

Online Students – Your Survival Guide

Enrolling in study as an online 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 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. Set time aside to become familiar with your new territory. Start with the UNE homepage www.une.edu.au from where, under “[current students](#)” you will discover the many support services that can provide information and assistance to help guide you through your studies. You will also find your student portal called [MyUNE](#) that you securely log into. This portal is your online “doorway” to information about your enrolment, your study units, support services, the library, your student account and more.

Who to ask?

Unit information - As an online student, all of your unit information is found in your online learning platform called “[Moodle](#)”. When you log into each unit in Moodle, it is there, within the general discussion forums, that you can ask your fellow students and the unit coordinator questions about the unit, and can contribute to discussions about online lectures, reading materials, and assignments. Each unit coordinator will also have specific information about if, when and how you can email or phone him or her. If you are seeking an extension of time to complete assignments, some unit coordinators can be approached directly (via email, phone or in person) while others will have a specific administrative email that all requests for extensions must go via.

Social - Some online units have an informal chat space or forum, where you can have social discussion with your peers. You can also link in with UNE students via a number of specific UNE Facebook groups, and via [Student Clubs and Associations](#). You can get a sense of what other students are thinking via the Vibe in your MyUNE. You can also meet other UNE students when accessing one of the [UNE study centres](#) in NSW, when attending events [during intensive schools](#), and at the [Sydney Campus](#) if in Parramatta, Sydney. Just so you know, intensive schools are teaching periods where, for some online units, students are required to attend classes for consecutive days at the Armidale campus (or Parramatta or Tamworth for some units). Check , via the unit information tab in the Course and Unit Catalogue, if you have intensive schools in your online units and whether they are optional or compulsory. Do attend the optional schools if possible, as it is a stimulating, motivating time.

Course / Enrolment information - Student Central is the administrative hub of the University and is where you can seek information about your enrolment, course, graduation, etc. You can also find information about your enrolment under the MyEnrol tab in your MyUNE student portal. If you need to speak to someone, Student Central staff can be contacted via the Helpdesk on 02 6773 4444 and via email at [AskUNE](#).

Academic Skills and Support - 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.

Student Support - [Student Support](#) provide services that include: the student support team for information, referral and online support via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the [Insider's Guide @ UNE](#) blog; regional study centres throughout NSW; counselling for personal, relationship or study-related matters; career support to help guide you through the process of deciding on a career path and developing the skills to obtain a job after you graduate; access and inclusion support and equity advice to ensure that you have access to necessary resources and facilities to undertake your studies; and a student grievance unit that responds to your feedback and any complaints.

Financial assistance

If you have financial difficulties, talk to the uni4me [Student Advocacy Officer](#). Small loans are available either through the University to help purchase textbooks or for other costs associated with your course. Check out the [Financial Assistance](#) webpage for loan forms and tips to manage your money.

Time management

Re-structure your time to give yourself at least 10 hours a week for every subject you are enrolled in. Talk over your needs with other people in your household or possibly at your workplace so they understand what changes you require.

Use 'waiting' time such as when waiting for a bus or an appointment, as learning time. For example, listen to podcasts or recordings of your lectures, and review 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, leisure and "the unexpected". If you have a smartphone, check out the range of apps for managing time and reminder messages. Also check out time management tools like My168 for tertiary students at [thedesk](#), a website especially developed for Australian tertiary students.

Use assignment due dates, exam dates and intensive school dates as a guide for long-term planning. Guesstimate how long each part of your assignment will take (locating resources, reading, summarising, writing, proofing). If assignments are due around the same time, aim to work on several concurrently, otherwise work on one at a time but then allow time to proof read them all again before the due dates. Plan [with your family, employer, partner, pets!] for time-off to attend intensive schools.

Develop self-confidence in your academic ability

It is much easier to stay motivated if you enjoy the subject that you are learning about. Enrol in a course that you at least think will interest you. If you are not sure whether you are in the right course for you, talk to the [Careers](#) staff at UNE. Refer to the online [Course and Unit catalogue](#) for course and unit descriptions.

Set yourself realistic and manageable goals. This gets easier as you get better at knowing how long tasks take. You're more likely to succeed if you keep your load to what you can handle. Full-time study and full-time work do not mix. One of these needs to be part-time, especially if you have a family to look after as well. If you want to complete your studies faster, enrol in one or two units to begin with, and then build up the number once you assess how you are managing. If you are relying on Centrelink payments, check with Centrelink as to how you can spread your academic load across trimesters without affecting payments.

Ask for feedback from supportive friends and family. Discuss your ideas with them, ask them to read your assignments and to 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 written comments from your markers as constructive feedback. Recognise areas that need improvement and contact the Academic Skills Office about specific study skills. You are on a learning curve, so it's OK to have room to improve. If things don't improve, talk to the counselling team about whether you or others are sabotaging your studies. Maybe you don't think you deserve this degree or that someone let you into "uni" when no one was looking!! Lots of students have these thoughts, but then overcome them as they give themselves permission to do well.

Use time at any intensive 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 if you are having difficulty with your studies. If you start to feel overwhelmed, or unpredictable problems arise, get help earlier rather than later. The Student Support counsellors offer counselling by phone or Skype for online students. Lecturers, academic skills advisors, the Student Support Team and Student Central will all give advice by phone or email or via [AskUNE](#). You may also be eligible to seek an extension or extra time from your unit coordinator to complete assessments (check in your unit guide for how to do this). Under extenuating circumstances, special arrangements (special extensions of time, special consideration and special exams) can be applied for via relevant [forms](#).

For further information, go to the [Student Support](#) webpage.

The Student Support Team can be reach via studentsupport@une.edu.au or 02 6773 4430

You can get in touch with UNE Student Counselling and Psychological Services (CAPS) and the Special Needs and Equity Office via (02) 6773 2897 or email via [AskUNE](#).

Please phone rather than email to arrange an appointment.

The support you need to succeed