**What factors contribute to student success at university?[[1]](#footnote-1)**

The modern university serves a wide range of needs in society[[2]](#footnote-2). In 2018, Australian universities had just over 1.5 million students in full-time and part-time study (Australian Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020)[[3]](#footnote-3)[[4]](#footnote-4). These students were from a variety of backgrounds and had a wide range of personal goals. Traditionally, gaining a degree can be viewed as a rite of passage for young people, but in the modern world, it may be a means to an end for those who simply wish to obtain a qualification for employment purposes. In both cases, however, the challenges of dealing with an extended period of high-level study must be overcome, including becoming familiar with the expectations of the university, and its modes of study and assessment. In addition to these external factors, the successful student needs to develop personal characteristics or study skills[[5]](#footnote-5). This assignment will discuss three key factors which can contribute to or impair a student’s effectiveness during a degree program: motivation, time management, and effectively utilising university resources[[6]](#footnote-6).

The issue of motivation[[7]](#footnote-7) is important for all university students[[8]](#footnote-8). Motivation can be defined as that which causes a person to want to repeat an action or behaviour[[9]](#footnote-9). In an educational context, this refers to the idea that students need some kind of internal or external reason or drive to continue studying. Theoretically, these constructs are known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Jones, 2009)[[10]](#footnote-10). Students who are intrinsically motivated are driven by an interest in the topic itself, and have a strong desire for self-development. They also have a strong sense of self-belief and demonstrate autonomy; in other words, they feel in control of their own learning and they believe they possess the skills necessary to improve. Instead of focussing on simply achieving a good score, they are interested in mastering a particular skill. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to external factors such as rewards or punishments. The individuals are focussed on a specific outcome[[11]](#footnote-11). Competition is an example of an external motivator, because it focusses on the specific outcome of winning, rather than enjoying the activity itself (Smith, 2019).  Being motivated contributes to student success[[12]](#footnote-12).

In addition[[13]](#footnote-13) to motivation, successful students also demonstrate effective time management skills. This can partly be done by creating a study schedule and, in the lead up to exams, a realistic revision timetable. Mature and external students may have work and family commitments which impact on their studies and, for this reason, time management is of particular importance to them.  At high school, the academic day is clearly structured, which allows students to quickly become familiar with the timetable. In addition, students generally move from class to class as a group, ensuring that the classes can start on time with all students present. This level of control and structure is not provided at university, since university students are expected to behave as independent adults who can manage their own time. This means that the individual needs to create his or her own timetable and attend lectures and any other academic activities (such as seminars or tutorials) by themselves. A study schedule can assist students throughout the semester by recording lecture times, exam dates and assignment deadlines. Leading up to the exam period, a revision schedule can be created which ensures that preparation for the examination is completed.

However, in the case of adult learners and those not based on the campus, the issue of time management is particularly important. For these[[14]](#footnote-14) students[[15]](#footnote-15), it can be challenging to balance the needs of work responsibilities, family duties and study. Some of these commitments are fixed, such as hours of work or picking up children from school. However, there will always been unexpected problems or obligations to fulfil which put pressure on an individual’s time. Mature and external students have a particular need, therefore, to use their limited time in the most effective way possible. While it is often ideal to have consistent study hours, these students may have to deal with studying at inconvenient times of the day or having a variable study schedule. As with more traditional students, however, the value of a study schedule remains the same.

The third key factor[[16]](#footnote-16) which will lead to success in higher education is the student’s ability to effectively utilise the resources available at university. These resources may be found directly within the unit that the student is taking, in which case they may be created with the direct involvement of the lecturer, or they may form part of a broader range of support services for all members of the university community. In terms of resources within the unit of study, in addition to course content and assessment information, the lecturer may provide extra readings, videos or other resources to enhance the student’s understanding of the themes of the unit. It is also common to find links to platforms for interaction between students and staff such as discussion boards. However, in the modern university, the student experience extends far beyond the course of study. The library provides tools to develop effective research and reading skills. Academic support is provided by a dedicated service whose objective is to empower students to develop their own study skills. Information and Technology and Careers support are further examples of such services. With regard to health and safety, universities provide medical clinics, counselling services and security. All of these are designed to provided a safe, respectful community within which students can thrive.

In conclusion[[17]](#footnote-17), although the student needs to become familiar with processes and requirements outside of their control (such as university admission or assessment procedures), there are several important factors or characteristics which the successful student needs to be aware of. These include an understanding of the role of motivation over extended periods, the value of using time effectively, and an understanding of how and when to utilise the wide range of university resources available to students. By adopting effective skills and maintaining a positive mindset, the student should not only successfully attain his or her degree but benefit from the full range of experiences available to them in the modern university.

References

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/2018\_student\_data\_infographic.pdf

1. Title – linked to the question [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Orientation to the Topic – a broad statement that introduces the reader to the topic. The role of the background is to contextualise the discussion, answering the questions “What are we going to discuss?” and “Why are we going to discuss it?” There are a range of strategies that can help you do this:

   1. Use a statistic
   2. Use a citation
   3. Explain how we got to this point (the historical perspective)
   4. Explain why we are talking about this topic (the relevance of the topic)
   5. Give a definition
   6. Introduce the theory that relates to the topic

   [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Fact on Topic – this highlights the importance of the topic. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Reference – this needs to be in the style you are sing and gives credibility to your writing [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Writer’s position (“positional **thesis statement**”) – This statement gives the writer’s view on the topic. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Structure of essay (“overview thesis statement”) – This statement explains the structure of the essay. It prepares the reader for how you are going to approach the topic. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The topic of the first paragraph as stated in outline [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Introduces the point – (topic sentence) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Define or clarify the point [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Develop and support the point (use reliable evidence to support) [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Add support of argument, alternative views or contrasts as a way of evidencing critical thinking.

    There are five kinds of support: logical reasoning, examples, statistics, citations and speculation (a kind of logical reasoning). Citations commonly are used either as front position or end position in the sentence. Ensure you follow the appropriate referencing style when using citations.

    Theoretically, these constructs are known as intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Jones, 2009).

    Brown (2011) argues that mature and external students have a particular need, therefore, to use their limited time in the most effective way possible.

    Here are some other examples of how to integrate a citation:

    A study by White (2009) found that….

    These findings were supported by a study by White (2009), who found that….

    Several studies identified motivation as a factor (Jones, 2009; Monk, 2004; Suarez, 2007). [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Conclude the point (optional) [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Use linking words as a way of creating coherence. Linking words (e.g. therefore/consequently). Although there are no rules about how many linking words you can use, we advise you to be judicious – overuse can make your writing feel unnatural. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Another way of adding coherence is referrents (e.g. this/that/these/those) [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Unity of voice (i.e. consistently using one voice). In the examples, you will see that the plural form ‘students’ is consistently used [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Noun phrases and time phrases (e.g. instead of ‘Firstly’ you can use ‘The first issue/point’ and instead of ‘Then/Next’, you can use ‘Once this is completed/done’) [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. There are three common strategies in a conclusion:

    1. Paraphrase the thesis statement
    2. Summarize and key issues
    3. Provide a closing comment. This last strategy may require you to discuss the implications of your discussion, bring the topic back into its broader context, or point the way forward.

    In conclusion, although the student needs to become familiar with processes and requirements outside of their control (such as university admission or assessment procedures), there are several important factors or characteristics which the successful student needs to be aware of. These include an understanding of the role of motivation over extended periods, the value of using time effectively, and an understanding of how and when to utilise the wide range of university resources available to students. By adopting effective skills and maintaining a positive mindset, the student should not only successfully attain his or her degree but benefit from the full range of experiences available to them in the modern university. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)