

Starting To Study

A few weeks into your first semester, you should be on your way to establishing new routines as a student and finding your way around study materials and classes. If you find you are having difficulties at this point, now is the time to address them, as they will only increase if left unattended.

If you are living on campus, you should have begun to settle into your new living arrangements so you are able to concentrate on the academic side of university life. Similarly, if you are studying by distance education, you should now be realising what you need to do to adjust your life to accommodate your new role as a student.

This section looks at how your subjects will be delivered as well as issues that will affect the success of your studies. Strategies and resources to assist you to achieve your academic potential are also outlined.

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Your Study Package

As a Distance Education (DE) student, you will receive a study package to assist you in each subject. Study packages may include the following:

- Subject outline
- Study guide/Modules
- Readings
- Material on loan
- CD Rom / DVD / Audio CD.



Check All Materials Are In Study Package

Your Subject Outline includes a list of all learning resources sent in your study package. You should check you have received everything listed. Contact the Student Services Support Central if anything is missing from your package. Go to help below for website and contact details.

Tracking Despatch Of Material

You can check if and when your study package was despatched on my.csu > Quick Links > Subject Info > My Subject Material.

[study material](#)



If you have not received your package, after allowing for the appropriate mailing time, first check with your local Post Office. If they do not have your study package, then contact the Student Services Support Central.

[help](#)



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Subject Outlines

Subject outlines are very important. They contain an overview of the content to be covered and the expectations for the subject, such as:

- your subject coordinator
- how and when they may be contacted
- assignment details: the questions, due dates, marking criteria
- study schedules to help you plan your time
- whether the subject has an exam and what form it might take
- details about textbooks and
- information on other support services

It is important that you read your subject outline(s) carefully.

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Online Support

All DE subjects, and an increasing number of on campus subjects, include online support by way of access to a standard web based subject outline and other online services. Each subject includes:

- internet links and resources relevant to your subject
- an online subject forum which provides you with an opportunity to engage in discussion with your subject coordinator and other students enrolled in the subject
- a subject email address that allows you to contact your subject coordinator
- Electronic Assignment Submission Tracking System (EASTS) that allows you to submit your assignments online (EASTS is for DE students only)
- links to the library, allowing you to search for subject information and resources and
- links to other administrative and support areas of the University

Your online subjects are accessible through the My Subjects tool in my.csu.

Remember the Guide to Learning Hotline is available if you need assistance using your online subjects or forums. Just call 1300 734 654

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Text Books

Most subjects have a combination of prescribed and recommended texts.

A prescribed text is considered essential, as the subject is planned around it. You should either purchase the prescribed text or have permanent access to it.

A recommended text is exactly that, i.e. recommended but not considered essential. You will be advised at the commencement of each session of the textbook requirements for the subjects in which you are enrolled in the subject outline.

DE students can find textbook information by accessing my.csu.

Recommended texts and other resources, including limited number of prescribed texts, are also available from the Library.

textbook



Most textbooks can be purchased from the Co-op Bookshop. This can be done online or in person at Bathurst, Albury/Thurgoona, Wagga Wagga and Agrimart bookshop in Orange.

Co-op bookshop



Make sure you purchase the right edition of your textbook. Many lecturers refer to specific pages of the texts, and if you buy an older text, the page numbers may not correspond.

Lectures And Tutorials

As on campus students, you will attend a series of lectures and tutorials for each subject. You may also have lab sessions and/or practical sessions.

Timetable

Your lecture timetable will be available through my.csu at: https://online.csu.edu.au/Inter/Action?type=B&cmd=stud_schedule or access my.csu, go to “Quick Links” and select “Subject Info”, then select “My Timetable”.

Dubbo students' timetable information is also available on the Dubbo Students' Forum.

Tutorial groups are usually arranged in the first week of class. Check with your lecturer or course coordinator where to put your name down for a tutorial group.

Organising Your Timetable

If you haven't already done so, access your timetable details and record when and where your lectures and tutorials will be held for the semester.



timetable

Dubbo student forum is accessible at: <http://forums.csu.edu.au>



If you find you have a timetable clash, contact your Course Coordinator as soon as possible.



Lectures

Lectures are effective ways of presenting information, providing demonstrations and making class announcements. Lectures also lay the foundation for further individual study and group tutorials.

To make the most of lectures, do some background reading beforehand and ensure you sit where you can see and hear properly. Your ability to listen carefully and take effective notes is important in lectures.

To learn how to make the most of lectures, refer to the 'How Do I' guide on note taking on the Learning Skills website.

[learning skills](#)



Tutorials

Tutorial groups are much smaller than lectures and allow for more interactive discussion of your topics. You will often be required to prepare for tutorials in the form of background reading or completing activities. To fully benefit from your tutorial time, you should attempt to complete all the required preparation and fully participate in the group discussion. Don't be afraid to ask questions in tutorials, part of the academic process is to critically evaluate information. This involves being able to question and to support your viewpoints. Use your time with your tutor to your advantage, so you can confidently carry on with your independent study until your next class.

It may sound obvious, but actually turning up to all your lectures and tutorials is vital. It might be tempting to skip a class here and there, but in doing so you will be missing vital parts of your course of study and perhaps jeopardise your chances of success.

Make sure you know where your lecture or tutorial room is before your first class!



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Reading

One of the challenges of university study is the amount of reading you will have to do.

If you are studying by distance education you may have received large books of readings as part of your study package. On campus students will receive reading lists that are often required as part of tutorial preparation. At first, this can seem overwhelming. However, there are a range of strategies you can apply to help you to read faster and to remember more of what you have read. For strategies and activities on reading effectively, refer to the 'How Do I' guide in the Learning Skills website.

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explain to someone what you have just read will highlight how well you understood material.



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Managing Your Time

Your ability to manage your time will have a great effect on your success at university. A general rule of thumb is that for each subject you are enrolled in, you will need to spend at least 7-12 hours of independent study time each week. This time commitment will increase during assignment preparation and exam revision.

Useful advice on planning and time management can be found within the 'How Do I' guide on the Learning Skills website.

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As students juggling work, study, family and social commitments, your time is limited and valuable so it makes sense to use the available time wisely. This is where a schedule/timetable can be useful. Creating a study schedule can assist you by:

- lessening any worrying about whether you have enough time
- increasing your sense of control and flexibility
- enabling you to align your time-use choices with your priorities
- providing you with a basis for measuring your progress towards goals and priorities
- allowing you to reflect on your time management and adjust according to insights

Creating A Study Schedule

From the Learning Skills website, download the available study planners by selecting the 'Tools to Help You Plan' link found within the *Manage myself* 'How Do I' guides. Enter all activities including sleeping, eating, work, travel, sporting and any other commitments you have. If you are studying on campus, include all your lectures and tutorials. Once you have entered all these areas, hopefully you have some time left to devote to your studies. Plan regular time where you will be working on each subject in which you are enrolled.



If you're feeling tired around your study time, go for a brisk walk or just get some fresh air to clear your head before you start.



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Motivation

A strong motivation is needed to learn and succeed. Think carefully about your original purpose in enrolling at university. This will assist you to strengthen and develop your motivation and to help you to organise yourself in the most beneficial way.

Motivation must be linked to long-term goals. The Self-help Resources section of the Learning Skills website has an excellent resource on motivation, time use and self motivation.

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Your Goals

the following questions:



Think about

Why am I enrolled at university? So that I can ...
In the next five years I would like to achieve ...
In the next three years I would like to ...
In the next year I would like to ...

Now look at your shorter term goals:

My priorities for the semester are to ...

Your time management, organisation and motivation are all closely related. Being a successful student has more to do with being motivated and organised than with raw brain power.

Steps in becoming organised:

- Identify goals
- Analyse tasks needed to achieve goals
- Rank in priority order
- Break into smaller steps
- Focus on the NOW (this hour I will...)
- DO !!
- Reward yourself when you complete a task

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Academic Skills

To succeed in your university studies, in addition to a sound understanding of your subject content, you will need to demonstrate that you have well-developed academic skills such as writing and referencing.

Don't wait until you have an assignment due to investigate these areas. Start looking over information regarding referencing and academic writing as soon as you have your subject outline and you know what assessment items will be required of you. The sooner you start working on these skills, the better, and you will be much better prepared for when you do have to start work on your assignments.

Developing Your Academic Skills

Work your way through *Academic Writing: an introductory tutorial* which is an online tutorial located within the Self-help Resources section of the Learning Skills website.

Learning Skills Advisers can be contacted through [Student Services Support Central](#)

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Using The Library

Linked to the academic process is the necessity to locate and analyse a variety of information resources. Whether it be online or on campus, the Library is the best place to start your search for resources.

[library](#)



Library Services

The Library offers you services and support to enable you to locate information resources. Information resources are available in print and also electronically via the Library's web site.

There is an 'Ask a Question' service offered via the Library's web site. To access this, go to my.csu and click on the 'Ask a Question' link listed under Library.

Library staff are able to assist you in a number of ways, including providing assistance with:

- catalogue searching
- database searching
- world wide web searching
- use of online reference resources
- print information sources
- using other libraries
- search tips
- bibliographic management software - Endnote

Books and scanned copies can be requested online using the Library catalogue or online request form

The Library Services Forum is available for discussion, questions and feedback about Library services and resources. Library staff also use the forum to post advice about new resources and service issues. The Library forum is accessible via the Forums tool in my.csu.

The library blog contains information about new resources, highlights of new books and DVD's, great websites and information about any interruptions to services. You will find a link to the library blog on the library homepage.

Library staff have also created a series of podcasts which include borrowing tips, ways to contact us and services for distance education students. You can listen to them online or download the podcast to listen to at your leisure. There is a link to the podcasts page on the library home page.

Additional Services Available To Support Students Studying By DE:

You can also contact library staff in person, by email, fax or phone to arrange loans, copies or information searches

Print resources that you have requested can be sent to you directly at a specified address or in some situations, electronically via email.

We encourage you to visit the Library if you are near any of the campuses. Remember that opening hours are subject to change, particularly during Residential School periods, and can be checked via the Opening Hours link listed under the Library heading in my.csu.

Using Other Libraries

All tertiary education institutions allow use of the collections within their library. Australian university libraries belong to the University Library Australia (ULA) reciprocal borrowing scheme. To borrow from other university libraries, you must register (see details about the ULA scheme below) and use the libraries in person. A postal service is not provided.

The University Library Australia (ULA)

The University Library Australia scheme covers all Australian university libraries. To register at another university library under this scheme, you need to present your current CSU student card and proof of enrolment at CSU.

While the ULA scheme supports free reciprocal borrowing, some university libraries charge for ULA registrations. More details of the ULA scheme can be found at: <http://www.caul.edu.au/ula>

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Computer Training

You will need to use various software packages during your studies. CSU provides free access to online interactive training through the Knowledgebank program, which covers all aspects of Microsoft Office 97 and 2007 products.

[web based training](#)



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Support

There are many avenues of support available to you, should you need assistance with your studies.

Learning Skills

Whatever your educational background, study advice can help you succeed. The Learning Skills Team can assist if you:

- need study skills advice to gain insight into the demands of tertiary study
- are concerned about your ability to succeed at university
- are having trouble coping with the reading
- do not know how to write an essay or report
- are worried about your exams
- would like to get better marks
- would like to be a more efficient student

Learning Skills Advisers can be contacted through [Student Services Support Central](#)

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Assistance for students who have difficulties with English is available from the Advisers in Students Services, including students whose first language is not English.

[English](#)



Learning Skills Advisers are available to provide assistance with mathematics and statistics.

[maths](#)



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