**From school to university – what to expect**

Adapted from: <http://smu.edu/alec/transition.asp> ****

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| **FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL** | **CHOOSING RESPONSIBLY AT UNIVERSITY** |
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| \* Your time is structured by others. | \* You manage your own time. |
| \* You attend ‘classes’. | \* You attend ‘lectures’ and ‘seminars’ and ‘workshops’. |
| \* You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities. | \* *You* must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before. |
| \* Most of your classes are arranged for you. | \* You arrange your own schedule. Schedules tend to look lighter than they really are. |
| \* You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate. | \* Graduation requirements are complex. You are expected to know those that apply to you. |
| \* Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behaviour is out of line. | \* Guiding principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions. |
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| **GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL**  | **SUCCEEDING AT UNIVERSITY**  |
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| \* The school year is long, and divided into terms and half terms. | \* The academic year is divided into two separate 12-week semesters, plus a week after each semester for exams. |
| \* Classes generally have no more than 35 students. | \* Modules may number 100 students or more. |
| \* You may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation. | \* You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each contact hour. |
| \* You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough. | \* You need to review class notes and text material regularly. |
| \* You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class. | \* You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in the lectures and seminars. |
| \* You complete ‘homework’ after school. | \* You do ‘independent study’ in between seminars in preparation for the next seminar. It is not ‘homework’. |
| \* Teachers will check your spelling and grammar regularly. | \* Lecturers will not check your spelling and grammar in your study notes, but they will expect you to present your assessed coursework correctly and professionally. |
| \* Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings. | \* Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so. |
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| **HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS** | **UNIVERSITY LECTURERS** |
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| Are ‘teachers’ and addressed as ‘Miss’ or ‘Sir’ | Are ‘lecturers’ or ‘professors’. Address them as ‘Dr (surname)’ until they say you can call them by their first names.  |
| \* Teachers check your completed homework. | \* Lecturers may not always check your independent study notes, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks in tests. |
| \* Teachers remind you of your incomplete work. | \* Lecturers may not remind you of incomplete work. |
| \* Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance. | \* Lecturers are open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance. |
| \* Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class. | \* Lecturers expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours. |
| \* Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students. | \* Lecturers have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research. |
| \* Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent. | \* Lecturers expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed. |
| \* Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook. | \* Lecturers may not follow a textbook. Instead, to amplify the text, they may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying. Or they may expect *you* to relate the classes to textbook readings. |
| \* Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes. | \* Lecturers may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When lecturers write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Good notes are a must. |
| \* Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process. | \* Lecturers expect you to think about and synthesize seemingly unrelated topics. |
| \* Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates. | \* Lecturers expect you to read, save, and consult the module handbook; the handbook (on Studynet) spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded. |
| \* Guiding principle: High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills. | \* Guiding principle: University is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned. |
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| **TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL** | **ASSESSMENT AT UNIVERSITY** |
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| \* Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. | \* Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the lecturer, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular module may have only 2 or 3 assessments in a semester. |
| \* Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events. | \* lecturers in different modules usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other modules or outside activities. |
| \* Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts. | \* Lecturers rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant, one who comes prepared with questions. |
| \* Guiding principle: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve. | \* Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems. |
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