

Making the most of your time as an undergraduate

Skills that this session will develop:

Knowledge - Routes In

By the end of this session the mentee will be able to:

- Describe the different ways you can make the most of your time as an undergraduate
- Identify goals for their own undergraduate life

Session Preparation:

1. Mentee to prepare questions to ask the mentor about their experience as an undergraduate.
2. Mentor to think about top tips for making the most of your time as an undergraduate.

Session Plan:

Review the information below and then complete the tasks together.

If you think that being an undergraduate student is all about being buried underneath books, take comfort in knowing that this is far from the truth! While there will definitely be times when you need to buckle down and focus, the student experience is much more than essays and exams. It is often described as one of the most formative and best experiences of your life!

Although everyone's student experience will be different, there are a number of ways to ensure that you get the most out of your time as an undergraduate. The following is not an exhaustive list, but a great way to get started:

1. Embrace learning

University is your chance to explore the subject you are really inspired by and take a proactive role in your education. You will have the chance to taste-test different programmes, learn from experts in diverse fields and use your passions to tailor your academic and career paths.

2. Build new friendships

One of the best things about university is that it puts you in contact with so many new people - capitalise on this as much as possible. Learn from each other and share experiences because

it will make you a more rounded person and equip you with the skills needed to work with all kinds of people in the outside world.

3. Be smart with your finances

Your student loan has come in and you have financial freedom - but maybe think twice before buying that iPhone 11 Pro!

It is very easy to underestimate how much you can spend, so learning how to budget and keep track of your finances is an important part of ensuring that your uni life is comfortable. Plan out a weekly budget and make use of apps to [track your spending](#).

4. Manage your time effectively

At university, you won't have school bells telling you when classes start or teachers reminding you when assignments are due. Therefore it's important to learn to independently manage your time and organise your priorities.

Whether it's a pin-up planner, your phone calendar, or a [time management app](#), find an organising tool that works well for you and write out a personal timetable. Include lectures and seminars, private study, extracurricular activities, any employment obligations, and time for rest and relaxation with your friends. Break down big tasks into small, manageable steps.

5. Get involved on campus

University offers a myriad of meaningful ways to get involved and enrich your student life - you might want to consider submitting an article to the university magazine, volunteering to show new students around campus, or joining a society (societies are a diverse collection of student groups and organisations ranging from sports and drama to Quidditch and YAS, i.e. the 'Yoncé Appreciation Society' - whatever your interest, there will likely be a society for you!)

These will all allow you to engage in your interests, develop valuable skills, and meet new people outside of your course and accommodation.

6. Take advantage of work experience and study abroad programmes

Many of the skills you will need to thrive in your professional career aren't taught in a lecture theatre. Work placements or even spending a year in industry will broaden your skillset and give you an understanding of what work life is like – giving you a great head start!

An option now offered by many universities, studying abroad gives you the opportunity to immerse yourself in a new culture, learn a new language and make friends from all over the world, further developing your life experience.

7. Don't be afraid to ask for help

Leaving home for the first time, juggling studies with making new friends - university can be a big lifestyle change.

Be it emotional, physical or social support that you need, don't be afraid to reach out to people you trust and your university will have resources on campus that can help if you come across any difficulties. There is no shame in admitting that you are having a tough time – a lot of students underestimate the different pressures and stresses that they might experience during their time at university, so it's important to be kind to yourself and take care of yourself.

Task 1: Together, discuss the mentor's experience as an undergraduate. Go over mentee's prepared questions and mentor's top tips.

Task 2: Together, set some goals for the mentee to achieve in their first year of study at university. To help with this, consider the following:

- Identify what the mentee is most excited about in starting their university life. How can they best expand upon this as an undergraduate?
- Identify what the mentee is worried about in starting their university life. How can they best overcome this as an undergraduate?

For more information on undergraduate experiences:

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/student/advice/student-blog-five-tips-make-most-your-university-experience>

<https://targetjobs.co.uk/news/467392-how-to-make-the-most-of-university-14-tips-from-a-graduate>

<https://www.savesthestudent.org/money/student-budgeting/student-budgeting.html>

<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/student-life/getting-undergraduate-student-support>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/tips-for-everyday-living/student-life/about-student-mental-health/>