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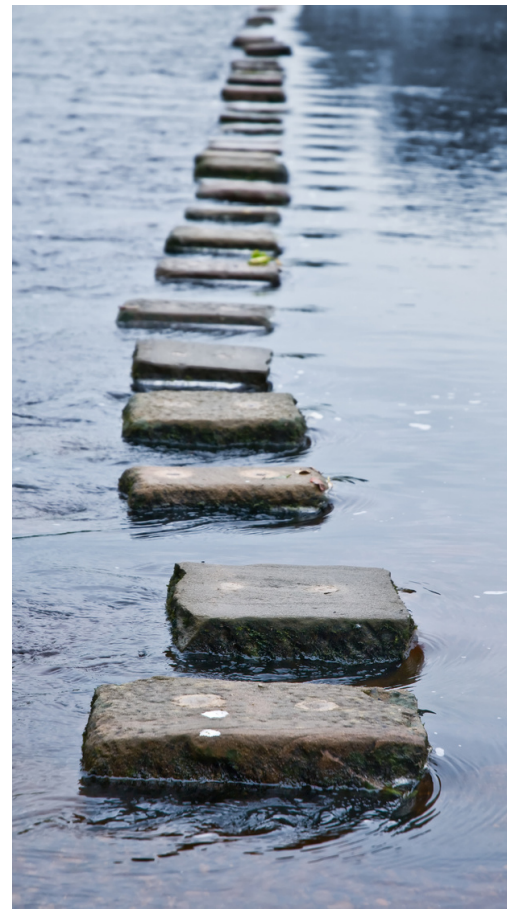
UNI : THE NEXT STEPS

SCISOC 2023



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**SCISOC
2023**

EDITORS NOTE

DEAR Readers,

University is a very tricky stage within our lives. As we finish high school and move on to the next step, it can be difficult to balance friends, work and studies. Everyone have all had their fair share of difficulty adjusting to university.

Due to this, UNSW SCISOC's Publications portfolio would like to introduce their second publication of this year. We have all diligently worked hard to create this new publication to give advice to fellow UNSW students.

Within this publication, we have interviewed six different types of students at UNSW to share their wisdom, experience and advice. We hope to aid students who are facing struggles in any aspect of their university experience.

We hope you find the next step enjoyable and were able to learn new strategies and recieve advice in getting through university!

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Publications Portfolio 2023



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SCISOC

2 0 2 3 P U B L I C A T I O N



Reynard Tay

Through his eyes...

Reynard, a vibrant Optometry student in his fifth and final year at UNSW dreams of providing optometric care to remote rural communities.

Fueled by his love for General Aviation, his passion for optometric care, and his heart for helping others, Reynard is set on a path to create a meaningful impact in the world of eye care.

Balancing his studies and part-time work, he's a dedicated individual who radiates enthusiasm and determination. In this invoking interview, Reynard reveals revelations, relevant to university students, regardless of degree or year.

Age:

24

Favourite animal:

Quokka

Most listened-to artist:

Coldplay

Fun fact:

I've done national service with the Singaporean Armed Forces.



"Getting involved earlier would have allowed me to get that useful head start towards getting industry experience that would streamline my career progression."

IN YOUR OVERALL UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE, WHAT WAS YOUR BIGGEST REGRET?

Not exploring the various student life aspects of University during the first year and instead being a bookworm and studying all the time. On that note, I wish I started **volunteering earlier** in my University career, especially in my 1st and 2nd year, where I could devote more time to the **opportunities** these amazing programs available.

On a side note, I've learnt that it's best **not to waste energy** on those who don't have your best interests in mind.

If I could give advice to first-year me, I would tell myself that **sometimes, things are out of my control** - if you persevere, one day **it will work out**.

FROM A CAREER-ORIENTED VIEWPOINT, WOULD YOU DO ANYTHING DIFFERENTLY? WOULD THIS AFFECT YOUR CAREER GOALS AT UNSW?

As I mentioned earlier, It would have been great if I had an Industry related job **earlier** in an ideal world.

I hope to become an Optometrist that performs outreach services to Rural communities in Australia. I see the need for optometric care in rural communities that are cut off from main health infrastructure such as Hospitals and Medical Centres but still deserve the same level of healthcare.

I believe that, together with my love of flying and General Aviation, I may one day be able to get my Private Pilot's License and my own plane to fly out to communities for the day to help test their eyes while still being able to come back to my family at night.

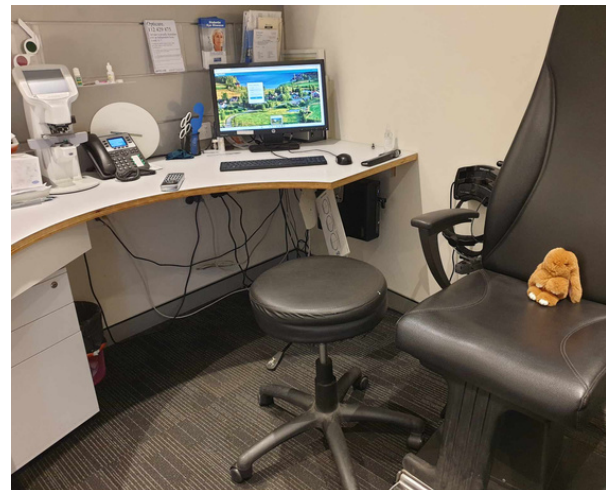


"I don't regret how my career has worked out so far- I'm blessed to work in a good environment with supportive mentors."

WHAT EXPERIENCES AND QUALIFICATIONS HAVE YOU ACQUIRED THROUGHOUT YOUR OPTOMETRY DEGREE THROUGH INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS AND INTERNSHIPS?

I realised later in my degree the **importance of getting involved**, but I've still got a variety of Optometry placements under my belt. I did my Private Practice Placement at an independent Optometrist in Blacktown, as well as my Preceptorship at another independent Optometrist in Merimbula.

I've also spent a week at the **Australian College of Optometry** in Melbourne and spent some time at Stewart House School in Curl Curl performing vision screening for **disadvantaged kids**. I also work at Specsavers to get some industry experience (and some well-needed funding).



"Step into my office..."

WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO EFFICIENTLY MANAGE YOUR BALANCED UNI: WORK RATIO? ARE YOU ABLE TO EFFECTIVELY INCORPORATE A SOCIAL LIFE?

It can be challenging sometimes, certainly during the final year, and especially in times of change- being away from home, etc - which has thrown my balance of work and Uni off and made things a little bit more stressful as a result.

It's important to **set short-term and longer-term goals** that help me achieve what I want out of my University experience. It is always good to **balance** this with some **leisure and physical activity** (I like to go walking/hiking) but I found it was good for me to break my days and tasks up into manageable "chunks" which I could set time aside for whenever I was able to. Have different-sized chunks that you can squeeze into awkward gaps during the day.

Getting into **societies and volunteer programs** with those who share **similar interests** and hobbies as I do makes it much easier to engage with the community. My time with OneStep Walking Group as part of the Arc Wellness Volunteering Program was just so much fun - I loved being able to use walking as a tool to promote wellness and mental well-being.

JOSEE HART



Age: 24

Degree: PHD student in marine ecology

Year: 1st year of PHD

Question: *If you could talk to your first-year self, what is one piece of advice that you would give to yourself?*

Probably to be brave in trying new things and asking questions. Just try and get the most out of your university teaching and learning. **Learn as much as you can.**

Question: *What were some of your favourite experiences at university?*

I think getting to meet a lot of people, since I moved from outside of Sydney, I didn't really know anyone before I started university for my undergraduate degree. So, it was fun **meeting a range of people** in my classes and just in Sydney in general. I also really **enjoyed being able to study** something I chosen to do because I'm passionate about it and I enjoy it. Also, in ecology we do field trip which are always a fun experience being able to **learn things outside of university**



Question: *Is there anything you regret in university and if you do, what would you do differently if you could go back to that time?*

It's a hard question. I would say though that it goes quickly, so as much as your assessments and things like that are important, it can be stressful and full on. But it is also important to **make the most of the opportunities** you have like **joining society's** and having fun as well.

Question: What's one thing you wished you learnt about earlier in university (can be in terms of relationships, friends, study techniques)?

You want to make sure you **look after yourself**, so I feel like I learnt a lot in my early years in university on how to **balance** living out of home for the first time, doing university which is hard and stressful and making new friends. It's important to like you **make sure to relax and rest well** otherwise you'll get very tired.

Question : What is one piece of advice you would give to first year students?

I think it's **going to be okay** which would be my advice cause I feel like with school it is quite structured and regimented a bit. With university it comes down to you, **how much you want to learn and how much you want to put into it**. No one's going to force you to show up to classes.

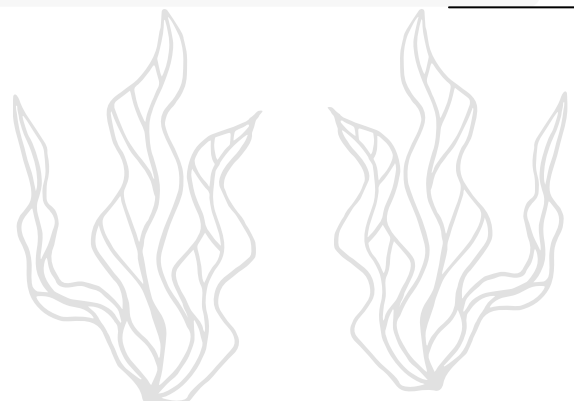


Question: Which emoji describes your personality the best?

Super smiley face cause I spend most of my time smiling.

About Josee

She currently is doing her PHD on sea grass and is working as a lab demonstrator at UNSW. She's very passionate about teaching and you may see her in one of your BABS1201 labs!



MINH TRAN

Degree & Year: 4th Year Psychology/ Marketing

I HEARD YOU'RE A TAYLOR SWIFT FAN, WHICH ALBUM OF HERS IS YOUR FAVOURITE?

Ooh, I really like Red because it's one of the first albums of hers that I started listening to. You know when you hear an older song from your childhood on the radio or something, it really strikes a chord within you just because of the nostalgia component. Yeah, I'd definitely say Red is my favourite album of hers.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY HAS BEEN THE HIGHLIGHT OF UNI SO FAR?

Literally nothing, haha, I'm joking! I think the highlight has been the friends that I've been able to make within societies and classes. Uni is such a unique segment of your life that you won't experience again after graduating just because everyone is more open to socialising here. Also, it's much easier to make friends within uni as opposed to the pressure of the workforce as everyone has more flexibility between classes, work and maintaining a social life. I feel like the friendships that you have in uni are pivotal in shaping your identity because they're the people that you'd hang around with the most.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE UNI, WORK AND A SOCIAL LIFE?

I'm not going to lie, being a part of a society just means that you're going to be doing more unpaid work, haha, it feels like a side quest! But, it gives you the opportunity to socialise with others so it usually doesn't even feel like work because the time that you spend working with your team is just loads of fun. I do sometimes experience moments where I'm overwhelmed with exam season and the work that I've committed to completing within a society, but I try my best to mitigate these situations by preparing well the week leading up to it. I actually froth over to-do lists, haha! I think my best advice is honestly to try your best to set out some time before the due date to break up your work into smaller and more manageable tasks so you can tackle things one by one. It's also really important to remember to ask for help when needed so that you don't feel so overwhelmed.

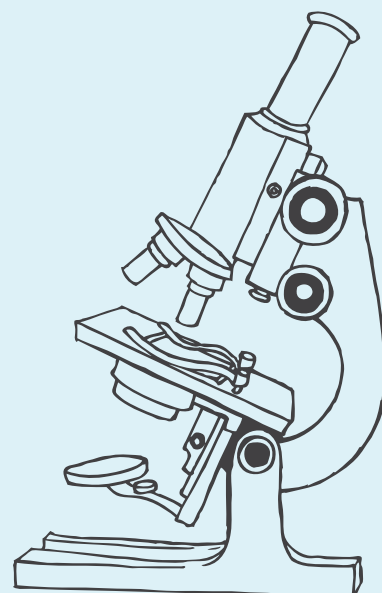
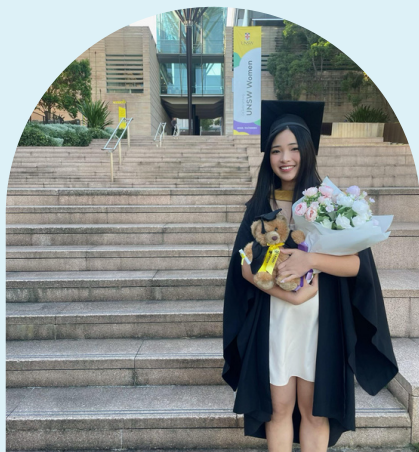


WHAT PROGRAMS HAVE YOU BEEN A PART OF AND HOW HAS SOCIETY CULTURE IMPACTED YOUR UNI EXPERIENCE?

I've had the opportunity to be a part of a bunch of different subcommittees which are the portfolios that act as the backbone of a society. Being in a subcommittee is such hard work but completely worth the reward as you get to meet a bunch of people who share the same interests as you. Throughout my uni experience, I've been a part of Psychsoc as an executive, the philanthropy director of Artsoc, and a subcom of Marksoc. I've also volunteered in shorter term programs such as Yellow shirts, Street team and Wellness warriors, but these programs only last for about 2-3 months as opposed to a society which goes for the year. Each society is unique to the people that are involved and the vibe varies depending on those that are in your portfolio. After the year that a society ends, you might find it harder to keep that close connection, because everyone is busy but it's good to find time to still meet up with each other.

JESS NGUYEN

UNSW Alumni; Bachelor of Medical Science, Honours



Just to help break the ice, what's your favourite concert you've ever been to?

Oh, yes! I love this question! A month ago, I went to Blackpink. I've liked them ever since they started as a band so I went to their concert four years ago and now they're back so I went again. Even though they don't release as much music, I think every one of their songs just holds so much inspiration. I like all of it and they're all so pretty and have great style.

What did you study at UNSW and what do you think was the most enjoyable thing about this?

I studied medical science for three years and honours for 1 year. The most enjoyable thing about this was that I really liked science and anatomy in high school. I liked how I learnt a lot about diseases and the human body which is why I majored in cancer pathology. My project was also on the brain cancer in children called neuroblastoma. That's why I took honours, just to go into research and see what I can do with that. Another thing I liked is that I met a lot of friends. I think the best thing about studying this was that I met people from med sci and I became good friends with them.

What are you up to now that you've graduated?

I'm actually taking a gap year right now. I did my undergrad and also the GAMSAT as a prerequisite to study post-grad somewhere else. I found out after four years of studying that I want to do dentistry, so I might use that to study again later next year. Right now all I'm doing is working so I can make money, and also just on myself.

What's something you did at Uni that you enjoyed way more than you expected?

For a subject I'd say I really enjoyed taking this gen-ed course which was completely unrelated to my degree. It's called personal finance and I chose it because everyone said it was a WAM booster but I ended up really liking it. It taught me a lot about saving money, budgeting properly, investing, really planning your future out with regards to money. I can be a really irresponsible spender so actually learning how to not just save but also grow it over time was really useful; I loved it.

With regards to my extracurriculars, I think you know what I'm gonna say, I loved street team! I think I first joined in 2021, and I joined because it was my second last year and I wanted to make some friends. I didn't think too much of it, but in the end I wanted to come back more and more every time because I felt like every time I improved either in being more self-confident or making more friends. I also loved getting to lead people who just wanted to grow and be more confident, like it makes me really happy to see Juniors (first-time street team members) grow or myself progress forward. It was really fun, and in the end I have friends that I still talk to. It wasn't just like a normal volunteering thing, we actually still talk and I'm really grateful for that, I think that's the best part of my time in uni. I feel like meeting you and meeting everyone else was really fun

If you had to give one piece of advice to people still at Uni what would it be?

One piece of advice would be to take every opportunity that is thrown at you, I think I regretted not saying yes to a lot of the things that were offered to me, like opportunities, because I was scared of overcommitting or being a bit too burnt out, or even just too shy and overthinking that people won't vibe with me, or thinking that I'd suck, like I'd suck at this course.

"I regret not joining things earlier... In third year I joined and I realised that If I had done this sooner I would have cherished my time in uni more."

I think I had a lot of fears going into my degree and uni life, so I think that a really good mindset is to just say yes to most things that are thrown at you because you never know what you can gain out of it, you can gain life long friends, you can gain a lot of skills that you can still work on in the future in jobs and stuff, and you can gain confidence.

Always value your time at uni is my point. My four years was really really fast, so I don't want anyone else to feel like they wasted their time at Uni, and to not have all these good memories left behind. It was really really fast for me so hopefully everyone can cherish their time there.



Do you have any advice for people hoping to get some more experience within the world of science before they graduate?

I think the most important thing is, so for me I had to know what I liked in science. Is it pharmacology, is it diseases, is it cancer, is it anatomy? After these years it's good to know what you're good at and what you enjoy doing, not just one or the other. You need to both enjoy it, be somewhat ok at it, and have passion to do it. I found out that I really like cancer and diseases, so near the end of my course I looked for a project that I could research on and actually be passionate about doing. A whole year of research on something that you don't enjoy wouldn't do any benefit in the end.

I also had a lot going on, which I shouldn't have done, I had a lot of volunteering experiences going on. I packed it all in the last year because I felt like I was going to miss out on everything. I was very burnt out in the end but because I liked the course and I liked what I was learning I still didn't struggle as much even though I had a lot going on. Choose something that you really enjoy and do further research and further studies on it, like honours or any research experience. I think it really helps students in science to gain more lab experience and skills which are useful in the future if you do choose to pursue research or further studies.

DO YOU HAVE ANY LAST TIPS OR WORDS OF WISDOM FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE STARTING TO GET CLOSE TO GRADUATING?

My one would be, even though you think it's scary that you're gonna go into the workforce and maybe you don't know what else to do with life even though you're at the end of graduation, I think you should still dream big and keep taking your own time. Don't compare yourself to other people's timelines and success because I find myself doing that a lot. I always think I'm behind because I'm taking a gap year or whatever, but everyone is on their own little journey, it's so corny but I think it's actually true, just take your time, focus on what you're doing. The other thing is I think keep connecting with your friends, they're not gonna drift from you if you guys both make time to see each other outside of grad.

CHRISTY LI

Fourth Year Optometry Student

What is your favourite and least favourite thing about Optometry?

For my least favourite I would say the volume of content you have to get through, which requires a lot of memorisation which is never fun. Favourite thing is probably seeing patients, which has been really rewarding because we are applying everything we've learnt.

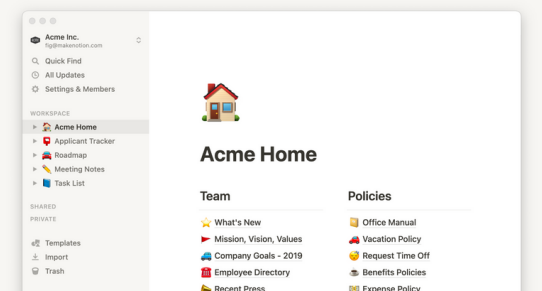
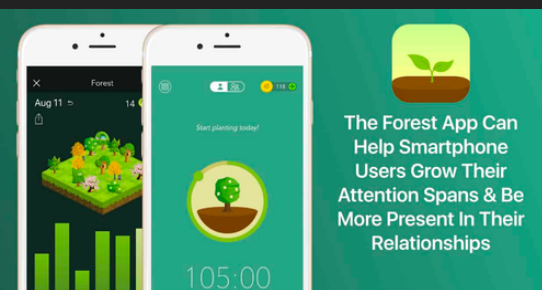
What are your favourite locations to study on and off campus?

I personally don't study a lot of campus, but I do like the study cubicles because I feel they help you a lot avoiding distraction on Level 3 of the Main Library and Law library. Outside of campus I like Macquarie Library, they have closed off study cubicles, quiet areas and overall just great facilities.

Living in a time full of distractions, how do you deal with procrastination?

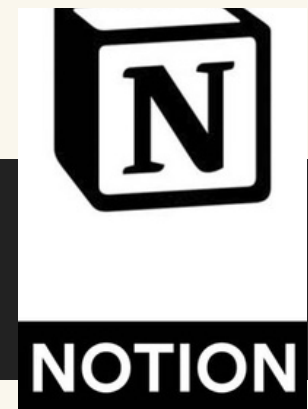
Honestly, with distractions on your phone the best way is probably just to put it somewhere you can't see it so you're not tempted to use it while you're studying. In terms of more practical methods, there's an app called forest which helps with not using your phone while you're trying to be productive and focus mode for apple users is great as well. For procrastination in general, if I have something due, I am always more comfortable with finishing it several days before the deadline, so I tell myself that my later self will thank me for it and try to get it done early. If you really struggle with, try to implement deadlines for small goals and really just try to get started.

Useful Study Apps



Do you use particular productivity apps that you'd recommend to others

I currently don't use any apps, I have tried them in the past but never stuck to any. A lot of people do find them very helpful. So I've already mentioned Forest, Notion is another one I would recommend, it basically allows you to organise your work, keep track of goals and a bunch of other functions that you can explore.



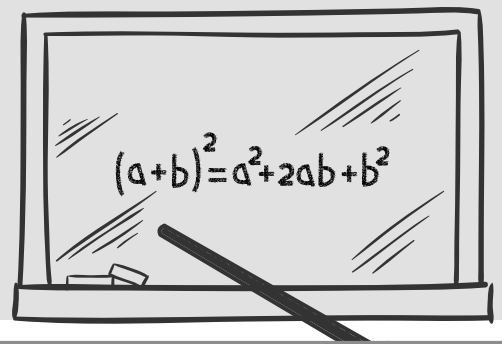
What are some exam tips or techniques you've found the most useful?

Dealing with stress and nervousness was something I personally found really useful in elevating my exam performance. Make sure to trust that you have studied enough, even if you might not have, take a deep breath and understand that you've done what you can.

TINA LUO

3rd Year Student

Bachelor of Science (Mathematics)



Academic History

Advanced Math Honours/ Computer Science
Science / Secondary Education (Majoring Math)
Science (Majoring Math)

What is your favourite season?

Winter because I can play in the snow and go skiing.



Why did you change degrees?

After 1.5 years I decided that I didn't want to pursue Computer Science as my career because I no longer wanted to pursue a career in technology. Instead I decided that I wanted to become a Math teacher so I changed to Science and Secondary Education but due to issues with my Visa I had to drop Secondary Education as my visa requires me to complete my degree at the end of this year. Once I graduate I will apply for a Masters of Education instead of completing the Bachelours.

Has there been anything in uni you regret?

I regret not taking uni more seriously in 1st year and thinking that WAM doesn't matter too much, If I could go back I would not choose Computer Science and go straight to Science and Secondary Education. I also regret not using uni services such as the Nucleus earlier as I thought I was able to do everything myself, but after the first year, I realised how helpful the people at the Nucleus are.

What has been the most enjoyable part of uni so far?

I enjoy society activities and other group activities from different courses, I like to meet new people and make friends within my courses that will be doing the same courses as me in the future. I am currently in the Chinese Musician Society (CMS) and have been involved in this society for 3 years, although I don't play an instrument I am the events director and organise all performances and events.

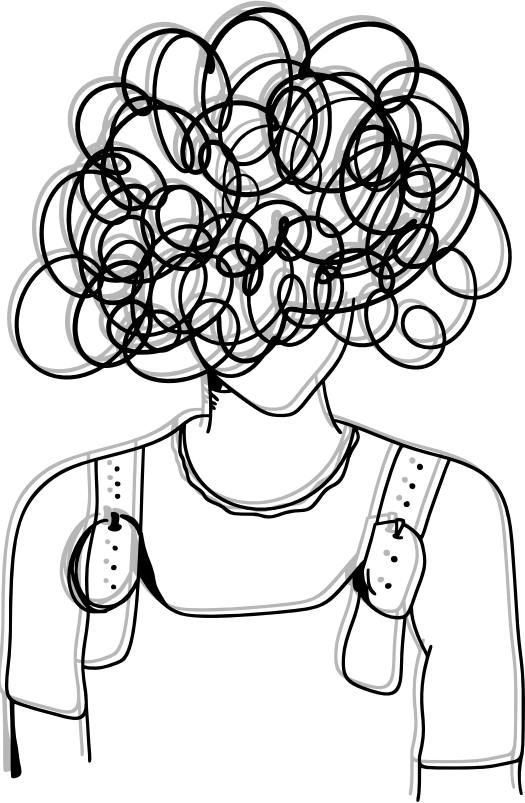
Advice for First Years

Take advantage of the Nucleus or course advisors as it can be really helpful to figure out what to do about certain degree progression or general struggles, but make sure to ask around in the Nucleus as some people may not be well versed with a particular degree or course to give the best advice.

Outside of academics I would also highly recommend taking advantage of uni life such as societies as it can help you network and make new friends.

Feeling Stressed?

Here are some tips and tricks from the Philanthropy team from SCISOC!



Keerthi

Ways I Destress

- Go to a **different room** or completely **leave the area** and just **blast my music** to get myself out of the stressful headspace, this is usually a thing I do to hype myself up.
- Having a **shower** in complete **darkness** at night, the water and darkness really **relax** me and helps to put me in a **better mindset**.
- **Talking** to my **friends** about a completely different topic to **distract** myself from the **stress**, this way I can **slow my brain** a bit by thinking about someone else and also **don't feel alone** since I sometimes isolate myself when I'm stressed.
- **Bake** something yummy and **channel my stress** into **something I love** doing, although cooking stresses me out it's a different type of stress, and I get something to eat out of it so it acts as a **reward**.

Grace

My Wellbeing Tips

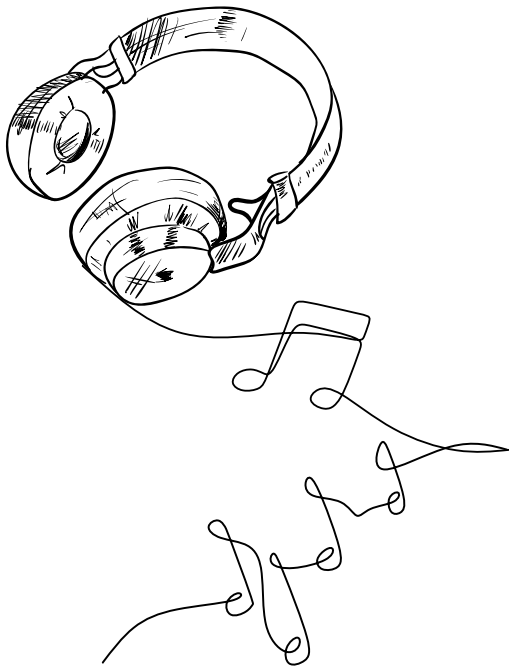
- I like to take **short walks** in between studying ideally going somewhere close to my house. Sometimes I'll take the train and go get a **snack or milk tea**, This lets me get some **exercise** and **Vitamin D** for the day by **walking**, and I also get to **treat myself**.
- **Stopping my work** on assignments around a certain time at **night** so I can **do something I enjoy** and **take my mind off of work** for that day i.e. I'll make a **plan** to just get as much as I can **done before** a certain time like **11 pm**.
- **Limiting screen time**; whether it be time on **social media**, **TikTok** or just replying to **messages**, I find that it sometimes gets **overstimulating** to be on my phone with **too much going on** all at once.
- **Doing something** else **productive** that's **not study**, allows me to **clear my mind** up, but also **not have to focus my energy on work** if I'm not in the **right headspace** for it; e.g. I'll **clean my room** if it's messy so that there's **less physical clutter**, which makes me feel **less stressed overall**.



Monet

Mindfulness Tips

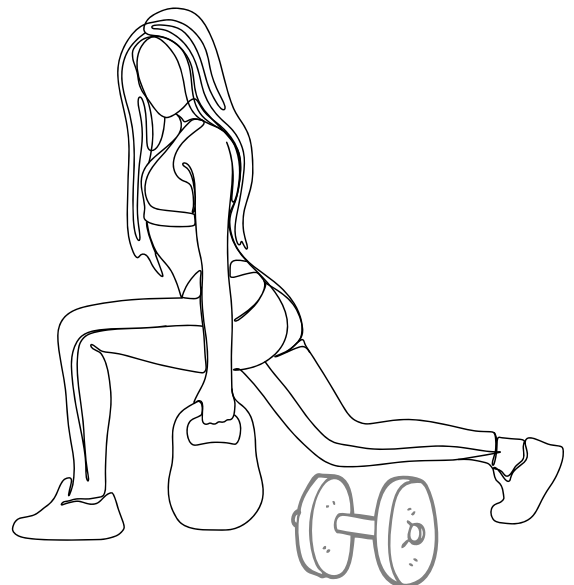
- Waking up in the morning and taking **5 deep breaths**, bringing your attention to your breaths also **eases you into the day**
- Do a **body scan** – sit still and notice the way your body sits etc, I do this to **ground myself** and bring myself to **my own thoughts**
- **Lying in bed** and just **listening to music** – whatever genre, **absorbing everything** and just experiencing **peace!**

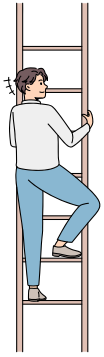


Bani

What I do during Exam Season

- **Taking breaks:** I like to **spend time** after uni or work **with my family**, whether for a long time or even ten minutes, to take my mind off whatever I had been doing, **relax with a calming conversation**, and see how their day went. I like to spend time with my dog and play games or watch a few episodes of my current favourite TV show as a mindless activity requiring low energy. This helps me **recover from anything stressful** I have going on and take on a fresher approach as **my mind feels clearer and more relaxed**.
- **Listening to Music/Making Playlists:** I like to listen to music or make new playlists for whatever vibe **I feel to motivate me to continue studying**. A lot of the time, I use **music to relax and dissociate** while I take breaks from studying. It helps me **regather my thoughts and feel more energised** when restarting.
- **Calling a friend:** I find that although sometimes calling my friends can be distracting, it is one of the **best stress relievers** because it **makes me laugh and let loose**, and it helps a lot when I want to ground myself **in times of built-up stress** and anxiety. **Spending time with my friends**, whether in person or over call, is often one of the **best solutions to destressing** because it makes me feel less trapped by my uni workload and helps **maintain a well-balanced work and social life**.
- **Going to the gym:** Exercising helps me feel **more productive** in my day and **less sluggish** when I am unmotivated. When I go to the gym, I prefer to go during a **quiet time of the day** so I can take my time and **have a relaxing yet rewarding session**, and it makes me feel like I have **put in the effort to do something good for myself** that day.





TECHNIQUES

STUDY SMARTER NOT HARDER

Are you re-reading lecture slides over and over yet still remember nothing? Bored with the typical study methods?

Below is a quick look at some of the most popular and effective study techniques that can help you learn and retain content more effectively.

01

THE SQ3R METHOD

The SQ3R Method is a popular study technique that stands for Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review. This method helps you to actively engage with the material you are studying and to make sure that you understand it.

02

POMODORO

This technique involves breaking down your study time into 25-minute intervals, separated by short breaks. This helps you stay focused and productive, and it also gives your mind a chance to rest and process the information you've just learned.

03

THE FEYNMAN TECHNIQUE

This technique involves breaking down a complex concept into smaller, easier-to-understand chunks. Then explain the concept to yourself in simple terms, as if teaching it to a child. This helps to solidify your understanding of the concept and to identify any areas where you still need clarification.

04

THE LEITNER SYSTEM

The Leitner System is a spaced repetition system that helps you to remember information over time. This system involves creating flashcards or other study materials, and then reviewing them at regular intervals.

05

MINDMAPPING

This technique involves creating a visual representation of the information you're trying to learn. This can help you to understand the relationships between different concepts, and it can also make the information easier to remember.



By using a variety of study techniques and following these general tips, you can improve your academic performance and achieve your educational goals.

Here are some additional tips for choosing the right study techniques

CONSIDER YOUR LEARNING STYLE

Are you a visual learner, an auditory learner, or a kinesthetic learner?

Once you know your learning style, you can choose techniques that are tailored to your strengths.



EXPERIMENT WITH DIFFERENT TECHNIQUES

There's no one-size-fits-all approach to studying, so it's important to experiment with different techniques to find what works best for you.

BE PATIENT

It takes time and practice to develop effective study habits. Don't get discouraged if you don't see results immediately. Just keep practicing and you'll eventually find what works for you.



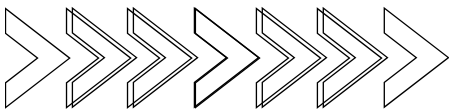
I hope this article has given you some helpful tips on different study techniques. Remember, the most important thing is to find what works best for you and to be consistent with your studies. With hard work and dedication, you can achieve your academic goals.



**Thank you for
reading:**



**U N I : T H E
N E X T S T E P**



**A guide to your
time at UNSW**