FIRSTIE FOUNDATIONS

By

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Catherine Hutchings

PUSH TO START

After Orientation, you're ready to push 'start' for your first term as a first-year 'firstie'. You may be feeling excited and perhaps little bit anxious. In this chapter, we share strategies to GPS your way to success in all aspects of your studies.

There's too much in this chapter to absorb all in one go. Start with an overview, i.e. look at the headings, bold print and illustrations. Then read the bits that you think will be most useful to you. (This approach is always a good way to tackle new information.) You'll find it useful to revisit this chapter over the next few weeks.

YOU'RE IT!

It's time for you take full responsibility for your learning. No-one else is going to do so; no-one will contact you or your parents if you bunk lectures, pracs or tuts, or fail a test or assignment. At the end, you will simply fail the course. And, if you fail too many courses, you won't be allowed back to UCT next year – this is called academic exclusion.

The good news is that taking responsibility does NOT mean doing UCT all on your own. Taking responsibility includes asking for help when you are stuck. It means finding study buddies who hold you accountable in a learning community.

Your personal well-being is now your full responsibility. Self-care is an essential life skill at university because you need to be well in body and mind in order to learn effectively. For your physical well-being, get enough sleep, eat healthily and do some exercise. For your emotional well-being, make friends, cry when

you need to, and write your thoughts and feelings in a notebook or journal. Sufficient sleep and exercise also contribute to your mental health.

Even if there are disruptions (such as protests, loadshedding or a fire), you are still responsible for your learning and well-being. If you can't come to campus, then your lecturers will communicate with you by email and put material on Amathuba. It's up to you to make the most of such circumstances, while prioritising your safety and well-being. You are free to engage in protest action and should be aware of the issues. However, you are still expected to do whatever it takes to pass your courses.

Remember that you qualified for a BSc because of the way you took responsibility at school – you took initiative and made the most of opportunities. University just requires you to 'glow-up' your study and self-care skills to the next level.

Don't underestimate yourself. Don't compare yourself to others. Always believe in yourself. Your biggest supporter is you! Take yourself seriously. Love yourself.

Ajani Mnyandu

BSc Hons (Oceanography)

Day 1: Sort out the details

The first step to academic success is to be in the right place at the right time. Here's what you should do by the end of the first day of lectures, in order to ensure that you're always where you need to be:

- Put all assignment and test dates on a **semester planner**, and stick it where you'll see it daily.
- Draw up a **weekly schedule** that includes lectures, tutorials, pracs and their venues, as well as any weekly assignments. (If you discover any clashes, sort them out by communicating with the course convenor, departmental secretary or lab/tut convenor, as appropriate.)

- Add the following to your weekly schedule: **self-study time** (15–20 hours per week), **email check** (daily), **sleep** (8 hours per day) and **exercise**. A good balance is equal amounts of sleep, study and 'me time'.
- Take a photo of your weekly schedule or keep a copy in your bag. Don't rely on your memory, since you're already overloaded with information at this stage.

LEARNING 1000W

At UCT, you need to learn fast and effectively. You'll use the foundational knowledge and skills from this semester in future courses. You'll learn more effectively if you know some facts about learning that are particularly true for learning science.

Active learning works best. Research shows that you learn best when you engage actively in learning [1]. Tutorials, practicals and assignments are good opportunities for active learning.

Learning is emotional. Learning involves emotional ups and downs. There will be times when you are frustrated because the work is hard and the concepts are difficult (hey, this is university, not school). But your perseverance will be rewarded with a feeling of deep satisfaction or even exhilaration when you conquer difficult material.

New knowledge builds on what you already know. By the time you reach UCT, you've accumulated many skills and lots of general and specific knowledge. This is the foundation that supports new ideas. You learn by processing information received through your senses (usually sight and sound)

and positioning it in your existing scheme of knowledge. Therefore, it helps to always think consciously about what you already know about a topic, from school, radio, TV, the internet or life experiences. Sometimes, your foundation may need altering, i.e. you may need to change your mind or rearrange your ideas about a topic.

Sleep plays a key role in learning. While you sleep, your brain processes what you've learnt that day. Sleep deprivation impairs your cognitive ability, which makes it harder (or even impossible) to learn. You can't concentrate in lectures if you are sleepy. Sleep is also important for your physical and mental health; sleep deprivation lowers your immune system and increases your chances of depression. It's hard to work efficiently when you are sick or depressed. Overall, sleeping eight hours every night makes learning easier *and* more effective.

The night before a test is not a good time to learn science. Scientific concepts are learnt gradually and with lots of practice. You need to be learning all the time, in lectures, tutorials, practicals and self-study. You need a good night's sleep before a test because university tests require a high level of cognitive function.

Beware of 'short cuts', as they are usually inadequate. While internet content is often useful as supplementary material, this should not be your primary mode of learning. Your lecturers are experts in their subjects and have experience of designing effective learning experiences. Also, the exam will be set by the lecturers, so you should know their approach and the level at which they expect you to know material.

Specialist perspective

Faking it at university

A/Prof. Dale Taylor
Physics lecturer

In my experience, many first-year students feel as if everyone around them knows what's going on and they're the only ones who don't. So they fake it: they act as if they know what's going on. They don't ask questions because they don't want to appear stupid. This is really sad: it means we have many students putting their energy into protecting appearances, instead of putting energy into learning.

At some high schools, people are made to feel foolish if they don't know something. This is a pathetic kind of one-uppance – somebody trying to deal with their own feelings of inadequacy by putting someone else down. If someone puts you down, you can be sure that's because of their own insecurity. Just smile and wave, because you know better than to be upset by such behaviour.

Let's get two facts straight. (1) Everyone who made it to UCT is smart enough to be here. Your matric results proved you are in the top 5 % academically. Intelligence is a given and your lecturers are not making comparisons. (2) Everyone finds university work difficult; the students who get ahead are those who put their energy into learning, whatever it takes (even asking 'stupid' questions). The biggest enemy of success is fear of appearing foolish.

LECTURES

Since lectures are the main teaching method at university, it's important that you make the most of them. Here's how to do that.

Show up! Although lectures can be easy to skip and hard to follow, it's important to attend them. A lot of what the lecture does for you can't be done in any other way. Lecture recordings are useful (particularly if you are too sick to attend), but a lecture recording is a poor substitute for the real thing. Make a pact with yourself (and your study buddies) that you won't miss lectures, no matter what!

Be prepared. You'll get the most out of lectures if you're prepared for them. At the very least, this means:

- **Arrive early**, if you can. This way you won't miss any important information. Punctuality shows respect towards your lecturer and classmates. (But if you are delayed, it's better to arrive late than not at all!)
- **Pick a seat** where you can see the board/screen clearly (not too far back).
- **Get ready:** Take out the materials you need (notebook, pen, calculator etc.).
- **Review:** While waiting for the lecture to start, look over your notes from the previous lecture, as that will be the foundation for today's lecture.
- **Preview:** If there are any handouts, look over them to give yourself a preview of what's coming.
- **Breathe:** If you're feeling distracted, try closing your eyes and focussing on your breathing. Take some deep, slow breaths and exhale each breath completely.
- **Ask:** If there's anything from yesterday's lecture that you still don't understand, ask a fellow student for help.

If you find it difficult to follow a lecturer, then do additional preparation. Read your course textbook or Amathuba resources during the previous evening, weekend or free period. (The course outline will tell you what's coming next.) This preparation will give you a head start on new concepts. It's fine if you don't understand everything you read; at least, you will know what you don't understand and where you need to pay particular attention in the lecture.

Be an active learner. You learn best when you engage actively, so you should:

- **Take notes** (see the next section for ways to do this). If you are given a handout, you can annotate the handout with notes.
- **Try any examples** that the lecturer gives. (Don't wait for the lecturer to do them; they will make it look easy and you won't know whether you are able to do them on your own.)
- **Participate** in any activities that the lecturer provides, e.g. multiple-choice questions.
- **If you get confused,** take note of the time so that you can revisit that point in the lecture video.

Reflect on your learning. The sooner you recall what you learnt in a lecture, the greater your chances of remembering it long term. Try to scan through your notes as the lecture ends. In your self-study time (later in the day or in the evening), go through your lecture notes and check that you understand them. If something doesn't make sense, ask your study buddies or use the course textbook, Amathuba resources or the internet. Enhance your notes by underlining headings, highlighting important points and adding extra information. But don't rewrite your notes because you will fall behind in doing this; just live with the messiness.

Note-taking

Why should you even take notes? After all, note-taking is hard work and the information can be found elsewhere. Here are the main reasons for taking notes:

- The process of taking notes helps you to concentrate and digest information.
- Your notes (even if messy) are better than anyone else's notes (even your lecturer's) because they are tailored specifically for you. They record your unique meaning-making journey through the lecture.
- Note-taking reduces your cognitive load. By offloading ideas onto paper, you free up your working memory.
- Note-taking helps you to see the big picture by keeping track of the overall logic of a lecture.

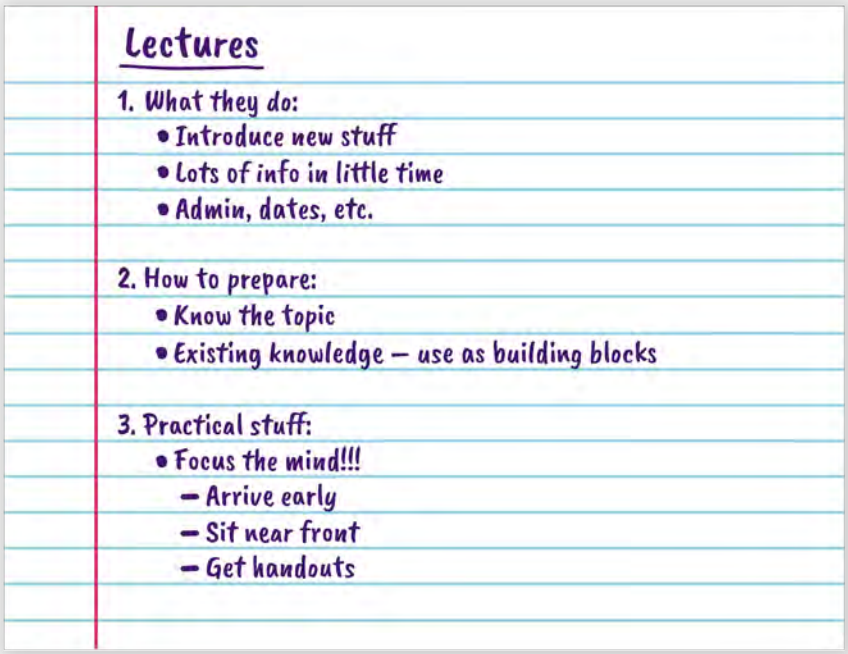
From the above, you can see that the point of note-taking is **learning.** Notes are not an end in themselves, but a means to an end. Your note-taking skills will improve with practice. Here are some fundamental dos and don'ts:

- **Don't only copy the board or screen.** You also need to listen to the lecturer and elaborate on the main points.
- **Don't try to write everything the lecturer says** – it's neither helpful nor possible. Try to identify the main ideas; the lecturer's introduction and outline will help you.
- **Don't write stuff you already know.** Focus on new ideas.
- **Don't worry about neatness.** Notes just need to be legible.
- **Do use abbreviations and symbols** to save time – e.g. $\therefore$ (therefore), $\because$ (because), $\Rightarrow$ (implies) and WhatsApp abbreviations. Abbreviate words that occur often (e.g. 'vec' or 'V' for vectors).
- **Do leave space** to add to your notes later – Figure 1 gives some examples.

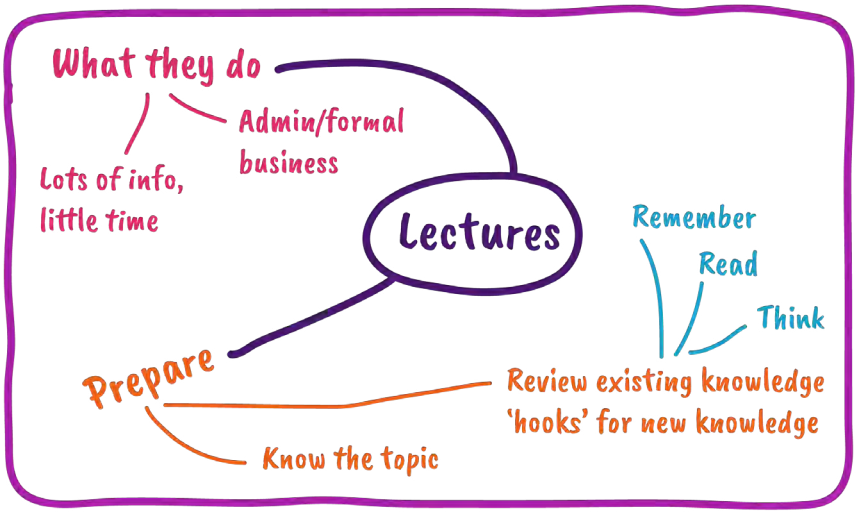
Note any 'aha' moments when you suddenly realise something new (maybe something you 'knew' before).

Figure 1: Three styles of lecture notes

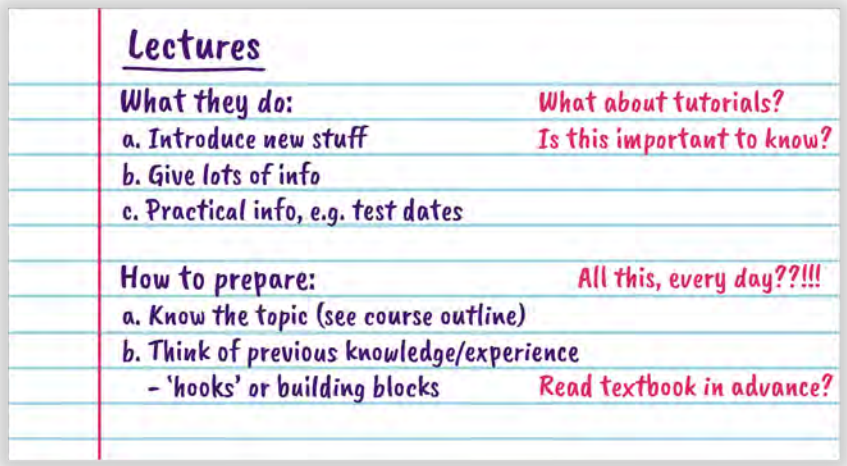
Linear lecture notes



Mindmap
(shows the connections between ideas)



Double column lecture notes
(with your thoughts and responses on right)



How are you going to organise your notes? Many students use a different notebook for each subject. If you use loose pages, always write the date and number your pages, e.g. 'M1' (for maths page 1). You'll also need a file or folder for the material you'll accumulate in each course, such as handouts and tests. You can make file dividers from scrap paper or cardboard.

Organising notes is as important as creating them.

PRACS AND TUTS

Practicals and tutorials are great learning opportunities. They take slightly different forms in different subjects, but here are some strategies for making the most of them across all subjects.

Tutorials

Be prepared. Remind yourself about what's been happening in lectures, because the tutorial will build on this. While waiting for the tutorial to start, flip through your lecture notes.

Be willing to make mistakes. You learn best from your mistakes.

Try. If you don't try, you won't know what you can and can't do. Also, you're more likely to succeed in a tutorial – with the support of your peers and tutors – than on your own.

Ask! There's no such thing as a stupid question (though there are some dumb answers). Your classmates would probably enjoy showing off their knowledge by answering your questions. Also, their own understanding will be enhanced by explaining concepts to you. Or maybe you'll discover that you're all confused, in which case, ask a tutor. Your tutors are paid to help you. (If they come across as arrogant, that may be because they're afraid of 'making a fool' of themselves.)

Remember, you are here to take care of yourself and not what others think of you. Nobody will care about how dumb your question seems to you. Nobody will remember you as the person that asked that question in the tut; chances are they needed to ask the same thing. You are here for you!

Iqra Faki

BSc (Maths and Applied Maths)

Reflect on your learning. After the tutorial, ask yourself what you learnt from it, so that you don't forget and thus waste your tut efforts. Start reflecting while walking away from the tutorial. It's a good idea to make notes on what you learn; you can do this both during and after the tut.

Practicals

Be prepared: The secret to success in pracs is to prepare beforehand:

- Read the **prac manual** to get an idea of what the prac is about. You can use the internet to help you with unfamiliar terms or to find out what a piece of apparatus looks like. See whether you can answer any practical questions before the prac.
- If there are **pre-prac questions**, answer them by yourself or with a study buddy. Don't copy someone else's answers. The purpose of the pre-prac questions is to prepare you for the prac; the answers are not as important as the process of becoming familiar with the prac.
- Remember your **PPE** (personal protective equipment), such as your lab coat and closed shoes.
- Make a friend – ask someone if they'd like to be your **lab partner.**

Ask! It's not your fault if you haven't used apparatus before, or don't understand unclear instructions. Your demonstrators are paid to help you. (If you have any difficulties with your demonstrators, raise this with your class rep.)

Don't aim for perfection. Your prac report needs to be good enough, and that's all. If you're a perfectionist, you may never finish.

Reflect on your learning. After the prac, ask yourself what you learnt. The next pracs will build on what you learnt in this prac.

You can't be an island at university. You have to at least try to make friends or interact with others. Because you can't be good at everything. Something you don't understand, someone else excels in and is willing to help. And that also applies to you, you can help others.

Refilwe Seleka

MPhil (Biomedical Forensic Science)

Ask. Ask. Ask questions. No question is stupid. It's better to look stupid than die in silence.

Mpho Sehlabo

MSc (Oceanography)

READING

Part of your learning will happen through reading. The good news is that you don't have to read anything from start to finish. Instead, be strategic in your reading.

How to read a university textbook

University textbooks are different from school textbooks. South African school textbooks are written specifically for the South African school syllabus, but most university textbooks are written for USA students. They do not fit your courses perfectly; they are simply the best option that your lecturers can find. They include material that you already know from school, as well as material that is not required for the course. They use North American examples and vocabulary.

Despite these limitations, textbooks are still useful and it's up to you to make the most of them. You probably got ahead at school because you used your textbooks strategically to improve your knowledge. This skill will serve you well at university. Here are some ways to use your textbook productively.

Find the section you need by using the **table of contents** (at the front of the book) or the **index** (at the back).

Before a lecture: Your experience of lectures will be enhanced if you preview the material in your textbook. The purpose of previewing is to remind yourself what you already know and give you an idea of what's to come. Look at the headings and illustrations. If there's an end-of-chapter summary, read through it to assess: (1) what you already know; (2) what's new but makes sense; and (3) what doesn't make sense yet. Dipping into new material will give you a head start over your peers. Enjoy the journey of discovery – you've come to UCT to learn!

Reading is an interactive process in which your pre-existing ideas influence how you understand the ideas in the text.

After a lecture: You'll have specific questions and will want to find answers as efficiently as possible. It may help to write down your questions so that you don't get distracted by other interesting things in the textbook (which you can always come back to later). You'll probably need to read a paragraph more than once to make sense of it, because university-level concepts are not simple. If something still doesn't make sense, be strategic: ask a study buddy, tutor, lecturer or the internet.

As you learn, it's a good idea to **make notes** to help you remember what you've learnt. But beware: don't get hooked into making beautiful notes without understanding the content. The goal is always learning, not note-making!

When to use a dictionary

If you come across a word that you don't know, you can often work out the meaning without having to interrupt your reading to use a dictionary. Sometimes it is more important to just get the sense of what is being said than to find the precise meaning of every word. For example, if a physics problem says 'a bobsled accelerates', you probably don't need to know what a bobsled is, because it's only the bobsled's accelerating behaviour that's actually important. Sometimes, the parts of a word give clues, for example, in 'subterranean', 'sub' means 'under' (as in submerge or submarine). Sometimes the sentences around the word give clues.

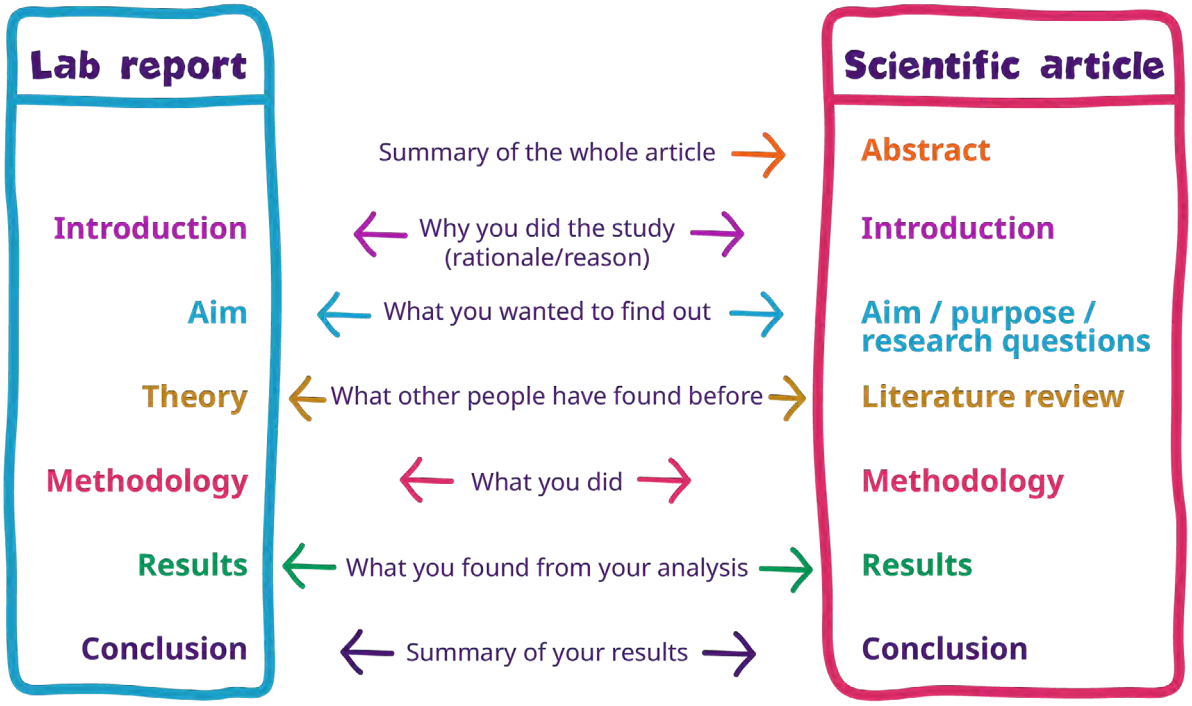
However, there are times you will need to use a dictionary or the internet. But beware, many words are used in multiple ways, so you need to find the disciplinary-specific meaning (i.e. the meaning in the context of your subject).

Reading a scientific article

Some courses may require you to read scientific articles. Most scientific articles have the same structure as your lab reports, as shown in Figure 2. The headings may differ, but the basic structure is always the same (except for 'review' articles, which summarise other people's research). This structure makes it easier to find what you are looking for.

The first sentence of a paragraph is usually the '**topic sentence**', which tells you the topic of the paragraph.

Figure 2: The structure of lab reports and scientific articles



Here are some reading tips:

Know what you want. Before you start, know what you want to find out. Perhaps you are only interested in the results or conclusion. Or perhaps you need details of the methodology.

Don't read the whole article. It's a waste of time. As a first-year, you don't really need to know all the details. If you try to read the whole article, you may never reach the conclusion, the most important part.

Read the abstract first. The abstract summarises each section of the article into one or two sentences. The abstract probably won't make complete sense to you, so you'll have questions after reading it. You can then dive into sections of the paper to find the answers to your questions. It's normal to go back and forth a bit as you try to make sense of a study; it's still more efficient than reading the whole article.

SELF-STUDY

When you were at school, you were expected to do homework and assignments after school hours. You probably knew just what you needed to do each day. Now you need to spend more time in self-study, but it's not so obvious what you should be doing in this time.

Here's a simple recipe for successful self-study:

1. Find study buddies. Making the most of your self-study time requires self-discipline, which can be hard, especially when the course content is difficult. It helps to work with study buddies who will keep you accountable. You could agree to work side-by-side in a library or other study space, at fixed times every day. Or you could create a WhatsApp group in which you share your plans and then report on progress daily. If you are shy about reaching out to potential study buddies, you are not the only one! Other students may appreciate your invitation. Don't be put off if the first person that you ask declines.

2. Make lists. Start each day by making a list of what you need to do today, for example:

- Go through today's lecture notes and add to them.
- Look at the relevant section in the textbook.
- Look at material on Amathuba.
- Prepare for tomorrow's pracs/tuts.
- Work on upcoming assignments (don't leave them until the last minute!).

3. Acknowledge anxiety. If you are worried about something, it can race around in your head, distracting you from the task at hand. It helps to write down your concerns (whatever they are).

4. Focus. You might find it helpful to close your eyes and focus on your breathing for a minute before you start.

5. Take breaks. Be sure to give yourself regular short breaks – you cannot concentrate forever!

6. Reward yourself. Learning is a reward in itself, but it can help to have some external motivation, such as time with friends or listening to music.

Digital learning tools can be helpful for self-study. Time-keeping and scheduling apps can help you stay on track. A generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) tool can be a 'thinking partner' when there isn't anyone else around to ask. If you don't understand a topic, ask it to simplify or provide examples. GenAI can be used to create practice questions or quizzes based on your study material, or to summarise long texts, such as scientific papers.

Be aware of the limitations of GenAI tools. They can generate impressive-sounding text, but it may contain misinformation or 'hallucinations' such as fictitious citations.

ASSESSMENT

In the past, you may have been in the top 10% of your grade, getting 90% for everything. Now you're an average university student, so achieving the class average of 65% means you're doing better than half of your peers, which is a huge achievement. This reality means you should **adjust your expectations** of what you consider an acceptable mark.

It helps to distinguish between the roles of summative and formative assessment. **Summative assessment** is the exam at the end that 'sums up' what you've learnt overall in a course. **Formative assessment** 'forms' you by helping you learn. The main point of formative assessment is learning, not marks; the marks are just feedback on how you're doing, so that you know what to work on.

Be strategic

If you find yourself overwhelmed with formative assessment (it happens!), then be strategic. Your strategy should focus on the goal of learning, not the marks. Sacrifice marks for learning, not the other way around. It's fine if you don't get top marks, as long as you're learning enough to pass the exam. If you're learning, then you will probably get the marks that you need to pass the course overall.

A common mistake that first-year students make is to focus too much on an upcoming test, while ignoring their other courses. After the test, they find that they've fallen behind in their other courses and battle to catch up. You should be able to pass class tests without falling behind in other courses, provided you do your tutorials, assignments, quizzes and a few past papers to familiarise yourself with how test questions are asked.

You may be concerned about what future employers will think, but the truth is, they are most interested in your final-year marks, which indicate your ability level at the end of your degree. Everyone knows that first-year students are still adjusting from school. Anyhow, your degree is not about your marks, but about what you learn – otherwise, what is the point of your degree?

Be honest

Being strategic does not include academic dishonesty. Whatever you submit for assessment should be your own work, not material from a friend, the internet or a GenAI tool. If you use someone else's work, you may pass the assignment but fail the exam at the end. Worse still, you may be caught out for plagiarism, which is a form of academic misconduct. Prof. Emese Bordy explains these concepts below.

UCT makes use of Turnitin software to detect plagiarism and identify content that may have been produced by GenAI tools.

Specialist perspective

Academic integrity

Prof. Emese Bordy
Deputy Dean for Undergraduate Matters, Science Faculty

Academic integrity is about doing academic work in an honest, accountable and transparent way. It means doing your work truthfully, giving credit to others' contributions. A successful academic community operates on collectively agreed rules and values [2]. Academic integrity is the foundation of a trust-based partnership between lecturers and students. Ethical academic work shows respect for yourself, peers, lecturers and university's rules. Respect includes following proper procedures in your discipline, giving credit where it is due and valuing the hard work that goes into earning your degree [3], [4].

Academic integrity promotes a fair learning environment where all students can succeed and helps you develop important lifelong traits like trustworthiness and accountably. It protects the value of your degree and your university's reputation. In the long run, it sets you up for success in your career and in all aspects of your life.

Academic misconduct is when someone claims credit for unauthentic work. Examples include plagiarism, cheating, using unauthorised resources or falsifying data [5]. Common reasons for misconduct include feeling pressured to succeed, a lack of interest in the subject and poor time management. Some students may think they won't get caught or believe it is not a big deal [6], but misconduct cases are reported to the Faculty's Academic Misconduct Committee. Serious cases like falsifying data or cheating on an exam could lead to expulsion or losing your degree.

You can succeed without compromising your integrity by learning good study habits, managing your time effectively, thinking critically, asking for help when needed, and understanding academic conventions (i.e. the rules of the academic 'game'). By embracing academic integrity, you will not only succeed academically and grow as a person but also help build an equitable society while strengthening academia.

Specialist perspective

Plagiarism: A common pitfall of academia

Prof. Emese Bordy
Deputy Dean for Undergraduate Matters, Science Faculty

Plagiarism occurs when you use someone else's ideas, words or work as your own. Deliberate plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense, which may lead to an academic misconduct hearing and compromise your reputation.

Plagiarism can also happen unintentionally, usually by failing to cite sources properly, in one of these ways:

- **Verbatim copying:** You copy a sentence (or part of a sentence) word-for-word from a source, without using quotation marks. (Even if you provide a reference, it's still considered plagiarism.)
- **Paraphrasing without credit:** You rewrite a passage but retain the original ideas, without giving credit. Even if you change the words, you must still acknowledge the source of the idea.

Proper referencing helps you avoid accidental plagiarism. Acknowledging your sources and citing them correctly are crucial academic skills that you will develop with time and guidance. Your reference list needs to be accurate and complete, while adhering to conventions of your discipline. Avoid unreliable sources and sources that are difficult to verify.

Creating original work without doing your own research or experiments is challenging, yet at university, you are expected to demonstrate originality in your work. This means simply repeating what others have written is not enough, and you need to contribute your own ideas and perspectives by critically analysing existing knowledge.

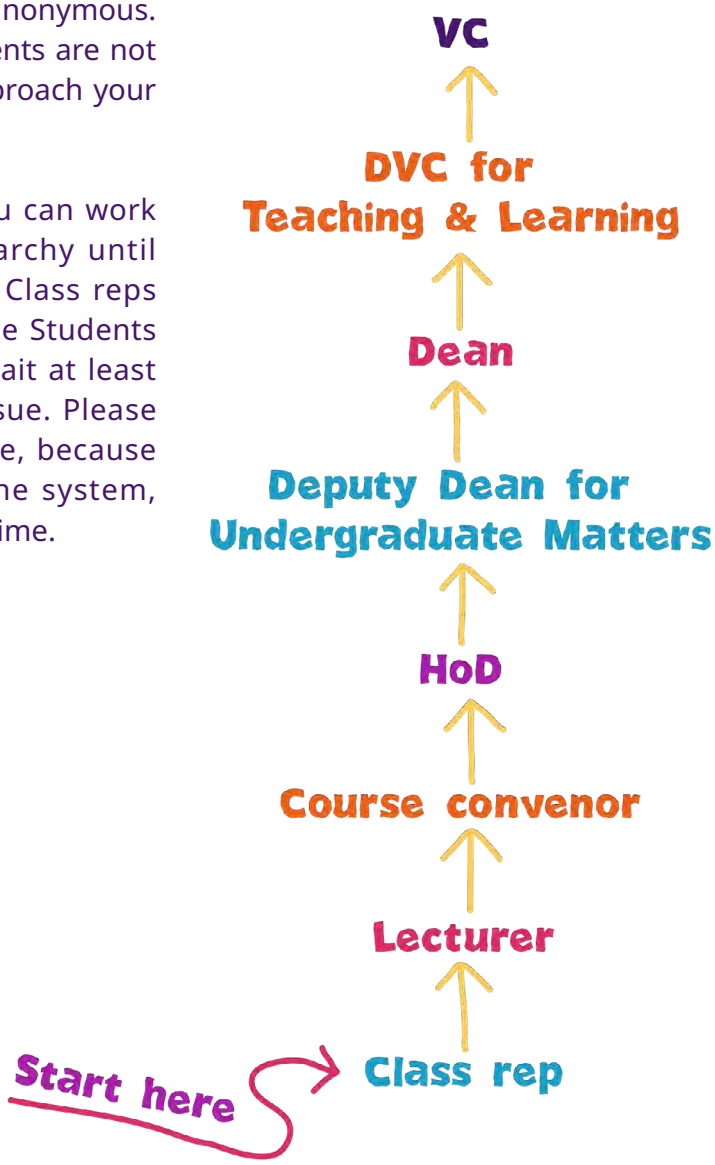
If you are unsure about how to cite sources or avoid plagiarism, ask your lecturers for help. The UCT Library offers workshops and resources to guide you through proper citation practices and ethical use of sources. You can also reach out to the UCT Writing Centre for assistance to learn how to give credit where credit is due.

WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS DON'T WORK

Although UCT is a top university, it's not perfect and things don't always work as they should. You have a right to speak up when things don't work. Never assume that your lecturers know when things aren't working properly on Amathuba, or in pracs and tuts.

Your class reps are there to channel information and complaints to your lecturers. This system allows you to remain anonymous. (The class rep can say, 'Some students are not happy because...') You can also approach your lecturer directly.

If things don't get sorted out, you can work your way up the academic hierarchy until you get a satisfactory response. Class reps can also take issues to the Science Students Council or the SRC. You should wait at least 48 hours before escalating an issue. Please only contact one person at a time, because sending multiple emails clogs the system, delays responses and wastes staff time.



Email etiquette

Whenever you send an email, think carefully about the way you are presenting yourself. What you write is who you are – or, at least, that's how you come across. Here are some tips for emails to staff:

- Be very polite.
- Start with 'Dear [title] [surname]'. Use the person's correct title: Dr, Prof, Mr, Ms, etc. If it's a generic email address (e.g. sci-science@uct.ac.za), you can start with 'Dear Science Faculty Office' or 'Good morning'.
- Introduce yourself, for example: 'I am a first-year BSc student who is in your CEM1000W class ...'.
- End with something like 'Thank you for your assistance'.
- Sign off with 'Kind regards' or 'Regards'.
- Put your full name and student number.

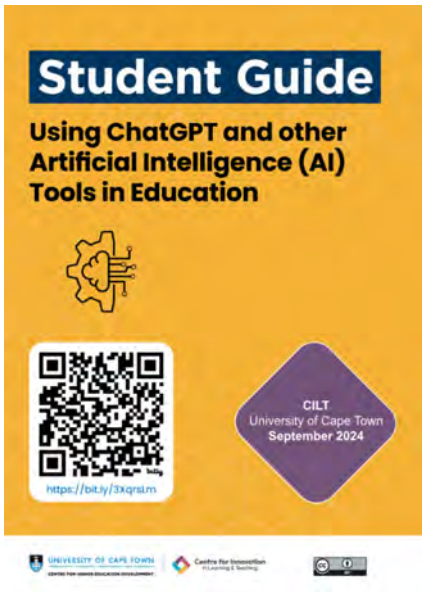
If you don't get a reply, first check whether your question has been answered in an Amathuba announcement or a handout. Wait a couple of days before following up, as lecturers' inboxes can be full and your message may be overlooked despite good intentions. When following up, forward your original email so they can see your initial query, and write something like:

> *Dear [title] [surname],*
> *I know this is a busy time, but I wanted to check whether you've had a chance to look at my query below. Thank you for your time.*

YOU'VE GOT THIS!

You've now pushed the 'start' button and are GPSing your way to success at UCT. It's up to you to make the most of all learning opportunities, day by day, and to look after yourself. Of course, you won't get it all right from the start, but you'll get better with practice. Find what works for you and stick to it. If you find yourself battling in some area, you may need to change your strategy; ask your study buddies how they are finding things and what they are doing to manage.

Read/watch more



Using GenAI
UCT has a useful guide:
Student Guide: Using ChatGPT and other Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Education

Avoiding plagiarism
Appendix 2 of this policy document has good tips:
UCT Policy for the Prevention and Management of Academic Misconduct by Students

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Advance release version (February 2025)

How to cite this resource

Taylor, D., Kajee, M. & Hutchings, C. 2025. Firstie Foundations. In Taylor, D., Kajee, M., Moosa, N. & Mnisi, T. eds. *Science is tough (but so are you!)*. Advance release version. Cape Town: Science Faculty, University of Cape Town. **https://10.0.99.31/uct.28409480**