The University Portal

• Make sure that you become familiar with the University Portal (portal.stir.ac.uk), which will give you access to lots of university resources.
Succeed

• The most important from an academic point of view is SUCCEED, the University’s web-based learning environment:

  • information about your modules (course materials, lecture times, announcements etc.) will be distributed on Succeed;

  • you will need to submit electronic copies of your assessments through Succeed.

• (You may hear references to WebCT - this was the old name for Succeed)
Your Timetable

• Each semester, students study *three modules* (sometimes two if your home university approves):

  • these modules may be all in one subject area, or all in different areas.

• Each module should have a *course handbook* (available on Succeed):

  • this gives specific details of class times, course books you should buy, assessments etc.

  • use the My Teaching Timetable Generator (on Succeed) to see when your lectures are scheduled.

• Your Division/School should also have a Divisional/School Handbook.
Teaching

• Teaching takes place in a number of different formats, depending on the modules you’re taking:

  • **Lectures**: the basis of teaching in the first years of your programme.

  • **Seminars** and **Tutorials**: smaller discussion groups which supplement lectures. These require a much greater degree of involvement from you, both in preparing work beforehand and participating in the discussions.

  • **Lab Sessions**: practical classes where you carry out experiments under supervision.

  • **Fieldwork Excursions/Practical Labs**: going into the field to get hands-on experience.

  • **Film Screenings**
Lectures

• Lectures are taught in large groups.
  
  • Lecture notes are often available beforehand (on Succeed): these will give you an outline of what will be covered.

  • Listen to the lecturer and take your own notes; laptops and tablets normally ok.

  • Look at the suggested readings (on Succeed) to find out more about the topics raised.

• Some lectures are recorded (Listen Again) so that you can replay them in your own time.
Seminars / Tutorials

• Seminars are taught in smaller groups.

• The Timetable Generator schedules lectures, but you will also need to sign up to particular seminar groups (See your module handbooks for details).

• Seminars allow the class to discuss particular issues raised in the lectures in more depth, to ask questions of the tutor, and to give you practical experience in the topic.

• There will often be preparatory work you need to do before the seminars: texts to read, or exercises to complete: make sure you do this beforehand!

• Seminars will allow you to gain confidence in discussing topics, and to develop your skills in oral communication and argumentation as well as group/teamworking.
Lab Sessions

• In Science subjects, you will typically also have lab sessions.

  • You may have to to *sign up* for lab sessions at particular times (see your module handbooks for details)

• Lab sessions will give you practical, hands-on experience in a particular topic:

  • you will be able to participate in and carry out experiments under supervision;

  • you’ll also develop your computational and analytic skills.
Attendance at Classes

• It’s important that you attend **all** your classes:
  
  • make sure you know where and when they take place (including which building they are in!)

• Some classes are especially important:
  
  • compulsory seminars and fieldwork trips;
  
  • prescribed seminars and tutorials.

• You should not miss these classes **without a very good reason.**
Class Times

• Most classes are scheduled in one-hour slots (e.g. 10-11am, 2-3pm). Note that sometimes the 24-hour clock may be used (e.g. 1000-1100; 1400-1500). Learn what this means!

• What this actually means:
  
  • they begin at five minutes past the hour (e.g. 10:05)
  
  • they end at five minutes to the hour (e.g. 10:55)

• This gives you ten minutes between classes, so that you can get between Pathfoot and Cottrell if necessary.
Independent Study

• As well as the scheduled classes, you should be working on your own or with classmates.

• You should aim to be working on your modules for about 35 hours a week.

• The amount of independent study required varies dramatically, depending on the modules you’re taking:
  
  • in Arts and Humanities modules, you are expected to do about 5 hours independent study for every hour in class;
  
  • in Science modules, the ratio is probably more like 1:1.
Assessment

- Modules can be assessed using many different techniques:
  - exams;
  - coursework essays and exercises;
  - oral presentations;
  - class tests;
  - practicals and labs.
Assessment

• Your modules will use a combination of these methods for assessment. You might have:

  • an essay and an exam; or a class test, a lab test and an exam;

  • or a language test and an exam; or an essay and a presentation; or two essays.

• Look in your module handbooks to see exactly what your assessment is.

• **DO NOT MISS** deadlines: there are penalties for late work.

  • If you are going to miss a deadline, contact your tutor beforehand!
Grading

• The University has a Common Grading Scheme for all modules:

  • grades are classified into broad classes, with a three-way sub-classification (high, mid, low) within each.

• Grading in the UK is typically lower than in other countries (particularly the US):

  • first class (1; excellent) grades are unusual;

  • you may find that your grades are lower than you expect from your home institution.


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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>2B</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>2.2</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2D</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2E</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Grade</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Plagiarism

• Often you will have to submit your work for assessment both electronically and on paper:
  
  • Electronic versions must be submitted through the plagiarism detection software TurnItIn (on Succeed).

• **Plagiarism is cheating**, by taking someone else’s work and presenting it as yours without acknowledgment. This is a **very serious offence**.
  
  • Each case of plagiarism is graded for severity and receives penalty points.
  
  • The university runs a *cumulative* penalty scheme for each student.
Plagiarism Penalties
## Plagiarism Penalties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strong admonishment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Downgrade assessment by one class (i.e. 3A➔4A). No resubmission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Fail module, grade 5C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Fail module, unable to graduate with Honours.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Required to leave the University.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Misconceptions about Plagiarism

“As long as I put the source in the bibliography, it’s OK.”

You must refer to the source specifically, in a footnote or in brackets. Include the page reference (or weblink).

NO

“It’s OK as long as the words are different.”

You must also acknowledge other people’s ideas by referencing them.

NO

“Cutting and pasting from the web doesn’t count.”

You must say where on the web you got it from, and specify the date you got it.

NO

“If I translate it from another language, then it’s OK.”

You must acknowledge where you got all your material from.

NO

• The University has produced a very helpful book, which tells you how to avoid plagiarism: www.quality.stir.ac.uk/documents/BookofPlagiarism.pdf

• Make sure you read and understand this book, so that you don’t plagiarise.
Help!

• If you need help with anything while at University, there are many places you can go. You can find information about all of them on the Portal.

• Your first port of call should be your module coordinators or the divisional offices for each subject.

• Your next stop should be the International Office.

• For academic advice, you should speak to Student Learning Services, or one of your Departmental Advisers.

• For help and counselling, contact Student Development and Support Services, or the Students’ Union Advice and Support Centre.

• For help with any kind of disability, including stress and anxiety, speak to Disability Services.
And finally…

- Enjoy your time at Stirling — it’s a great place to study and to make friends.