Study Support Tools

There are a wide range of software tools that you can utilise to study effectively and develop the skills you need to succeed. Our top recommended tools are on this page, with some further suggestions on the next page.

Both **TextAid** and **Inspiration** are available for use at home

Text Aid

UWS Students get free access to TextAid tools to help with reading, spelling, comprehension, working memory and concentration.

- Listen to any text
- Use on any device
- Proofread your work
- Annotate text
- Translate text
- Word prediction
- Spell checker

To access TextAid please click on the link below which will take you directly to the UWS Study Support Tools webpage. Here you will also find information on how to use TextAid to support you in your studies.
https://uws.careercentre.me/u/dlqxd131

Inspiration

UWS students also get free access to Inspiration which is visual thinking software. Visual thinking is a learning style where the learner better understands and retains information when ideas, words and concepts are associated with images.

If you would like to download Inspiration to your device the link to the installer is:

https://inspiration10installers.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/insp10ie_setup.exe

You will also need our serial code below to access the download:

 Serial Code: **1630D0297T9631**

The following link is a quick ten-minute guide to using Inspiration software: https://techedshowcase.wistia.com/medias/1pzxnru2em

For more detailed instructional videos please follow the link: https://www.inspiration-at.com/inspiration-for-windows-how-to-videos/

If you are having difficulties accessing any of the software available, please contact ITDS, you can do this by logging onto the self-service portal: https://uws.topdesk.net/tas/public/login/form/

You can also find some great resources on our Careers & Skills portal. Within the Academic Skills tile there are some Key Academic Skills resources that you might find very useful. https://uws.careercentre.me/Members

Study Support Tools

XMind 8

XMind allows you to create a picture of your ideas and concepts in the form of a diagram or mind map. It also lets you reorganise your visual plans into written documents, meaning that your map or diagram can become the structure for an essay or report. XMind stimulates both visual and linear thinking to deepen understanding of concepts, increase memory retention, develop organisational skills and tap creativity.

XMind is available for both Windows and Mac. www.xmind.net/download/xmind8

Balabolka

Balabolka is a free text-to-speech program that runs on Windows XP; Vista; 7 and 8. It can read text from a variety of file formats, including text that is copied to the clipboard. This text can also be saved in several audio formats so that you can listen to it again using a media player or mobile device.

My Study Bar

MyStudyBar is a tool which can help students overcome common problems with studying, reading and writing. The package consists of a set of portable open source and freeware applications, including Balabolka and XMind, assembled into one convenient package. MyStudyBar has six sections, each with a drop down menu offering personal choice, flexibility and independent learning, particularly for those learners who require additional strategies to support their learning.

My Study Bar is completely free to download and works with any Windows computer
MyStudyBar 4.1 (callscotland.org.uk)

More information and tutorials on using the above tools can be found in the Online Careers & Academic Skills Centre:

Click here to log in and be redirected to the Study Tools page

If accessing this document in print format you should log into the Online Careers & Academic Skills Centre by clicking on the tile in MyDay or the log in link at https://www.uws.ac.uk/current-students/supporting-your-studies/study-skills/. Once logged in go to the Study Skills section.

Some further suggestions

Scottish Computer Voices

Provides high quality computer voices that work with Balabolka www.thescottishvoice.org.uk/download

Speak for Word

Speak is a built-in feature of Word, Outlook, PowerPoint, and OneNote. You can use Speak to have text read aloud in the language of your version of Office.

How to Use Speak in Word

Grammarly

Provides proofreading and grammar checking support and works with a number of programmes and websites, including MS Office. Please note that the functionality is restricted in the free version. www.grammarly.com

ATbar

A free, open source, cross-browser toolbar to help users customise the way they view and interact with web pages.

www.atbar.org

My Web My Way

This BBC web page shows you how to change the way your internet pages look. www.bbc.co.uk/accessibility/guides

Calendars

Use built in features of your online calendar (Outlook, Google, iCal) to set deadlines, reminders and plan a study or revision timetable

For Mac Users

Mac users can utilise many inbuilt accessibility features. Information can be found at: www.apple.com/uk/education/special-education/osx/

If you would like further support in using any of these tools, you are welcome to book an appointment with an Academic Skills Adviser via our Online Calendar in the Online Careers & Academic Skills Centre.

If you feel that you have additional support needs and haven't already done so, please contact the Disability Service:
disabilityservice@uws.ac.uk