

Top tips

Top tips for reaching your potential at University from your Union of Students

Who should I contact if any of these issues are worrying me?

If you have any problems, you can make an appointment with the Union of Students advice service. Call 01332 591507 or email us at advice@derbyunion.co.uk you can also book online at derbyunion.co.uk/advice/onlinebooking

Or you can contact the Student Wellbeing Service on 01332 593000 and email them at studentwellbeing@derby.ac.uk.



I'm struggling to complete my work due to something happening in my personal life.

If you have any issues which are affecting your work, it's best to let a lecturer or your personal tutor know as soon as possible so they are aware and can offer you the best support possible. Your programme team are there to help you, however, you can access additional support from the Union advice service or Student Wellbeing.

Something out of my control has impacted on me completing my work to the best of my ability.

If something goes wrong in your assessments (ie excessive noise in exams, or issues with submitting your work) email your personal tutor as soon as possible so that the incident can be recorded. Following this you may need to submit an Academic Appeal.

Is there a limited amount of time for me to submit an appeal for my grade?

Appeals must be submitted to the Assessment and Awards Unit within ten working days of the date of formal publication of results. Contact the Union's advice service for further guidance.

I'm unsure how to reference correctly. How do I write to a university academic level?

The library host Study Skills sessions which take place online and face-to-face covering a wide variety of topics including referencing, academic writing and revision. Sessions can be booked at derby.ac.uk/services/library/

How do I know if my work is plagiarised?

Check your turnitin report! There's no exact percentage to try and stay under but it's important to check that any highlighted areas are referenced properly, and that any text that has been paraphrased is not showing high levels of similarity to the original source - it's important use your own words.

You can normally submit your work to turnitin before the deadline to check for similarities or missed references, and then resubmit as many corrected documents as you need to before the deadline. Check when the submission portal opens to allow yourself a few days for the report to be generated prior to the submission.

I've heard of something called 'Self-plagiarism', but what does it actually mean?

If you use any work that you have already submitted to the University, you must reference this in the same way you would be expected to with work by somebody else. If you are unsure ask your lecturer or a Study Skills advisor.

There's a problem on my course, who do I need to speak to first?

Course reps are students on your course who have been elected to represent your views about the academic experience to the staff in your department. They attend regular meetings with academic staff where they are able to influence positive change based on student feedback. If the problems persist visit the Union advice service who can support you through the University Complaint Process.

I want to get involved in activities outside of my lectures and seminars.

The Union of Students have over 100 societies and clubs that you can join. You can also get involved with volunteering, fundraising and sports. To see the full range of activities you can take part in visit derbyunion.co.uk/getinvolved/

I've been asked to attend a University meeting and don't want to go alone.

If you have an investigation meeting with staff, ie about a suspected academic offence or a placement failure, contact the Union advice service as soon as possible so that we can support you before, during, and after any meetings. The Union advisors are independent from the University and will provide you with confidential and impartial support.

I've never signed a contract for a house before, is there someone who can check it with me?

The Union advisors can check your housing contract for you before you sign it to ensure that it is fair. Keep an eye on our social media channels for our first annual housing fair where you can get your contract checked before signing. Don't feel pressured to rush into signing up to a property.

I want to ensure I keep as much of my housing deposit as possible, what do I need to do?

Take pictures! As soon as you move in, take pictures of the house and your room, particularly any damage. Do the same when you move out (after you've cleaned) so that the pictures can be compared and you can demonstrate that the property was left clean and tidy.

Where can I get free condoms?

If you're aged 18-24 you're entitled to free condoms, lube and dams with a C-Card. You can sign up for a C-Card with one of our Union advisors. Once you have your C-Card, you can collect free condoms from the Union of Students and at different sites around Derby City and Derbyshire.