

Information literacy

What you need to know

In developing a strategy, you need to know how to:

- establish opportunities for using information literacy skills over an extended period of time (eg in a programme of study, project or work to be carried out over three months or so);
- identify the outcomes you hope to achieve (eg by recognising a knowledge gap and defining it in terms of the types of information needed to fill it, more effective searching, better use of information and critical abilities);
- identify relevant sources of information, including people and reference material (eg librarians, tutors, reference books, internet and databases) and research the information needed for planning purposes;
- plan your use of information literacy skills (eg options, sequence of work, resources, level of expertise needed) taking into account factors that may affect your plans (eg access to IT, patterns of work, issues raised by the use of information such as intellectual property rights, copyright, data protection and plagiarism);
- make a reasoned selection of methods for achieving the quality of outcomes required (eg library catalogues, databases and internet search tools).

In monitoring progress, you need to know how to:

- explore different information sources, developing alternative lines of enquiry where appropriate (eg formulating questions appropriately, identifying types of information required, using different sources for different purposes);
- use a variety of search strategies and tools effectively (eg choosing search terms appropriately, using keywords and Boolean operators to narrow searches, using different search engines and user interfaces);

- record and critically evaluate the results of your search (eg establish, and apply systematically, criteria to assess the quality of results);
- monitor and critically reflect on your use of information literacy skills, including:
 - obtaining feedback from others (eg colleagues, tutors, librarians, managers);
 - noting choices made and judging their effectiveness (eg impact on the quality of work);
- adapt your strategy to overcome difficulties and produce the quality of outcome required.

In evaluating strategy and presenting outcomes, you need to know how to:

- interpret results and identify the main findings from your work, including evidence to support your conclusions (eg examine generalisations, assess coverage of your searches and authenticity and authority of sources);
- organise and clearly present information to suit your purpose and your audience, ensuring that the information is accurate (eg produce citations and a bibliography in a document using a consistent format);
- assess the effectiveness of your strategy, identifying factors that had an impact on the outcomes (eg availability and quality of resources, time, level of own expertise and confidence);
- identify ways of further developing your information literacy skills.

What you must do

You must:

Provide...[examples of work that show] you can plan and carry out searches, and critically evaluate information.

Evidence must show you can:

<p>...</p> <p>Develop a strategy for using skills in information literacy over an extended period of time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • establish opportunities for using information literacy skills and clearly identify the outcomes you hope to achieve; • identify relevant sources and research the information you need for planning purposes; and • plan your use of information literacy skills, and make a reasoned selection of methods for achieving the quality of outcomes required.
<p>...</p> <p>Monitor progress and adapt your strategy, as necessary, to achieve the quality of outcomes required involving the use of information literacy for two different complex information searches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore different information sources, developing alternative lines of enquiry where appropriate; • use different search strategies and tools effectively and critically evaluate information to meet your purposes; and • monitor and critically reflect on your use of information literacy skills, adapting your strategy as necessary to produce the quality of outcomes required.
<p>...</p> <p>Evaluate your overall strategy and present outcomes from your work, including citations and a bibliography.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interpret results and identify the main findings from your work, including evidence to support your conclusions; • organise and clearly present information to suit your purpose and audience, ensuring that the information is accurate; and • assess the effectiveness of your strategy, including factors that had an impact on the outcomes, and identify ways of further developing your information literacy skills.

Format based on QCA (2000). *Key Skills Units, Levels 4–5*, QCA/99/455. London: Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.