Academic Skills for Higher and Degree Apprenticeships
How to Succeed at Distance Study

Familiarise yourself with Moodle

Moodle is the University’s virtual learning environment, it is where all of the
necessary information for each of your modules are:

- Familiarise yourself with the content and structure of each of your modules.
- Make sure you can access the weekly reading materials and guides.
- Check procedures for submitting work via turnitin and receiving feedback
  on written assignments via feedback studio etc
- Look ahead at the structure of each module and take note of all important
dates and deadlines, build them into a study plan (see Have a plan below).
- Check Moodle daily for announcements, updates or changes to the module,
  and to take part in structured discussions.

Have a plan

Use a study planner to organise your study time:

- Put module start and end dates, exam dates and assignment hand-in dates into
  your planner.
- Identify how much time you should spend each week on each module in order to
  meet hand-in dates; divide your time between weeks, days and hours accordingly,
  add to your planner.
- Break your work into small tasks and set yourself short deadlines to complete each
  task, this minimises the chances of you over-running hand-in dates.

Use simple project management techniques such as a Gantt chart to plan the course
of your whole degree/apprenticeship programme.

Be organised

Create your own study space – somewhere quiet where you can concentrate on your
studies – ideally with a suitable desk and chair, and a place for storing your course

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material (computer, physical files/folders, books etc.). Make sure your personal computer is kept up to date with the latest software updates and security features. Discounted and free study-related software is available for Kent students at https://www.kent.ac.uk/itservices/software/ along with a range of free productivity tools to help you work more effectively.

**Leave enough time to ask for help**

If you get stuck in your studies go back to your course modules, notes and readings, or conduct some research; however, if you are still unable to move forward please contact your tutor, as well as talk things over with fellow students.

**Remember** the Student Learning Advisory Service (SLAS) is here to support your academic development. We offer individual appointments to distance learners (by phone or Skype) on all aspects of effective learning and study skills, including maths and stats. For more details go to www.kent.ac.uk/learning

**Keep motivated**

**Remind yourself of your long-term goals**, why you embarked on the course - are you wanting to further your career or learn more about the subject? This will maintain your focus even when things are difficult.

**Work actively to maintain your interest in the subject**, the more you regularly engage with your studies the more likely your motivation will be maintained. Any subject can be interesting if you are curious to learn more about it.

**Get started** – the hardest part can be starting a task, so start with something small or easy; once you’ve got going, you’ll find it easier to keep going.

**Keep in contact with your course** - contact your tutor to get advice or to make sure you’re on the right track. Set up social media forums, groups and networks with students on your course in order to share experiences and swap tips.

**Study at the right time** – when you’re at your most focussed and alert. Study requires a high level of concentration and focus.

**Stay organised** – make sure you have all the resources you need to hand, and think carefully about what you want to achieve.

**Reward yourself** – if you’ve achieved your aims for the day or week.

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