

Tips for university learning (whether studying remotely or on campus)

There is a substantial difference in teaching and learning between school or college and university. Like when you moved from your GCSE study to either your A-Level or Btec study, with the right preparation you will be able to excel at this new challenge. Before we talk about how you can do this best, here are a few bits of terminology you need to know about university teaching and learning.

Terminology

Lecture – A type of teaching at university often where a teacher speaks to a large group who take notes on what they are saying.

Seminar – A type of teaching at university delivered in a small group led by discussion and sharing of ideas on a particular topic. Also sometimes known as a 'Tutorial'.

Lab study – Hands on learning in a Laboratory where you are given the chance to investigate problems and improve your skills.

Office hours – Scheduled time outside of classes where academics are available to students to attend individually and ask questions or receive assignment feedback.

Pomodoro technique – A time management technique which uses a timer to break down work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks.

Tips to help your learning at university

#1 Use your time wisely – Unlike with your school or college schedule, you will not be in classes all day at university. You are far more independent at university therefore, it is really important to use your time wisely. Begin by getting a diary (physical or electronic) to track your classes and deadlines making sure you're aware of upcoming important events. Plan around your deadlines to make sure you're aware of the work you need to do and to give yourself a chance to research effectively. Lastly, be strict with yourself when you are studying. It can be very easy to get distracted, however, remove distractions (e.g. putting your phone away from you) and try different productivity techniques such as the **Pomodoro technique** to get the most out of your work time.

#2 Learn how to take notes – With many things, the way you learn at university is different to what you may be used to. You will no longer have classes as such, instead you will have **Lectures**, **Seminars** and **Labs** (if you are study a science subject). Unlike school classes, you will need to listen and take your own notes at university. Whilst writing down what you think is important, work out what the purpose of your notes are (e.g. how will you use the notes). Also, after your class, write up your notes by expanding on what you have written, organise your notes by content or themes and supplement your notes with the additional reading you will be doing.

#3 Use your academics office hours – Though your university professors will be different to your teachers, they are always happy to help. Find out their **Office Hours** and use them to discuss your course content, get advice of assessments and get feedback for essays. The people teaching you at university are experts within their particular area of study, so make sure to use their knowledge and take their advice.

#4 Use the learning resources available to you – Universities have a huge amount of learning resources both online and in person. In your first couple of weeks, make sure to attend introductory sessions (e.g. how best to use the library) and familiarise yourself with the resources the university has to offer. Use the university's library team for advice on research and how to get the most out of the university collections. Also, use the Academic skills team who will usually offer 1-1 advice, small workshops and larger lectures to help you improve your study skills.



Emily Wilding Davison building at Royal Holloway which houses the library