

Self-directed learning 1



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Careers, Skills &
Student Development

Independent and self-directed learning and studying are key characteristics of university education. Getting to grips with, what can be, a new approach sets you up well. There are various skills and tactics you can make use of in your study and in how you manage yourself. This includes planning and prioritising your time and tasks for extra curricula activities as well as university demands. Below you find links to key resources and some top tips.

Effective learning and studying

For proven strategies and tips on how to personalise them, have a look at the Study Hub Learning resources:

- [Effective study](#)
- [Time management, planning and prioritising](#)
- [Making notes](#)
- [Reading at university](#)



Familiarise yourself

Spend some time getting to know where, and how, your courses are organised. Look at your course VLE in [Learn](#) for handbooks, readings lists and other course information (e.g. assessments).

Did you know...?

Lecture outlines or presentation slides should be available at least 24hrs in advance in Learn as part of mainstreaming adjustments. Course outlines and reading lists should be available at least 4 weeks before the start of a course.

Top learning tip

Use your advance materials to help prime your learning. For example, looking at the lecture outline shortly before the lecture will familiarise you with what is going to be covered and in what order. This makes it easier to start to understand as it's less of a novelty.



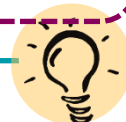
Hot topic: AI

The emergence of artificial intelligence has, and will likely continue to, change the way we learn and study. Learn how you can use it to confidently support your studies (and for free) with ELM: [AI Essentials: Responsible use in your studies](#)

Top study tip

Go beyond the books – reading is a great way to gather information, but there's a lot of it. So why not try a study buddy or study group? Everyone picks a different topic, learns about it, then takes turns in explaining it to everyone else. This way you can check your understanding (by explaining), and expand your knowledge (by listening).

Find a space on campus: [Study Space](#).



Academic Skills Study Advice:
acskills.study@ed.ac.uk

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Effectively managing your time often means looking ahead, sometimes by a couple of weeks, sometimes longer. For your studies, it's useful to have a sense of what the academic year will look like (e.g. exam diets) as well as the semester (e.g. assessment deadlines, teaching timetables). If you want to get involved with other activities and opportunities (e.g. internships), you will need to factor these in (e.g. closing dates and application deadlines) as well.

Look ahead

It's never too early to start thinking about your assignments and exams. Get ahead with things:

- [Academic writing](#)
- [Presentations and posters](#)
- [Exams](#)

Top study tip



Testing yourself is one of the most effective ways to learn. You can make up your own questions or cue cards and test yourself.

For revision, try working with a study buddy or group to make up questions and test each other on the answer.

For more information on revision:

[Exam Bootcamp](#)

Looking further ahead

Whatever stage you are at, whether you've just started your studies or are in your final year, finding and taking the next step can be daunting. There is expert careers advice, and resources available for you to use anytime and anywhere:

[Your Careers website](#)



Hot topic: Lecture recordings

Recorded lectures are another way of engaging with your subject. They are particularly useful if you have missed a lecture and need to catch up, or need to go back to a particular topic for clarification.

If you are using a recorded lecture as a lecture (rather than for clarification), it is best to treat it like a live lecture:

- Try to watch it as soon as you can, in line with the course timetable
- Review the outline/ slides beforehand to prime yourself
- Play it at normal speed and don't pause it
- Make notes (including any questions you have) as you would in a live lecture
- Review your notes and add value e.g. definitions, additional resources, answers to your questions

For more information: [Guidance on accessing and viewing recorded lectures](#)

Complement your studies

There's a wide variety of optional activities and resources you can use to build on your studies:

- [Online short courses](#)
- [Digital skills](#)
- [Skills for life and learning](#)
- [LinkedIn Learning](#)
- [Student societies](#)