather, these techniques can enhance it when used appropriately.

Academic conventions

Finally, second year is the time to really hone your adherence to those academic conventions that may have been new to you in first year. This means ensuring:

- Accurate and consistent **referencing** throughout, with correct in-text citations and reference lists.
- Clear adherence to **presentation** and **formatting** requirements, as outlined in your module or programme guidance.
- An appropriate academic **tone** and **style**, with clear expression and effective paragraphing.
- **Appropriate** and **ethical** use of Generative AI, if you decide to use it at all. For more guidance, visit your [UniSkills GenAI Webpage](#).

Meeting these expectations helps the focus remain on the **quality** of your writing, rather than avoidable technical or ethical concerns.

We hope that you now feel more confident as you prepare to move into your second year of study at Edge Hill University. Remember that developing your academic skills is an ongoing **process**, so it's important to balance your ambition with **patience** and **kindness** towards yourself as you grow.

As you continue your studies, be sure to revisit your [UniSkills Toolkits](#) - both throughout second year and as you begin preparing for third year.

How to access your support

Congratulations on completing this toolkit

As you move through your second year, remember that academic success is a **journey**, not a destination. The skills and strategies explored in this toolkit will help you navigate **new challenges** and continue developing as an **independent learner**.

There is **lots of support available** to you, both in-person and online, bookable and self-directed, so **however you prefer to access** there's something for you.

Access your support

UniSkills

Whatever your subject or level of study, UniSkills is your key to academic success.

UniSkills provide a comprehensive programme of [workshops](#), [online resources](#) and [one-to-one support](#) tailored to **enhance your academic abilities** and **boost your confidence** at university and beyond.

[Access a wealth of online academic skills resources](#), including video tutorials, digital guides and [interactive toolkits](#), all **available 24/7** via the UniSkills web pages. From finding academic information, to critical thinking, academic reading and writing, referencing, preparing for assessments, presenting with confidence and much more!

Disability Support

[Additional study skills support is also available](#) if you have a **Specific Learning Differences (SpLD)** or disability, such as **dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia** and **ADHD**.

Your SpLD team offer [access to support](#) and [technologies](#) to develop **effective study strategies** and mitigate the impact of any challenges. If you have any other conditions you can also access a range of support from your [Inclusion team](#).

Academic Resilience

Academic resilience is about developing your **skills** and **mindset** to **cope with challenges** and **thrive in your studies**. Understanding what resilience means in an academic context can help you adopt practical strategies to **manage stress, stay motivated, respond to feedback** and **adapt to setbacks** such as disappointing marks, mistakes or lack of confidence.

By maintaining your **wellbeing**, taking a positive approach to **problem-solving** and accessing **support networks** effectively, you can strengthen your ability to stay focused and succeed, even when faced with challenges. **Academic resilience can be learned** and a great place to learn more is your [Academic Resilience Toolkit](#).

Digital Skills

Access a range of support, resources and short courses to help you **build your confidence, independence** and **digital skills** at your own pace:

- Explore a range of self-help guides and video tutorials to support your studies on your [Digital skills web pages](#).
- All students have full, free access to thousands of high-quality online courses and video tutorials written by industry experts on [LinkedIn Learning](#).
- If you need help with your digital skills, or have any questions about using university systems, you can [contact the Catalyst Helpdesk](#).
- Access year-round [targeted support campaigns](#) to help settle in, find your study-happy-balance and ace your assessments.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

At university, GenAI can support your studying by helping you explore ideas, understand complex concepts, plan or draft work and gain feedback, but it **must be used ethically** and **in line with the University's guidance**.

You can learn more about GenAI, including how to access your **Student Guide to Ethical Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence** and related resources on the [UniSkills GenAI web page](#).

Learning Communities

In addition to your timetabled studies, **engaging in learning communities with your peers** can be valuable, enriching and help you build a **stronger sense of belonging**.

There are lots of ways to engage with learning communities at Edge Hill, from [UniSkills Workshops](#) to [Students' Union Societies](#) and even [events provided by your Student Life team](#).

Productive Mornings

There's lots of ways you can **maximise your mornings** to support your studies. Whether you're commuting to or from the **Ormskirk** or **Manchester St. James'** campuses, or getting ready for the day in your residential accommodation.

[Play the video to learn more about how Student Advisor, Ivy, ensures a **productive morning** by:](#)

- Logging into **Outlook emails**, **calendar** and **Blackboard** to check for any **updates**, **announcements** or **prep work**.
- Accessing eBooks and listening to **lecture recordings** or **academic podcasts**.
- **Converting documents into audio files** to listen to while travelling or getting ready.
- **Visiting Catalyst** when it's open 24/7, during term time, using UniCard swipe access.

Commuter Breakfasts

[Play the video to join your Student Advisor, Dan, as he enjoys **catching up with friends**, picking up a **free pastry and hot drink** and **learning more about specialist support** at a **commuter breakfast event**.](#)

Commuter breakfasts are available at both **Ormskirk** and **Manchester St James'** campuses, and you can find out more about upcoming events by exploring your [Student Life portal](#).

Study-Life Balance

It's important to find a **happy and healthy study-life balance** that works for you. It helps you **avoid burnout** and can give your **mental health and wellbeing a much needed boost**.

[Play the video to find out how Student Advisor, Ivy, embraces her study-life balance](#) by:

- Using the [Libby app](#) or picking up a **fiction book** from the University Library.
- Accessing **free mental health and wellbeing support** through the [Edge Well 24/7 app](#).
- Making use of **quiet** and **reflective spaces** available on **Ormskirk** and **Manchester St. James'** campuses.

Catalyst Specialist Support

Learn all about who and what Catalyst is, how Catalyst specialist support can help you thrive on your student journey and how to access everything you need in your [Catalyst Induction Toolkit](#). This toolkit provides a condensed overview of all the support available to you and is available 365 days a year for you to revisit whenever you need.

And remember, you don't have to know *who* can support you, as you can always [contact the Catalyst Helpdesk](#) and they will triage you to the right support.

Final farewell

[Play the video for a final message of good luck from your Academic Skills Advisor, Emily.](#)

Video transcript

Having worked through this toolkit, we hope that you now feel more confident about your move into second year.

*Don't forget, you can revisit any of the sections at any time if you need any reminders.
Thank you for accessing this resource, and best of luck with your studies.*

Your experience matters

How could we improve your toolkit?

Thank you for engaging with this alternative format of the toolkit, we hope you've found it useful learning more about your foundational academic skills and how you'll study at Edge Hill University. We'd love to know what you thought of the content and [invite you to share your feedback](#) with us in a very quick survey, which should take you no longer than five minutes to complete.