

## Self-motivation & Independent Study

Learning how to motivate yourself to work independently is one of the most valuable skills you can have. It's not only important for your future job, but it's also a beneficial skill to have in general. University is the perfect time for you to learn that. There will be deadlines, for sure, but you will be expected to do most of the work yourself. While you will get the foundations of what you need to know from lectures (presentations to large groups of people) and seminars (smaller group discussions), a big part of what you learn at university will come from your independent study. The library will be your best friend – you'll spend hours upon hours there browsing through the literature, so make sure you pick a subject you enjoy. You'll need to learn how to motivate yourself as well, since working on your own can be quite challenging sometimes, even when you love what you're learning.

I'll be sharing some tips which have worked for me to make sure I am motivated to get my work done.

### 1. Ways to motivate yourself

#### - Have goals and commit to them

It's essential to think about the goals you want to achieve during the academic year. "Why is it so important to be so specific?" you might ask. Well, because it's a lot easier to achieve something when you have a clear end goal to strive towards. Perhaps you want to write the best essays or want to graduate with a first class degree (the highest grade available): always have goals and make sure you're organised and committed to achieving them. It's far too easy to let the days flow and not do anything until the last minute, but this is why it's important to have goals and to try to do your best to achieve them.



#### - Join a good study group

Having a good study group can help you greatly. You can motivate each other to do your work and to do it well; and you can help each other along the way too. However, make sure you study with a group of students who are keen to get the work done and who won't distract you too much. There might be some trial and error until you find the best study mates, but once you do – stick with them and you can work together to ace those assessments.

#### - Reward yourself at the end of the day

Whether it be going out with your mates or treating yourself to a pizza, make sure you have something to look forward to at the end of your study day. This will keep you motivated to do your work quickly and not slack off. My idea of a reward to look forward to is cooking some nice food and eating it in front of my favourite TV show; when I'm struggling to get things done, I remind myself of what I've got planned and gives me a reason to stay focused.



- **Stay positive**

Possibly the most important advice anyone could give you. Being positive about your work and future helps you work harder and gets you to focus more on achieving your goals. By being negative, you could easily fall into a state where you don't believe that anything would matter in the long run. This is why having a positive attitude would be very helpful for your academic career. The University has student-led Growth Mind-set workshops which you can complete in order to help you stay positive. They can be found online here: <https://www.essex.ac.uk/schools-and-colleges/sixth-form/resources>.

## 2. How to study independently

- **Schedule your days**

The easiest way to get behind on your work is by not having a plan. Scheduling your days from morning until evening can help with that. Personally, I like to write everything down in a physical planner, but there are great digital alternatives as well. And an important note here - don't forget to schedule breaks between each study session!



- **Be realistic**

It's easy to overestimate how much you can get done in one day. Planning to study five chapters from five different modules might sound like a good idea, but chances are that this will overwhelm you very quickly. A little bit every day for a longer period is much better for achieving your goals, as it'll help you process the information. Cramming everything into two days may seem very appealing but you'll find that you struggle to take in the information and recall it when you need to.

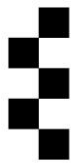
- **Start early**

If there is any advice that I give myself and always follow, it's this one. If you know you have an assignment due in a month, don't start a couple of days before the deadline. Always plan your time beforehand and start earlier than you think you need to. Even if you don't start writing on the day it has been assigned, make sure you start planning and researching the task. This is especially important when you have several assignments due on the same week. Starting with plenty of time means that you can make sure you have a clear understanding of both the topic and what you want to write before the writing process even begins, meaning you'll be more likely to achieve a good grade.



- **Have a designated study space**

Having a special study space can "get you in the zone." Your mind will automatically know that you have to start studying because that's what you always do in that specific place. Personally, I prefer to work



University of Essex

WINNER  
UNIVERSITY  
OF THE YEAR

THE AWARDS  
2018

in my student accommodation, but some people find their bed too tempting! If that's you, then there are some great alternatives on campus. Some students choose to study in at the library or in study spaces; at the University of Essex, we have plenty of study space in the Silberrad Student Centre. Both of these places are great options for when you need a quiet study space.

Yoana,  
University of Essex Student

[Click here to chat live to staff and students from the University of Essex \(including Yoana\)!](#)

**Colchester Campus**

Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester CO4 3SQ  
United Kingdom

T 01206 873333

**www.essex.ac.uk**

 @Uni\_of\_Essex

 /uniofessex

 /uniofessex