

Study diary

When to complete: September to June.

Recommended time for completion: 30 minutes per entry.

Date completed:

Introduction

The SWAP East study diary is personal to you. Its purpose is to encourage self-reflection, by providing you with an opportunity to stand back from the day to day challenges of your access programme and think about how things are going. Reflecting on what we have done well and what we might be able to improve upon is an important and natural part of the learning the process. You should use the diary to record observations, concerns, achievements, aims and anything else of significance that happens throughout your access year. You should use the diary in the way you find most useful. It may also help you identify issues outside college which might be affecting your ability to learn. Suggested times for diary entries are provided, but you should update it whenever is most useful for you.

Tips

The diary is only useful if you use it fairly regularly throughout the year. Find somewhere you can think in peace and quiet to complete your entries. Even if you are sceptical about using the diary, do try giving it a go; you might find it works really well for you. If nothing else, it will help you keep a record of what you achieve on the access programme and chart your academic and personal development over the months of the programme.

The diary

If you are able to reflect on how you learn and become aware of how you learn best, your time at college (and later at university) will be more productive. We recommend that you spend some time filling in this study diary throughout your access year. It will help you identify the aspects of studying you are happy with and those you may need to work on or need help with. As well as helping your studies, the diary will also give you a useful reference that you can use to chart your progress from new to accomplished student.

	Diary entry	When to do
1	First impressions	End of week 1
2	Reflection	End of week 3
3	Reflection	October break
4	Writing: self-assessment	September-November
5	Stock check: rating your progress	End of November
6	Reflection	November-December
7	Stock check: rating your progress	January
8	Reflection	March-April
9	Writing: self-assessment	May
10	Stock check: rating your progress	June
11	Reflection	June

1. First impressions (end of week one)

What are your first impressions of college? (Tick as many options as you like).

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OK | <input type="checkbox"/> Boring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad | <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terrible | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nerve-wracking | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stressful | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

1. Describe your ideal study conditions (e.g. where, time of day, materials, equipment, music/TV on or off).

2. Describe how the reality you have experienced differs from the ideal conditions you described above.

3. What could you do to improve your study conditions and make them as good as they can be?

4. What do you see as the main challenges to being successful in your studies (e.g. confidence, academic issues, childcare, money)?

5. Have you had any particular problems with studying in the past (e.g. certain subjects, teaching styles, being easily distracted, pressures, your attitude to learning, special learning needs).

6. What strategies could you put in place now to overcome those difficulties?

2. Reflection (end of week three)

How would you describe your first few weeks?

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OK | <input type="checkbox"/> Boring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad | <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terrible | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nerve-racking | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stressful | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

1. What have you enjoyed during your first few weeks?

2. Note down the first thing that comes to mind when you think about your return to full-time education.

3. Are you having any difficulties with your return to full-time education? Think about the challenges you identified in diary entry one.

4. What might you do to overcome these difficulties? Who might be able to help you?

5. In terms of your studies, what is your main priority for the next few weeks?

3. Reflection (October break)

How would you summarise the past few weeks? (Tick as many options as you like).

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> Exciting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Good | <input type="checkbox"/> Interesting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OK | <input type="checkbox"/> Boring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bad | <input type="checkbox"/> Overwhelming |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Terrible | <input type="checkbox"/> Fun |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nerve-wracking | <input type="checkbox"/> Difficult |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stressful | <input type="checkbox"/> Inspiring |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Confusing | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

1. How do you feel now compared to how you felt at the start of the programme?

2. What achievements have you made and how do you feel about them?

3. Can you identify any aspects of your studies and college life you feel you need some help with?
Who could help you?

4. Write about how are you finding the following aspects of college life:**Classmates/other students**

Tutors

Subjects

Learning resources

Managing your finances

College/home life balance

5. What aspects of the programme so far have you enjoyed most? Why?

6. What aspects of the programme so far have you enjoyed least? Why?

7. Are you happy with your study conditions and workspace? Are there any improvements you could make? Do you prefer to study at home, at college or somewhere else?
