



THE UNIVERSITY
of ADELAIDE



CRICOS PROVIDER 00123M

O'Week seminar 2017 S1
Maths Learning Centre and Writing Centre
Jillian Schedneck & Nicholas Crouch
Succeeding with Assignments

adelaide.edu.au

seek LIGHT

Congratulations and welcome!

- Dr Jillian Schedneck, Writing Centre Coordinator
 - Support with anything to do with writing in your assignments
- Nicholas Crouch, Maths Learning Centre
 - Support for anything to do with Maths in your assignments
- We are located in Hub Central East, Level 3

The purpose of our talk

- different types of assessment tasks
- time management
- expectations
- academic integrity
- support

Grading system

- HD = High Distinction 85+
 - D = Distinction 75-84
 - C = Credit 65-74
 - P = Pass 51-64
 - F = Fail 50 and below
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- HDs & Ds are awarded to about 20% of students.
 - Credit still means that you've demonstrated a high level of understanding.
 - A Pass means you've satisfied the minimum requirements.
 - A fail means you haven't met the requirements of the assignment.

Introduce yourself to the person next to you

Find out:

1. What grades your partner is aiming for this semester
2. How many hours of study they plan to do each week
3. What other commitments they have (e.g. part-time job)

Get the facts about first year



45%

of students feel that school adequately prepares them for university



70%

report that the standard of university work is different to school work



45%

have outside commitments that negatively affect their learning

Tutors and lecturers have complex roles which means

different feedback & longer return times for assignments

Recommended amount of study outside of contact hours is

6-10 hours a week per subject



You will need to commit up to

48 hours a week to study (full time)

So what are the top tips for First Year students?

- > Take responsibility for your own learning
- > Keep up with the workload
- > Don't try and do too much on top of study!
- > Go to workshops and study support to develop skills
- > If in doubt, ask for help!

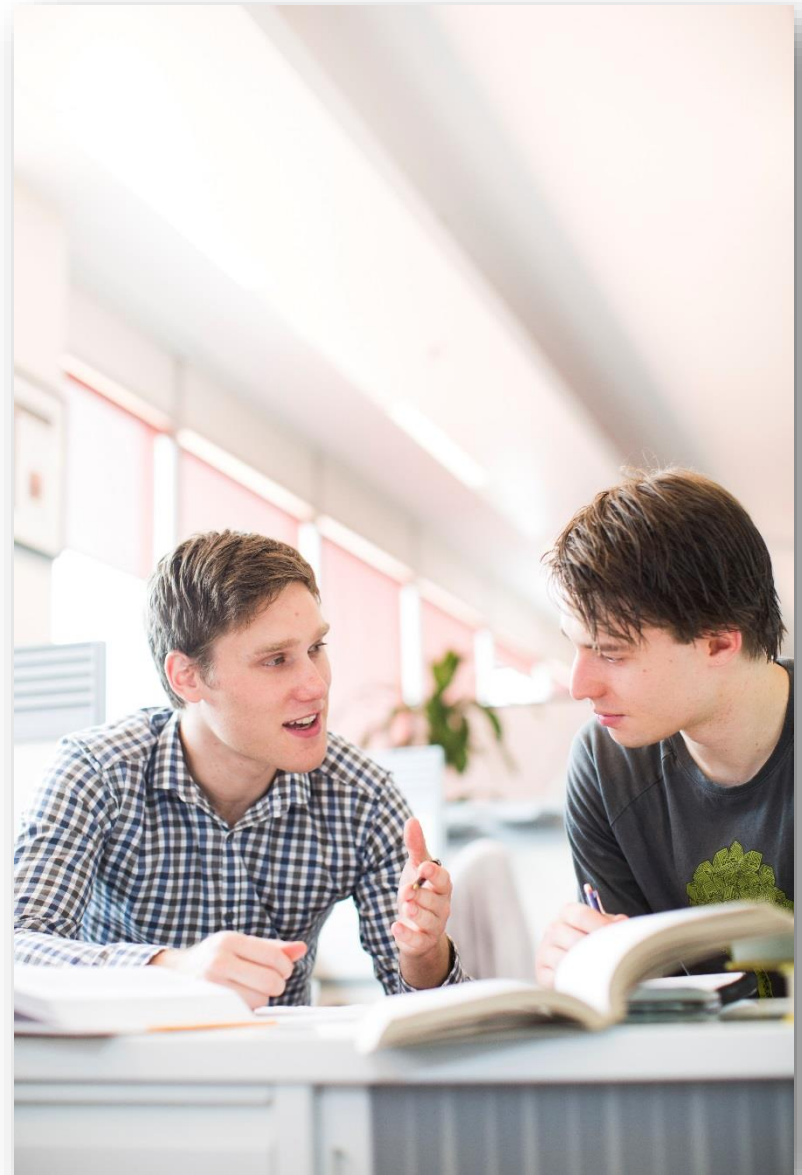
You are not alone! Need further help?
adelaide.edu.au/orientation/first-year

Expectations

Assessment tasks at university are often complex.

You probably won't be asked just to describe something.

You'll be evaluating ideas, considering how things are related to each other, and how theories can be applied to real-life problems.



What to do when you read your assignment task

- Identify what the assessment task is asking you to do
 - This information will be on the course outline and the course documents that your lecturer puts on MyUni
- Read the instructions several times
 - There may be a lot of information, and there may only be a brief description
- Ask your tutor if you are uncertain about anything
 - They are there to help you

Preparing for Maths assignments

- Typical aspects of Maths assignments
 - Often weekly assignments for maths courses
- At times, you'll be asked to figure out problems you've not been explicitly shown how to do
- All will be asking about the course content, so you will need access to your lecture notes
- Access to internet or specific software

Types of assessment

- Different courses have different types of assessment tasks.
- Lecturers choose them according to what you'll have to do in the workplace in your field
 - what skills they want you to develop and
 - what their preferences are

The Essay

- One of the most common assessment types
- A complex piece of writing with several long paragraphs
- aims to **persuade** the reader to agree with your viewpoint
- logically presenting evidence from other people's research in order to build an **argument**

Other types of assessments

- Just because your lecturer asks you to write something, that doesn't mean it's an essay.
- It might be a report, a reflection on an experience, a case study, a critical review, an analysis or something completely different.
- Each assignment type differs according to the course you're studying.

With all of your assessments, consider ...

Purpose—why are you being asked to do this assessment task? What will it demonstrate you have learned?

Audience—who is the intended audience? Who is your ‘reader’? What do they know about your topic?

Features—what are the common features of this type of writing?

Oral presentation

- There are many types of oral presentations
- The kind of presentation you will be asked to do will depend on what's typical in your area of study
- It's generally a structured talk where you
 - present information or
 - persuade your audience to agree with your viewpoint
 - leading a class discussion around a topic
 - It is not reading your essay out loud.

Group work

- Sometimes you'll be asked to work in a group.
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in groups?
- Talk to your partner and come up with two advantages and two disadvantages.
- What can you do to try to avoid these problems or deal with them once they've occurred?

How to solve some group work problems

- Establish expectations
- Communication between members
- Address issues early
- Assign roles to keep everyone accountable
- Team contract
 - Template available from MyUni

Maths assignments

- In many courses like science, engineering or economics, you will be given assignments which are a list of maths questions to do.
- You are expected to show reasoned arguments with a mixture of words and maths notation for each question.
- The marker wants to see how you came up with the answer, not just the answer itself.
- The content of the assignments is often similar to the content in the final exams.

A note about online quizzes

- Online quizzes are often used to check your understanding after each topic in a course.
- Think about whether you're better off doing this kind of assessment at home or on campus.
- If you do it on campus during working hours,
 - you're more likely to have a reliable internet connection
 - you'll have support if there are any technical issues which are most likely to occur in the first few weeks while you get used to the technology.

Submission of assignments

- Different assignments have to be submitted in different ways.
- Sometimes you have to submit a hard copy of your assignment, and sometimes you have to submit it online.
- Sometimes you have to do both.

Deadlines

- You are asked to complete your assignments by a certain date.
- Do you think these deadlines are fixed or flexible?
- Lecturers do give extensions for exceptional circumstances if you tell them early enough and provide evidence of your circumstances.

Time Management tips

- Plot your deadlines on a calendar.
- Decide when you're going to start each one.
- See whether you'll need to work on several assignments at once rather than finishing one before starting the next.
- Listen carefully in lectures and tutorials when your instructors and classmates talk about assignments.
- Pay attention to how much your assignments are worth.
 - You should spend more time and effort on an assignment that's worth 30% than one that's worth 10%.

Start early

- Assignments take longer than you expect, especially when you're doing them for the first time.
- There are seminars this week called Successful Time Management that will advise you on how to do this well.
- In 7 weeks' time, you will have a two-week mid-semester break.
- This is a break from classes, but not a break from study.
 - You'll probably want to use the break to relax a bit,
 - catch up on work that you missed,
 - work on assignments,
 - prepare for the following 4 weeks and
 - prepare an exam revision timetable.

Academic integrity

- Start with what you know from your background knowledge and from the information you've learnt in your courses.
- This will help you work out what you want to say, and what you need to find out.
- Remember that the information you find should be used to support what you want to say and should not form the whole assignment.
- The marker will probably already be familiar with the ideas you present.
- She wants to know your interpretation of them.

How to Use Sources

- Show how you've used other people's work to arrive at your own conclusions or answers.
- This might include summarising or paraphrasing
 - re-writing someone else's idea in your own words with the aim of using it to support your argument,
 - or quoting, which is using someone else's exact words and indicating this with quotation marks.
- Most of the time you will summarise or paraphrase.



Turnitin

- checks whether your assignment is similar to other texts.
- Turnitin will almost always find sections in your text which are the same as other texts.
 - For example, writers tend to use similar phrases such as “In conclusion”,
 - Quotes will come up as ‘unoriginal’ and so will reference lists entries.
- What’s important is for you to check that you haven’t just copied other people’s writing without attributing it.

Avoid plagiarism and Maths

- You might have trouble understanding how all this applies to a mathematical calculation, since oft-times there is a particular method they would like you to use.
- Well the definition of plagiarism is really passing of someone else's ideas as your own original ideas.
- The person reading your work wants to know how you arrived at your response.
- Also it will have a distinct style of its own, which will be shown mostly through the other words that are part of your work – the explanatory comments that show how the ideas connect together.”

Start Early and Get Support

- study group
- Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS)
- discussion board on MyUni
- lecturer/tutor
- subject librarian
- Maths Learning Centre
- Writing Centre



Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS):

- This is where a student who was successful in this course in the past runs classes to help this year's students to understand the course content.
- The PASS leader will help you find out more about the content as a group.
- Not every course has PASS. If there is PASS in your course, the lecturer will tell you.
- You can also look it up on the PASS website.

Form your own study group

- meet regularly throughout the semester,
 - think about what you want to achieve in each meeting.
- Your lecturer may set up a discussion board on MyUni, and this may be used in different ways in different courses.
 - In some courses, the discussion board may be student-led, so you might post your thoughts and questions here,
 - in others the lecturer might direct conversation and participation might be assessed.

Lecturer and Tutor office hours

- They are usually couple of hours per week.
- You have to make sure you've approached them with questions well before your deadlines.
- Think carefully about whether the information or advice you need has already been provided in your course info.
- If you're about to see them in a tutorial, think twice about clogging up their inbox with a question you could just ask face-to-face.
- If your question is complex and requires a complex answer, face-to-face will be faster and easier. The more specific your questions the better for both of you.

Writing and Maths Learning Centre

- located in Hub Central
- These centres offer a drop-in service, which means you don't need to make an appointment.
- Staffed with Writing Mentors and Maths Tutors to support you throughout the semester.

- 10-4 Monday - Friday

When to use the Writing Centre

- If you're having trouble getting started on an assignment
- If you need some help finding and using research within your assignment
- If you want to know if you're on the right track with your assignment
- If you want some help with that bane of all students' existence: referencing
- If you're unhappy with your marks and want to learn how to get higher ones

How to use the Maths Learning Centre

- When you visit, sit down somewhere and one of the staff will come to you – you might have to wait 20 mins to half an hour.
- There are signs on the tables to write what course you are studying so that other students can sit with you and you can study together.
- You can bring your assignments, but we won't answer the assignments for you or check if your answers are right.
- The staff are trained to make sure you have learned something you can do on your own each time you visit.



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