**Introduction to Undergraduate Study**

## **Degree Structure**

* Most degree courses are three years long, consisting of both core and optional/elective modules.
* There is also the opportunity early in your degree to take wild modules from other disciplines, enabling you to study other subject areas of interest.
* To view the module catalogue go to: <https://www.kent.ac.uk/courses/modules>

## **Pathway to academic success**

University study is a big leap from school or college, however it offers an exciting opportunity for personal and professional growth if you fully engage:

* Read your course handbook and recommended texts.
* Attend everything that is timetabled for you, on time, and catch-up on everything that you unavoidably miss.
* Always be prepared to take notes; develop a format that works for you.
* Develop a filing system so you can find everything you need for your studies.
* Develop effective time management strategies to help manage your time between your studies/assignments and life outside of university.
* Develop your knowledge of the library system and its resources.
* Develop your academic study skills, making use of all resources available to you.
* Seek help as soon as it is needed or as soon as you have been advised to.
* Carefully note all feedback from tutors and do all of what has been suggested.
* Develop your subject knowledge proactively, reading beyond core materials.
* Fully prepare for all assessments and meet all assignment deadline.

## **Academic skills needed to study effectively**

## The Skills for Academic Success team (SAS) offers free one-to-one advising sessions on the academic skills necessary to succeed at university. These include:

* Independent learning and critical thinking.
* Getting the most from lectures, seminars and tutorials.
* Effective note-taking strategies.
* Academic reading and critical analysis.
* Using research to develop and support ideas.
* Referencing and avoiding plagiarism.
* Planning and developing assignments – written, visual, verbal, etc.
* Learning from feedback.
* Linguistic development for different purposes and audiences.
* Managing multiple projects and responsibilities.
* Understanding specific principles of maths and statistics, from basic to advanced.

## **Lectures, Seminars and Tutorials**

* **Lectures** – introductory overview of topics to a large audience of students (especially in the first year).
* **Seminars** – discussion groups led by a seminar leader to discuss topics raised in lectures in more depth.
* **Preparing for lectures and seminars** – undertake any assigned reading, contribute to discussions and take notes.
* **Tutorials** – prepare for tutorials in the same you would for a lecture or seminar. Think about what you wish to get out of the session and note: questions you need to ask; concerns you wish to raise, or work you wish to discuss. Make sure you note all feedback/responses and ask for clarification if you are unclear.

## **Note-taking**

Note taking can be tricky when a lot of information is being given to you or you have a lot of thoughts and questions you wish to record. Here are some note-taking tips:

* **Content** - consider what information will aid your understanding and knowledge development, bearing in mind you will need to do something with your notes e.g. follow up with research/reading, now or in the future. Listen out for key information e.g. specific terms, definitions, names, dates, methods, rationales, formulas etc.
* **Updating and filing** – after a seminar, lecture or tutorial, make sure you fill in any gaps where you feel you missed important information or lacked understanding, and then file them in a way so that you can find them easily later.
* **Format** - unless your discipline/course dictates a particular format you may find diagrammatic note-taking (spider diagrams and mind maps) a quick way to get key information down in relation to each other.

## **Managing your time and meeting deadlines**

* Most of your learning time at university will be independent, so you will need to organise this time effectively.
* Make sure you know when all of your assignment deadlines are so that you have plenty of time to complete assignments, especially when they occur simultaneously.
* Start assignments early and discuss any problems with your seminar leader.
* As well as timetabled events, university study requires you to develop practices of self-study, that is, using your unscheduled or ‘non-contact’ time for independent learning.
* Study planners are available to download from the Skills for Academic Success learning resources page to help you do this, or you can pop into our office on the Canterbury or Medway campus to pick up one of our free study planners.

## **Assessments and acting on feedback**

* Assessments at university vary, a mixture of coursework and examination can be expected for most degrees.
* Coursework may include essays, reports, presentations and seminar contributions.
* In order to improve on assessments, it is important that you understand and act on all of the feedback given to you by your module convenors and tutors during and after assessment.
* Advice on how to complete coursework assignments and tips on exam revision etc. as well as making best use of feedback, can be found in our study guides.

## **The Library**

* You should familiarise yourself with the library and its facilities and resources as soon as possible; you will be expected to use them.
* Attend induction events, find out where the books for your subject are housed and who your academic subject librarian is.
* As well as the library, there are multiple Study Hubs with PCs located around campus for students to use, find out where they are.
* Use Library Search to find and request books and to access e-books, online journals and multimedia material.

## **Online Resources**

* As well as the Library’s online resources, Moodle, Turnitin, KentPlayer and MyFolio will all be invaluable during your time at Kent.
* For explanations on what these resources are and how to use them go to <https://www.kent.ac.uk/elearning>.
* Your online Student Guide, My Kent’ will also be vital during your degree, giving you access to your timetable, student email, Moodle and the Student Data System where you can view your deadlines and marks.

## **Seek advice**

* If you have any concerns about your studies, please make sure you speak to someone as soon as possible.
* Talk to and seek help from others at university. Your tutors and library staff are all there to help you. Find out who your academic advisor is and get their email address. Visit lecturers and seminar leaders in their office hours to clarify anything you do not understand or need help with. And of course, visit the S.A.S. team.

# Co-curricular and Extra-curricular Opportunities

There are a great many co-curricular opportunities at Kent such as becoming a course rep, a student ambassador, a student volunteer or a peer mentor. These are great ways to get more involved at university and develop your skills.

The University also has a wide range of student societies and sports clubs which will help you to feel part of the university. For more information:

Canterbury <https://ksu.co.uk/> Medway <https://www.thehubmedway.co.uk/>

## **To sum up:**

## Prepare for university study by:

* Knowing what to expect in your degree.
* Considering areas that you might need to work on.
* Using the learning resources in the library and SAS.
* Joining a club or society.

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