

Dealing with bureaucracy

“I was continually learning new skills to deal with the maze of university bureaucracy”

There was one obstacle that caused me to stumble many a time during three years of academic endeavour – university bureaucracy. It provided a steep and unanticipated learning curve, and though the experience of each year at uni left me feeling as if I knew the way through the maze of university bureaucracy a little

better, I was continually learning new skills to deal with the system. For each faculty at a university, there were staff and administrative procedures that were part and parcel with handing your assignments in, getting to the right exam and knowing your tutor's name.

Bureaucracy at uni is pretty similar to a car's accelerator – if you can work out how to push it, it helps you get to where you're going, faster. Talking to tutors, keeping up with your uni email account and being proactive if you feel confused, are good ways to step on the bureaucracy accelerator.

At some points, the staff and resources that are available will seem to be unreachable, utterly confusing, or just plain frustrating. Keeping open the lines of communication between yourself and tutors will help a great deal in providing opportunities to gain understanding of what is expected of you.

In first year, I made an appointment with the head of my faculty, in order to chat and gain a better awareness of what I could study in second semester. It was at a time that I'm sure every uni student experiences, when everything and everyone seems unfamiliar and intimidating. It was confronting and I had to work up the courage to make the appointment. So when the head of my faculty told me that she only had 15 minutes, and I was late (I couldn't even find the office), I became flustered and left feeling even more confused than when I arrived. I was also put off ever stepping foot in there again. Now, I'm a pretty enthusiastic and hardy individual, so I can only imagine how a similar experience would leave someone feeling if they were shy or worried to begin with.

The thing that I've learned, though, is that experiences like this teach you a skill set that you may never learn in MKF3121 Marketing planning and implementation or FTV1010 Contemporary television studies. While a Bachelor of Communication concentrates on the history and ideologies, the practice of communicating over and over again with the administrative staff in your



faculty will set you in good stead for future employment, on top of the skills you learn in tutorials.

Some general tips to winning the uni bureaucracy battle include keeping on top of your emails and use your student email account to communicate with tutors and other staff at your uni. At the beginning of each semester, write down the name and contact details for each of your lecturers/tutors and keep all the information in one location, so it's always easily accessible.

Be pro-active. If you find yourself unsure about an aspect of your weekly questions, assignment, or course, acting fast will ensure the problem doesn't get out of hand.

Be brave. University can be overwhelming, and complex bureaucracies don't help. Talk to your tutor. In my experience, they are friendlier when you make the effort and they will try to help. ☑

Amy Hunt

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