

**UNIVERSITY
OF WARWICK**

School of Life Sciences



Postgraduate Student Handbook

Made for students, by students



Hello...

Congratulations on your acceptance to the University of Warwick and Welcome to the School of Life Sciences!

Starting a postgraduate degree – whether it's a taught Master's or a research-based PhD – is an exciting step, but it can also feel overwhelming at first. We understand how much there is to take in, especially if you're navigating a new academic environment, adjusting to life in the UK, or returning to education after a break. Many of us have been in your shoes, and we've created this handbook to help smooth your transition.

This guide is written *by postgrads, for postgrads* – pulling together practical tips and insights into life as a Postgraduate at SLS. It covers everything from making the most of your supervision or seminars, to where to find community, well-being support, and the best places to take a break on campus.

We know postgraduate life can be both incredibly rewarding and uniquely challenging. Whether you're here to dive deeper into a subject you love, build a research career, or explore new career paths – this handbook is here to support you every step of the way.

If you're an international student or the first in your family to pursue a postgraduate degree, this space might feel unfamiliar. We hope this handbook also helps you explain your journey to friends and family and reminds you that you belong here.

Wishing you a fulfilling and supported time at Warwick.

Shristi Sharma

PhD Researcher, School of Life Sciences
Student Network Lead – Community & Culture
2024-26

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Creating your own Postgraduate University Experience

This is more than just a place to expand your academic expertise—it's a space for intellectual curiosity, interdisciplinary exploration, and personal growth.

At the postgraduate level, learning takes on new depth. You'll engage critically with cutting-edge research, challenge assumptions (including your own), and contribute new knowledge to your field. But alongside that, you'll also refine how you work, how you think, and how you navigate complexity—not just in science, but in yourself.

Pursuing postgraduate study is a remarkable achievement and a bold step forward. It's also inherently demanding. You'll encounter moments of uncertainty, unexpected outcomes, and the occasional misstep—both in the lab and in life. This is not only expected, but also essential to the process.

So, embrace a mindset of experimentation. Try. Adapt. Reflect. Iterate. Growth at this level isn't always linear—and that's okay.

Above all, remember, you're not alone. This is a rich and collaborative academic community. There are networks of support, resources, and individuals—staff and students alike—who are here to help you succeed and thrive. Wishing you every success on your postgraduate journey.

You've earned your place here—now make the most of it.



SCHOOL OF LIFE SCIENCES STUDENT NETWORKS



Student Networks at SLS are communities of students who promote a more inclusive and equitable campus. There are the Ethnicity, Disability, Gender Equality and Identity, and Community and Culture networks. Each are run by student leads (many of whom wrote this handbook).



"Hi, I'm Esther, a Biological Sciences graduate and previous Gender Equality and Identity network lead. Our aim is to make the School of Life Sciences as welcoming and inclusive as possible, so that students of all identities feel represented and empowered within the department.

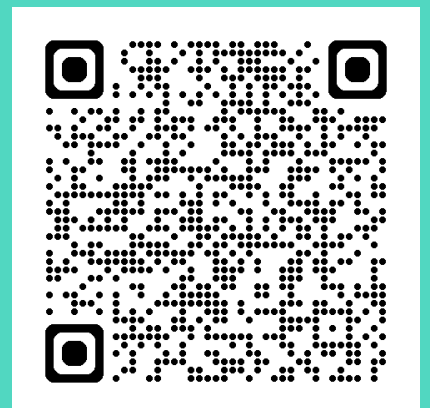
An academic institution fostering a sense of inclusivity and belonging is crucial to allow this support to develop. For many students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, attending university is extremely intimidating. Therefore, having student networks to implement their lived experiences to help foster an inclusive and friendly environment makes it easier for students to build connections with others, allowing us to flourish and reach our academic potential. These networks engaging students means that we are more likely to feel valued by the department, contributing to the overall positive experience at Warwick."

Could you be one of the next student network leads in the School of Life Sciences?
Keep an eye out for opportunities to join or apply for roles when you arrive.

You can listen to our Director of Student Experience (Sam) talking about the Student Networks and this very handbook:

Presentation to Royal Society of Biology on our Inclusive Education activity:
<https://youtu.be/7-b3wuK8TAM?si=M2sj9HwAJv8TZrXq>

Podcast Episode for UEA "Voices of Belonging":
<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2m0K3Cr6Qu8ZBRSdwaGozA?si=wGBmv-8rQZStEDd73--kpQ>





Part I – Welcome to SLS

Gibbet Hill and SLS

Gibbet Hill is home to the School of Life Science and Warwick Medical School. Just off the Central campus, Gibbet Hill is a short walk through Tocil Woods (there is a proper path with lampposts, making it accessible for wheelchair users and bikes).

Gibbet Hill is filled with undergraduates and a range of teaching, technical, and research staff; Master's and PhD Students; and a team of support staff who keep Gibbet Hill a clean and functioning place to work, live and learn.

Gibbet Hill has:

1300+ Undergraduate students

150+ Taught Master's students

350+ research students

150+ academic staff including teaching fellows and research-focused academics

100+ professional, technical and operational services staff.

Postgraduate study at the School of Life Sciences may feel quite different from your previous academic experience—whether that was at university, in industry, or along another path. No matter how you arrived here, know that you are not alone in adapting to the pace, independence, and expectations that define this next phase of your journey.

At this level, you are treated—and trusted—as an academic peer in training. The structure is less prescriptive than what you may be used to. You're responsible for managing your time, attending lectures and workshops, meeting deadlines, and proactively seeking out opportunities for growth. No one will check up on you daily, but there's a rich network of support ready to step in—provided you reach out. That might mean dropping an email to a lecturer, engaging with your cohort, asking for feedback, or simply turning up and participating.

From student to student: we know it's not always smooth. Life happens. Research is unpredictable. Energy ebbs and flows. So do what you can, when you can, with the tools, insight, and challenges that are uniquely yours.

Growth here doesn't come from perfection—it comes from perseverance.

The more intentional you are with your time, connections, and curiosity, the more you'll gain from your time with us at Warwick.

Follow us on Instagram @warwicklifesci



Places, Spaces and Faces

Coming to SLS, you will meet many new faces and explore many new spaces. Here are some of the key people at SLS and main places over at Gibbet Hill Campus.



Professor Gary Bending
Head of School



Dr Graham Teakle
Director of Postgraduate Studies



Dr Antonia Sagona
Associate Director of Postgraduate Studies



Dr Sophie Martucci
Director of Academic Support



Dr Samantha Wilson-Thain
Director of Student Experience



Dr Marwan Albuhtori
Senior Tutor



Professor Rosemary Collier
Course Director Food Security



Dr Hendrik Schaefer
Course Director Environmental Bioscience in a Changing Climate



Professor George Bassell
Course Director Biotechnology, Bioprocessing and Business Management / Medical Biotechnology and Business Management

The IBRB

The Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building (IBRB) is the newest building on Gibbet Hill Campus. The building has five-storeys of laboratories, each floor representing a different theme: neuroscience, infection, cell biology, plus a 400-seat lecture theatre and social spaces. Also, it is good to know that there is a café and washroom facilities downstairs.



Café Gibbet Hill

Café Gibbet Hill is the cafeteria and coffee bar. It serves **breakfast, lunch and coffee** and has many tables to sit and eat. There is also a microwave for students and staff who bring their own lunch. Café Gibbet Hill also participates in **TooGoodToGo** so affordable mystery food bags from the café can be purchased on the app.



The GLTs

There are several Gibbet Hill Lecture Theatres or 'GLTs' located in the main SLS building. GLTs are used for lectures, as well as talks, BioCafé sessions and other functions at SLS.

ICL Suite

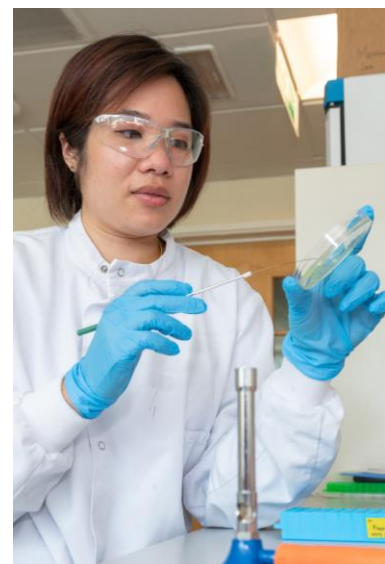
The Interactive Computational Learning (ICL) suite is a computer room where some dry lab and quantitative skill modules take place. When not in use for teaching, the ICL suite is open to students.

The Biomed Grid

The Biomed Grid is the main study space at Gibbet Hill. Open every day, including weekends, the **Biomed grid has PCs**, many of the key textbooks for Life Science students, as well as **print, scan and copy machines**.

SLS Quiet Study Hub

The SLS Quiet study space at Gibbet Hill. Open every day, This is a great space to study or write, there is lots of natural light and space. The SLS student experience team often leave snacks and drinks during busy times of the year.



Departmental Support

There is a range of support and resources for students at SLS. Here is a summary of just a few of the opportunities offered. Be sure to check emails and newsletters to keep up to date with different opportunities as well.

Mentorship Programme

As a post-graduate, you will be assigned a PhD student at SLS to be your mentor, someone you can go to for advice about your studies, practicals, career plans, anything to do with life sciences. At the start of the year there will be an event in which you can meet them.

Careers Department

The Careers and Skills Team provides opportunities including one-to-one careers guidance, networking events and talks, help with CV and cover letter writing and applications for internships and jobs.

Moodle Forums

Moodle Forums are where you can ask Module Leads questions about a specific module and concept. They are found on each Module Moodle Page. Forums are sometimes 'quiet' but be brave and ask questions if you have them – chances are other students are wondering the same thing!

Academic Essentials (new for 2026)

If you are seeking specific support to support your academic development, there are a whole host of resources on this page: [Academic Essentials](#)

Academic Support Librarian

Academic Support Librarians are information experts who you can contact for any questions about literature and database searches, selecting trusted sources and information about references and avoiding plagiarism. At SLS, Sam Johnson and Chris Bark are our Academic Support Librarians and can be contacted by email:

samantha.a.johnson@warwick.ac.uk

chris.bark@warwick.ac.uk

Quantitative Biology Centre (QuBiC)

The Quantitative Biology Centre (QuBiC) is an online drop-in programme where you can ask PhD students and experts questions about data handling, statistics and anything quantitative (number-based). It is available for all students at all levels. It is run daily and drop-in times are available on the QuBiC Moodle Page.

Student networks

Run by students for students, the networks (page 4) offer opportunities to connect with others with shared values. Previously we have run cake and craft sessions, network breakfasts and other activities to help strengthen our community. The networks connect directly to the Schools EDI committee.

Who to ask?

If you are ever unsure where to go for support, who to ask or even what type of support you might need, please speak to your personal tutor or the educational support services team, who will be happy to help find the answer.

You can email: slspgt@warwick.ac.uk



Modes of Department Communication

Staying up-to-date with the range of information across different mediums can be overwhelming. Here are some of the ways SLS communicates with us students. Our advice - stay on top of emails and communications and skim/scan them. Look for key words and opportunities/information that are relevant to you. It doesn't take as long as you think and will mean you stay informed about both important information and exciting opportunities.

Personal Tutor

Often, it is your Personal Tutor who will alert you of any important information or opportunities. They may tell you in person or forward you opportunities via email. Communicate with your personal tutor about your scientific interests and career aspirations. That way, they can help you find the best opportunities for you.

Emails

Getting into a habit of checking your emails is extremely important because emails are the most common way information is relayed to you. Email communication may be Newsletters from the Student Communication Team highlighting opportunities and events across the University, or the Life Sciences Careers & Placements Team highlighting different jobs, research projects and internships in the Careers Round-Up. Particularly useful is the weekly (during term time only) Updates, so do take a moment to scan through them.

MS Teams

MS Teams is another point of communication for the department. MS Teams houses the Virtual Notice Board (VNB) information, events, activities, and opportunities. These are posted in the VNB daily under different channels, e.g. Events, Things to Do, Careers and Placements. It's a good information resource, especially over the holidays when the UG Updates don't happen. MS Teams is also used by the Student Networks for communication (see page 4).

MyWarwick App

Sometimes, you will get alerts via the MyWarwick App, notifying you about Central Campus activities, events, careers, networking fairs, etc. You may also get reminders for deadline submissions. The MyWarwick app also shows weather, bus times, and the spaces available in study spaces including the BioMed Grid, so it is an important app to download.



The International Student Perspective

Warwick brings together students from across the world into one vibrant, multidisciplinary department. Here, we celebrate both academic curiosity and cultural diversity, values that are essential to modern science.

Starting your Life Sciences degree at Warwick as an international post-graduate student is more than just adapting to a new academic system; it's an opportunity to grow, connect, and thrive in a global community of future scientists, researchers, and changemakers.

Adjusting to the UK's academic style can take time. You'll find that lectures are complemented by independent study, practical lab work, and group tutorials. If you're accustomed to a different system, don't worry - you're not alone.

The **School of Life Sciences (SLS)** offers:

- Academic skills workshops for lab report writing, scientific presentations, and data analysis
- Dedicated **personal tutors** who guide you throughout your degree
- Drop-in sessions and peer mentoring from older students who understand your journey

Engage in as much as possible to get the most out of your degree. Communicate with the academics if you are unsure of something, they are here to help. You don't have to call them 'Sir/Madam', use their first name or if they've made a preference known then you can call them Dr/Professor (insert last name).

Words from Your Fellow Students

- “Ask questions! — your lecturers really do want to help.”
- “Lab partners can become lifelong friends. Be open and collaborative.”
- “Try something outside science — volunteering, student radio, even a dance class. It helps with balance.”

Finding Your People

Science thrives on collaboration, and so does your experience at Warwick. From Day 1, you'll be part of a cohort that learns and grows together.

Join:

- The SLS Student Networks! (The ones who wrote this handbook!)
- Warwick PGSoc, BioSoc and NeuroSoc— for socials, academic talks, and networking.
- **International Student events** — from Global Café to cultural potlucks.

Many Life Sciences students also join **cultural societies**, language exchange groups, and volunteering programmes, helping you build friendships across disciplines and backgrounds.



British Culture Shocks

Most international students, especially those who would have attended an international school prior, will most likely have been taught in American English. Also, with most of the media being American-centric, the British accent and slang may take some time to get used to. Here are some of the lingo and words I have learned over the years:

“You alright?”

This sort of means *how are you*, but really, they’re not really asking if you’re alright – it's just a greeting, just respond with “good, and you?”

Other Useful Lingo

- Hob = stove
- Hoover = vacuum cleaner
- Till = cashier
- Sweets = candy (*this one isn't a big difference but a few people have said it was funny I refer to it as “candy”*)
- Jumper = sweater
- Crisps = Chips
- Chips = Fries

The Drinking Culture

The UK is arguably most known for its heavy drinking culture so part of me did expect it upon coming here but it’s still quite a shock seeing how often students drink, especially in Warwick with events such as Circling and Kasbah Mondays. It’s also quite normal for people to drink during events! I remember going to a comedy show during my first few months here and seeing at least 80% of the audience with a drink in their hands. Alcoholic drinks are also surprisingly allowed in concerts!

Talking About Time

British people tend to say things like “half-six” or “quarter to nine” instead of “6.30” or “8.45”.

Sunday Closing Time

A lot of places, e.g. shops, close at around 4pm on Sunday (and some do not open at all on Sundays). This was something I learned the hard way.

The weather!

The weather in the UK can be really 'moody', you never really know what you are going to get. Use layers to cope with the changing conditions.



The Commuting Student Experience

Here are some helpful tips for students choosing to live off campus or staying at home in their first year. We hope that these things will help you to find a rhythm to your time on campus. If you find that something is missing or you aren't sure where to go, you can ask your personal tutor or the SLS student experience team (sls.se@warwick.ac.uk).

Plan your day before you arrive.

When you have a commute, every trip to campus counts. Try to group lectures, study sessions, society activities, and meetings together where possible. Having a clear plan helps you make the most of your time on campus and reduces unnecessary travel. Talk to your personal tutor if you need help with this.

Build in extra time for delays.

Public transport can be unpredictable, and traffic happens. If you can, aim to arrive a little earlier than you need to, particularly for assessments, presentations, or group work. A small buffer can make your day much less stressful. There are places to shower on campus should you need this facility, for example downstairs in the IBRB building.

Find your on-campus base.

Having a regular place to study between classes can make campus feel more like your own space. Whether it's the library, a quiet study space, or a favourite café, finding somewhere comfortable can help you settle into your day. The SLS quiet study space is a good example of this. It's out of the way and has a water cooler and fridge should you want to keep your lunch somewhere.

Make use of gaps between classes.

Rather than viewing gaps in your timetable as dead time, use them to review lecture notes, work on assignments, meet with classmates, or prepare for upcoming sessions. This can free up time when you get home. You could also just take a gentle walk through the beautiful Tocil Woods on Gibbet Hill campus and observe the wildlife.

Think about food and refreshments.

A long day on campus can become expensive if you're buying food and drinks throughout the day. Bringing a packed lunch, snacks, and a reusable water bottle can save money and ensure you have what you need when your schedule is busy. In SLS there are kitchen areas and microwaves to heat food. We also have a community cupboard and fridge where you can pick up things for FREE such as coffee sachets, teabags and often snacks, so do take advantage of these.

Use your journey productively—but don't overdo it.

Travel time can be useful for light activities such as checking emails, reviewing notes, listening to podcasts, or reading. Equally, sometimes the best use of the journey is simply to relax and switch off.

Perhaps most importantly...

Stay connected to your course community.

It can sometimes feel harder to build friendships when you're not living on campus. Make use of group chats, course societies, study groups, and social events. Even attending one or two activities regularly can help you feel part of the university community.

Look after your wellbeing.

Commuting can be tiring. Make sure you allow yourself time to rest and avoid feeling pressured to stay on campus late every day. It's okay to head home after your commitments are complete.

Don't be afraid to ask for support.

If your commute is affecting your attendance, wellbeing, or ability to engage with your studies, speak to your Personal Tutor, Student Experience team, or departmental support staff. There may be adjustments, advice, or support available.

Remember that you're not the only commuter student.

Many students travel to campus from home, and others may be facing similar challenges. Reaching out and sharing experiences can help you discover practical tips, new friendships, and a greater sense of belonging.



Part II – **Academic Info**

FAQs about Postgraduate study

Post-graduate study can be very different to undergrad, especially if you're an international student. Here, we answer some common questions to help you get ready!

How will I be taught?

Lectures

Given in the form of 50-minute talks by an academic to up to 100 students, these occur in lecture theatres. Most content in SLS is taught this way. See the next page for advice about how to learn from lectures

Seminars

Interactive teaching delivered to a small group of students.

Workshops

Interactive task-based teaching sessions. These can involve working individually or in groups.

What will my typical weekly schedule look like?

For the first two terms of the year, a typical taught post-graduate timetable will consist of 6-9 hours of module lectures or seminars a week, spread over 3 or 4 days. Usually, for postgrads and undergrads, Wednesdays are free from these, to make time for society events, but not always, and things like dissertation supervisor meetings might still be scheduled then. Rather than studying many modules at once, all your lectures/seminars will be on one module for two weeks, then move on to a different module for the next two weeks, and so on. Also, in terms 1 and 2 will be post-graduate events seminars, to discuss upcoming events for postgrads. Term 3 will be more focused on your project, dissertation, or work placement, so most of your time will be free of scheduled events. You'll get a few meetings, presentations or practical's here and there.

How can I find my way around campus?

The University of Warwick has an interactive campus map. Therefore, whilst Gibbet Hill Campus can feel confusing at times, simply look up the interactive map and type in the room number. This will show you where on campus it is and how to get into the building! This has an accessible routes function to help those who need to the lifts/elevators.

For buildings (but usually not rooms), Google Maps can also be helpful. Offices in SLS will often be numbered in the format of a letter then numbers (e.g., A1.23); the letter indicates the block the building is in, the first number represents the floor, and the number after the decimal point is the room number.

For help with navigating academic studies, the university has created something called Academic Essentials which covers all sorts of useful things. You can take a look here: [Academic Essentials](#)



Learning from Lectures

At SLS, lectures are typically 50 minutes long, starting at five minutes past the hour.

What is the best way to learn from lectures?

The best way to learn from lectures is the method that suits YOU. Everyone is different, so take an opportunity to explore a few different strategies to find what works best for you. A few best practices include:

- Attend in person
- Avoid distractions (e.g. place mobile phone in your bag)
- Take notes
- Engage with interactive aspects

Before Lectures

Preparation is the best way to make the most of lectures. Some ways to prepare include:

- Download/print out and **read through the lecture slides beforehand** (they can be found on Moodle).
- Identify any new or unfamiliar terminology.
- **Prewrite subheadings** in your notes.
- Review of previous lecture's content.

After Lectures

1. Ask the lecturers any questions you have - whether these extend beyond the lecture or ask to go over any content you did not understand, asking the lecturers is a great way to learn. You can also post questions on the Moodle Forum, or email lecturers directly.

2. Formalise your notes - Highlight, underline or bold any key terms and concepts. Write a summarising sentence – what was the main story of this lecture? Write three revision questions for your future self. When you come back to revise them in the future, you can test your knowledge and understanding.

3. Spaced Repetition - Try to review the content a few times over the next few days, weeks and months – spaced repetition throughout the year will benefit you during End of Year exam revision.

During Lectures

Many students choose to **take notes** during lectures. This may involve handwriting or typing on a blank page; or **annotating** printed or downloaded lecture slides. It can also help to use a **post it note** to jot down questions you have during lectures. You can ask the lecturer or independently research afterwards. Finally, if you space out or become distracted during a lecture, record the timestamp of when this occurred. You can return to this point on the LectureCapture recording (LectureCapture for a specific module can be found on that module's Moodle page, and is a live recording of the lecture, organised by date).

Take part!

Try not to be afraid of getting the answers wrong, just take part. Work with groups you haven't work with before, grow your network and learn from different cultures.



“Lectures are meant to be difficult. If you do not understand it all at first, that is OKAY. In fact, it is probably normal! Come back to the content later and ask the lecturers – they are always happy to help”

Assessment Types

During your time at SLS, you will be assessed in a range of ways, from in module assessments (IMAs) to essays, lab reports and posters. Here is some information and advice about assessments.

Formative and Summative

Assessments can be formative or summative. Essentially, this is a fancy way of saying whether they count to your final grade (summative) or not (formative). While formative assignments don't count, they are a good opportunity to learn and get feedback, so try to take both types seriously.

Essays

These are the most favored method of assessing your learning from a module. Make sure to leave plenty of time to do them, as they require lots of potentially in-depth research, as well as actually writing it (they are usually 1000-2000 words) and writing references, which should usually be Harvard or Vancouver style.

Posters

Usually, markers are looking for professional-looking posters that are easy to digest. Emphasise visuals, use graphs and infographics, and don't write too much text. That last part means any text you do write needs to be valuable, information-dense. If it's a group project, it's best to split the work among the group based on your strengths as individuals. For example, if someone is artistically inclined, they can focus on the colour scheme, background, design, etc.

Exams

Exams could take a range of formats, including computer-based, short answer or multiple choice. Exams at this level are usually easier than at the under-graduate level, and often other assessment types, like essays, are favoured.

Presentations

Oral presentations are sometimes used to assess a module, or to present your project or dissertation work. Here are a few tips for high marks: 1. Make sure to prepare a script, either detailed or a rough outline, so that you're not reading the words directly of your slides! 2. Take care when creating said slides, as details such as clashing font colours can be considered when you're being marked. 3. Have fun with it! Often times, presenting can be a nerve-wracking affair, and there's nothing like a good laugh from the audience to make you more comfortable.

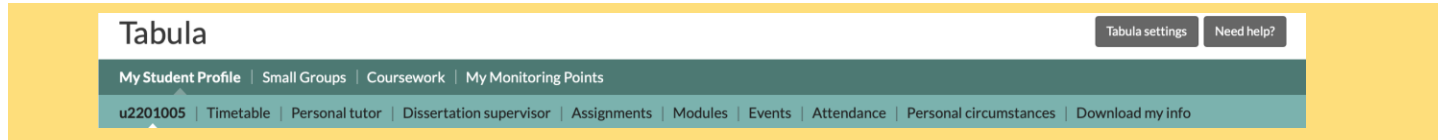


Academic Technology

You will use numerous software and platforms throughout your time at Warwick. To begin, the three best technologies to familiarise yourself with are Tabula, Moodle and MyWarwick.

Tabula

Tabula is a Warwick-specific website which houses information including your personal profiles, your personal tutor's details, as well as your timetable, modules, grades and monitoring point attendance. Importantly, Tabula is where you **submit assignments** and **receive feedback and grades**.



Moodle

Moodle is an online learning platform used by many universities and higher education institutes. At SLS, Moodle is the hub of your modules. Each module will have its own Moodle Page containing everything from **lecture slides** to **assessment details**.

Additional important Moodle's are:

- **Tutorial Group Page**
- **MSc (Postgraduate) Student Guide**
- **Life Science Careers and Employability**
- **Additional academic resources: QuBiC**

MyWarwick

MyWarwick is a mobile app (compatible with IOS, android, tablets and desktops) which brings together information about many aspects of life at Warwick. From course information such as modules and lecture timetables to broader university information such as news and events, bus timetables and the interactive campus map, the MyWarwick app is a convenient way to stay informed.

MyWarwick app has notifications that let you know about news and events and when you receive a Tabula notification (*cough cough* - assignment feedback release).



A final comment

It may be overwhelming at first, the range of unfamiliar technology used. However, soon enough, you will seamlessly know how to use them all.

Time Management at University

At University, your ability to manage time effectively is important. You will often be required to work independently, balance multiple assignments, while trying to maintain a social life, jobs, family and other competing demands. Here are 9 Time Management tips for students.

1. Prioritise Tasks - proper prioritisation involves knowing which tasks to do and when to do them. Determine whether a task is urgent or important, both or neither – this can help decide whether to prioritise, postpone or remove tasks altogether from your list.

2. Be Flexible - good time management is not about adhering to a rigid schedule but being flexible and adaptable with your time as circumstances change. Sometimes you are unable to complete everything planned, and sometimes, what you planned no longer aligns with what you need to accomplish on a given day. Be patient with yourself when this occurs.

3. Avoid Procrastination - procrastination often results from creating mental barriers that lead to delaying assignments until the last minute. To combat procrastination, break larger tasks into smaller, more manageable parts. Starting at a daunting task is often the hardest part, so set a timer for just 25 minutes to get going. Once you're in the groove, it becomes easier to continue.

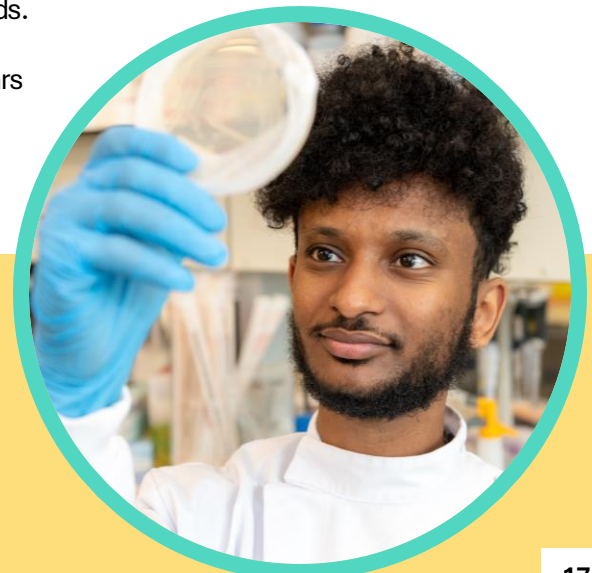
4. Find Joy - when we enjoy our tasks, we are more likely to do them. Remember your purpose and find the excitement and joy in learning. Create a pleasant work environment by keeping your workspace clean and free from clutter. Having a glass of water, a healthy snack, good lighting or instrumental music can also help to create a pleasant atmosphere conducive with productive work.

5. Optimise Your Time - everyone will have different schedules for their most and least productive time. Find when you work best and schedule your tasks accordingly – tackling the more demanding projects when you wake up alert and refreshed. Alternatively, you may find it works best to 'eat the frog first' and tackle the most daunting or difficult thing first – that way, the day will only ever get easier.

7. Limit Distractions - distractions can reduce productivity and efficiency. Introduce strategies to minimise distractions - such as turning off your phone, setting time limits on apps, heading to the library, or using a timer. Friends and peers may also be distracting. In such cases, it is helpful to separate study time from social time. Working independently for an hour and then meeting a friend afterwards may be more effective than trying to do both simultaneously.

8. Know Your Boundaries - it's okay to say no and decline some tasks. Boundaries ensure you can produce high-quality work and show up for yourself and others as the best version of you.

9. Find Balance - effective time management involves finding a balance between work and personal life. Balance does not mean getting it right every single day. Some days or weeks may require working long hours, while other periods may be dedicated solely to rest, family, and friends. Healthy balance and time management is a long-term goal - having a few 'unbalanced' days, weeks or even months is not a problem; it is over the years and a lifetime where it is important for things to balance out.





Part III – **Money Matters**

Budgeting

Managing your finances effectively is crucial to ensure a stress-free and enjoyable university experience. It's important to learn to- Live and Learn on a Budget!!

1. Understand Your Income

- **Student Loan**
- **Scholarships and Grants**
- **Part-Time Job**
- **Other Support**

2. Estimate your Expenses

Essential Expenses

- Accommodation
- Bills and utilities
- Food and Groceries
- Transport
- Personal Care

Non-Essential Expenses

- Social Activities
- Clothing
- Miscellaneous

3. Create a Budget

Using a budgeting tool or a simple spreadsheet, list your monthly income and deduct your essential and non-essential expenses. Aim to:

- **Track Every Penny:** Record all expenditures to identify spending patterns and potential savings, including subscriptions which you may not always notice you have.
- **Prioritize Needs Over Wants:** Ensure essentials are covered before spending on non-essentials.
- **Set Limits:** Allocate specific amounts for non-essential categories to avoid overspending.

4. Find ways to Save Money

- **Cook at Home:** Prepare meals and make packed lunches instead of eating out.
- **Buy Second-Hand:** Charity shops and online marketplaces like Vinted are great places to make unique purchases and save money. Do not miss Welcome Week- Kitchen Kit Market, workwear sale, book and clothe-swap sale throughout the year in central campus that aim towards sustainability by reusing donated items.
- **Use Student Discounts:** Signing up on platforms like StudentBeans and UniDays often offer student deals and discounts at different businesses.
- **Smart Shopping:** Look out for sales, compare prices, and use loyalty cards at supermarkets.

5. Use Additional Resources

- **University Services:** Utilize advice services provided by the Student Funding Support in Senate House, and the Student Advice Centre in the Student Union. Feel free to dive into resource available from [Student Funding Support](#) to know more about- Government Support, Bursaries and Scholarships, Hardship funds and tips and tricks on a budgeting.
- **Apps and Bank Accounts:** Consider apps like Monzo for budgeting and tracking expenses. Some student bank accounts may offer perks like one-time payments or rail card.

6. Adjust and Review

Regularly review your budget to ensure it aligns with your financial situation and goals. Adjust your spending as necessary to stay on track.



Working while Studying

Arriving at University, there's a lot on every student's mind, but one of the most important is **MONEY**. Whilst loans, bursaries and scholarships support many students, taking on paid work is a great way to support yourself and add to that all-important CV!

On-campus Work

As a student, there is a lot to consider when applying for jobs. Even if your workload isn't too heavy at the beginning of your first year, it is likely to ramp up over the course of the year, so it is important to make sure you don't take on too much and that your job allows you flexibility for holiday and deadline season.

Within the University, there are a range of different jobs available. If you have visited Warwick on an open day, it's likely that you met **student ambassadors**, both from individual departments and the university itself. These roles have the benefits of being extremely flexible, as you can usually choose your own shifts, and provide opportunities for promotion. SLS recruits between 50-100 student ambassadors each year and there are also opportunities for student network roles (just like the students writing this handbook for you). Getting a role in your department is a good way to stay engaged and make the most of your time on campus. Recruitment is early in the academic year, so keep an eye out!

Within the Student Union, many jobs in the food and drink outlets are worked by students. From working behind the bar in the Copper Rooms nightclub, to baristas in Curiosity, and the team at the Dirty Duck (the popular campus pub), there is a role for you! If you live in on-campus accommodation, you will only have to walk approximately 5-10 minutes to work - a great saving on commuting!

Other miscellaneous roles based on campus will often be advertised via Unitemps or through your department - ranging from **one-off single day roles** to **long term opportunities** - just keep an eye out.

Off-campus Work

You may prefer to work off campus too. Warwick is surrounded by the major hubs of Coventry and Royal Leamington Spa, and with the towns of Canley, Kenilworth, and Earlsdon on our doorstep, there are plenty of opportunities for part-time work. Look out for businesses offering **student contracts** - these can be great to ensure that you get time off in the holidays!

Student contracts can also apply to holiday-time work - if you currently work in your home area, it can be a good idea to find out whether you can retain your job for the holidays. Not every business will offer this, but it can be a good way to avoid stressful job hunts every holiday. Particularly around the Christmas holidays, you may also be able to find seasonal jobs.

Key Advice: If you are an international student, check the conditions of your visa to make sure you are not working more than the permitted number of hours per week.

Fun Fact: The students writing this handbook are employed with the School of Life Sciences to help enhance the student experience!



Part IV – Social Life

Sports and Societies

At Warwick, we have over 250 societies and 60 sports clubs. Each has a diverse range of members, from first year undergrads to PhD students, and from beginners to highly experienced competitors. In freshers' week, most societies will have free taster sessions designed to give you a flavour of what you will experience as a member, so make sure you go along - there are some great opportunities to try something different and meet new friends! You will be able to find out more at the Sports and Societies fairs running throughout freshers' week.

Sports clubs

Sports clubs are a great way to both stay fit and socialise at Warwick and possibly represent your University. Sports clubs usually have a range of teams of different levels, from recreational to competitive. Competitive teams attend competitions with other universities, including Varsity, an annual sports tournament against the University of Birmingham in which Warwick has reigned victorious for 34 consecutive years! Sports clubs from Warwick also compete internationally and in BUCS (British Universities & College Sport) competitions.



Our Sports and Wellness hub is an accessible, multi-facility space with top-of the range facilities. These include:

- A gym with over 200 fitness stations.
- Fitness studios including dedicated spin and rowing studios, as well as other spaces for dance and fitness classes.
- A 12-lane 25m swimming pool.
- The climbing centre, which features a 15m climbing wall, bouldering, and 2x 15m speed climbing walls.
- Combat rooms.
- 6 glass-backed squash courts.
- Sports halls.
- Outdoor sport spaces, including football, basketball, cricket, athletics, and more.

Societies

Societies are all other student run clubs and organisations. The variety is huge; categories include:

- Welfare, charity and action (e.g., Warwick Raising and Giving, ADHD Society, DofE Society).
- Performance (e.g., Warwick A Cappella Society, Warwick Salsa, Warwick Band).
- Academic (e.g., Warwick Africa Summit, Warwick BioSoc, Warwick Consulting).
- Cultural (e.g., Filipino Society, Northern Society, Warwick Punjabi Society).
- Religious and Belief (e.g., Christian Union, Krishna Consciousness Society, Islamic Society).
- Food and Beverage (e.g., Allotment Society, Real Ale, Cheese and Chocolate).
- Campaigning (e.g., Climate Reality Warwick, Sexpression Warwick, Warwick Action for Palestine).
- Film and Media (e.g., Bad Film Society, The Boar Newspaper, Gothic and Horror Society).
- Activities and Games (e.g., Chess, Warwick Esports, Warwick F1, Knitting and Crochet Society).
- Music Appreciations (e.g., Taylor Swift Society, RockSoc, Warwick K-Pop Society).

Some societies and clubs come with costs. See the Sports Clubs and Societies section of the SU website for updated information!

The Local Area

Despite its name, the University of Warwick does not sit in the town of Warwick, but is located just outside Coventry, close to the suburb of Canley. Its position enables great transport connections to many different towns and cities, some of which students may live in, and others which may be more suited to a day (or night!) out.

Within Walking Distance

Cannon Park Shopping Centre is a 15-to-20-minute walk away from central campus. It includes a big Tesco, Sports Direct, Seoul Plaza, Subway, Happy Lemon and more. Behind the shopping centre is an Aldi.

Park is in Canley, a popular place for students to live due to its proximity to campus. Canley is home to a Costco, a big Sainsbury's and a few large green areas, but is also home to many long and busy roads taking traffic to and from the M42, which can put some people off.

There are plenty of beautiful green areas in and around the university, such as Gibbet Hill wood, which separates Gibbet Hill campus from the main campus, featuring many ponds and rivers. Also, if you walk beyond the Sports Hub, you will find countryside and nature reserves to your heart's content!

Coventry

Coventry City Centre is an important location for University of Warwick students. Served by the 12x and 11 buses, it is 15-minute ride from campus (or just over an hour walk if you're feeling adventurous!). It has many shops and restaurants, and the Kasbah nightclub is a particular favourite of Warwick students. Coventry train station has direct connections to London, Birmingham and Edinburgh; while Pool Meadow Bus Station provides an alternative (often cheaper) hub for travel locally and around the country. Due to its proximity to campus, transport connections, and amenities, Coventry is popular among students from both Warwick and the University of Coventry for housing.

Earlsdon and Kenilworth

Earlsdon is a small town on the 11 bus route from campus in the Coventry direction but is walkable if you have half an hour to spare. Whilst it is perhaps not the place to live if you value bustling cities; its quietness, closeness to campus, and shops and restaurants mean that some students choose to live there - it is especially popular with postgraduate students.

Kenilworth is a similar distance from campus as Earlsdon and also on the 11 bus route - although, in the Leamington Spa direction. Kenilworth has more shops than Earlsdon (though remains a small town) and is popular for its castle, which have a huge firework display on bonfire night, as well as its surrounding countryside and peacefulness.

Wellesbourne

You may find yourself based at the [Warwick Crop Centre](#) (especially during part of your research project time). The Crop Centre is based at the Stratford Innovation Campus, in Wellesbourne. Warwick Crop Centre is part of the University's [School of Life Sciences](#) and is an internationally recognised centre for translational research in sustainable agriculture and horticulture, and in food security.



Royal Leamington Spa

Arguably the most popular destination for students to live, although its mostly populated by undergraduate second and third years, Leamington Spa is a large town, famous for its imposing Regency-era buildings and pretty parks. Leamington is served by a train station and multiple bus routes, and is home to an impressive array of shops, cafés, restaurants, and nightclubs. More convenient than Coventry for travel to Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon, it has a thriving student community and sits a half hour bus ride from campus via the U1, U2 and 11 buses. Surrounding green space includes Newbold Comyn nature reserve and Jephson Gardens, making this area an excellent place to live.

Birmingham

A little further afield is Birmingham - one of the biggest cities in the UK. It is around half an hour away by train from Canley, Leamington Spa, and Coventry. Whether you are looking for concerts, shopping, a trip to the Sea Life Centre or almost anything else, you are sure to find it here. Birmingham Airport is an option for trips abroad and offers flights to over 150 destinations. The airport has its own train station, making it accessible to students.

Stratford-upon-Avon and Warwick

Whilst these two towns are local to Leamington Spa and accessible by bus or train, they are far enough from campus that they are not considered by Warwick students for housing. Nonetheless, they make a perfect day out. Stratford-upon-Avon is home to the Royal Shakespeare Company, which puts on Shakespeare plays as well as other works throughout the year. Often, young adults aged 16 to 25 are able to purchase tickets for only £10 and is a great opportunity to see some incredible performances. The main attraction of Warwick is Warwick Castle. Whilst it is a pricy attraction, it is also a wonderful day out, especially with student discount.

London

A little over an hour away by train, London is popular and convenient for Warwick students. It can also be commuted more affordably by coach from Pool Meadow Bus Station in Coventry. The capital city of England, London is home to many historical sites, museums and art galleries, shops, and almost anything else you can think of. London also has multiple airports for trips across the world.



The University of Warwick is close to the centre of the UK, and its great transport links, this means that most major towns and cities in the UK are only a train ride or two away! Whether you're getting to know the local area or venturing further, you are sure to find somewhere new to explore.

Nightlife at Warwick

Warwick's nightlife is exciting, diverse, and tailored to suit all tastes. Whether you're into dancing the night away at a club, enjoying a pint at a pub, or savouring a sophisticated cocktail, Warwick and its surrounding areas have something for everyone. Here's a guide to help you navigate the nightlife scene.

Nightclubs

Kasbah (Coventry)

When: Every Monday

What to Expect: Kasbah is a staple in the student nightlife scene, especially on Mondays. This club offers a range of music across its different rooms, from indie and rock to hip-hop and R&B. The venue also boasts an outdoor garden area, perfect for a breather between dances.

Neon (Leamington Spa)

When: Mainly on Fridays

What to Expect: With multiple dance rooms, a variety of music genres, Neon promises a great night out. The club often hosts events with guest DJs, so keep an eye out for special nights.

POP! (Warwick Students' Union)

When: Every Wednesday

What to Expect: POP! is a legendary weekly club night at the Student Union following the traditional "Circling" activity. It's known for its eclectic mix of pop tunes, fancy dress themes, and a lively, inclusive atmosphere. If you're looking to bond with your new friends and enjoy a carefree night, POP! is the place to be. Its location in the heart of campus makes it incredibly convenient for students living near campus.

Party Bus to Birmingham

When: Every Friday

What to Expect: For those looking to explore beyond Coventry, the party bus to Birmingham every Friday is an excellent option. It's an all-in-one package: transportation to and from Birmingham, and the chance to experience a bigger city nightlife scene.

Pubs and Bars

What to Expect: Leamington Spa is dotted with a variety of pubs to suit all tastes. Whether you're into craft beers, traditional ales, or just looking for a cozy spot to chat with friends, you'll find plenty of options. Some popular choices include The Royal Pug, The Old Library, and The Drawing Board. The Dirty Duck, Varsity and Fusion Sports Bar are all on Central Campus.





Part V – **Health and Wellbeing**

Settling in at Warwick School of Life Sciences

Coming to university can bring a whole range of emotions: excitement, anxiety, loneliness and even fear are very common, especially if it is your first time studying away from your home country. Despite this, it's important to remember that you're not alone! Many other students will feel this way too, and there is lots of support available to make the transition to SLS life easier.

When it comes to your day-to-day life, a **healthy and balanced lifestyle** is important for your mental health. There are **4 main components** of this:

1. **Eating well** - especially if you are moving away from home for the first time, learning to cook for yourself can be daunting. Knowing just a few cheap, easy recipes can be really helpful with this.
2. **Relaxation and sleep** - it can be tempting to devote all of your time to working when you start university. But having a consistent sleep schedule and allowing your brain time to switch off will help you in the long run, as a well-rested brain produces higher quality work. This doesn't just have to be resting in your room - joining societies is a great way to combine leisure with meeting new people.
3. **Regular exercise** - as a member of SLS, you're at an advantage here! Gibbet Hill Campus is a short walk from main campus. Taking the peaceful woodland walk to and from lectures, or up to main campus to see what is going on, is a great way to stretch your legs. Joining sports societies, going to the gym, and walks and runs are other ways to get exercise, and regular exercise helps your academic performance as well as your mental health!
4. **Social connections** - Positive relationships are as crucial to physical, mental, and emotional well-being as eating healthy, exercising regularly, or getting enough sleep. Each time we genuinely connect with another person, we release the pleasure hormone oxytocin into the bloodstream, which helps reduce anxiety and improve focus. Spend time calling and talking to loved ones and friends, and seek to make new social connections with people at university through sports, societies and your course.

Homesickness is a normal part of adapting to a new environment – whether you move to an entirely new country as an international student, or a two-hour drive from where you last lived.

As always, reach out for support. Our Wellbeing Services have a [guide on transitioning and homesickness](#) which you can access if you find yourself struggling with homesickness.



Advice from a current student:

- Most courses will have cohort WhatsApp groups - try to join them to connect with others and get support.
- Societies usually offer free taster sessions at the start of the year - this is a great time to try something new.
- Becoming a department or university ambassador is a good opportunity to make some money and gain skills.
- Be open to new experiences and meeting people - university is a unique chance to make new connections.

SLS Support and Student Networks

Loneliness can be a concern for students at university. But don't worry, SLS student networks can help!

BioSoc

BioSoc is for everyone, whether undergraduate, postgraduate or postgraduate research. BioSoc is a student-run society which organises lots of events and programmes to help you settle in. Socials are a big part of BioSoc - there is something for everyone- painting, clubbing, pumpkin carving and of course the annual BioBall are only a few of the events on offer and whether you prefer a night out or chilled out crafts, they're an amazing way to meet people from across Life Sciences! BioCafé sessions also provide academic support - they are weekly sessions (featuring free pizza!) on anything from lab report writing to careers. While these sessions are mostly directed at undergraduates, postgraduates are still welcome.

SLS Student Networks

The SLS Student Networks offer a space to connect with like-minded people who share your values and passion for themes such as Ethnicity, Community and Culture, Disability and Gender Equality and Identity. These networks are open to all SLS students and a good place to meet undergraduate and postgraduate students. The networks host events to help students connect and build belonging. They also work alongside the departments EDI committee task forces to achieve positive action in the EDI space.



If you're struggling...

Help is available. From academic support to wellbeing, don't struggle alone - there are people to help you.

Within SLS:

Personal Tutor: Your first point of contact for academic issues. If you are struggling to keep up or having issues, they can assist or signpost you to the appropriate place or people.

Senior Tutor: Your Personal Tutor may involve them if they feel you need additional support or to discuss things like deadline extensions.

ESS team (Educational Support Services): email slspgt@warwick.ac.uk with any query you may have and they will get back to you with a response or forward your query onto the right person.

Dr Sophie Martucci - Director of Academic Support: your point of contact for academic queries, including assignments and extensions.

Outside SLS:

Wellbeing services: Warwick Wellbeing have a vast range of services designed to support students. The Steps to Wellbeing programme and their online resources are great for self-help, but if you need extra support, they also provide one-to-one consultations, email therapy, and more.

The Chaplaincy: a source of pastoral and spiritual support for students of all faiths and none. Chaplains can offer a listening ear, and the Chaplaincy space provides a safe space for prayer, reflection and socialising.

SU Advice Centre: an independent, professional service which guides students facing personal, housing, course-related, financial or other problems.

Managing Stress

Many students, if not all, experience periods of stress throughout their time at university. Although stress isn't a mental health problem, it can lead to mental health problems like depression and anxiety. It may also result in a drop in your performance in aspects of life and make you physically ill. While not all stress is negative - some can help us take action and become energised. Stress is a problem when it lasts for a long time or is very intense. Here are some simple ways to help manage stress.

1. **Be prepared.** Knowing when a period of stress is coming can make it easier to get through. Knowing this is coming, you could begin to implement some management techniques to prevent stress before it occurs.
2. **Be kind to yourself.** Learning to be kinder to yourself can help with how you feel in different situations. Try to take breaks throughout your day and reward yourself for your achievements, even if they seem small. Speaking or thinking small mantras like "I am going to get through this" or "everything is going to be okay" helps some people.
3. **Try to find time to relax.** This might feel hard if you can't do anything to stop a situation that is making you stressed. But if you can allow yourself a short break, this can help with how you feel.
4. **Spend time in nature.** This can help to reduce stress and improve wellbeing. You could try going for a walk around campus and Tocil Woods or sit by the lake by Bluebell Accommodations. If you lack access to greenspace; watching nature documentaries like David Attenborough or Spring/Autumn Watch, listening to nature ambience or caring for houseplants offers alternatives. It's a valuable use of your time as it will help you get back to working your best.
5. **Look after your physical health.** Stress can sometimes make these things difficult to look after; getting enough sleep, staying physically active and eating a balanced diet can make stress easier to manage. Keep an eye out for free sessions at the Sports Centre put on during exam seasons to help with stress.
6. **Talk to a friend or loved one or support group.** If you're finding things hard, talking to people who have similar feelings or experiences, or you are familiar with and love, can help. Wellbeing services at Warwick offer different group sessions you could consider.
7. **Set smaller, achievable targets.** When we feel stressed, we may set large or unrealistic goals to try to avoid the stress - however, these can become overwhelming and worsen stress. Setting smaller, more achievable goals can help us feel more satisfied and in control.
8. **Be clear with yourself and others about what you can take on.** It is okay to say no and can be a relief when you do. Communicating your boundaries helps you, but also helps your team, family, colleagues and peers. It opens up space for discussion - you may find you are not alone.

Not all stress can be controlled.

Experiencing stress from discrimination and hate (such as racism, homophobia and transphobia); or because you are a carer; or from living in poverty and have financial stress; or from a lack of safety; is unlikely to be remedied by what is outlined here. Many of these things are difficult or impossible to change. **Remember: if you face these barriers, this is not your fault, and it is not up to you to remove these barriers yourself.**



Dealing with Uncertainty

Transitioning from undergraduate to postgraduate studies is a significant shift that brings with it a myriad of uncertainties. This period is characterised by both excitement and apprehension because as a student we are having to navigate new challenges that are not only academic but also career wise which comes with increased responsibilities and evolving personal dynamics. Deciding whether you want to continue studying, take a break, go straight into work or even having no plan at all can all create feelings of anxiety, stress or fear of what comes ahead. This level of change brings a whole host of feelings but there are several strategies to help manage this transition effectively.

Embracing a Growth Mindset

Understanding that change is inevitable, is a hard pill to swallow. But adopting a growth mindset, is the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through dedication and hard work. Embracing this mindset is crucial for dealing with the uncertainties of graduate life. Instead of viewing challenges as insurmountable obstacles, students can see them as opportunities for growth and learning. A strategy that can be useful is noting down the positive perspective of things that can typically be seen as overwhelming or negative. For example, starting a new job can be daunting but also seeing this as an opportunity to develop your communication skills by meeting new people and perhaps even building lifelong connections is a good positive to take from it. This perspective fosters resilience and a proactive approach to problem-solving, which is essential in navigating the complexities of graduate studies.

Building a Support System

Having a strong support system is vital in managing uncertainty. This includes academic advisors, mentors, peers, and family. Establishing a good relationship with members of the Wellbeing team who are always open and ready to talk or even your academic tutor, whoever you feel comfortable approaching and talking to can provide valuable guidance and advice, or even just be an ear to voice your concerns to. Talking to peers or academics or staff who have all probably felt or experienced exactly what you are feeling can help to alleviate feelings of isolation.

Maintaining Mental and Physical Health

The rigors of graduate life whether with studies, working or anything else can take a toll on both mental and physical health. But with many feelings of stress, creating a healthy mental and physical lifestyle through exercise, sleeping and eating well is always a great help to combat this. Your mental health should be a priority, and students should not hesitate to seek counselling services through wellbeing if needed.

Being Open to Change

Flexibility and adaptability are key in dealing with uncertainty. Plans may change, applications or prospects may not go as expected, and unforeseen challenges may arise. Being open to change and willing to adapt is crucial. This means being prepared to adjust goals, seek alternative solutions, and remain resilient in the face of setbacks.

Cultivating a Positive Outlook

Finally, maintaining a positive outlook is essential. While the transition to graduate life is challenging, it is also an opportunity for significant personal and professional growth. This time of transition in your life like everyone before it can seem daunting and perhaps almost impossible, but with every challenge comes growth and this period may be the perfect time to refine skills, take opportunities and experience new things. Celebrating small achievements, staying optimistic, and reminding oneself of the long-term goals and benefits of this new time can help in maintaining motivation and enthusiasm.





Part VI – Student Support and Advice

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA)

Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) is available to help cover the study-related costs you have because of a mental health problem, long-term illness or any other disability.

What is DSA?

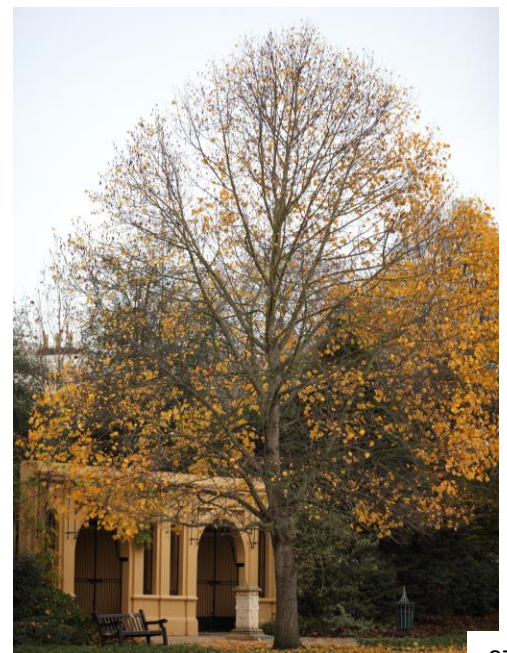
Essentially, DSA gives access to non-income based funded support for a range of disabilities from physical and mental health conditions to any potential learning differences. Your entitlement could include equipment e.g. funding towards a laptop, software e.g. Read & Write to read aloud, training (for any equipment and software which you have been provided with) or support from a trained individual e.g. a study skills helper or mentor. A list of what you have been offered (once confirmed) will be sent to the University's Disability Team so that they are aware. Alongside this the University's Disability Team will also discuss with you (on a video call or in-person) to identify potential reasonable adjustments to your course e.g. extra time and deadline flexibility.

How to Apply

The application portal is through your student finance account. All you need to apply is evidence of the condition(s) you are living with. This can be a letter from a professional explaining your diagnosis/diagnoses and how they affect you. Any specific evidence required for your disability will be stipulated. If your evidence is approved, you will then have a needs assessment. This might sound daunting, but it is simply a conversation where you work with an assessor to discuss your barriers to learning so that you can be matched with the best support. The assessments can be done over the phone; a video call or in-person and you are also able to have someone alongside you to support throughout.

Advice

Don't be put off by the process, getting support to help you better access your course will not only help you with your learning, but improve your overall post-graduate experience. Everyone deserves to have equal access to their university course. Your condition is enough to merit support – don't suffer in silence.



Report + Support

Report + Support is a service used by universities across the country to report behaviours such as bullying, sexual assault, harassment and hate. It can be used by staff and students alike. It is not to be an alternative to emergency services. Here is a brief introduction to what Report and Support is and the ways to use it, if required.

There are two options to file a report through the Report and Support platform; these are:

1. “Report Anonymously”
2. “Report With Details”

The first is a way to anonymously report the incident so that the university has the data on file, however, they cannot and do not act against the reported party due to the anonymity.

The second option, Report with Details, is when the person reporting the incident speaks to someone at the University, typically a Student Liaison Officer (SLO). The SLO helps to assess the situation and determines suitable actions to take following the report – if in alignment with the reporting party’s wishes. Possible outcomes include not taking the report further, a university investigation or a police investigation. There are many regulations, however, the SLO would take you through these should you ever need.

Report + Support may also be able to help with mitigating circumstances and finding further help and support through the Wellbeing Team.

The main takeaway is that Report + Support exists and can be used without having to speak to anyone, allowing you the jurisdiction in how you act on the report. Even if you choose no action to take place, a conversation with an SLO can help with processing and overcoming these situations.



Mitigating Circumstances

Sometimes things out of our control happen which impact areas of our lives including our education. Part of the universities responsibility to you is to provide support and help to mitigate any academic fall out.

If you have circumstances including, but not limited to, illness, bereavement and technical issues, which has hindered your academic performance in one or more assignments or exams, you may consider applying for Mitigating Circumstances. In this cases, you should contact your Personal Tutor, who will usually escalate this to the Senior Tutor. They will usually recommend that you submit a Mitigating Circumstances form on Tabula.

Students must submit evidence of these circumstances, and each form is dealt with case by case at a mitigating circumstances panel. This panel makes recommendations to the exam board. Outcomes can include waiving CATS from modules, Further First Attempts, waiving late penalties.

What are Mitigating Circumstances?

There are a range of circumstances considered by the 'Mit Circs' panel – This covers anything that has been outside of your control.

How are Mitigating Circumstances Assessed?

The panel usually meets to assess this at the end of the year after a deadline for evidence has passed. The exam board then takes into consideration the recommendations of the panel. There are quite a few policies and regulations that surround mitigating circumstances, and there is only so much that the university can put in place. Information on how to submit your mitigating circumstances form can be found by scanning this QR code. Here you will also find more information about the university policy for mitigating circumstances.



The most important thing to do in cases where you think you have mitigating circumstances are:

- 1. Get into contact with the department.** Your first point of call being your personal tutor or your senior tutor. Do this sooner rather than later.
- 2. Declare these circumstances as soon as possible.** Sometimes there is an anxiety sometimes even shame surrounding reaching out but the sooner it is done, typically the more can be done and put in place to support the student.
- 3. Make sure you have evidence of these circumstances.** More information regarding evidence is outlined online.



Glossary

There is a lot of terminology used at university which you won't have come across elsewhere. To help clear up confusion, we have put together this glossary of key terms to help you navigate university life.

CATS - The Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme is a points-based system that quantifies credit for a particular course. For example, a module may be worth 15 CATS and each year you take 180 CATS worth of modules. **HEAR report** - the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) is your formal record of achievement at university. It outlines your modules, grades and academic achievements.

Lecture - A lecture is an oral presentation intended to present information or teach people about a particular subject.

Module - a specific set of classes/lectures on some topic, and a specific set of accompanying assignments for you to complete.

MyWarwick - the University of Warwick app which includes information about timetables, news and events and transport details.

Personal Tutor - a member of academic or research staff at SLS who is your first point of contact for concerns, questions and queries and leads your Tutorials programme.

Seminar - a seminar is where a small group of students studying under a professor each exchange ideas and thoughts through group discussions.

SSLC - stands for Student Staff Liaison Committee. It allows students to express issues to their course reps who meet with the department's academics to discuss students' comments.

Tabula - an online tool to support the administration of teaching and learning in academic departments. It is where assignments are submitted and feedback is received. Timetables and student profiles are found on Tabula, as well as information about your personal tutor, mentor, and other relevant members of staff.

Unitu - An anonymous platform for giving feedback on your course.

Acronyms

BioSoc - Biology Society

DSA - Disabled Student Allowance

EDIC - Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee

GLT - Gibbet Hill Lecture Theatre

IBRB - Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building

ICL - Interactive Computation Learning (suite)

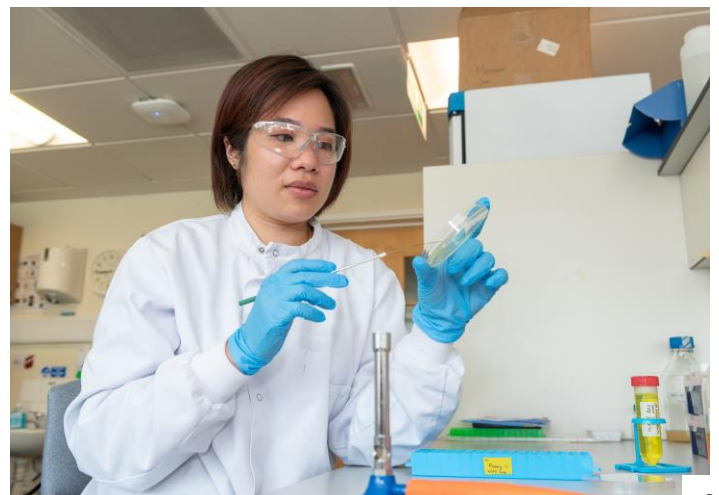
PG/PGT - Postgraduate

QuBiC - Quantitative Biology Centre

SLS - School of Life Sciences

SSLC - Student Staff Liaison Committee

WMS - Warwick Medical School



A Final Word...

Thank you for reading and using this Student Handbook – we really hope you found it useful.

Post-graduate study is your chance to really get to know your subject, and what interests you. Classes will be smaller than at under-graduate, so there is more opportunity to engage with the course and discuss it with the expert scientists who will be teaching you.

It is easy to become bogged down with work, and to see it as an obligation that controls you. Infact, your work is your own, and you control it! Remind yourself why you're doing this, and let yourself be interested and have fun with it, instead of seeing it as a chore. Ultimately, this course is your aide, so let it help you!

We wish you the most success, from all of us here at Warwick Life Sciences.



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Disclaimer: This was written by students. While we tried to ensure that the information is accurate and advice good, we are only human and may have made a few mistakes here and there. Also, while accurate at the time of publication (July, 2025). things change – it is therefore important that you revisit SLS and The University of Warwick websites to check information is valid. We wish you the best of luck with your university experience and hope one day you will impart your experience and advice onto the next cohort of student. Thank you for reading.