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## Table of contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Welcome to CQUniversity study skills.....                     | 6  |
| Chapter 1: Introduction .....                                 | 7  |
| Your first year at university .....                           | 7  |
| Your aims in first year .....                                 | 7  |
| Transferable generic skills and attributes .....              | 7  |
| Your responsibilities as a student .....                      | 7  |
| Email access at CQUniversity .....                            | 8  |
| Other responsibilities .....                                  | 8  |
| 1. Lifelong learning.....                                     | 8  |
| 2. Graduate Attributes.....                                   | 9  |
| 3. Becoming self-aware .....                                  | 10 |
| Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) ..... | 10 |
| 4. Seeking help when you need it .....                        | 11 |
| 5. Thinking ahead – post graduation.....                      | 13 |
| Accessing course material - You and your study.....           | 13 |
| The Course Profile .....                                      | 13 |
| Study/Faculty Guide .....                                     | 14 |
| Set texts.....  | 14 |
| The resource readings .....                                   | 14 |
| Online resources.....   | 14 |
| The World Wide Web as a resource .....                        | 15 |
| Arranging to have access to the Internet.....                 | 15 |
| Developing efficient searching techniques .....               | 16 |
| Making effective use of the information you find .....        | 16 |
| Evaluating Internet sites for scholarly use .....             | 16 |
| Using the information ethically and honestly .....            | 16 |
| Important online information sources .....                    | 17 |
| Study skills handbook by Stella Cottrell.....                 | 17 |
| Conclusion .....  | 17 |
| References.....   | 18 |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Chapter 2: Getting started and planning your study ..... | 19 |
| Setting yourself up .....                                | 19 |
| Accessing your course materials.....                     | 19 |
| Course Profile .....                                     | 20 |
| Study Guide .....  | 20 |
| Resource Material Book/Readings .....                    | 20 |
| Workbooks.....   | 20 |
| Set textbook .....                                       | 21 |
| Referencing guides.....                                  | 21 |
| The first weeks of study .....                           | 21 |
| How much time should I dedicate to readings? .....       | 22 |
| Time management.....                                     | 22 |
| Time management skills in practice .....                 | 23 |
| Goal setting and time management.....                    | 23 |
| Start with the end in mind.....                          | 23 |
| Environmental awareness and study.....                   | 25 |
| Conclusion .....   | 25 |
| References.....  | 25 |
| Chapter 3: Preparing assessment items.....               | 26 |
| Reading skills.....                                      | 26 |
| Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review .....          | 27 |
| Reading comprehension.....                               | 28 |
| Reading online .....                                     | 29 |
| Other useful resources.....                              | 29 |
| Ways of learning .....                                   | 29 |
| Researching.....   | 30 |
| Study Hint : The importance of research .....            | 31 |
| Course Resources Online .....                            | 32 |
| Evaluating sources .....                                 | 32 |
| Plagiarism .....   | 33 |
| Paraphrasing – avoid plagiarism .....                    | 34 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Academic writing.....   | 34 |
| The academic essay.....   | 35 |
| The report.....   | 35 |
| The lab report.....   | 35 |
| The literature review.....  | 36 |
| The annotated bibliography.....                                   | 36 |
| The abstract.....   | 36 |
| Help with spelling and grammar.....                               | 36 |
| Assessment preparation checklist.....                             | 37 |
| Referencing.....  | 37 |
| Why reference?.....   | 37 |
| When is a reference required?.....                                | 38 |
| Study Hint: Reference lists as a research tool.....               | 38 |
| Oral presentations.....   | 38 |
| Conclusion.....   | 38 |
| References.....   | 38 |
| Chapter 4: Exam preparation.....                                  | 40 |
| Revision strategies and exam techniques.....                      | 40 |
| Exam types.....   | 40 |
| Memorising difficult information, e.g., formulas, dates, etc..... | 40 |
| Memory aids.....  | 40 |
| Revise according to an organised schedule.....                    | 40 |
| Rest if you are stressed.....                                     | 41 |
| Perusal time and timing.....                                      | 41 |
| Prioritise the questions.....                                     | 41 |
| During the test.....  | 41 |
| Cheating.....   | 42 |
| Multiple-choice questions.....                                    | 42 |
| Conclusion.....   | 42 |
| References.....   | 42 |
| Chapter 5: Assorted study hints.....                              | 43 |
| Glossary of terms used at CQUniversity.....                       | 43 |
| More glossaries of terms used at CQUniversity.....                | 48 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Study Hint A: General study strategies.....                     | 48 |
| Study Hint B: Reaffirm what you have learnt .....               | 49 |
| Study Hint C: Mind mapping.....                                 | 50 |
| Extracts start← .....   | 50 |
| Creating learning maps .....                                    | 50 |
| Study Hint D: Advice on how to write an abstract/synopsis ..... | 52 |
| Study Hint E: The <i>KISS</i> principle .....                   | 53 |
| Study Hint F: Reflecting on how you have learned .....          | 53 |
| Study Hint G: Think about the future .....                      | 54 |
| Conclusion .....  | 54 |
| A final word .....  | 55 |
| References.....   | 55 |

# Welcome to CQUniversity study skills

Congratulations on your acceptance to CQUniversity or welcome back if you are a continuing student. For many students, studying at university can seem quite daunting, especially those of you coming back to formal education after a long break from school days. This handbook should be used as a guide to help you with study at CQUniversity. It has been divided into sections, and while some topics mainly provide related information, others suggest practical advice to help you navigate your way through your program of study.

As a university student, you have certain responsibilities. These include carrying out your study and research, completing all assessment items and organising personal commitments and/or full-time or part-time paid work. It can be quite a juggling act; that's why this handbook has been specifically designed to assist you! A variety of sources have been consulted in compiling this handbook and referencing details have been provided throughout should you wish to further pursue any of the listed topics in more detail.

Topics in this handbook include:

- an introduction to university
- getting started and planning your study
- preparing assessment items
- exam preparation
- study hints.

The information contained in this handbook will help you to work steadily and confidently through your materials. Figure 1 shows you how!

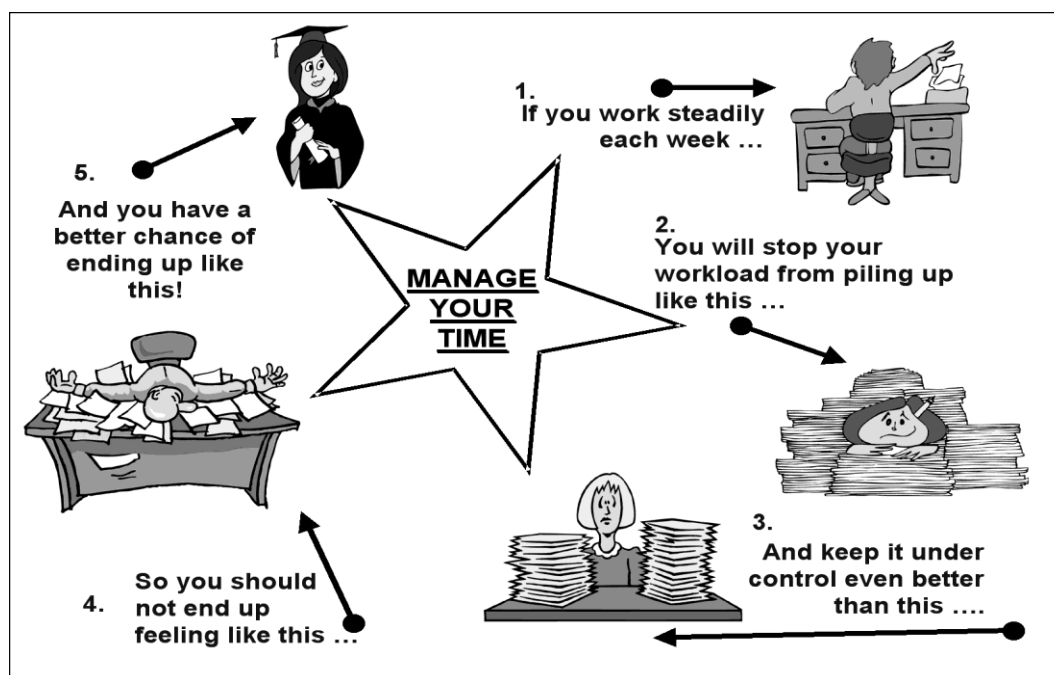


Figure 1: Manage your time and survive university

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## Your first year at university

Welcome to what may be the start of the most challenging and rewarding time of your life! Just as you were the one who made the decision to enter university, you will be the one who makes the decision to get the most out of your time as a university student. University is about:

- expanding your world view
- meeting new and interesting people
- engaging with society in new and often rewarding ways, and
- learning new knowledge and skills.

### ***Your aims in first year***

Your aims in your first year at university will be many and diverse. To help you achieve them, your primary focus should be to establish a foundation of generic skills, knowledge and attributes. These will enable you to more successfully develop specific professional and course competencies required of you as you study for your degree and progress to the workforce.

### ***Transferable generic skills and attributes***

Upon graduation from CQUniversity, most students will enter careers that require the application of a variety of generic competencies as part of everyday working experience. These generic competencies will be expected as skills you acquired whilst studying at university. It is therefore up to you to ensure that whilst being a student, you take every opportunity to develop your abilities in these areas.

Even without the specialist knowledge of a particular discipline or field of study, the acquisition of professional generic competencies and skills is an important step towards a productive and successful career. As you approach the completion of your degree and search for employment, you will find that:

- Research skills will help you locate job opportunities – you may utilise various search strategies used in your own research to find job information.
- Presentation skills will assist you in presenting yourself well to a future employer (or alternatively, if you choose to become self-employed, to your target market/s).
- The ability to write clearly and competently and an awareness of reflective thinking will help you to tailor your job applications to the specific requirements of positions for which you apply.

## Your responsibilities as a student

As previously mentioned, you have certain ‘student’ responsibilities to fulfil. If you work comprehensively through this handbook, you will develop an *awareness* of a wide range of competencies that are useful throughout your

university studies. However, it will be up to you to work beyond this *awareness* in order to develop your *competencies*. Of course it would be impossible at this introductory level to suggest that you will ‘have’ professional competencies simply by working through this material in isolation from your studies.

The courses in your program at university will provide you with the opportunity to develop and practise the many topics covered in this handbook (for example, academic writing, time-management and presentations). They are also likely to introduce and/or expand upon other useful attributes (such as the ability to work in teams) and expose you to a variety of specialist knowledge areas (for example, business, engineering, communications, sociology). Therefore, you are strongly urged to view this material as *a foundation* for your studies at university and beyond into the workplace and wider community. The following section elaborates on your student responsibilities.

### **Email access at CQUniversity**

Upon enrolment, all students are provided with a student number as well an official university email address to which CQUniversity sends all your official email communications. You are required to use this email facility to communicate with your lecturers and it is your responsibility to check your CQUniversity email on a frequent and consistent basis at least once per week. These requirements are stated in the policy on email and Internet usage which is available via this URL  
[http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy\\_file.do?policyid=317](http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=317)

### **Other responsibilities**

As a student at university, you have other responsibilities to fulfill. This chapter will elaborate on the following important information, the goal being to assist you in meeting those responsibilities. This information relates to:

- Lifelong learning
- Generic skills & attributes:
- Becoming self-aware
- Seeking help when you need it
- Thinking ahead – post-graduation

#### **1. Lifelong learning**

The culture for our society and business world demands lifelong learners who know and can use their *preferred learning styles* to their best advantage, and who are self-directed and *independent learners*. Recent literature and research on the workforce of the future describe the need for each person to develop lifelong learning skills and attributes to enhance their abilities to be *job creators* rather than *job takers*.

Lifelong learning skills are defined as being the informal and formal learning that occurs from ‘womb to tomb’. So, there is a need to recognise that your learning will not stop after the mortar boards have been thrown in the air on

graduation day! You will need to continue to keep abreast of the changes and developments in your chosen field throughout all of your working life.

Dr Peter Ellyard (1998), an Australian futurist, suggests that 70% of the jobs we will be employed in in 2020 have not yet been invented. As we move into this millennium, economic, social, political and scientific knowledge continues to change at an ever-increasing rate, and like all consumables, knowledge has a somewhat limited shelf life.

## **2. Graduate Attributes**

CQUniversity is committed to providing opportunities for its students to develop general skills and attributes that they can transfer into the workplace and their day-to-day lives. These are referred to as Graduate attributes. According to CQUniversity (2008), Graduates of CQUniversity will possess the following attributes:

### Category 1: Generic skills

- Communication
- Information literacy
- Team work
- Information technology competence

### Category 2: Intellectual nurturing

- Problem solving
- Critical thinking
- Cross-cultural competence
- Ethical practice

### Category 3: Discipline-specific skills

(CQUniversity 2008, *Graduate attributes*, viewed 20 October 2010, <http://quality.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/getFile.do?id=33810>)

### 3. *Becoming self-aware*

You possess a variety of skills, knowledge and attributes acquired from your time at school, your involvement with community and social groups, your role as a family member, and/or your life, travel and workplace experiences. You may already have:

- some *good habits* which can be practiced and improved upon and may even enhance your ability to take up new good habits
- some *bad habits* about which you need to be open enough to allow for the development of new skills and knowledge.

#### ***Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)***

It is important to build upon your personal strengths and become aware of your weaknesses. A common exercise involves considering your ‘Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats’ to assess your own competencies.

Before commencing study, think about:

- the skills, knowledge and abilities you already possess that will aid you in your studies – your **strengths**
- those **weaknesses** that may impair your ability to succeed at university
- the potential future **opportunities** and **threats** that may occur during your time at university.

For example, if you have entered university directly from school:

- a *strength* may be (and not all school leavers can claim this!) that you have already established some very sound time-management skills
- a *weakness* might be that you are not used to being an independent learner and so self-motivation may be hard to come by
- an opportunity that presents itself might be reading this handbook (depending on how much you engage with the material)
- and a *threat* might be that you must work long hours to pay for your living expenses while studying.

Take some time to complete the following table to identify your own SWOT, but remember, the points you identify here may change, even by the end of your first week at university. They will definitely change by the end of the first term. Revisit this table from time to time throughout your studies and update the information.

| <b>Personal SWOT</b> | <b>Internal characteristics</b> | <b>External influences</b> |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Positives            | <i>Strengths</i>                | <i>Opportunities</i>       |
| Negatives            | <i>Weaknesses</i>               | <i>Threats</i>             |

To maximise opportunity for success, you might consider taking some pre-emptive action on some of the *negatives* you have identified and seek out resources to minimise their impact on your studies. A great site for information on how to manage your time and adopt good study skills is at <http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=11733>

If working long hours is identified as a **threat**, you might like to visit <http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/getFile.do?id=28644> to start improving your time-management and study planning skills before the term becomes really busy with assessment deadlines looming.

#### **4. Seeking help when you need it**

Regardless of whether you are an external or internal student, CQUniversity provides many support services to help students cope with a broad range of factors that may impact on study. These support services are of both an academic and non-academic nature. It is important to know that you can seek assistance from the following services while you are a student at CQUniversity:

**The library** staff provide a wide variety of services to assist students with academic study at university. The library home page can be found at <http://www.library.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=410>. The library also has an excellent online tutorial that walks you through the process of academic research and finding resources. It is referred to as *Compass: Library Help Online* and can be found at <http://library-compass.cqu.edu.au>

**Student Centres** provide a variety of services to CQUniversity students and include:

- Course Information Centre – undergraduate/postgraduate program and course advice; credit transfers; graduation assessment
- Student Business Centre – student records; student fees & charges; timetabling; exams
- Student Contact Centre – student enrolment and program enquiries; undergraduate, postgraduate & international admissions; distance education assignment tracking; study material tracking; teletutorial and teleconference bookings
- Student Support Centre – counselling; equity & disability support; careers and employment service; student mentor & leadership program; orientation; monitoring academic progress; international student support; Commonwealth scholarships; alternative pathways; outreach to potential students.

To contact these centres, phone 13CQUni 13 27 86 or visit <http://contactus.cqu.edu.au>

**CQUni Student Association** is a voluntary membership organisation which enrolled students of the CQUniversity are entitled to join. Check out the following link for more information on how you can become a member: [http://association.cqu.edu.au/cqusa\\_new\\_site/cqusa%20site/aaflash/frameSet/Frameset.htm](http://association.cqu.edu.au/cqusa_new_site/cqusa%20site/aaflash/frameSet/Frameset.htm)

**Communications Learning Centre (CLC)** provides free of charge on-line and face-to-face advice about academic communication. For a wealth of information, visit <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28>

**Mathematics Learning Centre** provides free assistance for those courses requiring certain mathematics competencies. For detailed information, go to <http://mlc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=20>

**Office of the Student Ombudsman** may provide assistance to students who have a complaint to make against the University. The Ombudsman can be contacted via <http://facultysite.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=46>

**International students** can find information specifically tailored to their needs at <http://international.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=1055>

**Study and Faculty Guides** for students are documents put out by the Faculties to help students understand what is expected of them in terms of assessment and Faculty or School procedure. Go to the CQUniversity site at <http://www.cqu.edu.au/> and click on 'Current students', then choose your Faculty by clicking on your Faculty name.

**All current on- and off-campus students** can access a range of information at <http://navigatecquuni.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=1052>

All of the previously mentioned services are available to CQUniversity students, regardless of study mode. It is up to you to take advantage of the services and facilities available to you.

### **5. Thinking ahead – post graduation**

Because the workforce is such a complex, dynamic and all pervading area of life, you need to be prepared to operate effectively in this arena. Your studies at university and your commitment to developing lifelong learning skills are a means of preparing yourself for the workforce. As an employee or an employer, you are usually expected to keep your knowledge of your clients and/or product up-to-date. You will need to continue learning throughout your career/s, either by attending training sessions, learning another language and/or undertaking further study at university. Remember, the world of paid work is constantly changing and evolving. As businesses become more and more globally orientated, an awareness of different cultures becomes increasingly important, and as information becomes even more accessible, the need to be computer and information literate will continue to grow in importance.

The degree program you study at university is designed to expose you to discipline-specific knowledge, field of study application, ethical and cultural awareness and a broad range of professional, generic competencies, skills and attributes. You will need to transfer such to the workforce or perhaps to further study if you should choose that path. Before your graduation, however, you need to have taken every opportunity offered by the university to develop a range of competencies.

## **Accessing course material - You and your study**

As a student, you also have the very important responsibility of accessing all program materials. Your courses, which combine to create your degree program, are designed to expose you to a variety of information sources that will be useful in developing a range of professional competencies in the disciplines and fields you are studying. These program materials include:

- The Course Profile
- Study/faculty Guides
- Set texts
- The Resource readings
- Online resources

### ***The Course Profile***

The Course Profile is an integral component of each and every course in which you enrol. The assessment component of a course, marking criteria, due dates and the lecturer's contact details and expectations are detailed in the Course Profile. It also includes set texts, suggested reading, links to important information, due dates and marking criteria. It is **essential** reading.

## **Study/Faculty Guide**

*Study/Faculty guides* contain **important information** that is specific to the program you are studying and the Faculty offering that program. The chapters/modules presented within it are usually structured to guide you through any associated readings (set texts and resource materials) and direct you to additional useful information on the chapter themes. Guides address some of the specific queries, concerns and *style* techniques that students are faced with in their assessment tasks. You should obtain a copy of the relevant faculty guide to adhere to your Faculty and/or discipline expectations for assessment items. Guides for students can be located on each Faculty's Web page. It is important that you become familiar with the specific expectations of your Faculty.

## **Set texts**

There are usually set texts for a course and you will be required to purchase these or borrow them from the library. Although the *Study Guide* and lectures will usually take you through the set texts in a particular order, this does not mean you should not use the various sections of a text at other times. For example, you may need to write a report for an assessment item by Week 12, but report writing may not be covered until Week 11. Do not wait until Week 11 to learn how to present a report; pre-read the material and use the lecture or *Study Guide* session in Week 11 to confirm your learning.

## **The resource readings**

Literature that you are directed to and resource readings that accompany each chapter/module/topic of a *Study Guide* may:

- expand on the material covered in the set texts and lectures
- provide examples of the topics being covered.

As these have been specifically recommended, they are usually the most helpful initial resources for you to consult. They indicate further readings that you could research and they also provide bibliographies and reference lists that you may wish to follow up on. These are excellent research tools and may provide some useful direction to additional resources.

## **Online resources**

One of the ways course delivery is facilitated at CQUniversity is via the use of computer, email and Internet resources. If any course that you are studying includes an online component, you will be advised in the Course Profile.

Many courses include an online component that is delivered using the online learning management system called **Moodle**. These courses are referred to as e-courses and can be accessed online at <http://mycqu.cqu.edu.au/portal/dt>

From this site you can log into the e-courses system by using your e-rolment username and password at <http://e-courses.cqu.edu.au/webapps/login/>

Here are some examples of questions commonly asked of CQUni Technology at <http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=10408>

- What is my e-rolment user name and password?

- I am enrolled in the course but I cannot access the site.
- If I have connection and access problems, who is it I should contact?
- I am having problems attaching a file.
- Some of my course material is on CD, but I cannot get the links from the e-course to work.
- Do I need special software installed on my computer to access Moodle?
- What happens if I do not log out of Moodle when I am finished?

*Remember e-courses are delivered through the Moodle system and the terms e-courses and Moodle are frequently interchanged.*

To help you use the system conveniently and productively, check out a *Student Guide to Moodle* at the following site:

<http://moodle.cqu.edu.au/course/view.php?id=263&username=guest&password=guest>

Moodle allows lecturers to design online courses and use a variety of learning and assessment tools and resources to assist with course delivery. E-courses may include a range of interaction and learning options for students, such as:

- discussion boards
- announcements
- virtual classroom and chat facility
- emails and group pages.

The *group page* site provides the facility for students to undertake discussion on group projects and to develop online teamwork skills.

### ***The World Wide Web as a resource***

One of the most exciting aspects of being a student in the 21st century is the abundance of information that is freely and easily accessible on the Internet; however, with this access comes responsibility. Your responsibility in this respect is in terms of:

- arranging to have access to the Internet
- developing efficient searching techniques
- making effective use of the information you find
- using the information ethically and honestly.

### ***Arranging to have access to the Internet***

Whilst in most instances it is still possible to complete assessment items without access to information online, it is likely you would be doing yourself a disservice if you do not attempt to use the Internet to search for information. The CQUniversity Library has extensive online resources available and many courses offered by the University refer you to resources and information online. For this reason you should organise to have regular and reliable access to the Internet, either by coming on to a University campus, arranging home services or by checking out your access options at the local library and/or Internet café.

### ***Developing efficient searching techniques***

It is very easy to waste considerable periods of time searching for information on the World Wide Web. To optimise your time, hints for searching the World Wide Web and searching in general can be found on the Library's *Compass: Library Help Online* tutorial at <http://library-compass.cqu.edu.au>

### ***Making effective use of the information you find***

Whilst a wealth of information can be found on the Internet, much of the information may not be of a standard suitable for use in academic assessment items. Choose your information wisely and if using any information in your university assessment items, be sure to reference it as a way to acknowledge that it is not your own.

### ***Evaluating Internet sites for scholarly use***

It can be difficult deciding if information you have found is appropriate or not. Use the **Compass: Library Help Online** site and click on 'How do I find good web sites?' You are advised to familiarise yourself with this information and use it to evaluate the quality of the Internet information you choose to use.

### ***Using the information ethically and honestly***

Information found on the Internet must be treated the same as any other type of information, that is, you must appropriately reference Internet information and acknowledge your use of the material. When quoting information, it must be clearly indicated both in-text and on the reference page at the conclusion of your assessment item.

To avoid plagiarism (discussed more fully in Chapter 3), the following list of **MUST DOs** may help you avoid common, unethical misuse of Internet information:

- Clearly reference any information you use from the Internet.
- Paraphrase information rather than cut-and-paste directly from the Internet. Reference it the same way as you do for paraphrased material from a book or journal article.
- Acknowledge all direct quotes from the Internet the same way you would reference direct quotes from a book or a journal article.
- Use a mix of sources, such as texts, journals, reference books, databases and the Internet.
- Always evaluate the quality of the information you choose to use. Be wary of web sites that contain information contributed and maintained by the general public.
- Present citation details correctly in your assessment items and record the date you accessed the source.

### **Note**

*Information on the Internet **cannot** be used as if it were your own. University programs check for plagiarism, so ensure you always reference information that is not your own.*

## **Important online information sources**

To get an idea of some of the resources that are available to you online, you should access and then skim through the following important URLs:

- CQUniversity home page <http://www.cqu.edu.au/>
- CQUniLibrary home page  
<http://www.library.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=410>
- CQUniversity Library's online tutorial—*Compass: Library Help Online* <http://library-compass.cqu.edu.au>
- Course-specific information, accessed via Faculty course lists for current students. The URLs for these will vary for each course. You should check your Course Profile to find out how to access this information.

### **Hint**

*If you have regular, reliable use of a computer with Internet access, you are advised to add these URLs to your bookmarks and save them in a folder labelled 'CQUniversity'.*

There are also a variety of university-wide services and information sites available to students. Check out the CQUniversity home page links.

If you have difficulty accessing a computer, then you should make every effort to overcome the problem.

### **Study skills handbook by Stella Cottrell**

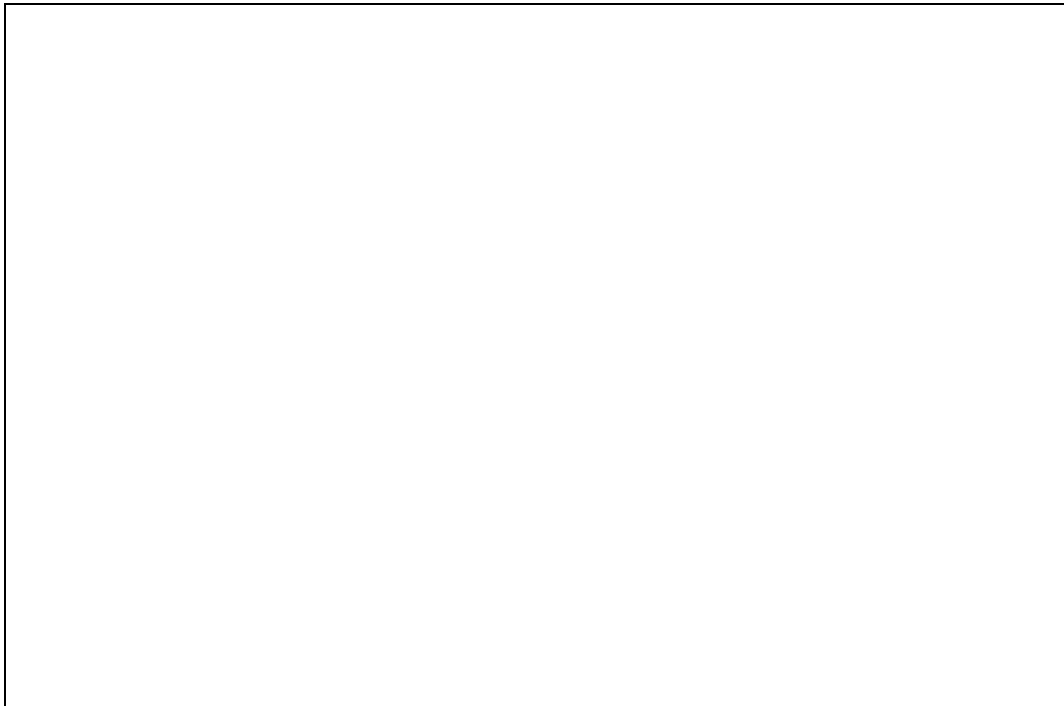
Throughout this handbook there are references to the *Cottrell text*. This refers to: Cottrell, S 2008, *The study skills handbook*, 3rd edn, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire. This excellent reference can provide you with extensive information and details about study skills. You are strongly urged to arrange access to this text as a companion resource to assist you in your studies at university. It has been evaluated by a number of staff and students and found to be very helpful in a variety of areas including the development of academic reading, writing and analytical thinking techniques. The CQUniversity bookshop carries copies of the text for purchase while the library carries copies for loan.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has established the foundation information required for your studies at CQUniversity. It is important that you familiarise yourself with all of the information before moving on to the following study support sections. It would be a good idea now to revise what you have read by jotting down some of the main points that come to mind.

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....

Alternatively, you might like to draw a concept map or mind map to reflect your thinking. (See page 30.)



## References

CQUniversity 2009, *Graduate attributes*, viewed 20 October 2010, <http://quality.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/getFile.do?id=33810>

Ellyard, P 1998, *Creating and preparing for jobs in the 21st century*, keynote address, Working 2001 Employment Futures Conference, February 19-20, Fremantle, WA.

# Chapter 2: Getting started and planning your study

## Setting yourself up

The first step in getting started is to set up a suitable study area that is well away from other activities that may be going on around you. Ensure you have a comfortable chair that is set at the correct height, good lighting and some ventilation. You will be spending quite a considerable amount of time in your 'study space', so you will need it to be just right for your needs. There will be times when you will need to leave your work in what may look like a disorganised state, but you will have done so knowing that you are coming back to it and do not need it to be packed up and put away! It is a work in progress! Also, by having a designated study space, you are sending a message to others in your life that you are going to your 'study' space! To avoid sitting at your study space for too long at one time, try to adopt the 50/10 rule: work for 50 minutes and then stretch, go for a quick walk to the kitchen, hang some washing or do something physical for 10 minutes. Then return to your study area and embark on the next 50 minutes of study! It may take some discipline, but remember that studying is a holistic experience. Try to keep fit, get enough sleep, eat well and drink lots of water. The next step is to ensure you have all of your course materials.

## Accessing your course materials

As stated in Chapter one of this handbook, there is essential course material that you need to become familiar in order to get off to the best start possible. Try to do this as soon as possible and ensure you have purchased or printed the necessary texts, guides or profiles. Remember, essential material includes:

- Course Profiles for each course
- Study Guide for your program
- Resource materials book or readings
- workbooks
- set text books
- referencing guide

Note that your course material may come in a variety of ways that may include:

- a CD-ROM
- audio or DVD format
- an online format
- printed materials.

For easy reference, keep all essential materials in your study area. Ensure you have arranged access to the Internet and email facilities. Call the Information Technology Division (ITD) for any assistance required by phone 1300 666 620 or (07) 4930 9233 or send an email to [helpdesk@cqu.edu.au](mailto:helpdesk@cqu.edu.au)

For further hints on ‘Getting started’, see the Cottrell text (3rd edition), especially pages 172–174.

The following section provides an elaboration on essential materials.

### **Course Profile**

The Course Profile is the overall guide to each course you are enrolled in and is full of vital information. You need to **read** this document **very carefully**. It will contain information on the following important areas:

- course details
- set textbooks and suggested readings
- university rules
- proposed study schedule
- assessment items, deadlines, allocation of marks & marking criteria
- lecturer’s contact details
- expected student outcomes
- examination information

The Course Profile for each of your courses can be found online at <http://courseprofile.cqu.edu.au/> Simply click on your Course Code to access your Course Profile.

### **Study Guide**

A study guide is intended to ‘walk’ you through the content of your course. Read this in the order indicated by the proposed weekly study schedule in the Course Profile.

Complete all the exercises and activities in the Study Guide in a presentable manner. This can be helpful for a lecturer or tutor to see that you have done the necessary work should evidence be needed for a particular case. Working steadily through the Guide will also help you to prepare for end of term exams if they are a requirement of your course.

### **Resource Material Book/Readings**

You should make sure that you read everything that you are directed to in the Study Guide or online course modules. To familiarise yourself with the contents, may wish to skim through the list of readings, but you need not attempt to read ahead in the materials until directed to do so in the Study Guide. Whilst reading ahead can be helpful, it can sometimes make the material seem daunting and difficult, simply because you are not yet prepared to deal with the information. The comprehension of the resources will come in due time as you work through the course and build upon your knowledge base in a progressive way.

### **Workbooks**

These usually require the student to undertake some research or activity and report their work in the workbook. This is sometimes required to be submitted

for assessment and sometimes is just meant as a record of student work. The way in which you use the workbook will be clearly stipulated in either the Course Profile, the Study Guide or your Moodle course.

### **Set textbook**

Many courses will require you to purchase or have access to a set textbook. Such texts support the information in the Study Guide, Resource Materials and/or your online course. You should check the Course Profile as soon as you receive it for information on the set textbook for the course. You are advised to then make arrangements to purchase the set textbook as near to the beginning of your studies as possible. The CQUniversity bookshop provides an online site at <http://bookshop.cqu.edu.au/texts.asp> and has an excellent response time to student requests.

In most instances, having the set text(s) makes working on the course significantly easier as these texts have been carefully selected by lecturers because they are vital. Be wary of purchasing earlier editions of texts as the page numbers referred to in the course profile will relate to the most recent edition.

### **Referencing guides**

Essential to your list of course materials is a referencing guide. Your course profile or study guide will make explicit which referencing style you will be required to use. To download your referencing guide, go to <http://facultysite.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=3955>. It will be well worth the printing costs to have this valuable resource close by when completing assessment items. For your information, this study skills handbook has used the Harvard referencing style.

## **The first weeks of study**

Now that you have your course materials all sorted, you need to think about how you are going to fit study into your already busy life. This requires good management and goal setting.

In your first few weeks at university, you should attempt to structure your study time to reflect the minimum 12 hours per course expectation. This will help you establish some sound time management practices for the term ahead; more importantly, it will give you the space needed to **learn how you are learning**. By allocating some consistent hours at the beginning of your studies, you will begin to realise how much time you will need to give to each topic area.

Here are some of the things you should ask yourself in the first few weeks of study.

- How quickly or slowly do I seem to be picking up information?
- Are some courses more challenging than others?
- If so, can I safely allocate some extra time to the more challenging courses and 'pinch' some hours from the courses with which I am more comfortable?

- Should I get some advice from the Communications Learning Centre (CLC) on referencing and academic communication?
- Will I need to work on my library research skills and allocate time for online library tutorial sessions using the *Compass: Library Help Online*?
- Do I actively read and note my materials in such a way that they will be useful later in the term, especially for exam revision?

### ***How much time should I dedicate to readings?***

Even if the chapters of your Study Guide or modules on your Moodle site appear of varying lengths, they usually require a *consistent amount of effort* on your part to work through the accompanying materials. For example, most undergraduate courses are developed on the expectation that a full-time student is working a full-time workload; this would be approximately 48 hours per week. Hence, if you are enrolled in four courses a term, the expectation is that you should allocate a minimum of 12 hours per week to each course.

From the experience of most students, the time studying for a course is never as straight forward as a '9 to 5' job. Sometimes, only a couple of hours per week might be spent on any one course; however, this invariably results in the need to spend many long hours later in the course 'catching up' on the hours not done previously. A mix between a consistent weekly effort, and some concentrated extended study sessions when assessments are due, is the most constructive way to manage your study time.

### ***Time management***

Being professional in the workplace and at university encompasses all the study skills discussed in this handbook, but is perhaps most obviously demonstrated by how well individuals manage their time. As an example, a person may write an excellent essay but submits it two weeks late (without having enquired about an extension). As a result, that person's professional credibility is challenged. This demonstrates the significance of having effective time management and goal-setting skills in order to secure a successful and professional outcome from your study.

It is the student's responsibility to notify the relevant person (course coordinator, tutor, or School administration officer) if they are unable to meet tutorial and/or assessment item timelines. Although it is preferable to manage your time so that this action is not necessary, this is not always possible. Sometimes illness and/or emergency situations occur that will impede a person's ability to keep to a schedule. When this happens, the professional approach is to take responsibility for the problem and notify your course coordinator so that alternative arrangements can be made. Each Faculty has policies in place to allow students to obtain extensions on their work should problems arise. Make sure you read the relevant extension policy. Importantly, though, you must enquire about an extension **before** the due date of the assessment item.

## ***Time management skills in practice***

Studying at university is quite often a process of juggling the balls. Tutorial preparation (or general study and reading time), assessment item deadlines, examination revision, employment, family, sport and social commitments, and attendance at tutorials and lectures when studying on-campus all vie for time. If you can manage all this, achieve reasonable grades and complete the degree within the standard amount of time, you will have developed high-level time management skills.

Sometimes, however, the establishment of these skills may take a term or two. When this happens, it is frequently the examination assessment that suffers from being ‘pushed aside’ to make time for other more immediate demands on your time. To stay with the ‘juggling’ analogy, it is the **exam ball** that gets dropped. The discussion of exam preparation later in this handbook should help you in avoiding this consequence.

## **Goal setting and time management**

It would be almost impossible to complete a study plan if there were no clear goals that needed prioritising. Similarly, it would be pointless generating a time management plan without having some outcome to aim for. For this reason, time management and goal setting are intrinsically related. Successful goal setting allows for the establishment of timelines over which action can occur and also allows for the satisfaction of achieving goals.

When setting goals, it is important to remember that we play many different roles in our lives and being a student is just one of them. Allocating ‘down time’ for you to fulfil your other roles is an important consideration when setting your goals. You need to allocate time for fun and social/family engagements. You should not have to feel ‘guilty’ about having fun if your study, family, work and other commitments are balanced in your life.

### ***Start with the end in mind***

The mind will not reach towards achievement until it has clear objectives. We need to set clear goals (long-term, medium-term and short-term) that will help us to achieve successful outcomes. If we start with the end in mind, often we can be more focussed on setting realistic goals that will help us to get there.

Think about what you would want someone to say about you on your eightieth birthday. How would you want to be described? What would you want to be remembered for? If this is the end result, what steps (goals) do you need to set now to help you to achieve this? Let us call this your Mission Statement.

- Where do you want to be 10–15 years from now? (Long-term goals)
- What goals for the next 4–5 years will help you to get there?
- What goals for the next 12 months will help you to get to where you want to be in 4–5 years?
- What weekly plans do you need to set in place to help you achieve this?

- How can you implement this daily?

The diagram below sets this out for you.



Figure 2: A five step planning model

Source: Adapted from Direct Edge Corporate Development Workshop, Central Queensland University (permission granted by R. Jeffery, Convenor on 17 October 2003).

Long-term organisation means that you have to consider how your Mission Statement considers the roles and goals that are important to you. Weekly organisation considers these things in terms of goals and plans that you can realistically achieve through scheduling, and sometimes, through delegation to others.

Working backwards from deadlines is also a good way to approach time management. Rather than **reacting** to things, it is probably better to be **pro-active**. Prioritise and be aware of your own time management. Understand yourself and how long it takes you to complete tasks. Make sure that you take these things into consideration as you make your weekly/daily schedules and always make sure you have your short, medium, and long-term goals in the back of your mind so that you can stay motivated when things do not seem to be going well.

There is an excellent section in *Cottrell text* on pages 70–96. We strongly recommend you work through these pages as you begin your program of study.

Another useful book that has been used in the preparation of this section of the handbook is Covey's *Seven habits of highly successful people*. It is well worth reading.

Finally, Web references on time management can be very useful. You may like to visit <http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=11733>

## **Environmental awareness and study**

Many students may be surprised at how much paper and computer ink they go through in the course of their studies. Despite being a computer society, it seems that most of us still need to read things in 'hard copy'. There is a tendency to print out online resources, photocopy articles indiscriminately and print multiple drafts of assessment items. This can become an expensive process for you, but of more serious long-term consequence is the impact this has on the environment. Think of the amount of paper hundreds of thousands of students can use in one year of study, and add to this the number of ink cartridges that are used in the process. This adds up to quite a significant negative environmental impact. Below are a few hints to improve your environmental awareness and also save you money:

- Whenever possible, print on both sides of the paper using 'greyscale'. Note, however, that the final version of most assessment items should be printed on one side only.
- Try to limit the amount of photocopying you do and photocopy on both sides of the paper. If you can read and note the information in the library or online, this will save money and time in the long term.
- Always use the 'draft' option for printing anything other than the final assessment item.
- To promote recycling, *Planet Ark* organises collection points for used ink cartridges. Consider finding your nearest collection point to drop your used cartridge off at.
- If you leave your study area for a length of time, turn off the lights and the computer. Turning off the power may only be a small saving for you but collectively, it can be a big saving for the environment. Try to ensure you use energy efficient light bulbs.

## **Conclusion**

The intention of this chapter was to ensure that you are aware of the need to set up a study space, to take care of yourself while studying and to ensure that you have access to essential study materials, resources and the internet. If you tend to these matters, you will be well on the way to maximising success in your study efforts.

## **References**

Communications Learning Centre 2008, *Improving study skills*, viewed 1 June 2010, <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28>

Cottrell, S 2008, *The study skills handbook*, 3rd edn, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire.

Covey, R 1990, *The seven habits of highly effective people: restoring the character/ethic*, Simon & Schuster, Sydney.

## Chapter 3: Preparing assessment items

As a university student, you are going to be doing a lot of reading and researching. This chapter provides some very useful reading skills and researching strategies. Finally, outlines the correct ways of referencing research material and also discusses some of the salient features of academic communication.

### Reading skills

While at university, you will be required to engage in quite a large amount of reading. More importantly, you will be required to think critically about what you have read. Thus, you will need to make choices about some of your readings as you begin to search for information.

As with all texts and documents used throughout your university study, the first thing you need to do with the materials is to **skim** them for content usefulness and structure.

It is a useful strategy to set aside the first 15–30 minutes of your study time to skim through what is contained in the Study Guide, Resource Readings, the set texts and, most importantly the Course Profile. **(You will find that you will return to your course profile on many later occasions).**

It is important to remember that in your everyday reading you use different reading styles. For example, you may simply **scan** a telephone book or dictionary when looking for a number or word. You may **skim** (in slightly more detail) through a newspaper or magazine, looking for sections of interest. If reading a novel, you are likely to read and retain just enough to be able to follow the story (passive reading).

When studying a text, you may use all the above ‘levels’ of reading a document, but you are also likely to be more focused on seeking out and retaining information. As such, you are likely to switch between **rapid reading** of some sections of the text and **close study** of other sections. It is important to be flexible in your approach to reading. If you were to attempt to read every text in depth (close study) you would probably never get through even a third of the recommended readings of your courses!

A commonly used method for effective reading is the **SQ3R technique**. Whilst this is a common method, it is not the only approach and it is important for you to experiment with different types of reading skills and find the one most suited to your own preferred learning style. The SQ3R technique involves 5 steps:

1. survey
2. question
3. read
4. recite
5. review

You should be aware of the importance of **asking questions** before undertaking research (reading) in order to focus your investigations. Keep in mind, however, that it is usually necessary to conduct a preliminary **survey** of the book or article before you begin to formulate specific questions.

### ***Survey, Question, Read, Recite and Review***

The 3Rs are the next phase in this technique. Surprisingly, however, most students tend to miss the first two important steps and jump straight into reading the document before determining its usefulness. Only after you have surveyed and asked questions about what you are **going to read** should you actually start to read for main concepts and conclusions.

The reading step in the SQ3R technique can be further divided into two approaches: **pre-reading** and **key reading**. Sometimes all that is needed is the pre-reading approach (for example, when simply looking for an author's ideas on a subject, rather than an intensive analysis of these ideas). To **pre-read** a document you need to simply read introductory and conclusion paragraphs (or chapters) and seek out the topic sentences throughout the work.

When **key reading** a document you need to read more of the text. At the same time, you can still choose to focus on just the key phrases or words that are **keys** to understanding the text and gloss over the less important words and phrases. This is because not every word or phrase has equal importance in reading. You should note that if the writer has used italics, underlining or headings, these will be helpful guides.

Generally, authors devote certain paragraphs near the beginning and end of each section to an expression of the main idea of the paragraphs in between. You should make a habit of consciously trying to find the main idea in every paragraph.

In just the same manner that students tend to quickly begin at the reading stage, they also have a tendency not to go beyond simply reading the text and making some preliminary notes. The final two steps in the SQ3R technique are vitally important and should not be overlooked if reading is to be effective. Hence it is important that once you have read the document, you recite and review what you have read.

When you finish reading a section (not necessarily the entire article, and definitely never the entire book), **recite** the information and try to **recall** what you have just read (without looking at the document). Use some headings as guides but only refer back to the book or article when you cannot remember. If it helps, jot down some brief notes. This serves to keep your attention on the task at hand and also helps to keep distinctions between sections.

**Reviewing** the information requires you to summarise mentally (or in writing) what you have read, immediately after reading. That is, after you have attempted to recite the information and key points, you should try to summarise the content. Evaluate your summary to see if your questions have been answered (remember step 2 above). If you are reading several books or articles related to the same topic, compare these and determine which have provided the

most useful descriptions and analyses of the topic. Also compare them for positive and negative approaches to the topic as these provide various perspectives on the issue.

Although the SQ3R technique takes a little time to master and will initially seem tedious and time-consuming, persevere with it. You will find that you can remember and understand more rapidly what you read actively, rather than passively.

### **Reading comprehension**

Whilst effective reading can be enhanced by the use of the SQ3R technique, for ‘close study’ and evaluation of the information, you also need to develop your reading comprehension. So it is important to be aware of three different levels of comprehension. These are:

- 1 Level of literal meaning—*Reading the lines*  
Reading the words of the text; what the author wrote.
- 2 Level of interpretation—*Reading between the lines*  
Reading for what the author means.
- 3 Level of inference—*Reading beyond the lines*  
Reading for what generalisations can be made from the text.

One way of increasing your awareness of the different levels of an article or text is to ask questions about what you are reading (as discussed in Chapter 3 of this Study Guide). The 5Ws + 1H list is a good starting point for asking questions for comprehension:

#### **Why, Where, Who, What, When + How**

An easy way to **skim** through most material is as follows:

**Step 1:** Check the contents page/s (and index) for **key words** and **headings**. If you do this first, you can quickly determine whether or not it will be useful. It helps if you are clear about what you want to know, so **know your assessment task well and have it clearly analysed so you know the type of information you are looking for.**

**Step 2:** Briefly check out the different **sections** of the document/s (for example, the synopsis, table of contents, the different chapters) to get an idea of what is contained in each section. This can include noting if there are any subheadings, graphs, and/or pictures, reference lists, tables, numbers, bold or italicised words and bullet points. In addition to observing the structure of the work, make a mental note of what is likely to be useful at different stages of your study.

**Step 3:** Remember to **come back** to relevant sections at the time they will be useful to you. Sometimes you may notice a point early in your study that can prove useful later on. Do not forget to return to this information. Conversely, your skimming may have identified some useful information later in the materials that you can use to assist you

with work being done prior to you reaching this information in your study schedule.

**Step 4:** Closely examine the **meaning** of the relevant sections when you return to them and apply the information to your task. Make your own notes from the useful sections (do not just rely on highlighting or copying interesting sentences).

**Step 5:** **Apply** this technique to any documents you may be working with during your study. Skimming can save you valuable study time by determining (in a very short space of time) if something is suitable/useful or not.

(For further reading hints, see various sections in the *Cottrell text*, especially pages 115–121.)

### **Reading online**

Reading online can be very tiring. When reading on the computer screen, rest your eyes every half an hour, ensure you have a good monitor, and minimise any reflection. Ensure you have a comfortable screen image and after every 50 minutes take a 10 minute break. Get up and have a stretch!

### **Other useful resources**

Here are some sites that you may find helpful:

Listening skills: Mind Tools™:  
<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm>

Note taking hints: Communications Learning Centre home page at  
<http://clc.cqu.edu.au>

University of Waterloo home page: <http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocs/study/>

ARC @ SBC.edu home page: <http://www.arc.sbc.edu/study.html>

## **Ways of learning**

Just as there are different forms of literature and ways of presenting information, there are also different ways of learning and taking in information. Reading is just one way of gathering information. Rose and Nicholl (1997) suggest some other ways of acquiring information. These include learning using ‘visual strategies’, ‘auditory strategies’ or ‘kinaesthetic strategies’. They suggest the best approach is the ‘VAK attack strategy’, that is, combining visual, auditory and kinaesthetic approaches to learning.

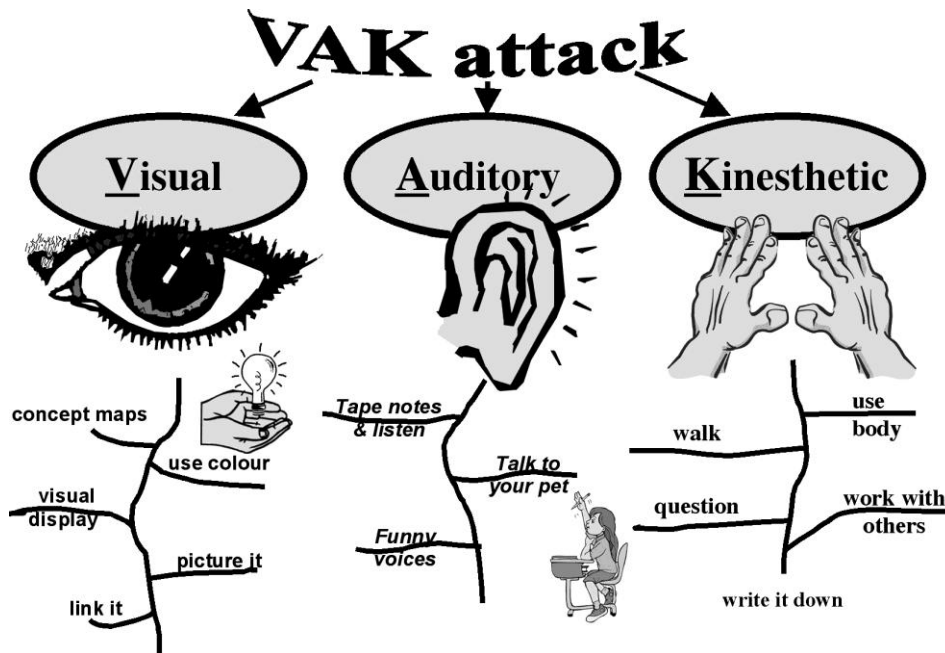
The best idea is to find a combination of ways to learn. Multisensory learning can be as simple as:

Read and visualise the material . . . you have **seen** it.

Make up questions and record the answers aloud . . . you have **heard** it.

Write out the major points on index cards and arrange them in a logical order . . . you have **physically** handled it. (Rose & Nicholl 1997, p. 104)

The following mind map is based on the ‘Acquire the Information’ mind map by Rose and Nicholl (1997, p. 106) but has been adapted to illustrate various strategies for memorising and learning information, as suggested in the *Cottrell text* (2008, pp. 302–307).



**Note**

‘Mind mapping’ is an approach to noting that is similar to the ‘pattern notes’ technique discussed by Cottrell (2008, p. 123). Another common term for the process is ‘concept mapping’.

Reference: Rose, C & Nicholl, M 1997, *Accelerated learning for the 21st century*, Piatkus, London.

Once you have completed your reading and begin to put your assessment item together, you need to be aware of how to use the information of others in your work. We call this **referencing**. At university, you are required to follow specific referencing protocols and failure to do so can result in **plagiarism**.

## Researching

Researching means finding out about something and you will be doing a lot of that at university!

There are three main stages to research.

1. Analysing the task and deciding what it is asking.
2. Finding and understanding the information relevant to the task.
3. Recording the sources of your information and using the content you read to address your task.

The *Cottrell text* has some useful information about this on pages 111–115.

Analysing your assessment task is a vital first stage of researching. Read the task carefully and look for words in the assessment task that indicate what type of task it is and the areas on which you should focus your research. These words are called **key words** and they are pivotal to directing your research efforts. Note the key words in the following example:

***Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in Australia?***

The bolded key words will direct your response:

- **Discuss** determines the nature of the response needed
- advantages and disadvantages denotes the scope of your research
- Living in Australia puts limitations on your research

You also need to be very mindful of the:

- due date
- word count
- marking criteria

### **Study Hint : The importance of research**

According to Timm and Farr (1994), never have we needed a good crystal ball more than we do today. Our society has undergone fundamental changes as we have moved into the information age and technology will continue to accelerate this change.

It may be tempting to start with an Internet search engine, such as Google, to find Web resources to get your background information on your topic. However, it is important to understand the limitations of relying solely on the Internet for your information. In most disciplines, research and scholarly discussion is conducted primarily through scholarly journals, which are usually subscription-based and not freely available on the Web. Additionally, web sites may be written by individuals without authoritative knowledge or expertise on the subject. While Web resources will form part of your information search, you need to develop your information-seeking skills to find appropriate scholarly resources.

CQUniversity Library provides access to a significant collection of resources (print, DVD and electronic) to support the teaching areas of the university. The collection can be searched using the online Library Catalogue. Most of the electronic resources, such as journals and e-books, are contained in databases. Some databases contain information that is specific to one subject area (e.g., law, business, chemistry) whilst others cover a range of subjects. Examples of multidisciplinary databases available through the CQUniversity Library include those on the various platforms, e.g., the EBSCOhost platform, which supports such databases as Academic Search Complete and Expanded Academic ASAP; Info Trac, set up by Gale Cengage Learning to access full-text journals; and Informit, which hosts databases on subjects from Agriculture to Technology. For Australian content, the Informit databases are highly recommended.

In addition, many libraries now have available a large range of indexes to journal articles, either on CD-ROM or online. Developing search capabilities makes it more efficient to search these indexes. Examples of indexes available in online databases held by the CQUniversity library include: APA-FT (Australian Public Affairs Information Service), AMI (Australian Medical Index), and BCA Online (Building Code of Australia Online). The CQUniversity library stocks journals, in either hard copy or on databases, to support all disciplines taught by the Faculties.

When researching a journal article, make sure that you write down the exact title of the article, the journal's name, the volume number, issue number, and the number(s) of the page(s). If it is an electronic journal that you obtained from a CQUniversity database, then add the name of the database.

When researching an Internet site or database, write down all the relevant information at the time and the date you accessed the site. There is nothing worse than trying to find that site a week later! Being diligent with this will save you a great deal of time and angst when you are in the final stages of preparing your assessment task.

### **Course Resources Online**

These resources are selected to complement courses offered at CQUniversity and have been made available in consultation with the relevant academic staff. Course codes and Course names will lead the student to the resources at <http://library-cro.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=7076>

The CQUniversity library online tutorial 'Compass' provides training on using the library catalogue and databases.

### **🔊 Note**

*You can access all of the library's resources from your home computer using the Internet. You will need to login using your student ID and password. If you do not have Internet access at home, the University and most local libraries provide free access.*

You are also encouraged to undertake a search of the CQUniversity library catalogue. It does not matter whether you access the catalogue on campus or from home. The main thing is to test or practice your search/research skills.

### **Evaluating sources**

It is important when writing assignments that the sources used for the task are of a high standard. Therefore, when using Internet sites in academic work, it is necessary to ensure they are of a high standard. A site that provides useful information on evaluating Web pages can be found at New Mexico State University Library: <http://lib.nmsu.edu/instruction/eval.html> (The Good, the Bad & the Ugly). Although it is especially important to evaluate Web pages, the issues raised at this URL can also be applied to any resource you are using. You may also wish to use the same criteria to evaluate the quality of your own work. Two further useful WWW sites about different aspects of evaluating information sources are:

*Introduction to research*, Cornell University Library

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/intro>

*Evaluating Internet Research Sources*, VirtualSalt

<http://www.virtualsalt.com/evalu8it.htm>

### 🔊 **Important note**

It is important that you know how to use library resources, especially the databases available through the Library Web site. Investigate the library tutorial, Compass: Library Help Online at <http://library-compass.cqu.edu.au> for some great information.

The main sources of your research should be your course material, the resources of the library, both electronic and print form, and the Internet. The Internet sources should be used with caution for even though it is a great way to access information, it is very important that you always judge the validity and reliability of any site. Good ways to do this are to:

1. Look for the author's name and qualifications – what are they and where are they from?
2. Look for a contact address – it is a good sign if the author is willing to be contacted for further information.
3. Look to see if the site has been up-dated as this is a sign that the author knows the value of up-to-date information.
4. Look to see if it is a sponsored page and judge its purpose as this could indicate bias.
5. Look to see if there are references to other authors and some of their arguments 'for' or 'against' the author's position. This is a good sign.
6. Look to see if there is a reference list and take time to check out some of these sources of information.
7. Look at the structure, grammar and spelling. If there are obvious spelling errors or incorrect grammar usage, be very wary; the author is probably not very academically respectable!
8. If you decide to use a **Web site**, you must always give the Web address and some referencing styles require the date of access as part of the citation. However, this is not relevant if citing a database as the name of the database will suffice (for example, online Academic Search Complete).

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism refers to academic dishonesty and is regarded **very seriously** at any academic institution. Essentially, plagiarism refers to the act of taking the thoughts or ideas of another and passing them off as your own work. It can be deliberate or it can be unintentional but it is always considered to be a serious offence. Regrettably, students have been known to commit such offences due to a lack of understanding about acceptable paraphrasing and quoting techniques.

Pages 128–132 in the *Cottrell text* may also be useful. Full details of the university's plagiarism policy can be accessed from:

CQUniversity's Plagiarism Procedures  
[http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy\\_file.do?policyid=1244](http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=1244)

Student Misconduct and Plagiarism policy  
[http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy\\_file.do?policyid=1245](http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=1245)

### ***Paraphrasing – avoid plagiarism***

Paraphrasing is restating accurately and succinctly published material into your own words, without changing its original meaning. It is very important that you know how to paraphrase. Paraphrasing correctly shows that you have understood the passage you are referencing and can put it in your own words coherently. It is **not** paraphrasing to cut and paste the original text and then put the words in a different order. If your work does not refer to specific ideas on particular pages of a resource but to general themes mentioned throughout the resource, page numbers need not be shown.

When you paraphrase, you must provide a reference that indicates the source of the material. Failure to do this can be interpreted as plagiarism. The way that you reference the source of material in your assignment varies according to the referencing style you are required to use. **That is why it is important to be familiar with the referencing style needed in your course(s).**

With appropriate acknowledgement, you can also quote an author's words directly in your assignment. This is referred to as a **direct quote**. The quotes should be carefully integrated into your text and reproduced exactly. Be aware, however, that lecturers prefer that you express ideas in your own words rather than use a number of direct quotes as it convinces them that you have understood the meaning that the author wished to convey. Keep direct quotes to a minimum in your assessment items.

## **Academic writing**

At university, the expectation is that you will write in a specific way. The following is a quick introduction to academic writing, giving you a guide to sites that will be helpful.

### **Academic writing**

- is very formal and addresses a narrow audience
- can take many forms, for example: essay, report, literature review; case study, annotated bibliography, abstract, synopsis
- is concerned with a thesis (informed argument or view) or statement of purpose
- is based on research and includes referenced, scholarly information
- uses objective language and tone.

It is important that you follow the guidelines in your Course Profiles and Study Guides at all times for Faculty requirements regarding the preferred referencing style for your course. When in doubt, check with your lecturer or tutor.

The CLC web site <http://clc.cqu.edu.au> offers links to **generic** styles of the essay, report and the literature review and other academic genres. Remember these are generic so it is important that you follow your Faculty's guidelines as they may differ from this generic form.

The following are some examples of the types of academic writing you may be required to engage in while at university. Always read your course profile/study guide to look for **specific information or instructions** about assessment items.

### ***The academic essay***

One of the most common assessment items you will be required to submit at university is the essay. Essays are written for various purposes: to inform, to challenge, to explore, to convince. Structurally, the essay is generally comprised of an introduction, a body and a conclusion. A reference list is always included at the end. Always check your course profile to see if any variation from this is expected.

The academic essay is generally written in response to a question. You are expected to present a point of view (expressed in a thesis statement) that is informed by research. A great deal of this research will be available through course materials, the library and Internet sources. Your aim is to develop an argument, backed up by research to support the thesis you propose.

For a **generic** guide to the academic essay go to <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28> and click on **Assessment advice**

### ***The report***

A report is a formal document that is written for a variety of purposes, generally used in the physical sciences, social sciences, engineering and business disciplines. Report styles will vary between these disciplines but generally, findings pertaining to a given or specific task are written up into a report.

It should be noted that reports are considered to be legal documents in the workplace so they need to be precise, accurate and easy to interpret; therefore, ***it is important to follow the prescribed format for your discipline.***

For a **generic** guide to the report go to <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28> and click on Help with assignments

### ***The lab report***

For general information on the generic form of a lab report, you might like to look at The Learning Centre, University of New South Wales: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/labrep.html> . However, your Faculty will direct you on their preference for the format of a lab report, so ensure you take time to find out what is expected of you.

### ***The literature review***

A literature review requires you to critically analyse the ideas expressed by others. According to Taylor and Proctor (2001, p. 1 of 1), 'In writing a literature review, your purpose is to convey to your reader what knowledge and ideas have been established on a topic, and what their strengths and weaknesses are'.

The following site has a complete tutorial on how to write a literature review  
<http://libguides.library.cqu.edu.au/litreview>

### ***The annotated bibliography***

The purpose of an annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the various sources that have been cited. A concise annotation summarises the central theme and scope of the book or article. Included are 'one or more sentences that (a) evaluate the authority or background of the author, (b) comment on the intended audience, (c) compare or contrast this work with another you have cited, or (d) explain how this work illuminates your topic' (Engle, Blumenthal & Cosgrave 2002, p. 1 of 1).

For more information, visit Cornell University Library home page on How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography:

<http://www.library.cornell.edu/resrch/citing/bibtut> Critically Analyzing Information Sources.

### ***The abstract***

An abstract (also referred to as a synopsis or an executive summary) is a **stand-alone** statement that briefly conveys the essential information contained in a paper, article, document or book. An abstract presents the objectives, methods, results, and conclusions of a research project. It is a **brief summary** that appears as the **first section** of a paper. It is on a separate page following the title page. **It is not the introduction.** It is an independent statement.

The abstract should be a clear, concise summary of the essential information in all sections of your research paper or essay (if required by the lecturer). As such, even though it appears in the first section of a paper, it is generally composed last of all as an overall summary of essential information only. The abstract's length will depend on the depth of the original source. For a **generic** guide to the abstract, go to <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28> and click on Assessment advice or see the example in Chapter 5.

## **Help with spelling and grammar**

It is important that your academic writing is free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Professor Paul Brians' grammar site <http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/errors/> is an extremely helpful site for those wishing to improve their grammar and spelling.

As you look through various web sites, you will find that some of the vocabulary is in American-English spelling. For example, words such as color, humor, organization, behavior, recognize, specialize and so on will be used. Each time you notice words such as these, by using the Spelling & Grammar

tool on your computer, you can replace them with the Australian-English version. **Please note that it is important to set the language on your computer to Australian English.**

Correct punctuation is also very important in all academic communication. For some great advice and examples of good academic communication, visit OWL Purdue 'Brief overview of punctuation' at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/566/01/>

### ***Assessment preparation checklist***

As you conclude each assessment item, you will find it very helpful if you use an assessment checklist to self-evaluate your own work. For an example, go to <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28> and click on Assignment advice, The academic essay, Stage 9.

## **Referencing**

It is an important academic (and ethical) convention to acknowledge the use of someone else's ideas and/or words. Whenever you are referring to the work of another person, you should cite (reference) the source to which you are referring. This includes all Web sources used, pictures, diagrams and so on. A simple rule to remember is that **if it is not your own information**, it must be referenced both in the body of your work (in-text) and on a reference list at the end of the assessment item. (See the way references are presented using the Harvard referencing style at the end of this chapter).

Referencing is not just about technique; it is also about intellectual honesty, demonstrating the scope of your own research and how you are incorporating others' knowledge and ideas into your work. Always cross check that all in-text references have been included in the reference list at the end, and vice versa. The two sets of references should be in 100% agreement with each other, including consistency in the dates and the spelling of author(s) name(s).

Not only does referencing allow examiners to verify your data, but it also allows you to demonstrate how much effort you have put into developing your assessment item. The more varied and integrated your citations (and consequently your use of different sources), the greater the likelihood that you have constructed a scholarly assessment item. A reference list with at least ten relevant and scholarly sources is taken very seriously indeed, although this of course depends on the length of the assessment item.

### ***Why reference?***

References enhance your writing and assist your reader by:

- showing the amount of research work you have conducted
- strengthening your academic argument
- showing the reader the source(s) of your information
- allowing the reader to consult your sources independently
- allowing the reader to verify your data

- ensuring that you cannot be accused of plagiarism.

### ***When is a reference required?***

- When quoting – using someone else’s exact words
- When reproducing any information that is not your own, for example figures, tables, photos or diagrams
- When paraphrasing – using someone else’s ideas or words in your own words
- When summarising – giving a brief account of someone else’s ideas

### ***Study Hint: Reference lists as a research tool***

A reference list can often provide a useful starting point to investigate other references used by the author. For example, if a text or author is referred to across a number of different sources that you are using, it is fair to assume that you might benefit from finding the original document for your own study. (See Compass: Library Help Online.)

### ***Oral presentations***

Sometimes you will be called on to make an oral presentation, either in a group or individually. This may be by way of audio visual recording or on-campus workshops. Most students tend to find that giving an oral presentation can be somewhat of an ordeal. The experience can be daunting if you are not fully prepared and in full command of your material. Being familiar with your topic and being well prepared will help you feel more confident and ensure a greater likelihood of success.

If you find the thought of an oral presentation to be nerve wracking or worrisome, consult the CLC page ‘Preparing for an oral presentation’ <http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=848>

For further information, consult the Business Guide for students – Chapter 7: oral presentation at <http://fbi.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/getFile.do?id=17724>

## **Conclusion**

The intention of this chapter was to provide you with some very useful reading skills and researching strategies. To avoid plagiarism, the necessity to reference the work of others has been stressed and some salient features of academic communication have been presented.

## **References**

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<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html>

# Chapter 4: Exam preparation

## Revision strategies and exam techniques

Written assessment is not the only type of assessment you will engage in at university. While there may not be an exam for every course you study, it is more than likely that at some stage, you will sit an exam. Most exams are of a three hour duration, and your responses are generally handwritten. Go to [http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy\\_file.do?policyid=1242](http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=1242) for more information. If you have an injury that precludes you from sitting for a three hour period, you must register with Equity & Diversity so that consideration of your case can be made. They can be found at <http://equity.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=48>. You can also view the policy at <http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy.jsp?policyid=1180>.

You should be aware that the Student Support Centre is a very good source of information about exams. For further information go to <http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=11733>

### **Exam types**

Always carefully check your Course Profile to get a good idea of what type of exam you will be sitting. It may be either **closed** or **open book**. Knowledge of this will inevitably guide your study strategies.

### **Memorising difficult information, e.g., formulas, dates, etc.**

When preparing for your exam(s), make a list of important concepts, themes or definitions. Ten minutes later write down as much of the information as you can remember. Then, focus on the information that you missed as this is the material that you have trouble remembering and on which you should concentrate.

### **Memory aids**

Memory aids can be great in assisting the recall of information. Make up rhymes, acronyms and so on. Condense the information, for example: Careful Study Improves Results Outstandingly = CSIRO. As you may realise, CSIRO is an acronym that is particularly easy to remember if you are an Australian because it is the name of a well known government research department. The *Cottrell text* has an excellent section that covers exam preparation for all types of learners. See pages 313–317 for more information.

Thoughtful and easy-to-revise noting is an important tool for you to develop. Used progressively and persistently, it will ensure careful preparation well in advance, vitally important when revising for examinations. As part of your revision and preparation for end-of-term exams, you may wish to allocate time to develop some mind maps of important aspects covered during your course(s).

### **Revise according to an organised schedule**

Studying for exams is not something you leave until the last moment. Gradually intensify your study over the term to make sure all your information stays in long-term memory. Otherwise it is probable you will complete your degree and

not remember much of it at all! Take note of what you find hard to remember and study that more often. Ensure revision and study time is included in your schedule and make the effort to maintain this plan.

### ***Rest if you are stressed***

Sometimes people push themselves too hard just before exams. Have a good night's sleep before the exam. Try to have a good breakfast and drink water to stay hydrated. Of vital importance is to remember:

- the location of where your exam is being held
- to arrive a little early at the exam room
- to take your student card to the examination centre
- to take some water to drink.

If you are ill, you must inform your supervisor and find out what arrangements you need to make so that you are not penalised.

The responsibilities of the Faculty, lecturer and student, together with corrective procedures, sanctions and penalties related to examinations, are outlined in CQUniversity *Student Misconduct Procedures* (2010, Schedule 2(b)) as well as in CQUniversity's *Plagiarism Policy*.

### ***Perusal time and timing***

Too often people quickly read the exam paper once and then settle back nervously. Read the instructions several times during perusal time, looking carefully for any clues that might help you. Begin to analyse the question(s), taking special note of **key** and **signpost** words such as discuss, analyse, compare, contrast and so on.

Be aware of time allocation and do not spend too long on questions of which you are unsure. Come back to them later.

### ***Prioritise the questions***

The order in which you answer questions can be important. Complete the questions you can. Of these, address them in order of the marks they are worth.

Often, information in one question may help you to solve another. Look for formulae, references to similar concepts, and so on.

### ***During the test***

- Keep track of the time.
- Revise your questions if you finish early.
- Tidy up your work, making sure nothing is illegible or ambiguous. Neat, clearly laid out work is much easier to correct.

## Cheating

At university, cheating is viewed very seriously. The CQUniversity *Student Misconduct Procedures* (2010, Schedule 2(b)) define *cheating*:

Cheating in an Examination or test including speaking or communicating with other candidates, bringing unauthorised material into the examination room including a mechanical or electronic device, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, reading or attempting to read other students' answers, leaving examination or test answer papers exposed to other student's view.

Academic misconduct

<http://glossary.cqu.edu.au/Glossary/glossary.jsp?id=19>

Academic Board Guide for Faculty Hearings

[http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy\\_file.do?policyid=1247](http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=1247)

Student misconduct procedures

[http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy\\_file.do?policyid=1246](http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=1246)

### **Multiple-choice questions**

Multiple choice questions can be quite tricky. Try to avoid excessive haste, but remember multiple-choice questions are a balance between thoroughness and speed. Also remember to find out if marks are deducted for incorrect answers. Do not guess if this is the case. Do not forget to use your **logic** and eliminate the choices that are clearly incorrect.

### **Conclusion**

The intention of this brief chapter was to provide you with some revision strategies and exam techniques. The intention was also to inform you of important policies surrounding cheating and plagiarism, offences that could land one in very hot water!

## References

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York University Counselling and Development Centre 2002, *Time management for university students*, viewed 9 January 2009, <http://www.yorku.ca/cdc/lsp/skillbuilding.html>

## Chapter 5: Assorted study hints

This final chapter is designed to provide you with an assortment of study hints. Commencing the chapter is a very useful *glossary of terms*, followed by 7 very useful study hints.

### Glossary of terms used at CQUniversity

| Term                                 | Definition  |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Assignments                          | Assignments are the most common form of assessment used at university. They usually take the form of a research paper that needs to be presented as an essay or report. Students need to follow the advice given to them in their Faculty 'guides for students' regarding Faculty expectations.   |
| Assessment                           | Assessment is the term used to describe the way in which lecturers determine whether or not a student is successfully achieving the aims and objectives of their courses. Summative assessment contributes to the student's overall grade for a course. Formative assessment does not contribute to the overall grade but must be completed as part of course requirements.   |
| Bibliography                         | A bibliography is a list of all of the resources you consult in your research for an assignment whether you used them or not. It must contain the referencing details of all sources accessed and will be set out according to the referencing system you are advised to use by your Faculty. Undergraduates are not often asked to include a bibliography, but they are required to complete a reference list. (See reference list.) |
| Browser                              | A browser is a computer program (e.g. Internet Explorer or Firefox) that allows you to gain access to the World Wide Web.   |
| Catalogue                            | The Catalogue is a searchable online interface listing all of the resources in the CQUniversity Library collection. These resources include books, maps, DVDs, etc., as well as electronic resources such as journals in databases. The Library Catalogue can be accessed at <a href="http://library-catalogue.cqu.edu.au">http://library-catalogue.cqu.edu.au</a>  |
| CQUniversity Glossary                | CQUniversity Glossary of common terms is available on the e.rolment web site or <a href="http://glossary.cqu.edu.au">http://glossary.cqu.edu.au</a>   |
| Communications Learning Centre (CLC) | The Communications Learning Centre (CLC) is a service provided by the University. The staff at the centre can help you with issues relating to academic assignment writing, oral presentations, referencing and much more. The web site can be accessed at <a href="http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28">http://clc.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=28</a>  |
| Compass:                             | Compass: Library Help Online is the Library's online tutorial   |

|                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Library Help Online           | site and provides step-by-step courses in how the library works, and how to access its databases and catalogues. It is strongly recommended that you work through Compass which can be accessed at <a href="http://facultysite.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=411">http://facultysite.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?site=411</a>   |
| Computer Labs                 | Computer laboratories have been established throughout the University for students to use. They have current software programs that allow students to access the Internet, Microsoft Word, the Library home page and so on. The labs are open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.  |
| Course                        | A course is another name for a subject that you study as part of your degree program.  |
| Course Coordinator            | A course coordinator is responsible for overseeing a course. Your course coordinator's contact address should appear in your Course Profile, or faculty guide or faculty web site. They are the person to contact for content related questions.   |
| Course Profile                | Each course has a Course Profile that explains what the course is about, the aims or objectives of the course, assessment requirements, and extra information that you may need to know about the course. Usually the contact details of the lecturers and support staff are found in the Course Profile.  |
| Course Resources Online (CRO) | The resources are selected to complement courses offered at CQUniversity and have been made available in consultation with the relevant academic staff. Course codes and Course names will lead the student to the resources: <a href="http://library-cro.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=7076">http://library-cro.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=7076</a>                                    |
| CQUcentral                    | CQUcentral is the student enrolment system which you access to find any information about your specific program and enrolment details.   |
| Databases                     | Databases are collections of information stored in electronic format. Databases provide access to a wide variety of information, including journal citations and articles, e-books, conference proceedings and standards. Some databases contain information that is specific to one subject area, whilst others cover a range of subjects, e.g., Academic Search Complete, CINAHL with Full Text. |
| Dean                          | Each School within the university has an executive manager. This person is referred to as the Dean of the School.  |
| Degree                        | A degree is the formal qualification you receive if you successfully complete all of the requirements of your study. Most degrees are studied full time over 3 or 4 years.   |
| Discipline                    | A discipline refers to the branch of learning that consists of a set or system of rules and regulations pertaining to the area of study you will enter. (See also Field of study.)   |

|                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| E-courses                     | Many courses include an online component that is delivered using the online learning management system, Moodle. These courses are referred to as e-courses and can be accessed online at: <a href="http://e-courses.cqu.edu.au/webapps/login/">http://e-courses.cqu.edu.au/webapps/login/</a>   |
| Electronic mailing list       | Many courses have mailing lists. A mailing list or distribution list appears to be just like an email address, except that when you send an email message to that address, it is distributed to all the subscribed members of that list. You may have to subscribe to a course mailing list. Your Course Profile will provide directions on how to subscribe.   |
| Examination Centre            | An examination centre is the place that you attend if you have to sit exams for any of the courses in which you are enrolled. You will be advised by the University of the location of your closest exam centre. You can nominate where you would like to sit your exams, but do so well before the exam.   |
| Faculty                       | There are two faculties at CQUniversity: Faculty of Arts, Business, Informatics & Education (FABIE) and Faculty of Sciences, Engineering & Health (FSEH).   |
| Field of study                | These are areas of study that may make use of a variety of disciplines to develop their knowledge base. For example: Sociology is considered a discipline, whereas tourism is considered a field of study. Tourism draws on the disciplines of sociology, psychology and geography, to name a few.  |
| Handbook                      | The CQUniversity handbook contains all of the essential information that students need to ensure successful study at CQUniversity. It is only available online through the CQUniversity Web page:<br><a href="http://handbook.cqu.edu.au/Handbook/">http://handbook.cqu.edu.au/Handbook/</a>  |
| ID Card                       | Every student must have an ID card to be able to access many of the services offered at the university. The ID card must be used to borrow items from the library, access computers and sit examinations. Upon enrolment, you will receive your card.   |
| Information Literacy          | 'Information literacy is the ability to locate, evaluate, manage and use information from a range of sources for problem solving, decision making and research' (Bruce & Candy 1995, p. 245).   |
| Internet (The World Wide Web) | The Internet is a vast electronic resource that connects thousands of networks to a vast Internet of networks. Often referred to as the World Wide Web which contains all of the Internet services, it is a valuable resource for finding up-to-date information. At university, the Internet is seen as a valuable resource tool; however, it is important that you use reliable sources. The Library has an excellent site that helps you evaluate an Internet site before using it in academic research. |
| ITD Service                   | ITD stands for Information Technology Division. If you are  |

|                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Desk Online                       | having trouble accessing any of the technology or using the online resources offered, you need to make contact with the Helpdesk at (07) 4930 9233 or IT Service Desk Online: <a href="http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=10408">http://content.cqu.edu.au/FCWViewer/view.do?page=10408</a> |
| Lecturer                          | The lecturer is the person who delivers the lectures for a course. The lecturer may not always be the person who facilitates the tutorials for the course or marks your work.   |
| Lecture                           | Lectures are one method used to deliver the content information of a course to students. All internal students enrolled in a course are expected to attend lectures. Your Study Guide or Moodle site replaces lectures if you are studying off-campus as a FLEX student.                                  |
| Marker                            | Often, in courses containing large numbers of students, markers are employed to correct student work. They are not always your lecturer or tutor.   |
| Mathematics Learning Centre (MLC) | The Mathematics Learning Centre is a service provided by the university to support students who have queries regarding mathematics aspects of their courses. The Centre has a web site that can be accessed at: <a href="http://mlc.cqu.edu.au">http://mlc.cqu.edu.au</a>                                 |
| Moodle                            | Moodle is a content management system (CMS) that supports CQUniversity's e-Courses.   |
| MyCQU                             | MyCQU is a personalised web site where you can access a range of information by using a single logon at <a href="http://mycqu.cqu.edu.au/portal/dt">http://mycqu.cqu.edu.au/portal/dt</a>   |
| Orientation 'O' Week              | 'O' Week is traditionally held the week before formal classes start for a term. Faculties organise activities to help students familiarise themselves with the University and with the Faculty or School to which they will belong while at CQUniversity.   |
| Online                            | Online is a term used to describe communication via the Internet or any electronic resource.  |
| Paraphrasing                      | A rephrasing of the meaning of the text you are using as a source for your research. It is not simply a reordering of the words in the original text. It must be referenced.  |
| Plagiarism                        | This is when work is presented or submitted in a course as if it were a student's own, done expressly for that course, when in fact it is not.  |
| Podcast                           | A CQUniversity podcast consists of audio and visual files available on the Internet. A list of current CQUniversity podcasts is available at: <a href="http://onlinemedia.cqu.edu.au/podcast/">http://onlinemedia.cqu.edu.au/podcast/</a> You are required to log in.                                     |
| Prerequisite                      | A prerequisite course is one that must be completed prior to enrolling in another. The student handbook, program advisor or program coordinator will help make sure that you complete   |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
|                            | all prerequisites before enrolling in other courses. Some courses do not have prerequisites and can be done at any time in your program.   |
| Program                    | A program is the term used to describe the entire area of study in which you have enrolled. For example: STEPS is a program; Language and Learning is a course that forms part of the STEPS program.   |
| Program Advisor            | The program advisor is the person to contact if you need to know anything about which courses (subjects) can be chosen to fulfill all of the requirements of your chosen area of study. Program advisors can help you plan your program of study.  |
| Program Coordinator        | Most programs have coordinators who are responsible for the day-to-day overseeing of the operation of the program in their area. The coordinator deals with issues that cannot be dealt with at the lecturer or tutor level.   |
| Reference list             | A reference list is an essential part of any academic assignment that you complete at university. It contains the referencing details of the research sources you have used in the preparation of your assignment, but not necessarily all of the resources you have read. The reference list contains the bibliographical details of all sources actually referred to in the body of your assignment. The bolded heading <b>References</b> is used. |
| Residential school         | Some programs require students to attend a residential school as part of fulfilling course requirements. Students are expected to attend on the days set down by their lecturers. It is important to read carefully the information provided in Course Profiles to find out if you are expected to attend residential schools or not.  |
| School                     | Schools are organised within the larger unit of the Faculty. Programs within similar fields are grouped into schools or colleges, for example, the School of Nursing & Health Studies; the School of Sciences.   |
| Screencasts                | A Web-based audio-visual presentation usually available on Moodle. Some examples of presentations include lectures, workshops and assistance with particular concepts/activities such as interviews, experiments and revision.   |
| Self-directed study groups | Self-directed study groups are generally made up of 2 to 8 off-campus students who are in regular contact for academically related purposes. Students register on enrolment but access lists of students in their courses on MyCQU. It is up to the student to make contact with selected individuals.   |
| Student Centres            | There are five student centres that will help you with information about academic services and student facilities. Web site address: <a href="http://studentcentres.cqu.edu.au">http://studentcentres.cqu.edu.au</a><br>Check out the services offered to financial student members of The Student Association.  |

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Student email       | All students are provided with an official university email address. CQUniversity sends all student email communications to this official university email address. You are required to use this email facility to communicate with your lecturers. It is a requirement that you check your CQUniversity email on a frequent and consistent basis (at least once per week). These requirements are stated in the policy on email and Internet usage which is available via this URL<br><a href="http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=317">http://policy.cqu.edu.au/Policy/policy_file.do?policyid=317</a> |
| Student Ombudsman   | The Student Ombudsman is another form of support offered to students at CQUniversity. It is considered to be the 'last resort' option if other avenues of appeal fail. The Web address for the Student Ombudsman is:<br><a href="http://www.cqu.edu.au/ombudsman">http://www.cqu.edu.au/ombudsman</a>  |
| Telephone directory | Contact details of all staff, divisions, faculties and services are available online through the CQUniversity at<br><a href="http://phonebook.cqu.edu.au/">http://phonebook.cqu.edu.au/</a>  |
| Teletutorial        | A teletutorial is a learning session involving a number of students and a facilitator that takes place over the telephone. It is mainly used as a learning experience for off-campus students.   |
| Theory              | The general principles of explanation of phenomena. For example: Critical Literacy Theory; Newton's Theory of Gravitation.   |
| Tutorial            | Similar to a small group teletutorial, only face-to-face in a classroom situation.   |

### **More glossaries of terms used at CQUniversity**

In addition to the above list of words, you may find occasion to consult other glossaries of words used at CQUniversity. For example, click on *Glossary of Terms* on the Statistics and Analysis Office Web page at: <http://cqu-stats.cqu.edu.au/>

In addition, some courses provide a glossary of terms specific and/or particularly relevant to that course. Students are advised to seek out such glossaries.

### **Study Hint A: General study strategies**

The following URLs offer a variety of useful hints:

*Helpful study skills link*—University of St Thomas, St Paul at <http://www.stthomas.edu/academicsupport/> and search for Helpful study skills links

*Academic skills center—Study skills library*—California Polytechnic State University at <http://www.sas.calpoly.edu/asc/> and search for Study skills library.

## Study Hint B: Reaffirm what you have learnt

When you have completed half a term's study, it is time to 'test yourself' and reaffirm what you know. Exhibiting what you know and demonstrating what you have learnt are important steps in proving to yourself that you have totally comprehended the course material. If the task proves difficult, it is a good early warning sign that you should seek assistance from your lecturer, tutor or the course coordinator in order to clarify your areas of concern.

There are many ways for you to demonstrate what you know. Your work on the activities in course Study Guides and tutorials is a demonstration of what you have learnt. If you were to review some of your earlier work now, however, would you recall what you learnt at the time you were first studying it? Revision is both an important learning tool and an important memory tool.

The mind map below illustrates some ways for you to 'reaffirm what you have learnt'. You may wish to practice the mind map technique as you revise your work from the first half of term, before moving on to the last half of your term.

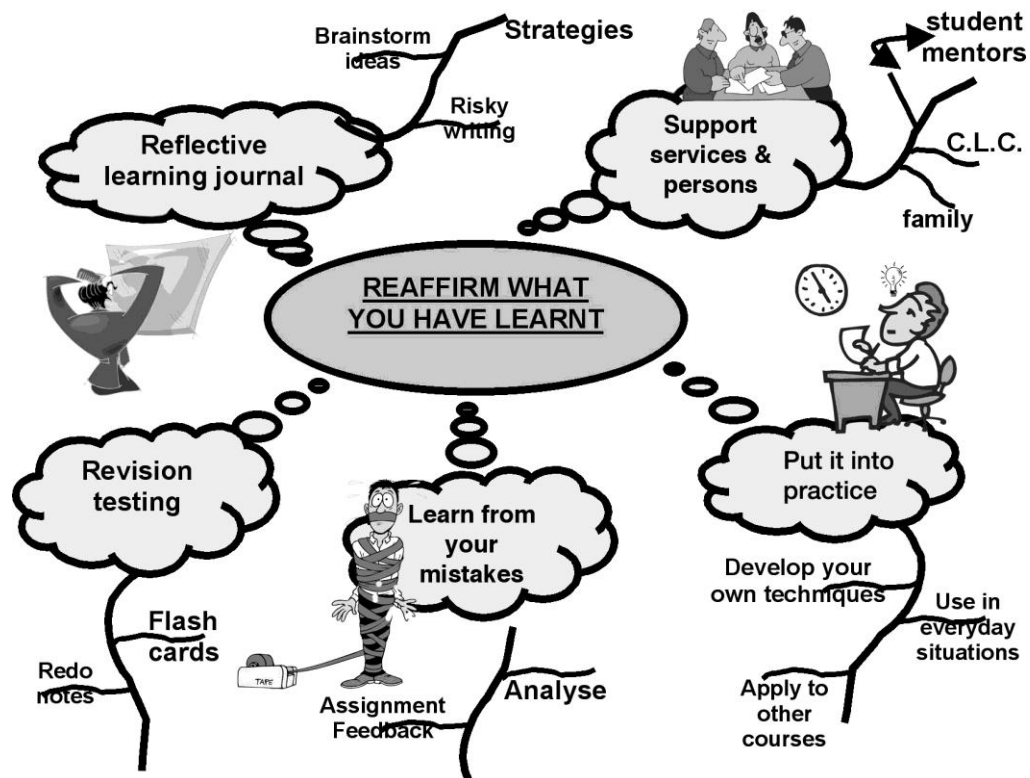


Figure E1 Revision mind map

Source: generated by the Communications Learning Centre Staff

## Study Hint C: Mind mapping

Extracted from: Rose, C & Nicholl, MJ 1997, *Accelerated learning for the 21st century*, pp. 96–100, Piatkus, London.

### → **Extracts start** ←

Learning maps are a dynamic way to capture significant points of information. They use a global format, allowing information to be displayed in the same way that our brain functions—in many directions simultaneously (p. 96).

Research by Robert Ornstein and others has shown that the process of thinking is a complex combination of words, pictures, scenarios, colours and even sound and music. Thus the process of presenting and capturing lesson content in learning maps closely approximates the natural operation of thinking (p. 96).

Retraining the brain to draw ideas radiating from a central image takes practice and patience. The trick is to practice the skill until it becomes automatic (p. 97).

You will notice that a learning map allows you to record a great deal of information on one page and to show relationships among various concepts and ideas. This visual representation helps you to think about a subject in a global fashion and lends to the flexibility of your thinking. On a map you can literally see the structure of the subject in a way that isn't possible with outlines. You can see separate **themes but also the relationship between themes**. Linear *note-taking* can not keep up with our complexity of thought. *Note-making* through learning maps can (p. 97).

### **Creating learning maps**

*Start with the topic in the centre*

Begin by putting the central theme in the middle of the page. This forces you to define the core idea of your subject—the start point of effective learning (p. 98).

Keep this core central theme reasonably small so you have room to clearly display the sub themes around the centre. They can be connected to the central theme by lines, like the spokes of a wheel (p. 98).

*Use key words*

The point of learning maps is to capture only the essential facts that, when reviewed, will trigger recall for the whole lesson. You will find that this mainly means using key verbs and nouns. Everything else is 'fill-in' information that your mind will supply when it has been jogged by the learning maps (p. 98).

*Work outward*

Work from your central theme outward in all directions. Limit your main branches to between five and seven (p. 98).

*Practice makes perfect (p. 100)*

Do not expect to get it right the first time. In fact, it is better if you have to redraw your learning map. Doing it a couple of times will help you remember the details.

*Use symbols, colours, words, pictures, and other images*

The combination of many styles makes the learning map more memorable. For added variety, vary the size of the words throughout the map. Write key words or phrases in bold capital letters. Keep the words to a minimum. Use easily identifiable symbols—crosses, check marks, exclamation points, question marks, stick men, hearts, triangles, and so on (p. 98).

*Doing your own thing (p. 100)*

You do not have to be a graphic artist to excel in the creation of learning maps. The important thing is to develop a style of your own. By all means, use as much visual imagery as you can.

It is not necessary to have an artistic flair. It is far more meaningful to develop your personal style, to create maps that you can understand and which will help with the embedding of information into your long-term memory. Try to get a little more creative with every new learning map you draw.

*Learning maps become memory maps (p. 100)*

We use the term learning map to describe the use of maps as input devices. We use the term memory map to describe their creation and use as revision or summary devices.

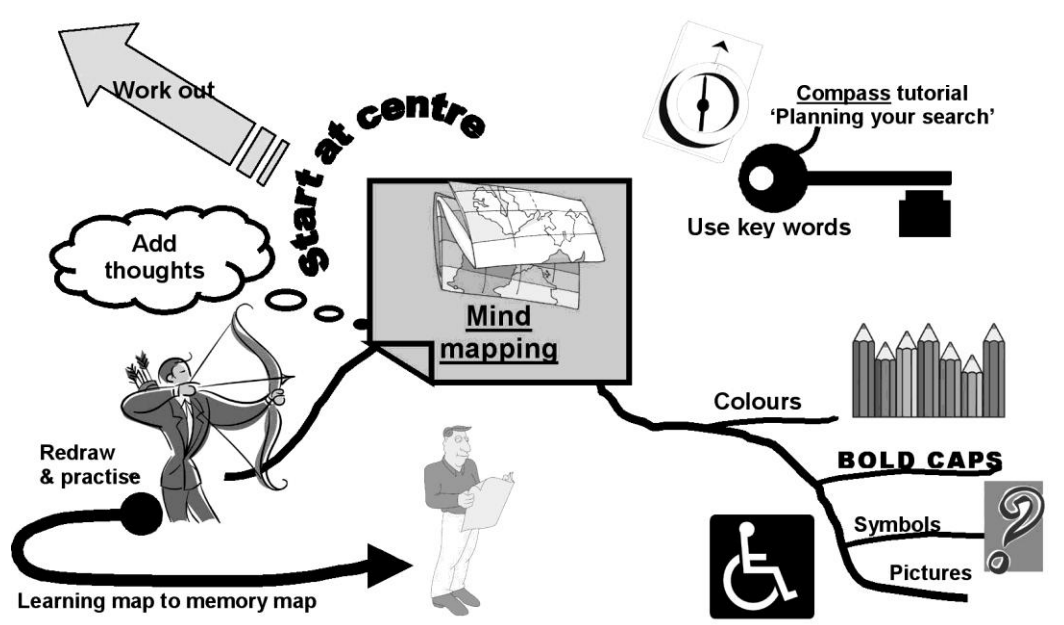


Figure F1 Learning map

Source: generated by Communications Learning Centre staff

## Study Hint D: Advice on how to write an abstract/synopsis

To give you an idea of how to compose an abstract/synopsis, a section of Kenneth Mahrer's (2004) article, *Writing abstracts – a basic approach* has been reproduced. It is recommended that you view the entire article, located at the following website:

<http://www.geophysics.dkrz.de/fileadmin/documents/teaching/Vortrag/Mahrer-abstracts.PDF>. Mahrer (2004) offers the following advice:

Here's what you should put into your abstract, nothing more, nothing less! Answer the following three questions in the order presented. Do not add anything else; do not stray, do not embellish, just the questions in a straightforward manner:

- 1. What did you do?
- 2. How did you do it?
- 3. What did you learn that was not known before?

Mahrer (2004) prefaces this by saying that abstracts should not be written to be propped up by the article; abstracts are standalones. Their initial stop is at the front of the article, but later they journey, alone to many other stops, specifically databases.

Here is an example of an abstract:

Over the coming decade, increasing numbers of mature age learners are likely to be enrolling in higher education programs in Australia. To meet imminent higher education reform targets, the Australian federal government proposes "that by 2020, 40 per cent of 25 to 34 year-olds will have attained at least a bachelor-level qualification" (Gillard, 2009, p. 3). Mature age learners will inevitably constitute a significant portion of the anticipated enrolments, and for many, the decision to undertake formal study may be somewhat of a paradox as they come to terms with the tensions that arise when they straddle the 'divide' between old and new ways of knowing about themselves as learners. This 'divide' can be conceptualised as "living at the intersection of multiple worlds and multiple ways of knowing" (Alsup, 2006, p. 15), or similarly, as existing within a "liminal space" (Meyer & Land, 2005), a "not-so-sure" (p. 5) place of meaning-making in which personal transformation can occur. The borderland (Alsup, 2006; Gee, 2005) is an apt description for this territory in which the conceptualisation of new knowledge and subsequent new personal status can problematise the learning journey for the mature age learner. This can be particularly manifest in the learning experiences of the mature age learner who accesses university via an enabling program. For some, this decision marks the end of a long hiatus from formal study, and encountering the protocols, assessment regimes and other discourses of the university context can give rise to significant personal tension. However, as this paper will demonstrate, when enabling programs adopt particular pedagogical strategies that philosophically and theoretically link learning, teaching and high quality student outcomes, the learning experiences of the mature age learner can be enriching. One pedagogical approach that has demonstrated significant effect in supporting the educational journey of mature age learners is the Vygotskian (1978) concept of scaffolding, whereby learners are provided with support structures that fade away as the learner becomes more independent and self-directed (Dabbagh, 2003). This extends to encompassing emotional scaffolding (Rosiek, 2003). When scaffolding techniques underpin the pedagogical practices of educators in enabling programs, and the prior learning experiences of mature age learners are acknowledged and built upon, there is real potential for high quality learning and teaching outcomes. (J Willans & K Seary 2010, p. 1, by kind permission 3 December 2010)

## Study Hint E: The *KISS* principle

The KISS principle refers to the idea of not complicating a task or issue unnecessarily. That is: **Keep It Simple, Stupid!**

For example, when trying to present an idea in an assignment, it often makes more sense to use a number of shorter sentences, rather than a lengthy convoluted single sentence. If you break the sentence up into its component parts, the idea is presented more clearly.

In relation to oral communication, the simpler your message, the easier and quicker it will be picked up by the person or persons to whom it is directed. Just because you may have a variety of technologies available for conveying your message, it does not always mean you have to use them all. At the same time, using technology can present complex information so that your audience can more clearly understand what is being presented. For example, if discussing statistics, rather than just reading them out, provide a handout with the necessary statistics reproduced for the audience to follow during your discussion. Instead of providing only a list of numbers and/or percentages, consider whether they might be better presented as a graph or table or pie-chart. If you want to display numerical information as a slide, produce the information so that it is clear and easy to read from a distance. Make sure you only include the relevant figures for your presentation. (Keep It Simple!).

When studying, a paced approach which regularly reviews your material (to the extent that it becomes 'simple' to do) is more effective than a last minute cramming of materials which makes the information seem overwhelming. In addition, something that appears difficult on first attempt invariably becomes easier with practice. For example, if you were to practice an oral presentation several times before presenting the talk formally, it would not be as daunting when you formally present the talk. Preparing for an exam by practising your exam technique with past exam papers can also make the actual examination seem 'simpler' than if you went in without any preparation.

## Study Hint F: Reflecting on how you have learned

Extract from: Freelance Writers 2010, 'Chapter 10: meta cognition', *Accelerated learning*, viewed 1 November 2010, <http://hirefreelancewriters.com/accelerated-learning-10th-chapter/>

1. The main point of the 10th Chapter of Accelerated Learning is that reviewing and evaluating not just what you have learned but especially how you learned it is at the heart of becoming a self-sufficient, independent, and successful learner. Introspection is not just "talking to yourself." It is what's called "metacognitive" behaviour— our ability to think about how we think.
2. One of the connections I have made deals with an observation I have made. When some students get a lousy grade on a test, they quickly throw out the test and put this failure behind them without dealing with it; others keep the test as a reminder that they need to change their

approach. The people who reflect on failure can often become very successful.

3. This chapter has extended my knowledge by helping me to be more reflective of my progress. Metacognition and reflection can allow me to be more aware of other people's views (students, family, friends) by imagining myself in their position. Also, reflection will extend my knowledge by enabling me to be up to date with my evaluations. This will lead to better progress in dealing with future problems.

## **Study Hint G: Think about the future**

It is never too early to start thinking about what you want to do after you graduate. You should give some thought as to how you might present these skills in an interview and/or job application situation. Cottrell (2008, pp. 36–37) suggests some useful strategies for identifying 'transferable and soft employment skills'.

Another approach you might like to take is to visit the Student Support Centre, student support office, or their online information site on career support. Whether in person or online, they can provide assistance with such things as: writing job applications and CVs, preparing for interviews, career guidance and employment and postgraduate study information.

On their web site you will find information about:

- Courses and Careers
- Their 'Careers Library'
- 'Australian Job Search' link
- 'Australian Job Guide' link (skills etc. required)
- Vacation Employment or Overseas Employment
- The 'Graduate Recruitment Program'
- Workshops—on campus and online, such as how to write a CV
- Austudy and Abstudy, plus information on HECS and how to calculate it
- How to contact a Career's Advisor
- Questions to test yourself with for an interview situation
- Information on Post Graduate Studies in Australia
- Career Hub: <http://careerhub.cqu.edu.au>

## **Conclusion**

The intention of this chapter was to provide you with an overview of the vocabulary you are likely to hear or read while you are a student at CQUniversity. Some general and more specific study strategies have been outlined to get you thinking about your thinking.

## A final word

If you have made it to the end of this handbook, then you have done very well! Enjoy your study at CQUniversity. It will be a time of challenge but great reward, a bit like a journey that will have its ups and downs, good days and bad, and hopefully, not too many flat tyres!! Don't be afraid to ask for help or clarification. The only silly question is the one that remains unasked!

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---

## 3

3Rs · 26

---

## A

abstract · 35  
academic essay · 34  
Academic misconduct · 41  
academic writing · 33  
Annotated Bibliography · 35  
Assessment · 42  
Assignments · 42  
auditory strategies' · 28

---

## B

Bibliography · 42

---

## C

chat facility · 14  
*cheating* · 41  
CLC · 11, 42  
close study · 25  
Communications Learning Centre · 11, 42  
*Compass* · 21, 42  
**Compass: Library Help Online** · 32  
**Cottrell** · 16, 54  
Course Information Centre · 11  
**course materials** · 18  
course profile · 18, 19  
Course Profile · 12  
Course Profiles · 12  
Course Resources Online · 43  
**CQUni** Student Association · 11  
CQUniLibrary home page · 16  
CQUniversity home page · 16  
CQUniversity Library · 30  
CQUniversity's Plagiarism Procedures · 33  
CRO · 43

---

## D

databases available through the CQUniversity  
library include  
APA-FT (Australian) · 31  
discussion boards · 14

---

## E

*e-courses* · 14  
E-courses · 44

electronic resources · 30  
emails · 14  
environmental awareness · 24  
e-rolment · 13  
exam · 39  
exam paper · 40  
exam technique · 52  
extension · 22

---

## G

Generic skills · 8  
goal setting · 22  
Graduate Attributes · 8  
group pages · 14

---

## I

ID Card · 44  
inference · 27  
Intellectual nurturing · 8  
International students · 11  
interpretation · 27  
ITD Helpdesk · 44

---

## K

key reading · 26  
**key words** · 30  
kinesthetic strategies' · 28  
KISS principle · 52

---

## L

lab report · 35  
Learning maps · 49  
Library Help Online · 15  
Listening skills · 28  
literal meaning · 27  
literature review · 35

---

## M

Mathematics Learning Centre · 11, 45  
Memory aids · 39  
mind map · 29, 48  
mind maps · 39  
MLC · 45  
*Moodle* · 13, 14, 45  
Multiple choice questions · 41

---

## O

oral communication · 52

oral presentation · 37, 52  
Orientation · 45

---

## **P**

paraphrasing · 37  
Paraphrasing · 33, 45  
plagiarism · 29  
Plagiarism · 32, 45  
Podcast · 45  
pre-reading · 26  
punctuation · 36

---

## **R**

rapid reading · 25  
reading · 25  
reading hints · 28  
reference list · 36, 37  
Reference list · 46  
references · 36  
referencing · 36  
referencing guide · 20  
reflective thinking · 6  
report · 34  
research · 29  
Research skills · 6  
Residential school · 46  
resource materials book · 18  
Resource readings · 12  
revision · 40

---

## **S**

scan · 25

set text · 18  
set texts · 13  
Set texts · 12  
skim · 25, 27  
skimming · 27  
SQ3R · 25, 26, 27  
SQ3R technique · 25  
Student Business Centre · 11  
Student Centres · 46  
Student Contact Centre · 11  
Student email · 47  
Student Guide to Moodle · 14  
Student Misconduct · 33  
Student Ombudsman · 11, 47  
Student Support Centre · 11, 53  
study guide · 18  
Study Guides · 12  
study plan · 22  
*Study/faculty guides* · 12  
SWOT · 9

---

## **T**

time management · 22

---

## **V**

virtual classroom · 14  
visual strategies' · 28

---

## **W**

workbooks · 18  
World Wide Web · 15