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**How do I know what I know? Supported self-reflective practice for student skill development and employability.**

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## What are Skills Surgeries?

Short 30 minute sessions between level 4 programme lead and a student

Students can contact to book a session between 10am and 11am on Thursdays and Fridays

Informal chat, notes on the whiteboard, photo can be taken for future reference



How did they come about?

Every year I have students contact me anxious about next steps beyond graduation

A key skill is for our graduates to be able to articulate their knowledge and skills to employers

This is recognised by accrediting body and the HEA (Reddy et al., 2013)



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Informal chat with myself about their time at the University

Any challenges faced and how they had overcome these, any particularly positive experiences they recalled both in their academic and extracurricular activities

For example, working with others may be a theme that the student returns to throughout our conversation so we may talk about this a little more to identify what was challenging and how the student has developed skills of collaboration, communication, and leadership from this



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Gaining some perspective

It was apparent that student's thinking changed during the sessions

A few lightbulb moments!

Change their view of rationale behind activities e.g. working in groups



## Positive outcomes

Identifying aspects of the students' practice specifically as skills was a positive outcome:  
*'I was pleasantly surprised by how beneficial I found the skills surgery, really helpful to talk through those things you maybe don't even think of as being skills and realise how useful they are for overcoming current and future challenges.'*

The relaxed nature of the sessions was noted as a positive aspect of the experience:  
*'I liked the relaxed setting, the session made me feel better about myself afterwards.'*



Things to think about

Time – block time out every week in your diary and keep to 30 minutes

Confidentiality – clear the whiteboard after the photo has been taken

Not going to be everyone's cup of tea – challenge remains of connecting with students and encouraging them to take up opportunities



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Now the student perspective!

Hannah Roche, level 4 student





Final thoughts....

All students who provided feedback indicated they would recommend the sessions to a friend...

...that the sessions enabled them to consider things in a way that helped with next step...

...and that they felt more comfortable considering their skills and knowledge suggesting they are a short yet effective way of identifying graduate attributes.