

# Studying as an International student

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# Studying as an International student at Exeter



Exeter University has a thriving international community with over 5,000 students from more than 130 different nationalities, but we understand that studying here might mean adapting to a different language and perhaps a different academic culture.

Perhaps the main difference you'll experience is that you'll be expected to do a lot of independent study of your own.

UK universities use different types of taught sessions to help you learn. Typical sessions are:



## Lectures



- Lectures will introduce you to key concepts and ideas, but you will be expected to treat this as a starting point and to do further reading on the topic beyond the lecture.
- Try to prepare for lectures; use the module reading list to do a bit of reading about the subject before the lecture.
- Sometimes you might be asked to do some reading before a lecture.

# Seminars



- These are typically smaller scale group sessions where you will be expected to actively participate. The tutor might lead a discussion or activity and there is a greater level of interaction between tutor and student. Sometimes seminars might be led by a student or guest speaker.
- You might be asked to read something before a seminar as preparation, to prepare some questions for a guest speaker and, sometimes, might even be asked to lead a seminar either on your own or as part of a group.



# Labs



These usually focus on practical and problem-solving skills and are usually led by tutors.

# Group Work



You are likely to be asked to work as part of a group either to prepare for a seminar or to produce a piece of group work. This is an area that international students sometimes find difficult, but which is a real opportunity to gain useful experience.

# Tutorials

- Usually just you and your tutor.
- Usually booked in advance or arranged during a tutor's office hours.
- These give you an opportunity to talk to your tutor about your course and any parts of it you are finding difficult or didn't understand.

# Assessment

Some of the typical forms are:

- Essays
- Reports
- Reflective Essays
- Exams-in person and online
- Group Work
- Presentations
- Posters
- Dissertations and projects



# Make sure you understand what is required of you

Most of your course or module information will be available on your Exeter Learning Environment (ELE) pages, so make sure you understand [how to use ELE](#).

Look in your module handbooks for details about:

- How you will be assessed (normally available via ELE, the Exeter Learning Environment)
- Format (font size, spacing, margin sizes)
- Structure (sometimes you will be given specific sections to include)
- Referencing style (there are a number of different styles in use across the university)
- Exam dates, assignment deadlines etc.

# Manage your time

- Coming to university is an exciting time and making new friends and developing new interests is an important part of your university experience, but you will need to manage your time well.
- Setting up good, regular study habits from the start will be key to your success.
- Whether you use a handwritten planner, software like Microsoft Outlook or other applications, do organise your 'working' week so that you can keep track of the demands of the different modules you will be studying.
- The start of your first term will mean you have a lot of information, timetables and deadlines to cope with, setting up a schedule that helps you deal with and make sense all of this, will be your first challenge.

# Readings Skills

You will have a lot of reading to do, so think about your reading skills:

- Read with intent-have an idea of what you are looking for and why, when you read.
- Skim or scan texts to find the most relevant sections.
- Use the structure of a text to help you identify its key points-index, contents, introductions, conclusions, paragraphs and topic sentences.
- Review your reading afterwards-what have you learnt? Are there gaps or areas you are unsure about that require further research?

# Notemaking

Notes are only useful if they make sense to you later in the term so think about what you are trying to achieve when you take notes:

- Don't try to copy everything down in lectures-look for the key points, do the same in your reading.
- Use a notetaking system that suits you (Cornell, OneNote, Linear notes, Bullet points, Mind Maps, Flow Charts, voice recordings).
- Your notes should be an investigation of the lecture/book/article you are reading, not an attempt to rewrite it; ask questions of the material, highlight the bits you don't understand so well, explore links with and compare to other books/lectures/articles.
- Review your notes regularly, it'll make retaining information and revision for exams a lot easier!

# Writing at university

Academic writing is one of the ways that you communicate your understanding of your subject to the wider community of your discipline.

- Adopting a clear, logical structure to your writing is an important skill to master.
- Your essays shouldn't just be a summary of what others have said- your tutors want to know what you think about what others have said!



# Basic Essay Structure

- Introduction @10% of the word count, sets out what your essay is about, what you will try to demonstrate, how you will approach the topic and why it is important.
- Main Body @80% of word count, organised by paragraphs, each paragraph contributing a key point towards the overall argument. Supporting your argument with evidence is important here, but adopting a critical approach to the evidence is also important. This part of the essay might be subdivided into sections such as methodology, results, discussion.
- Conclusion @10% of word count, summarises the argument, but also discusses the significance of the argument, why it is important, how it might be useful for future research.
- Bibliography or List of References

# Referencing Resources

Referencing is a key element of academic writing; it shows you acknowledge the work of others and demonstrates the depth and quality of the research you have done. This is often an area that international students are unfamiliar with, so make sure you know what referencing style your subject uses, and then look at these resources to get an understanding of how to reference in that style:

- [Cite Them Right - Home \(citethemrightonline.com\)](https://citethemrightonline.com)
- [An introduction to referencing - Referencing - LibGuides at University of Exeter](#)
- [Referencing & Academic Honesty](#)

Paraphrasing is a specific part of referencing that International students often struggle with, so do have a look at this resource so that you understand its importance as an academic skill:

[Paraphrasing](#)

# Use of Artificial Intelligence

The university's position is that AI is a developing tool that will become prominent in workplaces. However, students should learn to use it responsibly and acknowledge when, and how, they have used it. Your modules will give you guidance on the use of AI, but there are general guidelines available here:

[Understanding Generative Artificial Intelligence \(GenAI\)](#)

# What are tutors looking for in their students?



- A questioning approach to the subject, a willingness to challenge ideas, test them to see if they hold up, and if they don't, suggest how you can change them so that they do!
- The ability to take in information from different sources, evaluate it and synthesise it into your own writing.
- The ability to think and write critically.
- The ability to present ideas and arguments persuasively and with clarity and detail.
- Reflective students, students who think about the feedback they are offered and adapt their study skills in light of it.

# The Study Skills Team is here to support you

- [Weekly drop-ins](#)  
(online and in person)
- [Digital Resources](#)
- [Bookable Appointments](#)



University  
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Thank you for attending, we really hope you enjoy your time as an Exeter student.

We would really appreciate your feedback!



Please scan the QR code to give feedback.