



# **SOLDIERS FIVE TO STUDY**

**Tips for soldiers  
from soldiers**

## COMMON ACROYNMS

<b>GPA</b>	Grade Point Average
<b>CSP</b>	Commonwealth Supported Place
<b>HECS</b>	Higher Education Contribution Scheme
<b>HELP</b>	Higher Education Loan Program
<b>SSAF</b>	Student Services and Amenities Fee
<b>VEP</b>	Veteran Entry Program
<b>SVSP</b>	Student Veteran Support Program
<b>VTP</b>	Veteran Transition Program

## GRADES/RESULTS

<b>(0) Fail Hurdle (NH):</b>	49%
<b>(0) Fail (NN):</b>	0 – 49%
<b>(4) Pass (PA):</b>	50 – 64%
<b>(5) Credit (CR):</b>	65 – 74%
<b>(6) Distinction (DI):</b>	75 – 84%
<b>(7) High Distinction (HD):</b>	85 – 100%

## ADMINISTRATIVE GRADES

<b>Credit Given</b>	CG
<b>Withdrawn Without Academic Penalty</b>	WW
<b>(0) Fail Absent</b>	NL
<b>(0) Withdrawn – Fail</b>	WN

## KEY DATES

<b>Census</b>	The deadline to finalise your enrolment without academic or financial penalty.
<b>Summer term</b>	The study term between Semester 2 and Semester 1.
<b>Winter term</b>	The study term between Semester 1 and Semester 2.

## KEY CONTACTS

<b>Student Veteran Services:</b>	Single point of contact on campus for veteran-related enquiries. Can also provide advocacy for ‘Special considerations’ and ‘Extension requests’.
<b>Course coordinator:</b>	Primary contact for degree/course related matters.
<b>Lecturer in charge:</b>	Primary contact for unit level matters.

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# Introduction

Beginning study can be a challenging time. Generally, this will be a new experience and often outside of many people's comfort zone. This book is designed to give you tips from student veterans who have walked a similar path and can provide advice that has been learnt throughout.

It aims to:

- a.** support your transition to study through lived experience
- b.** provide you with key information in a familiar language
- c.** introduce concepts that veteran members have found challenging.

A common theme you will notice is trying to utilise the skills you have already developed throughout your military careers and applying them to the study setting.

In addition, much of the adjustment is understanding the expectations in tertiary study and what you should expect from the experience, particularly challenges you may face.

The following tips are hard-won lessons from various student veterans who have undertaken tertiary study at ACU. Through research and collaboration these tips have been compiled to make your transition to study more successful.

- a.** Find ways to translate your skills.
- b.** Understand that your past experiences are what will set you apart.
- c.** Take ownership of your learning.
- d.** Know how to and have a plan to access support.
- e.** Manage your time management and your expectations of others.

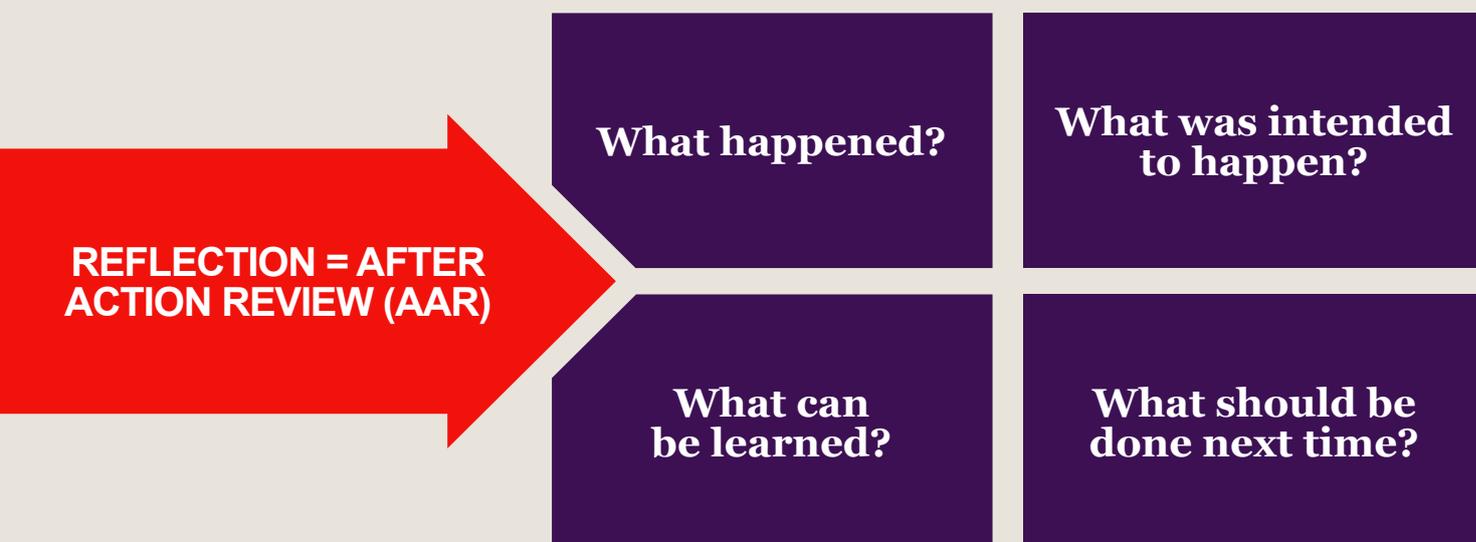
Whether you are a veteran studying at ACU or another institution, these tips are universal in nature. As you move through your university experience you will likely develop your own internal set of lessons learnt, and we'd like you to write these down.

This handbook is a living document that will be updated over time, and there will be opportunities to contribute your tips and ideas. Hopefully you find this handbook useful in transitioning and succeeding in your studies.

# Find ways to translate your skills

University presents a unique opportunity for lifelong learning. The language may differ from that used in defence, and the skill sets may appear quite foreign. But even though there might seem to be little crossover, many of the skills learnt in defence can be used at university. Translating the skills you developed in the ADF to those used at University will allow you to utilise what you have already been using throughout your career.

A great working example of this can be seen with **'reflections'**. Reflections are a critical skill at university used all throughout your studies. For many student veterans this is initially met with some resistance as it's a very subjective process. But at its core, a reflection is just an 'After Action Review' (AAR) conducted on one's own personal experience.



Rather than learning a new skill, finding ways to translate old ones can not only save time, but reduce concerns associated with study.

A good idea is to develop your own list of translations, write them down in a book, as a note on your phone, or utilise the notes section in the back of this handbook.

This will allow for quick reference and refinement of the skills over time. This will also provide the opportunity to share what works for you with others. This can also help with refinement as you will be able to receive feedback, and often teaching someone else can reinforce the learning for yourself.

### MAIN POINTS:

1. The ADF has given you the skills to excel in tertiary study. Recognise the skills you have developed during service – don't discount anything.
2. Identify skills required, pay particular attention to areas where you are unsure.
3. Compare the skills, look for similarities and modify as required – same, same, but different.
4. Refine as required. Some translations will just make sense, others might take time to adjust.
5. Collaborate with others, you may have thought of a translation they haven't – and vice versa.

*“Throughout your service you will likely have been told about the six Ps – prior preparation prevents piss poor performance. This couldn't be truer at university.”*

*– Brisbane student veteran*

# Your past experiences will set you apart

Coming into University can feel like you are starting over. The University is a new environment, and the learning is very different to the ADF. This can often make student veterans feel like they are starting over, and like their previous experience has no place in the academic setting.

Even though this is a new chapter, your previous experience is what will set you apart throughout your studies and give you a competitive edge after graduation. Don't forget where you have come from and draw on your past experiences. This may be formal training undertaken while in defence, on-the-job training as part of your role, or lessons learnt on operational taskings. There is no set limit to what counts and what doesn't; it all comes down to how you can contextualise it into what you are doing now.

Some great examples would be:

- a.** understanding the chain of command
- b.** how to work in a team
- c.** planning tools such as SMEAC
- d.** ability to take leadership.

It is common amongst many separating members that they want to disconnect and differentiate from their service careers.

By no means is this an attempt to change your mind, and for many it may be necessary to create a divide between past/present – but instead we are highlighting the value of using your past experience to your advantage.

### MAIN POINTS:

1. Your past experiences are what have made you who you are today.
2. Leaving the ADF doesn't mean you have to leave the skills you've developed behind.
3. Becoming a student doesn't have to define who you are.
4. Drawing on your past experiences is what will set you apart.
5. Don't forget you are coming into study with a wealth of life experience and skills.

*“I didn't realise how valuable the skills I learnt in the ADF were at university, I feel like I'm steps ahead of my peers.”*

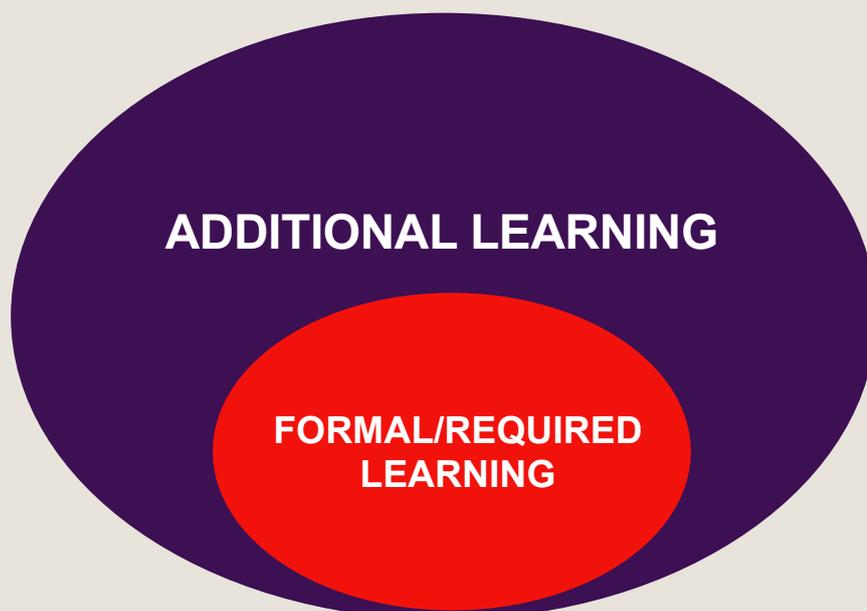
*– ACU student veteran*

# Take ownership of your learning

University is a true adult learning environment; this often means that your learning is primarily your own responsibility. The formal teaching component happens during lectures, tutorials, and workshops. This leaves much of the actual learning occurring outside of the classroom in your own time.

**Taking control of your learning means to be responsible for your own success and understanding of the topics.** If you are unsure about something, then it is your responsibility to reach out for clarification or do some extra research.

This can be a common misconception in higher education, as many assume it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure students understand. This may be the case, but each student learns differently and if the teacher is unaware you are struggling, then there is little they can do to help.



There are a variety of resources available which will guide you through what to focus on and where extra work can be done. Often this will be referred to as ‘additional readings’.

This can significantly increase the “study hours”, but as a guide each university unit is 10 hour of study per week (lectures, tutorials, workshops and study). This would mean that a full-time study load is equal to 40 hours per week. If you are aiming to do well during study then it is advisable to have a plan, balance your work/study/external commitments, and make sure that study isn’t an afterthought.

### MAIN POINTS:

1. You are the key stakeholder in your learning.
2. You are responsible for your understanding. This means if you don’t understand, you need to reach out.
3. There is a formal learning component, but true understanding will happen outside of the classroom.
4. The prescribed content is the basis for understanding.
5. There is no such thing as a stupid question.

*“The onus really does fall onto you. The more study I did outside of class, the better I understood. In the end, my peers were asking me for support.”*

— ACU student veteran

# Know how to & have a **plan to access support**

Throughout your study you will have access to a wide range of support services. These services range from academic skills support, all the way through to employment support. **Knowing what support is available is key to ensuring you get the most out of your university experience.**

More importantly, having a plan to access this support will help you when you need it most. This can be as simple as educating yourself on what is available, and who to speak to when you need it.



It is important to highlight that this plan should include external services and incorporate any existing treatment plan you have. There will likely be some overlap between your existing treatment plan and any actions you would take at university if needed.

Mapping out what the plan would look like in line with any existing plans will ensure you aren't doubling up or missing key areas of support.

## MAIN POINTS:

1. Understand what support is available to you.
2. Have a plan to access that support.
3. If you believe you might need to access it, investigate the processes in advance.
4. Where possible, set up adjustments prior eg. Education Inclusion Plan (EIP).
5. If you are unsure, reach out to Student Veteran Services.

A common challenge for ADF personnel can be the stoic mentality of “sucking it up” when things get tough. There are times when this might be necessary in defence but rarely will there be a time where this is appropriate in higher education.

The support services available throughout study are there to be accessed. **When you are presented with your degree at graduation there will be no mention that you “didn’t ask for help”.**

*“I didn’t think I would need to access any support during my studies but knowing where to go was a lifesaver. You don’t know what’s going to happen so having a plan will make a big difference.”*

— ACU student veteran

# Time management: managing your expectations of others

One of the biggest challenges for defence personnel coming into higher education is time management. Now this generally doesn't refer to the management of your own time (though still important) but refers to managing your expectations of others' time management.

Remember that for many of your peers this will be their first true 'adult learning' experience. Many of your peers will likely have recently left high school and will be learning what time management actually looks like. Understanding this in advance and **accepting that you cannot control how others manage their time is key.**

Often this will be as simple as not holding your peers to the expectations you hold yourself to and accepting that other people's actions are out of your control.

It is important to understand that it is not your responsibility to hold others accountable and that it is up to the academic staff member running the lecture/tutorial/workshop to deem when it's appropriate to intervene.

*"Taking the time to recognise and accept that I can't control the actions of others was one of the best moves I made."*

— Student veteran

## MAIN POINTS:

1. Managing your time is important.
2. Managing your expectations of other people's time can be challenging.
3. Accept this is out of your control.
4. Remember university is not the military – it is likely your peer's time priorities are not the same as yours.
5. It is not your place to correct a peer's time management issue. If you believe it is hindering your ability to learn, raise the issue with the Lecturer in Charge.

# **SMEAC as a planning tool**

It can seem strange using something such as SMEAC outside of defence, but its practicality in developing structure/order is incomparable.

This amazing tool is something all ADF personnel are well versed in using. Incorporating this tool into your planning can give you a significant advantage and help to alleviate stresses associated with assignment writing or exam preparation.

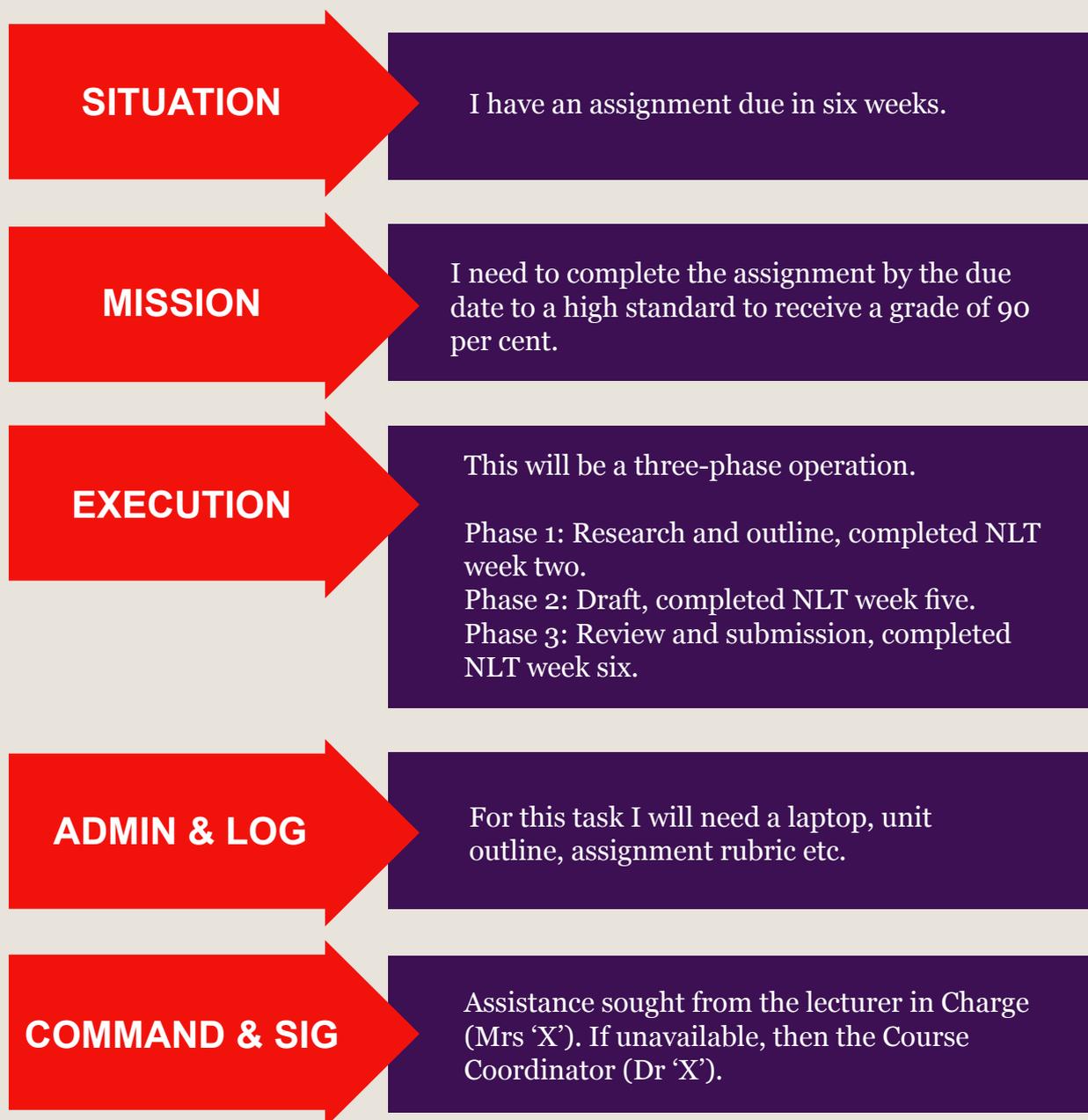
As a refresher:

**S** = **Situation**  
**M** = **Mission**  
**E** = **Execution**  
**A** = **Administration and logistics**  
**C** = **Command and signals**

This is a prime example of translating an existing skill into something you can utilise to give you a significant advantage in university.

The depth of detail that you go into will be guided by the situation and personal preference, but in general, SMEAC will provide a strong foundation for planning most study related tasks. As a starting point, look at your 'Unit outline' and determine a high-level order using SMEAC for the entire unit. From there you can break it down into individual tasks.

An example would be, having an assignment due in week six of the semester.



# Referencing

**Throughout your studies, it is mandatory to reference any information that you have used that isn't your own work.** By referencing you are demonstrating your skills in retrieving and utilising a range of information to support or enhance your work.

The importance of referencing is to provide evidence to support your argument, to allow the reader to locate and verify the sources you have referred to, and to protect you from accusations of plagiarism.

Each discipline requires different referencing styles. It is key to ensure that you are referencing in the correct format, it can mean the difference between a high or low mark.

## REFERENCING GUIDES

<b>APA 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<a href="http://libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/apa7">libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/apa7</a>
<b>Harvard</b>	<a href="http://libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/harvard">libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/harvard</a>
<b>Chicago</b>	<a href="http://libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/chicago">libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/chicago</a>
<b>AGLC4</b>	<a href="http://libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/aglc4">libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/aglc4</a>
<b>Vancouver</b>	<a href="http://libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/vancouver">libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/vancouver</a>
<b>MLA</b>	<a href="http://libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/mla">libguides.acu.edu.au/referencing/mla</a>

## MAIN POINTS:

1. Referencing demonstrates your reading and research efforts.
2. Referencing ensures you are protecting yourself from collusion and/or plagiarism.
3. Make sure you indicate where and how you are referencing, e.g. in-text citations or paraphrasing.
4. Always reference using the correct format and style.
5. Referencing can be the difference between a pass and a fail (great mark/poor mark).

# Resources

## INTERNAL SUPPORT

### **Student Veteran Services**

[acu.edu.au/about-acu/student-veteran-services](http://acu.edu.au/about-acu/student-veteran-services)

### **AskACU**

[acu.service-now.com/askacu](http://acu.service-now.com/askacu)  
or 1300 275 228

### **Academic Skills Unit**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/academicskills](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/academicskills)

### **Student Advocacy Services**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/advocacy](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/advocacy)

### **Student Veteran Support Program (SVSP)**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/svsp](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/svsp)

### **Disability support**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/disability](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/disability)

### **Counselling support**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/counselling](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/counselling)

### **Career Development Services**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/careers](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/careers)

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students**

[studentportal.acu.edu.au/indigenous](http://studentportal.acu.edu.au/indigenous)

## EXTERNAL SUPPORT

**Beyond Blue** 1300 224 636

**Bravery Trust** 1800 272 837

**DMFS (Defence Member and Family Support)** 1800 624 608

**DVA (Department of Veteran Affairs)** 1800 838 372

**Lifeline** 13 11 14

**Open Arms** 1800 011 046

**RSL (National)** 134 775

**Soldier On** 1300 620 380

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# **Soldiers Five To Study**

Copyright © 2021 by Australian Catholic University  
First paperback edition December 2021

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ISBN 978-1-922325-08-2 (Electronic)

CRICOS registered provider: 00004G

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