

#UFSLearnOn:

Make it happen



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CENTRE FOR TEACHING
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Make it happen – **succeed!**

And so we have come to the end of the 2020 academic year, well almost. Congratulations for making it this far, it was not easy but we all endured and here we are!

The UFS has remained committed to supporting you in every way possible and as you prepare for the final assessments, remember to access the support tools you will need in order to successfully complete the 2020 academic year: <https://www.ufs.ac.za/toolsforsuccess>

If you have any other challenges, speak up by contacting the academic advising office:

advising@ufs.ac.za (Bloemfontein campus)

advisingqq@ufs.ac.za (Qwaqwa campus)

advisingsc@ufs.ac.za (South campus)

We have made the most of this year despite the challenges, now let us make success a reality and cross the finish line. Remember to also practice self-care, visit the [#WellbeingWarriors](#)

NB: Main exams will run 30 November – 19 December 2020

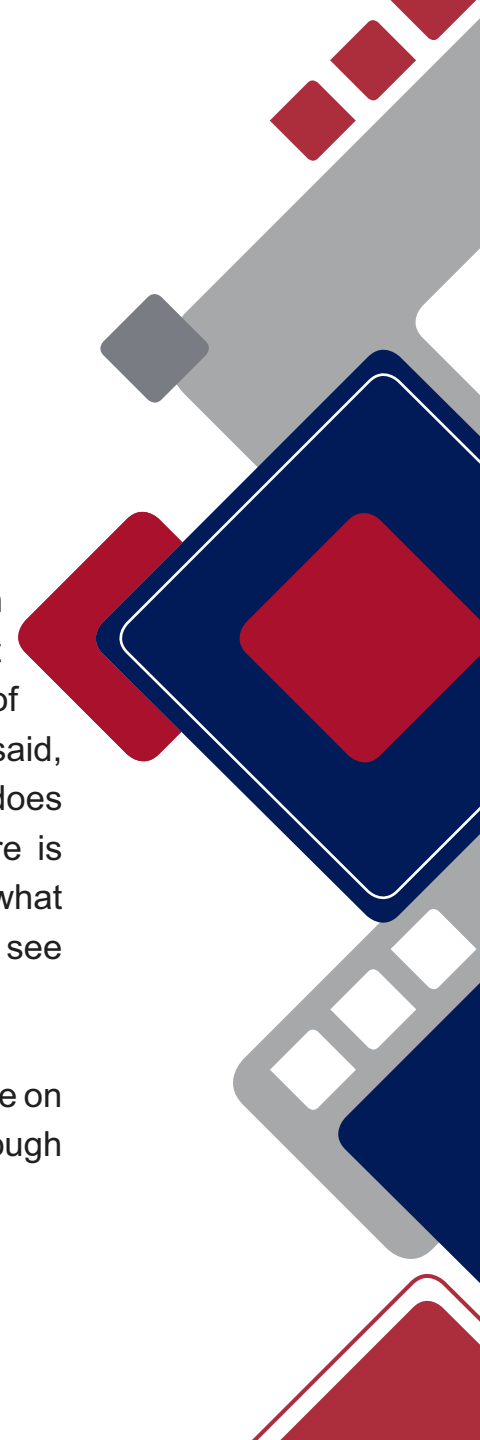
All of the best, and break a pen in your upcoming final assessments. For those of you who will be graduating, we cannot wait to see you in that graduation attire and those who still have some way to go, we cannot wait to serve you again in 2021 as we continue the pursuit of academic success!

The Central Academic Advising team

Developing Dynamic strategies for my Distractions: **Making my space work for the final stretch**

With the academic year wrapping up and final assessments around the corner, we can acknowledge your main distraction being visuals of yourself relaxing and taking time out to enjoy the festive season. Understandably so, this year has been hectic! For the rest of you, distractions may still be plenty, particularly those you have no control over. That said, you still have a few more weeks (opportunities) to ensure your 2020 academic record does not display 'distractions' but rather reminders of how you pulled through. The future is unknown and in this new normal, we have to embrace an attitude of seeing the good in what may seem like a bad situation. Moreover, looking from a different perspective to see opportunities where others may see none.

With this article we would like to make a few recommendations on how you could leverage on some of those distractions that are driving you up the wall and make the most of a tough situation.



Below are 5 popular challenges many of our students experienced and recommendations we have for how you can take these distractions and turn them into dynamic duties:

1. Firstly you have to remember that acceptance is the key to progression, the sooner you come to terms with blended learning the sooner you can see and take advantage of the opportunities that come with this approach to your studies.
2. Secondly, use family time as an opportunity to show them what you are learning and learn from what they can teach you. (Personalize your learning-see the module content in everything you do).
3. The third most popular distraction students have difficulty with is television and social media. If television is a distraction, watch programmes that contribute to your understanding of module content (e.g. watch the news and stay up-to-date with current affairs, you never know which question paper could ask about something you may have seen on TV or social pages)
4. The fourth are chores, now here is one distraction many of us can't avoid. Even so, use your chores as an overall wellness strategy (e.g. cook hearty and healthy meals for you and your family to keep everyone energized and at their peak)
5. And last but definitely not least, involve your family in your journey. Start introducing your younger family members to the idea of being enrolled in the higher education experience and career exploration, it's never too early to start exploring.

5 Study Tips for Final Assessment Success

Now that you sorted your study space (see the article on leveraging and making your space work), it is time to hit the books. Here are a few tips and strategies to help you:

1. Set a realistic study schedule

You might think that studying for 8 hours straight for 4 days before the exam, will help you get through the work in time. But, research has shown that cramming like that does not work as effective as well spaced-out study sessions with regular breaks in between¹. Neuroscience also indicates that moderate stress levels (i.e. having spaced-out study sessions and not cramming) before studying enhances memory, but high acute stress levels such as those experienced when cramming impairs memory². [Click here](#) to visit our online workshop and create a realistic study schedule at your own pace.

2. Structure & organise your work

Imagine you are assisting with an emergency surgery. The doctor asks for a scalpel and as you turn to the table, you find all the tools on each other and scattered around on different tables... You would feel stressed and possibly overwhelmed. The same principle applies when it comes to your study notes. If your notes are organised, it is also easier for your brain to recall information even when you may become nervous during exams.

¹ Kramár, E.A., Babayan, A.H., Gavin, C.F., Cox, C.D., Jafari, M., Gall, C.M., Rumbaugh, G., and Lynch, G. (2012) Synaptic evidence for the efficacy of spaced learning. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, 109(13), pp. 5121-5126.

² Vogel, S. and Schwabe, L. (2016) Learning and memory under stress: implications for the classroom. *NPJ Science of Learning*, 1.

3. Practice with an old exam/semester test paper

Practice makes perfect and although the final assessments might look different in how they are administered, it will still help to practice using old tests and exams. You can find old question papers either loaded by your lecturers on Blackboard, or you may find it through the library [here](#).

4. Adapt your strategies to the content

What works for one module or even one learning outcome, might not be effective for another. You need to continually adapt your note-taking and study approaches. For help with note-taking methods – and seeing other methods to try out that you may not have known about – [click here](#).

To learn about an approach to help you with theory-rich modules, [click here](#). The online workshops at the before-mentioned links are zero-rated through the Global Protect App and can be done at your own pace.

5. Healthy body, healthy mind

A crucial part of successful preparation for final assessments, is to keep a healthy body to help you not only perform well academically, but also ensure the best mental wellness possible. Your brain needs optimal care to perform at your best and getting physically active (even if it is by jumping in one spot if space is limited) forces your body to release neurotransmitters responsible for positive emotions and which assist retaining information in your memory. For a healthy body and mind, you can also snack on brain foods ([click here](#) for information and examples). Our bodies consist of about 60% water which makes sense why drinking plenty water also helps when you prepare for final assessments.

We saved the most important for last: SLEEP. As much as it sounds counterproductive to get enough sleep when you are preparing for upcoming assessments, sleep is crucial. One of the most important reasons you should have healthy sleep habits is due to the function of sleep in the processing and integration of memory (i.e. what you studied earlier the day). During sleep, our brains basically get rid of toxins built up during daily activities and research shows that short-term³ memory is encoded into long-term memory (needed to write assessments) during sleep. For help on healthy sleep habits while studying remotely, [click here](#).

³ Cherry, K. (2019) 11 Methods for improving your memory. [Retrieved from: <https://www.verywellmind.com/great-ways-to-improve-your-memory-2795356>]

Library Information Services (LIS)

STILL OPEN

Although you may not be able to currently make full use of the Library physically across the 3 UFS campuses, services are still available.

By completing the below links, you can still:

a. Collect and/or return library books

b. Book a virtual appointment/consultation with an information librarian

<https://ufs.libwizard.com/id/9f2c840eee35624cf786693feb01dd92>

(for books)

<https://ufs.libwizard.com/id/49ec83faeb898d5d0b60d4a0edc5e42>

(Virtual Librarian consultation)

T: +27 51 401 9111 | E: info@ufs.ac.za | www.ufs.ac.za

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UFS
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Be ready **for exams** (Online and Face-to-face)

In our previous edition of #UFSLearnOn, Crossing the finish line, we aimed to get you ready for the coming assessments in general. [Click here](#) to visit our previous LearnOn edition. In this article we would like to delve a little deeper into what you need to consider in online assessments and face-to-face assessments.

4.1 E-Examinations

What is E-Examinations?

E-Examinations are final summative assessments that can be in the format of online tests (or quizzes) on either Questionmark or Blackboard. E-examinations replace traditional face-to-face examinations and take the form of a Blackboard assignment or a Turnitin assignment. Make sure you consult your lecturer in what format your E-examination will be conducted in.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE YOUR E-EXAMINATION

1. Admission is still the same as for face-to-face exams

UFS Rules for admission to the exam still applies when completing online examinations. A module mark of at least 40% is required for you to write your online exam. Furthermore, you must have prescribed to all the subminimum and assignment requirements of that module and must have participated in all the scheduled assessments for the module. Refer to A9.2 in the UFS General Rules ([Click here](#).)

2. Look out for practice tests:

Check your Blackboard modules to see if there are practice tests available. This is helpful to prepare you in how to complete online assessments. Your lecturer will communicate with you if they would like you to complete a practice test before the examination.

3. Make sure you have your password ready

It is your responsibility to ensure your password is working. Inability to log into Blackboard or Questionmark because of a wrong/ expired password will not count as a technical query and students will not be eligible to complete an additional examination in such instances.

4. Make sure you are connected

Remember that it is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to a strong and stable network connection for the entire e-examination session. The university will not be held liable for network failure during your exam.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW DURING YOUR ONLINE EXAM:

1. You will need to wait to see your results.

Other than in some informal online assessments, the feedback option will be disabled, and you will not be able to see your marks immediately.

2. Make sure you get it right the first time!

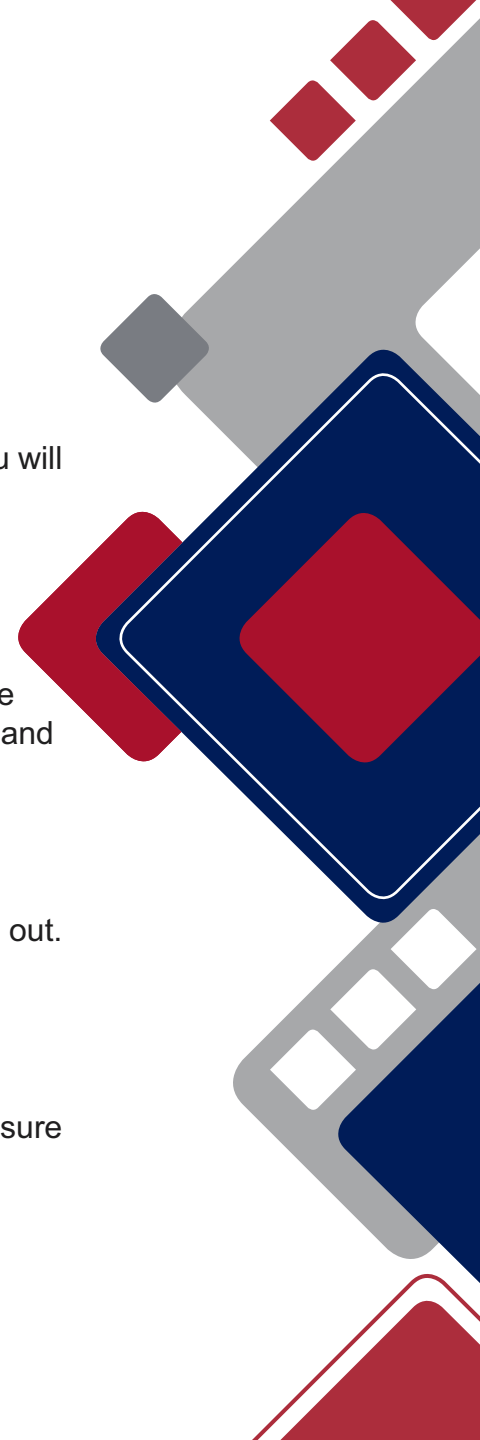
You might have been granted multiple attempts to complete online tests during the semester, However, you will only get one attempt to complete your online examination. Therefore, make sure you do it correct the first time. When you submit your attempt, it will be considered as final, and you will not get another opportunity to change your answers.

3. Stick to the time limit

There are still time limits to e-exams. Once you open the exam, your time starts running out. Therefore, make sure you have everything at hand before you open the online exam.

4. Your exam is unique

Questions in online examinations are randomised, and your exam is therefore unique. Make sure you prepare hard as you would for a face-to-face examination.



5. Normal Rules Apply

Normal UFS examination rules of plagiarism and re-examination still apply when you are completing an e-examination. Make sure you adhere to the examination rules as stated in the UFS General Rule A9.3 ([Click here](#) to read more).

Technical Assistance during online examination:

It is important that students understand the following regarding how technical assistance will work during an e-examination:

- All exam queries to be submitted via email, and not telephonically. Please insert a screenshot or photo of the issue you are facing, as this will aid in the investigation by the examination committee.
- No lecturers will handle exam queries directly. Students need to email the relevant helpdesk
- Not the helpdesk nor the lecturer (nor any individual for that matter) will be able to clear an attempt/ re-open an assessment for a student during the e-examination session. The issue will be investigated, and the faculty will then decide whether to allow the student to complete an additional examination based on the validity of the query.
- It is important that students include all information (as specified in the document) when they email the relevant helpdesk about an e-exam query
- Any technical issues experienced during the e-exam must be reported via email to the relevant helpdesk (including all information required) within **1 day (24 hours)** after the deadline of the assessment
- If you cannot complete your e-examination due to load shedding, acceptable proof must be provided with your application for the additional examination.

What to do if you experience technical difficulties:

Students who experience technical issues during their e-examination session must contact the relevant helpdesk via email (note that no e-examination query will be dealt with telephonically):

- E-Examinations on Blackboard: ehelpdesk@ufs.ac.za
- E-Examinations on Questionmark: eassessments@ufs.ac.za

The student must include the following information in their email to the relevant helpdesk:

1. Student number
2. Module code
3. Assessment name (e.g. examination/ final assignment etc.)
4. Campus
5. Screenshot as proof of issue, if (due to the nature of the issue) a screenshot cannot be provided a clear photograph will suffice as evidence

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW AFTER YOUR E-EXAMINATION:

Additional Examination

In accordance with the General Rules (A9.3.1), you will automatically qualify for an Additional Examination if:

- You were admitted to the scheduled main examination in each semester (module mark at least 40 percent), obtained an examination mark of at least 30 percent and a final mark of at least 45 percent for the module; or
- If you were admitted to the scheduled main examination in each semester (module mark at least 40 percent), obtained a final mark of at least 50 percent, yet failed to obtain the required subminimum of 40 percent in the examination.

As far as possible, additional examinations will be completed on campus or in a controlled venue with invigilation. If this is not possible, the additional examination will be a Blackboard assignment or Turnitin Assignment to avoid further technical issues.

Review of Scripts

In accordance with the UFS General Rules (Section A53.13) you do have the right to view your examination script, both for face-to-face and e-examinations. The procedure stipulated in the General Rules, however, needs to be followed:

You must request a discussion with your lecturer within 5 working days after receiving your marks.

The lecturer can either send your transcript via email or arrange an online session with the student to discuss your assessment.

NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT?

Mental Health Support

Counselling is a voluntary service and requires informed consent from each individual student. Student Counselling and Development (SCD) may be contacted as follows:

- Bloemfontein Campus: SCD@ufs.ac.za / 051 401 2853
- South Campus: SCDSouth@ufs.ac.za / 051 505 1298
- QwaQwa Campus: SCDQQ@ufs.ac.za / 058 718 5032

Students may also contact the South African Depression and Anxiety Group (SADAG) 24-hour toll-free UFS Student Mental Health Careline as follows:

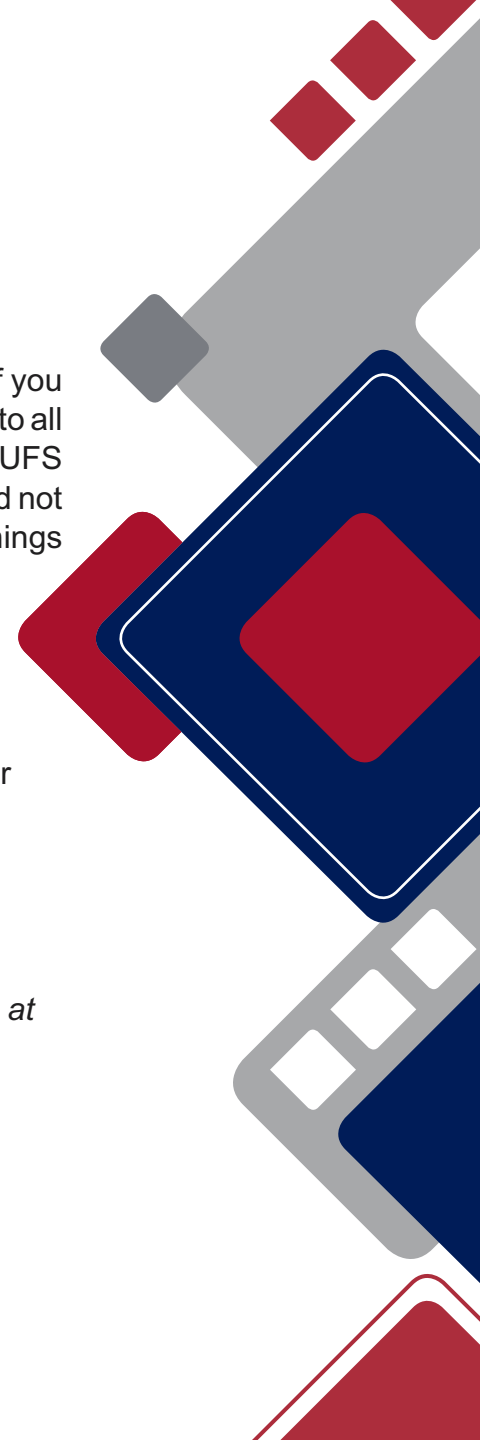
- Tel: 0800 00 6363
- Email: helpline@sadag.org
- SMS: 43302

Staying connected **for final assessments**

In less than a month, you will be writing your final assessments for semester two. With most of you preparing to write your final assessments online, it is important to ensure that you are connected to all the academic and support resources you will need during your studying and revision. The UFS understands that internet access and data are still a serious challenge currently, but that should not discourage you from wanting to write your final assessments and succeeding. Here are some things to consider and note:

- You can visit the **Digital Life Portal** on the student life website. The Digital Life Portal links you up with available zero-rated academic resources especially if you are still off-campus. You will find resources on websites that are exempted from data fees when accessing them through the <https://myaccess.ufs.ac.za> platform.
- If you are looking to find **reasonable data solutions**, here are a few tips to consider when looking for data deals from network providers:
 - Buy monthly or weekly data deals instead of hourly/daily deals
 - Manage your data usage (i.e. how much time are you spending on social media)
 - Download all necessary resources/material then log off
 - Update only the critical apps (i.e. Blackboard App vs. Instagram)

Keep in mind that *some network providers have **night time deals**, if you are more productive at night (night owl) consider getting connected with the provider with the best night time deals.*



- Ensure that you are connected with where to expect communication at all times.

Type of communication	Contact person	Location
Module information	lecturer/facilitator of the specific module	Blackboard announcements, Student email
Faculty information	Faculty manager, Teaching & Learning Manager, Faculty Advisor	Faculty web pages & Facebook pages
Institutional information		UFS website, any official UFS social platforms (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube channel and Twitter)

- Because it is still risky to allow students on campus to access the library. You can also visit the UFS library (click on link: <https://www.ufs.ac.za/library>) for all your e-learning material, ie. textbooks, articles, etc. to assist you to fully prepare for your final assessments

Alternative mental health resources

SCD's latest edition of #WellbeingWarriors on goal setting is currently available to help you sustain your healthy habits and plan SMART goals.

Find the latest as well as the other editions for support on <https://www.ufs.ac.za/wellbeing-warriors>

Student Counselling and Development

Email to SCD@ufs.ac.za / SCDQQ@ufs.ac.za / SCDSouth@ufs.ac.za

telephonic online

Adcock Ingram Depression and Anxiety Line	(0800 70 80 90)
ADHD Helpline	(0800 55 44 33)
Befrienders Bloemfontein 24hr Helpline	(051 444 5000)
Cipla 24hr Mental Health Helpline	(0800 456 789)
Pharmadynamics Police & Trauma Line	(0800 20 50 26)
SADAG Mental Health Line	(011 234 4837)
Substance Abuse 24hr Line	(0800 12 13 14 / SMS: 32312)
Suicide Crisis Line	(0800 567 567)
Gift of the Givers COVID-19 Counselling	(0800 786 786)

www.mobieg.co.za (online chat, articles and app)

www.helpguide.org (online resources)

How I survived and was able to thrive in 2020!

With the most gruelling year recorded in our entire lives, gradually coming to an end we remain hopeful and thankful that we have made it through. From the unexpected shock of going into lockdown, to the worry of having to use a blended approach to succeed in your academics and now finally settling into a new normal, we at the advising office bestow upon you the title of Kovsie champion...because that's exactly what you are!

One of our many champions, Carli Kleynhans, a 3rd (final) year student enrolled for BA Psychology and English shares how she survived...no, actually how she has thrived in 2020.

- **What was your biggest concern about your academics when you found out the country was going into lockdown?**

My biggest concern about my academics as a final year student was whether the online learning and tests would provide the same in depth learning experiences that are necessary to build upon for future studies.

- **What are some of the challenges you've experienced along the way?**

Staying focused and trying not to procrastinate was a big challenge I had to conquer, especially trying to not be distracted by my family and my phone.



- **What are some of the strategies you've used to ensure your academics don't suffer?**

Time management was one of the most important strategies that I applied. For most of my classes, I was able to focus each week on a different module, by working and studying in advance I was able to keep up with my workload and still have the weekends to focus on myself, therefore creating designated time to work, study and also time to relax and read.

- **What support have you received from the institution that's helped you thus far?**

Most of my lecturers have provided needed support regarding our academics. The institution helped provide clarity with everything that was going on.

- **What do you think the UFS could have done differently to support student success?**

I think the UFS could have provided more resources for the final year students, especially considering we have to apply for further studies; online it was difficult to discern exactly what was necessary for the applications, whereas in class I feel more information would have been provided.

- **What has kept you motivated?**

Knowing it is my final year has helped to motivate me, as I have to use these grades to apply for further studies. I recently received recognition from Golden Key and this helped to further inspire me to work even harder at my academics.

- **What advice do you have for your fellow Kovies who are finding it difficult to keep going?**

Remember to make time for yourself, to look after yourself and your mental health, especially in these difficult times. Work in advance and keep to your personal academic calendar.



2021 and **Beyond** (the next level/Phase)

A wise man once said “the journey is best travelled together rather than alone”

Will we ever get used to the idea of wearing masks and washing our hands every now and again? No one was ever ready for this pandemic; it has most definitely pushed us to another level (the new normal/the digital world). For some, it was a blessing and others a curse. Instead of feeling sorry for ourselves, all we need to do is soldier on and get used to what is.

Approaching 2021 and beyond, like giants we need to be prepared and be ready to face life. With new changes implemented, we always need to keep in mind that no matter what, we cannot forget what the main purpose is.

In the midst of all we ought to plan but fail to put out actions into practice, rest assured; you are not alone. The goal here is to ensure that every student has an opportunity to graduate, regardless of which path they choose. And along the way guidance and encouragement will be provided for you. We get/ask for support from stakeholders on campus and most importantly our families. The most important thing one can do is prepare for postgrad studies and the world of work, this is the part where we experience the fear of the unknown. To be academically prepared you need to have the right entry qualification, do a lot of reading on the field you will be studying. The best way of preparing will be to talk to those who have had the experience of being a postgraduate student.

Preparing for the world of work has never been easy, however we have a Career Services office to assist you with CV writing and preparing for interviews. Taking that one step is the one thing you can do. Preparing ahead and knowing where you are headed is very important.

Read and listen for free to the latest edition of [GRADnext](#) packed with information to help you transition over into the next step.

