

CHECKLISTS FOR SUCCESS

Strategies for Maximising Your Success
Student Academic Skills
University of Otago



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University
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Student Academic Skills

Welcome to your first year at the University of Otago! Getting used to a new learning environment can take time. This booklet is designed to give you some strategies and tips to consider, making transitioning in university study easier.

This booklet is an introduction to some of the skills and strategies that will help you successfully complete your studies at Otago.

Based on an original booklet developed by OUSA and the University of Otago.

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What I can do to be a successful student?

Studying at university is very different from studying at high school. For example:

- There is no 'homework'.
- No-one will check whether you have done any studying.
- You have to plan assignments in your overall semester plan.
- You can choose where you study – you can move around and work anywhere.
- You can decide when you want to study.
- There is a lot of un-allocated time in between classes this is not 'free time', but time you use for study activities, such as revising course material.
- There is often a lot of material for the exams so leaving studying till just before the exams is very unwise.

Checklist for success

- Am I being productive with my time?
- Do I revise course material every week?
- Do I review my lecture notes after I have taken them (rather than filing them away)?
- Do I vary my study places?
- Do I talk to other students about course work? Have I organised one or more study groups? Do I attend all classes?
- Do I know what resources are on Blackboard for my courses?
- Am I clear about assignments, the marks associated with them and due dates? Do I know what study/learning resources are on-line?
- Do I look at feedback and understand it so I can do better next time?

What are tutorials all about?

'Tutorial' refers to an informal teaching session that complements a lecture. Tutorials can take many forms and your tutor may provide opportunities for:

- Clarifying ideas covered in lectures
- Overviewing course material and objectives
- Exploring some aspects of lecture material in detail
- Solving problems
- Practising speaking and active listening skills
- Debating ideas
- Developing independent thinking skills

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- Do I know the time, location, frequency and whether attendance is compulsory (check eVision or the paper's Blackboard site)?
- Have I marked myself off on the attendance roll? Know what you need to do if you are sick and cannot attend. Do I have the tutor's contact details?
- Am I prepared? Have I done the pre-readings or questions? Do I know the topic being covered? (check your course book, course outline or Blackboard).
- Have I brought everything I need to bring to class tutorial workbook, text book, Powerpoint slide print-out, etc.
- Have I brought any questions I have (e.g. questions from pre-readings, lectures, or writing up lecture notes)?
- Am I ready to pick up any important 'stuff' that the tutor may mention and ask questions or discuss issues?
- Did I have to complete any tutorial tasks or test/quiz?
- Am I clear about tutorial tasks, the marks associated with them and due dates?
- Am I clear about the assessment requirements of the course and marking

criteria? Do I know what questions to ask about these issues?

What do I need to know about using computers at university?

When you come to the University of Otago, you will need computer access to course material and the Internet. This can be:

- From your home computer.
- Using university wireless from your laptop, phone or other WiFi device.
- Using student computers in any of our computer rooms.
- These computers are equipped with free software for you to use during your time at the university.

Student IT advisers based in the Central Library (they wear yellow jackets) can help with all your computer needs.

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- Complete registration and obtain a student ID card (username, student email address, and password and PIN).
- Change my password to something I can remember, and no one else can guess (don't use symbols).
- Check [eVision](#) for my course details, timetable and tutorials.
- Check my student email account regularly or forward it to my personal email account (in eVision). Get my laptop, phone or other WiFi device working on the student wireless network.
- Visit IT advisers in Central Library for set-up handouts or ask them for help. Install Sophos anti-virus on my computer for free [Sophos](#)
- Access [Blackboard](#) Many courses put lecture slides and other material here.
- Visit the Student IT website [Student IT](#) for computer help and setup instructions.
- Save my work files in multiple places: home, on University computers, email, USB flash drives, etc. Add printing funds to my card and learn how printing works on the Student IT website
- Find the location of computer rooms and wireless coverage on the Student IT website (above)

What do the University libraries have to offer?

- Wonderful facilities & services
- Wicked learning support
- World class research collections
- Welcoming staff
- Wireless access
- Warmth

Checklist for success

Do I know...

- Which of the six Libraries on Campus best suit my needs?
- That the best place to start when figuring out how the Library system works is the Library webpage [University of Otago Library](#)
- That I can ask for help at any Library desk and if the staff can't help me they will find someone who can?
- That I get course readers from UniPrint in the Central Library?
- That all my course readings are listed under "Course Reserve" in the Library search/ketu?
- That I use my student ID card to get books out of the Library and need to put money on it to be able to print out assignments and course readings?
- That I need to reference books, videos, and journal articles in my assignments?
- That the Library webpage has a section on citation styles where I can use an online citation generator to get my reference list sorted?
- That I can set up text alerts through the Library catalogue to remind me when books are due?
- That to use the Library group study rooms I need to book ahead through the Library catalogue?

Sometimes it's not WHAT you know, but WHO you know...

The University has lots of useful services, resources, and people to help you make this adjustment and make your time at university a successful and enjoyable experience.

So why not check out...

Checklist for success

- University of Otago Libraries – check out your subject guide for your very own Library liaison person - [University of Otago Library](#)
- Student Academic Skills– study skills workshops, resources and learning advice - [Student Academic Skills](#)
- Maori & Pacific Island Student Support Services – academic and cultural support and mentoring - [Maori & Pacific Support Services](#)
- Disability Information & Support – additional resources and support for students studying with a disability, impairment, injury or medical conditions - [DIS](#)
- Student IT to answer your computer and technology questions - [Student IT](#)
- Career Development Centre – where is your degree taking you? - resources, workshops and career counseling - [Student Careers](#)
- Chaplaincy – for all your spiritual needs - [Chaplaincy](#)
- OUSA Student Support Centre – free, confidential, independent information and advice for students - [OUSA](#)
- Student Health – taking care of your health and well-being – [Student Health](#)
- Recreation Services – don't distress, get de-stressed! Sports, action, arts, craft and leisure activities – [Student Recreation Services](#)
- Check out [Student Services](#) for more student services

Tips for success in labs

- Do I know** the time, location and frequency of my labs? Check out eVision or Blackboard if in doubt.
- Come prepared.** Before each lab read your lab manual and any assigned pre-readings..
- Safety Equipment.** What do you need? Footwear that covers your feet (both heels and toes), and purchase a lab coat from the Archway shop to protect your clothes.
- Ask questions in the lab.** If you don't understand something, don't be afraid to ask the demonstrator or supervisor. You can also ask any questions about the course.
- Follow the instructions in the lab manual exactly.** They are tried and true and they work!
- Talk to the students around you in the lab.** You can help each other understand concepts, engage in group learning, or chat in general about the course.
- Be proactive and help yourself.** Bring your lecture notes and/or your textbook to the lab.
- Learn the practical techniques demonstrated in the lab.** They're designed to teach you practical aspects of your subject that you're not going to learn in lectures.
- Attendance.** Make sure you know how your attendance is recorded and if there are any lab assessments that you must complete.
- Sick?** If you miss a compulsory class or assessment for health reasons, provide your course administrator with a completed health declaration form. Available here: [Health Declarationhealthdeclaration.html](#)

Tips for success in lectures

- Be prepared for your lecture. Make sure you have read through any handouts and completed any required readings.
- Lecture objectives are the key. These tell you what the lecture is about and the level of detail you need to know information. Read them before the lecture.
- Know where your lecture is in advance and get there early. Some lectures are streamed, if so it is important you go to the lecture that you are streamed into. See the appropriate course administrator if you have any problems.
- Take notes. Find and use a note-taking method that best suits your learning style. Check out Student Learning Development for more info: [Student Academic Skills](#) or email sas@otago.ac.nz
- Get to know the students around you. You might meet a potential study group member or make a friend.
- Be respectful of the people around you. They are there to listen and learn from the lecturer. Catch up with your friends between lectures.
- Ask questions either in the lecture or afterwards on Blackboard.
- Summarise and review your notes after each lecture. Identify key points and check you have covered the lecture objectives. If necessary, do more readings. Write revision questions to help you prepare for your terms test or exam.
- Know what resources are available to you. Are the lecture PowerPoints, audio or video files available on Blackboard? Are there help sessions, tutorials, PASS sessions?
- Are you clear about the assessment requirements and criteria of the course? Check out the course information book or Blackboard site for details or contact the course administrator.

Find a peer leader

One of the best ways to have an enjoyable start to your academic career is to meet up with another student who started university not too long ago: a peer leader.

Your peer leader can answer the many questions you will have in the first few weeks as you settle into Otago University life and can also direct you to some of the other great support services.

If you do not live in a residential college, it is even more important to have this support, by joining the Locals programme which offers opportunities to help the transition into university life. Go to [Locals](#) to find out more, or email locals@otago.ac.nz

Examples of peer leaders on campus include:

- PASS facilitators
- Residential assistants
- Locals leaders and mentors
- Maori Centre mentors
- International office mentors
- Kiwi hosts
- Senior students in your department
- Student staff around campus

Study smart quiz questions

Test your knowledge

1. What is the website address for Blackboard at Otago and why is it important for my study?
2. List five student services and how you can use them for a successful and stress free first year.
3. How many libraries are there on the Dunedin Campus? Which of can I use?
4. What is my Otago uni email address? Why is it important for my study at Otago?
5. Where can I get stuff printed out and how much does it cost for an A4 b&w page?
6. Four key bits of information I get from eVision are...
7. What colour is the front door of the OUSA Support Centre and what are their hours?
8. What is Library Course Reserve and how do I make the most of it in my study?
9. Where do I find out where and when my labs / tutorials are held?
10. What is the website address for StudentIT and what colour jackets do the friendly StudentIT help staff wear?
11. Who handles lost property and what are their hours?
12. What can I do with my time at university in between classes to enhance my success?
13. Where would you find the Careers Development Centre?
14. List three locations of student computer rooms and three places where I can get wireless internet access on Campus.
15. Where is the Student Learning Development office? Name three of their handouts.