

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

School of Life Sciences



Student Handbook

Made for students, by students

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Hello...

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

As a new university student, you are most likely going through all sorts of emotions and trying to digest a lot of new information - we were all there once as well. As part of this onboarding, one of the student bodies within the School of Life Sciences (SLS) has put together this handbook to help you navigate the move to University.

Written by students, for students - this handbook aims to summate and advise on the various aspects of university life, both academic and non-academic. It also highlights the range of services, resources and opportunities offered by the University that may be of use throughout your journey here.

You may be one of many students who are the first in their family to attend University. If so, you may consider using this handbook to help explain University and the journey you are embarking on to loved ones.

We hope you find this Student Handbook useful!

Aadi Nandedkar

Biochemistry Graduate

Student Network Lead and Co-Creator 2024-2026

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."

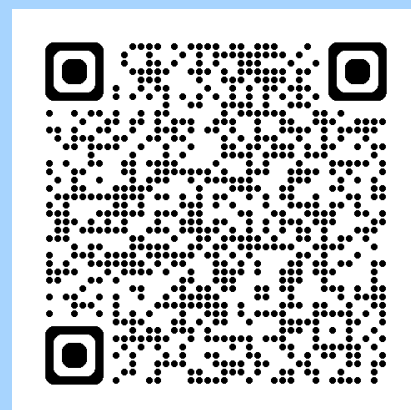
An academic institution fostering a sense of inclusivity and belonging is crucial to allow this support to develop. For many students, particularly those from underrepresented groups, attending university is extremely intimidating. Therefore, having student networks to implement their lived experiences 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 – Preparing For University

What to expect when you arrive at University?

Starting university is a thrilling experience, and the University of Warwick has plenty in store to ensure your transition is smooth, enjoyable, and fulfilling. Here's a guide to help you know what to expect when you arrive and how to make the most of your first few weeks.

Arrival and Accommodation

Welcome Team - Upon your arrival, you'll be greeted by the friendly Welcome Team. They will provide you with your room key, a campus map, and direct you to your accommodation.

Settling into Your Accommodation - Once you reach your accommodation, you'll start unpacking and settling into your new room. This is your space for the year, so make it feel like home — decorate with photos, posters, and anything that makes you comfortable.

Meeting Flatmates and Exploring Campus

Meeting Your Flatmates - Within the first few days, you'll meet your flatmates. Introduce yourself and plan some shared activities, such as cooking a meal together or exploring the local area.

Familiarising Yourself with Campus - Take time to walk around the campus and get to know the key buildings and facilities. Locate the department, student union, sports hub, library, and popular gathering spots.

Societies and Sports Fairs

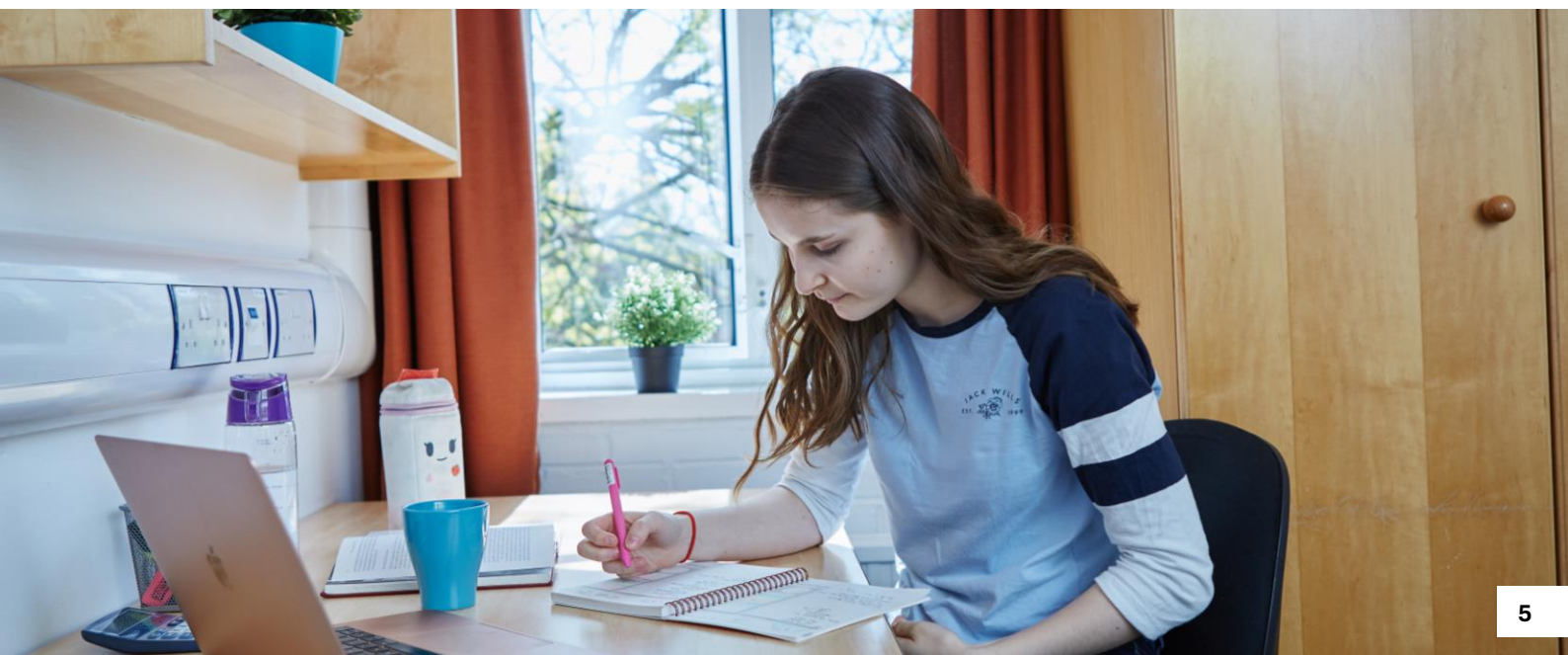
Societies Fair - The Societies Fair is a great opportunity to explore Warwick's wide range of student societies. Meet current members, learn about their activities, and sign up for any that interest you.

Sports Fair and Taster Sessions - The Sports Fair showcases Warwick's sports clubs, many of which offer taster sessions. It's a great way to try something new, stay active, and meet like-minded people.

Academic Life

First Lectures and Tutorials/Seminars - Your academic journey begins with introductory lectures and tutorials, where you'll meet your lecturers and course mates.

Building Academic Relationships - Get to know your lecturers and tutors. Attend office hours if you have questions or need support — these relationships can be invaluable throughout your degree.



Your guide to Student Accommodation

As a first-year student, you're guaranteed Warwick-owned, on-campus accommodation. Whilst not everyone will take up the opportunity of living on campus, for most first-year students, it's one of the biggest things on their mind leading up to moving to university. As a result, we've put together this guide to on-campus accommodation to help you settle in!

Shared Kitchens

Keeping the kitchen clean may be a source of tension in shared accommodation. Although Warwick's cleaning team cleans each kitchen weekly, students are responsible for taking out the bins and keeping the kitchen tidy throughout the week. To avoid misunderstandings, discuss expectations with your flatmates. Simple arrangements, such as a bin rota or agreeing that everyone cleans up after themselves, can make a big difference.

Meeting Flatmates

Meeting your flatmates can be daunting. During Freshers' Week, take the initiative to suggest activities such as trips to the Freshers' Fair or movie nights. Some students become lifelong friends with their flatmates; however, don't worry if this doesn't happen for you. University offers plenty of opportunities to meet new people. The most important thing is that your flat remains a respectful environment, regardless of how close you become.

Moving Flats

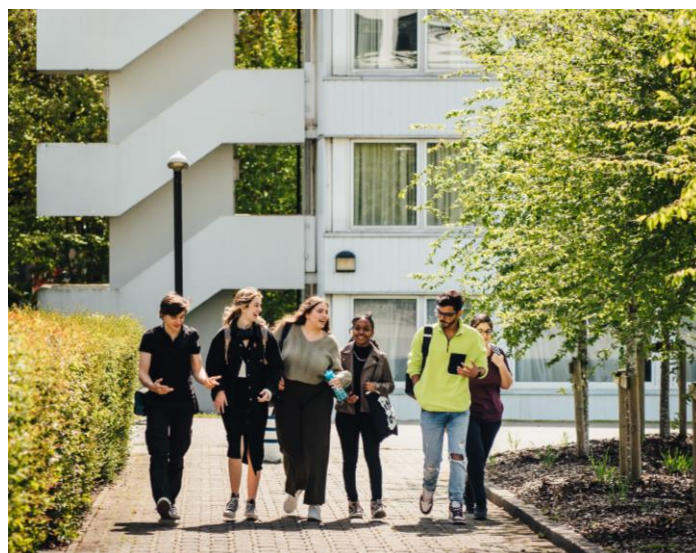
Moving flats is uncommon, but support is available if needed. If your accommodation is not the right fit, you may be able to swap rooms after the settling-in period. The Residential Team can guide you through the process. However, if you experience serious issues such as bullying or harassment, contact the Residential Team as soon as possible. They can provide support and advise on next steps.

Residential Support

Your first point of contact is your Residential Community Assistant (RCA), who lives in your building. They can support with pastoral issues, help build a sense of community, and address concerns such as noise complaints. For urgent or serious incidents, contact the Community Safety Team (+44 (0)24 7652 2083). The number is also on the back of your student card.

Getting post

Postal rooms for receiving parcels are located across campus and will be signposted by your accommodation team. Each flat also has a locker in the Residents' Hub, which serves as a postbox for letters. Make sure you take your student card when collecting parcels and mail. You will receive an email when parcels arrive, so you do not need to regularly visit the hubs to check.



What to **actually** bring to University?

The University sends out a recommended What to Bring List each year - which can be found by scanning the QR code. However, here are some additional (and unusual) tips and advice about what to bring from students at SLS.



1. You do NOT need to buy everything ahead of coming to university. During Welcome Week, the university hosts a Kitchen Kit Market. Here, you can get everything from pans and trays to plates, mugs, bowls, cutlery, oven gloves and tea towels. It is pay-as-you-feel basis - so you can get everything you need for whatever price you can pay. It is the more sustainable choice as well. Make sure you go early (things do sell out quickly so try going earlier in the week).

2. Storage boxes and baskets. Most student accommodation rooms are devoid of storage spaces. Bringing a few boxes (whether you buy new, second-hand or just use an old shoe box) can help organise your possessions.

3. Command Hooks. When you arrive at university, you will be given a key to your accommodation, a student ID card and SLS will provide you with a lanyard. You must bring these everywhere. Having a command hook on the back of, or by your bedroom door helps you remember and minimises the chance of misplacing them.



Other things to bring:

- **Photos** - making your room feel like home can help you settle in.
- **Lunch box and Tupperware** - save money by bringing your lunch to lectures or the library.
- **Batteries** – you never know when you will need them.
- **Small first aid kit** – it is always good to have some plasters, antiseptic wipes and pain medication on hand.
- **Toilet Roll** – something worth not forgetting...
- **Photo ID** – passport, visa, copy of your birth certification and banking details – check you have all important documentation.
- **Flipflops or shower shoes** – for shared bathroom accommodation, you may want to consider buying shower shoes.
- **Needle and thread** - whether it's costumes or emergency repairs, this is a handy thing to have!

Feeling Homesick

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 your family home.

Often, we are told to keep busy to conquer homesickness, however, this can sometimes only delay the emotions and means homesickness hits even harder at night, or when the busyness calms down.

The best approach to dealing with homesickness will be different for everyone. However, some things that have helped us are: 1) acknowledging these feelings, 2) video-calling loved ones, 3) watching a comforting TV show and reading familiar books, 4) changing my perspective on homesickness – reminding myself that I am lucky to have a home that causes homesickness, and I am fortunate to have people in my life that make it difficult to say goodbye. This way, I feel some gratitude for having homesickness, which makes it easier to deal with.

As always, reach out for support. Our Wellbeing & Student Support are available to all students, and they offer a wide range of services. If you find yourself struggling with homesickness, the team at Wellbeing & Student Support have prepared some helpful tips to cope with homesickness, you can find at this QR code.



Preparing for University – Developing Practical Skills

Ahead of coming to university, it can be helpful to brush up on some practical skills.

Whether you ask a loved one or watch a YouTube video, these fundamental life skills provide the bedrock for the success of your first few terms and beyond.

Cooking

Cooking is a science, but also an art and a practical tool. Ingredients can be substituted or omitted based on preference, access and affordability – so don't be scared to play with recipes (they should work for you, not the other way around).

Here are some tips on cooking for students:

- **Learn five recipes** you know how to cook, inside and out.
- **Plan recipes with overlapping ingredients.** That way, you save money and prevent food waste.
- **Adopt a cook once, eat twice attitude;** making a double serving of dinner to eat for lunch the next day.
- **Have frozen 'backup' meals** for busy days where you don't have the time or energy to cook. It is quicker than takeout when all you do is defrost/ reheat it in a microwave or oven.

Laundry

Laundry is a simple task, and nothing to concern yourself over. Here are some laundry tips:

- **Fill the machine to the correct level.** Many students underfill the machine, which wastes money. Only do laundry when you have enough to fill the machine as indicated by the fill line.
- **Identify your limiting reagent.** If you run out of a certain item of clothing, such as socks or underwear, it may be more cost-effective to buy more of that item and space out your loads further instead of underfilling the machine.
- **The myth of the whitewash.** Unless you are washing super expensive, crisp white skirts – clothes can often all go in together (best at a lower temperature). Check the materials of the clothing - dyed natural materials are quite likely to bleed, whereas with synthetic-based materials, it's usually safe to wash everything together.
- **Consider buying off-white linen** or other colours/patterns. These are much easier to maintain than true white.
- **Know the frequency of washing different pieces of clothing.** Many items do not need to be washed after every wear, so find out their recommended washing frequency online.
- **Don't forget to wash items like bedsheets, towels, and tea towels.** It's typically recommended to wash bedsheets every week, but if this is too much, wash your pillow covers every week (since they are smaller) and bedsheets every other week.

Cleaning

Cleaning does not have to be a big deal. Instead, little and often is the best way to maintain a clean and clutter-free environment.

- **Buy a multi-purpose, anti-bacterial spray.** With limited space, buying a kitchen, bathroom, window, and wood cleaner is far too much. Rather, choose a multi-purpose spray and a few cloths.
- **Toilet cleaner** (bleach) and brush are needed if you are in an ensuite room. Use daily and make sure to scrub down to the U. Also, use a disposable wipe or toilet paper and multi-purpose spray around the rims of the toilet seat and toilet cover.
- **Ventilate your room.** Prop open your door, open the window or both when using bleach or cleaning spray.
- **Set a five-minute timer** every night before you go to bed for tidying. It shouldn't take too long to put things in their proper places and clear your space of clutter.
- **Make the bed.** It hardly takes a minute but can set you up for a better day. If possible, try pulling back your sheets, opening the window and waiting 15 minutes before you make the bed. This is called 'airing the bed' and helps with sleep hygiene.



Part II – Welcome to SLS

Gibbet Hill and SLS

Gibbet Hill is home to the School of Life Sciences and Warwick Medical School. A short walk from Central Campus, it can be reached via Tocil Woods, with a well-lit path that is accessible for wheelchair users and cyclists.

Gibbet Hill is home to undergraduates, taught Master's and PhD students, as well as a range of teaching, technical, research, and professional services staff who help maintain a supportive environment to work, live, and learn.

Gibbet Hill has:

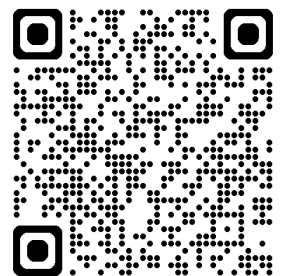
- **1300+** Undergraduate students
- **150+** Taught Master's students
- **350+** research students
- **150+** academic staff including teaching fellows and research-focused academics
- **100+** professional, technical and operational services staff.

University life at SLS may feel quite different from college, sixth form, or your previous educational experiences. Student-to-student, there are a few things we think are worth knowing before you begin.

Firstly, at university, you are treated as an adult. It is your responsibility to attend lectures, complete assignments, and manage your own learning. No one will chase you or give you a detention for not showing up. However, there is a wealth of support available — you just have to take the first step.

Professors, lecturers, older students, and researchers are often happy to help and share their advice and expertise. Ultimately, you have to send the email, ask the question, engage with the forum, and attend your lectures. The more you put into your university experience, the more you will get out of it.

You can also follow the SLS 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 locations at Gibbet Hill Campus.



Professor Gary Bending
Head of School



Dr Ian Edwards
Director of Undergraduate Studies



Dr Samantha Wilson-Thain
Director of Student Experience



Dr Sophie Martucci
Director of Academic Support



Dr Emma Picot
Director of Teaching Labs



Dr Beatriz Lagunas
Year 1 Senior Tutor



Professor Johannes Boltze
Course Director
Biomedical Sciences



Dr Freya Harrison
Course Director
Biological Sciences



Dr Katrine Wallis
Course Director
Biochemistry



Professor Bruno Frenguelli
Course Director
Neuroscience

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. **Most first-year lectures will be held in the IBRB.** There is a café and washroom facilities downstairs.



Café Gibbet Hill

Café Gibbet Hill is the cafeteria and coffee bar at the SLS. It serves **breakfast, lunch and coffee** and has tables to sit, eat, chat and study. There are also microwaves 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.

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.

Labs — the Teaching Labs consist of rows of benches and a range of laboratory equipment – the two-storey lab block provides a wonderful setting to translate scientific theory into practice.

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.

SLS Quiet Study Hub — is a great space to study or write, with lots of natural light, it is also open everyday. The SLS student experience team often leave snacks and drinks during busy times of the year, too.



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.

Science 101

Science 101 (S101) is an extracurricular online moodle course designed for Year 1 students to help with the transition to university study. It provides invaluable advice on lab reports, essay writing and study skills. We highly recommend you check it out. The time spent completing S101 will pay off in the long run (contributing to your Warwick Award points!).

The BioSoc Mentor Programme

BioMentors is a BioSoc-organised programme where upper-year students help lower-year peers with their academic studies. You can sign up to be matched with a BioMentor on the BioSoc website. You may also consider becoming a BioMentor - it is a great addition to your CV, is HEAR-accredited, and is a chance to develop confidence and interpersonal skills.

Careers Department

The Careers and Skills Team provides opportunities include one-to-one careers guidance, networking events and talks, help with CV, cover letter and applications for internships and jobs as well as help with interview prep.

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!

BioCafé

Run by students for students, BioCafé offers weekly peer-support sessions covering topics from writing lab reports to revision techniques. There is also free Pizza and drinks at BioCafé sessions and is a great opportunity to socialise with your course peers.

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 at samantha.a.johnson@warwick.ac.uk and 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 (UG and PG). It is run daily and drop-in times are available on the QuBiC Moodle Page. QuBiC is especially helpful for the module LF136: Practical Skills for Biologists 1.

Medical School Application Support Programme (MASP)

MASP is a series of resources, workshops, mock interviews and 1-2-1 support for students interested in applying for graduate entry medicine run by the careers department. If you hope to become a doctor, surgeon, or other medical profession – be sure to join the self-resourcing MASP Moodle.



Modes of Department Communication

SLS shares information with students through a range of channels, which can sometimes feel overwhelming. Our advice: regularly skim your emails and other communications, looking out for key information and opportunities that are relevant to you. It only takes a few minutes and helps you stay informed about important updates and exciting opportunities.

Personal Tutor

Your Personal Tutor will inform you of important information or relevant opportunities. They may tell you in-person, in tutorials or forward you opportunities via email. Speak with your personal tutor about your scientific interests and career aspirations during 1:2:1s and group tutorials. That way, they can help you find the best opportunities for you.

Email

Getting into the habit of checking your emails is important, as email is the main way information is communicated to you. You may receive newsletters from the Student Communication Team highlighting opportunities and events across the University, as well as the Life Sciences Careers & Placements Team's Careers Round-Up, featuring jobs, research projects and internships. The weekly UG Student Guide Updates are particularly useful, so take a few moments to skim through them each week.

Microsoft 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, 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. Be sure to download it.





Part III – **Academic Advice**

FAQs about University Education

University education can be very different from what you're used to, especially if you're coming straight from school. Here, we answer some common questions to help you get ready for university!

How will I be taught?

Lectures

Given in the form of 50-minute talks by an academic to up to 400 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

Tutorials

Interactive teaching delivered to a small group of students. You will usually have the same tutor and tutor group throughout your degree. These are usually weekly in first year but are fortnightly in following years.

Laboratories

These usually either take place in the Teaching Laboratories or the ICL suite. 'Dry labs' are computer-based, while 'wet labs' are more traditional laboratory work. They vary in length and can be as frequent as weekly in your first year, decreasing in frequency in later years.

What will my typical weekly schedule look like?

As a student at SLS, no two weeks will look the same! Your first year is the year with the most contact hours (10-16 per week), with approximately 10 lectures, half to a full day of labs, and a tutorial. You will undertake several modules across the year; those taught via lecture will typically run across 1 term, whilst Practical Skills for Biologists (including labs and tutorials) run for longer as they are worth more credits. Modules may include optional modules, as well as a compulsory Chemistry module for those who do not have an A-Level (or equivalent) in Chemistry.

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. See more here: [Places & Spaces](#)

You will have many more questions when coming to university for the first time.

Ask them! Ask other and older students, your personal tutor, course mates and friends. No question is silly. No one is expected to know what university is like until they arrive so don't be shy to ask any questions you have. You can also explore this fantastic resource: [Academic Essentials](#)



Learning from Lectures

A lecture is talk by an academic to university students. It is the main type of 'class' at university. They involve a lecturer talking about a specific topic, usually supplemented with a slideshow. 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. 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.

During Lectures

Many students choose to take notes during lectures. This may involve handwriting, typing or annotating printed or digitally 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.

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. You can also post questions on the Moodle Forum, or email lecturers directly.

2. Formalise your notes - Highlight, underline or bold any key terms. Write a summarising sentence — what was the 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.

What is Lecture Capture?

LectureCapture records lectures so you can watch them back later. Wherever possible, it is best to attend lectures in person, but we appreciate that sometimes life gets in the way. LectureCapture recordings are available on the relevant module's Moodle page, organised by date. Recordings are uploaded as soon as the lecture finishes (for example, a 9:00–10:00 lecture will be available from 10:00). If you do need to use LectureCapture, try to watch the recording on the same day to help you keep up to date with the module.

This is the IBRB Lecture Theatre and is where most First Year Lectures take place.



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.

Lab Report

Lab reports are one of the major assessment types for first years. Most students arriving at SLS have not seen or written a lab report, but they are nothing to worry about. Essentially, a lab report is a write-up which outlines what experiment you performed in the lab, why you did it and what you found out. Lab reports will contain data and statistics; although resources such as Science101, QuBiC and tutorials help with that.

Essays

Essays are typically set for over winter and Easter break, and your personal tutor may assign the essay topic. Most first year essays are 1500 words plus figures and references. Essay writing guidance is provided in tutorials so pay attention and you will do fine. Also, essays do take time for research, write-up and editing so try to avoid leaving them to the last minute.

Presentations

Oral presentations are often a concern for students, particularly those with a fear of public speaking. However, there is nothing to be worried about. Presentations are in front of your tutor group (familiar faces) and you will be given time to prepare. My advice for presentations is *tell a story*. Stories are easier for both you as a presenter to remember and for the audience to follow, so find the story in any topic and tell that, rather than just listing a lot of technical jargon.

You can look up any Life Sciences module and view the assessment types here: [Home - Module Catalogue](#)

Exams

As a student, it is hard to give a definitive answer to what an exam looks like at SLS. Recent challenges like the COVID-19 pandemic and advances in generative artificial intelligence have led to changes in exam structure. What I can say, is that you will have exams and everyone will be different in how they best prepare for and tackle exams. Start early and find what works for you.

Posters

Posters may be an individual assignment or group project. Similar to other assignment types, you are given support and guidance. If it is a group project, remember communication is key. Talk with and (importantly) listen to your group, highlight your strengths and interests and be dependable with work you have taken on. Start these early- organising the group always takes more effort than you may think!



Grades and Degree Classifications

The grading system at Warwick and across universities in the UK is slightly different to what you may have had with A-levels, IB and other qualifications. This page explains the system of degree classifications at university and what to do when things don't go to plan.

Grades

First Class - this is the best grade you can get at university! It is usually any mark over 70% and is something to be very proud of.

2:1 - an upper second-class degree (pronounced two-one) is a grade between 60 and 70%. It is considered a high grade and is the entry requirement for some further study courses (including MBio) and jobs.

Fail - below 40% is considered a fail. Resits may be available, but if you consistently receive fail grades, it is important to contact your Personal Tutor, as an overall Fail grade means you will not receive a degree.

2:2 - a lower second-class degree (pronounced two-two) is a mark of 50-60%. Some Master's courses at Warwick and elsewhere will accept 2:2s.

Third Class - this is the lowest pass grade and represents a grade of 40-50%. If a job or further study course only requires you to hold a degree, a third-class degree will be accepted.

Resits, Mitigating Circumstances and Evidence-based Extensions

Resit - if you fail an exam, you may be offered a resit. These often take place in the August/September after the end of the third term and may be optional or compulsory dependent on the module. They are usually capped at 40% (the pass grade), meaning that you cannot score above a pass. Some modules - usually those with practical or group work elements - are ineligible for resits and the fail grade will therefore stand.

Further First Attempt - if you fail or are unable to take an exam due to circumstances considered by the department to be out of your control (mitigating circumstances), you may be offered a further first attempt. The format of these is identical to the standard resit with the exception that grades are not capped at 40%, so you may score higher than a pass.

Mitigating Circumstances - circumstances including, but not limited to, illness, bereavement and technical issues which have impacted your academic results may be considered by the university and modifications to your degree classification and/or progression to next year may be made. See page 34 this handbook for details about Mitigating Circumstances.

Evidence-based extension - an evidence-based extension can be used for coursework to extend a deadline for a defined period, up to the beginning of the next term. These extensions can be granted for events like jury service or recovery from surgery which hinders your academic performance. The relevant form should be filled out via Tabula with the support of the Senior Tutor. Evidence must be supplied, and extensions will be considered and granted throughout the year.

Self-certification - if you need a few extra days on a piece of coursework, and the assignment is eligible; you can apply an extension of 5 working days via Tabula without supplying evidence or filling in a form. Students at SLS have 2 self-certifications per academic year. You can choose the days which the self-certification covers, and all deadlines falling within this period will be extended to the end of the period.



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.

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 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!

Student Union (SU)

The SU is a student-run organization at the heart of life at Warwick. They are headquartered in the Student Union building at the centre of campus, and their purpose is to provide a voice and opportunities to students. Although they are independent from the University, they work in partnership with the University to ensure that the students have a say in their education.

Officers

The SU officers are democratically elected in annual All-Student Votes. They work alongside staff to deliver services and represent the interests of students. Full-time student officer roles include the President, and Vice-Presidents for Education, Democracy & Development, Postgraduate, Welfare & Campaigns, Societies, and Sports. Part-time student officers generally represent different groups of students: disabled, ethnic minority, LGBTQUA+, trans, and women students all have officers representing their needs, in addition to the Widening Participation and Environment & Ethics officers.

Services

The Student Union offers many services to students. The Advice Centre is a great example of this: it is an independent, professional, confidential service available free of charge to all students. The subjects they advise on range from academics and wellbeing, to housing and money. There are also funds to help students in need, including Sportswear For All, the Disability Item Fund, and the Gender Expression Fund, as well as other one-off campaigns, which have historically included the Free Breakfast Club and grocery shopping vouchers to help with cost of living. They are also very helpful with second- and third-year housing, including finding housemates or landlords. If you are ever in need of support but don't know where to find it, the Student's Union is a great place to begin; even if they can't help with your specific issue, they will be able to direct you to someone who can.

Paid roles

As a student, you may well be looking for paid work! The SU-run outlets, including the Dirty Duck, Curiosity, and the Copper Rooms, employ students, and given their short distance from on-campus accommodation, these are great opportunities to make some money around your studies. Check out the 'Working while Studying section' (page 34) of this handbook to find out more!

Sports and societies

Sports and societies are a big part of life at Warwick and are overseen by the SU. The execs for these societies are elected by members, and are subject to SU rules on conduct, finances and more to ensure that students get the best possible experiences. Membership of sports clubs and societies are subject to fees (varying by year) paid to the SU. More information about Sports and Societies on page 24 of this handbook.



The SU building is at the heart of campus, and contains facilities for eating, drinking, studying and socialising. These include:

- **Curiosity café**
- **The Dirty Duck pub**
- **Terrace Bar**
- **Fusion Sports Bar**
- **The Esports Centre**

For more information, visit warwicksu.com!

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

As a first-year student, you may well be living on campus. The town of Canley is a short walk or cycle away, and its main attraction for first year students is the Cannon Park Shopping Centre, including a Tesco and Aldi.

The Warwick Arts Centre should be mentioned here as a great cultural and entertainment centre. Internationally touring comedians and artists frequently perform here, and it is also home to a cinema which gives students great prices. There are some restaurants in Canley too, but the Student Union often serves as the main socialising hub for students living in Canley.

Coventry

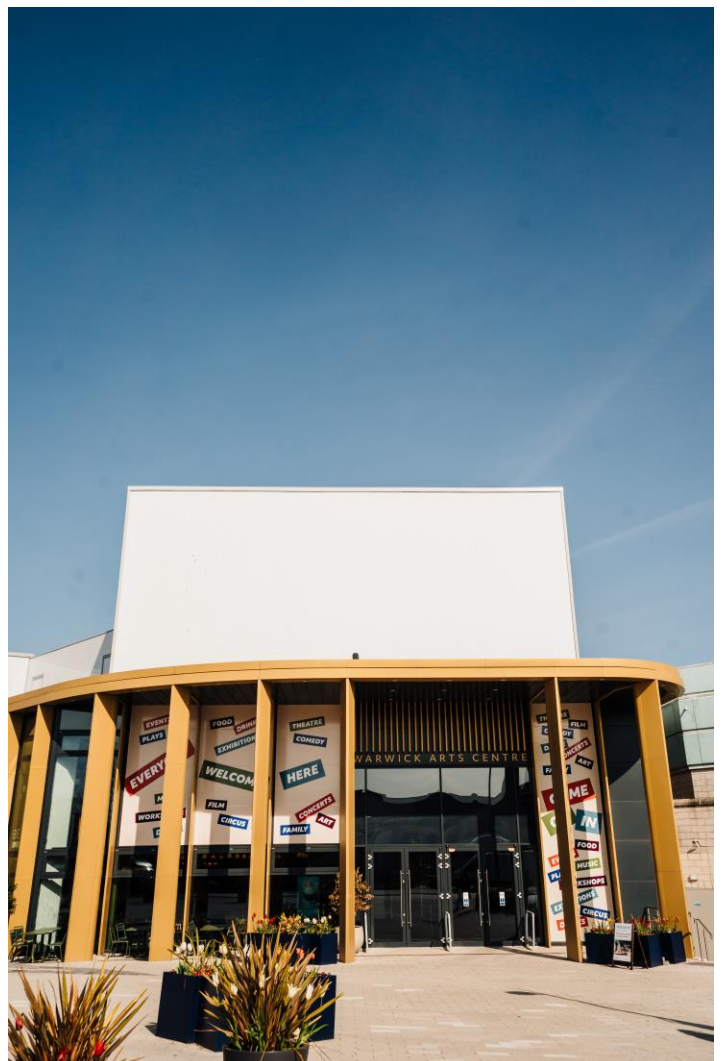
Coventry City Centre is an important location for University of Warwick students. Served by the 12x and 11 buses, it is 15-minute ride from campus (or just over an hour walk if you're feeling adventurous!). It has many shops and restaurants, and the Kasbah nightclub is a particular favourite of Warwick 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.



Royal Leamington Spa

Arguably the most popular destination for students to live in later 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

As you embark on this exciting new chapter of your life, you'll soon discover that 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

Neon (Leamington Spa)

When: Mainly on Fridays

What to Expect: Neon is one of the most popular nightclubs for Warwick first year students, especially on Fridays. With multiple dance rooms, a variety of music genres, it promises a great night out. The club often hosts events with guest DJs, so keep an eye out for special nights.

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.

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.

Tips for a Great Night Out

Stay Safe: Always keep an eye on your drink and never leave it unattended. Plan your journey home in advance and stick with friends, especially if you're unfamiliar with the area.

Budget Wisely: Nights out can add up quickly. Set a budget for yourself and try to stick to it to avoid any financial stress.

Join Societies: Many student societies organise their own nights out, which can be a great way to meet new people with similar interests.

Explore Different Venues: Don't just stick to one place. Part of the fun of university nightlife is exploring new venues and finding your favourite spots.

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 on 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.





Part V – **Money Matters**

Budgeting

As a first-year student, 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**
- **Personal Care**
- **Food and Groceries**
- **Transport**

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 VI – **Health and Wellbeing**

Settling in at Warwick

Coming to university for the first time can bring a whole range of emotions: excitement, anxiety, loneliness and even fear are very common. 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 university 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. Cooking with your housemates can also be a great way to bond!
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! Most accommodations are a 5-15 minute walk from Gibbet Hill Campus, and taking the peaceful woodland walk to lectures 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 from before university and seek to make new social connections with people at university through sports, societies and your course.

A good tip for eating well is to stock up on frozen veg. It is cheaper, does not go off, has no prep-time and you can buy mixed bags to get a good diversity of phytonutrients (good for gut health as you will learn). Studies even show that frozen veg may have greater nutritional value than its non-frozen counterpart as it is frozen at peak ripeness!



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.

BioSoc and SLS Student Networks

Loneliness can be a concern for students starting university. But don't worry, Warwick BioSoc and the SLS student networks can help!

BioSoc

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! We also have a mentoring programme that matches first years with second, third and fourth year (MBio) students. This is designed to help you get to know one another in a relaxed, supported environment where you can socialise with new people. The BioMentors will provide you with academic advice and support. BioCafé sessions also provide academic support - they are weekly sessions (featuring free pizza!) on anything from lab report writing to careers.

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 sls.ug@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 graduate 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 VIII – 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.

Reasonable Adjustments

The University of Warwick supports students by implementing reasonable adjustments (RAJs) for those who have a disability or long-term health condition, as outlined in the Equality Act (2010). According to the Act, a person is considered disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that is both substantial – more than minor or trivial, and long-term – lasting, or expected to last, more than 12 months. As stated in the [Warwick Code of Practice for Disabled Students](#) 'Reasonable adjustments are changes that organisations and people providing services or public functions have to make for you if your disability puts you at a disadvantage compared with others who are not disabled' (Mind, 2023). To implement reasonable adjustments, the university asks for information or evidence related to the student's condition(s).

Sharing your needs with us is an important step in advocating for yourself and getting the most out of your educational experience. In the School of Life Sciences students and staff are working hard to ensure that students feel comfortable communicating their needs and working with us on making reasonable adjustments.

During welcome week, we will tell you about the department's current work around reasonable adjustments in labs, and you'll hear from our Disabled Student Champions as well as fellow students about how they have been supported to get the adjustments they need. You will be encouraged to fill a brief reasonable adjustment in labs consultation to evaluate if you will need any support to work in labs.

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 university 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 at the end of the year. Outcomes can include waiving some assessments 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.



The Commuting Student Experience

People travel to campus in different ways and for different reasons, from supporting family and caring responsibilities to managing finances and other commitments. 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 are not 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, lab sessions, 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.

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.

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 undergraduate 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

"The first few lab sessions felt a bit intimidating, but the demonstrators were incredibly patient. Soon, I felt confident using the equipment and asking questions. It built my independence."

– *Aiswarya, Singapore (BSc Biomedical Science)*

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

- "Don't wait until second year to 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 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 as an International Student

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.



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.

Accreditation - the recognition of a degree by a professional body. Courses at SLS are accredited by the Royal Society of Biology, meaning they are independently assessed to ensure that they give students a solid academic foundation in biological knowledge and key skills.

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 Credits and each year you take 120 Credits worth of modules.

Formative - A piece of work you do that is graded but does not count towards your final grade for the year.

HEAR report - the Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) is your formal record of achievement at university. It outlines your modules, grades and academic achievements.

Integrated Master's Degree - an undergraduate degree which has an extra year added to the end of the 3-year Bachelor's degree, allowing you to graduate with a Master's degree.

Joint honours - a course of study in which students gain expertise in 2 or more different subjects. They graduate with a degree named for both subjects. Some students in SLS may take Life Sciences and Global Sustainable Development. They usually take equal amounts of modules from SLS and Global Sustainable Development.

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.

Postgraduate - a student who has already been awarded one or more degrees and is studying for a more advanced degree.

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

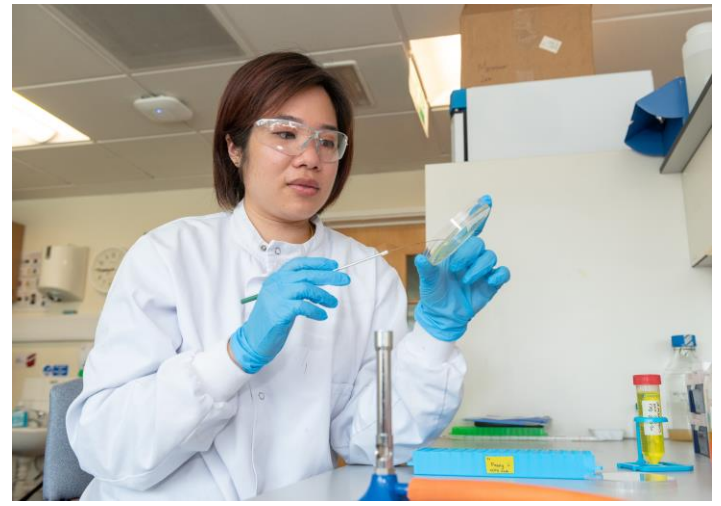
Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC). A forum that allows students to express feedback to their course reps, who meet with the department's academics to discuss students' comments.

Summative - A piece of work you do that is graded and does count towards your final grade for the year.

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.

Tutorial - a small group session led by your Personal Tutor with other members of your tutor group. Sessions may cover academic skills or interpersonal development.

Undergraduate - a student who is studying for their first degree at University.



Useful Acronyms

BioSoc - Biology Society

DAS – Director of Academic Support

DSA - Disabled Student Allowance

DSE – Director of Student Experience

EDIC - Equality Diversity and Inclusion Committee

ESS – Educational Support Services

GLT - Gibbet Hill Lecture Theatre

IBRB - Interdisciplinary Biomedical Research Building

ICL - Interactive Computation Learning (suite)

IMA - In Module Assessment

MASP – Medical Application Support Programme

MCP – Mitigating Circumstances Panel

PGT - Postgraduate

QuBiC - Quantitative Biology Centre

RAdj – Reasonable Adjustments

S101 - Science 101 (online course)

SLS - School of Life Sciences

SSLC – Student-Staff Liaison Committee

UG – Undergraduate

UPD – Undergraduate Programmes Director

WMS - Warwick Medical School

WP - Widening Participation

A Final Word...

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

Entering university is an exciting moment of your life – so enjoy it, be enthusiastic, embrace the challenges and make the most of the range of opportunities.

Remember to treat university like an experiment (we are all becoming scientists after all). Have a hypothesis when you arrive at Warwick and SLS, however, do not worry if you get an unanticipated result...

it is there, in that unexpected zone, where scientific progress, or in your case personal growth, really occurs.



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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.