



HIGHER EDUCATION PREPARATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

Whether you are undertaking higher education studies to gain an in-depth understanding of your subject of interest, to continue developing your study and employability skills or to help pursue a professional career, this guide explains what to expect and how to prepare for this.

KEY FEATURES

DEEPENING YOUR KNOWLEDGE

You will **expand** your **knowledge** beyond textbook summaries and read from a wide range sources, such as scholarly books, journal articles and research papers. Upon completing your course, you will have a thorough and up-to-date knowledge of your discipline.

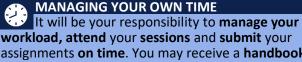
CRITICAL THINKING °Ø

Rigorously questioning and analysing the content you are learning, alongside developing your skills in how to apply the tools of your field in original and new ways, are **key elements** of higher education study.

INCREASED SPECIALISATION

At higher education level, there is **no national** curriculum. Instead, the topics covered on your course are typically related to the **expertise** of your **lecturers** and the **research** that is taking place at your college or university. There is also more **freedom** to **identify**, explore and develop your area(s) of interest, for example in a dissertation or major project.

MORE INDEPENDENT STUDY The hours you spend learning with teaching staff ("contact time") may be lower compared to your previous studies. Instead, your lecturers introduce you to a topic and you build upon this knowledge in your own time, for example by completing set readings and researching around your topic. As such, successful students often spend a lot of time in the library!



workload, attend your sessions and submit your assignments **on time**. You may receive a **handbook** for your modules, which typically includes a **timetable** plus key deadlines.

DIFFERENT STUDENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP Typically, relationships with your lecturers will feel more equal than at school or college. It can often seem like, rather than being told what to do, you are working through an issue together.

COURSE ORGANISATION

MODULES AND CREDITS

Your course may be split into modules (or units), which are typically:

- Compulsory/core: you must study
- Optional: you choose to study

You may be able to study optional modules from outside of your main subject area. Some modules can involve more work to complete, in which case you earn you more credits towards your qualification.

SEMESTERS

Most colleges and universities split their academic year into three semesters (or terms). If you are studying an accelerated degree, a fourth term may replace your summer holiday period.

READING WEEK

Your college or university may set this halfway through a term to help you complete your reading and work towards your assignments. As such, teaching sessions are typically not scheduled.

TEACHING METHODS

Depending on your subject, you may attend:

- Lectures: a lesson delivered in speech or presentation format to a large number of students. There may be little interaction with your lecturer(s)
- Seminars: meeting in smaller groups to discuss your readings and the content recently covered on your course. These are typically more informal than lectures
- Tutorials: one-to-one sessions with your lecturer/personal tutor where you can discuss your understanding and assignments plus receive feedback
- Laboratories/workshops: these help you develop your knowledge of the typical working environment, methods, and techniques of your discipline
- Field work: where you apply the knowledge you have gained in lectures, seminars etc. beyond the college/university setting
- Work placements: gaining skills and experience in a realistic setting

Digital platforms can also play a key role in higher education teaching and learning.



PREPARATION



STRENGTHEN YOUR STUDY STILLS

The SkillsYouNeed website provides free advice on improving your study skills: https://bit.ly/3hirZrE

C_

FutureLearn offer free online study skills courses, including:

- Preparing to Learn Online at University: https://bit.ly/3hgGBrr
- Improving your Study Techniques: https://bit.ly/3f7k26K
- Critical Thinking at University (An Introduction): https://bit.ly/2YpV8bB

COMPLETE YOUR PRE-READING

Your college or university may provide you with material to read before starting the first academic year. Completing this will put you in a strong **position** for when teaching and learning starts.



UNDERTAKE WIDER LEARNING

The summer holidays are a **perfect time** to broaden both your general and subject-specific knowledge. You could achieve this by:

- Keeping up to date with news and current affairs
- Reading sector magazines and publications
- Listening to Open University podcasts: https://bit.ly/3dRTo1y
- Watching TED-ed videos: https://bit.ly/2BYhNEw
- Completing FutureLearn courses: https://bit.ly/2Yq1Nm7

MY PREPARATION PLAN

SLN Connect is funded by the Office for Students and works in partnership with the Chichester College Group to provide free and impartial information, advice and guidance on progression pathways (including college and university study and apprenticeships).