



**STUDENT
DEVELOPMENT
OFFICE**

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**SKILLS
EMPLOYABILITY**

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

LEARNING SKILLS



WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss your role as a reflective, self-directed learner at university
2. Identify existing learning skills and personal development needs
3. Locate services, activities and further resources for skills development



Learning Skills

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

- Becoming social scientists: skills and values
- The academic year: time management
- Self-directed learning at university
- Using lectures and tutorials effectively
- Managing assessments successfully
- Accessing support
- Planning your journey
- Further resources

Individual Reflection:

Note down an adjective that describes you as a learner.

Examples: structured, last-minute, late-night, creative ...

There are no fixed 'types' - ongoing reflection and evaluation of what works best for you is important.

WHAT KIND OF LEARNING IS EXPECTED AT UNIVERSITY?

- Analytical thinking
- Critical thinking
- Engagement with wide range of views and evidence
- Evidence-based argumentation
- Independent, self-directed research
- Interaction: teamwork and collaboration

- We are not born with these skills – they develop over time and with experience

REFLECTION: BECOMING SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

- **Open reflection – please share:**
 - Why did you choose to study social sciences at this university?
 - What excites you about becoming a social scientist?
 - What do you bring from your previous education and work experience?
- You will develop a huge range of skills over the course of your degree programme.
- Engage in ongoing reflection to identify and consolidate these new skills.

ACTIVITY: BECOMING A SOCIAL SCIENTIST

Take a pen and paper:

- **Draw** a page-sized outline of a human. This is a vision of **you as a future 'great social scientist'**
 - What **values** does this social scientist have? Note them down inside the body.
 - What **skills** does this social scientist have? Note them down around the body.
- **Briefly compare** your vision with the person next to you. What similarities and differences can you identify?

Graduate Attributes

Mindsets



Outlook & Engagement



Aspiration & Personal Development



Enquiry & Lifelong Learning

Skills



Communication



Personal & Intellectual Autonomy



Personal Effectiveness



Research & Enquiry

UNIVERSITY AS PREPARATION FOR STUDY, WORK AND LIFE:

THE GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

THE ACADEMIC YEAR: MANAGING YOUR TIME

September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May
Start Semester 1	Mid-term deadlines*		End-of- term deadlines *	Start Semester 2	Mid-term deadlines*		End-of- term deadlines *	Exam Period*
			Exam Period*					
			Winter Break				Spring Break	

*Assessment formats and deadlines vary across courses. Check your course handbooks.

SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AT UNIVERSITY

What is self-directed learning?

Why is it important?

- Stay organised: use a diary and write daily and weekly TO DO lists
- Study strategically: assess what is needed, set goals and manage your time
- Make the material meaningful: it is not just about remembering theories and examples but also about **understanding** and **applying** them
- Engage critically: challenge yourself and others in your thinking. Find out what you find exciting. Look for links between courses and the wider subject matter.
- Practice reflection: take feedback seriously and evaluate your learning. Celebrate your progress!
- Collaborate: create study groups, take part in Peer Learning (PALS)
- Take care of yourself and each other: take breaks and seek support when needed

UNDERSTANDING WHEN AND WHERE **YOU** LEARN BEST

Learning spaces and times matter

- Try different options
- Be confident in your own preferences

Questions for ongoing individual reflection:

- What makes a good learning environment for you? .
- What makes a space accessible for you?
- What times do you learn best?
- Have you tried different study spaces across the campus and city?

LEARNING SPACES

More information:

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/information-services/students/study-space>



EFFECTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH LEARNING

Lectures vs. tutorials

- Lectures: formal presentation of course content
- Tutorials: small group format with opportunity to discuss course content, ask questions and consolidate knowledge

	Before	During	After
Lectures			
Tutorials			

ENGAGING WITH LECTURES AND TUTORIALS

	Before	During	After
Lectures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarize yourself with the content (handbook, slides, readings)• Set yourself questions• Form your own opinions• Look for links to other lectures and courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note down essential points• Listen for answers to your questions. Ask if needed• Focus on understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share and discuss reflections and ideas with others• Check your notes and fill in any gaps• Organize and file your notes• Do further research on interesting examples, theories and concepts.
Tutorials	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the compulsory reading thoroughly<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take notes on key points• Look for links to other topics• Set discussion questions• Form your own opinions• Go beyond required reading if possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Actively engage in tutorial discussions• Listen to others and respond critically• Note down essential points• Don't be afraid to ask. There are no stupid questions!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure you understand how the new information fits into the bigger picture.• Follow-up any remaining questions with your tutor.

WHAT ARE ASSESSMENTS FOR?

- Revise course material for **better understanding of main theories and concepts, controversies and links** between different topics
- Demonstrate ability to **provide concise, critical analysis** of key course themes
- **Course assessment:** you will typically have 2-3 types of assessments. Check your handbook for course-specific information.

PRACTICAL REMINDERS

- Common assessment **formats**:
 - mid-term essays
 - end-of-term essays or end-of-term exams
- **Grade compositions**: assessments often have different weights e.g. 40% and 60%; 10%, 30% and 60%; etc – check **handbooks**.
- Consult your **handbooks** for essay deadlines, wordcounts, questions and other specifications.
- Plan enough time for essay writing and exam revision. **start early to manage competing deadlines**
- Develop your skills:
 - Engaging with feedback
 - Attend further **workshops** on essay writing and exam revision

PLANNING YOUR JOURNEY: INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION

- Using your 'ideal social scientist' drawing, think about the following:
 - What do you want to **achieve** over the course of your degree?
 - Which **challenges** do you foresee with regards to your learning and skills development over the next year?
 - What **resources and support** do you need? Are you already aware of any you could access?

- Engage in **ongoing reflection and planning**.
- Take individual reflection to a **meeting with your personal tutor** for feedback and to discuss further resources.
- Plan your development and make use of **available resources**:
 - Student Development Office,
 - Institute for Academic Development
 - Careers Service

ACCESSING SUPPORT

School of Social and Political Science

- Personal Tutors
- Student Support Officers
- Student Development Office
- Tutors and Lecturers (for specific assessment related questions)

Central Services

- Careers Service
- Institute for Academic Development
- EUSA

Wellbeing

- Disability Service
- Counselling Service
- The Advice Place

SKILLS FOR SUCCESS

Remember to sign up for our other skills sessions!

