

#UFSMyAdvice

Kovsies[®]
Advice

OWNERSHIP
+
BELONGING
=
SUCCESS



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UFS
CENTRE FOR TEACHING
AND LEARNING (CTL)

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Check-in note from the Central Advisors

As the UFS continue to prioritize the health and safety of staff and students and preserve the continuity of learning, all student support services have been pivoted to ensure you are supported every step of the way. While many of us continue to work and learn from home, our environments are definitely not the most conducive but with over 400 days into lockdown, don't mind the level, we have survived it all and kept our focus on success.

The UFS is in 2021 still offering an online modality to learning and teaching, reserving face-to-face and mixed-mode classes for courses that are unable to be offered online. This approach allows the University to focus on creating engaging and innovative online experiences while minimizing potential disruptions to learning and teaching. The #UFSLearnOn in 2020 offered emergency responsive support to students to complete the year and this year, the #UFSMyAdvice is aimed as emerging from the emergency to ensure that we do not lose sight of you #SecuringTheGrad and attain holistic success.

With all the pressures 2021 has presented thus far, we surely hope you haven't drowned and forgotten that help is there, the UFS community is ready to help. We encourage that you maximise the FREE student support services packaged for all registered Kopsie students. Tutorial support, mental health support, social support, WriteSite and academic advising support to mention just a few, it is all available when you need it. If you missed the #HelloFirstYear and #HelloSenior guides released in February 2021, catch up with them because they too carry the gems to help you succeed.

This edition of #UFSMyAdvice is packaged such that you reconnect and own why you are here and re-establish a sense of belonging to ensure you succeed.

We hope you enjoy learning and reading this edition!

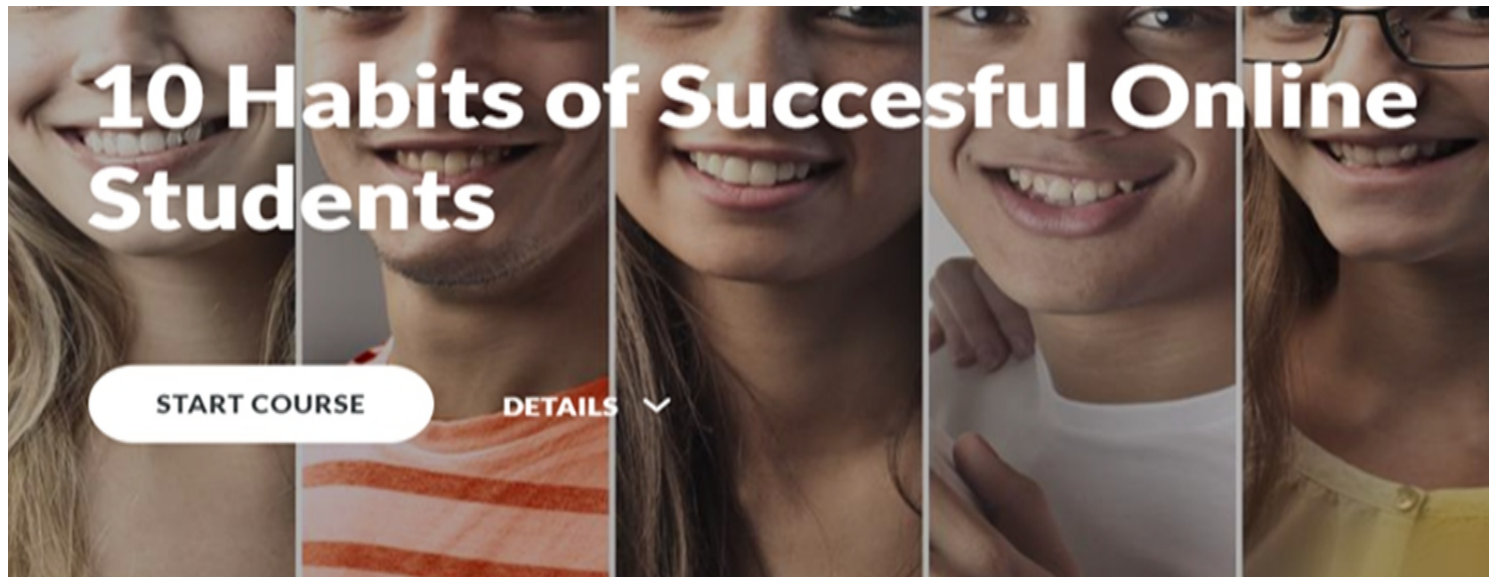
Be a Kopsie and #SecureTheGrad because only a Kopsie knows the feeling.

Best wishes
The Central Advising team

Habits for **success**

Some of you may be feeling like you did not perform as you expected in your continuous assessments, some of you may be feeling slightly overwhelmed regarding your upcoming final assessments and some of you may be feeling like you are not coping with your academics in general. From today onwards, know that your feelings are valid, and the academic advisors are here to help you cope and ensure you still succeed in the 2021 academic year!

Aristotle said: “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit”. All you need are some healthy habits to ensure you become successful in your studies. You can access the online workshop by clicking on “start course” on the image below to help you apply the 10 habits:



As we are nearing the end of semester 1, you also need to ensure that you provide yourself with an opportunity to reflect. Reflecting allows you to make sense of all your experiences throughout the semester — academic, social, and emotional, build metacognition skills and consolidate new learning. You can use the table below to assist you in reflecting on all the significant activities that took place in the semester:

Registration	Ensure you are correctly registered for semester 1. If you are not yet registered for semester 2 modules, then contact your relevant faculty advisors for assistance.
Orientation	Online orientation was to assist you transition and adapt to the 2021 academic year. Should you need to catch-up, access the recordings below: First Years: https://bit.ly/3fPLKqn Senior Students: https://bit.ly/3bVLULO
Computer literacy skills	In order to start with the academic year, you needed to equip yourself with basic computer literacy skills. If you were unable to, don't sweat. Access the skills below: https://www.ufs.ac.za/ctl/home-page/ctl-registration-support-2021/computer-literacy
Classes	Do you have your class timetable? If not, you can access it on PeopleSoft > Student self-service > Student documentation. Use the link below: https://bit.ly/3bX3cYX
Tests and Assignments	Go through your past tests and assignments - celebrate your passes, take note of your mistakes, use those mistakes to revise for future assessments and as motivation to perform better and study smarter in the next semester.

The new normal-being a remote student in a contact university

Anyone will agree with me when I say, remote learning is not for the faint hearted. Only a Kowsie knows the feeling, of rushing to your next lecture at EBW or even Stabilus before those doors close at 10 minutes past the hour to the change of now constantly hearing your lecturers requesting you to "please switch off your microphones", on the collaborate sessions. No part of this transition has been easy. And yet here you are, mastering virtual platforms specially designed to keep us connected even though we are apart.

Online learning has been a challenge for students and universities alike, but it has also helped us develop in our technical skills and many other skills beyond that. Remember, the knowledge and skills you have learned in these trying times will advance beyond graduation, they will give you a competitive edge so take the time to reflect and realize the opportunities of growth in these time of crisis.

As the UFS continues to support its students and produce skillful graduates, so too should you have the desire to level up and make the most of a not so tough situation. Below are a few tips on how you can continue to create pathways to your academic success, even though you may have had to take a detour:

5 Tips on how to continue to succeed as a remote learner:

1. Reach out to your advisor - the advising community (peer advisors, faculty advisors and central advisors) are all here to help you navigate the demands of your academic and personal life so make the most of the services available to you
2. Remain disciplined by staying up to date with your work and not allowing yourself to fall behind
3. Visualize your future - start thinking about how you can enhance many of the skills you have already learned
4. Balance your responsibilities by setting realistic goals - no one knows your potential better than you do and the goals you want to achieve. Working with an advisor helps to create a pathway to success, unique to you.
5. Rest! - Your due dates will still be there when you wake up from your power nap, but the quality of your wellbeing and your work will reflect in how well you take care of yourself

#Advising is here for you

Dear **First –Year**

In ensuring that your journey is as smooth and successful as you have hoped. The Central Academic Advising office at the CTL is still at the heart and part of all stakeholders in the institution. Below is a reflection of one of our academics and a view from a first-year student:

“A reflection by a professional who works with FY students”

Dr Grey Magaiza

Program Director: Faculty of the Humanities

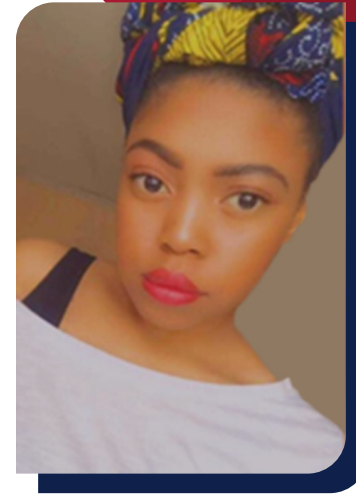
1. Challenges you and your students encounter (online learning):

We experience connectivity issues as a result of persistent power cuts and network challenges. These dual challenges have greatly slowed down the learning process as we have to be very accommodative to enable learning. The other challenge is digital literacy as some of the students are not competent in using the LMS-Blackboard used by the UFS. Although the institution has tried to ensure that the FY cohort is competent on BB, there is still a considerable number that still struggles. Lastly, we have to set up multiple assessment opportunities to ensure that students are not left behind

2. Tips for first year students/What to look out for

All FY students must have the requisite tools to become effective students and these include a laptop. Secondly, they must learn early about the LMS of the institution and how to access it. Thirdly, FY must be capacitated to know how to use data free platforms. Lastly, all FY must be acculturated to the Institution

A reflection by Lungile Ndlovu – how I am fairing thus far



1. Please tell us a bit about yourself.

My name is Lungile Ndlovu, I am a first-year student enrolled for Bachelor of Administration. I am originally from Ladysmith, Ezakheni. I am an extrovert and like exploring new things.

2. How did you hear about Academic Advising office, and also elaborate more on your experience with an Advisor?

My sister is a final year student she is the one that told me about the academic advising office and how much they help her when she is experiencing academic problems.

At first, I was scared to enter her office but as soon as I got in, I felt welcomed and safe. She was so understanding, and willing to help by all means possible. She had this warm smile that made me believe that all will be well soon. She made me regain all the hope I have lost and ensured that I leave her office with a happy soul and a smile on my face. She might not know how much she helped me, but I am truly grateful to have met her. My life took another direction because of her. I got registered and now looking ahead of the future.

3. Which advice can you give to your fellow first year students?

I strongly believe that I'm not the only one who had or have academic problems, so my advice would be first year students should make use of the academic advisors because they help a lot and their advices are eye openers, with the whole pandemic issue first years are lost not sure if they will make it and some have lost hope. Academic advisors can help you on how to find your feet again and they truly understand how it feels like to be a first year in a foreign place.

Senior students **matter**

What is the Senior Orientation programme?

The Senior Orientation is a newly launched programme that facilitates student learning in three general dimensions: transition processes, academic integration, and personal and social integration.

The Senior Orientation at the UFS is designed to help our students successfully navigate their transition by bringing all the important information to one place. The orientation provides students with an opportunity to virtually meet people in the campus community, begin planning their professional development, establish realistic expectations aligned with those of the institution and foster a sense of belonging as senior students.

This orientation is not only intended to centralize information that will get you started on the right path, but aims to connect every senior student to the dynamic support programmes that will enable them to achieve their full potential as well as reach the finish line at the UFS.

How did the idea for this programme originate?

Part of the research that has been conducted by the Centre for Teaching and Learning is a series of insightful conversations with over 165 senior students who helped us to learn more about factors that are helping them succeed during different stages of their student journey. Students told us about how they felt very supported by the institution as first-years but felt that this support suddenly disappeared in their senior years.

Therefore, these conversations inspired the design and launch of the first-ever Senior Orientation that will help our students navigate the different and sometimes challenging university avenues that lead to graduation and success.

Why this fuss about supporting senior students?

We know through research and our own experience as senior students that coming from high school to university as a first-year student is not the only transition that you experience. Moving from one level of study to another or transferring from one campus to another, students are confronted with many transitional moments during their time at university. We also acknowledge that going through a transition is a challenging learning experience in its own right and it is important that we help our senior students build their resilience to successfully negotiate these changes as they navigate to the destination of graduation.

What can students anticipate in the Senior experience programme for the upcoming months?

Students can look out for our live webinar series called **#SecureTheGrad**. The #SecureTheGrad webinars are aimed at re-introducing students to success programmes that exist at the UFS as well as share stories of how the programmes have benefitted other students who have been successful at graduating at the UFS.

Season 2 of the webinars will start in the first week of the second semester, but students can go to BB - success portal to listen to all the season 1 webinars.

If you could give your 2cents to senior students to help them, be successful in their studies, what would it be?

You have made it past the hurdle of matric and first-year, do not give up on getting to the goal of securing that grad. Learn the rules of game and maximize the support and resources at your disposal. You know the saying, "It always seems impossible till it's done".

Well, there you have it! Make sure you join this programme by **Visiting the Senior Student Experience tab** on the Student Success Portal.

Technologies to help **you** succeed

Studying remotely might have come with various challenges, but be assured that various technologies make this new reality a little easier. There is the added advantage that you have academic support at your fingertips 24/7, Blackboard has become helpful in helping you succeed, and there is even a GPS Contact Centre to help you with your modules.

With remote studying, you have academic support at your fingertips 24/7 through a chatbot to answer your questions, as well as short courses developed by academic advisors to help with academic success skills. The UFS chatbot can be reached at 0872406370 to answer your academic questions, and if you do not find the answer, you can reach out to agents for help. The academic advisors further created various short courses to help you with academic success skills such as time management, study skills, exam preparation and many more. These and more are shared sporadically on the [UFS Academic Advising](#) Facebook Page, so keep an eye out for them.

Blackboard has become more than just an added tool for learning, but rather the lifeline for remote studying. It is thus vital that you regularly check your [Blackboard](#) for updates. But did you know that Blackboard has more than just your modules' information? With the #LearnOnSkills Support Organisation under My Organisations, you will find some valuable How-To guides from how to download PDF software and use a fillable PDF, to how to use Blackboard collaboration tools. This Organisation also provides you with some valuable tools and apps to help you succeed, from getting Microsoft Office 365 for your mobile or laptop, to suggesting some apps to help with distractions. Here you are also introduced to the Blackboard app, which is especially useful for its offline capability when the network is problematic.

In addition, there is also a Graduation Positioning Services (GPS) Contact Centre for you to reach tutors for your modules. If you are thus struggling with the module content, you can reach out to tutors through the GPS Contact Centre at 0514012444.

So, let's make this last stretch of the semester count and make use of the various technologies available to help you succeed.

Be the 'A' in **your assessments**

Before we get to the midyear break, and as we approach the assessment finish line for the 1st semester, - Predicate day, these next few weeks and days will be very important to ensuring you successfully obtain that "A" in your remaining assessments. In these easy steps, we have taken from student support experts and students what works and packaged it just for you:

1. Know what it takes to succeed

The UFS Rules for admission to the exam still applies during remote learning. Check with your lecturers or in your module guides what it will take to be successful in the module. A module mark of at least 40% is required for you to write your exam but 50% overall to pass. Furthermore, you must have completed all prescribed subminimum assignments and tests required to pass. Refer to A9.2 in the UFS General Rules ([Click here](#)) and refer to your module guide for all the info to better understand what it will take to succeed.

2. 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. Research has shown that cramming like that does not work as effective as well spaced-out learning 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.

3. 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 on old exams

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-term memory is encoded into long-term memory (needed to write assessments) during sleep³. 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>]

Academic Student Support

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NATIONAL BENCHMARK TEST (NBT) AND ENGLISH ACADEMIC LITERACY (EAL)	THE WRITESITE	BLACKBOARD
UFS NBT office: +27 51 401 2448 (Bloemfontein) E: nbt@ufs.ac.za (Bloemfontein) E: nbtQQ@ufs.ac.za (QwaQwa) Alternatively, contact the call center at +27 51 401 2444	Tel: 051 401 2324/7355 Email: writesite@ufs.ac.za (BFN) writesiteQQ@ufs.ac.za QQ	Tel: +27 51 401 9452 Email: ehelpdesk@ufs.ac.za
LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES	CENTER FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND DISABILITY SUPPORT (CUADS):	
Bloemfontein Campus: +27 51 401 2745/2737 QwaQwa Campus: +27 58 718 5212.	Bloemfontein Campus: +27 51 401 9980 QwaQwa Campus: +27 58 718 5189 South Campus: +27 51 505 718 5189 Email: cuads@ufs.ac.za	

● Career Services Office ●

If you have been wondering how you can develop skills and competencies you will need to be ready to enter the workspace once you have secured your qualification, do not fear the Career Services office has the solution for you.

Whether you are a first year or a senior student, the work-readiness programmes for self-paced studies created by the Career Services office are available for you on Blackboard > My organizations > Career Services = the programmes are open to all registered UFS students.

When selecting **Work Readiness** tutorials, meet **Guy** and pick any one of our great career starter tutorials such as:



Interview Skills



CV Writing



Networking & Job Hunting



Future of Work



Digital World



LinkedIn



Public Speaking

In order to inform you about future career possibilities and opportunities, some faculties have already had their career virtual fairs that are still open to view until December 2021:

Faculty of Law	https://www.ufs.ac.za/supportservices/LawCareerFair21
Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences	https://www.ufs.ac.za/supportservices/NasCareerFair21
Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences	https://www.ufs.ac.za/supportservices/EMSCareerFair21

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CAREER SERVICES

UFS STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



STUDENT COUNSELLING & DEVELOPMENT (SCD)

STEP 1 Access our online resources which cover a variety of topics ranging from academic support to psychological well-being.

#WellbeingWarriors
UFS Student Toolkit
(Available on UFS website)

STEP 2 Make sure of the 24/7 toll-free dedicated SADAG UFS Student Careline

0800 00 6363
SMS 43302
helpline@sadag.org

STEP 3 To schedule an appointment with a Mental Health Professional, please contact us:



Bloemfontein Campus:
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South Campus:
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WriteSite

The Write Site aims to help you with your academic writing needs. The consultants at the Write Site are trained to identify your individual writing needs and work with you to become a better writer, as well as produce improved academic writing assignments.

The services at the Write Site are free of charge, and you are encouraged to visit as often as possible for assistance with your writing tasks throughout your studies at the UFS.

Contact the Writing Centre at Writesite@ufs.ac.za (BFN) or writesiteqq@ufs.ac.za (QQ) to make a booking.

T: +27 51 401 2324/7355 | writesite@ufs.ac.za | www.ufs.ac.za/ctl

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Faculty Support:

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 Education	eduinfo@ufs.ac.za	EDUQQ@ufs.ac.za
 The Humanities	humreg@ufs.ac.za	AdviceHumQQ@ufs.ac.za
 Natural and Agricultural Sciences	nasadvising@ufs.ac.za	nasadvising@ufs.ac.za
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 Theology and Religion	theology@ufs.ac.za	
 Health Sciences	StudentAdminFHS@ufs.ac.za	



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Having Airtime issues? Leave a missed call and
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Working hours: 08:00 – 17:00 (Weekdays)

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