



Being a Postgraduate Student in Australia: Keys to Success

The University of Melbourne >



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Things Lecturers Seldom Tell You

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- How the academic system works
- What is expected of you as a graduate student
- The assessment criteria
 - What to do to get a HD
 - Forms of assessment in the Faculty
- How to:
 - manage your time
 - prepare for and perform in:
 - tutorials
 - exams
 - read academic articles and books

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'Good' and 'bad' students

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A good student will:



Ref: cutcaster.com
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A bad student will:



Ref: blogs.smarter.com
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Good and bad students

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A good student will:

- Be critical of ideas
- Speak up regularly in class
- Educate their lecturer with ideas and new information found (go beyond reading list)
- Be prepared to change their opinion
- Design their own timetable and START NOW!

A bad student will:

- Accept everything and rote learn
- Only cover material given in lectures
- Skip lectures and tutorials sometimes because 'I don't feel like going'
- Leave everything to the last minute
- Drink A LOT of coffee

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Graduate Study

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- A full-time job
- 'Holidays' are for rest but also:
 - assignment work & research
 - preparation/getting things organised
 - working on your problem areas
 - attending any useful additional classes
- For every subject you should be spending about 15-20 hours per week in private study
 - HOWEVER:
 - You should also have a life
 - Study efficiently

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Don't see yourself as 'just a student'...

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...but rather an emerging professional (in your field)

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Ref: news.lancs.ac.uk

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Australian academic expectations

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Australian Academic Culture

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- less scheduled class time
- few, but heavily weighted, pieces of assessment late in the semester
- a different approach to grading assignments
- more group work
- less individualised attention from professors/lecturers
- this requires:
 - more self-directed, active learning
 - following assessment procedures
 - an 'original' voice and thinking and writing critically
 - a more argumentative and linear style of writing in essays and exams

Ref: based on <http://www.mobility.unimelb.edu.au/incoming/study/academic-culture.html> and TLU Helpsheet: Academic Expectations
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Expectations (1)

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- In some countries it is *expected* that:
 - the lecturer is THE authority on the subject
 - students should be quiet and courteous and simply listen and take notes
- In Australia however such behaviour can show a student:
 - who has not done their required reading
 - who does not understand the material
 - unable to cope at graduate level
- Note that such students do not do very well!

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Expectations (2)

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- In some countries it is *expected* that students have no original ideas of their own
- The attitude in Australia:
 - plagiarism
 - a student unable to cope at graduate level
 - these students will fail the subject (or be asked to resubmit) and can be asked to leave!
 - of course, you will not be completely original, but you cannot simply copy
 - Turnitin (anti – plagiarism software) is used in the university

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Self test: Some Australian university expectations

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- **How do you feel about these expectations?**
1. Asking lecturers questions
 2. Participating in organised discussions
 3. Contributing to team assignments
 4. Thinking critically about the work of others
 5. Writing critically about the work of others
 6. Supporting arguments with evidence
 7. Expressing ideas in your own words

Ref: based on TLU Helpsheet: Academic Expectations
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What do lecturers and tutors do/expect?

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Ref: crc.nsw.gov.au

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Lecturers in Australia (1)

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- don't necessarily see themselves as the "authority" figure (though they are)
- expect less formality between themselves and students
- value the novel opinions/arguments of others and contributions in class
- won't act as 'father/mother figures'

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Lecturers in Australia (2)

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- see academic issues as very complex and difficult
- value scholarship/ideas of others:
 - depth and breath
 - plagiarism is NOT excusable
 - original ideas valued

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Lecturers in Australia (3)

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Lecturers do NOT:

- impose ideas on you;
- motivate you to complete project/assessed work;
- write material for you;

• YOU ARE BEING ASSESSED ON:

- HOW WELL YOU CAN CONDUCT AND COMPLETE INDEPENDENT RESEARCH
- HOW WELL YOU CRITICALLY ASSESS (AND ORGANISE) IDEAS

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Adult Learners in Australia

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Ref: theuniversityblog.co.uk

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Ref: fctl.ucf.edu

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Adult learners in Australia are expected to:

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- Take an **active** role in their learning:
 - Seek, hold and express **opinions**
 - **Participate** in organised discussions
 - **Contribute** to team-work assignments
 - **Approach** academic staff for assistance
 - **Follow** assessment **procedures**, e.g. due dates for assignments, examination times
 - Express ideas in **their own words**
 - **Support** ideas & opinions with **evidence**
 - Think and write **critically**

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Critical thinking...

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- What is it?
- How can it be useful at university?

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Critical: Two Meanings

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Thinking critically/criticise:

1. to find fault
2. to judge or discuss the merits and faults of

Critical:

1. inclined to find fault or to judge with severity
2. involving skilful judgement as to truth, merit, etc.; judicial

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Critical: Two Meanings

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Melbourne University Expectations

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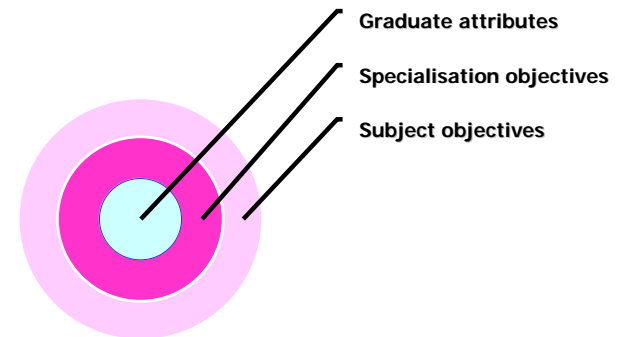
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Ref: blogs.unimelb.edu.au

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Graduate Attributes and other Objectives





Melbourne Graduate Attributes

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- Academically excellent
- Knowledgeable across disciplines
- Leaders in communities
- Attuned to cultural diversity
- Active global citizens

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Ref: <http://www.unimelb.edu.au/about/attributes.html> 25



Melbourne Graduate Attributes (con't)

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- Academically excellent:
 - intellectual integrity
 - in-depth knowledge of their specialist discipline(s)
 - high writing, generic research activities, problem-solving and communication
 - critical and creative thinkers with self-directed learning
 - can learn in a range of ways

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Melbourne Graduate Attributes (con't)

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- Knowledgeable across disciplines:
 - examine critically, synthesise and evaluate knowledge across a broad range of disciplines
 - analytical and cognitive skills through learning experiences in diverse subjects
 - participate fully in collaborative learning and to confront unfamiliar problems
 - have a set of flexible and transferable skills

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Key Graduate Assessment Requirements

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- Essays (all subjects) (from 2,500 words upwards)
- Reports (Empirical, Business)
- Case Studies (Management)
- Critical Reviews (Summaries and Critiques)
- Exams (Open book and Closed book)
- Presentations
- Tutorial Participation

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Course Objectives (Master of Management)

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- 1. Be able to **analyse** and **evaluate** evidence in management decision making:
 - **describe** and **explain** the fundamental principles influencing markets and managing organisations
 - **evaluate** the impact of a variety of cultural and environmental factors
- 2. Strategic and critical in relation to business and commerce related issues and problems
 - **critically analyse** factors that influence decision making
 - **identify** strategic issues and solutions in relation to economic problems and activity within firms
 - **apply** knowledge of theory to **analyse** real and hypothetical problems in different markets both domestically and internationally.

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Course Objectives (con't)

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- 3. effective decision makers in business and commerce:
 - **apply** basic mathematical techniques to analyse business data;
 - **evaluate** the applicability of various theories and techniques to business
 - **employ** a range of tools of analysis' pertinent to the evaluation of evidence
 - **use** evidenced based research techniques to support decisions;
 - **apply** ethical principles and corporate governance strategies to issues
- 4. knowledgeable in the core areas of management and possess the capabilities to manage organisations effectively:
 - **describe** the core areas of management (principles, theories and models);
 - **analyse** and **evaluate** the key areas needed to become a successful manager
 - **critically analyse** problems and **apply** relevant models and theories to generate effective solutions.

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Subject Objectives (Organisational Fundamentals)

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- On successful completion of this subject (325-606 Organisational Fundamentals), students should be able to:
 - **Describe** the nature of organisations in their economic and social environments;
 - **Explain** the key functions undertaken by managers and marketers within contemporary organisations;
 - **Analyse** management and marketing functions in terms of how they contribute to organisational performance;
 - **Evaluate** factors internal and external to organisations in terms of their influence on management and marketing activities; and
 - **Analyse** real and hypothetical problems in management and marketing and in developing responses to them.

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Ref: <https://handbook.unimelb.edu.au/view/2009/325-606>

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Originality at Master's Level

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Originality is rare and much-prized



Bare pass or fail:

- Student simply reproduces the content of lecture material,
- no further reading,
- no argument for a point of view.

Clear High Distinction:

- Student goes beyond reading list
- educates lecturer
- a small contribution to an academic debate

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How can you be "original"?

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1. continuing a previously original piece of work
2. providing a single original technique, observation or result in an otherwise unoriginal but competent piece of research
3. showing originality in testing someone else's idea
4. making a synthesis that has not been made before (putting ideas together that don't normally belong together)
5. using already known material but with a new interpretation
6. trying out something in one context that has previously only been done particular contexts
7. taking a particular technique and applying it in a new area
8. bringing new evidence to bear on an old issue
9. being cross-disciplinary and using different methodologies
10. looking at areas that people in the discipline have not looked at before

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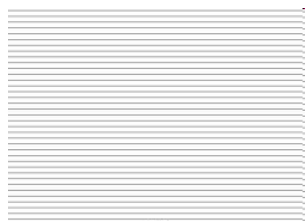
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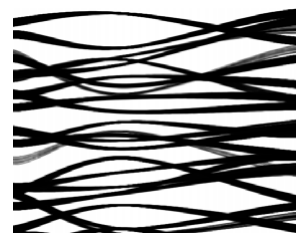


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Some Tips



2/08/2011 Ref: cadcourse.com



Mark Egginis Ref: openprocessing.org

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Some Tips for Success

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1. Learn actively
2. Asking Questions
3. Participation
4. Contribute to Team Discussions
5. Approach Staff
6. Follow Assessment Procedures
7. Use the Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU)
8. Express Ideas in your Own Words
9. Support Ideas with Evidence
10. Think and Write Critically
11. Time Management and Planning

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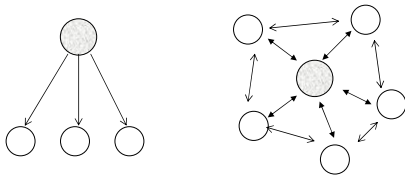
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What kinds of learning is happening here?

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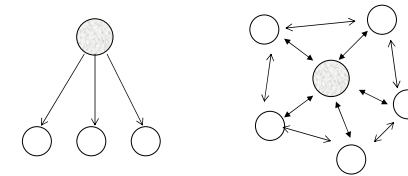
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Tip 1: Learn actively

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Lecturer directed Student involvement



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Tip 2: Ask Questions (1)

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- Australian academic culture values **asking questions**
 - demonstrates a desire for knowledge
 - does not show ignorance or stupidity;
- Other students probably have the similar questions

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Tip 2: Ask Questions (2)

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- If you ask a question, you help yourself and others.
- FAR TOO FEW STUDENTS ASK QUESTIONS
- Consider open and closed questions as appropriate
- Generally it is better to ask for clarification

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Ask Questions (3)

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- Many students from NESB are too worried or shy about their English
- This problem **gets worse during the semester**
- What can you do?:
 - Ask a simple question in WEEK 1
 - Ask a more complex question in WEEK 2
 - Make a comment on an idea in WEEK 3
 - Argue against an idea in WEEK 4...

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Tip 3: Participate

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- Australian students are trained from a very young age to **participate!**
- Students from some overseas countries have not had this educational training so they may find it uncomfortable.
- Participate actively:
 - ask questions
 - play a role in assignments and tasks
 - lead discussions
 - offer comments
 - actively criticise the views of others.
- Done politely, all this is not considered “rude” or aggressive.

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Tip 4: Contribute in group work

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- You may be paired to work with Australian students for group work.
- You might be tempted to only mix in culturally-similar groups—avoid this.
- Take every opportunity to mix and improve your English
- When in teams:
 - treat it as a job where you are expected to manage yourself and others
 - draw up a list of things to be done, allocate duties and follow up as needed.

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Tip 5: Approach Staff

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- It is:
 - expected that if you do not know something *you will ask*
 - always better to ask than to stay silent.
- Even if you want slight clarification you should always ask.
- Asking questions shows you are:
 - thinking.
 - confident and assertive
 - concerned with getting it right.

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Tip 6: Follow Assessment Procedures

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- In Australia, *a deadline is a deadline*. All due work must be handed in on the date due (usually by 5 p.m. on that day)
- Lateness is unacceptable. You will lose marks (usually 5-10 marks per day late)
- If you need an extension of time for a legitimate medical reason, you must ask the lecturer first
- If you happen to be sick on the day, you must supply medical evidence for your inability to hand in your work on time

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Tip 7: Use the Teaching and Learning Unit (TLU)

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- Cannot help you on day an assignment is due
- You need to make an appointment well before due date
- You can come in with:
 - the question
 - an essay plan
 - an incomplete or complete draft
 - an old essay that has been handed back
- Use the TLU consultation as a guide for improving the rest of your assignment and later drafts

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Other TLU services

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The Writing Hub



- Open Monday – Thursday 12- 4pm
- Drop in and book a computer
- You can also ask for help from TLU staff with your assignment

<http://www.tlu.fbe.unimelb.edu.au/students/study/WritingHub.html>



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Peer Writing Tutor

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- Available in the Hub (sitting at the far table or in the Resource Room)
- A drop in basis three times a week.
 - Monday (10am-12 pm)
 - Tuesday (12-2 pm)
 - Wednesday (2-4 pm)

http://www.tlu.fbe.unimelb.edu.au/students/undergraduate/peer_writing.html

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Tip 8: Express Ideas in Your Own Words

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- At worst, students who do NOT do it are regarded as *plagiarists* (someone who steals the work of others)
- At best, such students are thought of as lacking ideas and imagination and/or being incapable of understanding the material
- This is grounds for failure and/or dismissal from university
- You must become comfortable with paraphrasing—and being able to identify plagiarism

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Tip 9: Support Ideas with Evidence

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- Don't just make statements and give your opinions in your assignments.
- You must also provide **supporting evidence**.
- How you do this will determine your grade
- Excellent work educates the reader (your lecturer)
- Always **move beyond the reading list** given

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Tip 10: Think and Write Critically

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- You are required not merely to document your response to the assessment task but to *argue* for it
- This requires that you present your position as a:
 - series of statements leading
 - logically to a conclusion.

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Tip 11: Plan your Time (1)

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- It is **expected** that you have acquired self-discipline, self-reliance and good planning skills
- **Don't wait:**
 - for the lecturer to tell you to do something
 - wait to the last minute
- Find out your assessment requirements NOW!
- Find out what you will/might need to do and start work NOW!
- Design your own planning schedule NOW!

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A useful study timetable?

Time	mond	tues	wed	thur	friday	sat	sun
7-8							
8-9	study	study	study		study	study	study
10-11	study	study	study		study	study	church
12-1	study				study		church
1-2	study		study		study		
2-3	study	study	study		study	study	
4-5	study	study	study		study	study	study
6-7	study	study			study	study	study
8-9	study					study	study
10-11	study				study	study	
12-1	study	study	study		study		study
1-2	study	study	study		study	study	study
3-4	study	study	study		study	study	

A better one?

Time	mond	tues	wed	thur	friday	sat	sun
7-7.30	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	breakfast	Sleep
7.30-8	study	study	study	study	study	study	sleep
8-8.30	travel	travel	travel	travel	travel	study	sleep
8.30-9	study	study	study	study	study		sleep
9-9.30	Lecture 1	TLU	Lecture 2	Library	Lecture 3		travel
9.40-10	study	study	study	Lab	study	study	library
10-10.30	Tute 1	study	Tute 2	Lab	study	study	study
10.30-11	study	study		Lab	study	library	study
11-11.30	study	study				library	Study
11.30-12						study	study
12-1	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH	LUNCH
1-1.30	study	study					
1.30-2	study	study	study				



Plan for the long and short term

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- A wall planner:
 - plot in all assignment deadlines, presentations, etc
 - work back 4-5 weeks and write “Begin Finance assignment 1 NOW”, etc. Do this for all assessed tasks
 - work to the plan.
 - tick off tasks accomplished as you do them (e.g., edit essay for Management; redraft essay for Economics).
- A ‘to do’ list in a prominent public place (i.e. fridge)

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March	1 RESEARCH FOR MARKET ESSAY	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 START MARKET ESSAY	9
10	11	12 START MACRO ESSAY	...	
	29 EDIT MACRO ESSAY	30	MARKET ESSAY DUE	
April	1 PREPARE FOR FINANCE TEST	2 MACRO ESSAY DUE	3 PLAN FOR PRESENTATION	4 READ BOOK CHAPTER FOR ECO TUTE
5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 MACRO ESSAY DUE	13	



Tips for Writing Tasks

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- Don't stop writing until you have reached target or "pick-up" point
- Edit work ruthlessly (leave aside for a week and come back to it)
- Form study groups and swap work for comment
- BE CRITICAL WITH EACH OTHERS' WORK

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Ways to Plan Ahead

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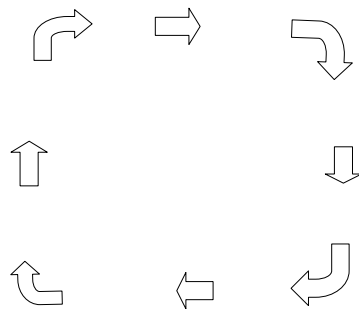
- Look at the subject handbook/reading pack well before time (Reserve Collection)
- Begin research for essays NOW!
- Find resources NOW!
- Plan your time NOW!
- Plan your argument/ideas NOW!
- Write NOW! (can make something better later)

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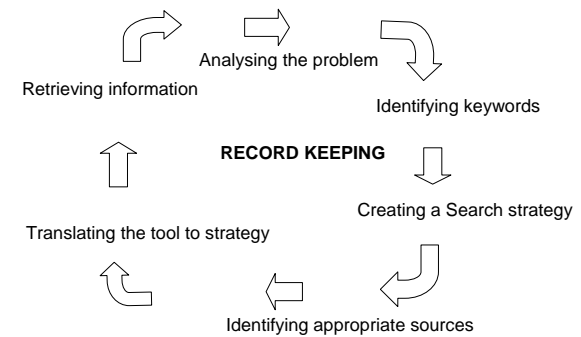
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Doing Research



Doing Research





Daily Routine (1)

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Establish A Daily Routine

- Try to pace yourself, working regularly each day
 - Your brain needs to be exercised just like the muscles in your body.
 - It performs best if you subject it to a regular rhythm.
- Try to study in the same place each day.
 - If you always sit at the same desk your brain will automatically prepare itself for work when you sit down.

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Daily Routine (2)

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Recognize your own Strengths and Weaknesses

- It is no good writing out a timetable that you will not be able to keep to, even on the first day
- Morning person, afternoon, evening, late-night?
- Allow yourself breaks during day for rest
- Human concentration span 20-40 minutes

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Surviving Tutorials (1)

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- You ARE being assessed on what you say in tutorials
- Knowing what language to use when asking questions, agreeing, disagreeing or asking for further explanation can give you the tools and confidence you need to open your mouth, say something and be understood

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Asking for Clarification

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- I'm not clear what you meant by...
 - when you said ...
- Am I right in thinking that you
 - believe.../ consider... ?
- Is what you're saying that...?
- Are you saying that...?
- I'm not sure I understand (correctly) what you said about ... ?
- Could you please explain what you meant by ... ?
 - when you said...?
- I don't understand what you mean by ...?
 - when you say ...?
- Did you mean that...?

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Giving Clarification

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- The point I'm making is that ...
 - / trying to make is that ...
- What I'm saying is that
- What I am trying to say is...
- All I'm saying
 - / trying to say / is...
- What I mean is...
 - meant was ...
- What I was driving at ...
 - getting at is ...
- What I said was ...

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Active Learning: a summary of practical strategies

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1. Prepare for lectures
2. Set yourself questions
3. Rework your notes (they are 'building blocks' only) so improve them with:
 - further references
 - clearer presentation (bullet points, headings, outlines, etc.)
 - less information that doesn't require prompting.

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Ref: theuniversityblog.co.uk

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Some Specific Active Learning Strategies (con't)

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4. Link, order and prioritise information
5. Discuss with others
6. Mull things over
7. Draft and redraft
8. Evaluate your own work and use feedback constructively
9. Participate and volunteer

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academic_expectations.pdf (Application/pdf Object) - Mozilla Firefox

Helpsheet

TL//

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Use this sheet to help you:

- Identify key academic expectations in Australian universities
- meet those expectations to experience academic success

