

Off Campus Students – Your Survival Guide

Enrolling in study as an off-campus student can be like taking a journey to a new part of the country. It is likely that you will experience excitement, anxiety and have many unanswered questions. It is important to know that you are not really on your own, even though you may be geographically at a distance from the campus and other students. The University's website is the most up to date way to find out about the many support services that can provide information and assistance to help guide you through your studies. This information includes:

Who to ask?

- Your course co-ordinators and lecturers will discuss aspects of the course material with you, either by phone or email. They are also the people to contact in the first instance if you need to apply for extra time to complete an assignment.
- The Student Centre will give you information about variation of enrolment, change of address and course advice.
- The staff of the Academic Skills Office will give you information and advice about academic research and writing, preparation for exams, referencing for assignments and other practical study skills advice.
- The staff at Student Assist provide services that include: counselling for personal, relationship or study-related matters; career advice to help guide you through the process of deciding on a career path and developing the skills to obtain a job after you graduate; and disability support/equity advice to ensure that you have access to necessary resources and facilities to undertake your studies.

Financial assistance

- If you have financial difficulties, talk to the counselling staff at Student Assist, the UNE Loans Officer, or the Services UNE Welfare Officer. Small loans are available either through the University to help purchase textbooks or for other costs associated with your course. Information can be found at: www.une.edu.au/sfassist/sfas.php
- Apply for scholarships offered by UNE – these are listed on the web.
- Budget for extra costs you will incur with your studies – textbooks, course materials, membership fees for any student organisations, postage, phone bills and transport and accommodation costs for Residential Schools.
- HECS – if you are working and are already over the income limit (\$39,825 in 2008), you may be better off paying HECS up front to take advantage of the discount offered, see www.goingtouni.gov.au for more information.
- Most major banks offer student loans with deferred repayment options, usually aimed at students towards the end of their degree.

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Time management

- Re-structure your time to give yourself at least 10 hours a week for every subject you are enrolled in. You may need to talk over your needs with other people in your household so they understand your need to make changes.
- Use 'waiting' time such as when waiting for a bus or sitting waiting for an appointment, as learning time, for example, have a series of index cards with summaries, definitions or formulae that you can read over.
- Use a timetable to work out and plan time for study. Make sure you still leave time for relaxation and leisure activities.
- Use your assignment due dates as a guide for long-term planning and set deadlines for each stage of working on the assignment.

Develop self-confidence in your academic ability

- It is much easier to stay motivated if you enjoy the subject that you are learning about, so enrol in units that you are especially interested in to begin your studies.
- Set yourself realistic and manageable goals. You are more likely to succeed if you keep your load to what you can handle. If you want to complete your studies faster, enrol in one or two units to begin, and then build up the number once you assess how you are managing.
- Ask for feedback from supportive friends and family. Discuss your ideas with them, ask them to read your assignments and then give constructive feedback. When you get a mark that you are pleased with, share your pleasure with them by celebrating in some way.
- Take in the written comments from your markers as constructive feedback. Recognise any weaknesses and contact the Academic Skills Office for advice on how to improve your assignment skills.
- Use time at residential schools to get to know your lecturers and other students. Sharing ideas and study strategies can really affirm that you are doing well.

When problems arise

- Let others know when you are having difficulty with your studies. If you start to feel overwhelmed, or unpredictable problems arise, then it is important to get help earlier rather than later. The Student Assist Counsellors offer counselling by phone for off-campus students. Lecturers, academic skills advisors and the Student Centre will all give advice by phone or email. You may be eligible to apply for extensions, special consideration or special exams.
- Check out all the resources available from links on the university home page.

For further information contact:

Student Assist
Phone: 02 6773 2897
Email: counselling.service@une.edu.au
www.une.edu.au/counselling