

Studying at University - Top Tips For Success

Know your rights and responsibilities

- Every university is different and you must be aware of rules about deadlines and standards expected.
- Know where to get help if it is required.
- Read and keep any student induction material or handbooks as this may help at a later date.

Look at the big picture

Plan ahead for your career, there is no job waiting at the end of your course anymore! Try to get involved in activities' at University that will make you stand out from other applicants fighting for the same jobs.

Develop your essay writing skills.

- Sometimes there may be essay title choices, pick one that interests you or that you have been focussing on during study.
- Make sure you fully understand what is required of you. What the title means.
- If you don't understand or don't like what you have to write upon, then see your lecturer, they are often more than happy to talk it through with you and may even find you a way of writing about the given topic in a way that does excite you, after all, that's what they're paid for!
- Start your researching and drafting early, (it will be better in the long run!) that way if you have concerns or issues, your lecturer has plenty of time to answer any queries.
- Plan it well. Introduce the main focus of the essay and in new paragraphs explain and support each of the ideas you have.
- Complete your draft focussing on ideas and content rather than grammar and spelling.
- After a break return to your work to review it with a fresh look.
- Re draft.

- Ask someone to look at it, such as a friend or family member.
- Review your work in light of any comments made.
- Finally proof read for grammatical errors and spelling.
- Always check that you have referenced your work properly using the University guidelines. (They love to penalise for little errors!)

Learn to read

I know this sounds condescending, but how often do we really take notice of what we read? Those of us that are auditory or kinaesthetic learners will sometimes have a harder time when it comes to the masses of written text that so often accompanies university courses. There are ways in which we can enhance the reading process to help us engage with a text.

- Look at the headings and the titles of chapters that you are going to read, before you read them. Skim for information that will help you ascertain the content of the text.
- Turn headings into questions, this will help you review the important chapters to focus on (especially when it comes to essay writing!)
- Read a section of the text.
- Summarise what you have read, aloud (especially good for those auditory learners!)
- Write in the margins, (use post-it notes if it's not your text book!)
- Continue with another section.
- When you are finished, review all you have learnt, as loud as you like.
- Although many people I assign rhymes to certain things, another tip I picked up at University is where possible, link a small action to a particular idea or concept you have learnt, which may help you recall at a later date.
- Review the chapter or section of reading a week later to refresh.

Learning to take notes effectively

Making good notes will help you no end when it comes to essay writing or revising for exams. Note taking not only helps you reflect upon what you have learnt at a later date, but also helps you engage with what is being said during a lecture, thus making your learning during this time more efficient. Some universities have student support centres that offer help or guidance for note

taking. If your University offers leaflets they will often run out quickly or courses become fully booked so get in quickly!

- If there is text book reading related to the lecture read it BEFORE (This is hard to find time for, but really does make a difference!)
- Always review the previous lectures notes.
- Whilst reading, list any questions that maybe helpful to ask.
- Make sure you go to lectures prepared with a good pad and pen that you find it easy to write with. There is no point trying to take notes on scraps of paper, you just won't find them when you need them!
- Do not try to write everything, there won't be the time; focus on main points and references given for further research.
- Where possible abbreviate.
- Give yourself plenty of space, often lecturers jump from one idea to another, leaving space means you can squeeze any tit bits of information in when they are given.
- Read your notes as soon as you can, if any further ideas come to you from reflection or discussion with colleagues; add them in where you have space.
- Where possible check someone else's notes, did they get something you missed?
- Review your notes regularly to see how much you can recall.

Plan well for presentations

Whether it be group or individual presentation, planning is key:

- Organise the main points and talk about them (on your own) at length to see how much you know without pressuring yourself with an audience.
- Try to think of a question or statement that can be used straight away to engage your audience.
- Practice before presenting to friends.
- Try not to memorise the text, make it natural and 'unrehearsed'.
- Time yourself, don't go over the limit and try to keep it 'short and snappy' to make sure you don't lose the audience.
- Remain calm, make eye contact (this makes you look supper confident, even if you're shaking in your boots!) and invite questioning at the end

(this makes it look like you are confident in your knowledge- they love it!)

Manage your time

- Whilst University is fun, don't forget you are there to learn. Make sure you are not too hung over for important lectures!
- Leave yourself plenty of study time and play time.
- Find a balance.
- Plan ahead; don't leave anything to the last minute.
- Make sure that when you are studying for an exam or essay you give yourself enough time, insuring there is time for study breaks.

Prepare for tests

- Don't leave it all to the last minute- the 'learn as you go' approach is much better.
- Where possible give yourself a practice exam, think about what they could ask you to do.
- Plan during the exam, have a quick look at what is required and try to leave yourself enough time for each section.
- Answer the easy, quick questions first (they will provide you with easy marks). Go back to the others when you have completed them. Any that you find really hard should be left until the end to avoid time wasting.
- For long essay questions, plan your answer in bullet form, at least then if you run out of time the marker can see what you were trying to achieve.

Ups and downs

Everyone has issues when going to University. The important things to remember are:

- Know when to get help. Universities offer support to those in need, no matter what the problem (money, stress, health, family issues, etc)

- Don't let problems linger on. Speak to family and friends as soon as you can.
- If you feel the situation you are in is affecting your study, talk to your lecturer as soon as you can (especially before deadlines), they will often point you in the right direction.

Keep a good balance of work, rest and play.

This is the key to enjoying your time at University.

Want to make sure that your project gets a better grade? Then have a Words Worth Reading Ltd expert [proofread your work](#) and [improve your essay, coursework, dissertation or thesis](#).