

— Your guide to being a —
Successful Student
— **AT THE** —
University of Huddersfield

Advice and support for commuter students

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Welcome



We would like to offer you a warm welcome to the University of Huddersfield where we recognise the importance of local students and pride ourselves on inspiring you to become tomorrow’s professionals.

We hope you feel at home in our learning community and we trust you will enjoy your time here.

We know that for successful outcomes it’s important for you to know where to go for support, so we’ve put together this guide to give you information that you can share with family and friends, to help you achieve success.

We have included information about the more informal aspects of campus too, because we recognise getting involved in university life, feeling you belong to the community and making new friends is as important to your future success and your wellbeing as your academic study.

Your University journey and goals



We view your time with us as a partnership. If you identify your aims and aspirations early in your student journey we can support and inspire you to achieve your goals.

We would encourage you to give some thought to why you are here and what you want to achieve. It's OK to be unsure and there are plenty of people to talk to and plenty of places to go for more information.

This link from Careers may give you ideas to get started:
students.hud.ac.uk/firstyear

Set your goals with this handy checklist.

Try setting 3 goals in each term.

Term 1	☐	☐	☐
Term 2	☐	☐	☐
Term 3	☐	☐	☐
Examples	☒ Meet at least one new person every week	☒ Set up my home study space	☒ Agree a weekly study timetable

Your timetable and study time

Your degree is much more than scheduled teaching. You will contribute to your degree through study time in the library, on campus and at home. This may include preparatory work for lectures, seminars, assignments and exams and sometimes this involves working with other students on a group project.

Allow 35 hours study time per week during term time.



Studying full time for a degree is much the same as being in a full time job so you might wish to consider how you will juggle University life with your other commitments.



It may be useful to consider the times of day that suit you best for study and it may help if you share and agree your plan with those close to you so they understand what is required.



Remember to include time for all your projects, paid work and other commitments, and allow some time for fun activities and extra curricula opportunities too.



Your degree is made up of modules of study and these are worth credits. To obtain an ordinary level degree you will usually need to pass 120 credits in each year; 360 credits in total over your three to four years of study.



Allow 35 hours study time per week during term time.



Our support, your success

Joining the University is similar to joining a gym. You will join with a goal in mind. At University it may be to get your degree and develop your career prospects. The important thing to remember is that you don't just pay your fees and get results. You need to apply consistent effort, and generally the more effort and time you put in, the better your results.



Increasing the effort you put in to your University life will increase your chances of getting a good degree and employment in your chosen area. The Careers Service has resources and timelines with suggestions for each year of study to help you with this.

Visit the links below for more information:

students.hud.ac.uk/careers/

students.hud.ac.uk/careers/downloads/

Wobbles and worries – support is available

University is a transformative process; you will be a different person when you leave, full of new ideas, having new interests and passions, new friends and contacts and seeing the world in different ways.

The transformation is not always easy; learning new things, meeting new people, coping with deadlines and course demands can be tough for all students and most will have a 'wobble'... ...a period of time when they're not sure, feel out of their depth, or wondering if they made the right choice.



It's important to remember that 'wobbles' are normal and we can learn from them and there is a lot of support if and when this happens:

Library

- Academic Subject Librarians – specialist knowledge
- IT Support/Assistive Technology – training and help to get the best from IT

School

- Personal Academic Tutors – named academic to support you
- School Office – support, queries answered, signpost

Student Central

- Back on Track – support if struggling with study and referral to Wellbeing
- Careers Service – career planning, CVs, Job shop
- Student Finance – matters relating to your finances
- Wellbeing and Disability Services – support with your wellbeing one to one and in groups, referrals to counselling, support with specific learning difficulties and long term disabilities.

Academic Skills Tutors are available in schools, they are staff dedicated to helping you developing your study skills such as: academic writing, research skills, presentation skills, time management and study planning.

You can find your School support here:
students.hud.ac.uk/academicskills



If you are unsure where to go with your particular query go to the ipoint in Student Central (next to the Students' Union shop) and they will be able to signpost you to the people most able to help.

Your facilities

Study Skills and Academic Skills Tutors

We have a wide range of modern facilities available to support you with your studies.



Remote Access

You are able to access online resources from home. The Student Hub provides quick access to timetables, reading lists, email and the Virtual Learning Environment. UniDesktop provides you with a virtual PC, allowing you to use University software remotely.



Lockers

Many Schools have lockers for students. Ask at your School office and if there is a need for additional facilities please raise this with your Course Representative. We aim to constantly improve what we offer.



Student Central

Student Central as the name suggests is where a lot your facilities can be found. There places to eat and drink, areas to socialise and quieter corners where you can sit and study, in addition to all the Students' Union, gym and Sports Centre.



Computing and Library Services

Library staff are on hand to support you with any aspect of study related to finding academic information, use of on campus and remote access IT facilities, and loan of laptop computers. You will have an Academic Subject Librarian dedicated to your School.



The Students' Union

The Students' Union Advice Centre is able to advocate on your behalf with a range of matters, both academic and personal and can also offer one off short-term loans.

The Students' Union also supports a diverse community of student societies and activities that we would encourage you to take a look at.



The Faith Centre

The Faith Centre offers a multi faith space for quiet reflection or more formal prayer, in addition to comfy sofas, tea and coffee and a place to meet friends.

Your community

Make the most of friends and facilities...

Time on campus spent with fellow students, friends and tutors embeds you in your learning community, which has a positive impact on your studies. Plan your time on campus to develop your social and academic learning.



Developing your community and network is one of the most important things you can do at University.

Your community of friends, fellow students tutors and support staff will be able to sustain and support you through your studies and we encourage students to develop a diverse network of friends and supporters on campus.

Coming in to contact with University members from different cultures, backgrounds and countries is an important part of University life. These new friends will be able to support you during your studies, as a graduate, in your early career and as you build your network and set yourself challenges.

The benefits of having a diverse network and community include:

- A peer network who are sharing the same experiences
- A diverse range of perspectives to support good decisions
- A range of fellow students to study with and work with on peer assignments – study buddies
- Finding future business partners and employers
- Finding friends who you will keep in touch with through life.

You may wish to jot down ideas for developing your networks:

Suggested Activities

- Say hello to one new person per week
- Meet your academic course leader
- Make friends with an international student
- Identify your study buddies
- Go beyond your every day network.

Your family, friends and supporters



Your family and friends at home provide an invaluable source of support and advice to you as students and it can be useful to share with them aspects of your University life, current work, aims and goals.

If you share your experience they will be better placed to understand the time, space and support you require to successfully complete your studies.

It may be useful to share with your supporters:

- Timetable including contact time and study time
- Study commitments and deadlines
- What you are learning and some of your work
- Wobbles and worries.

Think about the space and time you will need for study (see our tips on page 15).

Share this guide with family. Agree a study plan that works for you.

You may want to invite your friends and family to see the campus to help them understand your daily life at University and to show them the facilities that are available.

Assignments and assessments

Why assessment matters:

Assessments provide opportunities for you to apply your knowledge and through applying that knowledge you embed it in your practice and consolidate learning.

Remember assessment and exams are not just about testing students, it supports your learning and helps develop your capabilities.

The University assesses students through assignments, course work and exams to check that they have understood the concepts and topics of the course they are studying. In some cases the University is required to provide assurance to external bodies that you have met competencies and particular standards.



Assignment checklist

To develop good learning habits and behaviours for success, it can be useful to consider the following tips when approaching assignments:

- Start early and start with a plan
- Understand the assessment criteria
- Where possible choose a topic you're interested in
- Get help early – whatever it is, ask early
- Research well, noting references
- Write up with time to check and check again.

Tip – Remember the following rule when assigning your time to assignments:

1/3 research, 1/3 plan, 1/3 write

It is always best to leave plenty of time for assignments rather than rushing them at the last minute.



"I never used to like writing assignments but after I'd written a few, I learnt techniques on how to best approach them and it helped me to get a better understanding of my topic."

Home and university life – a case study



“I kept a diary and planned out the year in terms.”



My travel

As a local student I travelled in to University each day. This obviously added more time to my day; taking around an hour to get a bus and a train to University (and the same for the return journey) so I had to factor this in to my daily routine.

My routine

I found a way to use it to my advantage, I'm not a morning person so I could use the journey to University to wake up and prepare my mind for the day and I used the journey home to switch off from University, I listened to music on headphones and prepared for relaxation at home.

My study plan and schedule

The main thing that I found difficult was the workload and how the deadlines were scheduled throughout the year (multiple deadlines on the same day or week). I kept a diary and planned out the year in terms of when assignments were due in and how I would manage my time for each piece of work. I also gave myself weekly and daily targets to monitor if I was staying on schedule. There were times when I would fall back, but the beauty of it was it was my plan so I could move it around as and when I needed to.

“I found studying at University more helpful than at home, I used my free periods and some time at the end of the day to use the library and computer labs.”

My time on campus

I found studying at university more helpful than at home, I used my free periods and some time at the end of the day to use the library and computer labs. I came in almost every morning regardless of my timetabled sessions and saw it more like working shifts at a job.

I'd get too distracted at home with my family around, and I found it really helpful for my wellbeing to be able to pack my work away and use my commute home to switch off from University, keeping home as my place to relax away from work.



My Network

I made an effort to build connections with my tutors, and approach them with any questions I had, mostly over email but at times arranging to meet for a tutorial. In my final year I made sure I attended all meetings with my dissertation supervisor, my view was that they are the experts and I wanted to use their knowledge as much as I could. I used the careers service in my final year as I thought about my career options and found this very helpful. The most helpful thing was taking part in a scheme which offered students placements within schools. The school I was placed in offered me further volunteer work and after I left University this experience led to paid employment.

Laura – Psychology Graduate

“I made an effort to build connections with my tutors, and approach them with any questions I had.”

Home and university life – a case study

As a student travelling to University I had to make sure I had good time management skills. I used bus journeys to catch up on reading and videos from lectures. It was useful time to get organised before I came home. I booked marked chapters to read before I got home and replied to emails.



“I was focused on doing well and motivated because I was given lots of support.”

One of the challenges I faced was managing a 9000 word dissertation as well as trying to complete work set for four other modules. I also had work commitments at weekends. As a female from an ethnic minority group I was expected to live up to cultural values. I got support from the University.

I spoke to the Student Support Officer about how I can manage my time. I would bring a calendar and we would discuss how far apart each deadline was. We were then able to figure out what deadlines I should prioritise. I was advised to sit an exam when the date was set, rather than apply for an extension. I realised that it would be best to do this so that I would then have an opportunity re-sit, if I needed to.

On a regular basis, I would also set myself a target for each day and then break this down further into each hour. Additionally, I would make sure that I would plan each essay by setting myself a word limit for each paragraph. This made everything much easier to cope with.

I managed my dissertation by having regular meetings with my supervisor. I made sure that the time we had was used wisely by sending work for us to discuss beforehand.

I was given lots of advice on how to improve my work and key books to use. I also felt that any issues I had were heard and the meetings were well structured, covering personal and academic matters. I was focused on doing well and motivated because I was given lots of support.

One other challenge I faced was maintaining my overall emotional health and wellbeing. During regular meetings with a Wellbeing Advisor, we discussed how I should stay positive and methods of coping with the stress and anxiety of my personal circumstances. My Wellbeing Advisor taught me useful techniques. For instance, writing down achievements, using analogies to put things into perspective and making sure I was able to look after myself. I began healthy eating and made time for myself. Walking and socialising worked best for me. Furthermore, it became apparent that through discussion I had too many commitments. I realised that it was best to stop paid work for a few months to concentrate on studies.

It was hard to concentrate at home, so a great deal of time was spent in the library. This was beneficial because I did not feel as anxious, stressed or distracted by family pressures and expectations. To add to this, seeing other students working hard in the library motivated me to do the same.

Your study time and space

Identifying and protecting study time and space will be key to academic success.

Space: Identify and agree some study space that works for you. You may need to think about:

A computer and internet connection. Many university resources are accessible online (e-books, journals, software, lecture recordings, reading lists). You can get the information you need without a trip to campus. You can loan laptop PCs from the library for up to 48 hours.

A desk. It sounds obvious, but it is more than a desk, it is your space for learning and ideally it is a distraction free zone or the space where you do your best thinking, reflection and learning. Think about the following and make a space that works for you.

Limit distractions: switch off alerts on your devices, tell friends and family you are in your study zone and you cannot be disturbed for an agreed time. (Every time you are disturbed by that ‘ping’, you will have to get back in your study mind-set).

The right lighting: natural light works for some people, night-time and evening works for others.

Cluttered or clear? Some of us do our best work, thinking and concentration in a clear organised space; for others stuff around them is the stimulus to creativity.

Struggling for Space? If it is difficult to accommodate a desk of your own, there are some ways to carve out that study space and time.

Maximise your time on campus: find and create your own study space. You may find a space in the library that works for you or a quiet corner of a computer lab.

Early morning and late evening? When is the quiet time when the distractions are gone? Seize that quiet time in your home! It could be when you do your best work but do get enough sleep.

Is there a shared space that you could commandeer for studying? Can you agree to use a kitchen table or space in a bedroom for some agreed hours each week?

Become a coffee shop student: free wifi, good coffee, in a place where you can’t be disturbed. Cafes and coffee shops work for some people, why not give it a try?

Time: Planning and protecting your time for study is as important as making your space.

Everybody’s life and demands are different; so there is no one size fits all, but making a plan that fits your study and home life commitments will help keep things on track.

Some tips are:

Use travel time wisely: this could be the time where you catch 30-minutes sleep, check emails, read an article, reflect upon or prepare for the days lectures. Whether you read, rest or reflect – use that time purposefully every day.

Get a plan: share it, agree it, stick to it. There are choices to be made about how our time is spent, successful students develop shorter and longer term plans about how they will use their time. Sharing this with those close to you, so they understand your plan and what you need to do by when, will help them to support you.

Good habits and mini rewards. Studying in short bursts of between 20 minutes to an hour can be effective. Think about what will be a good reward after period of concentrated study. It could be a drink or meal break, it could be a walk and some fresh air, it could be checking social media or a sociable break with friends and family.

Supercharge your time on campus! Free periods on campus are not free, they are an opportunity to supercharge your learning. Grab drinks and food to fuel your body; but also fuel your mind...

- Get an hour in the library to read and research.
- Arrange some time with your tutors to clarify any aspect of your studies.
- Check in with a librarian to guide you through resources.
- Meet with your fellow students to complete group work or prepare for the next class.

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*Huddersfield is first in
England for professionally
qualified teaching staff**

*HEFCE, 9 Dec 2016



**THE QUEEN'S
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FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2015



Data Protection

University students are adults – so unlike school or college, universities cannot provide families, carers or friends with details of their progress, or any personal details.

We cannot let you know if we are worried about their progress. Families and friends at home may need to encourage the student to discuss their progress with them.

Visit us

Student family and friends are very welcome to come and look around the University.

Tel. 01484 422288

Email. ask@hud.ac.uk

Find out more at hud.ac.uk/supporting-success