



## Tips for students: how to do uni

This short guide aims to help you make it at uni. But I can't do it for you – here's how you can make it.

- 1 *It's not like school.* For example, you don't get to do an essay and get feedback on your drafts so you can make it better. When you hand an essay (or report, or whatever) in at uni to be assessed, that's it. You're marked on what you hand in.
- 2 *It's a lot bigger than school was.* At school, you may have been one of the brightest of the bunch, and you knew everybody. At uni, you're one of a much bigger, brighter bunch, and most folk don't know you. You've got to sink or swim – and it's much more fun swimming.
- 3 *Your success depends most on what comes out of your pen.* It's not really about how well you get your head around your subjects at uni, as only you know how well you do that. You're assessed on what comes out – mainly through your pen in exams, and your keyboard in coursework.
- 4 *Your lecturers won't know you like teachers used to know you.* There may be hundreds in your class, especially in the first year. If you're slipping behind, lecturers may not notice. It's up to you at uni – less chance of help unless you ask for it.
- 5 *How much work you do is up to you.* No one will tell you that you should be doing more. Many of your fellow students won't seem to be doing much work (even those who are doing a lot behind the scenes). Only you can make sure you're doing enough.
- 6 *Yes, do enough, but don't burn yourself out.* Doing too much studying is as dangerous as doing too little. What you really need to do is to make your studying efficient, so you don't waste time and energy. You'll need a fresh set of study skills at uni. What worked fine at school is no longer up to the mark at uni.
- 7 *You can't do it all at the end.* At school, you could mug up for exams and get away with it. At uni, there's so much more to get to grips with, and it's harder, and you've really got to keep at it all the way through so that when exams come up you're right there, ready and waiting.
- 8 *There will be loads of distractions.* That doesn't mean don't ever get distracted from studying, but it does mean you've got to manage your distractions. Those who don't, don't succeed. What a waste of time and money that is. Life is too short not to make a good go of Uni.
- 9 *Sounds like all hard work?* No, for most successful students, uni is one of the best times of their lives. Successful students, however, tune in fast to what's wanted in essays, reports and exams, and draft and re-draft their coursework to score most marks. Successful students listen for all the cues, clues and hints that lecturers give about what counts. Teachers used to tell you what counts, lecturers don't – but they do give you clues, cues and hints.
- 10 *Your fellow students are a great resource for you.* Talk to them. Listen to them. Explain things to them. Get them explaining things to you. The more you talk and listen, the more you learn – even more than just reading or writing. You need to do the learning before you can write well, so talk and listen to make the most of the folk around you.

If you succeed, you'll be really glad you went to uni. But I said 'if'. Whether you succeed at uni is, as you can see above, up to you. I hope you do. *You can.*