

## Social Identity Mapping (SIM)

The aim of the activity is to support your understanding about you, and the influences upon your choices and actions, especially regarding your engagement with your studies. This is a structured activity that you can complete on your own, or with your personal tutor. This consists of completing an Excel Workbook (which asks six questions across six worksheets) and then reviewing the returned analysis which forms an active identity map of your group influences. This can be used to both support your action planning in your personal tutor meetings, or whenever you wish to reflect about your social identity and how it is evolving. This is a *living* document and as such, you should expect it to evolve as you develop and progress through your studies.

You can reflect upon Your MAP and revisit any of the data you have previously entered whenever you wish. Remember to refresh your Group lists after any change though!

### GETTING STARTED

Download the SIM workbook [here](#). When opening this for the first time make sure you **enable macros** and if need be, re-set your view with the left arrows at the bottom of the worksheet so that all tabs are visible across the bottom of your screen. These run in order of: How to use, Groups, Importance, Positivity, Time, Helpful, Influence and Your MAP.

Once everything is visible, follow the instructions below, completing each worksheet in the order listed.

### Worksheet 1 – GROUPS

This first worksheet asks you to identify those groups you feel shape your social reality – in other words, groups that contribute in some way to how you engage with the world through all of your activities, both formal or informal. This is a very open question, and you should be able to identify a number of such groups. If there is any text in any of the group cells you can re-set this by clicking on the **CLEAR GROUPS** button – you may also want to adjust the document magnification to 130% so each tab is easy to navigate and work through.

A group is a term broadly used in this activity – it can include individuals, organisations, and identity labels (such as gender, ethnicity). Think of *groups* as the statement of where you source some aspect of who you are and how you identify yourself with others.

Some suggested group labels are as follows:

Parents or Guardians	University Teaching Tutors
Siblings or Children	University Programme and/or Module Leaders
Significant other relations (e.g. immediate relatives or family friends)	Society or Club memberships – sports or hobby interests
Relationship/partner	Professional Organisations (e.g. memberships)
Pre-University friends (college, school etc)	Work colleagues
University friendship groups – this may be different to class-mates or house-mates	Role Models (this can also include aspirational or historical figures)
Other characteristics that support in and out groups (gender, age, ethnicity etc)	Health or Support professionals

This is not an exhaustive list, so please feel free to identify any group that you view as contributing to shaping who you are and how you interact with the wider world, especially in a study context.

In identifying your groups, try to not cluster into a group what you may wish to consider individually. For example, the group Parents or Guardians typically includes more than one individual. You may wish to separate those individuals out into their own group label if how you engage and recognise their contribution to your identity is different.

**For the purpose of SIM you will need to identify at least seven groups, but no more than twenty groups.**

Add your group labels to the green cells in sequential order (i.e., starting at Group1 then Group2 etc) as per the example opposite.

Once you are happy with your listing of groups, click on the **NEXT button** to move to the next worksheet screen.

Group 1	Parents
Group 2	Grandparents
Group 3	Siblings
Group 4	Close Friends
Group 5	Associates
Group 6	Lecturers
Group 7	Uni Classmates
Group 8	Sports buddies
Group 9	Social buddies
Group 10	Social Media
Group 11	
Group 12	
Group 13	
Group 14	
Group 15	
Group 16	
Group 17	
Group 18	
Group 19	
Group 20	

**NOTE** – If, after completing your analysis (or you want to redo your analysis), you wish to delete ALL of your entered data you can press the **Clear Groups** button (but remember, this clears ALL of your personal data in the workbook).

## Worksheet 2 - IMPORTANCE

	group	value
Group 1	Parents	4
Group 2	Grandparents	7
Group 3	Siblings	3
Group 4	Close Friends	6
Group 5	Associates	8
Group 6	Lecturers	9
Group 7	Uni Classmates	2
Group 8	Sports buddies	5
Group 9	Social buddies	4
Group 10	Social Media	3
Group 11		
Group 12		
Group 13		
Group 14		
Group 15		
Group 16		
Group 17		
Group 18		
Group 19		
Group 20		

The next worksheet is the first of four worksheets which ask you about your identified groups.

As SIM is about your understanding of your social world, how you choose to interpret importance is your decision. However, in terms of contributing to this analysis, try to think of it in ways of value to you. So, place a value on how important a group is in shaping your views and actions.

You value each identified group on their importance. You select a rating from 1 to 10 where 1=not very important through to 10=very important in the blue boxes.

The groups you have identified are taken from the original listing. Where a group was not identified, it is shown as blacked out on this worksheet (see example opposite).

Once you are happy with your importance values, press the **NEXT button** to move to the next worksheet screen.

### Worksheet 3 – POSITIVITY

As SIM is about your understanding of your social world, therefore how you choose to interpret positivity is your decision. However, in terms of contributing to this analysis, try to think of positivity as how comfortable and happy you are to accept and engage with the contribution of a group to your actions and views.

	Name	Value
Group 1	Parents	4
Group 2	Grandparents	3
Group 3	Siblings	5
Group 4	Close Friends	7
Group 5	Associates	8
Group 6	Lecturers	9
Group 7	Uni Classmates	2
Group 8	Sports buddies	4
Group 9	Social buddies	3
Group 10	Social Media	2
Group 11		
Group 12		
Group 13		
Group 14		
Group 15		
Group 16		
Group 17		
Group 18		
Group 19		
Group 20		

Place a value on how positive you feel towards a group in shaping your views and actions.

You value each identified group on your positivity. You select a rating from 1 to 10 where 1=not very positive through to 10=very positive.

The groups you have identified are taken from the original listing. Where a group was not identified, it is shown as blacked out on this worksheet.

Once you are happy with your positivity values, press the **NEXT button** to move to the next worksheet screen.

### Worksheet 4 – TIME

Time is defined by you, but that it should represent the volume of available time you give to engage with a group. It does not matter in terms of a unit of time (e.g., an hour on Mondays) as long as you apply that unit consistently in putting a value on how much time you give to engaging in a group.

You value each identified group on your given time. You select a rating from 1 to 10 where 1=not much time through to 10=most of my time.

The groups you have identified are taken from the original listing. Where a group was not identified, it is shown as blacked out on this worksheet.

	Name	Value
Group 1	Parents	4
Group 2	Grandparents	5
Group 3	Siblings	3
Group 4	Close Friends	7
Group 5	Associates	8
Group 6	Lecturers	8
Group 7	Uni Classmates	9
Group 8	Sports buddies	2
Group 9	Social buddies	4
Group 10	Social Media	3
Group 11		
Group 12		
Group 13		
Group 14		
Group 15		
Group 16		
Group 17		
Group 18		
Group 19		
Group 20		

Once you are happy with your time values, press the **NEXT button** to move to the next worksheet Screen.

## Worksheet 5 - HELPFUL

	Name	Value
Group 1	Parents	2
Group 2	Grandparents	5
Group 3	Siblings	7
Group 4	Close Friends	7
Group 5	Associates	8
Group 6	Lecturers	7
Group 7	Uni Classmates	6
Group 8	Sports buddies	7
Group 9	Social buddies	7
Group 10	Social Media	7
Group 11		
Group 12		
Group 13		
Group 14		
Group 15		
Group 16		
Group 17		
Group 18		
Group 19		
Group 20		

Helpful is defined by you, and for the purposes of this activity it should represent how helpful you feel a group is in supporting your engagement with your studies.

You value each identified group on your feelings about how helpful a group is. You select a rating from 1 to 10 where 1=not very helpful through to 10=very helpful.

The groups you have identified are taken from the original listing. Where a group was not identified, it is shown as blacked out on this worksheet (as opposite).

Once you are happy with your helpful values, press the **NEXT button** to move to the next and final worksheet screen (Influence).

## Worksheet 6 - INFLUENCE

The previous worksheets have been asking you to think about different aspects of how you value your identified groups individually. This final worksheet explores the influence groups have with your views and values collectively, and so may take a little more time to work through.

In this view, each group is paired with every other group in a matrix format and you are asked to value the influence of that pairing in terms of your engagement with your studies. For example, in the image below, all the groups are listed on the side and across the top of a table.

	Parents	Grandparents	Siblings	Close Friends	Associates	Lecturers	Uni Classmates	Sports buddies	Social buddies
Parents									
Grandparents									
Siblings									
Close Friends									
Associates									
Lecturers									
Uni Classmates									
Sports buddies									
Social buddies									
Social Media									
0									
0									
-									

As with all other worksheets, group labels not used are automatically blacked out, and the last group listed will of course not be paired with itself.

In each yellow cell you need to place a value that reflects how much mutual influence that pairing of groups has upon your engagement with your studies, where 0 = no mutual influence, 1 = some mutual influence and 2 = significant mutual influence.

**NOTE** – This question is asking you about the mutual influence of the pair of groups over your studies, not of one group over another.

As this matrix table includes repeated combinations of pairs, **ONLY** data needs to be entered for **HALF** of the table (the yellow cells). In other words, the black cells are a mirror of the top half of

the data table.

For example – in the data below, Parents and Grandparents are viewed collectively as significantly influential upon the engagement of this student with their studies and a value of 2 is recorded in the box.

	Parents	Grandparents	Siblings	Close Friends	
Parents					
Grandparents	2				
Siblings	2	1			
Close Friends	1	2	1		
Associates	1	0	2	2	
Lecturers	0	0	0	1	
Uni Classmates	2	1	2	0	
Sports buddies	1	2	1	1	
Social buddies	1	1	0	2	
Social Media	1	2	1	2	
0					
n					

As before, once you have entered all this data, you have finished data collection stage and can proceed to the analysis (Your Map) worksheet and press the **NEXT button** to move to the next worksheet screen, Your MAP.

## Your MAP

### How is your map constructed?

The workbook you have just completed constructs a value that reflects the relative strength of an influence between groups in your social identity map upon your engagement with your studies. SIM is not a comparative nor absolute tool – in other words it is not comparing your thinking with that of others, nor is it suggesting there is a *correct* map to aim for, for you.

This generates a visual map that shows the views and values you hold of others around you with whom you interact and engage, and which contribute towards your social identity. The map is a visual representation of a multidimensional construct of your social identity.

*If you are interested, you can read more about the technical summary of how the map is constructed at the end of this guide.*

### Understanding your MAP

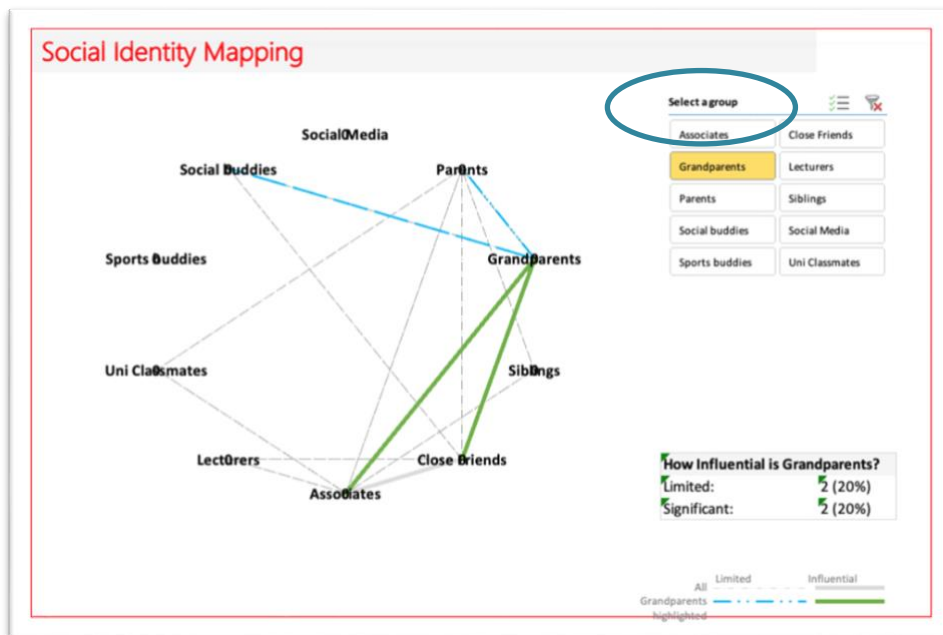
The map created from all these values is a visual plot of your identified groups influence, as you have defined it, upon engagement with your studies.

It shows all the weighted connections between the different groups you have identified, as well as their relative importance.

**NOTE** if you have changed your group names in updating your analysis – always *right click* on the **select a group** text and then select **refresh** to update your map group labels.

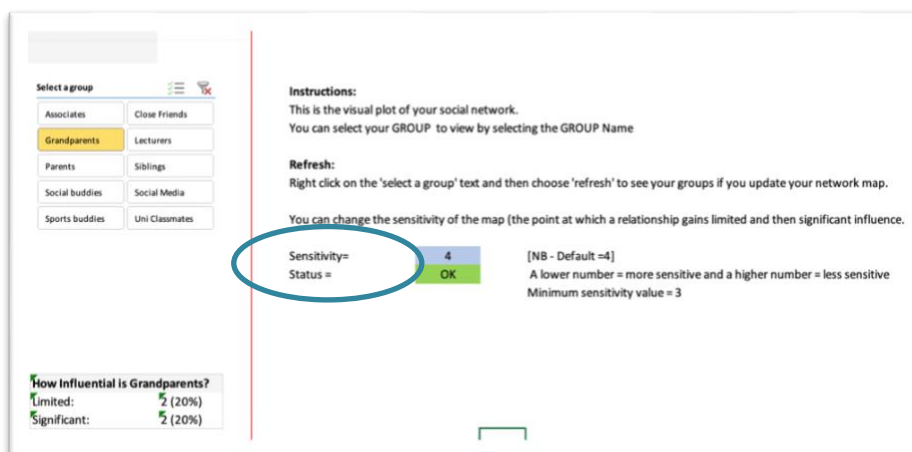
The example data used in this guide generates the map shown on the next page.

When viewing this in Excel, you can see the detail of each group you have created in the map by clicking on a group label of your choice in the **select a group** section.



In the example above, Grandparents has been selected which shows four identified map connections (with Parents, Close Friends, Associates and Drinking Buddies). Of these four connections, two are significant and two are of limited influence. The % influential value identifies how much of the stakeholder is engaged in the network (either significantly or in a limited fashion).

You can change how sensitive your map is by varying the **Sensitivity** value in the blue box. The range is 3- 10 (although 4 or 5 is a good workable value).



If you select too low a value, the **Status** message will indicate this.

Whilst this data is not from any particular student, a number of observations can be made:

- This map is not particularly diverse. A larger number of group connections support resilience in engaging with your learning environment.
- The number of groups with *significant* influence is three (Associates, Close Friends and Grandparents) – which is a relatively small number. Are these groups always available? Are

they nearby? How are they communicated with?

- There is a larger number of identified groups with *limited* influence (eight of the ten groups are identified). This is a more diverse source of influences upon the student and their engagement and is supportive of a more resilient resource to access.
- Are there additional groups you could build relationships with? Perhaps societies or sports clubs?
- In the example, sports friends are identified but they are not connected to other parts of the social identity map. What reasons might there be for this lack of connection? Is it deliberate?

### **Thinking about your own map:**

- Are there groups you might have anticipated being more influential in your map that are not as you expected? Why might that be the case? Or are there groups you did identify but did not anticipate being as influential as they seem to be in your learning social world?
- Are you concerned by any map outcomes that you need to talk further about, in confidence? You can always speak to Student well-being / Student Support and/or senior staff in the College.
- In completing the SIM activity, you are actively developing your reflective skills. You are thinking about your social connections, trying to understand them and how you engage with them to support your studies and how this process might be more effectively managed in the future.

### **Thinking about difficult conversations**

An outcome of a SIM activity might be that there are topics that require difficult conversations for you. These can be hard to explore but you might find it easier to think about if you:

- Think how you might have a conversation of a difficult topic in a way that is positive and helpful.
- Consider your choice of words, tone, and language
- Discuss your goals with your Personal Tutor or another individual with whom you feel comfortable addressing the topic.
- Discover how to listen and engage, rather than ignoring or resisting potentially challenging topics.
- Realise that there is usually more time available to address an issue than you might initially think. It is not always possible for an issue to be resolved in a short space of time or in a given meeting.
- Further discussions may be necessary.

Give some thought to what you want moving forward, and from the future. What would that look like in your map?



## Technical Summary

Your data is used in the following way:

- The first three values (importance, time, and positivity) are multiplied together. This new calculation is then scaled by helpfulness to create a 'relevance value'. So, a group scoring high on the first three values and on the helpful value has a high relevance to your social world when explored from the view of contribution to engagement in your studies. However, a group might score high on the first three values but not be viewed as helpful in supporting your engagement with your studies and therefore the contribution of this group to your social world in this context is reduced. Similarly, a group might be valued relatively low in the first three values but be viewed as helpful and which then creates a higher relevance value for that group.
- The relevance value is then scaled by taking its log value to create a relevance multiplier. This both helps computation and scaling of your map but also reflects the view that we (as human beings) tend to think in ways that are open to influence of others in a non-proportionate manner (hence the log value reflects this non-linearity).
- The influence data process is based on scenario planning methods, used to consider the scope of different potential outcome likelihood. It is used here to provide some comparative scaling between groups – in other words to recognise how group influence can be enhanced by convergent views and actions of others you have identified and valued. The influence data is multiplied by the relevance multiplier for each group.

### For example:

Group = Parents (with a relevance multiplier of 1.3)

Group = Grandparents (with a relevance multiplier of 1.5)

Are viewed as possessing a collective influence on a student of '2' (significant) – which creates the final influence value of 3.9 (i.e.,  $2 \times 1.5 \times 1.3$ )

To determine the final strength of a relationship between two identified groups, the computed influence data is scaled again so that any influence data from the preceding step is scaled to values of:

2 if the multiplied influence data is  $>4$

1 if the multiplied influence data is between 2 and 4

0 if the multiplied influence data is  $<2$

The sensitivity can be adjusted to reflect different views about the identity map by you on the *Your MAP* worksheet (the default is set at 4 but you can change this).

The final map is then drawn to reflect the number of groups you have identified in a circle and lines drawn between the groups to reflect the influence of those groups accounting for how important, how much time, how positive you feel and how helpful, a given group is.

Excel computes this as an x-y plot for you.