



UNIVERSITY OF
ZULULAND

A NODE FOR AFRICAN THOUGHT



FYE UNIZULU STUDENT GUIDE

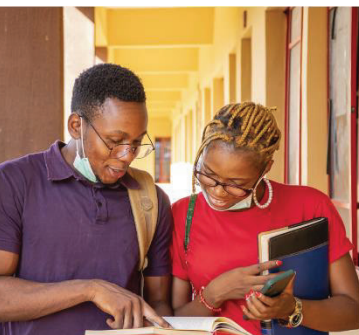


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WELCOME TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND (UNIZULU)

Now that you are officially a student at the University of Zululand, you have moved into a space that fosters academic development and excellence.

University life provides a platform for you to grow as an individual. You now have to learn the art of independence, which will contribute to completing this journey to attain your degree.

Now that you are in your extra space, the onus is on you! To ensure that you achieve academic success and all-round well-being. The University has various support services to assist you academically and socially in ensuring you excel. You can also sign up for various clubs and societies to make friends and meaningful connections that will last a lifetime.

REMEMBER to utilise all support services whenever you need to. The services here at the Teaching and Learning Centre will provide you with holistic development opportunities to successfully attain your full University life.

So, get ready to have a delightful experience at UNIZULU! Wishing you all the best!

**SIYAKWAMUKELA ENYUVESI YASEZULULAND
(UNIZULU)**

Njengoba usungumfundi waseNyuvesi yaseZululand ngokusemthethweni, sewudlulele esigabeni esigqugquzela ukukhula nokukhuthala, kanye nokuvelela kwezokufunda kulelizinga.

Impilo yaseNyuvesi ikuhlinzekela ngendawo ezokukhulisa. Manje sekumele uzifundise ikhono lokuzimela ekuqinisekiseni ukuthi uhambo lwakho ulufeza ngempumelelo endleleni ebheke ekuzuzeni iziqu zakho.

Njengoba sewusendaweni yakho entsha, konke kusezandleni zakho!!! Ukuphumelela kwakho ezifundweni nasenhlalweni jikelele kungumsebenzi wakho ngqo. INyuvesi inezinhlelo ezinhlobonhlobo zokukweseka kwezokufunda nokunye okungaphandle kwezokufunda, ezizoqinisekisa ukuthi uphumelela ngamalengiso. Ungabhalisa emikilabhini nasezinhlenganweni ezinhlobonhlobo lapho ungazitholela khona abangani futhi uzakhele ubudlelwano obuhle obuzohlala impilo yakho yonke.

KHUMBULA, ukusebenzisa izinhlaka zokukweseka noma nini uma uzidinga. Okuhlinzekwa lapha eSizindeneni Sezokufunda Nokufundisa kukunika amathuba aphelele okuba ukwazi ukuphila impilo yakho yaseNyuvesi ephelele.

Ngakhoke, lindela ukuba nesikhathi esingefaniswe empilweni yakho e-UNIZULU! Okuhle kodwa!!

WELCOME MESSAGES:



Professor M Mabusela
Director of Teaching and Learning

Congratulations on being admitted to the University of Zululand, a **University of Choice**. You are now a part of the UNIZULU community, and we wish to ensure that your journey is seamless, filled with growth, laughter, and, most importantly, academic success. This new stage in your life may be overwhelming and exciting as you are introduced to a new social, cultural and academic environment. However, the Teaching and Learning Centre will ensure that you feel comfortable and supported throughout your academic journey; hence, this guide will help you achieve that.

Various services available to you will ensure your time at UNIZULU is one in which you grow academically, personally, and professionally. The First-Year Experience (FYE) focuses on promoting your success as a first-year student with various university-wide activities and programmes to improve your academic achievement. Therefore, you are encouraged to participate in the FYE programme. Your time at UNIZULU may be the best years you may experience. However, you are urged to do so responsibly. As future UNIZULU graduates, we know that you will be equipped to be global citizens that will make a difference in your respective societies.

All the best with your studies!



Mr L Mkize

Coordinator: Student Academic Support

As you start your new academic year at UNIZULU, take advantage of the various services offered by the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) to help you achieve your full potential.

The TLC will offer programmes that will ensure you cope with the pressure of being a first year at the University. These programmes include *FYE Orientation*, *Peer Leader Development*, *Tutorship and Mentorship*, *Readers are Leaders (Reading Club)*, and *Computer Literacy*. Activities covered by the programmes listed above include:

- Coping with formative and summative assessments (tests, examinations, and other related assessments).
- Adjusting and thriving at university.
- Life coaching.

Your first year at the University is a big adjustment, so it makes sense to talk to someone who can offer advice based on their experience and understanding of the university environment. The Teaching and Learning Centre has mentorship programmes in place. Mentors are trained senior students who can help you adjust to academic life and refer you to areas where you can find more support you may require.

The Teaching and Learning Centre will support you until you complete your degree.

All the best!

#Activate#Connect#Reflect!!!

KNOW YOUR CAMPUSES

KWADLANGEZWA CAMPUS



Caption1: KwaDlangezwa Main Campus

HOW TO MOVE AROUND YOUR CAMPUSES

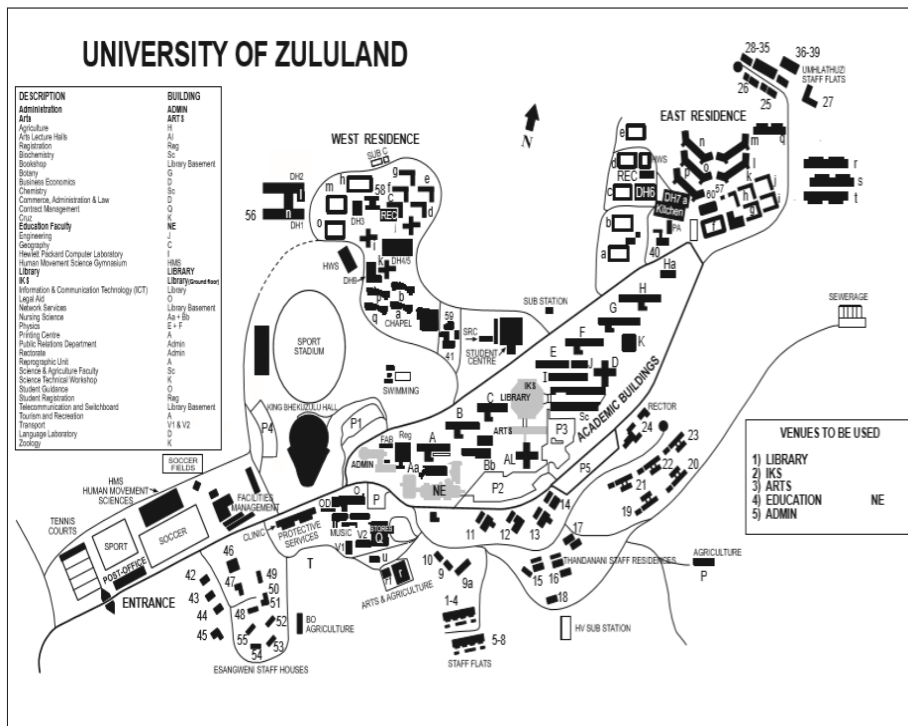


Diagram 1: KwaDlangezwa campus map

RICHARDSBAY CAMPUS

RICHARDSBAY CAMPUS



Caption2: Richards Bay Campus Building



Diagram 1: Richardsbay campus map

FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE PROGRAMMES (FYE)
#Activate#Connect#Reflect

What is FYE?

The **First-Year Experience** (FYE) programme bridges the high school and university gap. The programme provides a support structure to empower and equip first-year students. In addition, the FYE programme helps first-year students transition from high school to university. FYE comprises both curricular and extra-curricular activities.

Why is FYE important?

Literature has shown that students who perform well in the first year are more likely to stay at university and succeed. FYE seeks to manage the school-university transition. Hence, we encourage you to take full advantage of the programme to enhance your performance and university experience.

Programmes offered:

- FYE Orientation
- Peer Leader Development
- FYE Living and Learning
- Tutorship and Mentorship
- Readers are Leaders (Reading Club)
- Computer Literacy

For more information regarding the above programmes, visit the Teaching and Learning Centre at Thandanani Complex 12, Office no 18.

FYE ORIENTATION



The FYE Orientation covers an important stage in your life as a First-Year Student (FTENS). Here, you will learn more about the academic and social experience at the University of Zululand.

You need to participate in this programme to get to know the campus and other programmes to ensure that your stay at UNIZULU is memorable. Much of the support you will receive during this period will come from senior students (peers and mentors) and student leaders who can advise you on negotiating this transition.

During this orientation period, the programme will help you find your feet and learn and negotiate your new physical, social, and academic environment.

PEER LEADER DEVELOPMENT



The Peer Leader Development programme will offer you an opportunity to be prepared by senior students. The peer leader is a postgraduate student selected to serve as a mentor for your first-year students. Peer leaders serve as role models and advocates, and they coach, mentor, and are knowledgeable guides to new students during orientation programmes and beyond.

In their role, Peer leaders work collaboratively with other departments to ensure your successful transition at UNIZULU.

The peer leaders will assist and guide you in various ways:

- Ensuring that you are acquainted with the FYE Programmes that are provided.
- To be up to date with the Mentee's academic performance and general well-being.

FYE UNIZULU STUDENT GUIDE

- Refer mentees to various support services offered by the Division of Student Affairs and Student Support Offices.
- Provide academic support through referrals to faculties, departments, and other support services.
- In addition, peer leaders will assist you with academic success strategies, identify on-campus resources and activities, and help you to acclimatize with the UNIZULU community.



Figure 1: Peer Leaders at work during the registration of FTENs

FYE LIVING AND LEARNING



The FYE Living and Learning programme is designed to assist and prepare you in transitioning from high school to university. Adapting to the new academic culture should not be restricted to lecture rooms, laboratories, and libraries. Students need to get involved and participate in experimental learning to improve their motivation and resilience.

Living and learning employs the help of Peer Leaders and Faculty Representatives to link academic and residential programmes. Small groups of peers are formed in the residences. These groups meet after lecture hours.

TUTORSHIP



Tutorship is one of the student academic assistance programmes that increases student performance and retention that will be offered to you by the Teaching and Learning Centre. Tutorials have proved to be an effective way of providing academic and personal support.

How is it offered?

- The programme is offered to all students in the first year.
- Teaching and Learning Centre employs senior students from the same field of study and trains them for tutoring.
- Tutorial sessions are meant to assist students in applying and discussing content related to the module, as delivered in class.
- Tutorial sessions offer regular, peer-facilitated sessions out of class and after lectures, thereby integrating content with learning skills and study strategies.

- The work covered and facilitated in the tutorial sessions is therefore embedded within the context of a particular discipline, which is dependent on the relevant faculty.

Look at how happy are the first-year students after attending a tutorial session!



Figure 2: First Year Students coming from the tutorial class.

MENTORSHIP



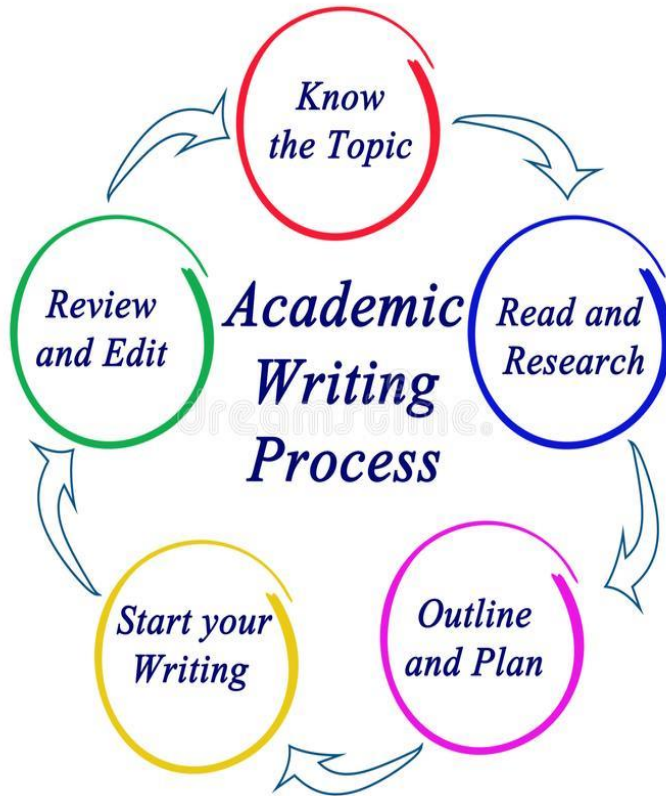
This programme aims to provide a supportive environment that motivates and assists you in developing maximum personal and academic potential.

Mentoring has been found to increase students' academic success, social skills, self-efficacy, and professional development.

What is mentorship?

- The mentorship programme provides a framework for positive interaction between students, mentors, and lecturing staff. More importantly, trained mentors provide leadership and support to students during mentoring sessions.
- These sessions are designed to help connect learners, provide them with information on on-campus resources, give them a sense of belonging and open possibilities of connectedness to the world.

ACADEMIC WRITING



The Writing Centre will advise and support your academic journey at UNIZULU. Writing Centre will assist you with the following services:

- Facilitating a smooth transition from high school into university.
- Supporting students through stages of the academic writing process.
- Developing students to be confident, self-directed, and informed writers.
- Assisting students in achieving greater academic performance.
- Encouraging students to be independent learners and critical thinkers.

You will be assisted at any stage of the writing process. Some of the Writing Services are as follows:

Topic analysis	Referencing, citation, and paraphrasing
Brainstorming	Comprehension
Drafting	Summarizing
Sentence construction	Research: Proposal and thesis writing
Paragraphing	Creative writing
Presenting skills	Word recognition
Reading skills	Writing process
Writing skills	Note-taking
Grammar	Time management
Vocabulary	Cohesion, flow, and argument development
CV and Cover letter writing	Interview Preparation

GLIMPSE OF THE WRITING CENTRE EVENTS

Pop Up:



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INTRODUCING YOUR WRITING CENTRE FACILITATORS

KWADLANGEZWA CAMPUS



Ms A Cebani

Facilitator: Reading Laboratory

CebaniA@unizulu.ac.za
(035) 902 6432



Ms Y Mgobhozi

Facilitator: Humanities and Social Sciences

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(035) 902 6007



Mr T Ntshingila

Facilitator: Faculty of Education

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(035) 902 6007/6432



Ms R Harilall

Facilitator: Faculty of Commerce, Admin and
Law

HarilallR@unizulu.ac.za
(035) 902 6007/6432



Dr N Dlamini

Facilitator: Faculty of Science, Agriculture
and Engineering

DlaminiNG@unizulu.ac.za
(035) 902 6007/6432

How to find our offices:

Venue: DH – 5

E-mail Address: - writingcentre@unizulu.ac.za

Operational hours

Monday to Thursday:

07:30 – 16:00

Friday:

07:30 – 14:30

INTRODUCING YOUR WRITING CENTRE FACILITATOR

RICHARDS BAY CAMPUS FACILITATOR



Ms S Ngcobo

Writing Centre Facilitator: Richards Bay

NgcoboSI@unizulu.ac.za
(035) 902 6966

How to find my office:

Office A2 – 82

Email: writingcentre@unizulu.ac.za

Operational hours:

Monday to Thursday:	07:30 – 16:00
Friday:	07:30 – 14:30

BASIC COMPUTER LITERACY



Historically, it has been observed that students attending UNIZULU are not subjected to any ICT Literacy in their secondary education. This poses a problem to first-year students needing to embrace the ICT tools and technologies they are subjected to in their first year of studies.

Computer Literacy skills focus on the basic ICT skills you will need to function successfully in an academic environment. The aim of including an introductory ICT Literacy workshop during the first-year experience is to introduce you to the various forms of ICTs available during the academic journey.

The training will encompass but is not limited to the following:

Ms. Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Internet Explorer).	Introduction to computers
Advanced Google Search	Moodle
Educational Apps	Social Media Etiquette
Ms Teams	Zoom

ADJUSTING AND THRIVING AT THE UNIVERSITY

ORGANIZE YOURSELF



Post-secondary education is very different from high school. The workload is heavier, and the pace is much faster. Therefore, it is extremely important to remember to stay organized. Have your books, notebooks, pencils, and pens ready!

- Plan your schedule.
- Make a weekly to-do list.
- Prioritize your work.
- Break large tasks into smaller components.
- Set goals and deadlines for projects.
- Avoid perfectionism.
- Honestly, assess the amount of time you waste.

STUDY NOW PARTY LATER

TAKE GOOD NOTES; PAY ATTENTION



You will come across different Professors who have new and different teaching styles. Therefore, finding a note-taking system that works best for you can be challenging. For example, during lectures, information might be revealed that can add value to PowerPoint presentations or the notes posted online.

KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON



Do not stress. It is not the end of the world. You might not get an "A" on that essay you thought was well deserved. You might sleep in too late and miss an 8:00 class. You might miss a social date with your friends. It is okay. It will pass. Life goes on.

Stress will only cause headaches, anxiety, anger, and pimples. Nobody has time for any of that.

FIND A ROUTINE



BORING, RIGHT? WRONG!

Routines are helpful to combat anxiety, anchor you in a new lifestyle, and give you a sense of control. Of course, not every day has to be the same, but try to find a rhythm to your week. That way, you will find time to get to the important stuff - not just the urgent stuff.

Wellness includes many dimensions - academic, physical, spiritual, social, psychological, and financial – try to prioritize a time to address them all.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

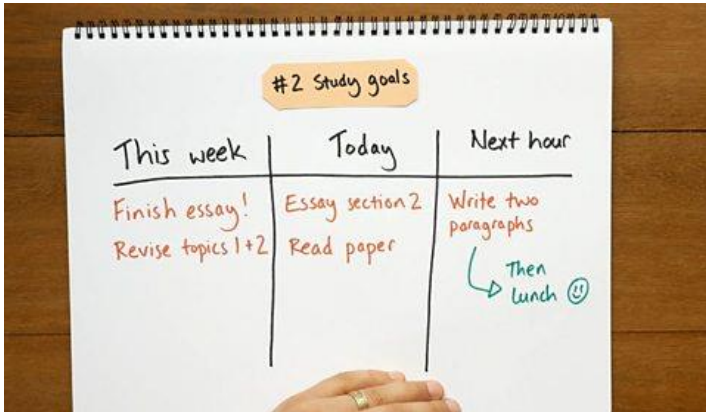


- Sleep is important for health and well-being.
- You need at least **6- 8 hours** of sleep to function at your best
- Rest enough; your brain needs restful sleep to concentrate optimally, regulate mood and energy levels, and also (believe it or not) control your appetite.
- Learn to say **NO** to the many late-night invitations you will receive.

TIME MANAGEMENT



MANAGING YOUR TIME



Dealing with a new environment and keeping on top of your courses can be difficult while coping with different deadlines. However, dropping one or more is easy when juggling all those different balls.

Managing your time is essential for balancing classes, coursework, and relationships. It is a skill that will benefit you during your time at university and after graduating.

1. DIARISE:



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We all have 168 hours a week. Some may say that how you spend this time is up to you. Not really. If you do not complete your assignments, it could affect your final mark, meaning that you have to redo a course. Managing a diary is not only for high-flying execs. Use your diary to schedule those things you have to do first, even if you have to enter times to sleep, wake up or work out.

2. CREATE A TO-DO LIST:

This is one of the best ways to manage what you need to do. Whether you make a daily or weekly list, you need to write down what you must do.

- Writing it down makes it concrete – out of your head and onto paper.
- Tick tasks off as you get them done (this feels good!)
- If some tasks have not been completed, allocate another time for them. Make sure you write this down, too, do not just think about it!
- Keep your lists up-to-date.

3. CREATE A PLAN

Study Schedule (Semester SPRING / Year 13 - 14)

Scheduling tips

Monday May 26	Tuesday May 27	Wednesday May 28	Thursday May 29	Friday May 30	Saturday May 31	Sunday Jun 1
	<i>Organic papers</i>			<i>Biochem quiz</i>	<i>Work on study sheets for paper revision</i>	
<i>Jun 2</i>	<i>Jun 3</i>	<i>Jun 4</i>	<i>Jun 5</i>	<i>Jun 6</i>	<i>Jun 7</i>	<i>Jun 8</i>
<i>Bio quiz</i>		<i>Organic paper</i>	<i>Write up organic essays for test</i>	<i>LAST DAY OF SCHOOL!</i> <i>day off!</i>	<i>Study</i> - CH 6 - CH 7 - CH 8 - CH 9	<i>Organic theory, inorganic material</i> - Bio 2 - Chem - Phys
<i>Jun 9</i>	<i>Jun 10</i>	<i>Jun 11</i>	<i>Jun 12</i>	<i>Jun 13</i>	<i>Jun 14</i>	<i>Jun 15</i>
<i>Physiology</i> - CH 14 - CH 15 - CH 16 + practice problems	<i>Physiology</i> - CH 17 - CH 18 + practice problems + revision abstract concepts	<i>Reproductive</i> - CH 19 - CH 20 - CH 21 + CH 22 at CH 18	<i>Reproductive</i> - CH 22 at CH 18 - CH 23 + CH 24 material	<i>Exam 2</i> - CH 9 - CH 10 - CH 11	<i>Exam 2</i> - CH 12 - CH 13	<i>Review exam essays for 2 hours</i> <i>day off!</i>
<i>Jun 16</i>	<i>Jun 17</i>	<i>Jun 18</i>	<i>Jun 19</i>	<i>Jun 20</i>	<i>Jun 21</i>	<i>Jun 22</i>
<i>Human Bio 2 Final</i> <i>Topic Revision</i>	<i>Range from, Organ. tissues</i> + <i>Practice</i>	<i>Biochem Final</i> <i>Topic Revision</i>	<i>Reproductive problems</i> + <i>Exam papers</i> + <i>Revision</i>	<i>Physics Final</i> <i>Topic Revision</i>	<i>day off!</i>	<i>Review for Physics exam study strategy</i>
<i>Jun 23</i>	<i>Jun 24</i>	<i>Jun 25</i>	<i>Jun 26</i>	<i>Jun 27</i>	<i>Jun 28</i>	<i>Jun 29</i>
<i>Psych Final</i> <i>Topic Revision</i>	<i>SUMMER BEGINS!</i>					

You will have lots to get through. Draw a study plan before exams start, and do the same for your assignments. Enting these priorities in your diary are pointless if you do not plan for them. Small steps are always easier than big ones, so break work up into chunks that work for you. For example, if you have an assignment, you will need time to research, compile a draft and probably rework the draft, so plan for these different stages.

4. REFLECT:



Ask yourself, 'Am I spending my time on the right things?'. Does the value you place on an activity warrant the amount of time you devote to it? You may love to go clubbing and do other extra mural activities, but when these activities impact your time on studying or assignments, you may have to make some tough cuts. These may only be temporary until your 'crunch time' passes.

5. CUT THE CHAT:



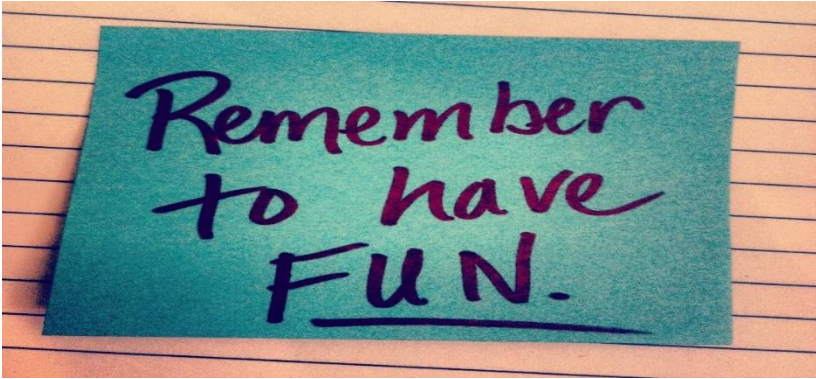
Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, SMS, and the regular old phone call can all be distractions. So limit yourself to the essentials. While Twitter's great for keeping up-to-date on what Babes Wodumo is doing, sadly, it does not count as essential. If you cannot bear to break with these tools, give yourself a communications hour, for example, from 8pm to 9pm.

6. DELEGATE



Delegating can play a role in group work. Group members can assume responsibility for different tasks, so one member does not carry the load. Delegating can also involve asking for help. For example, you may have a friend or mentor who has completed the course and can offer tips and advice to save time and unnecessary stress.

7. HAVE FUN:



Take deep breaths and be kind to yourself. Once you have devoted time to a task, taking a breather is okay. See a movie on a Tuesday night, go for a jog or sleep in on a Sunday morning.

WORKING IN GROUPS



Being asked to work in a group can challenge the best of us. Since it relies on teamwork, you have to depend on your fellow students, and you may not know them that well. So we have all heard that communication is key. This is true for group work, but the clarity of communication would be an even better description of the skill you will need as a group. This means being clear about your goals, duties, and capabilities.

a) Be a good listener.

Pay close attention to what your group members say and avoid the urge to interrupt. Please encourage others to speak up and share their own opinion. If you are unsure about their opinion, try to relay what you have understood back to them even after they have expressed themselves. Start the sentence with, "So what you are saying is..."

b) Establish a common goal.

Take a few minutes to go over the purpose of the group. If the purpose is unclear, try to brainstorm a shared objective.

c) Create a timeline.

If your group has to meet regularly, create a timeline for completing specific dates. Add deadlines to these dates. Finally, list what the group should achieve by each date.

d) Divide and conquer.

If you are working on a big assignment, break it into smaller, more manageable parts. Tasks can be assigned to individual members of the group or even smaller sub-groups. Everyone in the group has their strengths and weaknesses. Have an honest conversation about what each person thinks they can contribute.

e) Restate your objectives.

At the beginning of each meeting, discuss your goals for the session. At the end of the meeting, discuss what you have achieved and what needs to be done before the next meeting.

f) Watch out for 'groupthink.'

When working in a group, you could be tempted to fall in line with what the rest of the group is saying. However, do not be afraid to voice your opinion, even if you disagree with the majority.

g) Be willing to compromise.

Differences of opinion can arise when you are working in a group. This is a normal and healthy part of group work. While it is good to voice your opinion, compromising for the sake of the group does not make you a loser. It is better to sort out conflict immediately so the group can function.

h) Exchange contact info.

Compile a list of everyone's cellphone numbers and email addresses, and make sure everyone has a copy.

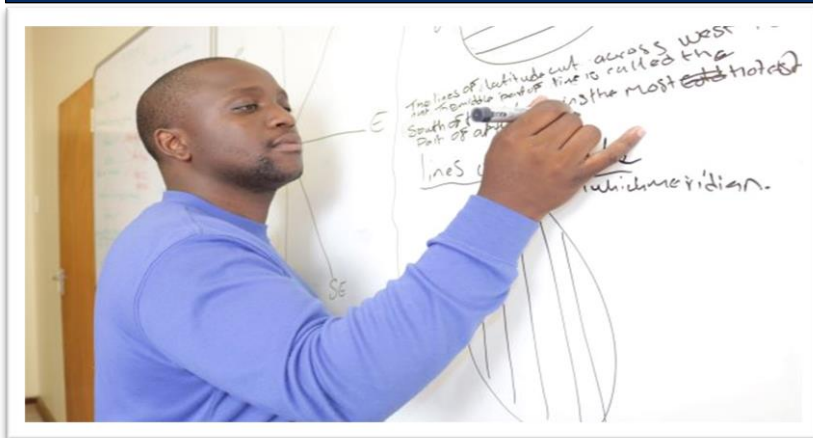
i) Find a regular place to meet.

If you are looking for a quiet place to meet, consider booking one of the study rooms in the library. Speak to a librarian about making a booking.



Figure 3: UNIZULU Library

TAKING LECTURE NOTES



TIPS FOR TAKING NOTES:

Sitting in a lecture should not be a passive experience. It involves listening to what is said, understanding the information, taking key concepts away, and ensuring that you can talk or write about these issues later. Most information passed on during lectures will not be found in your textbooks. The lecturer may use examples and explanations and offer tips you will not find anywhere else. This is why it is important to attend lectures and take good notes.

1. Try to pre-read

If you know that a particular topic will be covered in a lecture, do some reading beforehand. Then, you'll learn a bit of the content the lecturer will cover, making it easier to follow.

2. Do not transcribe

Don't take down every word the lecturer says; instead, aim for key points. Try and look for interesting examples your lecturer uses, points we pause or use repetition, more straightforward explanations of complex topics, and important authors or readings they mention.

3. Do it in your style

Do not worry about your grammar or spelling while taking lecture notes. You can always correct your spelling when you read over your notes. Instead, try and use your own words as far as possible. It will make your notes easier to study.

A. Mapping

Mapping is a note-taking method that relates each fact or idea to another point or idea. It is a more graphic representation of concepts because you visually illustrate relationships. It is most helpful when lecture content is heavy but well-organized. For example, if your lecturer is talking about a topic like extrasensory perceptions and breaking it up into components, your map could look like this:

EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTIONS



B. Charting Method

Notice that the lecturer follows a very distinct format, like outlining the characteristics of different periods. You may be able to follow by drawing columns with appropriate headings.

For instance, if your lecturer is discussing the Rwandan Genocide, your chart could be like this:

PERIOD	GROUPS	DEATHS
1994	Tutsis & Hutus	500 000 to 1 mil

C. The Outlining Method

This method can also be called the dash or indent method. General information will be further to the left of your page, with specific points indented to the right. You can indicate levels of importance/specificity through the indent. It helps study because you can cover the indented information and ask yourself questions about the main point.

EXTRASENSORY PERCEPTION

-def.: means of perceiving without sense organs

-3 kinds:

*Telepathy: sending messages

*Clairvoyance: forecasting the future

* Psychokinesis: perceiving events external to situations.

PREPARING FOR TESTS AND EXAMS



Many students who are new to university experience stress because university life can bring new experiences. You are meeting and living with new people, becoming accustomed to new ways of learning, and experiencing the stress caused by tests and exams.

1. However, stress is also the body's warning mechanism – it is a signal that helps you prepare for something important that's about to happen. So stress is a natural experience. However, managing it is important to avoid interfering with your learning or performance.
2. Stress can appear in different ways. It can be physical (you could experience headaches, nausea, faintness, problems sleeping, experience stomach aches), it could be emotional (you could feel irritable, get frustrated or angry quickly, or feel fearful), it could be behavioral (where you are constantly fidgeting, pacing, abusing substances or you are easily distracted) and sometimes it can be more cognitive which means it affects your thinking and

reasoning. For example, you may experience difficulty concentrating, or you could experience symptoms like 'going blank' even though you have studied. So, it is important to recognise the signs of anxiety in yourself.

3. When you are under stress, your body releases the hormone adrenalin, which prepares it for danger (known as the fight or flight reaction).

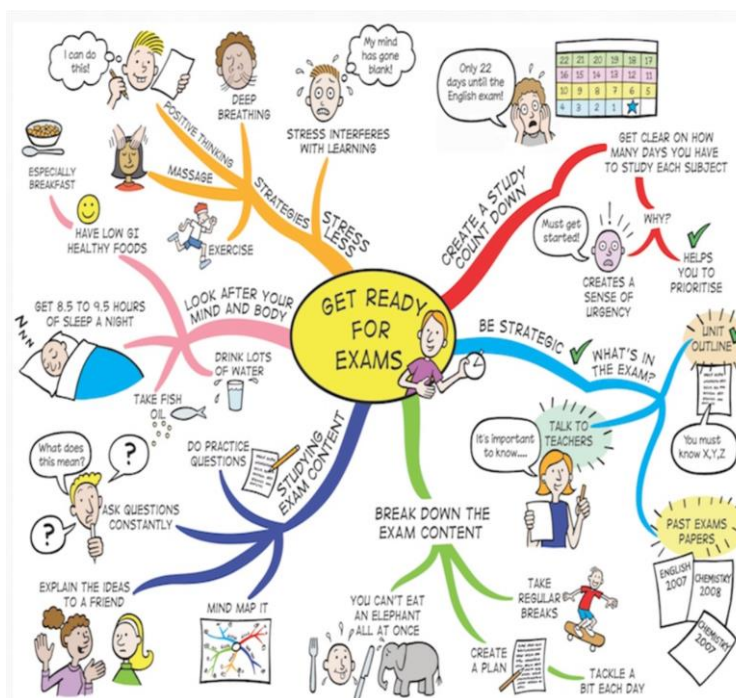
This also causes physical symptoms like sweating, a pounding heart, and rapid breathing.

- Focusing on the wrong things fuels anxiety or fear. For example, in a test situation, asking yourself questions like 'What if the test is too hard?' or 'What if I forget everything I know?' only fuels anxiety.
- A lack of confidence or fear of failure also contributes to anxiety. If you are unsure of academic or emotional things, ask for help.
- A fear of making mistakes can also be a contributing factor. Sometimes these pressures can come from your family. Often, if your self-esteem is tied to the academic task, you focus on your chances of failing instead of preparing.
- A lack of preparation can contribute to stress. So make sure you have prepared well in advance.

BE WELL PREPARED FOR TESTS AND EXAMS

During test and exam time, create a study calendar for the month.

- Indicate when your deadlines/tests/exams are.
- Then look at the time between and plan how you will allocate the studying for your specific subjects.
- Work backward - from the last day of the month to the beginning. Knowing how much you need to do and how much time you have to do it can reduce anxiety!



HAVE A DEDICATED STUDY SPACE

This is often overlooked as a contributing factor to poor time management. Still, it is very important that without a dedicated space that your mind associates with studying, you are more likely to waste time without realising it.

- Determine a free place from most distractions (socialising, TV, cell phone, laptop, etc.)
- You should be able to maximise concentration in this space.
- Ensure you have all the equipment and material you need for your study session.
- It does not always have to be quiet, but it needs to be where you focus and study best (this differs from person to person).
- Remember, your bed will not be one of these spaces! Unfortunately, we often associate bed with rest and sleep – not studying.



Figure 4: Dedicated study place

HOW TO KEEP CALM DURING TESTS AND EXAMS?

Sometimes when we are supposed to be focusing on the test or exam, many other things can come to mind. Sometimes we also become distracted by negative thoughts (e.g., I do not remember anything), which may enter your mind during a moment of panic. Challenge any negative thoughts (e.g., I'm going to fail) with more positive, realistic thoughts (e.g., I have studied all the work I needed to study).

It is also very common to worry about the impact of your performance on your family and what they expect from you. It would help if you reminded yourself that you would think about them **AFTER** your paper in a test or exam situation. Worrying about these things will take the valuable time you need to focus on your paper.

1. Prepare well in advance. Keep up every day if you can, but do not judge yourself harshly if you do not. Avoid last-minute cramming. Do not go without sleep the night before.
2. Know the time and place of the test and what you need to bring. Be on time, neither too early nor too late, with supplies. Do not rush.
3. Do not talk about the test with classmates immediately beforehand, especially if you know this sort of thing raises your anxiety level.
4. Read over the test and plan your approach. For example, ascertain point values per part, time limits for each section, which question you will start with to boost your confidence, etc.
5. Do not hesitate to ask for clarification from the professor, teaching assistant, or proctor if you have questions about instructions, procedures, etc.
6. Be clear about your job. A test is a thinking task, and your job during an exam is to think as clearly as possible based on your

current knowledge. So focus on your job (the thinking process) and practice letting go of what you do not control (the grading).

7. Reduce anxiety with activity. If your mind goes blank and you can't think of anything to write, go on to another question or another part of the test. For example, on an essay question, jot down anything you can recall on scratch paper to stimulate your memory and get your mind working.
8. During the test, relax physically, especially if you are not thinking well or have tight muscles. Pause, put your test down, and take several slow, deep breaths. Tense and release your muscles. Do this in particular if you are worrying excessively about one problem, not reading carefully, and are unable to recall information you know.
9. Pay attention to the test, not to others. Do not waste time wondering how other people are doing—keep calm during tests and exams.

USE POSITIVE SELF-TALK AND COPING STATEMENTS

How we "talk" to ourselves is very important in determining how we feel and conduct ourselves in a situation. For example, if you are going to sit in an exam and have self-doubt or think about how you will fail, this will not ease any anxiety you may feel. Instead, it would be best if you repeated statements to yourself such as:

- "I have prepared and must just show them what I know."
- "Relax and work through everything carefully."
- "I'm going to try my best."
- "Right now, I only need to focus on my paper, not on my future fears."

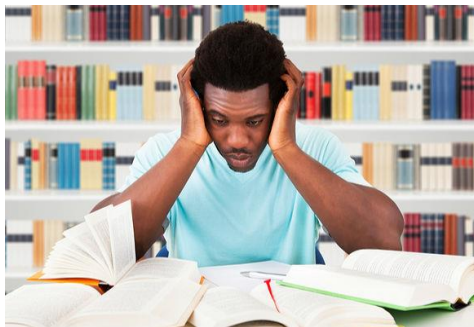
Remember to be "kind" to yourself by using positive self-talk – advise yourself in the same way you would recommend a friend in the same situation.

REMEMBER!

- Be realistic about how much time you have or spend on the different aspects of your life.
- Plan for the next day, the night before.
- Writing it down helps take it out of your head!
- Have a dedicated study space with minimal distractions.
- If you get distracted by something you need to do, make a note of it (unless it is an emergency) and attend to it later.
- Set definite start and finish times – begin and end as planned.
- Allocate any unfinished work to another time – do not ignore it!
- Find your own pace and do what works for you.
- Review all of your work – your class notes, assignments, and readings.
- Postpone unnecessary activities until the work is done!
- Identify resources to assist you – study buddies and study groups, tutors and lecturers, and academics. Then, use your free time wisely!
- Reward yourself with things you enjoy – spending time with friends, social media, fun activities, sports, etc.



HOW CAN YOU MANAGE STRESS?



- **Be prepared!** If you are worried about a test or exam or an upcoming essay, preparation is first. This could be a plan for tackling the task when you work on it and how much time you will devote to it.
- Remember to ask for help if there is something you do not understand. For example, you could chat with a tutor, visit the Writing Centre, or use forms of academic support like the hot seats in your faculty. If issues affect your time at university, you can also talk to your student advisor or mentor.
- **Try to be healthy.** Our lives can get very busy. Sometimes you have to schedule exercise or set a definite time for bed.
- **Make sure you get enough sleep.** Students often try to pull all-nighters before a test or exam, which can negatively affect their performance. Eat a healthy diet. While the occasional burger or pizza is okay, junk food can also cause stress.
- **Take care of yourself.** Take the time to do things you enjoy, whether a movie night or making time for your favourite society. This may not be easy during exam time. Sometimes you will have to explain to your society or club that you need to take the time to study and THIS IS OKAY!

IMPROVING CONCENTRATION, ATTENTION, AND FOCUS

- Avoid distractors such as Email, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. Keep these out of your reach when you need to focus!
- Reward yourself for concentration by checking your social media accounts, browsing the net, or taking a break.
- Take regular short breaks – to keep refreshing your mind.

Even though you may sometimes lapse into old habits of distraction, keep trying these methods to improve your concentration level.

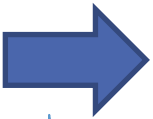
University studies and requirements can be overwhelming at times. Stress and anxiety can make it challenging to manage the demands of your course. However, you can do a couple of things to help yourself.

TIPS!

- Understand the course requirements and what is expected of you.
- Learn effective study skills.
- Think about how the work fits into the bigger picture of the module or course.
- Make connections between things you already know
- this will promote a positive attitude and develop your motivation to continue.
- Consult with your lecturers, tutors, and other supportive university resources.
- Manage your time and plan all of your work accordingly.

IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT

- Make sure you study in a comfortable area and sit in a comfortable position (but not in bed!), as this will ensure you are productive.
- Your study area should be distraction-free! This is because it can take up to 15 minutes to regain focus after a distraction.
- Ensure you have all the material you need for the study session.
- Do not multi-task and avoid too much sensory input, such as playing background music or the TV while trying to focus, as this can become quite distracting.
- Close the door to avoid distractions from outside or passers-by.



REMEMBER

- Learning how to concentrate and focus fully is a skill that needs practice.
- The longest time one can concentrate is about 45 minutes, after which you DEFINITELY need to take a break.
- Look out for our other tip sheets on topics such as:
 - ✓ Limiting Academic Stress
 - ✓ Keeping calm during tests and exams
 - ✓ What's next? After tests and exams
 - ✓ Motivation
 - ✓ Stress relief
 - ✓ Time Matters

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF POOR CONCENTRATION?



- Lack of sleep
- Poor nutrition
- Feeling low/depressed
- Negative thoughts and feelings about your studies
- Negative feelings about yourself
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Distractions
- Difficulty managing time
- Using alcohol/drugs

Improving concentration relies on addressing some of these causes and other obstacles you may identify. However, concentration is a skill that can be developed and improved!

Try some of these tips to improve your concentration, attention, and focus:

SELF CARE!

EXAMINE YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE

It is harder to concentrate when upset, anxious, or worried. For example, anxiety about failure, financial problems, work-related problems, family pressures, expectations, etc., can impede your concentration.

KNOW WHEN YOU CAN CONCENTRATE BEST

We all know that it is difficult to concentrate when you are tired.

You may also find it easier to concentrate or focus on your studies at certain times of the day. Therefore:

- Tackle the most difficult tasks when you are mentally and physically fresh.
- Find the times of day when you work best. Studying each day simultaneously can help you frame this time as “study time.”
- Decide which tasks require low and high attention – alternate between them to maintain focus. Do not set vague goals like “I am going to study all day on Sunday,” as this can be discouraging. Instead, clear goals will help you focus on the specific task and provide important feedback on your progress.
- Prioritise tasks and plan your work – ensure you know what needs to be done and how you will do it.
- Focus on one task at a time – there is nothing worse than trying to divide your attention among several tasks.

DEAL WITH DISTRACTIONS AND CLEAR YOUR MIND

We often find it easy to be distracted by many other things, which leads to procrastination and lack of focus. Deal with this by applying the following steps:

- Create a list and jot down things on your mind before you start studying. It is easier to put thoughts aside if you are sure you will not forget them. Furthermore, add to this list anything that distracts you while studying. Then, try to catch yourself before your thoughts wander.
- Use this simple “BE HERE NOW” strategy, which will help you refocus your attention, especially when you start drifting off. So say to yourself, “BE HERE NOW,” and go over what you did to refocus.

- Schedule worrying or thinking time. Keep an appointment with yourself at this special worrying or thinking time to focus on the distracting thoughts of the day. This means that you will need to schedule a time to attend to your worries and concerns, especially when you start losing focus while studying

ACCEPT MISTAKES

- At university, you will have to learn to accept mistakes. No matter how much you plan and prepare, certain mistakes are unavoidable, but moving on from them is important. A bad result in one area signals what you need to work on. Remember that this does not necessarily mean that you need to work harder. It could mean that you need to work differently (pause for emphasis). Experts at the Writing Centre, tutors, mentors, and Student Wellness counselors can help you with this.



ABBREVIATIONS

	UNIZULU abbreviations
SSD	STUDENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PSD	PROTECTIVE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PP&W	PHYSICAL PLANNING AND WORKS
BZ	KING BHEKUZULU HALL
DH	DINING HALL
AL	ARTS LECTURE HALLS (In the Arts Building)
LT	LECTURE THEATRE (Separate Building)
SC	SCIENCE LECTURE HALLS (In the Science Building)
NE	NEW EDUCATION LECTURE HALLS (In the faculty of Education Building)
FAB	FINANCIAL AID BUREAU
ICT	INFORMATION COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT
STU	STUDENT CENTRE
CHAPEL	WALTER GCABASHE CHAPEL
TLC	TEACHING AND LEARNING CENTRE
FYE	FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE
FTENS	FIRST-TIME ENTERING STUDENTS

WORDS USED AT SCHOOL VS WORDS USED AT THE UNIVERSITY

Words used at school	Words used at University
Secondary education	Tertiary education
School	University
Principal	Rector or Vice-Chancellor
Teacher	Lecturer
Subject	Module (Department of...)
Titles such as Mrs and Mr	Titles such as Dean (Academic head of a Faculty) Head of Department or HOD Professor; Doctor; Ms; Mrs; Mr
Class	Lecture Seminar Tutorial
Classroom	Lecture theatre room
Homework	Assignments
School grounds	Campus
Year Mark	Duly Performed (DP)
Grades	Levels
Period	Lecture

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CLINIC	(035) 902 6162
HIV/ AIDS	(035) 902 6158
PROTECTIVE SERVICES (PSD)	(035) 902 6940
STUDENT COUNSELLING	(035) 902 6342
STUDENT WITH DISABILITY	(035) 902 6324
WRITING CENTRE	KwaDlangezwa Campus (035) 902 6482/6432 Richardsbay Campus (035) 902 6966

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Prepared at:
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