

STUDENT STORIES

“I think university life is pretty exciting, the learning and the development and the social life. There’s always a lot of events to go to, and things happening on campus. Then there’s also the uni assignments that come around earlier than you think and pretty much always catch you unexpected, though you were given the dates at the start of the semester. It just means that uni is a whirlwind, but pretty good to be a part of it.”

“It hasn’t been all that brilliant thus far. Live nearly 60kms away from uni and work 25+ hours per week. Thought I was superman and could manage everything. Found out I wasn’t. Need to change the balance between work/uni/social life, however this is much easier said than done. When I did achieve decent grades it was because I studied constantly throughout the semester and enjoyed the course content. Being organised helps. Even more so, knowing people who have done the courses before you has massive advantages. Having a positive attitude and getting enough sleep helps too. Do I enjoy the challenge and experience? Yeah, it’s pretty good. It’s like a bit of a journey really. Something you can say you stuck out for a relatively small part of your life that hopefully over the long run will make a big difference, particularly in pay and employment opportunities.”

UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

Universities have many resources available to help students. Here are some useful links to first year student support services:

FLINDERS UNIVERSITY:

www.flinders.edu.au/future-students/support/orientation

UNISA:

www.unisa.edu.au/newstudents/default.asp

UNIVERSITY OF ADELAIDE:

www.adelaide.edu.au/student/firstyear/

Getting ready for University

Some things you should know

An initiative of the
Student and Staff
Expectations and
Experiences Project



Flinders
UNIVERSITY



University of
South Australia



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE



Australian Government

Office for Learning and Teaching

What do over 16,300 students say about their first year at South Australian Universities?

“Understanding that the key to being successful is only dependent on the amount of work you are prepared to put in. You do not have to be the smartest person to complete a degree but you do need to be committed and put in the effort.”



LEARNING NEW SKILLS IS CRITICAL TO YOUR SUCCESS

- Just because you complete Year 12 doesn't mean you are fully prepared for university
- 70% of students say that university work is different or extremely different to school work
- Our survey shows that only 45% of students felt that school adequately prepared them for university study

“Completing a year of study changed my outlook a bit as I felt like I had achieved something and that I could finish this degree. There was light at the end of the tunnel.”

What does this mean for you?

- You will need to adapt to a more independent learning style to do well at university
- It is not expected that you have these skills already but it is expected that you will learn them
- Attend university workshops to help you develop the skills to succeed, eg; research, analysis, writing, study and time management skills
- Keep up with the workload

FIRST YEAR FOCUS

- Finding a balance between university, work, social life, family and other commitments is important
- Most first year students (75%) expect to be able to successfully balance work and study but only 50% are able to
- Take care that other commitments don't impact on your studies, 45% of students reported having outside commitments that negatively affected their learning

“It was important for me to try and find a balance between university, work and my social life... if I have a balance I won't be rushing assignments and adding stress.”

What does this mean for you?

- Don't try to do too much on top of study! Balancing work, study and your social life is a challenge
- Prioritise study over other activities initially until you adjust to the expectations of university

UNIVERSITY REQUIRES COMMITMENT

- 75% of new university students have unrealistic expectations about the amount of study expected at university
- The recommended amount of study at university is 6-10 hours per week per subject
- This is double what is expected of students at high school and is equivalent to a full time job

“I believe the time commitment makes a big difference. More time (invested) usually equals better grades.”

What does this mean for you?

- You will need to commit up to 40 hours a week to study for full time study
- As an adult learner you will need to take the initiative, no one will be checking up on you to make sure you are keeping up with the work
- You will need to learn to manage your time and the newly found freedom



DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP & SUPPORT

- University tutors and lecturers have complex roles, typically spending less than half of their time teaching.
- This means less one on one time with individual students, less feedback given on assignments (30% received feedback on drafts) and longer time to return work (60% report 3-4 week turnaround)
- There is a range of support staff dedicated to helping students at university
- If you need help, talk to someone about it, 25% of students said that talking with university staff helped their decision to continue their studies
- 80% of new students agree it is important to have a close group of friends for support at university

“Making friends within the first few days of orientation – (it was) important to have that support from the beginning. I know many people who have dropped programs just because they did not make friends from the beginning.”

What does this mean for you?

- If you feel like you need more feedback from university teaching staff, don't be afraid to ask for it
- Be prepared to seek feedback and support from other sources as well eg student support services, transition and advisory services, language /writing centre & online forums
- Go to Orientation activities (over 60% of students said these were useful or really useful)
- Make friends and create your own support networks