

Studying for university



Dr Chloe Alexander & Wendy Lawrenson
Student Learning Service
Centre for Academic Development
www.abdn.ac.uk/sls



What will studying at university be like?

- Past experience of education?
 - School
 - College
 - Break from studies
- Previous experience will help you prepare for higher education. You will probably be familiar with many of the aspects:
 - Writing essays and reports
 - Presenting on a topic
 - Contributing to group discussion
 - Reading sources and making notes
 - Listening to someone communicate key information on a topic

What will studying at university be like?

- However, you will need to develop these skills further, and in some cases change the way in which you approach them.
- University level is different and every university has their own preferences, expectations and conventions!
- This session will aim to highlight some of these aspects:
 - Independent learning
 - How will my work be marked?
 - Writing academically: essays and reports
 - Help for your English skills
 - Student Learning Service online resources and workshops



Independent learning: fewer contact hours

- Big difference at University!
- Your actual contact hours with e.g. lecturer may be few, depending on your course.
- You are expected to do a lot of work independently e.g. in the library, extra reading, studying.
- You will need to prepare by yourself for Tutorials, Presentations, Assignments, Exam Revision.
- It is up to **you** to manage your time effectively!
- Workshop/resources on planning and independent learning



Independent learning: fewer contact hours

- Staff will not always be available or on hand to remind you of what you have to do.
- Check MyAberdeen regularly:
 - Course information and details
 - Course guide
 - Reading lists and preparation for tutorials / seminars
 - Assessment information e.g. deadlines & where to submit
- Check your University of Aberdeen e-mail regularly: always use this if you are e-mailing a member of staff.

How will my work be marked? <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/CAS.php>

The Common Grading Scale

Grade	Band Descriptor	Honours Class	PGT Award	Grade Point
A1, A2, A3, A4, A5	Excellent	First	Distinction	22, 21, 20, 19, 18
B1, B2, B3	Very Good	Upper Second	Merit	17, 16, 15
C1, C2, C3	Good	Lower Second	Pass	14, 13, 12
D1, D2, D3, RP ⁺	Pass (pass grade = D3)	Third	Pass	11, 10, 9
RF ⁺⁺ , E1, E2, E3	Marginal Fail	Below Third Class Honours	Fail	8, 7, 6
F1, F2, F3	Fail	Below Third Class Honours	Fail	5, 4, 3
G1, G2, G3	Fail, Token, or no Submission	Below Third Class Honours	Fail	2, 1, 0

⁺RP is Resit Pass at Postgraduate Taught level

⁺⁺RF is Resit Fail at Postgraduate Taught level

How can I aim to get good marks?

- Ensure that you read the course guide and any other specific department resources. Different departments have different preferences, expectations and conventions.
 - Preferred written style?
 - Preferred layout?
 - What sources am I expected to use?
 - What referencing system do my courses use?
- Demonstrate that you understand the task set.
- Demonstrate you understand the material/information
- Critical thinking and analysis.
- Conform to Department conventions e.g. referencing style.
- Proofread your work before submitting.



Writing academically: how do I get good marks?

- Communicate your ideas clearly:
 - A good structure
 - An argument (not just description)
 - Support your argument with evidence (references to sources) and explain your thinking
 - Acknowledge your sources (avoid plagiarism)
- Write in paragraphs, ensuring that your words and phrases convey exactly what you mean to say. Remember that your reader (marker) may not think in exactly the same way as you do.
- Do not try to use big words or complex phrases if you are unsure of what they mean.
- ‘Signpost’ your writing: explain clearly to your reader e.g. ‘Therefore, in conclusion, it is clear from the evidence that ...’

Writing academically: how do I get good marks?

Sources and referencing:

- Make detailed notes as you research / read, so that you can properly acknowledge your sources.
- Be cautious when using sources on the internet:
 - Use LEGITIMATE online sources (academic journals and books) e.g. from JSTOR
 - Other websites: is it a legitimate academic-based source? Who has published the website?
 - Do not reference Wikipedia
- Always conform to the style suggested by your Department.
- You must always reference whether you are directly quoting or paraphrasing.
- Check out the Library website for guides on referencing systems.

<https://www.abdn.ac.uk/library/support/library-guides-101.php>

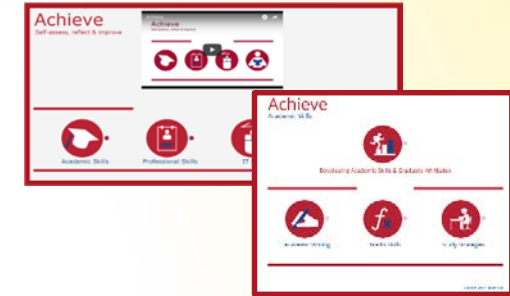
Help for your English skills

- Don't worry if it takes some time for you adjust! You will probably need to continuously work on refining your English skills throughout your time at university.
- The Language Centre:
 - A range of courses at different levels, but some may have to be paid for.
 - Range of self-study materials freely available.
 - <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/languagecentre>
- Try doing a language swap.
- Immerse yourself in English: listen to the radio, watch television, YouTube videos, READ!
- Keep track of new vocabulary, especially in your discipline.
- Consider joining a student society. Get involved with the International Centre.
- You will encounter many different accents in Aberdeen!

The Student Learning Service: helping you to develop your academic skills

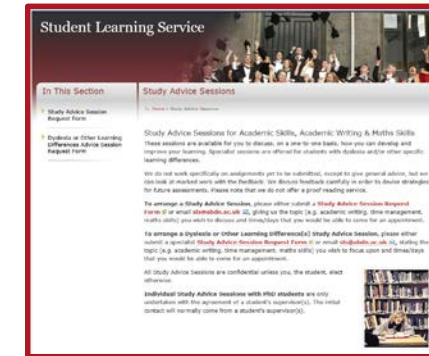
- **Online Resources:**

- **Achieve** (for undergraduates) and **Achieve +** (for taught postgraduates) in 'My Aberdeen'
- Find it via the 'Organisations' tab
- A range of resources and guides on Academic Skills
- 'Improving Your Writing' online interactive resource: www.abdn.ac.uk/academicwriting



- **One-2-one Study Advice Sessions:**

- Complete the online form on our website(www.abdn.ac.uk/sls)
- We can offer sessions on Academic Writing, Academic Skills and Maths Skills
- We also have a specialist Adviser for dyslexia and other specific learning differences
- Please note however, that we do not provide a proof-reading service and we do not work on assignments yet to be submitted.



- **Workshops throughout term-time:**

- Held on a range of topics
- View these courses via our website and book a place: www.abdn.ac.uk/sls
- Booking opens Monday 9th September

Academic writing, note taking, time management, presentations, memory tricks, revision and much more ...

Enjoy your studies!