Welcome

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, as a parent, partner or friend of a new university student, to the University of South Australia community. Someone special to you is beginning a new phase in an unfamiliar environment and that can sometimes prove as daunting as it is exciting.

University life offers a range of opportunities and experiences to be embraced and enjoyed. It offers a pathway to the future and the knowledge needed for a successful career or to follow a particular field of interest. It also offers students opportunities to build lifelong friendships, broaden their horizons and maximise their opportunities.

Our university has established a deserved reputation for both the quality of our programs and the support we provide to our students. This guide has all the practical advice and information to enable you to support your student to get the best out of their university experience.

Regardless of whether you have studied at tertiary level yourself, you’ll find insights into what is involved in starting a university program, how it differs from other educational institutions, and what is involved in being a university student in the 21st Century.

I hope you find this guide useful, and that the UniSA experience proves enjoyable and rewarding for the student in your life.

Professor David Lloyd
Vice Chancellor and President
University of South Australia

This guide provides information for Parents, Partners and Friends of UniSA students about starting and succeeding at university.
Inside the Guide for Parents, Partners and Friends of UniSA Students

- Getting Started at University 4
- How Parents, Partners and Friends Can Help 12
- The UniSA Community 16
- Frequently Asked Questions 18
- Costs and Financial Assistance 20
Getting Started at University

Students find studying at university both different and familiar.

University study builds on previous experiences but teaching and learning methods will vary for new areas of study and because all students are adults.

The general environment is designed for adult students who have chosen their program and therefore will accept more responsibility for themselves. At University they will be exposed to new ideas and encouraged to deeply explore their professional field.

Typical differences between high school and university

The chart on the next page summarises some of the key differences between high school and university and helps explain why university students need to manage their workload differently. These differences can mean that various members of one household have different daily routines.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH SCHOOL</th>
<th>UNIVERSITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most students are under 18 years old; school attendance is compulsory.</td>
<td>Students are adults responsible for meeting basic commitments like attendance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are known by staff and other students.</td>
<td>Students will have to make themselves known.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers manage assessment; provide prompts and reminders.</td>
<td>Assessment information is available from week one. Students work to due dates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes are small.</td>
<td>Class sizes vary from small to large.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom learning is essential to success.</td>
<td>Most learning is done outside of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignments are submitted electronically or handed in to the teacher.</td>
<td>Most assignments are word-processed and submitted electronically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School reports are sent to parents/guardians.</td>
<td>Student results are confidential to students and posted on their student portal. This information is not shared with others without written permission from the student.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students learn the elements of referencing their research resources.</td>
<td>Detailed referencing is required. Copying information is treated as plagiarism. Penalties apply.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers manage most student issues.</td>
<td>Students can access expert support services and online resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers may allow extra time on assignments.</td>
<td>Formal extensions are available only on medical and compassionate grounds. Evidence must be provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The school will contact parents/guardians if there is an issue.</td>
<td>The University contacts students when there is a learning or administrative issue and parents/guardians/partners in the case of emergencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School hours are regular and predictable.</td>
<td>Classes are scheduled from early morning to mid-evening. Each student’s timetable varies each study period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some students have part-time jobs.</td>
<td>Most students work part-time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students must leave school grounds after hours.</td>
<td>Students can study on-campus whenever necessary to complete work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School costs are predictable and payable within a certain time-frame.</td>
<td>Program costs are pre-determined but vary across programs. See p.20 for more information. Additional costs include text books etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making a good start is important and reactions to university expectations in the first four to six weeks can determine how students proceed.

The First Year
The first year is crucial. Generally students who succeed in their first year go on to graduate. Your encouragement and guidance is essential throughout this first year.

Enrolment
Students who have been offered a place at UniSA enrol online using myEnrolment. UniSA’s New Students website provides relevant information and access to this step-by-step process. There is essential pre-enrolment advice attached to some programs. Most full-time students will enrol in 4 subjects (called courses at UniSA) per study period (semester).

unisa.edu.au/newstudents
Students needing assistance with enrolment should contact Campus Central. unisa.edu.au/campuscentral

Once they are enrolled any information about a student’s progress, financial or personal status is only available to the student as it is protected by government privacy laws. While this is standard practice in universities it is a change for parents who are used to receiving such information.

Orientation
Students must be involved from the very beginning to make a good start. As soon as they know they have a place in a program they can plan for Orientation by checking the New Students website. unisa.edu.au/newstudents

Orientation activities are a mix of essential preparatory information and opportunities to meet staff and classmates. It has been shown that those who miss Orientation tend to be less successful than students who attend so encourage students to take full advantage of these activities, including social events.

External and online students can prepare for the study period by looking at information on the Program website unisa.edu.au/programs and on Studying Externally webpages unisa.edu.au/external

How is the year organised?
For most students there are two main study periods (semesters) each year: Study Period Two (SP2) is in the first half of the year (late February – June) and Study Period Five (SP5) is in the second half of the year (July – November). Other study periods cater to special needs e.g. the compressed courses offered in Summer and Winter Schools (SP1 and SP4).

Students are on vacation between, but not during, study periods. Knowing how the academic year is organised may affect your planning.

Assessment
Teaching, learning and assessment drive student activities during each study period. Students are assessed in every course through a set number of assignments (perhaps as few as 3–4). The complexity, value and standard will gradually increase with final assignments worth a lot of marks (see Typical Workload Overview). Some assignments will require new skills and new ways of working e.g. in groups. Through their assignments students acquire new information and a range of practical skills for their future careers.

The workload pattern for each course is similar and linked to assessment each study period. In the first few weeks they will be introduced to their new courses, with small assignments generally set for week 4 (See diagram). There is a short teaching break which coincides with due dates for a number of larger assignments. Meeting all the deadlines when they are close together requires continuous work and good time management. Often students with jobs have to negotiate their paid work around due dates.

Students must submit their work on time. Extensions are available only if students are unwell or have good personal reasons for lateness. Formal requests with supporting documentation e.g. medical certificate, must be lodged before the due date and approval is not automatic.
Typical Workload Overview

- **WEEKS 1–5**
  - Workload increases at a MODERATE RATE.
  - One assignment per course.
  - Some assignments share due dates.

- **WEEKS 6–7**
  - Workload increases to a MEDIUM RATE.
  - One assignment per course.
  - Assignments increase in size and value.
  - Some assignments share due dates.

- **WEEKS 8–13**
  - Workload increases to a MAXIMUM RATE.
  - One assignment per course.
  - Assignments increase in size and value.
  - Some assignments or exams on same day.

Students have some critical deadlines to meet during each study period.

1 2 3 4 5 6 two week teaching break 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 Swot Vac Exams
How many hours of study are required?

Full-time study is often compared with a full-time job comprising 40 hours or more per week. That equates to ten hours on each course each week. Some of this time is spent in class but most work is done in independent study, either at home or on campus. As most students have additional commitments outside of uni, like work and family, planning is essential. If students can’t fit their commitments around their study load they can choose to study part-time over a longer period. Overloaded students tend to under-achieve.

Weekly study demands fluctuate over the study period and between courses. Some weeks carry a regular workload while others are very busy with assignments. Students can plan for these variations from the start by using course information and free Study Planners. Understanding this pattern of work will allow you to plan around the busiest weeks.

Find your study planner here unisa.edu.au/studyplanners

What do students actually do?

What students do is largely determined by their field of interest and program requirements. Students need to develop sound knowledge in their field, organisational skills and the ability to work professionally with people from many different backgrounds.

Their contact time with teaching staff can vary from 12 to 26 hours per week. Students studying on-campus will attend scheduled lectures, tutorials, studio, practicals or workshops. Program differences reflect variations in professional education requirements. For example, Engineering and Nursing students have many learning activities in class while Commerce students spend less time in class.

As professional skill development varies greatly it is important for students to take a very active part in their learning. Sometimes they will need to work with others in informal study groups or arrange times outside of class to work together. Developing confidence to discuss course information with staff and other students, and raise questions in class, online or via email is essential for increasing their understanding of what is expected and meeting the requirements.

Key dates in the Academic Calendar as well as a table of commonly used university terms are available online to support their study.

unisa.edu.au/newstudents

Full-time study is often compared with a full-time job taking 40 hours or more study time per week.
Early challenges

Adapting to university can present special challenges. Even students with good organisational skills can take some time to settle in and manage their workload and deadlines. Students living away from home for the first time and those used to more guidance will need your encouragement as they take on new responsibilities.

Sometimes students lose momentum early in their first study period. Some find that their program is not what they expected. Others enrol late or skip some early classes, missing essential information and opportunities to make a good start in their courses.

As early as Census date, some students consider withdrawing despite the fact that they worked so hard to get into university.

Instead of withdrawing there are a range of options available and UniSA advisory staff can help students work through these early transition issues.

unisa.edu.au/counselling

Parents, partners and friends can play a strong role in encouraging students to get good advice on their options.

Studying off-campus or online

Studying courses which have a limited or no attendance component is convenient for students unable to attend on-campus.

The risks in off-campus study lie in students not being able to discuss their questions face-to-face on a daily basis. Losing momentum or developing a sense of isolation is common.

Program and course-based staff answer questions related to courses. Campus Central (unisa.edu.au/campuscentral) provides administrative advice. The Studying Externally website (unisa.edu.au/external) provides practical advice and organisational tools for external students. Tools like the Study Planners allow students to monitor due dates.

Help external students by:

- supporting students to work towards their long term goals
- ensuring they have dedicated time and space for study
- encouraging contact with other students and staff through online activities and email
- encouraging contact with student services when expert advice is needed
- organising shared events after due dates
What Successful Students Do!

1. Attend classes regularly

2. Develop social networks with other engaged students

3. Research information as needed

4. Study each course every week
5 Communicate and ask for help early if things are confusing

6 Participate online and in tutorials

7 Aim for success by doing their best work

8 Organise time; balance their activities

9 Submit all assignments on time

10 Learn from markers’ feedback
How Parents, Partners and Friends Can Help

First year at university is a time of new experiences and rapid personal growth for students.

This brings many different changes at the same time. Each student is an individual and will manage their challenges in their own unique way. You can be available when they need to talk. Your emotional and practical support is very valuable for developing their self-reliance.

Self-directed Study
A key achievement for students is managing their study requirements independently. They need to learn how to recognise what, when and how much to do. The ability to prioritise, plan and complete their study requirements develops over time. You can suggest they share a calendar of all their due dates with anyone able to encourage and support them. Try to convey your confidence in them without attempting to organise their lives for them.

Provide a good study environment
Help your student to create their dedicated study space. Ideally this is a place where they can leave their work undisturbed. Students need blocks of committed study time in which they are not interrupted, usually between 2 and 4 hours. Accommodating study in any household involves negotiating their needs and discussing the impact these will have on others.

The support of family and friends is very important to a student’s success and health.
Computer Use
Studying at UniSA is managed through a sophisticated online environment. Therefore a home computer with internet access is a great asset. If the student will be relying on shared computer use, their demand for intensive and uninterrupted computer time will need to be negotiated. Alternatives to home computer use include:

1. UniSA’s computer pools and facilities which are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. On-campus libraries are also equipped for quiet online study.
2. Community-based computer pools e.g. local libraries.

Make allowances for uni commitments
Students living at home will be less available to give family support during study periods because they are expected to do two-thirds of their work in their own time. In addition, if English is a second language, workload can be even heavier. Try to time family events between the major study periods as assessment. Assessment policies cannot accommodate student absences at key times.

Foster work/life balance
Some students over-commit to paid work and other responsibilities. Encourage your student to use the first study period to focus on managing their academic workload. Once they understand what is expected of them, they can balance other activities appropriately.

Encourage networking
Being a university student is much more than just achieving academically. Students need to make the most of opportunities to meet new people and build new networks. UniSA promotes activities that build connections between students for better learning and lifelong professional friendships.

Changes in direction
As students hear about new study options they may consider a new career direction. Encourage them to fully explore their options and any planning requirements by starting at Campus Central.

If they choose to leave the university it’s important they withdraw formally and ensure all affected groups are properly informed. International students must meet their Student Visa requirements. Encourage them to contact Program staff to discuss their options.

Students need to learn how to recognise what, when and how much to do.
You can support their study by asking useful questions and proof-reading drafts for spelling and meaning but you cannot edit or rewrite their work.

**Coping with illness or accidents**
Study can be interrupted by circumstances like major illness, family crisis or relationship breakdown. If this happens, encourage your student to contact each Course Coordinator to negotiate appropriate arrangements. They may benefit from talking with a University Counsellor at this time.
unisa.edu.au/counselling

**Checking assignments**
Students benefit from talking through the ideas in their assignments as it helps to clarify their thinking and writing. You can support their study by asking useful questions and proof-reading drafts for spelling and meaning but they must do their own editing.
Expert support and resources are available to students through the L3 Language, Literacies and Learning team and the L3 website.
unisa.edu.au/L3

**Provide that long term view**
Despite their change in lifestyle it is important to keep your communication lines open. Make time to connect about all the big and small things. Sometimes early experiences at uni are less successful than expected so remain positive and encouraging; maintain your faith in their ability. Take a longer term view — encourage them to clarify expectations with their tutors, to note the feedback on their work and do better next time.

If your student is living away from home set up regular times to keep in touch and maybe plan a visit for mid-study period. Some students need a boost after about six weeks.

**Checking assignments**
Students benefit from talking through the ideas in their assignments as it helps to clarify their thinking and writing. You can support their study by asking useful questions and proof-reading drafts for spelling and meaning but they must do their own editing.
Expert support and resources are available to students through the L3 Language, Literacies and Learning team and the L3 website.
unisa.edu.au/L3

**Talk about Careers**
The UniSA online Careers Hub offers training and advice about seeking work and preparing for a career. Support their career preparation by introducing them to your family, community or volunteering networks. Make a list of people you know who might act as mentors, referees or provide work experience and encourage your student to talk to them. Join them at Career Fairs and Expos organised by the university.
unisa.edu.au/careers

Whether living at home or away from home, a student can benefit from regular chats about what they’re doing.
Living Away from Home Checklist

Common important items that are easily forgotten:

- Contact Details of a Support Person in Case of an Emergency
- Health information/Prescriptions
- Birth Certificate (certified copy) + Passport
- Medicare Card/OSHC
- Maps and Local Area Information
- Tax File Number
- Driver’s License or Identity Card
- Personal Bank Account
- Public Transport Timetables
- Your Contact Details
- References for Job Searches
The UniSA Community

Our students are valued members of our community. Throughout the year there are many events, associations, clubs and activities for new students to join in, helping them to develop new friends and networks, some of which will lead to employment opportunities.

USASA – University of South Australia Students Association

USASA is a student run organisation that aims to make a student’s time at University more enjoyable. It provides support, advice and fun events, both on and off campus.

unisa.edu.au/usasa

Clubs

The University with USASA and professional interest groups offer a variety of academic clubs which provide students with the chance to socialise with other students and build positive relationships with industry. Some are connected to international and national organisations such as Enactus and Oaktree, as well as local clubs such as MERC (Mechanical Engineering and Robotics Club).

unisa.edu.au/studentexperience

► Watch the video at unisa.edu.au/merc

UniSA Sport

UniSA Sport provides a great way to stay healthy, make new friends and socialise. There’s everything from hockey and basketball through to badminton and gridiron. UniSA Sport also organises students to represent Team UniSA at local, interstate and national intervarsity competitions.

unisa.edu.au/unisasport

UniSA Leadership Program

The UniSA Leadership Program aims to produce leaders who will contribute to a cohesive, sustainable society. Students can develop their personal strengths and understanding of how to use these in study, work, and life.

unisa.edu.au/leadership

► Watch the video at unisa.edu.au/leadership
Global Experience
Global Experience is an exciting program that encourages students to build their intercultural competence and global employability. It offers opportunities to network with industry specialists, volunteer in Australia and overseas, go on a short-term international study tour, and undertake work placements and internships that develop their leadership skills.
unisa.edu.au/globalexperience

Student Exchange
The University of South Australia provides long and short term Student Exchange opportunities to help students gain an international perspective by studying overseas. Participants develop essential skills for working in a global marketplace.
unisa.edu.au/studentexchange

Participating in UniSA’s development programs can improve a student’s employment prospects.
Frequently Asked Questions

University is like a small town with lots of support services for its residents. Encourage your student to use the full range of services to find answers to their questions and succeed in their study.

**Where can students go with general enquiries?**
Campus Central manages all administrative enquiries – from initial course advice and student ID cards through all stages of study life including financial matters. Staff answer students’ questions or redirect them as needed.
[unisa.edu.au/campuscentral](http://unisa.edu.au/campuscentral)

**Where do students get career advice?**
UniSA’s Career Services offers a range of services and resources aimed at maximising our graduates’ employability. Explore the Careers site.

**Who can help with accommodation questions?**
While it may take some time for some students to settle on the right accommodation they can start exploring their options on the Accommodation Services website. This site also provides important information about renting properties and the responsibilities of all parties.
[unisa.edu.au/accommodation](http://unisa.edu.au/accommodation)

**What support is available to students who have a health condition or disability that may affect their study?**
UniSA provides a range of services to students whose study may be affected by a temporary or permanent disability, health, mental health or diagnosed learning difficulty. Students can make an appointment with a Disability Adviser for confidential advice and support in organising a formal plan of study support e.g. alternative exam arrangements and equipment loans.
[unisa.edu.au/disabilityservices](http://unisa.edu.au/disabilityservices)

**Are there childcare services?**
Flexible childcare options are available at recommended centres near UniSA campuses. Early booking is recommended. Enquire at Campus Central on each campus.
[unisa.edu.au/campuscentral](http://unisa.edu.au/campuscentral)

**How do students make contact with others sharing their religious faith?**
UniSA’s independent student association USASA offers a range of clubs where students can meet others sharing their faith. A multi-faith Chaplaincy offers free and confidential pastoral care. There are also Prayer Rooms on each campus for Muslim students to fulfil their daily practices.

Costs and Financial Assistance
Frequently Asked Questions
The UniSA Community
How Parents, Partners and Friends Can Help
Getting Started at University

Do students need internet access to study?

Students do need internet access to manage everyday tasks from the very start of their enrolment. Almost all communication and information is provided via the internet. For example, every course has its own website containing online resources and activities. Online@UniSA is a practical self-help resource for new students. unisa.edu.au/onlineunisa

Is it important to read, write and speak English well?

All programs have extensive reading, writing and speaking requirements for successful study and interactions in work placements. Throughout their enrolment students will be encouraged to develop their English language skills to a professional level. Specialised advice and services are provided by Language and Learning Advisers. unisa.edu.au/L3

What does the Library offer students?

The UniSA Library has a large collection designed for study on or off-campus. Many books and journals are in electronic form so they can be accessed online. The Library also offers training in advanced search skills for those needing it. Students should explore all Library facilities. Students who are studying externally, living remotely or unable to use the Library in person can access the comprehensive Off Campus Library Service via the Library website front page. library.unisa.edu.au

How do students access medical and health services?

Students’ health is important to us. Whenever students need medical advice they should approach student services staff such as Counsellors for directions to local providers.

Are campuses safe?

Security Officers are generally available 24 hours a day on all campuses. While campuses are generally safe places, students are encouraged to talk with Security about anything that is worrying them. unisa.edu.au/campusfacilities

Is there anyone to support newly arrived International students?

There are specialist advisors and transition workshops for International students and these play a valuable role in settling newly arrived students into Adelaide. The advisors are also available to support students with answers to all sorts of questions. unisa.edu.au/internationalsupport

Who can help when students experience personal or emotional issues while at university?

As university students are studying for several years unforeseen life events can impact their study – e.g. personal difficulties or a family crisis. When difficulties arise students are advised to talk confidentially with one of our highly trained and experienced counsellors to find the best way of balancing the issues and course requirements. Online resources also provide valuable advice on many topics unisa.edu.au/counselling

How do students access medical and health services?

Students’ health is important to us. Whenever students need medical advice they should approach student services staff such as Counsellors for directions to local providers.

Are campuses safe?

Security Officers are generally available 24 hours a day on all campuses. While campuses are generally safe places, students are encouraged to talk with Security about anything that is worrying them. unisa.edu.au/campusfacilities

Is there anyone to support newly arrived International students?

There are specialist advisors and transition workshops for International students and these play a valuable role in settling newly arrived students into Adelaide. The advisors are also available to support students with answers to all sorts of questions. unisa.edu.au/internationalsupport

Who can help when students experience personal or emotional issues while at university?

As university students are studying for several years unforeseen life events can impact their study – e.g. personal difficulties or a family crisis. When difficulties arise students are advised to talk confidentially with one of our highly trained and experienced counsellors to find the best way of balancing the issues and course requirements. Online resources also provide valuable advice on many topics unisa.edu.au/counselling
Costs and Financial Assistance

Beyond the payment of fees, studying at university incurs a range of additional costs.

These may include uniforms, field trips, placement costs, name badges and stationery and will be outlined on each course home page. The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) was recently introduced by the Federal Government to improve non-academic services and amenities for students, such as recreational activities, employment assistance, financial or legal advice, child care and food catering. This fee is compulsory.

Students are required to purchase some text books and materials for each course. Second hand textbooks are available through UniSA Student Association (USASA) (usasa.sa.edu.au) and new textbooks from the University Bookshop. Access to textbooks through the University’s Library is limited. University fees can change from year to year. See this site for current information UniSA.edu.au/fees

Scholarships & Grants

A scholarship might just provide the helping hand needed to make university life a little easier. Not only do scholarships provide financial assistance but they often include valuable work experience, mentoring opportunities and even overseas travel.

We have a range of categories – including financial support for high achievers and students in need. Use our search tool to find the scholarships you might be eligible to apply for.

For more information
unisa.edu.au/scholarships

Budgeting advice

Studying may impact the household budget through loss in wages and additional study related costs. UniSA provides an online workshop called Money Matters to assist students to work through the management of finances. Encourage your student to discuss their budgeting with you and others so that they learn to share tips on how to minimise costs and find ways to deal with financial issues as they arise.

unisa.edu.au/counselling
A Happy Uni Student

Stays focused on their study goal.

Keeps organised and balances activities.

Studies and attends classes regularly.

Participates in social networks.