

College Taster Pack
**Higher Education:
Studying at degree level**





Welcome

We believe everyone should have the opportunity to study at undergraduate level and that no one should feel they have missed their chance. With that in mind, this taster pack gives you some suggestions on how to plan your Higher Education journey with us.

Throughout your programme we will continue to support you with more in-depth study skills training and encouragement for those interested in progressing from a foundation degree to a full Bachelor's degree. Never be afraid to ask for support from your tutors and lecturers – we are all here to guide you through what can be a daunting transition into Higher Education.

Your first mission is to ask yourself why you are choosing to study for an undergraduate qualification; is it to improve your job prospects? Change career? Increase your salary? Just to prove you could? Keep that mission in your mind throughout your programme. Whatever your goal, we have supported thousands of students into achieving it and in doing so have changed people's lives for the better. We are here to help you achieve yours.

Rebecca Philbrook
Head of Higher Education



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



Tasks

Task 1: Setting aside time and space to study

Each lecture is just enough to give you an introduction to a topic with the inclusion of some more well-known theories on the topic and some guidance on where to find other sources. The expectation on you as a degree level learner, is that you will then do much broader research into each of those topics through reading, reading and more reading!

Studying a degree programme therefore requires you to set aside space and time to study. Use this template to think about and plan when you can complete your independent study.

Consider how much time you have to complete degree work and where is best for you to study (include times for setting and reviewing targets)

Day	When? (be specific)	Where can you study?
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		
Saturday		
Sunday		

Think about all your commitments – how will they impact on your studies?

What do you do each week? (e.g. work, family life, sports, socialising etc)



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



Consider what could prevent you from studying – how can you avoid this?

Potential barriers to studying	Ways to avoid this?

Consider what tools/methods you could use to keep organised and set targets

Paper based	Online	Gadgets



Plan of action – list the decisions you have made

Days/Times I will study	
Where will I study?	
Organisation methods	
Any other actions I need to consider before I begin my studies	

Abingdon
Witney
College



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



Task 2: How do you learn?

Often, if we understand how we learn, we can then develop strategies in order to help us retain information. You will find the amount of information that you are required to process and analyse quite daunting at times, therefore understanding the most efficient way you can do so is critical.

VARK is just one way of understanding how you learn; many more are available and your tutor may introduce you to one or more techniques when you begin the programme.

Step 1; find out your learning preference by completing the questionnaire here

<https://vark-learn.com/the-vark-questionnaire/>

You will receive a score for each type of learning mode:

- Visual: you learn through looking at the depiction of information in maps, charts, diagrams etc
- Aural: you learn via listening to people through discussion, lectures, peer groups, radio, TV etc
- Read/write: you learn via reading or the visual display of words. You prefer writing essays, assignments etc.
- Kinesthetic: you learn by doing

Step 2; research some strategies to help you learn by using your preferred choice

<https://vark-learn.com/strategies/visual-strategies/>
<https://vark-learn.com/strategies/aural-strategies/>
<https://vark-learn.com/strategies/aural-strategies/>
<https://vark-learn.com/strategies/kinesthetic-strategies/>
<https://vark-learn.com/strategies/multimodal-strategies/>

Step 3; explore the website <https://vark-learn.com/>

Is there any other information and guidance on there that you can use to help you learn more efficiently?



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



Task 3: What skills do you already have?

Whether you are returning to study or fresh from A levels, it is worth considering those skills that you already possess that will enable you to be successful during your higher education programme.

You may even be thinking, “I know nothing about studying” – how wrong you are! Think about activities you do in your day to day life and the skills you need to achieve them. These are the same skills you will utilise whilst studying. Here are some examples:

- Organisation; juggling personal and working lives
- Time management; getting to work on time, getting the kids to school
- Read; you read books, newspapers, Facebook posts
- Search for information; you do google searches, or contact friends for advice
- Evaluation of your work; you use the power of hindsight to think of things you could have done or said differently

List 10 other skills you already possess which may come in useful for studying:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.



01235 216 400

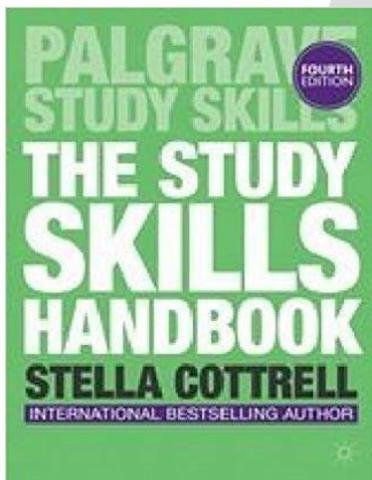
enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



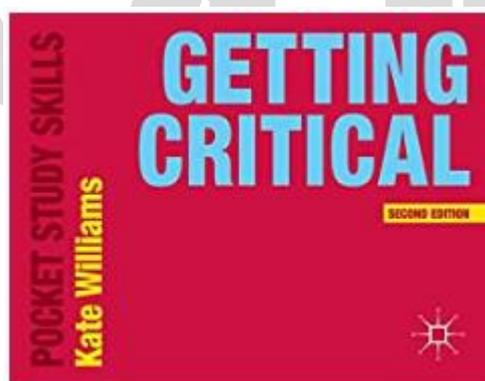
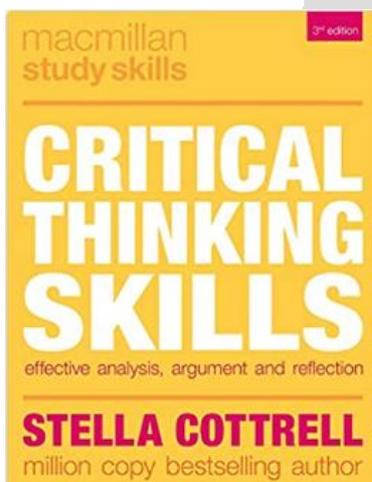
Task 4: Consider what additional tools you might need

Palgrave produce a variety of study skills books to help you succeed at undergraduate level. These are just a few that students have used in the past to help them whilst studying with us.

The Study Skills Handbook gives a broad overview of a wide variety of skills required. It is a reasonable price new (around £10) and 2nd hand copies are also available via eBay, Abebooks and other online marketplaces.



Writing Critically is an artform, one that is improved over time and a skill we will introduce you to fully once you begin your programme with us. You will receive regular written and verbal feedback on your work whilst you study with us, but one of the most important pieces of feedback you should respond to is to “be more critical”.



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



You need to be able to show us the books, papers and other published and unpublished materials that you have used while researching for your assignments. Referencing of your work is very likely to be a new skill that you are unfamiliar with, but one that we will support you to acquire and improve upon.

At Abingdon and Witney College, we use the Harvard Referencing System. Here are some links and guides that you might wish to read prior to starting with us.

<https://www.brookes.ac.uk/library/library-services/information-skills/citing-references-in-your-work-and-plagiarism/>

<http://www.citethemrightonline.com/>

Accurate referencing is important, not only to show us where you found information but also to show the range and nature of your source materials. Poor referencing can lead to loss of marks or even worse, plagiarism.

Be mindful of sources that would not be considered trustworthy; for example, as an undergraduate we would not accept any references from sources such as Wikipedia.

Make a list here of those additional tools that you might require and then use it to find further reliable websites (sites that end in .gov, .edu or .ac for example would be deemed as reliable)



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk



Task 5: Stay up to date

It is important as an undergraduate to keep up to date with what is happening in relation to your area of study. In the longer term, you will be introduced to journal articles which are far more reliable than, for example, news articles. For this task however, your job is to spend the time between now and the beginning of your course actively reading articles related to your area of study.

Use this page to keep a note of the articles you have read and the key points from that article.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for students to write notes. The background of the page features a large, faint watermark that reads "Abingdon & Witney College".



01235 216 400

enquiries@abingdon-witney.ac.uk