

Choosing a Study Skills Book

This study guide discusses the types of study skills books available and offers some criteria for making your choice.

What is available?

There are many books on Study Skills available which offer advice on studying effectively and improving your work during your degree. More are being published every year. In addition to their general titles, several of the major education publishers have each developed their own series of study guides, which offer a range of books in a similar format, each of which deals with a separate area of study or different subject discipline. There are also books with advice for students with Specific Learning Difficulties such as dyslexia, for mature students, part-time students or for international students who are studying in another language and culture. You will also find books on related topics such as grammar, which suit the practical needs of students rather than linguistics specialists. These books can be invaluable sources of advice, and a useful additional resource to your lecturers, course handbook and the Learning Enhancement Team.

However, the number and variety of titles can be confusing, and although many are comparable in terms of quality and content, their style and presentation will appeal to different people. This will depend on your learning style as well as your preferences. You should therefore spend some time thinking about what you need from such a book before buying one. As the Learning Enhancement Team cannot review every book that appears on the market, we suggest some criteria for making your choice.

How to find suitable titles

Waterstones on campus will carry the most popular and most recent titles, and is a good place to start. Online booksellers will also allow you to search for books, and discover other titles, perhaps equally good, which are not so recent or on current best-selling lists. The university library carries a selection of books which are well-regarded by teaching staff. Recommendations from other students, lecturers or reviews on bookshop websites can be useful. However, the way you learn best is very personal, and it is worth skimming through a few books in the bookshop or library to see which best suits your preferences.

Some of the main academic publishers are: Blackwells, Longman, Macmillan, Pearson, Palgrave, Open University Press, Routledge and Sage. If you find a book you like, it may be that the publisher has produced others on different topics in a series with the same format, and possibly the same authors.

What to consider in making your choice:

- Would you prefer a general book that covers most topics, or a more specific one that focuses on a single topic, such as writing or exams?
- Do you need a reference work to find topics quickly as you need them, or a workbook with exercises through which you progress in order?
- Do you prefer a presentation which favours text-dense explanation or more images, diagrams and text-boxes?
- Do you find that colour and cartoons make a text more readable, or do you find them patronising or distracting?
- Do you want an accessible, light, down-to earth tone or a more academic writing style that models the kind of text you are expected to produce in your writing?
- Do you want a short, bite-sized approach or a thorough, in-depth one?
- Would you find general advice and examples useful, or do you need more subject specific guidance and examples?
- Do you need a text aimed at a particular readership, such as students with dyslexia or international students?

Titles can be misleading, so if you choose a general study skills guide, check that it covers all the areas you need, and does not omit any such as report-writing or exams, if that is what you would like guidance on.

Want to know more?

If you have any further questions about this topic you can make an appointment to see a **Learning Enhancement Tutor** in the **Student Support Service**, as well as speaking to your lecturer or adviser.

- 📞 Call: 01603 592761
- ✉ Ask: ask.let@uea.ac.uk
- 🖱 Click: <https://portal.uea.ac.uk/student-support-service/learning-enhancement>

There are many other resources to help you with your studies on our [website](#).

Your comments or suggestions about our resources are very welcome.



Scan the QR-code with a smartphone app for more resources.