



Tips from lecturers

How to study

Sweaty hands from exam stress or no social life because you've fallen behind in your reading? No need for that. Three lecturers give you tips on how to make a success of studying and still get the most out of your student days. Text Luuk Zegers



Jessica Duncan

Associate professor of Rural Sociology

1 Read the course guide. Maybe it's a bit obvious, but lots of students don't. The course guide tells you what the course is about and what is expected from you as a student. Students lead such busy lives, so the better you understand what you have to do and when you have to hand something in, the better you can plan things. To test who actually reads the course guide, I often put in a task like: 'If you read this sentence, send me a picture of your favourite food'. Maybe half of the students do that.

2 Use a diary. Deadlines that seemed far off sneak up on students and all of a sudden their assignment is due. Get a diary and use it!

3 Take the reading work seriously. Reading can be overwhelming. I get it. But reading is key to learning and reading academic work is also an important skill that can serve you far beyond your degree. It is so important to keep up with the reading, ask questions about what you read, and try to understand why you're reading what you're reading.

4 Ask questions, But show that you're trying to understand. They say dumb questions don't exist, but if the answer to your question is in the course guide, it is quite dumb to ask that. That said, if you don't understand a concept or you need extra clarity, ask your teacher. Be sure to show them that you have tried to answer the question yourself,

and explain what part you don't understand.

5 Be curious when selecting your courses. At Wageningen you have the opportunity to go in many directions and try out so many different things. Do that. Get out of your comfort zone. It brings you new perspectives.

6 Transitioning to a new stage of life can be tough, so find **healthy ways to deal with the stress.** WUR has support available in the form of student psychologists, study advisers, student deans, confidential counsellors and more. If you feel overwhelmed, find someone to talk to, for example via the Student Service Centre. It's the bravest thing you can do!



Perry den Brok

Professor of Education and Learning Sciences

1 Study regularly. Research shows that it is often better to learn small amounts frequently than cram really hard for an exam in one go because you forget most of it afterwards. You might be able to pass your exams with some last-minute revision but hopefully you came to university to genuinely learn something. So it's good if you haven't then forgotten it all again one week after the exam.

2 The next tip is actually rather a bad one, but there are some books, for example *Test Heroes*, that explain how teachers create exams. If you **know how exams are designed**, you will have a better idea of what to do to pass them.

3 Think about the long term. What do you want to get out of your degree and what do you want to do later? The possibilities sometimes seem endless so it's a good idea to figure out what direction you want to go in. For example, are you more interested in the research side or the commercial side?

4 You don't just learn things in lectures. Try and find out more about your degree subject outside your courses. Watch films, go to talks or try out something in practice that you learned in lectures.



Hannie van der Honing

Lecturer in Cell Biology

1 There is a lot of scheduled time with teachers in Wageningen. Yet many students choose not to attend lectures and watch them online later instead. That's a shame, since the lectures clarify the focus and you can consult the lecturer during the break and afterwards if you have any questions. It also helps you stay on schedule. So my advice is to **be present at contact moments as much as possible.**

2 Prepare properly for practicals. It is a shame if you have to use your contact time with teachers figuring out what to do. If you are well prepared when you start the practicals, you can use the time in the lab to ask questions about the content and to share in your teachers' enthusiasm for the topic.

3 Don't be afraid of some delay in your studies if that lets you do something you are enthusiastic about and can learn a lot from. Students who

spend a year on a committee or board learn soft skills that will help them an awful lot when they start work.

4 Some students take their degree programme very seriously – too seriously, I sometimes think. My tip for those students is to **enjoy the freedom that you have as a student.** It becomes much harder once you start work.