Crib Sheet on Preparing for University:

1) Take care with your reasons for attending...if you study just for a job, then study itself, perhaps too easily, just becomes a chore. Certainly, attend for gaining a qualification/profession, but, be sure to study other subjects of interest, for your own pleasure and education, then, an amenable profession will be a handy spin-off. **Take care of your education, and your job or profession will take care of itself.** The best libraries are Uni libraries, and there is always a great ambient mix of brains, open lectures, and other Disciplines, as part of University intellectual life. **All value for money, plus Degree(s), re any Student Loan….!**

2) Certainly, best to have a year or so of work after leaving school, but, do keep up with reading, discussion, and personal research, so that you continue to maintain your concentration span, and this also applies to long holidays during the actual study span. *Useful in working life, and after, as well….*

3) Always best to actually write notes, and then just type your assignments for legible assessment. The act of writing notes, precis, et all, will make for better detailed memory of your studies. Concentration span, always, **maintain your concentration span**.....and ill-considered use of electronic media, especially social media, will always be deleterious to this end......

4) Go to all lectures, labs, field trips and/or tutorials, and, do not be shy, get under your lecturers'/tutors' noses, but, never actually up them. Keep the company of fellow students who are interested in what they are doing, avoid the company of those always on the phone or social media, plus, good quality tutorials and peer discussions will bring worthwhile results at exam time. Find a similarly motivated study-buddy in each of your chosen courses, who can take good notes, if ever needed. Remember that Uni should be a good test of your abilities for dealing with the outside world, whether full-time or part-time, so, always meet your challenges and deadlines, instead of ducking them. *Note that mature students will always have a head start, even if age means more revision..!*

5) Accommodation….avoid halls of residence, find a quiet flat, with similarly inclined students, or, best of all, a bedsit/studio where you can be undisturbed, and, your study desk is always just as you left it, plus, your hours are always your own…. Be ahead of the rush, to secure your accommodation, if required, whenever and wherever possible, for optimal peace of mind whilst studying. Walk to uni via a park is a great start to a study day, so, plan for a residence with this in mind,

6) Be aware, in the Southern Hemisphere, that the middle of the second year, being winter, is the main dropping-out hazard, and, SAD may well be the reason, so, re-affirm personal study efforts, motivation, and curiosity....plus, make sure your mental life is free of any distracting elements.

7) Be sure to eat properly, sleep well, and take adequate exercise. Join a Club such as hiking, mountaineering, canoeing, or caving, for physical fitness, change of environment, and, to be in the company of motivated and interesting people. If you are not serious about your study, with subsequent repeats, or even dropping out, the modern 'monetised' Uni has your money, regardless, and, there are no refunds, beyond initial latitudes for course changes. The Student Experience and Social Clubs are seldom or never about intellectual motivation or achievement, and, your own University experience should never be regarded as just attending a Kindergarten Finishing School...

8) Extra money may be needed during study, thus, in that case, a job on campus is first choice, to avoid wasted travel time, and also, to remain in a familiar intellectual environment. Next best choice would be an outside part-time position that reflects your post-Uni career plans.

9) In the digital age, your IT equipment need not be expensive, **both laptops and PCs do not have to be all new, especially if you employ Linux as an OS.**   Staying off the crest of the IT wave this way will conserve $$$.   Drives are swappable between most major Linux systems, and, Linux OSs themselves are not resource-hungry. Just ensure that your University, and respective Departments, all are aware of, and technically support, Linux OSs. See also *http://nofrillstech.net/MiniLinuxFactfile.pdf* Just remember, as well, whatever OS and system you do propose to utilise, re data security and safety, **if not backed up 3x, then not backed up at all.**

10) **For those who intend to be post-grads,** and want an early start on the skills and protocols that will be required, including those needed for studying and researching in this new digital age, the following notes, contributed by a PhD graduate, will be of great interest and value, viz:

Think about the software tools you will use to take notes and write assignments with an eye towards how you should do '**backups**' and '**version control**'. **Backups** are more to deal with loss due to hardware failure, and your files not being accessible on your primary platform of choice, in contrast, **version control** is more about protecting you from yourself, *eg, accidentally deleting a couple of pages from an important assignment but not immediately noticing this.*

Note that a lot of software, used for '**backing up to the cloud',** has basic version control functionality, in that it automatically keeps a number of older versions of files that you can revert back to, if necessary. However, there is also software involved that specifically handles **version control**, (most designed with coders in mind), and it can have a lot of nifty functions like comparing two versions of a file, and finding the differences.   A lot of this additional functionality **assumes the files are simple text files,** so, if you think you might want to make use of this specific function, think ahead, and save your files in an appropriate format. For example, if you write up notes in LibreOffice or MS Word, etc. **save them as .rtf (rich text format)** rather than the native .odf or .docx format.

Specific to higher level research, you also need to think about how to keep track of references, notes on other people's papers, and, citations for a large numbers of papers. An Open Source program, **Zotero,** is highly recommended for this purpose: **https://www.zotero.org/**

Finally, note that Technical Colleges also have a wide range of courses, as well as Degrees and Diplomas, on a par with any University, plus, also managing the added demands of the Digital Age. Thus, in general, the preceding 10 points definitely do apply toward obtaining a Higher Education qualification at these institutions.

The other great value of your own Tertiary Education, and the more comparative the better, **is to increase the core of comparatively educated people in the general population,** important at a time when there is increasing scorn for such education, plus, growing influence and adverse affects of social media, including 'influencer' vacuity, plus, declining news quality, false news, conspiracy theories, et al. Even public libraries are not the repositories of knowledge and culture they once were, and, are increasingly LCD in their approach to function and patronage.

So, best of luck, wherever you attend for Higher Education, plus, apply sound planning and a good work ethic, and all will be well. Once again, take care of your education, and your job or profession will take care of itself.

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-writing-by-hand-is-better-for-memory-and-learning/

Crib Sheet on Preparing for, and Sitting, Tertiary Exams

1) **Preparation for sitting Tertiary exams will, of course, extend back over how you have worked during the respective course(s).** Attending all lectures tutorials and/or labs, writing assignments/essays, working with interested and motivated fellow-students, et al. Cramming at the end of the year is a poor approach, and, much less retention of course material will result. **If you are a crammer, then read no further...**

2) **Be ready, therefore, physically and psychologically.**...rested, good diet, and, an academic semester, of full and consistent engagement, backing you up.   Some crib sheets may useful for final reminders in the days before the exam(s), but be sure to leave them behind before entering the exam room, obviously…

3) **Be relaxed, and be punctual for the exam, both very important, and a pit stop made just beforehand**. Keep your own quiet company before entering the exam room, keep interaction with others to a minimum. Have a watch that you can remove, and place on the desk before you, much easier to quickly consult than the exam-room clock. Have also, all you writing gear, calculator, drawing paraphenalia, glasses, water bottle, et al, ..thus, **ensure attendance to any details that will add to pre-examination calm.** Then, just tell yourself 'I have done the work, right thru the semester', and I will now demonstrate that I have done so.'

4) **When time comes to read the exam paper,** ascertain the number of questions to be answered, make your choice, then make a few notes on each answer, to engage your subconscious, and generate the flow of ideas. **Most importantly, you will then have established the number of questions to be answered.**

5) **After short note-making on each of your chosen questions,** check your time remaining, then divide that by the number of answers to write up, then commence your writing, within an allotted time for each answer.   **Bonus time remaining is then used for answering more difficult questions, and/or considered proofreading.**

6) **Be sure to use all of your exam time...rushing, finishing early, and, leaving the exam room prematurely, may lead to later rueful recollections, and regrets that your time was not used more wisely….**

7) **Be careful with overthinking any multiple-choice exam answers.**..*usually, your first choice of answer is the correct one.* **If in doubt, test your choice** by reading that question back to yourself, with that particular answer. If it sounds good, then go with it. **Note that M-C questions can be deceptive, and not just posing as easy memory-joggers.**

8) **Note that, if you are good at academic exams, then you will be able to operate under urgency in real life,** when required to research, record, and present your findings, under time constraints. **Testing your limits at this Tertiary education stage may also help you determine you career path.**

9) **Good exams and good results notwithstanding, do not be complacent, be sure to continue thinking reading, and note-taking, in your vacation(s),** especially when you have more years of academic study ahead of you. Your concentration span, your thinking re your subjects, and your subconscious, all should be at optimum performance, when you begin your next semester and/or academic year.

10) **Note that intra-term tests may be undertaken with all of these these points and methods in mind,** and all points apply to studying at any any Tertiary Education Institution.

Crib Sheet on Preparing and Writing an Essay or Thesis

1) **Early sighting of title and subsequent planning of proposed content is advised**….then let mental incubation do its job, as your subconscious is engaged. Given a chance, this will accomplish much. Keep a notebook handy for quick notes at all times, as your subconscious may produce results without warning. **From the beginning, also keep in mind who you are writing for,** and, the academic discipline or institution involved….this sort of self-guidance will keep you properly directed in thoughts, plans, and of course, ensure quality of finished output.

2) **If possible, have a reserved personal work area** which you can leave and return to at any time, and thus, easily resume your research and writing. Post notes, posters, photos, etc., readily visible in your work area, that will continue to prompt your important ally, your own subconscious. Find an interested, knowledgeable, and disinterested person, or persons, to discuss your work with, this will be very useful for clarifying and setting out ideas, again, aiding the function of your subconscious.

3) **Data accumulation, and general note-making, is best done in long hand,** superior memory, by direct association, will ensue, and, hard copy notes will more readily survive, (untroubled by power cuts and computer glitches, note…), plus, are optimally portable. Just be sure never to misplace pens, pencils, and hard-copy working notebooks….! **Long-hand** is best described as an A4/foolscap workbook, with all project notes, cuttings, jottings, post-it notes, et al, included, pasted, pinned, stapled....**does not leave the home desk.** ***Plus, multiple WIP data copies in more than one form, as work progresses, of course....***

4) **Prior to wring up, Golden Phrase(s), and/or, ordered points are assembled.** A *Golden Phrase* is one that encapsulates your projected task, prompts the flow of words, and also helps your subconscious. Note that text may even run thru your mind like dictation….*be sure to record this when it occurs. Ordered points* will work, in lieu, though spontaneity of expression may be more of a task. Your subconscious will also work between the bigger picture, and, greater detail, often producing results during some mundane task, or, other unrelated activity, so, **be sure to take time off regularly from intensive and directed thinking, to keep your subconscious engaged and working, plus, keep jotting.**

5) **When writing begins, use short sentences, short paragraphs**, **and, refer often to the title, and your Introduction, to keep on track. Golden Phrases for sections and/or chapters will be an added bonus,** and help boost your subconscious. Once again, logical tabulation of points will also work in lieu. Your Title announces your subject, your Introduction will describe how you will approach this subject, your main body of text will follow, your Conclusion will summarize what you have written up, and, perhaps will allude to further research directions. Your References will support your treatment of core ideas and conclusions.

6) **Proof-read and edit as you progress**, and also, ***read the text aloud***...if there is no real flow reading aloud, then your project it will not be easy, or pleasurable, to read silently, especially with assessors or markers in mind. Also, avoid informal grammar and spelling, this will also interrupt silent reading of your text, which can be irritating, especially for readers and assessors of formal presentations.

7) **References:** always be concise and to the point, not enough to break flow of main text reading, especially if included in main body, and, Bibliographies the same, with specific and general categories kept separate. To reiterate, **be sure that you adhere to recommended references protocols,** as mandated by the specific academic discipline, or, overseeing authority, if you are working outside the academic sphere.

8) **Always keep copies of what you research and write up**...even carbon paper books for notes may be useful at times, most certainly, observe the main rule of the working computer era...***if not backed up 3x, then good as not backed up at all, OK!*** Even emailing your short-term output to yourself is useful in this respect.

9) **Use commonsense as regards maintaining a healthy lifestyle, and regular hours**, plus, be sure to seek pleasant and non-stressful activities when not engaged in your work. Avoid mental and sensory overstimulation, and over-tiredness. If your brain is not cared for, within a healthy lifestyle, this will consequently, and adversely, affect your creative academic output.

10) As already noted, **there will be some differences in presentation styles and protocols within respective disciplines**, so, you must be sure to verify what will be required. **Think also about the software tools you will use** to consolidate notes, and write assignments, with an eye towards how you should do '**backups**' and '**version control**'. **Backups** are more to deal with loss due to hardware failure, and your files not being accessible on your primary platform of choice, in contrast, **version control** is more about protecting you from yourself, eg, accidentally deleting a couple of pages from an important assignment but not immediately noticing this.

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