

## Studying in a Different Academic Culture

As an international student you will have your own ideas about what it means to be a student. Similarly, you will have expectations about what happens in a classroom, what students and lecturers (teachers) do, and what you need to do to be successful in your study.

However, in a new country there is also a new academic culture and you have possibly already encountered new ways of teaching and learning, new relationships, and new tasks and activities in your study. Each unit (subject) will usually have 3-4 hours face-to-face contact in the classroom.

### Independent learning

- Each unit (subject) will usually have 3-4 hours face-to-face contact in the classroom.
- Students need to do most of their study in their own time.
- For each unit (subject), an additional 6 or 7 hours study outside the classroom is suggested.

If you are studying 4 units in a semester, it is recommended that you spend at least 40 hours per week on your study, both in and out of the classroom.

This way of studying may be quite different from your previous experience. You may be used to more contact hours, homework tasks, weekly tests, and regular checking of grades.

### Managing your time

Semesters at ACU are usually 12-13 weeks. Students need to carefully manage and plan their time. Semester and weekly planners are often useful to do this, especially to note the due/submission dates of assessment tasks.

### Resources

You will need to be confident in finding resources in the Library, using the library computers and accessing the databases for journal articles. To help develop this confidence you can attend any library information sessions, offered by the University.

### Reading

For each unit, in the 6 or 7 hours of your own study you will be mainly locating resources, reading, and planning. This includes:

- reading for weekly lectures and tutorials
- reading in preparation for written and oral assessment tasks.

### Unit outline

Carefully read your Unit Outline for each subject. You will find in each Unit Outline the lecturer's and tutor's contact details, including: telephone number, email address, and room number.

Lecturers may also give you their consultation hours, that is, the times you can meet with them individually to discuss questions you may have about your study.

**For further information:**

- Contact the Academic Skills Adviser on your campus
- Visit our web pages on myACU.

**Print the Pamphlet Series**

Last revision:  
December 2006

## Assessment

There may be assessment tasks that are new to you. The assessment tasks will all be identified in the Unit Outline for each subject.

Talk to your lecturer or tutor if you:

- have any difficulty in understanding an assessment task
- are unsure about what you have to do.

Your lecturers or tutors will want you to come and talk to them about this.

## Assessment procedures

You will need to understand the requirements for submitting assignments, including:

- **Where to submit assignments**, for example, to the School Office or in the School's Assignment Box
- **What to include**, for example Assignment Cover Sheet and the Marking Sheet
- **When to submit the assignment** – assignments are to be handed in on, or before the due date.

You will need to contact your lecturer or tutor before the due date if you need an extension. There are specific procedures for a lecturer to follow before an extension can be given.

## Responsibility

You will need to speak firstly to your lecturer or tutor if you are having difficulty with:

- understanding lectures
- readings
- assessment
- locating and obtaining resources.

The lecturer and tutor will want you to contact them if you are concerned or worried about any part of your academic study. Your lecturers and tutors can help with early difficulties and give you advice, so it is important to speak to them as soon as you can.

These types of informal discussions with your lecturer and tutor are considered a normal part of a student's life in Australia.

## Relationships

You may have noticed already that the relationship between lecturers, tutors and students seems very informal. This informality in teacher/student conversations is a feature of Australian university life and does not mean a lack of respect for the lecturers or tutors, or their positions. The relationships may be informal; however, students are still assessed according to the criteria of their assessment tasks.

Lecturers and tutors will often have casual conversations with their students and will want students to use their first names. However, using the family names of lecturers and tutors is also normal practice. If you are unsure of how to appropriately address your lecturers, ask them for their preference.