

## STARTING UNI (adapted from REACHOUT.com)

**Higher education is a big change from school or working full time. It can be fun but might also be stressful adjusting to new surrounds and people. If you are feeling overwhelmed or lonely you are not alone – many students feel the same way.**

### What to expect

You might have heard a lot about uni and the sorts of experiences you should have. Here are some common myths and facts:

**Myth:**

Uni is one big party.

**Fact:**

Sure you have fun and go to parties but there is the side of uni where you do have to concentrate on your studies to pass.

**Myth:**

Lecturers and tutors are unapproachable.

**Fact:**

Lecturers and tutors are happy to work through course content or assessment and offer helpful advice. Often lecturers have time specially allocated for students to chat with them about the course.

**Myth:**

Students are lazy and sleep all day.

**Fact:**

In order to succeed students have to work hard and motivate themselves to do well.

**Myth:**

Some people at uni know more than you.

**Fact:**

Some people are more outspoken than others. Try not to feel intimidated about stating your opinion or asking a question, someone else probably wants to ask the same thing.

### General tips

- Ask people for help – most people are more than willing to help out wherever they can.
- Don't become stressed out – see REACHOUT.com for fact sheets about managing stress and relaxing.
- Talk to someone if you aren't coping – Lifeline (131 114) has counsellors available 24 hours. Your friends, lecturers or Student Services Advisor may also be good to talk to.

It is OK to feel overwhelmed in the first few weeks of uni. If this feeling continues however, talk to someone about it. Don't let it be your entire uni experience.

### Feeling lonely

Large classes can be nerve-racking and might make you feel lonely. You aren't the only one! Here are some suggestions for helping you to feel confident about going to lectures and getting to know people:

- Form a study group. It is a great way to learn the course content and make friends at the same time.
- Join the Student Council. This student group funds clubs and organises the End-of-Tri party.
- Join or start a club.
- Meet with the Student Services Advisor for a chat.



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## Assessment

The first assessments might be daunting. You may feel unsure about your tutors and lecturers' expectations. It is not uncommon to feel anxious. Some tips to help you manage include:

- Approaching someone in your class and asking them about the work. It's an excuse to talk to someone else and you are probably not the only one who would like to start a study group.
- Talk to your Unit Coordinator, even if it is not face-to-face – emailing is a great way to ask them questions regarding assessment.
- Talk to your family, friends or someone who has been to uni before.
- If you don't go as well as you'd hoped it is a good idea to follow up with your lecturer about it – it'll help you to identify areas that you can focus on.
- Refer to the study skills fact sheets in the library, or online resources.
- Meet with the Student Services Advisor for assistance on time management.

## Changing your enrolment

If you are feeling overwhelmed by your course load or subject content, or you find the course is not for you, you can do something about it. Some things to remember when considering changing or dropping subjects:

- Look out for your FeeHELP deadlines (the "Census Date". Once the deadline has past, you will have to pay for the course even if you do not complete it.
- Keep in mind that the Census date is also an academic cut-off. After this time, you cannot drop a subject without getting a mark for it.
- Talking to your Unit Coordinator, lecturers or Student Services Advisor may help you to find new ways to approach a subject.

## If you are failing...

...there are some things you may need to consider:

- Do you understand the course content? If you are finding the course tough, consider getting a tutor to help you understand the subject content.
- Are you keeping up with the workload? Getting behind in the course can make it difficult to understand the content and to stay on top of your study. It may help to work out a study timetable so you can balance your subject load and other commitments. The Student Services Advisor can help you to do this.
- Is uni the place for you at the moment? If you are going through a tough time, whether you are sick or coping with grief or loss, your uni will allow for you to apply for special consideration. Usually this is a simple procedure and doesn't add to your stress. Your lecturer or the Student Services Advisor should be able to help you work out the best way you can manage your course work while things are difficult for you.

**Go to [REACHOUT.com](https://reachout.com) for more factsheets on maintaining good mental health.**



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