Strategies for successful learning
Outline of content

This session will cover:

1. Academic expectations at university
2. Useful learning strategies
3. Time management skills
4. How the Learning Centre can help you
1. Academic expectations at university
Compared with high school, university students:

- receive less guidance
- have more autonomy
- are closer to ‘equal’ in power with teachers
- have more distant, impersonal relationships with teachers and the university or faculty
- have larger, more irregular workloads
- have to deal with more implicit expectations
Some of the implicit expectations of uni students:

- you know how to find and use appropriate information
- you can think, read and write analytically and critically
- you can write the right genre for each assignment
- you can manage a large and irregular workload
- you will attend lectures and submit assignments on time
- you will motivate yourself
- you will make your own decisions about how to learn
- you can seek help and information when you need it
- you will behave with academic honesty (i.e. correct referencing, fair group work and no plagiarism).
Skills audit:

- Look at the list of academic tasks and skills in your handout
- Give yourself a rating of Master, Apprentice or Beginner for each skill.
Master:

- This skill is one of your strengths
- You have a high level of confidence and experience with this skill.
Academic expectations

Apprentice:

- This is a developing skill.
- You might have some experience but perhaps not at university level.
Beginner:

- You have limited skill in this area.
- You might not have experience in doing this.
- You might not have tried this at University.
Take 4 minutes to do the skills audit.
If you are a beginner:

- Have realistic expectations: Don’t expect perfection in the first assignment.
- If you need this skill for an assignment, ask for advice: other students, your tutor and/or your lecturer.
- Do a free Learning Centre workshop.
Academic expectations

If you are an apprentice:

- Have realistic expectations: Don’t expect perfection, but only improvement.
- Set yourself some goals to improve.
- Do a free Learning Centre workshop.
2. Useful learning strategies
Useful learning strategies

1. Know yourself and how you learn.

2. Get to know what your lecturers expect.
1. Know yourself & how you prefer to ...

- Learn and remember
- Prepare for assignments
- Communicate ideas
- Study for tests and examinations
Some students find it helpful to consider four different modalities, or learning preferences:

- Aural
- Visual
- Reading /writing
- Kinaesthetic
Aural learners prefer information that is heard or spoken:

- Lectures & tutorials
- Recordings
- In-class discussion
- Podcasts / vodcasts
- Speaking with a friend
Aural learners

If you prefer learning aurally:

- Record the lecture and listen to it again
- Record key points on your phone
- Meet with a friend each week to discuss readings and lectures
- Learn by teaching: explain the ideas to someone else
- Imagine listening and talking to your tutor
Visual learners prefer information shown through colours, lines and shapes e.g.:

- pictures
- diagrams
- flowcharts
- colour-coding
- symbols
Event map

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How?
- Why?
A

Things in common to A & C

Things in common to A & B

C

B

Things in common to B & C

Venn Diagram
If you prefer to learn visually:

- Use graphic organisers, such as SmartArt in Word
- Use colour – e.g. highlighting key words
- Use symbols and pictures to represent ideas
- Draw diagrams to show the relationships between concepts in the readings and in the lectures
Reading / writing learners prefer information to be in words:

- Notes
- Readings
- Lists
- Dictionaries and glossaries
If you prefer learning in words:

- Write summaries of your lectures
- Make lists
- Write key concepts on post-it notes
- Invent mnemonics (e.g. ROYGBIV – red orange yellow blue green indigo violet)
- Fill an A-Z address book with a glossary of key words, meanings, synonyms, equations, theories etc. in your subject
Kinaesthetic learners prefer learning experiences to be practical and involve movement, e.g.:

- Experiments
- Practice
- Computer simulations
- Demonstrations and observations
- Field trips
If you prefer a kinaesthetic learning style:

- Collect pictures or objects that remind you of the key points.
- Look for real-life examples of abstract concepts.
- Use case studies.
- Look for opportunities to see the ideas in practice: experiments, simulations, professional placements, etc.
Learning preferences

Ask the person sitting next to you:
What type of learning style do you prefer?

- Aural
- Visual
- Reading / writing
- Kinaesthetic
2. Get to know what the lecturer expects

Love your unit of study outline because it gives you:

- Due dates and instructions for assignments
- Referencing expectations
- Guide to style and format of assignments
- Information about criteria for different grades
- Outline of the content and structure of the teaching
- Contact information for lecturers and tutors
- ... plus more ...
Understand the assignment question

- Make sure you know what type of writing they want:
  - Descriptive
  - Analytical
  - Persuasive
  - Critical
- Make sure you know what the right structure is
- Ask other students, tutors and/or your lecturer for more information
- Maybe a Learning Centre workshop to help you, e.g.:
  - Analysing the Assignment Question
  - Essay Writing
3. Time management strategies
The best time of day for you

- Do you work best in the morning or evening?
- When are you most able to concentrate?
- When are you least productive and most distracted?

Maximise your effectiveness: study when you are fresh and avoid times when you are distracted.
Timewasters

How do you procrastinate?
- TV
- Facebook, IM, Twitter
- Phone
- Organising your desk
- Gaming
- Daydreaming ...

What are your biggest timewasters and how can you avoid these?
Timewasters

**TV**
Put only your favourite shows on your plan.

**Facebook**
Check Facebook as a reward when you finish.

**Household chores**
Don’t do cleaning or other chores on a weekday.
Goal setting

- Students who set goals are more likely to succeed.
- Goal setting can help you to improve academic performance at University.

Set **SMART** goals:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time-frame**

For example:

*By 2pm, read 4 journal articles and make a concept map.*

*Turn off my mobile between 3 and 5pm.*
Planning
Write the deadlines for all your assignments for each subject on the semester planner.

Include tutorial presentations, summaries and other work as well as major assessment tasks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>LNG</th>
<th>FR</th>
<th>BIO</th>
<th>ENG</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Week 1</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
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<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
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<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>Tutorial presentation</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Essay 1</td>
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<td>Summary</td>
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<td>Break</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
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<td>Assignment 1</td>
<td>Essay 1</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
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<td>Quiz</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Group assignment</td>
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</table>
Work out your weekly study schedule.

How much time do you have really have available for study each week?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
<th>Sun</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>7am</td>
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<td>9am</td>
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<td>Work</td>
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<td>10am</td>
<td>Lectures &amp; Tutorials</td>
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<td>Work</td>
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</table>
Break a large task into steps or chunks. Estimate how long each step will take. Work out which chunks need to be done in each week. Write the chunks in the weekly boxes on your semester planner.
For example: an essay assignment

Read and summarise journal articles – 5 hours
Plan essay – 2 hours
Write draft – 3 hours
Revise draft – 2 hours
Write final essay – 2 hours
Format references – 2 hours
Print out – 1 hour
<table>
<thead>
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<th>ENG</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Read novel 3 hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Read and summarise journal articles – 5 hours</td>
<td>Summarise lecture notes</td>
<td>Read chapters 1-3 and make notes – 3 hours Write draft of summary 1 hr</td>
<td>Read novel 2 hrs Find 3 articles 1 hr</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Plan essay – 2 hours</td>
<td>Study for quiz 2 hours</td>
<td>Write final summary – 2 hrs Summary</td>
<td>Read articles and make notes 3 hrs Plan tutorial presentation 1 hr Develop powerpoint 2 hrs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Write draft – 3 hours Revise draft – 2 hours</td>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>Read chapters 4-6 and make notes – 3 hours Write draft of summary 1 hr</td>
<td>Rehearse presentation 2 hrs Tutorial presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Write final essay – 2 hours Format references – 2 hours Print out – 1 hour Essay 1 due</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Write final summary – 2 hrs Summary</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Break</td>
<td></td>
<td>Summarise lecture notes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 6</td>
<td></td>
<td>Study for quiz 2 hours Assignment 1 Essay 1</td>
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</table>
Plan each individual study session: What chunks of assignments do you have? Set **priorities**.

- **What must you do?** - Priority 1
- **What should you do?** - Priority 2
- **What would you like to do?** - Priority 3
Planning

Semester

Week

Session
4. How the Learning Centre can help you
What is the Learning Centre?

- Our purpose is to help students build generic skills which are necessary for learning and communicating ideas at university.

- Learning Centre staff have expertise in English linguistics, academic writing and learning skills.

- Our services are available to all students who are enrolled at this university.

- Workshops and individual appointments are free of charge.
What we can do for you

- Central workshops
- Individual appointments
- Online resources - e.g. Write Site, WRISE, Help Yourself
- Writing skills programs within specific courses
Examples of workshops

Academic Writing

- Essay Writing
- Paraphrasing and Summarising
- Writing in an Academic Style
- Clearer Writing
Examples of workshops

Learning skills

- Concentration and Procrastination
- Managing Time
- Preparing for Exams
- Spoken presentations
- Working in groups
- Discussion Skills
Contacting the Learning Centre

Level 7, Education Building
Manning Road

Email: learning.centre@usyd.edu.au
Web: www.sydney.edu.au/lc
Phone: 9351 3853
Fax: 9351 4865
1. Questions ... ?

2. Feedback forms in the yellow box – thank you!

3. For these slides, go to sydney.edu.au/lc and click on Resources