

Skills Development Programme at UPES

UPES recognizes that higher education must prepare students not only with disciplinary knowledge but also with the **personal, interpersonal, communication, self-management, and professional skills** required to succeed in academic, social, and workplace environments.

In this direction, UPES launched **School for Life in 2020**, during the global pandemic, as a distinctive educational initiative focused on developing essential **21st-century life and professional skills** among students. The initiative provides structured learning pathways through **life skills courses, exploratory courses, signature courses, and experiential learning opportunities**.

A key feature of the School for Life framework is the delivery of selected **Life Skills Courses in an intensive Boot Camp format**. This approach provides students with focused, activity-based learning experiences and opportunities to practise skills in realistic situations.

The School for Life ecosystem addresses several competencies relevant to holistic student development, including **communication, teamwork, emotional intelligence, adaptability, self-management, relationship building, professional behaviour, and effective written and verbal expression**.

Within this framework, **EDGE Soft Skills and EDGE Advanced Skills are embedded within the curriculum as structured skill-development components**, enabling students to progressively develop foundational and advanced communication and professional competencies.

1. School for Life – Life Skills Boot Camp

The **School for Life cluster at the School of Liberal Studies and Media (SoLSM)** offers Life Skills Courses in a rigorous **Boot Camp format**. The format is designed to provide concentrated learning experiences and enhance the overall learning experience of students.

The Boot Camp model enables students to engage intensively with life-skill themes through structured classroom activities, discussions, practical exercises, reflection, collaborative learning, and application-based tasks.

Life Skills Course Structure

Students are required to earn a minimum of **12 credits** through Life Skills Courses offered by School for Life. The identified Life Skills Courses carry **2 credits each**, comprising:

1. **Managing Self**
2. **Emotional Intelligence**
3. **Deepening Self**
4. **Art of Relationship**
5. **Mastering Self**
6. **Human(e) Intelligence**

Together, these courses provide a structured pathway for developing **self-management, emotional awareness, interpersonal effectiveness, communication, relationship skills, and personal development**.



2. EDGE Soft Skills and EDGE Advanced Skills within the Curriculum

UPES integrates **Soft Skills and Advanced Skills development into the academic curriculum**, allowing students to progressively develop competencies alongside their disciplinary education.

Rather than treating soft skills as one-time training interventions, the curriculum-based approach provides students with **structured and sustained exposure to communication and professional skill development**.

The learning progression supports students from foundational interpersonal and communication abilities towards more advanced professional competencies.

Key areas addressed

- Verbal communication
- Professional communication
- Written communication
- Presentation and articulation

- Active and deep listening
- Interpersonal relationships
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Emotional intelligence
- Self-management
- Professional behaviour
- Audience awareness
- Persuasive communication
- Adaptability and professional effectiveness

This curriculum-based approach ensures that skill development becomes an **integral part of the student's educational journey** rather than an isolated extracurricular activity.

3. Self-Management and Time Management

Self-management is an important component of the School for Life framework. Courses such as **Managing Self** and **Mastering Self** support students in developing greater awareness of their personal habits, responsibilities, priorities, and goals.

The broader skills-development ecosystem at UPES also includes **time-management programmes and activities**, helping students develop practical strategies for managing academic workload and competing commitments.

Areas of development

- Goal setting
- Planning and scheduling
- Prioritisation
- Managing academic deadlines
- Organising study time
- Developing productive routines
- Managing multiple responsibilities
- Self-discipline
- Personal effectiveness
- Balancing academic and extracurricular commitments

These interventions support students in becoming more **organized, self-directed, responsible, and effective learners**.

4. Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Skills

The School for Life curriculum includes **Emotional Intelligence** and **Art of Relationship**, which contribute to the development of students' interpersonal and emotional competencies.

These courses provide a structured environment for students to develop greater awareness of themselves and others and to build healthier and more effective interpersonal relationships.

Key skills supported

- Self-awareness
- Emotional awareness
- Empathy
- Interpersonal communication
- Relationship management
- Collaboration
- Respectful interaction
- Emotional regulation
- Team participation

Such capabilities are important for students' **academic engagement, teamwork, personal development, and future professional environments.**

5. Experiential Learning and Application

School for Life extends skill development beyond classroom-based learning through **experiential learning opportunities**. Students are provided opportunities to apply their learning through activities such as:

- Projects
- Internships
- Co-operative learning opportunities
- Community service
- Research projects
- Collaborative activities
- Practical assignments

This approach allows students to translate the skills developed through their courses and boot camps into **real-world situations.**

Key Learning Outcomes

The School for Life and associated skills-development initiatives enable students to develop:

- **Effective communication:** Communicate clearly and confidently across academic, professional, and interpersonal settings.

- **Self-management:** Organize responsibilities, manage priorities, and develop productive learning habits.
- **Time management:** Plan activities, manage deadlines, and balance multiple responsibilities.
- **Interpersonal effectiveness:** Build positive relationships and collaborate effectively with others.
- **Emotional intelligence:** Develop self-awareness, empathy, and effective interpersonal behaviour.
- **Written communication:** Produce clear, structured, purposeful, and audience-appropriate written content.
- **Professional skills:** Demonstrate appropriate communication, teamwork, adaptability, and professional conduct.
- **Independent learning:** Take greater responsibility for personal development and continuous learning.
- **Workplace readiness:** Apply acquired skills in projects, internships, community activities, and other real-world contexts.

11. Institutional Impact

The School for Life initiative and curriculum-based skills programmes create a **continuous skills-development ecosystem** rather than relying on isolated training sessions.

The Boot Camp model provides **intensive and experiential learning**, while curriculum components such as **EDGE Soft Skills and EDGE Advanced Skills** provide progressive development of communication and professional competencies.

The combination of **Life Skills Courses, Boot Camps, communication-focused courses, time-management interventions, experiential learning, and career-oriented skill development** enables students to develop competencies that complement their disciplinary knowledge.

This approach contributes to the development of graduates who are **self-managed, effective communicators, collaborative, emotionally aware, professionally prepared, and capable of applying their skills in diverse academic and workplace environments.**