

THE EXPECTATIONS OF UNIVERSITY STUDY

What do you expect of university?

It is quite normal to feel uncertain, insecure or plain scared upon your acceptance to university. Most people also feel other emotions, especially excitement and exhilaration. Most people are somewhat apprehensive at first, but just hang in there. Few people really know what a university is or does before they go, and even fewer know in advance what is expected of them. This leads to many new students, especially at first, feeling worried. The information contained here should help you to weather these early storms and hopefully will help to calm you down.

Although studying is frustrating and tough it is very rewarding and satisfying. It can be like climbing mountains – you have a lot of hard slog on the way, and sometimes when conditions are poor you wonder why you bother, but when you reach the peak it can be very fulfilling.

Many students say that studying not only gives them greater knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are studying but also more **confidence**, **broader interests**, and more **purpose** in life. It helps them to achieve more in walks of life not necessarily connected with study at all.

Non-resent school leavers (mature students) bring with **them wide ranging experiences and capabilities to draw upon**, many factors which can assist successful completion of study.

There are **skills, knowledge** and **abilities** that you bring to tertiary study from informal and formal learning

environments. The learning culture of university will require the refinement and modification of some skills and abilities and the learning of new capabilities.

When students come to university study they really have to face a new **culture** in many ways. Whether they are students that have come out of high school or mature students that have come out of a business, trade, government job or managing a household, they have come out of a situation where they have learned how to talk and how to think in a particular way.

When you come to university you are going to be asked to **think differently**, and to **communicate in different ways**. A shorthand way for talking about this is to talk about **a culture**. A university, as with every institution, whether it's a family or whatever, has a culture and has a way in which people communicate. It also has a way in which people think about the way they understand their own communication. You may be expected to know things such as; how to present an academic essay.

At university you will learn by, studying books and journals, researching and writing assignments, essays and experiment reports. On campus, at Residential Schools, and by subject forums you learn by actively listening or participating in lectures, working in labs or practical sessions, or giving seminars, and by taking part in formal and informal discussions.

There are abilities you will need to fine tune, and that will definitely improve with experience!

- how to locate information
- how to read efficiently

- how to take and make notes effectively
- how to get the most out of lectures, tutorials and residential schools
- how to listen actively

What the university expects of you?

Firstly, you are exposed to learning in several ways. If you attend Residential Schools you are expected to attend lectures and take notes. You will also go to seminars (called tutorials). Whatever you have to do will be explained to you fully.

Faculties have their own versions of practical sessions known by different names, such as laboratory sessions or field trips.

Secondly, you will prepare assignments. If you are on campus you will give tutorial papers, where you are assigned a topic that you prepare. The handout you receive for the subject may tell you the required format for that subject.

In some subjects, you will also write major essays. The title, expected length and date of submission will be given to you. Sometimes you may choose your own title, after discussion with the staff member concerned.

Examinations will also appear, usually once a semester in each subject, although mid-semester exams are also possible. The proportion of marks for each assignment that add up to the total for the subject will be communicated to you at the start of the subject.

You will be given due-by-dates to submit your assignments. These dates are final acceptance dates and any assignments arriving late will be penalised. Check your subject outline

for details on late submissions and requests for an extension.

Subject material

Distance Education students, are supplied for each subject studied a variety of study material. This could include the following:

- Subject outline or module organiser
- Study guide or modules
- Readings
- You may also receive a laboratory manual, a video tape or computer disk.

The **subject outline** or **modules organisers** includes subject information such as the aims and objectives of the subject, assignment details and schedules, and also a list of learning resources including the recommended texts. Some students refer to this as their bible, don't lose it!

Study guides or **modules** will help you in the learning of the subject. It provides information on key concepts, how to tackle the readings and gives a commentary on how to work through the subject. Often there are self assessment task and other activities which will help your understanding of the content. It may provide alternative perspectives or views to those presented in the text book and readings. This will help you appreciate different views and to broaden and deepen your understanding of the discipline of which the subject is part. Some study guides are written as a series of modules to assist your learning.

Readings are usually journal articles or chapters from books included to provide essential information, or to broaden your perspective. Also they provide a supplement to set texts. Don't be daunted by the volume of set

readings. Look through your subject outline or study guide to find out the relationship of the readings to topic, and if there is any set reading order. Read the abstract or summary of a journal article or key ideas if available in chapters. Glance through the article to note its structure, and look for the outcome or findings of research, chapter summaries or conclusions.

Administration

The academic year usually comprises 2 sessions each of 18 weeks. All important dates are in the University Handbook. This should also be consulted for details concerning academic regulations, course information, fees and charges.

School Liaison Officers are located in the Student Administration Offices of each campus. They assist with course queries and act as a contact point for administrative questions or problems.

Support

The courses offered by the University are equally demanding whether you study on campus or at a distance. Studying by distance education does have unique requirements. **Learning Skills Advisers at Student Services** at each campus can assist you with many of the problems of adjusting to being a student, coping with the work load and developing your academic potential. Also available for assistance are:

- Accommodation and Loans Officer
- Career Adviser
- Religious and Community Connections
- Student Counsellor
- Disability Adviser
- Equity Adviser
- Health Service
- International Student Adviser
- Maths support

A 24 hour message service is provided for Distance Education Students. This number connects you to an answering service and the calls are acted upon by the Division of Student Services Help Desk Team. Calls are forwarded on to other staff if appropriate. This number is:

1800 670 679

You can also contact the Help Desk online via: www.csu.edu.au/help and complete an online inquiry form or have a look at the information provided, such as frequently asked questions.

Students may call Student Services Help Desk numbers during normal working hours:

<p>Division of Student Services Help Desk Albury 02 60516828 Bathurst 02 63384678 Wagga Wagga 02 69332405</p>
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Without wishing to re-invent the wheel in compiling this brochure, we have drawn on material from Australian universities and other sources for advice and examples. Particular mention must be made of the following:

- Bucknal, K.B. (1995) How to succeed as a student, Griffith University:
http://www.gu.edu.au/gwis/stubod/stuadv/stu_advice.htm;
- Marshall, Land Rowland, F (1993) A guide to learning independently
Longman Cheshire: Murdoch University.
- Nothedge, A (1990) The good study guide.
Open University: Milton Keynes, UK.