



Coffee with Caroline

Caroline Topham

Programme Lead Dr Caroline Topham has been hosting “Coffee with Caroline” drop-in sessions for students to discuss their wellbeing. In this article, Caroline answers some of your queries. Have more? Email c.h.topham@salford.ac.uk

Is practising past papers enough for the exam?

Practicing past papers can certainly help with exam preparation, as it gives you a feel for how to structure information in your answer. In particular if you have long answer/essay style questions in your exam then practicing essay writing is so helpful as some students really struggle to display their knowledge about a subject, as they don't communicate it clearly in their writing. When we mark essays or reports we need to clearly understand what is being written, with good grammar, spelling and sentence structure. If we can't make sense of it we can't assign marks! The university offers a lot of support with writing skills, ranging from online tutorials to weekly writing courses with Wordscope, have a look at this link:

<https://www.salford.ac.uk/skills/writing-support>

What is the best way to organise a study schedule?

How to best organise your study schedule will be personal to you, as we all have different competing demands on our time; family, work, studies, friends, hobbies, religious commitments, voluntary work, the list can be endless! Some things to think about which may help;

1. When are you most productive? Mornings or evenings? Prioritise studying at these times if you can.
2. Remember to schedule breaks, having that reward to work towards can really help. I sometimes use the pomodoro technique if I need extra incentive to concentrate on a task: <https://todoist.com/productivity-methods/pomodoro-technique>
3. Work on your time management skills in order to make the most of the time you have available, see this short course:

<https://www.salford.ac.uk/skills/personal-effectiveness>

How to deal with homesickness?

Homesickness can be tough for students, but there are a few things you can try which may ease the sad feelings, this blog has some great ideas: <https://www.savethestudent.org/international-students/tips-to-deal-with-home-sickness.html>. Reach out the people around you if you can, your personal tutor and your tutor group could be a good place to start. You might also find some other students on our course from your home town, we are a big programme so it's very likely! It can be nice to chat to someone from home. If your homesick feelings are stopping you from doing things and studying then you might need some support from our Wellbeing team, who would be happy to support you:

<https://www.salford.ac.uk/askus/topics/wellbeing-and-counselling>

Any quick, simple recipes for students?

I love recipes where you just chuck everything in a tray, put it in the oven and then something delicious comes out! I often make a veggie chilli like this adapted from Rukmini Iyer's 'The Green Roasting Tin':

Roughly chop a box of mushrooms (250g) an onion and a pepper and mix with a packet of fajita or chilli seasoning, some oil and a big pinch of salt. Roast for 25 mins at 180 degrees in a deep roasting tray or oven dish. Then add 1 tin of cannellini beans, 1 tin of black beans, 1 tin of kidney beans (drain all the beans before adding) and 2 tins of chopped tomatoes to the tray, mix it up and put back in the oven for another 35 mins. Have it with some yoghurt, nachos and lime squeezed over, and if you're feeling fancy you can add some fresh coriander and avocado too. Enjoy!