

---

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Academic skills refers to the wide range of skills required from students in order for them to thrive in their university studies. Often referred to as 'soft' skills, they include areas such as finding academic research, referencing and critical thinking.
- 1.2 At the University of Wolverhampton, academic skills are chiefly supported by the Skills for Learning (S4L) team. This is a centralised resource operating within Library Services.
- 1.3 The S4L team is well-regarded across the University, with faculty staff frequently incorporating their services into module teaching or referring students to their in-house support.

### 2. AIMS

- 2.1 The aims of this statement are to:
- 2.1.1 Formalise the S4L team's support.
  - 2.1.2 Provide best practice advice for academic staff wishing to utilise the S4L offer.
  - 2.1.3 Raise awareness of the S4L team's position within the University.

### 3. SCOPE

- 3.1 This statement focusses on the S4L team, and does not consider the support provided by other services across the University (unless directly relevant).

### 4. ACADEMIC SKILLS BEST PRACTICE

- 4.1 The S4L team encourages teaching staff to utilise the academic skills support on offer, whilst also considering best practice for its own development.
- 4.2 **Embedding academic skills support**
- 4.2.1 Although the S4L team provides a range of in-house support, in order to maximise our reach within the university we recommend teaching staff 'embed' our workshops into their own modules. Staff in S4L find it is useful to have a short session at the beginning of a semester, with a follow-up once an assessment has been made of student ability.
- 4.2.2 Contact should be made either with faculty Liaison Librarians, or directly with the Skills for Learning manager (Joe Carey, [j.carey2@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:j.carey2@wlv.ac.uk)).
- 4.2.3 Where embedding support is not possible, S4L have a range of [audio-visual materials](#) which can be incorporated into Canvas modules. Staff should contact the S4L Manager to arrange this.

### 4.3 Developing the S4L offer

4.3.1 For academic skills support to be effective, it is crucial that the S4L remains aware of current needs across the University. There are multiple ways in which development can take place involving both student and teaching staff feedback

4.3.1 S4L will have a representative at all key faculty meetings (in the form of either a Liaison Librarian or the Skills for Learning Manager). These meetings are an opportunity for staff to suggest new ways S4L can support students (eg: a new workshop, updates to online support). Where the S4L Manager is not present, all feedback will be shared.

4.3.2 As noted above, it is imperative that student needs are also addressed. Therefore the S4L team will continuously solicit feedback from students, incorporating relevant points into the support offer (see related policies below).

4.3.3 The S4L Manager regularly liaises with other relevant staff in the university – especially Academic Coaches, who frequently contact students facing particular issues with their studies. This also feeds into the development of S4L support.

### 4.4 Professional development within S4L

4.4.1 As well as keeping the support offer relevant, staff within academic skills must continuously build their own professional practice. Therefore, each of the following opportunities is used by members of the S4L team.

4.4.2 PGCert in HE Teaching – members of the S4L team complete this course, provided by the University. The PGCert is essential for most teaching staff, and gives a guarantee that S4L support is delivered by professionals.

4.4.3 Teaching Observation Scheme – several staff within the S4L team participate in this programme for professional services, receiving feedback on their practice from experts in the College of Learning and Teaching.

4.4.4 Student feedback – as noted above, student feedback is regularly discussed within S4L meetings. Where issues with teaching delivery are identified, these will be resolved through appropriate training.

## 5. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

5.1 As noted in Section 3 of this statement, focus is given here to the S4L team. However, it is the responsibility of the University as a whole to pursue this best practice guidance and maintain a clear means of communication between other relevant services. This might include faculty teaching staff, Academic Coaches and the Skills Hub (FABBS).

---

### 6. RELATED POLICIES

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:

- Offer development policy
- Appointment guidance policy

### 7. DEFINITIONS

NA

<b>VERSION:</b>	1	<b>AUTHOR/ OWNER:</b>	Joe Carey (Learning & Skills Development Manager, Library Services).
<b>Approved Date:</b>		<b>Approved By:</b>	University Research Committee
<b>Review Date:</b>			