



Queen Mary

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Science and Engineering

How University Works and How to Work with it.

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University isn't school?

- Runs very differently.
- Lots of students struggle to adapt to what academics expect and how to do things.
- We're not looking over your shoulder all the time.
- There's not daily registers, weekly homework, or strict reading lists and sources etc.
- If not already, you need to be engaged, motivated and independent.



Student handbooks

- Menti

Transition to University

We're running three sessions on the transition to university and how to succeed.

1. Mechanics of being and university and how you can succeed.
2. What you need to put into university to get the most out of it, and how to take ownership of your degree.
3. What university can do for you, and how you can plan a pathway to a career.

In this session:

- How universities work
- Professionalism
- Initiative
- Get help
- Emails
- Planning your time



How universities work

- As an undergraduate student, most of what you will see is the **teaching** side of the university – labs, classes, tutorials, assessments but that is only one side of things.
- Universities are also centres of **research** and this aspect is the other half of university activity – studying and publishing research papers and books and getting the support to do this.
- Even the teaching is only one side, we also administer this in a way that schools do not – we set the curriculum, assess our own teaching, set exams, check protocols and procedures etc.

Research feeds into teaching

- The academics teaching you don't just know things, they are the creators of new knowledge.
- This places them at the cutting edge of the subject you are studying.
- Our research directly informs teaching.



What do academics do?

- Mentimeter

What do academics do?

Academics will take undergraduate lectures, labs, tutorials, advisor sessions, fieldtrips, set and mark assessments and exams but they also:

- Supervise PhD students
- Publish scientific papers,
- Work in labs
- Sit on all manner of committees on teaching and research
- Administration
- Hiring staff
- Discipline panels
- Write research grants
- Review grants and papers
- Consult on commercial projects and to government panels,
- Go to scientific conferences
- Do outreach
- And more...

This means that...

- While students and teaching are extremely important, academics are not available 24-7.
- On a day-to-day basis they may be busy with other duties
 - They could also be away in the field, at a conferences or simply on holiday at odd times of the year.
- In short, **don't leave things till the last minute** or expect your lecturers to be able to drop everything to help you or be available whenever you want.

Everything that follows here can really be summarised in just two points:

- **Follow the instructions and advice**
- **When that doesn't work, ask for help.**

Expertise

- Collectively, the academic team teaching you have decades of experience of being students and centuries of experience of teaching students.
- We also set up the modules you take, teach them, and grade the assessments.
- So we know what we want and what we expect and how to try and get you to do just that.
- In short, if we offer advice, or help, or tell you to do something that will help you, try to listen.
- **So here is some of that advice...**

Be professional

- Obviously this isn't a job and it's also not a school, but it is useful to think of university as a hybrid between the two.
- You are adults here, not children.
- Think about how you do / should act when working in a company.
 - You don't necessarily need to be overly formal in every interaction
 - You do want to consider how you communicate with people, especially those you don't know well or those who are here to instruct you.



Be professional

- Show up on time, be respectful to staff and students, be polite, deliver quality work, don't be disruptive etc.
- Think about how your actions will be perceived – it's no use sending an email to someone at 10:15 saying you will be late for the 10 am meeting.
- Asking when the deadline is for an assessment when it's been announced in class, is on QM+ and was posted in the forum is not a good look.
- Remember that you will be asking academics for professional references in the coming years.

Have Initiative

- We expect you to be independent – to be capable of finding things out and working through problems without asking for help for every step.
- Asking for something you can find in 10 seconds yourself and we have already provided is not showing initiative.
 - Try to google it first 😊
- Asking for help without trying to find the answer shows you haven't tried to understand the material.
 - Reread the notes, checked some other sources and if you are still struggling, asking for help is taking initiative and being independent.

Take responsibility

- In addition to the obvious (go to lectures, hand in assessments etc.) be responsible for things that affect you.
 - e.g., we will always be careful and check, but it's easy with large classes to make a mistake entering grades or the system might not save things properly. So make sure you check that any marks given have been recorded.
- If you missed a class, immediately asking for the notes or help catching up is not a good look: try looking at lecture recordings first
- BUT...!

If you need help, do ask

- If you are struggling or having issues then do reach out.
- **We cannot fix problems we don't know about.**
- So if you cannot keep up with the workload, or have problems at home, or you think your grades haven't been saved properly, or anything else, let us know.
 - Get in touch with your advisor
- Leaving something till *after* the deadline has passed before raising an issues makes it much harder to solve. **The sooner the better!**

Use all the resources available to you

- Make use of all the information and services that have been made available.
- We have a good idea of what you need to know and what you need to do and so have made real efforts to make it readily available, accessible and clear.
- There is a lot of it, but it's been put there *because* you need to be able to access and use it without us.
- These should be your first port of call for most questions you have.

Resources

- Mentimeter

(Some) resources

- Program handbooks – how your program runs
- School handbook – rules and regulations
- Student's guide – how to do well at uni, advice on studying, writing etc.
- QM+ - all kinds of links to major resources
- QM+ module pages – forum, schedules, notes, reading lists, assessment instructions and deadlines, posted notes, videos etc.
- SBBS webpages – list of staff and their contact details etc.
- QMUL webpages – IT, calendar, maps, events etc.
- **These are the places you should be checking before asking for information**

The Gym Analogy

- Just going to the gym sessions and half heartedly taking part while the instructor leads you though it won't get you very far.
- Doing tons of exercise the night before a test won't make you fit.
- But taking full part in the sessions will help you do better.
- Warming up beforehand will help.
- Following the handouts for what to do between sessions will help.
- Checking in with each other and practicing will help.
- Practicing things you are less good at will help.
- Anything extra you do will be valuable and help at some point.
- The live sessions are there to set you up, not to be the start and end

Read your emails!

- Emails are a pain. They come in constantly. There's loads of irrelevant ones. There's lots of long and annoying or useless ones.
 - MENTI
- Your email is the official channel for the staff at QM (academics, admin, others) to reach you.
- When we send something by email to you **we expect you to see it, read it, remember it**, and if necessary, **act on it** quickly.
- You should **check your email multiple times a day.**

No, really, we mean it – **READ YOUR EMAILS!**

- If there is information you need or are looking for, check your emails!
- Also check your Spam filter, deleted emails, etc. It's possible something went wrong or you deleted it by mistake.
- Curate your emails.
 - Organise them in a way that works for you
- Read emails thoroughly when you do read them, don't skim important ones.
- Check the other sources that you expect to receive communications (especially QM+).

Deadlines and Planning

- You need to manage and budget your time.
- While we try to balance things, it's inevitable that some deadlines will land close together.
- Distribute your work accordingly
 - if you have two close deadlines get one piece done early, not hand one in the day it's due and only then start the other.
- Sometimes you will need to start things a long way in advance.
- Academics may not always be available when you want.



Lots of help is available

- Your academic advisor, the year tutor, the student support officer, student counselling, disability and dyslexia services, peer assisted study skills, finance office, housing office, careers office and various other people and departments inside and outside the university.
- **Again, we can only help if we know there is a problem and the sooner the better.**
- We want happy and successful students, please come to us if you are having issues.

Summary

- Things can be very different to what you might be used to or what you might have expected when coming to university.
- It is in everyone's interest (students, academics, admin etc.) that everything runs smoothly and well.
- Best ways to succeed:
 1. **engage with all the materials and services we provide**, and
 2. when these don't work or aren't sufficient, **ask for help**.
- **We want you to succeed and enjoy yourself! Let us help you.**

What questions do you have?



Links

<https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=20011>

Dashboard / My Modules / SBBS - Transition to University Resources

SBBS - Transition to University Resources

<https://qmplus.qmul.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=11270>

Dashboard / My Modules / Information for Psychology Students

Information for Psychology Students

Key information

Student voice - your feedback

Advisors and your welfare

Psychology Society **i**

Learning Resources

Careers and Work Experience

Placement and Year Abroad **i**

Third-Year Module Fair **i**

Archive - for staff **i**