

Independent learning and working from home

Independent learning is a big part of studying at university. One of the biggest challenges at university is maintaining motivation to study independently while managing your time effectively, in order to have a successful balance between socialising and your studies. At university you are expected to be responsible for working from home in your own time, taking responsibility for your own learning and effectively meeting your course deadlines and commitments. This document has been designed to offer guidance on independent study and working from home.

Organise your space

We recommend that where possible you set up a designated study area when working from home, ideally not in your bedroom, this area should be in a quiet space and well organised. When setting up your study space try to make the area inviting and make sure you have everything you need to study effectively to hand like chargers, your laptop, sticky notes, stationary and notebooks. It's also a good idea to have a schedule visible at your workspace so you can keep track of your learning, as well as any deadlines.

Minimise distractions

When working it is really important to maintain your focus and unfortunately, there are plenty of things that could distract you from working. We recommend that you turn off your phone notifications and even leave your phone out of sight or in a different room. We also recommend that you don't study with films, tv or music with lyrics you understand playing in the background as they are likely to distract you more than you realise. If you prefer to study with sound in the background then we recommend listening to music in other languages, classical music or soundtracks/scores from video games or films for example the Mario Galaxy soundtrack.

Learn what works for you

Independent learning allows for greater flexibility when deciding how and when to study and although this can result in more opportunity to procrastinate it can also have many benefits. It's really important to be realistic when deciding what time to start working, if you aren't a morning person it's unlikely that deciding to wake up at 6am to study is going to lead to you actively engaging with your learning. Instead take the time to learn when you focus best, what learning styles work for you and what environment you study best in. You may find that you study best at 9pm with no music playing, putting all your notes into mind maps or at 5am, with the pokemon

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soundtrack playing and writing your notes in bullet points while colour coding them. The important thing about independent learning is finding what works best for you.

Set schedules and goals

We highly recommend that you try to maintain a consistent routine when you are working independently or from home, this structure will help keep you on track and avoid procrastination or burn out. Try and leave your weekends free to recharge where possible and stick to a schedule Monday to Friday. Also, be realistic about scheduling independent study time. Planning an hour of independent work each day is more likely to be successful in comparison to planning to study from 9-6 everyday. You want to avoid overwhelming yourself with work as this will likely result in reducing your motivation and productivity while increasing your stress levels. In order to keep on track we recommend that you set realistic daily and weekly goals so you can track your progress, motivate yourself and identify which learning strategies are working for you. As part of the mentoring service at Liverpool Hope we can help you with weekly planning, organising to-do lists, priority matrices and goal setting.

Communicate

Even though you're studying independently and working from home we recommend that you stay in contact with your coursemates and lectures for help and guidance. We also encourage you to communicate with your friends and family about being respectful of your need to work without distractions. If you struggle to stick to your goals consider asking a trusted friend, coursemate or family member to keep you accountable.