

International Advanced Level

Subject: Geography

The need for Transferable Skills

Sources: Cognitive/Intrapersonal and Interpersonal skills adapted and taken from the NRC framework

In recent years, higher education institutions and employers have consistently highlighted the need for students to develop a range of transferable skills to enable them to respond with confidence to the demands of undergraduate study and the world of work. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) defines skills, or competencies, as ‘the bundle of knowledge, attributes and capacities that can be learned and that enable individuals to successfully and consistently perform an activity or task and can be built upon and extended through learning’.

To support the design of our qualifications, the Pearson Research Team selected and evaluated seven global 21st-century skills frameworks. Following on from this process, the team identified the National Research Council’s (NRC) framework as the most evidence-based and robust skills framework, and have used this as a basis for our adapted skills framework.

The framework includes cognitive, intrapersonal skills and interpersonal skills. These skills have been interpreted to ensure they are appropriate for this subject. All of the skills listed are evident or accessible in the teaching, learning and/or assessment of the qualification.

Identifying and highlighting these skills in International Advanced Level qualifications ensures that it is not only the academic and cognitive skills that are developed, but those broader elements that universities highlight as being essential for success. Skills such as self-directed study, independent research, self-awareness of own strengths and weaknesses and time-management are skills that students cannot learn from a textbook but have to be developed through the teaching and learning experience that can be provided through an international curriculum.

In the tables below, we have taken the NRC framework skills and provided definitions of how each skill can be interpreted for this subject. This will enable teachers and learners to understand examples of how they can develop each skill through an International Advanced Level qualification.

Intrapersonal skills		Interpersonal skills		Cognitive skills	
Intellectual Openness		Teamwork and collaboration		Cognitive Processes and Strategies	
Adaptability	Ability to select and apply geographical skills across different topics (‘transferable skills’) to support knowledge and understanding / learning process.	Communication	Able to communicate the geographical concepts behind a given scenario to peers and teachers and be able to answer questions verbally or in written forms using appropriate geographical terminology.	Critical thinking	Using various geographical concepts (including information collected from geographical enquiry) and synthesising this information to make judgements.
Personal and social responsibility	Awareness of contrasting social, economic, political and environmental perspectives for different geographical issues.	Collaboration	Peer review the work of others within a group to offer supportive feedback on strengths and weaknesses of the work.	Problem solving	Application of knowledge and understanding of geographical concepts to different contexts. Use of enquiry and geographical skills, including quantitative skills, to solve problems related to geography.
Continuous Learning	Planning and reflecting on own-learning goals and meeting them regularly.	Teamwork	Working with others in exploring geographical issues.	Analysis	Being able to break a geographical issue down into individual components and making logical, evidence-based connections about the causes and effects of interrelationships between components.
Intellectual interest and curiosity	Identifying their own geographical questions under their own initiative, and exploring the causes, consequences and possible solutions.	Co-operation	Sharing resources and sharing learning techniques with others. Working as part of a team in group based work.	Reasoning/argumentation	Give reasons and arguments on both sides related to a geographical issue.

Work ethic/conscientiousness	
Initiative	Using geographical knowledge, independently (without guided learning), to further own understanding. Using different forms of media to investigate real world stories.
Self-direction	Planning, developing and applying their learning of the real world through fieldwork.
Responsibility	Taking responsibility for any errors or omissions in own work and creating a plan to improve.
Perseverance	Actively seeking new ways to continue learning or solve a problem despite setbacks that appear insurmountable at the time.
Productivity	Be able to spot opportunities to apply knowledge to questions allowing complex arguments to be articulated in coherent, logical chains of reasoning.
Self-regulation (metacognition, forethought, reflection)	Using opportunities to reflect on own learning to support the recognition that similar geographical processes and concepts can be applied in contrasting scenarios.
Ethics	Appreciate ethical issues relating to geographical issues.
Integrity	Taking ownership for your own work and willingly respond to questions and challenges.
Positive Core Self Evaluation	
Self-monitoring/self-evaluation/self-reinforcement	Planning and reviewing your own work as a matter of habit.

Interpersonal skills	Using verbal and non-verbal communication skills in developing their awareness of geographical concepts and issues.
Empathy/perspective taking	Being able to appreciate that people have different views of, and attitudes to, the world, its environments and its issues.
Negotiation	Awareness of different viewpoints and ideas and that stakeholders should work together to propose a solution/strategy/plan.
Leadership	
Leadership	Taking a lead role in piece of collaborative work, for example a research task or geographical enquiry.
Responsibility	Taking responsibility to ensure that in a group exercise, all students contribute and a final outcome is achieved.
Assertive communication	Motivating a team through use of language to reach an appropriate outcome.
Self-presentation	Delivery/presentation of independent work or being part of a team presentation and being able to answer questions about the presentation.

Interpretation	Interpreting geographical information and understanding the meaning of that information.
Decision Making	Evaluate geographical issues, questions and information to form conclusions which draw on evidence such as strengths, weaknesses, alternatives and relevant data.
Adaptive learning	Apply understanding of geographical issues in familiar situations and adapt these to use them in new and unfamiliar situations.
Executive function	Planning how to apply practical geographical / enquiry skills to investigate a geographical issue(s). Consideration of the planning process and the importance of reviewing outcomes.
Creativity	
Creativity	Application of existing geographical knowledge and understanding to unfamiliar situations and/or use geographical concepts to explain an unusual geographical scenario.
Innovation	Use a different or unexpected way to answer a geographical question, for example those using data/statistics which require the application of geographical skills.