



**DEAKIN**  
UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA

**Advice for new  
Deakin students**

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## **Acknowledgements**

The research on which this guide is based was funded in part through a Deakin University Strategic Learning and Teaching Grant. We would like to thank our colleagues Dr Anna Lichtenberg and Associate Professor Judy Nagy for their contributions to the research that underpins this guide. We would like to thank the Library and the Division of Student Life for their contributions to the guide.

# Move to Uni

University can be a big challenge, perhaps even more so when you are not sure what to expect.

We've asked Deakin students like you what has helped them succeed at uni and now we're passing on their advice about how YOU can be a successful uni student.

Below are some quotes from successful Deakin University students who we interviewed in 2010.

They include students from all Campuses of Deakin; students studying on campus and off campus; students from a wide range of courses; mature age and younger students; and full-time and part-time students.

## 1. Successful students say: IT'S A LOT ABOUT ATTITUDE

- Get involved: don't come to uni and hang back, you really have to ask a lot of questions, find out a lot of things early to make it a lot better, a lot easier. If you sort of go there and be all shy and just wait for things to happen, it makes things a little bit harder.
- Find out as much as you can about everything, and just go exploring and take as many books, booklets and brochures as you need, because they do provide a lot of help.
- Feel free to ask questions – there are no stupid questions.
- Be positive and not be too critical of yourself.
- Just don't be daunted. Higher education I always believed was something that was beyond me financially and academically, and that's not the case. It's all about the University actually wanting you to succeed, wanting to help wherever they can and however they can.

*Tip: Make the most of Orientation Week – it is absolutely essential if you want to make a great start to uni life. Orientation is packed with activities that will enable you to meet other students and staff, become familiar with the Campus and services available, and learn more about your course. And there's lots of fun to be had too! An online orientation for off-campus students is also available. See: [deakin.edu.au/transition/](http://deakin.edu.au/transition/)*

## 2. Successful students say: ORGANISE YOUR TIME

- Just keep on top of your study, do your readings and make sure that you are up to date each week, because otherwise it can start piling up on you and when it gets to that stage, it gets harder and harder to get back, so it's much easier to do your work week by week.
- When you first start, you get your timetable and it's, 'Oh, I'm only here 12 hours a week, that's awesome', but you don't realise there's a lot of hours' work outside of those classes that you do have to do as well.
- Keep on top of your assessments, don't leave them until the last minute.
- Keep focusing on the assignments that you have to do. Don't try to do all of it because you won't be able to get through it all and you will get into a panic and you'll get confused about it all. So just make sure that you know when your assignments are due and focus on your assignments, and let your reading be guided by that as well so that you don't feel like you're going to slip behind. At the end of the day it's the assignment that you're marked on, that will get you through the subject.
- Print out your unit guide and everything you're going to need, at the beginning of the term and get them organised into folders. I keep everything from week one together, everything from week two together, all the way through and then I find that when I'm either doing an assignment or studying for exams I can go back and work my way methodically through it and it's all in one place.
- Always read your unit guides and make sure you know when your assignments and everything is due.
- Organise yourself, say, read a week ahead, so you know what's coming. Then if something does happen, you're not as far behind. If you want to go away for the weekend or something, try and work it that you get that little bit ahead so you can go away and enjoy yourself. I know you can't get it spot on all the time but try to keep all your workload managed so you don't end up with weeks and weeks of study that you're never going to catch up on.
- Get into the process of writing down what you do each day, like at nine o'clock I go to work or at nine o'clock I go to the gym, and when you look at it day by day and if you break it up hour by hour like the time management course suggests, you can actually look at the last week and say to yourself, 'Oh, I thought I did more study than that, but it only shows I did half an hour each day, which is, over five days, not much at all'. You need the physical evidence in front of you to see whether you're on track or not. So I would say just do that for a week or two or three.
- If you've got a family, it's getting your family life organised. And think about what you're prepared to give up to do the degree. So for me, I gave up my social life, and I gave up going to the gym. You can't just squeeze University into your existing life.
- If you have a part time job, make sure your employer knows the situation and that you are studying and give them your timetable so they don't roster you on the days that you have class.

*Tip: Get organised early! Download a copy of the Trimester planner from the Study Skills website and enter in all study periods, exams, assignment deadlines and other important dates (including major tasks and family/social commitments). Put this up above your study desk. It gives you an overall view of the extra busy times, so you can organise around them. You can also attend a time management workshop, access self-help resources online or meet with a Study Skills adviser to find out more about how you can best organise your time. See: [deakin.edu.au/studyskills/](http://deakin.edu.au/studyskills/)*

### 3. Successful students say: ATTEND CLASS

- The main thing: attend the lectures as a given, and pay attention while you are there.
- Attend everything, because you do miss out not attending.
- Attend all your lectures and tutes, it's the best starting point.
- Go to your classes, your tutes. I know you don't have to, like they don't call a roll, but it makes a big difference, there's stuff you get in there that you can't get just from reading your text books and going through the study guide.
- Come to the lectures. Make sure you come. It's invaluable. In going to the lectures you actually do get to know your lecturers or tutors a bit better and it makes it more comfortable, easier to talk to them, to receive help. It keeps you motivated, keeps you going.

### 4. Successful students say: USE UNI RESOURCES

- There are a lot of resources around that you can use, like student services and particularly make good use of the Library. There are tutorials to go to in your first year to learn how to properly use the University Library.
- Be sure to take the Library tours. I needed to learn how to use the databases, and honestly I actually think they should be compulsory.
- I got a little red book at the start, an essay writing and referencing guide, that was really helpful because it had detailed step-by-step examples.
- Take advantage of DSO, so just going on there, posting a question, using it to access study guides, lectures, everything like that.

- Do the Introduction to University Study course.
- Don't be afraid to apply for scholarships. You might get rejected, but there's always a chance that you could get it.
- Use as much of the support services of the uni as you can.

*Tip: Staff at Student Life know what students need to be successful at Deakin and we have tailored our services to help you achieve this. Our services include:*

- accommodation on campus and off campus
- career planning
- counselling
- child care
- Deakin Card (stored value ID card)
- financial assistance (loans, grants, food vouchers)
- Jobshop (for job opportunities while studying and beyond)
- medical centres (on-campus doctors and nurses)
- international student support
- multifaith chaplaincy
- fitness clubs and sports stadiums
- study skills (language and learning support)
- transition (helping you adjust to University life).

You can access our services in a range of ways including group workshops/tutorials, one- to one consultations (face to face, by email or phone), drop-in centres and self-help resources. See: [deakin.edu.au/studentlife/](http://deakin.edu.au/studentlife/)

*Tip: See the amazing range of Library resources and services available at the end of this guide!*

## 5. Successful students say: GET SUPPORT FROM OTHER STUDENTS

- Talk to people, 'cause that was one of my problems, I didn't really communicate much. Even someone that is just sitting next to you, just have a chat to them, saying, 'How are you going with this, how are you finding that?'
- Even if you don't make friends straight away, there are other people that are in the same situation, as alienating as it can be when you start out at uni.
- Try and see if there's someone in the local area that you can connect up with, and I say that because in my first year there was another girl here that was doing a couple of subjects that overlapped and that was incredibly helpful. We supported one another and we did also egg each other on. I'd say, 'Hey, have you read that journal yet?' She'd say, 'No, I haven't got around to it', and I'd say, 'Oh, come on, it's a really good one. I'll come over to your place on Tuesday afternoon, if you've got it written by then we can sit down and talk about it'.
- I reckon it's really good to form a study group and then you can just kind of swap ideas so it can effectively help you learn.
- When the crunch does come and it is getting really difficult and you think, 'Well really, should I be doing this or dropping a unit?' if you're involved with people who have actually got further than you have, it can give you the encouragement and hope that does get you there.

*Tip: If you are an on-campus student, you can get support from other students at the Host Program – the very first event in Orientation Week. Your student Host will introduce you to other students and give you some time to get to know each other. You'll then go on a tour of the Campus so that you can quickly get to know where your lectures will be, where to go for help, and where to grab a good coffee. See: [deakin.edu.au/transition/](http://deakin.edu.au/transition/)*

*Tip: DUSA, the Student Association, is a great way to get to know other students. Run by students for students, DUSA offers a range of clubs, societies and events for members. They also have online forums and study groups available for on- and off-campus students. DUSA can also advocate for you in a wide range of academic and disciplinary matters – they are there to protect your student rights. See: [dusa.org.au](http://dusa.org.au)*

## 6. Successful students say: TALK TO THE TEACHERS

- Always ask questions, and take all the help you can get.
- Ask questions if you're not sure, or if you don't want to ask questions, email.
- Speak to your lecturer or your tutor if you have concerns, if you don't understand something.
- Ask questions, talk to the lecturers, because you kind of get the impression, they give their lecture and then they walk out and then you go home and you do the rest. But they are available to talk to, to send them an email or to talk on DSO. At the end of the day, they are there to help you learn, so make sure you use that.
- If you're getting stressed and don't know what you're supposed to do, get confirmation from your tutor and lecturers, and get them to help you, because they're always just an email away, which is good.
- If you don't understand a task, organise a time to talk to the lecturer on the phone to clarify things ... Most lecturers are happy to talk briefly on the phone, so run ideas for assignments past them if you are unsure or want to tackle something a little bit different, or else use email.
- Get to make as many connections as you can, even by asking questions on DSO, or emailing your Unit Chair. Having those connections is a pretty big thing when you need a reference or something like that.

## 7. Successful students say: GET THE BALANCE RIGHT

- Prioritise uni before earning money. Earn enough to suffice and cover your bills, but don't work to the extent that you are burning yourself out with employment, just to buy treats or luxuries. Focus on your studies, because in the long run it is going to be so much more beneficial. The short-term benefits of working a lot don't outweigh the long-term benefits of studying hard. I learnt that the hard way.
- Find the balance between work and study and boyfriends and sport or whatever else you do.
- Just finding that balance I guess is the tricky part, the balance between work, family, study.
- Mix it up with social activities.
- Make sure that you don't party too much!

*Tip: Using a budget planner is a great way for you to get a clear idea of how you are managing your money by working out regular income and expenses. Try one today at [deakin.edu.au/current-students/services/student-loans/budget/](http://deakin.edu.au/current-students/services/student-loans/budget/)*

## 8. Successful students say: WORK HARD

- Being self-disciplined enough to make yourself do the work frequently is what ends up making you succeed.
- Do all the homework, it might make you the biggest nerd, but it pays off in dividends in the end. If you are half-hearted, don't bother.
- Expect that uni involves work. I think a lot of people come to uni and think that it is just a big party.
- It really is about effort, it's not some magical thing that you have to have money to be able to achieve.
- I would say that it is really about the amount of effort that you put in to your study and that's it. You will get out exactly what you put in.

*Tip: It is worth making the effort to attend the free workshops and events offered by a wide range of services in Student Life including Careers and Study Skills. These events are designed to help you maximise your success at uni and in your future career. Keep an eye out on 'what's on this week' on the current students Gateway to find out what is coming up. See: [deakin.edu.au/current-students/](http://deakin.edu.au/current-students/)*



# Advice from your friendly Deakin Library

## *Personalised Support*

- Be the first to know – Join a Library tour at the beginning of Trimesters 1 and 2.
- Ask friendly Library staff @ help desks, and get accurate answers on the phone.
- Not on campus today? Get prompt response to queries via email.
- If the Frontline staff can't help, they can arrange for you to talk with a Library subject expert who can.
- Notice a bright red t-shirt? Student Rovers can help you find that book, assist with basic IT issues, share their new-to-uni survival strategies.
- Learn about academic journals and how to find useful articles at information research classes.
- Learn more in-depth search skills at Library database tutorials.
- Get personalised assistance in one-on-one meetings with librarians.
- Get in-person help with your laptop or application from the IT staff at the Library service desk.
- 'How do I ...?' guides on the Library website answer questions, after midnight!
- Get instant help with SMS/Meebo chat assistance 10am to 4pm in Trimesters 1 and 2.
- Keep posted on the newest services and offerings via the Library's Twitter and Facebook accounts.
- Prefer do it yourself learning? Go to Smart Searcher/Smart Researcher: online training modules to develop your research skills.

## *Library spaces and facilities*

- Study for exams or complete your group assignments in the Library after class with extended Library opening hours.
- Book a group study room to prepare your group projects, practise group presentations or just get together..
- Use a Library desktop computer to access DSO, Microsoft Office or the internet.
- Need to listen? – There are headphones for loan.
- Heard about e-book readers? – There are Amazon Kindles to try out.
- Reflect and dream in the quiet thinking and study spaces.
- Power up your laptop or spread out your books on big tabletops.
- Borrow a laptop for a few hours (at Melbourne Campus only).
- Print/copy/scan using the printers in the Library
- Use the tech-enabled room with disability support software, catch the lift or use the mobility scooter (at Melbourne Campus).
- Keep your batteries charged with coffee shops in the Libraries at Melbourne and Geelong Campuses.

## *Library collections*

The Library's extensive collections are the best-kept secret. The Library shelves and the Library website have millions of treasures for your assignments and study, including:

- Books – both traditional and electronic.
- DVDs – films, documentaries and more.
- Library databases for discovering research articles, standards, statistics.
- Unit e-readings available via DSO or the Library catalogue.
- Scholarly articles in print and electronic journals.

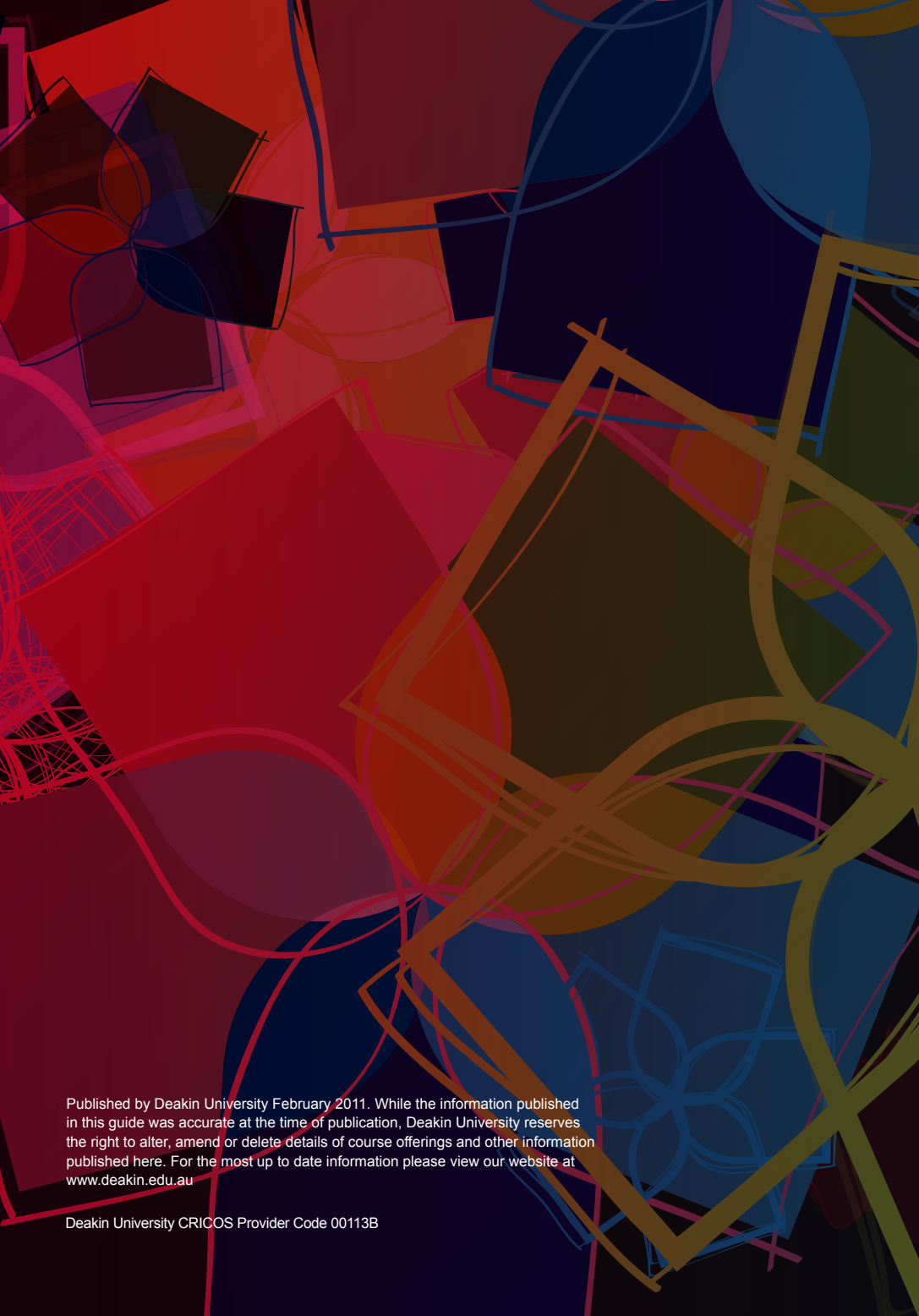
Borrow from the collection using your student card. Access the online resources – e-books, e-journal articles and library databases – anywhere, anytime, using your Deakin ID and password when you're away from Campus:

- Library subject guides are a great starting point for information sources for your course with key resources recommended by Library staff.

***So let's summarise the advice from successful students. These students advise you to:***

1. Be motivated in your attitude.
2. Manage your time well.
3. Attend all your classes.
4. Use the resources the uni offers.
5. Work together with other students.
6. Ask teachers for help.
7. Try to have a balanced life, and
8. Work hard.

***GOOD LUCK!***



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