**Making the leap into academia from college or sixth form**

The transition from sixth form to university is a big one, it is perfectly normal to need support in adjusting to all the new criteria that universities have. Where you may have studied A-Levels or a B-Tec before, you are now at a higher educational level. This can at first seem quite daunting, in terms of sourcing information, academic writing and referencing. You may find that whilst writing essays for college-level studies, you are encouraged to give a lot of your own opinions on subjects and the use of referencing is not really required. This is perfectly normal; you are now at the next stage of your scholarly development! In the same way that you have spent years learning in school and college to express your own opinions, you can apply that same passion for learning, to your academic writing.

At university level, there are different expectations from your tutors and the marking criteria. You are now a researcher! This may sound intimidating, though in fact, it means that you are considering and examining other people's work. It is a simple transformation. Instead of giving your own opinions you must learn how to be critical and present the opinions and work of others. It is not that your own opinion does not matter anymore; it is more the fact that with academic writing we share and present the research of others.

Here are some tips for making the leap:

**Read, Read, READ!**

In order to start writing in an academic style, you need to get used to the way journals, reports and academic writing is structured. It is also important to familiarise yourself with quotes and where they are used to support and endorse main points.

**Quotes** in the first instance can be tricky. A common problem first-year students have is integrating quotes properly within the text or essay. The more you examine the way they are used and presented within a text, the easier it will be for you to enhance and demonstrate your findings with academic quotes and samples of literature.

**Exercise:** Find any quote in a book relevant to your subject and write a paragraph that supports that quote. Then try it the other way - try some freewriting around your subject, then look for a quote to support your own writing. Slowly you will see that the two go hand in hand.

**Read** small sections at first! Ease yourself into reading; take in a paragraph here and there, until you are able to decipher the larger sections of journals or books.

A prominent change when making the leap from college to university level is the use of vocabulary. This need not be as intimidating - it is all about finding strategies.

**Familiarise** yourself with the new terminologies or terms that are commonly used in your subject to slowly build your academic vocabulary.

**Accept** that it is a learning process and it is also about forming new habits. Academic writing is a new skill so the more you engage with the academic material the more you will pick up ‘good’ habits.