



Starting the Semester, whether you are in your first year, or last, can always seem a little intimidating with new classes, people and adventures brewing! Coming straight out of holiday mode, it can feel like a major learning curve. That being said, we have come together to give you our best tips, curated directly from our own personal experiences, to surviving the Semester!

### **Our 1st Semester Experiences**

“Semester 1 was a mix of excitement and adjustment. The academic structure was a big change; managing multiple subjects from different faculties, group work, and self-directed learning took some getting used to. By the end of Semester 1, I started to find my rhythm. I had built a solid routine and felt more confident navigating the demands of university life. Looking back, that first semester was a time of figuring things out and reflecting on what worked for me, what didn’t, and what I wanted to get out of my university experience...”

“...If I could go back and do it differently, I would push myself to step out of my comfort zone socially. I’d also remind myself not to stress so much about “getting it right” from the start. Adjusting to university takes time, and it’s okay to make mistakes while figuring things out. Those moments of uncertainty taught me a lot and helped shape the way I approach challenges now.”

– Vanessa L., President

“I remember being really anxious that I didn’t know what to expect, but after some adjustments I felt myself slide into routine.”

– Lauren W., Vice-President

“Pretty nerve racking in the beginning but also exciting as it felt like I was stepping into a new chapter in my life.”

– Sasha K., Events Director

### **Keeping Organised**

Organisation is critical, particularly if you find yourself juggling numerous commitments at once. Though, there is not one correct way of organising yourself, in fact there are numerous approaches you can consider before finding what works best for you!

“Weekly planner broken down into hours, I put my mandatory classes in first, then my work schedule, extracurriculars and friends, then build my study calendar around that. I have a template I’m happy to share!”

– Lauren W., Vice-President





## OUR TIPS ON

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## ON THE RIGHT FOOT

“Staying organised throughout the semester requires a combination of planning and flexibility. Academically, I rely heavily on a digital calendar to map out deadlines, tutorials, and study blocks, along with all my other non-academic commitments...

...When it comes to assignments, I've learnt to break larger tasks into smaller, manageable components and spread them out over the weeks leading up to the deadline. This approach not only reduces last-minute stress but also ensures higher-quality work. I've found Google Sheets to be an excellent tool for this as it's free, easy to share, and the dropdown function minimises ambiguity about the status of each section...

...Lastly, I've learned the importance of balancing structured plans with adaptability. Unexpected tasks or opportunities can arise, so I always leave some buffer time in my schedule to handle them without feeling overwhelmed.”

– Vanessa L., President

### Having a Social Life

The social element of university life is infamous, from what we see on social media and in film. However, reality can be different and even off-putting.

“I really enjoy finding small snippets of time to see friends. For me this has looked like: commuting together, playing a team sport or working out together, saying hi quickly in between our classes, studying together, getting dinner, or inviting them to a WiB event!”

– Emily P., Engagements Director

“I prioritise quality over quantity in my social life, enjoying smaller, meaningful interactions like catching up with friends over coffee between classes or going for a walk together to get some steps in. As an introvert, these quieter moments help me recharge while still nurturing strong relationships...

...Being involved in clubs and societies, such as WiB, has also been a fantastic way to meet like-minded people. Events, workshops, and casual meetups hosted by the society provide great opportunities to network and make friends in a relaxed and welcoming environment.”

– Vanessa L., President

### Smart Saving and Spending

We all come from different financial backgrounds, and have different financial goals. However, financing the Semester can oftentimes be costly to the average student, from





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factoring in food, travel and activity expenses in Sydney.

"I used to manually track my monthly spending in a spreadsheet, which worked well but was time-consuming..."

...To make the process more efficient, I started using the Buddy app on my iPhone. It's a great tool for categorising expenses, setting budgets, and tracking my spending habits over time. The app's visual breakdowns and reminders help me stay on top of my finances without needing to spend too much time managing them."

– Vanessa L., President

"I keep track of my expenses through my budget spreadsheet based on my expected income and bills, as well as a plan for where to move my money for my various savings/spending accounts. I also track my spending and saving monthly to see if I am meeting my goals."

– Lauren W., Vice-President

### Wellbeing & Finding Balance

The Semester can get extremely busy, and to avoid burnout, prioritising your wellbeing and finding balance between your various commitments is crucial.

SUMMER '24 ED. | ISSUE #7

"I've been working hard to get back to netball and the gym, as I find these really help with my stress levels throughout the Semester. Making time for my relationships has also been important as it fills my cup up. Even in my busiest weeks I strive to take an afternoon for self care like doing my nails or baking something."

– Lauren W., Vice-President

"I maintain my wellbeing by finding time to take breaks and resting often. It is unrealistic to be working 100% all of the time and it is normal to find that you've fallen behind every now and then. The important thing for me is resting in ways that fill up my bucket. One aspect of this is being physically active – competing in team sports have allowed me to socialise and incorporate movement into my week."

– Emily P., Engagements Director

"I recognise that balance doesn't mean giving equal time to everything every day, but rather it's about adjusting based on what's most important at the time. Whether it's a major university assignment, a busy week at work, or simply needing to recharge, I adapt my schedule to try to manage my priorities without burning out."

– Vanessa L., President

by Vanessa Khan

