



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

***Adapting Well: how to
manage and make the
most of your student
experience***

***A self- study resource
for all students***



Welcome

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1. Your learning and teaching environment

Your university learning and teaching environment

Perhaps you are entering into a new learning and teaching environment now or thinking about one you will experience in the future. Before beginning something new or looking to the future it is helpful to look back and reflect. Reflection is *more* than simply remembering . . .

Remembering

My first semester was awful. I couldn't keep up with what the lecturer was saying and struggled to understand things right away.

Reflecting

My first semester taught me that it's ok not to understand something right away and that this is actually part of learning. I don't worry anymore when this happens as I know that my university learning experience is supposed to take me out of my comfort zone like that.

Reflecting with the STAR-L format

- **STAR-L** helps us to reflect as it moves our focus from describing to evaluating and thinking about our learning:
- Situation
- Task
- Action
- Result
- **Learning**

Learning from reflection

Think back to a previous learning environment/experience and a particular situation. Think through each step of **STAR-L** and ask yourself how you can apply this learning to your present environment

Situation

Task

Action

Result

Learning

Reflection is . . .

A powerful tool as it helps to unearth our assumptions which we may not be aware of.

Assumptions can be:

Wrong

Limiting

Stress inducing

Negative

and can:

Generate more work for us by sending us on the wrong path

Knowing your learning and teaching environment

If only I had known that then!

“Interviewer: do you have a lot of independent reading to do?

Student: Yeah (sighs) I feel like it’s **physically impossible** to do. It’s just **way too much**. . . It’s just **impossible** to keep up with”*

*International undergraduate student in University of Edinburgh study on student transitions (Internal Report, 2014)

Knowing your teaching and learning environment

“It’s really hard because all of the lectures and then your self study and you think that you have to spend all of your time on it . . . like I’ll be making dinner and I’ll be thinking oh **I should be studying** and Wednesday was my free day and I had to do my washing like there was no other choice because I was running out of things and thinking **I should be studying right now** but I can’t . . . ”*

*International undergraduate student in University of Edinburgh study on student transitions (Internal Report, 2014)

Knowing your new teaching and learning environment

Realisation:

For this particular course, this student wasn't expected to read **everything** on her reading list, but had assumed that the reading list was prescriptive. It wasn't.

Understanding your learning and teaching environment

- A good place to start whether you are an undergraduate or postgraduate is the Scottish Credit Qualifications Framework (**SCQF**)
- The **SCQF** details expectations in 5 areas (e.g. communication) for each level of programme at the University of Edinburgh

Understanding your learning and teaching environment with the SCQF

- Undergraduate: SCQF level 8 and level 10
- Postgraduate: SCQF level 11
- Doctorate (PhD): SCQF level 12
- Available at: <http://scqf.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/SCQF-Revised-Level-Descriptors-Aug-2012-FINAL-web-version1.pdf>
- If you would like help to build your skills/confidence in any of these areas, the IAD offers resources, workshops and one- to -one consultations:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/institute-academic-development>

Understanding your learning and teaching environment

Find out more about your learning and teaching environment by listening to the experience of and guidance from former students:

- <http://www.ed.ac.uk/studying>

Who can I speak to if I have questions?

