



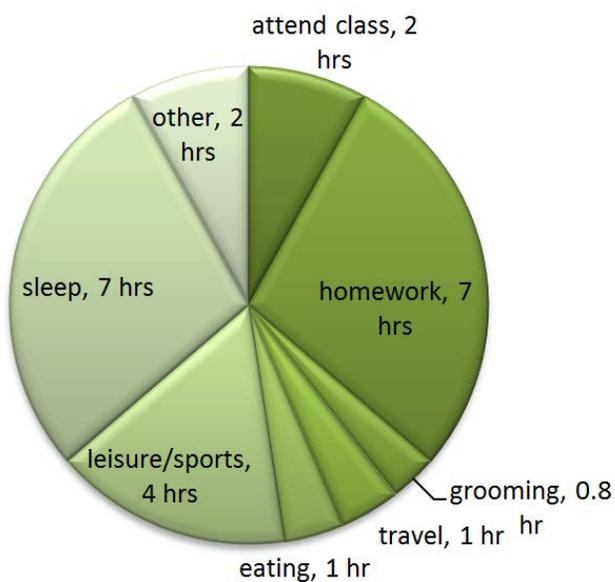
How will university be different from high school?

If you're starting university straight after finishing high school, it can be a bit tricky to get your head around how things are different. Here are some tips:

Don't be fooled by the free space in your schedule.

In high school, you get used to a regimented day, but this changes in university. Sometimes you'll have only a class or two per day, coupled with a lab, tutorial or discussion group. Your schedule seems incredibly open, but don't be fooled! The expectation is that during that "free time," you're doing homework and studying.

Where does the time go?



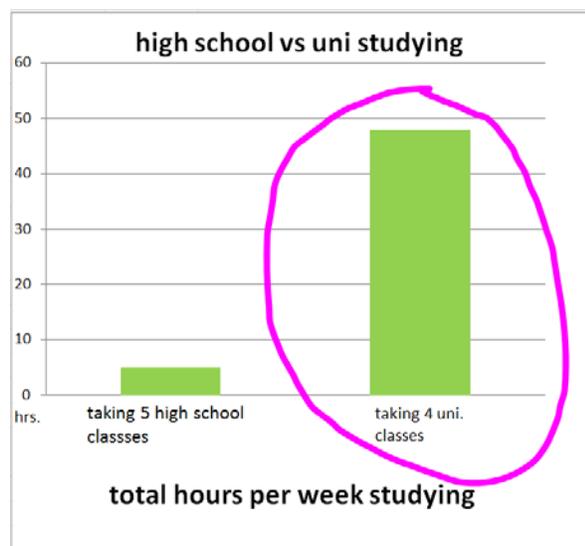
- typical university student weekday example

Class is only a quarter of your course.

At university, although class attendance is usually mandatory, attending class is only a small part of the work. Most of the course includes reading the assigned material, reviewing class notes and supplementary texts, regularly doing research for assignments, preparing presentations or labs & writing essays. You should be doing at least 2 to 3 hours of work outside of class for every hour of class time.

If you are struggling with a disability affecting your learning, then you should be prepared to spend more time studying --and accessing support services such as tutors and extra help.

High school: Typical students study up to 5 total hours per week outside of class time	University Between 2 and 4 hours of studying outside of each subject for each hour you spend in class
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You also need to do other stuff, like sleeping..

Work out how many class attendance hours and study hours you have each day, then add all the other stuff you need to do -- like meeting with tutors, travelling, grooming, eating, leisure/sports/exercise and other, and see if you have enough time. Don't forget to factor in sleep time. Many students reduce sleeping hours to fit it all in. The consequences of sleep deprivation and daytime sleepiness are especially problematic to university students and can result in lower grade point averages, increased risk of academic failure, compromised learning, impaired mood and increased risk of motor vehicle accidents. Consider taking a reduced course load from the beginning so you have enough time to do it all!

Read the syllabus.

In high school, teachers often remind you about assignments and due dates. In university, instructors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus outlines what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded. The syllabus usually contains all assignment and test dates for the entire term, and the latter part of a course may be weighted more heavily with due dates than in the beginning of the term.

Reading and reviewing..

In addition to showing up for class, you're expected to do substantial amounts of reading that are used for testing purposes, but not always discussed in class. Sometimes students think that only what's talked about in class is "testable." Not true: everything under the syllabus is grounds for testing. Talk with your instructor in their office hours if you are unsure.

Office hours.

In high school you could approach your teacher at a variety of times to ask questions you've been unable to ask in class. In university, instructors have posted office hours where they expect you to meet with them to ask further questions, to discuss the course, your progress, etc. If you want to connect with your instructor, you need to plan ahead –not only to make sure your availability matches, but the plan specific questions you wish to ask.

Testing is infrequent and comprehensive.

In high school, testing is frequent, covers small amounts of material and your teacher may tell you what to study for. In university, testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You need to organize lots of material to prepare for the test. Your instructor may only give you broad ideas about what to study. A course may only have 2-3 tests in a semester.

Tests and assignments count.

In high school, initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade. In university, watch out for the first tests and assignments. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected—but they may also count for a substantial part of your course grade.

Final exams.

In high school, you may or may not have written a long, comprehensive final exam for your courses. In university, many courses have a final exam scheduled after classes are over, occurring some time during the official final exam period. The dates and locations of these exams are posted by the Registrar's Office: <http://www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/academics/examinations/timetable.php> Many of these finals are regularly scheduled as three hour exams. Check with your instructor(s) if you are unsure.

A new kind of mastery.

In high school, mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught how it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve. In university, mastery is seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.

Sometimes this means you will encounter testing questions that ask you to apply your knowledge in new ways. You can prepare for this, but it takes efforts and careful planning long before your exam.

Digital expectations.

In high school, your teacher may have accepted assignments in a variety of ways. In university, you will be expected to submit assignments digitally through online course software or even by email. There are deadlines and marks penalties for submitting late. Instructors won't accept the excuse you don't know how to or that your computer doesn't work.

A new kind of teacher.

In high school, you generally see the same teachers day in and day out. You're in a small class of about 30 and you have a lot of time to get to know your teacher's quirks and habits and vice versa. In university, you could be in a class with a hundred or more students. You may see the teacher only once or twice a week.

How you write matters.

In high school, your teachers were likely happy if you wrote anything at all, and were probably ecstatic if you wrote something clear and gave an opinion or two. That won't cut it at university. Instructors expect essays to be formally structured and to provide analysis backed by evidence. They expect papers to be properly formatted, and they expect you to cite sources according to professional style guidelines. Dashing something off at the last minute — no matter how smart you are — won't cut it.

Preparing for your class is your responsibility.

In high school, your teachers may have organised your work and how you should prioritise your study time. University instructors will not prompt you with this, do not check required reading or remind you to complete homework. You are chiefly responsible for being on top of your own work and setting your own deadlines. Academics are trained as experts in their particular areas of research. Although your instructors might not check your completed homework, they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.

If university instructors have assigned reading or preparation for a class, they expect you have completed it and are ready to discuss/implement in class. Plan your preparation time accordingly so you are ready. In some classes, you are being graded on your participation in class which is directly related to how well you have prepared. Key among your preparation should be regular pre-reading, review of your notes and memorization.

No one is checking up on you.

Unlike high school, no one will come after you or notify your parent(s) if you are falling behind. So, on day one, scour your course syllabus/outline and figure out how your grade will be calculated. Know when things are due and get them done on time. Keep track of everything you hand in and what your current grade is in each course as you go through the term. Avoid unpleasant surprises at the end of term. Develop a routine, continually self evaluate what you know and getting help if you feel you are falling behind.

Some examples of activities that you will be expected to carry out during your own time are:

- Reading lecture notes and making sure you understand them
- Reading textbooks
- Wider reading to learn context and get clear about how your courses fit into the broader discipline of study
- Working on tutorial exercises and coursework assignments
- Completing online activities, wikis, and contributing to discussions

Pace yourself.

Due dates are not usually flexible. Students are expected to be actively working on assignments throughout the term and not leaving things to the last minute. You risk receiving low grades on late assignments because penalties are assigned.

Self-serve support systems are available.

Supports are available, (academic advising, academic learning centers, course specific tutors and/or learning strategists, residence life staff, disability services staff, counselling services, etc.), but you must seek those out, ask for the help, and follow through and work within the particular parameters of each service if you use them.

Expectations are based on standards in the discipline you study.

Your high school teachers have probably been taught that they need to do whatever they can to make sure you have success, even if it means changing what “success” means. At university, standards are more rigid. You have done well if you have met the standard that your instructor thinks is reasonable for a first-year student in that discipline. Whether you did well relative to your own potential is not relevant in university courses.

It’s not about you; it’s about the work you do.

Many high school students are used to getting credit for “having really tried hard.” In university, however, instructors aren’t grading you, your effort or your sincerity. They are grading the work you do. Many of your instructors will never know your name or recognize you in the hallway. This can make university seem intimidating, but summon your courage. It’s about to begin.

Life skills.

You may not only be adjusting to a new learning environment, but very possibly, a new city and new friends. It may be the first time you are living on your own. You might need to learn to budget your money and deal with your banking, buy groceries, cook, maintain an apartment, do your own laundry, learn how to live with a roommate, take public transportation and possibly balance working part time. These things all take time and attention and may impact your studies in ways you have not anticipated.

Peer network.

If your friends don't attend the same university, you may be without a support system. During high school, students often depend on their family and peers for support in problem solving, decision making and day-to-day activities, thus they may need a new support network.

University activities, organizations, clubs and support groups can help to build new networks.

Depression and loneliness.

The expectations of being a university student can raise your stress level, contribute to emotional lows and loneliness. Some find temporary relief in partying or isolating themselves which, in the long run, may contribute to depression. If stress or depression are issues for you, seek professional support at UVic Counselling Services or UVic Health Services. These services are included in your student fees. Counselors are trained to listen and can help students get back on track.

Staying healthy/sickness/health conditions.

Heightened stress, poor self-care, and lack of sleep can cause health problems. Living in close quarters also poses health risks and can increase your chances of contracting illnesses. Eating healthy, balanced meals, getting a good night's rest as well and washing your hands regularly can help. If an illness does develop, visit Health Services or your own family physician.

Logan's tips from an almost-grad. (UVic student, Logan Godin wrote this open letter to first-year students covering these topics):

Tips for any time in the term & work ethic	Paper writing	Study tips	Test tips	Stress reduction
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meeting your teachers and asking questions• Paying attention to your lectures• Treat it like a job!	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan your paper• Writing rough drafts• Getting someone else to read your paper• Paying attention to your grammar, spelling and tone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Starting early• Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making a "cheat/study sheet"• Do the things you know first• Stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do things you like and make you feel good about yourself

Here is the direct link to Logan's letter. Check out his good advice!

<https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/myuviclife/2016/11/16/tips-from-a-recent-grad/>

There are many sources of support on campus for you to assist with meeting academic expectations. **The learning assistance program** is a good first stop: <https://onlineacademiccommunity.uvic.ca/lap/>

Check it out!



Be patient with yourself!

Remember, you are entering a different learning environment and the transition process can take time, so be patient with yourself.