

# Starting University Study

Information for students in  
Non-Initial Teacher Education programs

Prepared by the School of Education Teaching  
Quality Committee

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## Welcome to Federation University Australia

We are excited to see you commencing your studies with Federation University. Nevertheless, we also recognise that no matter your age, or prior experience at a higher education institution, transitioning into further study can be daunting. The aim of this book is to support your transition to university life and to answer any important questions you may have about the experience.

Federation University has five stars for teaching quality and student support and is one of the top-ranked regional universities in the country (Good Universities Guide, 2019). The School of Education is committed to inspiring its students to become the teachers and leaders of the future.

This booklet has been developed by Laura Benney, Student Representative on the School of Education Teaching Quality Committee, in consultation with members of the committee. It is a revised version of the 2018 edition, developed by Jenene Burke, Theresa Meads and Peter Sellings.



## How Federation University will assist your learning

At Federation University, the School of Education supports its students through the implementation of a transition pedagogy framework, wherein University staff and current students assist the transition of students new to university life.

The **transition pedagogy framework** consists of a set of “principles and processes” (Kift & Nelson, 2005; Kift, 2009; Kift et al., 2010) to guide the design of an effective and supportive first-year university experience and student capacity building as they progress through their university degree and into their lives beyond university.

There are six principles that guide the implementation of a Transition Pedagogy. The content in this booklet relates directly to these six principles.

### Principle 1: Transition

Federation University supports students to shift both “into higher education [and later from university] ... to the world of work and lifelong learning” (O’Donnell, Wallace, Melano, Lawson, & Leinonen, 2015, p. 74). This is achieved through implementing a well-designed curriculum, ensuring students understand university processes and expectations and respecting student’s prior learning.

### Principle 2: Diversity

Federation University has a commitment to offering curriculum that is responsive to student diversity and respects student differences, particularly in regard to socioeconomic status, culture, ethnicity, dis/ability, experience, age and gender to provide an inclusive and accessible learning environment.

### Principle 3: Design

At Federation University, courses are designed through the “intentional integration and sequencing of [relevant] knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Kift, 2009, p. 41) that provides foundations on which to build classrooms that are student and learning-focused.

### Principle 4: Engagement

Federation University promotes student engagement by adopting learning, teaching and assessment approaches that are relevant to students’ interests and experiences, and require a variety of social and environmental interactions.

### Principle 5: Assessment

At Federation University, students will be exposed to a variety of relevant practices for assessing learning. The University’s assessment policy ensures that students receive timely, constructive feedback, within 3 weeks of an assignment due date. Care will also be taken to ensure students understand “the processes and rationale of higher education assessment” such as how to structure assessment tasks, how to read rubrics or how to effectively self-assess one’s work (O’Donnell, Wallace, Melano, Lawson, & Leinonen, 2015, p. 75).

### Principle 6: Evaluation and Monitoring

Monitoring students’ attendance, their engagement in their learning and their performance on assessments, is essential. At Federation University, timely follow-ups and intervention will assist student success, while regular formative and summative assessment and student feedback inform curriculum development and renewal.



## Before University Starts

### Can I get credit for courses if I have studied before?

Credit may be granted for previous successful study at Federation University or at another higher education, tertiary or TAFE institution. If you think that you might be eligible to apply for Academic Credit, please contact your Program Coordinator.

### What's the point of Orientation Week?

Attending Orientation Week is integral to your transition to university life. During this week, you will gain access to important information about the university, the School of Education and your specific program. You will have the opportunity to meet your Lecturers, and your classmates and begin to learn how to get involved in broader university life.

You will also learn, during Orientation week, how to log in to important websites and portals such as your university email and the Moodle site. Moodle is the University's official Learning Management System.



<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/starting-at-federation/oweeek>

### I've heard about FedReady. What is that?

For anyone wanting a head start at university study, FedReady is perfect. This is a free short course, taught on campus, or online before the beginning of each semester which assists students in developing academic writing skills, and learning strategies to tackle university assignments.

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/get-help-on-campus/fedready>

### What other supports does Federation offer as I start studying at university?

The Online Study Hub is designed to be a repository of support materials and information for students. This is a single location where students can browse and find information about topics such as studying from home, assignment and study help, technology support, university support services and tips for end of semester assessments. In addition, a range of Online Technology Bootcamp sessions are also offered by the Online Study Hub. These sessions are designed to help students understand the technology and online study skills they will need to succeed at Federation University. Each 45-minute live session will cover an essential topic and help direct students to resources.

Students can browse the Online Study Hub Moodle site at any time and announcements about when the Online Technology Bootcamp Sessions will run will be made via that Moodle site:

<https://moodle.federation.edu.au/course/view.php?id=67746>

### My family wants more information. What can they do?

During the FedReady program before the commencement of the semester, Federation University offers an information evening for families and friends who are interested in learning about how they might best support their loved one who is beginning university.

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/get-help-on-campus/fedready/family-and-friends>



## Living on Campus

### **I must move to attend University, and I need somewhere to stay**

FedLiving provides several affordable accommodation options for commencing and continuing students who are studying on campus. Whilst there are communal living areas and kitchens, bedrooms are private and fully furnished. Living on Res can be a fantastic way to smooth your transition to university as there are many extra events and activities available to students who live on campus.

<https://federation.edu.au/about-us/facilities-and-services/campus-life/accommodation>

### **I'm staying on campus and I need extra support**

While exciting and convenient, living on campus can also be challenging. Federation University employs Residential Leaders (usually senior students) who live alongside students in their units and provide emotional, financial and social support and advice, as well as play a role in keeping the FedLiving services safe for everyone.

## Settling In

### Things are different at university. What is expected of me?

When commencing at Federation University, students in most programs are assigned a Student Mentor. A Student Mentor is a senior student, who has been trained to support transitioning students and provide referrals for emotional, academic and social support. For the first five weeks of the semester, students will have weekly meetings with their mentor, who will be their first point of contact for any issues or questions.

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/get-help-on-campus/mentor-program>

### I want to make more friends. How can I do that?

You will often have the opportunity to interact with peers during your classes. Outside of class, one good way to meet new people is to get involved in clubs, societies, and volunteering. Federation University has an extra curriculum opportunity for everyone.

**Clubs and Societies:** <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/life-on-campus/getting-involved/clubs-and-societies>

**Sports:** <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/life-on-campus/getting-involved/sport>

**Volunteering:** <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/life-on-campus/getting-involved/volunteering>

### Tutorials, Lectures, CALS and DALs. What's the difference?

With tutorials, lectures, **CALS** and **DALS**, it can be confusing to know what to expect when you come to class. From 2021 onwards, the university is using the terms 'CALS' (Campus-based Active Learning Session) and 'DALS' (Digital Active Learning Session). Courses tend to have online lecture content and activities that students should engage in PRIOR to attending timetabled learning activities.

**Lectures:** During lectures, a teacher will present either online or in-person key content you need throughout the course.

**Tutorials:** In tutorials, students come to class to discuss and debate with their classmates, going over and building upon the content covered in lectures.

**Labs:** During labs, students studying science subjects will have the opportunity to conduct experiments.

**Seminars:** During seminars, an expert from a specialised field will deliver information to a group of students.



### I'm an international student. What support is there?

Life as an international student can be challenging. Nevertheless, Federation University has a large international student population and strong support systems in place to ensure international student success. The International Student Support Office organises events, activities and English as an Additional Language (EAL) conversation clubs for international students.

<https://federation.edu.au/international/student-support>



### **I need extra support (emotional, physical, cultural). Who can I ask?**

Federation University provides several non-academic support services for students including Chaplaincy, free and confidential counselling, a disability support office, health services including a doctor, and a Justice of the Peace. There is also an Aboriginal Education Centre which provides cultural and academic support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students.

Support Services: <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/student-support-services>

Aboriginal Education Centre: <https://federation.edu.au/about-us/our-university/indigenous-matters/aboriginal-education-centre>

### **Finances are a challenge and I need extra support**

In the case of financial hardship, Federation University has an extensive financial support service who are ready to help. Make an appointment to discuss potential grants or aid. Federation University also offers an extensive range of scholarships or grants for financial hardship, academic merit and other criteria that can support with finances.

Financial Support: <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/student-support-services/financial-information-and-support/financial-aid>

Scholarships and Grants: <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/starting-at-federation/scholarships>



## Preparing for Classes

### What courses do I need to enrol in for my program?

Federation University constructs effective program structures for each of their degrees which list the subjects that you need to enrol in. Once you have found your program structure on the Federation University website, you can use the course code listed to search for your classes on the 'Enrol in Classes' section of My Student Centre.

New enrolments: <https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/student-resources/new-enrolments/program-information>

Continuing Enrolments: <https://federation.edu.au/schools/school-of-education/student-resources/continuing-enrolment/program-information>

### When will the booklist be released?

The Federation University booklist is released a few weeks before the semester commences. Most courses have set reading lists, with electronic readings you can access through Moodle. Not every class requires you to purchase books. You may buy your books from the on-campus bookstore, order them online, or find your texts second hand.

<https://federation.edu.au/starting-at-federation/orientation/booklists>

### How do I find out what I will learn each week?

All of Federation University's classes operate through the platform Moodle. A week or two before classes commence, you will be able to access your courses on Moodle. Within each course, the content such as videos, readings, PowerPoints and weekly questions and forums will be split up week by week.

<https://moodle.federation.edu.au/login/index.php>



## Participating in Classes

### Am I required to come to class?

Studying at university full time is the equivalent to working a full-time job. On each course description you will find a breakdown of the study commitment which equates to 8-10 hours per week for each course over the semester. As a student, it is expected that you attend all classes and participate both online and offline where necessary.

[https://federation.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0017/410291/Student-attendance-and-participation-expectationsSoE2018\\_student.pdf](https://federation.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/410291/Student-attendance-and-participation-expectationsSoE2018_student.pdf)

### Can I get extensions for an assignment while at university?

Special Consideration, which includes Discretionary Extensions, is a form of safety net for students if, for a good reason, they need more time to complete an assignment. In such circumstances, a student can apply to their Course Coordinator for a **Discretionary Assessment Extension** of up to five University working days for one assessment task.

[https://federation.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/503699/Special\\_Consideration\\_Discretionary\\_Student.pdf](https://federation.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/503699/Special_Consideration_Discretionary_Student.pdf)

If the student needs to apply for an extension in more than one course or requires more than five working days' extension, due to medical reasons, compassionate grounds or hardship/trauma., then they are advised to apply for **Special Consideration**. The application can be made online, and evidence needs to be provided to support the request.

[https://federation.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0014/501503/SpecialConn\\_General\\_Instructions.pdf](https://federation.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0014/501503/SpecialConn_General_Instructions.pdf)

Applications for discretionary extensions and special consideration now go through My Student Centre.

### I feel like my classes are not meeting my individual needs/engaging me. What can I do?

If you feel as if your class is not meeting your needs, it is important to have a professional conversation with your Tutor/Lecturer. Contact them via email, or after class and discuss solutions to make the class more engaging for you. Remember, Lecturers are experts in their field and will be excited to pass on tips/advice, learning strategies and/or additional readings that may be more suited to you.

If you have suggestions about how a course, or Lecturer, may improve for the next semester, it is important to address this through the appropriate, professional channels. Towards the end of the semester, students have an opportunity to complete a Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching (SELT) survey. Your honest feedback to help Federation's courses improve is always appreciated.

You will receive invitations to complete SELT surveys via your student email.



## What if I fall behind in my classes and assessments, who will help me?

If you fall behind in your classes and assessments, it is possible that your Lecturer or Program Coordinator may attempt to make contact with you in person, or through email. It is therefore integral that you form positive relationships with your teachers by attending and participating in classes as much as possible.

In many instances, however, as an adult learner, your success is your responsibility. If you are experiencing hardship or challenges, it is integral to make contact with your Lecturers/Tutors/Program Coordinator (e.g., through an email) and begin to make inquiries about any potential special considerations you may be eligible for.

Federation University also has a peer-assisted study service (PASS) for selected first-year courses. PASS sessions are run by an experienced senior student and will enable students to discuss and debate content further, outside a classroom environment to consolidate their understandings. PASS is free to attend and is an excellent option if you are feeling overwhelmed by the content in a particular course.

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/get-help-on-campus/pass-program>

## Working Through Assignments

### How do I find out about my assessment tasks?

Federation University uses its Moodle platform for communicating information about courses and providing resources to students. Within your course on the Moodle site, you will be able to access a 'Course Description' which provides a detailed overview of the required learning for the course, as well as an outline of assessment tasks and their due dates.

Many Moodle sites often also contain a specific link to an 'Assessment' page. On this page, students may access their submission portals and obtain additional information about their assessment tasks. There may be an online forum set up, where students can post additional questions to be answered by the Lecturer.

<https://moodle.federation.edu.au/login/index.php>

### I'm confused about the structure of assignments. What should I do?

Writing at university can be quite different from secondary school and workplaces. When you first find out what assessments you are required to complete (eg. research essay, annotated bibliography, oral presentation) you can access the university study skill website. Here, you will find useful writing tips and learn how to structure assignments. You may even find work samples which could assist you in constructing your assignments.

<http://studyskills.federation.edu.au/>



## Who can help me while I'm writing my assignments?

Writing assignments can be challenging, and an extra pair of eyes can be useful. Although collusion (this means writing an assignment with another student, when it is supposed to be an individual assignment) is against university policy, Federation University does provide several services to support students with their assignments.

**Learning Skills Advisors** are professionals employed by the university who may assist you with structuring your assessments. During the writing process, you may make an appointment to take your assignment instructions or your draft assignment to them to gain support.

**Studiosity** is a platform utilised by Federation University that can also support students with their assignments. Students may upload their assignment and get feedback on their writing (e.g., have they answered the topic effectively, are their paragraphs structured effectively?)

**Learning Skills Advisors:** <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/get-help-on-campus/learning-skills-advisors>

**Studiosity:** <https://federation.edu.au/current-students/learning-and-study/online-and-after-hours-support/after-hours-tutoring>



## What is Turnitin and how can I use it?

At Federation University, most assignments are uploaded through 'Turnitin.' This platform has multiple features. It initially runs a similarity check and will give you a similarity report. Your marks will also be completed through Turnitin and, you will be able to access teacher comments and feedback.

You can find out how to use Turnitin here:

[https://fedflix.federation.edu.au/media/Uploading+to+Turnitin/0\\_irjuaw8p/74540772](https://fedflix.federation.edu.au/media/Uploading+to+Turnitin/0_irjuaw8p/74540772)

If you find that your assignment has a high percentage of 'copied material' you need to explore it further. Simply click on your submission and review the sections of your work that are flagged as 'similar'. Often, citations/references and direct quotations are counted as 'similar' material by the checker. As long as you include the correct citation, this will not be counted as plagiarism by your Lecturer, so don't worry. If you find that you have missed a reference, or have not paraphrased correctly, fix your work and reupload it. You have three submission opportunities before the system shuts you out

### **I'm feeling really worried about plagiarism. What should I do?**

There are penalties for plagiarism, so it is understandable to be worried. Nevertheless, if you make sure you are attentive to your referencing and learn about plagiarism, you will be set up for success.

Some different ways to learn about referencing and plagiarism are attending FedReady before your university course commences or speaking to a Learning Skills Advisor in the Library.

Another method, however, is to complete the compulsory Academic Integrity Module, which you can find in the 'Useful Links' section of your Moodle site. This short course will take you through strategies and rules around academic integrity so you can complete your degree with confidence.

<https://federation.edu.au/staff/learning-and-teaching/teaching-practice/assessment/maintaining-academic-integrity>

### **What type of feedback will I get during my degree?**

Throughout your course, individualised feedback will be delivered through the assessment section of the Moodle site.

If you post in forums, your Tutor may reply to your posts to issue suggestions and generate discussion. In-person tutorials also provide an opportunity to gain informal feedback from Lecturers and Tutors.

Once your assignments have been marked, you will be able to access feedback on those through the Turnitin submission point.

If you are concerned about your progress through the course, it is important to contact your Tutor for additional feedback. Your Tutor's contact details are available on the right-hand side of the Moodle site.

### **I'm working on a group project and things aren't going to plan. What should I do?**

Group tasks are common because being able to work in groups is very important and is good practice for when you work in teams when you are in the workforce. Although group work can be challenging, it may also be one of the most rewarding parts of your degree. Some challenges associated with group work include students not liking their team, feeling uncomfortable and beyond their comfort zone, finding time to meet with their group, having different visions for the assignment and having a group member who is challenging to work with.

If you are experiencing difficulties with group work, there are two routes to take:

1. Continue to work hard for your part. Politely contact your group and try to organise get-togethers. Maintain professionalism as you check-in that everyone understands their set tasks.
2. Contact your Lecturer to let them know the difficulties you are experiencing with your group work task. They may provide additional support or take your circumstances into consideration as necessary.





## Accessing Your Grades

### Where can I get access to my grades?

Shortly after the university semester has finished, your grades will be published. Grades may be accessed from my Student Centre:

<https://mysc.federation.edu.au/psp/csprod/?cmd=login&languageCd=ENG&>

Understanding your grades can be challenging. There are many abbreviations such as HD (high distinction) and W (withdrawn without academic penalty).

Access this website for more information about understanding your grades:

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/essential-info/administration/exams/results/grade-point-average-gpa>

### What is the GPA?

The GPA is your Grade Point Average. It provides a numerical measure of your success across your university courses. If you want to transfer to another degree, your GPA achievement might be used to determine if you will be able to handle the academic load.

The GPA is calculated by dividing the Grade Points (HD, D, C, P, etc.) achieved by the Credit Points (each course is worth 15-30 credit points) achieved for the semester.

For more information about how your GPA is calculated, visit this website:

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/essential-info/administration/exams/results/grade-point-average-gpa>

## I have failed a course. What do I do now?

When you are completing a university degree, you need to complete a certain number of credit points in order to graduate. Each of the courses you take will enable you to earn credit points and degrees are specially designed to ensure you make up enough points to complete your degree.

If you fail a course, you will not receive the credit points for the subject and thus, will have to complete it again in order to gain a pass, and gain the credit points.

If you disagree with a grade on an assignment that you have received, there are a number of procedures you may follow including contacting Lecturers, requesting a second marking or appealing your final grade.

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/student-support-services/student-advisory-service/assessment-and-results>

## Finishing Your Course

### Is there support to help me find work?

Whether you are looking for part-time work to supplement your studies, or need support finding a job after university, Federation University's career office can support you. As well as providing careers counselling, the careers office can also assist students by providing mock interviews.

<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/student-development-and-careers>

Appointments for Careers and a job search engine may be found through the EDGE online service:  
<https://federation.edu.au/current-students/assistance-support-and-services/edge>





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