Smart Start
A COMPANION FOR NEW STUDENTS AT UNISA GLOBAL
Get a Smart Start

Everything you need to know about starting university study.
Welcome to UniSA
University of South Australia Vice Chancellor and President

You are about to start on the greatest intellectual adventure you could possibly imagine; you will experience life in a wider community and get an opportunity to make your life bigger and better.

By undertaking university study, you will join hundreds of thousands of people just like yourself at universities around the world who are preparing for international careers.

You are joining a University of South Australia program with one of our partners across Asia, so you have already begun the internationalisation of your life. The programs we have prepared for you have been developed in collaboration with the industries and professions that you will enter, preparing you to be the new professionals who will drive national and international economies through your skills, capabilities and the innovation that study will instil in you.

But all that is in the future. Right now we want to help you navigate your first steps into university study. This booklet is a companion to guide your first few months in your new environment as well as provide information that will be relevant throughout your whole degree. In it you will find tips on how to focus on successful studies, how to manage your time and the tasks you’ve been given and how to make the most of the next few years of your life at university.

Work hard – but enjoy your studies too. We hope this is just the beginning of your lifelong love of learning and if it is, know that we will be with you every step of the way, ready to help whenever we can.

I wish you all the success in the world as you begin your adventure.

Professor David Lloyd
Vice Chancellor and President
University of South Australia

“No matter which UniSA partner institution across Asia you choose, you are a student of the University of South Australia and I look forward to visiting you in the future. Good luck with all your studies.”
Inside the Smart Start companion

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- Jeffrey Mao, Engineering
- Fifi-Odule Munezero, Medical Science
- Ben Van Loggem, Architectural Studies
- Saleh Abdulaziz Al Nefaie, Engineering
Making a smart start

Starting university is amazing and confusing. Universities are big and complex, and there’s so much to learn all at once. It’s important to work out where to find answers to your questions.

**Smart Start** offers advice to help you prepare for success. It’s designed for you to browse through and read as you need it.

**Tips for getting started:**

1. **Attend orientation**
   This is the best way to learn about university study and your courses, to meet staff and to make new friends. Orientation sets you up for a great start to your studies.

2. **Be proactive**
   If you’re not sure how to solve a problem, contact your local administration office. Don’t be shy to ask questions.
Connecting to UniSA

Connect with your courses

The learning activities in each course are designed to enable you to build knowledge and develop your professional skill base.

At the start of each course read the Course Outline carefully. This is your key source for everything you need to know about the course, including:
- Course aims
- Weekly schedule
- Assignment guidelines and due dates

Prepare for classes by doing the readings and any preparation exercises so you can join in class discussions. Your grades will reflect how much you've engaged with the course, and this means keeping up with your studies every week.

Connect with your teachers

It takes time to learn what’s expected of you in this new environment. Talk to your Course Coordinators and lecturers, making a note of their names and contact details, as well as the times they’re available for consultation.

Connect with other students

Make friends in your courses so you can help each other throughout your studies. Share information and discuss coursework and readings with them.

MAKE FRIENDS

Berfu Orhan Bekmez,
Graduate Certificate in Project Management

“I really enjoyed the way courses were taught and the multicultural composition of classes. I think group assignments in the courses really helped to make friends.”
Cracking the codes

Everything about university study has a code — program codes, course codes, and study period codes — and it’s important to know how these work.

Program and course codes

Program codes have four elements: your mode of study, your type of degree, the program name and your local administration office.

The courses you study are part of a program, which belongs to a Division or School.

These courses also have codes, e.g. MENG 2009 for Mechanical Engineering Practice N. Get to know these codes as it will make communication with staff and your local administration office easier.

Study period codes

At UniSA, your courses are delivered in study periods (known elsewhere as semesters or terms). A standard study period has ten weeks of classes, with a one week teaching break in the middle and extra weeks for exams at the end. Teaching breaks are not really holidays. While there are no classes, they coincide with busy times of the study period when lots of assignments are due.
Navigating UniSA

Navigating your courses

Use your myUniSA portal to connect to the websites for each of your courses. These sites contain your Course Outlines and links to online activities, readings and resources.

Navigating the online environment

Once you have enrolled, you need to start investigating online sites such as the Library and L3 (Language, Literacies and Learning) that will support your study. Do this as early as possible to give you an advantage when it’s time to start work on assignments.

Useful tips:

1. Login early
   The sooner you log into myUniSA, the sooner your learning begins.

2. Explore
   Get to know the layout of your course websites, as you’ll be using them each week of the study period.

3. Read the Course Outline
   Here your Course Coordinator has outlined the structure of activities for the study period. To successfully complete each course, follow the schedule of tasks – including readings, attendance, activities, and submission of assignments – provided in the Course Outline.

Communicating by email

Most communication outside of class is by email. Here are some tips for emailing teaching staff:

- Check to see if myUniSA or your Course Outline can answer your question first
- Write a clear subject line
- Identify yourself, including your student ID, course and program (it’s worthwhile creating an email signature)
- Be polite
- Write in complete sentences and keep the message concise

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How do I learn?

To learn successfully you need to use all opportunities provided. Active learning means coming to class ready to discuss key ideas and accessing additional support when you need it. The faster you get used to this style of learning, the more successful you will become. Here’s a quick guide:

Lectures
- Provide an introduction to course content in a structured way
- Indicate content that you need to explore later in more depth
- Are useful to revisit when revising for assignments or exams

Classes/Workshops/Practical or Studio sessions
- Are often compulsory (you must attend a certain number to pass)
- Often require discussion of prepared work
- Provide opportunities to apply course knowledge in a practical manner
- Provide opportunities for asking questions and discussing course content

Required readings
- Provide the basis of class discussion and supporting material for assignments
- Elaborate on the lecture content
- Introduce key theorists and theories in the field of study

Online discussions
- Give you an opportunity to raise questions and explore ideas in your own time
- Provide a real-time forum where you can post pre-prepared questions

Staff consultations
- Provide opportunities to access advice tailored to your learning needs

Professional placements/work experience
- Allow you to apply your learning in a professional setting under supervision

Informal study groups
- Provide opportunities to raise questions and explore ideas with peers
- Provide insight into other people’s questions and learning

To learn successfully you need to use all opportunities provided. Active learning means coming to class ready to discuss key ideas and accessing additional support when you need it. The faster you get used to this style of learning, the more successful you will become. Here’s a quick guide:
Assessment

Assessment tasks are where you demonstrate that you’ve understood the course content and can apply the information and ideas you’ve learned.

Each course has a set number of assignments (often 3-4). Some courses also include weekly activities like quizzes and others exams at the end of the study period.

Assignment workload is low at the start of each study period when you’re being introduced to new content. The workload and assessment values increase, with small assignments initially and large assignments or exams at the end of the study period.

Different assignments for different courses are often due around the same time. This means a student enrolled in three or four courses may have three or four assignments due close together. The best way to manage this is prioritising and managing your workload from the beginning by getting into some good study habits. If you are combining part-time study with full-time work or other responsibilities your success will depend on your time management and communication skills (see Time Management, p. 16)

Typical Workload Overview

Workload increases at a MODERATE RATE.
One assignment per course.
Some assignments share due dates.

WEEKS 1–5

Workload increases to a MEDIUM RATE.
One assignment per course.
Assignments increase in size and value.
Some assignments share due dates.

WEEKS 6–7
+ one week teaching break

Workload increases to a MAXIMUM RATE.
One assignment per course.
Assignments increase in size and value.
Some assignments or exams on same day.

WEEKS 8–10
+ Swot Vac + Exams
If you are worried about your studies, it is up to you to seek support before you are overwhelmed.

Jeffrey Mao, Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical and Advanced Manufacturing)

“In my spare time I am very active in social activities such as volunteer work. I will never forget those precious memories after I graduate. I look forward to using the hands-on skills and the professional knowledge that I learned at UniSA.”

There are many different types of assignments at UniSA

These range from written assignments like essays and practical reports to group presentations. Each assignment has its own specific format and rules. In addition to carefully reading assignment requirements, you can find out more about these different assignment types online at unisa.edu.au/l3

Read assignment guidelines carefully to make sure you interpret the task correctly.

It’s essential to learn how to properly research and reference in your assignments

Referencing is a requirement for almost all university assessment tasks. Showing the sources used to develop your opinions teaches you to respect others’ work. This prepares you for professional life. If you ignore the referencing requirements it will affect your grades (see p.14).

Extensions may be available

Extensions are available only if you’re unwell or have exceptional reasons for lateness. A formal application with supporting documents like medical certificates may be needed. See your Course Outlines for more information.

It is common for new students to receive lower grades than expected

Try not to be too disappointed. Review the feedback carefully so you can learn from it and improve your results in future assignments. In some situations it’s possible to resubmit assignments but there are rules governing this. This information is available in your Course Outlines. See unisa.edu.au/policies

Disappointing grades?

JEFFREY

Extensions

Types of assignments

Referencing

Writing for assessment

Teaching staff expect written assignments to:

- Analyse the set topic
- Develop a relevant and comprehensive response
- Follow any special guidelines
- Demonstrate use of expert sources
- Apply the required structure (essay, report, case study)
- Be easy to understand (use plain, grammatically correct English)
- Use the recommended referencing style
- Be submitted on time
What else do you need to know?

Assessment

Q Is it important to read, write and speak English well?
A English is the language of instruction and assessment in your program. Because you’ll be discussing many different topics in class and there are reading and writing requirements for every course, it’s important to develop your English language communication skills. This will also help you later on when working in your professional field.

All students find that the reading, writing and speaking expectations at this level of study are demanding. If English is not your primary language you should allow more time for researching and writing your assignments. This is especially important as paraphrasing and expressing information in your own words is a big part of academic writing (see p. 14).

Q Will teachers look at drafts of my work or help me improve my writing?
A Teaching staff give feedback on submitted assignments, but not drafts. Read this feedback carefully, as they will expect you to act upon their comments in later assignments. To help you develop your academic writing skills, visit the L3 website, which provides guidelines for writing different types of assignments, e.g. essays, reports, critical reviews. Visit unisa.edu.au/L3

Q Can I resubmit an assignment to get a better grade?
A While it’s great to want better grades, resubmissions are not the way to achieve this. University policies allow resubmissions in very limited circumstances and not for this purpose. If you fail a course assignment, seek advice from your lecturer as soon as possible to develop a strategy for success.

Q What if I find the set readings very difficult?
A Class discussions are the ideal place for raising questions about set readings. They provide an outlet for discussing new ways of thinking and talking through common issues. Informal study groups, where you discuss readings over coffee with friends, are also very beneficial. You may also wish to do some secondary reading to help develop your knowledge: some Course Outlines include a Recommended Readings list in addition to the set readings.
10 Steps to success

Activities to make the best start at UniSA

1. Log into myUniSA
   my.unisa.edu.au

2. Attend orientation

3. Explore course websites

4. Plan your time
5. Set up a study space

6. Check your email

7. Attend all scheduled classes

8. Get to know other students and form study groups

9. Explore the Library and L3 websites

10. Go for it!
Referencing and Academic Integrity

As discussed on p. 10, referencing strengthens your assignments by supporting your work and demonstrating your research. It also helps ensure your assignments follow Academic Integrity rules.

When you start doing your course reading you’ll notice that many of the authors refer to the work of others in their writing and provide references to these works. This is an academic custom which you’ll also be expected to follow in your assignments.

When writing an assignment you should provide references whenever you use, summarise, paraphrase, build on or refer to information from another source. Referencing involves two stages: providing a short in-text reference to the source, usually including the author and the date, at the point where the information appears in your work; and providing full publication details for the source in a reference list at the end of the assignment. Check the rules for the referencing system you’ll be required to use, which should be specified in your Course Outline.

Unless you are directly quoting the source (which you should only do occasionally) you must express information using your own words. You must also complete your work independently, unless it is a group assignment. By doing these things, you’ll uphold the 5 values of Academic Integrity that underpin the academic community.

Academic misconduct occurs when any of those Academic Integrity values are violated, and this is considered a serious offence. If you don’t reference the sources you use in your work, this is considered Academic Misconduct because you’re not acknowledging where the information in your assignment came from. In addition, if you don’t express information using your own words or if someone writes your work for you, this is considered misconduct because the work you submit will not be entirely your own. For this reason, while it is okay to ask family members or mentors to provide feedback on drafts, they must not alter your wording or content in any significant way.

For more on referencing, visit unisa.edu.au/L3

For more on Academic Integrity, Academic Misconduct and its consequences, visit unisa.edu.au/academicintegrity

DO

- Acknowledge other authors’ work through referencing
- Express these authors’ ideas in your own words (including a reference)
- Complete work independently

DON’T

- Use other authors’ work without referencing it
- Use exactly the same words as these authors (unless using ‘quotation marks’)
- Get other people to write or significantly edit your work
Using the Library

University study requires you to read and reference experts in your field.

The Library’s services and resources will help you find information to complete assessment activities. The Library Catalogue puts knowledge at your fingertips, with access to millions of ebooks and ejournals, available online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

When researching assignments, try the following:

- **Subject guides** – Pathways to assist you in beginning research for your assignment. Accessible from the MyCourseLibrary link within your course websites.
- **Databases** – Quality journal articles and resources available online to support your assignments.
- **Online resources** – How to guides and videos on using library resources and the databases effectively.
- **Manage your references** – Use the EndNote and Refworks guides, and if using Harvard referencing consult the Roadmap to Referencing.
- **Need help?** Ask the Library.

The Ask the Library service provides assistance via chat, email and phone. As an offshore student you are eligible to use the Off Campus Library Service to borrow items not available online but held in the library’s print collection. Visit unisa.edu.au/library-ocls.

Start researching now at library.unisa.edu.au

Fifi-Odule Munezero, Bachelor of Medical Science

“My approach to life has changed since I came to study. I have met many friends from different backgrounds. I have more dreams and hopes. Above all, every day when I wake up I realise that I have potential in me.”
Time management

To be successful and reach your goals at university you will need to manage your time effectively.

A full time university workload is like a full time job. Other commitments must be fitted around the time you spend in class (course contact hours) and the time you spend outside the class completing weekly tasks, reading and assignment work (independent study time). Studying part-time is a better option for many students, who are working full-time, but it still poses time management challenges. Remember that effective time management is essential to success.

Full-time Study: Hours Per Week

- **14–28 HOURS** Study at Home
- **40 HOURS**
- **12–26 HOURS** Study at Uni

**Family**
Keep in touch and plan quality time

**Friends**
Balancing your study with relaxation time & having fun is important

**Exercise**
Keeping fit will increase your concentration

**Work**
Most students work while studying. Try to maintain a manageable work/study load
Time management tips:

1. Use a weekly planner to map out all weekly obligations including classes, work, sport, family time, travel, and housework. Schedule in the required hours for independent study.

2. Set aside study time at hours when you’re most alert.

3. Write down weekly goals and tick them off when completed.

4. Talk about your study schedule with friends and family so they understand your commitments.

5. If your schedule does not look manageable, modify your other commitments if possible or seek advice about modifying your study load at your local administration office.
Having second thoughts about studying at university is not unusual.

**Second thoughts?**

**It happens when**
- First impressions of the program don’t fit with your expectations
- The first few weeks are overwhelming
- You get disappointing results for assignments
- Increased work or lifestyle demands make study difficult
- Personal or medical matters affect study

**If you are unwell, overloaded or unable to continue for personal reasons**
- Seek expert advice from staff about your options
- Ask about reducing your enrolment to a more manageable workload
- Apply for temporary leave from the program (protecting your place)
- Find out about timelines for action

**Help yourself by**
- Speaking about your concerns with staff as first impressions can be misleading
- Finding out more about other possible career directions

Contact your local administration office for further information.
What else do you need to know?

General

Q I don’t know if I can afford to study but I don’t want to leave. What financial help is available?
A Most UniSA students work at least part time to help cover living expenses and costs associated with study, like books, equipment, clothing, stationery, and transport. If you are unable to pay your tuition fees by the due date, please make an appointment with your local administration office.

Q What if I think I’ve been treated unfairly by staff?
A Where possible, discuss your concerns with the individual staff member. If this does not resolve the issue, please make an appointment with your local administration office.

Q What if there’s a major event in my life that impacts my study?
A If something happens in your life that affects your ability to study, like a death or major illness in the family, it is important to let staff know about it. Inform your Course Coordinators, lecturers and local administration office.

Q How can parents, partners and friends help?
A It’s great when people close to you are supportive. Help them by being explicit about your workload, time requirements and due dates, so that they can help you manage your study by not placing big demands on your time. Also share this booklet with them to help them understand how university study works.

Q What do I do if I have a health or physical condition or personal concerns that may affect my study?
A Many students experience personal issues which can affect their study, and many students manage a disability, health, mental health or diagnosed learning difficulty while studying. Please speak to your local administration office to find out about possible support.

Q Where can I get some career advice?
A If you’re looking for advice on career opportunities post-study, speak to the relevant team at your local administration office.

Q I have a lot of questions. Where can I get answers?
A Your local administration office is your first point of contact for all program enquiries, queries about enrolment, ID cards, exams, finances and fees, scholarships, and lots more.

Q Are campuses safe?
A Every care is taken to ensure that all UniSA students are safe on campus. If you have concerns or wish to find out more about safety on your campus, please contact your local administration office.

Q What if there’s a major event in my life that impacts my study?
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Are you an International student?

Starting university in a new country is exciting, but you may also be anxious about living and studying in a new place. Make the most of your time here – study hard, but also explore your new country and make new friends. If you have any questions or concerns, meet with your local administration office.

Living and studying away from home?

If you’ve moved away from home to study, life can be exciting and challenging as you settle into your new home and study environment. Make finding new friends and locating essential services in your new community a high priority.

Entering into a program from another institution?

Students entering into a program after studying elsewhere, e.g. Polytechnic, are often surprised how different university is from their previous place of study. For many students the writing and reading components in particular are different and challenging, as is studying in English. Explore resources that will help you make this transition at unisa.edu.au/l3

Top tips for students living away from home:

1. Organise convenient and suitable accommodation as soon as possible.
2. Make sure you understand lease arrangements.
3. Make local friends for local knowledge and to learn everyday sayings.
4. Attend everything.
5. Start assessments early and complete all assignments on time.
6. Contact your family often.
7. Ask questions early and often: use expert services.

Saleh Abdulaziz Al Nefaie, Bachelor of Engineering

“The most important aspect to consider when moving [from overseas] is to research thoroughly to see if the culture and lifestyle will suit your needs. This is important because you need to be comfortable in your surroundings in order to be productive in your studies and daily life.”

BE PREPARED

Saleh
Student experience: your adventure

Make the most of your university experience: meet people, make friends, have fun, study together, explore the world. Uni experiences and networks give you much more than a degree: unisa.edu.au/studentexperience

Social networking

Join UniSA’s main Facebook and Twitter as well as your local campus feeds. Not only will you keep up to date with news and events, it’s a great way to make contact with people studying in similar programs or circumstances.

Student clubs

Meet like-minded people with similar interests and hobbies by joining a student club or starting your own. Contact your local administration office to find out more.

Graduation

Earning your degree is a major achievement. Attend a UniSA graduation ceremony to celebrate this achievement with friends and family. Information about graduation is available through myUniSA.

Alumni

Your journey continues after graduation. The university has over 18,000 alumni worldwide. Join this community to stay connected with the university. unisa.edu.au/alumni
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<th>High School</th>
<th>University</th>
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<td><strong>Enrolment</strong></td>
<td>Parents/guardians enrol students.</td>
<td>You manage your own enrolment.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Identity</strong></td>
<td>Many staff and other students know you by name.</td>
<td>You must make yourself known to students and staff in your courses.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mode of study</strong></td>
<td>Mainly face-to-face at school.</td>
<td>Face-to-face and blended learning on campus with independent study outside of class.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Attendance</strong></td>
<td>Most students are minors and school attendance is compulsory.</td>
<td>Attending your classes is important: make it a priority.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment information</strong></td>
<td>Teachers direct learning, providing prompts and reminders.</td>
<td>Assessment information is provided at the beginning of the course; learning is self-directed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referencing</strong></td>
<td>Students collect and use information without referencing.</td>
<td>Students must reference in a specific style to acknowledge sources of information. Penalties apply if sources aren’t referenced.</td>
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# High School and University

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<th><strong>High School</strong></th>
<th><strong>University</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Classes are teacher-centred and didactic.</td>
<td>Students interact to discuss ideas and problem solve, with teachers facilitating learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers may allow extra time on assignments.</td>
<td>Formal extensions are available through application on medical and compassionate grounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communication is sent to parents/guardians.</td>
<td>Student communication, including grades, is treated as confidential and sent only to the student.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers, parents and students may be involved.</td>
<td>Staff resolve issues with students based on assessment policies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>School hours are regular and predictable.</td>
<td>Each student's timetable varies depending on their program.</td>
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**Teaching Style**

**Deadlines**

**Results**

**Issue resolution**

**Timetable**
Smart Start!
Now you’re READY.
Just Remember:

Be organised!
Time management is essential to success.

Be open to new ways of learning.

Focus on your goals.

Talk to the experts when you need help.

Your future is waiting for you.
Go for it!