

First Year Conveners

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New students often get a shock to discover the extent of independent planning and participation that is required of them at university. Large class sizes and multiple lecturers make the class situation more impersonal than it was in school or college. But it pays to remember that the more you put in to your time at university, the more you get out of it.

In this brochure, we have included some tips that will help you get the most out of your courses.



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SCIENCE CENTRAL

The Science Central team provides information and administrative support for students and the general public.

Open Monday–Friday, 8.30am–4.30pm

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FIRST YEAR FACTSHEET STUDENT ETIQUETTE

Lecture etiquette

Most first-year courses follow a traditional model of lectures, where theory is taught, and tutorials or pracs, which are more flexible.

Lectures give students a perspective on their subject that text books cannot. The lecturer's job is to impart information clearly, to show why the information is important and relevant, and to equip students to find out more for themselves.

For the best possible learning experience everyone should work together to create an effective learning environment. Here are some tips:

Arriving late

Make sure you arrive and are seated before the lecture commences. If you are late, enter the theatre quietly, preferably by a back door and take the nearest seat. If you miss out on getting handouts, you can always get them after the lecture. In some classes, the door to the lecture theatre is locked at the start of the lecture, and late students are denied entry.

Leaving early

Walking out during a lecture is rude and distracting to the lecturer and students. If you know you will need to leave the lecture early, sit near the door for a fast and silent getaway. If the class is small, it is polite to tell the lecturer at the beginning that you will be leaving early. If you need to leave unexpectedly, leave quickly and quietly by the closest door.

Never walk in front of the lecturer or between the lecturer and the class.

Mobile phones

Turn mobiles off before the lecture starts. In very rare cases, such as a dying relative or childcare issues, you may need to take a call. If this is the case, set your phone to vibrate and make sure you are sitting close to an exit so you can quickly leave and take your call.

Talking on the phone or texting in a lecture is the height of rudeness to both the lecturer and the rest of the class, and is not appropriate under any circumstances.

Online activities

Students often complain about others checking emails, googling and playing screen games. There is no place for these activities in a lecture.

Communicating with teaching staff

If you can't catch your lecturer immediately following lectures, use email to ask simple questions, or to arrange appointments. We will endeavor to reply within 24 hours. Please note the following:

- > Send emails from your ANU account
Emails must be sent from ANU assigned email addresses (uXXXXXXX@anu.edu.au) as they carry implicit student identification. For security reasons, information cannot be given out to other addresses.
- > Use appropriate language
An email to a lecturer is a formal method of communication, which should identify the receiver ("Dear Dr Smith") and the sender ("Yours sincerely, Peter Brown"). Messages starting with "Yo" are trashed unread.
- > Emails which do not observe common manners or are from non-ANU addresses will be discarded

- > Put the course title in the subject line
Staff get enormous numbers of emails, particularly if they are teaching several courses. Putting your course code into the subject line (e.g. BIOL1003) means it won't get mixed up or deleted as spam.
- > Appointments
Use email or phone to make an appointment. Some lecturers have visiting hours (e.g. Tuesday afternoon) when students can drop in to discuss class issues.

Web-based learning

Class web pages

All courses have a Wattle web page, which is your central source of information about class activities, lecture notes, and everything else to do with the course. Check your course sites daily for important announcements, lab notes and study material.

Wattle forums

Wattle is used for students to discuss course issues with one another, and draw attention to interesting articles or news items. Lecturers monitor the forums irregularly, so any important questions about the course should be addressed to the lecturer via email.

Facebook & social media

Social media is not a safe place to discuss course structure or content; circumstances have arisen where students have received incorrect information from others about due dates, assessment content etc. As staff have no control over this communication, information cannot be corrected.

Users of social media should also be aware of privacy issues and the potential for litigation by other students or staff in the case of offensive content or the distribution of copyright teaching material.

Lecture notes

Some lecturers post notes and PowerPoint slides on Wattle before lectures, whereas others feel that from a teaching perspective it is better to post notes after lectures. These notes are a useful accompaniment to lectures and you should make use of them for study purposes. But while they highlight important principles and issues, you will not pass a course using these notes alone.

Lecture attendance

Most courses involve formal lectures and it is your responsibility to attend. Lecture recordings may be provided as a backup in cases of illness or timetable clashes.

Recordings are not a completely satisfactory substitute for lectures. Our studies consistently show that students who regularly attend lectures do substantially better than students who attend irregularly. A 2012 study found that regular attendees achieved results of up to two grades higher than students who relied heavily on recordings - this is the difference between a Fail and a Credit, or a credit and a High Distinction.

If you think you can rely on lecture recordings and notes to do well in a course, you are wrong.