



# Facilitating 1:1 digital skills sessions

Working one-to-one (1:1) with a learner gives a digital mentor quality time to get to know the person they are supporting to learn digital skills. It gives you the chance to tailor the session specifically to the learners needs and allows you to be as creative as you like.

Below are some things you may like to think about when planning for and facilitating a 1:1 session with a learner.

## Discuss

### **Take the time to meet with your learner.**

Discover as much as you can about your learner at this meeting by using your active listening skills. Take the time to plan for this meeting and think about the things you need to ask your learner. Some questions may include - "Do you have a specific topic you are interested in?" or "Is there something about your computer or smartphone you wish to learn more about?"

You will also need to discuss with your learner the days and times you are available and find a time for the 1:1 session/s to take place.

Getting to know your learner will help you to keep them interested, design your sessions to meet their needs and help them to feel safe and confident learning with you.

## Assess

### **Build upon their existing digital skills.**

Your first meeting is the perfect opportunity to identify and assess what the learner already knows about using digital technology, their capabilities and their concerns if they have any. This can be achieved by asking open -ended questions such as, "What sorts of things do you currently use your computer for?" or "Tell me more about your experience using the internet." You can even ask your learner, "Please show me how you would do .....". It might be appropriate to conduct a mini quiz to help you assess their digital knowledge and skill level.

There are many ways to assess their abilities. All you need to do is choose one that you think will suit your learner and give you the information you need to move to the next step.



**TOP TIP:** Try [our Digital Skills Questionnaire](#) to help assess your learners digital skills ability.

Gaining this information is critical to you being able to deliver the session at the right level and in the right manner. It allows you to build on their existing digital skills and helps to boost their confidence when it is applied in a new way, and their desire to keep learning.

## Learning objectives

### Create learning objectives together with your learner.

Once you have assessed their digital skills capability and understand what they want to learn, you can work together to create learning objectives.

Learning objectives are the goals the learner hopes to achieve. Use the information from your Discussion and Assessment to identify how many sessions and then how many objectives you will need to create.

To create a clear and concise learning objective simply ask the learner what it is they hope to achieve and use the SMARTER acronym to help frame it. Learning objectives need to be:

S = Specific / M = Measurable / A = Achievable / R = Relevant / T = Timely / E = Evaluate /  
R = Revised

### An example of a non-SMARTER learning objective may be:

To learn how to use my new iPad, download and install Zoom and start using it to connect with my grandchildren.



**TOP TIP:** Learners may find this objective a bit overwhelming which makes it hard for them to successfully master. Break the learning topics up into smaller chunks. This will assist in developing specific, realistic and achievable learning objectives for you to then create a session plan tailored to your learners needs.

### An example of a SMARTER learning objectives may be:

By the end of the session, I will be able to turn on / off my ipad as well as navigate my way around it including opening a few applications.

By the end of the session I will be able to confidently download and install Zoom on my iPad.



**TOP TIP:** By breaking the learning objective up into specific topic areas and adding a timeframe, you achieve a SMARTER learning objective. Once you have delivered the session, revisit the learning objective and session plan to evaluate and revise it if required.

## Accessibility needs

**Getting to know your learner includes asking if they have any access needs. Knowing this information will help you to be better prepared to support their learning.**

If the learner is not aware of how technology can support their needs, adding time to explore accessibility features on devices in your learning plan could be beneficial.

For example you may like to show them how to increase the size of the font on their device, increase or decrease the volume or change the level of brightness on their screen.

When delivering your 1:1 session you will need to position yourself so you can see their screen but balance this with maintaining each other's personal space. Ask the learner if they have a side they would prefer you to sit on as this may assist those with hearing difficulties. Some learners also prefer to use a lot of space in order to move their mouse around or have the ability to take notes as they learn. You may also need to factor in their needs when choosing the location of your session.

Depending on your local health restrictions you may need to ensure your session is COVID-Safe. Read our [tips on delivering your sessions safely](#).



**TOP TIP:** Discuss accessibility needs and always ask your learner if they have a preferred side for you to sit on, as some people have hearing or visual impairments on one side only.

## Boundaries

**As a digital mentor you will need to establish clear boundaries which sets out the ground rules of your relationship with your learners.**

Learners prefer consistency and knowing what to expect. Clear boundaries help everyone to feel safe, confident and supported when they are learning

Take the time to discuss boundaries and expectations with your learners when you first meet with them. This is a very useful habit to adopt as a digital mentor, as you can then refer back to that discussion if the learner tries to push the boundaries at a later date.

For example a learner may ask you for advice on financial matters or a health related issue. It is not the role of a digital mentor to provide this type of advice or support. Rather, you can suggest they speak to a professional person trained in these areas.



**TOP TIP:** When setting boundaries with learners, remind them sessions are about learning, and are not the place for discussing personal issues.

## Prepare

**Preparation is vital to success. For every hour you deliver, it will take approximately 2 - 3 hours to prepare.**

Now that you have established the learning objectives it is time to think about creating your session plans. This means you will need to break the learning objective down into smaller chunks and think about the best way you can support your learner in their learning journey.

Things to consider include;

- Finding a suitable venue that helps to create a safe learning environment
- Equipment such devices and audiovisual equipment
- The types of resources or activities you may need such as printable handouts



**TOP TIP:** It is better to have too much learning material and too many activities prepared than not enough.

## Facilitation

**Even though you have a session plan, flexibility is key as people and situations change.**

1:1 sessions can be more intense for learners than being part of a group session. Short, regular sessions can sometimes be more effective than a single long session. Sessions can be lengthened if needed through the use of additional activities or more practice time. Wherever possible, you should try to incorporate different learning techniques into every session. These could be demonstrations, practise activities, self directed learning or discussions.

Use your active listening skills to gauge how your learner is responding to your material. You may discover you need to adopt a more flexible approach and try a new strategy to better support your learner. Using the learners' words helps to build trust as it shows you value them and are listening to what they have to say.



**TOP TIP:** Create a variety of engaging learning activities and allow the learner to choose which one to complete.

## Finish with actions

**Be sure to check in with your learner to determine the success of the session and make any changes if required.**

At the end of the session, ask your learner if they feel they have met the learning objective. It is also a great time to ask if they felt the resources were appropriate and if there is anything more they would like to know about that subject. This can help you plan future sessions or signpost to other learning.

You may like to give the learner a feedback form to complete so you can incorporate their comments into your revisions.

For highly engaged and motivated learners you may wish to provide them with homework. Activities such as practice worksheets or reading a handout will keep them motivated until your next session.



### Remember!

- Getting to know your learner is time well spent.
- Assessing the learners knowledge and skills will save you time and is an excellent building block.
- Creating SMARTER learning objectives together ensures a win / win.