

What can you do before teaching starts and during your studies?

- [Home](#)
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Top 10 tips for distance study success

<https://www.otago.ac.nz/distance/current/otago020814.html>

1. Make sure computer and internet facilities are adequate

[Advice about laptop recommendations](#)

If high speed internet access is not available at home, consider whether you can utilize facilities at work or elsewhere.

[Distance Students Help Page](#)


The Distance Students Help Page has information about student resources (webmail, Blackboard, Office 365, Student desktop, Zoom), library resources, as well as IT support and contacts.

2. Become familiar with your course materials

Get a head start on your reading.

Purchase texts well in advance in case of delays with stocking and shipping.





Go over readings provided via links in your paper's Blackboard or Moodle site, or ask if they are available via:

[Library Services for Distance Students](#)

3. Create a workspace

Make a warm, clutter free and comfortable space with adequate light, where you will be free from noise and interruptions. Try to make this a space which is solely for study.

4. Prepare yourself for Zoom sessions (if your course has them)

Zoom connects you with your classmates and lecturer online. You will find these sessions even more worthwhile if you read the required material ahead of time and are prepared for questions and to participate in discussions.

[Find out about Zoom](#) and check the "Getting Started" guide.

If connecting from home, find a quiet place to participate (hands-free headset, a place to sit and take notes, a place for your laptop).

5. Set a study schedule and stick to it

For an 18 point paper in a single semester allow approximately 15 hours per week study time (a 30 point paper = 25 hours study time).

Make a schedule to keep up with the pace, meet deadlines and ultimately succeed. Assess the time required for study and plan who will cover your home and work tasks during set or peak times for audio or video conferences, residential workshops, during reading and research time, assignment preparation and exam revision. Research shows that if you complete your first assignment you are likely to finish the entire course.

[Family Support](#)

The Family Support webpage addresses issues you and your partner/family may need to consider.

6. Become familiar with using the Library



- [Visit the Library Services for Distance Students website](#)
- Learn to make an effective database search for assignment material.
[Online tutorial: Searching for Information](#)
- Learn the referencing and citation style required for your paper (access online tutorials covering plagiarism and referencing).
[Referencing and Citation Styles website](#)
- Endnote referencing software is free to all University of Otago students, but you will need to apply for the license each year. Information about Endnote – including systems requirements for running the software on your computer and how to order a license to use the software during the time you are enrolled as a student – can be found on the ITS website:
[ITS EndNote webpage](#)
- The Library Services for Distance Students and your Subject Liaison Librarian are able to assist you with the above
[Library Liaison Service and Subject Librarians webpage](#)
Contact the Library via email, LibChat, or telephone.
[Contact details can be found on the Library services for Distance Students website](#)

7. Update your academic writing skills

[Student Learning Development](#)

The Student Learning Development website lists the resources and services available for improving writing skills.

8. Keep in touch with your lecturer and other students

Be willing to speak up if problems arise, otherwise your lecturer will never know what is wrong. Contact your lecturer regularly with any questions you have. It is a good idea to discuss your progress with a real person.

Your lecturer can also put you in touch with other students, which can help keep you motivated and become connected. Meetings with other students might be in person, via email or on social media.

Stay in touch with what other postgraduates are doing by subscribing to the postgraduate newsletter. For subscription requests:



Email otago.post@otago.ac.nz

9. Take practice exams

For some papers, practice exams can be found here:

[Library Exam Papers Online](#)

If past exam papers are not available for your paper, check your course material for module review questions or ask your instructor.

10. Reward yourself

The path to your ultimate goal may be a long one. Maintain your motivation by celebrating minor successes along the way.

After submitting your first assignment, treat yourself to something you have been looking forward to: perhaps a dinner out with your partner; or buying tickets to a special event.

Remember to reward your support team at home too. Negotiate what is study time and what is family time. Your success may well be dependent on their extra help during this time.

