DE MONTFORT
UNIVERSITY
LEICESTER

YOUR DMU FUTURE STUDENT HANDBOOK

GETTING STARTED

YOUR DMU PRE-INDUCTION

Your DMU pre-induction is an online programme made up of different units covering your faculty and programme, your teaching and learning environment, academic and support services, and top tips for life as a DMU student. It is designed to help you, as new students, begin to prepare for university life. Current students have assisted us in developing your DMU pre-induction content to help you settle in as quickly as possible and get a head start. You will receive further information via email about how to access the Your DMU pre-induction shortly before starting your course. You might need to put a few hours aside to complete it fully, but don't worry, you can log in and out of the site as often as you like.

WHAT IS INDUCTION?

At university, the term 'induction' generally refers to a range of activities organised by university central services, your faculty, your programme and De Montfort Students' Union (DSU). These activities are designed to introduce you to the physical university (buildings, spaces, and services), the social aspect (your peers, tutors, personal tutor and other university staff) and the culture (what it means to be an undergraduate or postgraduate, how to get the most from your time at DMU) and, very importantly, to help you to settle into university life.

In September 2020, a lot of the induction activity will be online, but the purpose remains the same. From the first weekend when most of you will arrive, you will have the opportunity to engage with multiple activities to help you find your way around. Your faculty will share a programme of activities when you register and many of these activities will be available for you to return to during the course of your first term or even first year. This is where your exciting DMU journey begins.

WHAT IS RE-INDUCTION?

For those of who are returning to DMU for their second or final year and are familiar with the university, 're-induction' is equally important. Much of what is offered to new starters (described above) will be of interest and use to you, especially activities introducing you to new ways of studying in a blended way, but there will also be activities specifically designed for you as you transition to the next level of study and continue your DMU journey. Look out for important messages and announcements on Blackboard.

HOW WILL YOU LEARN?

Every student is different and learns in different ways, so we support you through our inclusive learning practices. We use projects such as **Universal Design for Learning** and **Decolonising DMU** so we can be fully inclusive by tackling racial discrimination and disadvantage in everything we do. You will learn through a variety of delivery methods and will mostly learn either face-to-face on campus or via virtual learning platforms. These will either be on **Blackboard Collaborate**, Microsoft Teams, or face-to-face, depending on the type of delivery and the learning that is taking place.

There are so many ways that you will be learning and below you will find some of the terms you may come across on your academic journey in the next year.

Firstly, synchronous delivery and asynchronous delivery. Synchronous means a session that will appear on your timetables and is live. Asynchronous is standalone content that is pre-recorded, allowing you to access the content at any time. These sessions will be accessible via Blackboard Module shells so you can learn at your own pace.

Types of synchronous sessions	Types of asynchronous sessions
Streaming video platforms	Pre-recorded teaching sessions in PowerPoint with/without voiceover
Live chats, individually or course-wide	Pre-recorded teaching sessions in DMU Replay
Live engagement on forums on discussion boards	Podcasts, video and radio, blogs
Web conferencing tools	Broadcast media
Student participation with peers, including group working and co-creation	Links to journal articles or online data sets, Interactive knowledge checks
Supervision meetings	Recorded practical demonstrations
	Forum or discussion boards, student developed or co-created materials

TYPES OF SESSIONS

ONLINE LECTURE
A formal teaching session which is designed to provide information to students online but which is used in collaboration with interactive educational content, providing opportunities to engage. These sessions will usually be asynchronous.

ONLINE SEMINAR
A smaller group meeting on Collaborate or Microsoft Teams which allows you to develop your learning synchronously with peers and academic staff. This will usually be timetabled.

ONLINE TUTORIAL
A meeting of individuals or small groups of students to engage directly with a lecturer to provide learning support or clarify challenging concepts. This type of session could include support for dissertation students. These sessions would typically be synchronous and delivered through Microsoft Teams.

ONLINE WORKSHOP
Timetabled synchronous sessions where you can engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project. This may be of a practical nature or based on shared theoretical concepts and may include an interactive session that provides the opportunity to engage in experiential learning.

WORKSHOP SESSIONS
These involve students having remote access to the likes of IT labs, which will be timetabled to ensure access. Interactive online workshops will have clear guidance on how the workshop will work and the protocols for the session.

ONLINE LAB
Similar to a workshop, these sessions provide an interactive platform to enable you to engage in experimental learning. These sessions would typically be arranged through specialist IT remote access solutions and will be timetabled and delivered synchronously. Sessions may be recorded for asynchronous review by an individual or group, in line with DMU recording policy.

ONLINE DISCUSSION
These groups will provide safe spaces for you to exchange ideas or clarify understanding with peers or lecturers. They may be delivered synchronously or asynchronously if using discussion forums, for you to access at a time that suits you. They are places for you to develop and critically review ideas.

ONLINE DEMONSTRATION
These will usually be pre-recorded videos to show you practical skills which you may later apply in practical sessions.

ONLINE SIMULATION
These sessions provide simulations to reinforce key concepts so you can explore them in a real-world context. Sessions will be supported by open source content to develop the richness of the learning materials.

ONLINE CASE STUDIES
These are often developed to help apply knowledge based within real or imagined situations. Group or single responses to cases enable the development of critical learning skills and provide you with opportunities to develop research and problem-based skills.

ONLINE PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING
Discussion boards, chat rooms and wikis may be utilised to facilitate ideas in problem-based learning. They can either be led by your lecturer or in peer-supported groups.

ONLINE GUIDED LEARNING
These are independent learning sessions where you are supported to investigate, review and reflect independently on tools, research materials and learning resources. Sessions will not be timetabled.

BLACKBOARD
Blackboard is a web-based virtual learning environment used at DMU to support your learning. Blackboard provides access to online learning materials from any computer with internet access. On Blackboard, you will have:

- Community site: contains information about your faculty.
- Programme site: contains information about your course. You can also interact with other students on your course here.
- Module sites: contain information about the individual module you are studying. You can also interact with other students studying that module.
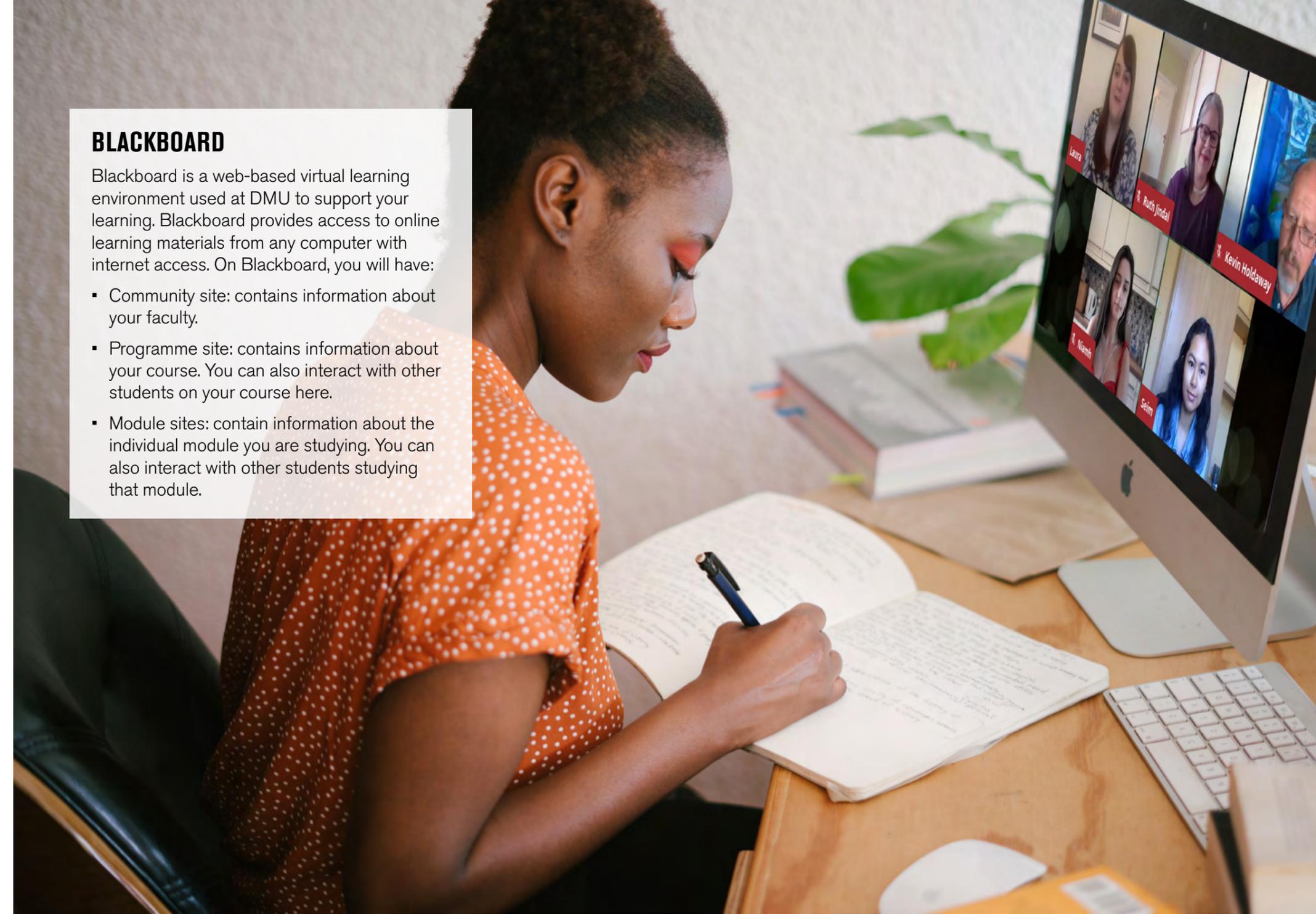
TIPS FOR LEARNING

When you start your journey at DMU, you need to remember three core principles that will help you to have a positive academic experience. These are to be prepared, be proactive and interact.

BE PREPARED

In a time of great change, it is okay to have unanswered questions. Do not be afraid to ask questions, let us share that burden with you and in some cases take it and find the answers for you. The more prepared you are for your programme, the better you will engage with the content. The following tips will help you do just that:

Tips

1. Train to use online platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Blackboard. You'll find ways of doing this throughout this handbook, so be sure to look at them and become familiar with the platforms. Check the Library and Learning Services (LLS) Digital Partner's online **Student Learning Technologies Hub**. Find out more about getting **online one-to-one support** from Digital Partner.

2. Read your programme and module handbooks to understand their structures. The more you know it, the more prepared you will be. Highlight important key dates and mark them in your calendar. You can access programme and module handbooks on **Blackboard**.

3. Digital skills support can be accessed through the online student digital skills hub ranging from using **Learning Technologies** such as Blackboard, Microsoft Word for structuring your assignments, Microsoft Office 365 and other software such as mind-mapping software and more. Find out more through online resources and obtain support from the library's **Student Digital Skills Hub**.

4. There is a digital capabilities certificate available for all students on your faculty Blackboard shell. This has been produced by university experts with help from existing students to build your digital wellbeing, skills and understanding. Successful completion of this short certificate is recorded in your Higher Education Achievement Report, it will be awarded alongside your degree. You will also receive a DMU completion certificate to download and save.

5. The **Library website** offers access to a wealth of online resources, including **subject guides** that relate to your course. Library and learning services teams can help support the development of your academic, referencing, digital and maths/statistics skills. There are many ways that you can get support, from **online bookable tutorials/workshop** and live LibChat. Find out how you can be **supported online**.

6. As a DMU student, you have access to the LinkedIn Learning platform and may find content embedded within your modules. In addition, you have a full access to browse **LinkedIn Learning** to develop any extra skills you want. Through your DMU login the platform provides access to more than 15,000 video tutorials supporting learning across many areas. It can keep track of your course history and recent activity, certificates of completion and you can download content to watch offline too. There is also scope to link these achievements to your **LinkedIn profile** if you have one, so once you earn a certificate it can be posted on your profile and seen by potential employers.

7. To find out more about this learning platform, speak to your module and programme leads and check the **LinkedIn Learning guide** on the library website.

8. Have a good understanding of the modes of learning for your modules, whether it be on campus or online. Look out for emails from your programme leads and use the glossary referred to previously to learn about the different approaches.

9. Don't forget to develop a routine – time management is a vital skill and especially when studying online. Planning a regular study time and blocking off set hours each week is what many successful students do.

BE PROACTIVE

Proactive individuals are usually more prepared and, in most cases, more relaxed and positive due to the extra steps they've taken for possible situations. The tips highlighted in this section can help you to be more proactive:

Tips

1. Reflect – use the self-assessment tool in this handbook to understand and identify your strengths, limitations and areas for improvement. For example, if time management is an area you want to improve, **LinkedIn Learning** has a course available to help you with that. Plan your time effectively to be present for your timetabled synchronous sessions.

2. Enhance your current study skills – you can find many courses on LinkedIn Learning, just log in using your student details. DMU also has a fantastic library and learning services team with lots of opportunities to improve your academic and study skills. You can find more **here**.

3. Remember there is no such thing as a bad question, so don't be afraid to ask. If you have queries, your lecturers, personal tutor, and course reps are on hand to help. If you didn't understand something in class, whether online or on campus, do not hesitate to ask the lecturer or facilitator. If there is no time, email them after the class.

4. Log on to Blackboard and visit the module sites each week. It's important to get into the habit of checking in consistently to access module announcements or review programme materials. It also offers a great chance to get involved in any discussion on the forum.

INTERACT

It's important to interact with others. Social interaction is vital to human health, both mentally and physically. Research has shown that interaction has huge benefits and a positive impact on learning.

Tips

1. **Connect** – reach out to others in the student community. This could be through interactive quizzes, videos and online forums. Connecting with other students is a positive step that can enhance your studies through learning from others and making new friends. It is also a really important step to avoid loneliness, and to contribute to positive mental health. Your module shells on Blackboard will have a group room which is open all the time for students to communicate.

2. **De Montfort Students' Union (DSU)** – the **DSU** offers many opportunities to interact with other students, be it through student groups and societies, activities, campaigns or various leadership roles. DSU student societies can have a dual identity/academic focus, including self-study groups.

3. **Course representatives** – these are the vital link between students and the university on all things course-related. They make sure your academic interests are represented in any course and faculty-related meeting. They will listen to your views and ideas and feed this back to the university through a variety of channels. Students usually interact with their course reps through course group chats, but they are able to contact them through their university email which is advertised on the DSU website.

4. **Staff surgery hours** – this is a time dedicated for students to contact academic staff on any issue relating to their module or programme. Usually, academic staff will make it known when this time will be, and you can then book a slot within the designated time to speak with them.

5. **Personal tutor** – you will have a designated personal tutor throughout your time at DMU and you are strongly encouraged to build a relationship with them from the start of your DMU journey. Your personal tutor is there to support and guide you and can help you to achieve your academic and personal development goals.

6. **Mentoring** – there are several mentoring schemes available which aim to support you throughout your time at DMU. The different schemes are designed to address student need in relation to wellbeing, belonging, and excelling. Find out how to take part in these schemes by visiting **Mentoring for All**.

7. **Communication** – students can receive a lot of emails, so it's useful to mark your module leader's email as a favourite to make sure emails from them are always prioritised so you avoid missing out on key information. Also, when communicating by email with staff, remember to do so in a professional manner and use your DMU email address.

8. **Closing the feedback loop** – following feedback from a member of staff on your work or assignment, it's important to focus on the points made and what needs to be done. This will further your reflection of the project and help you to improve next time.
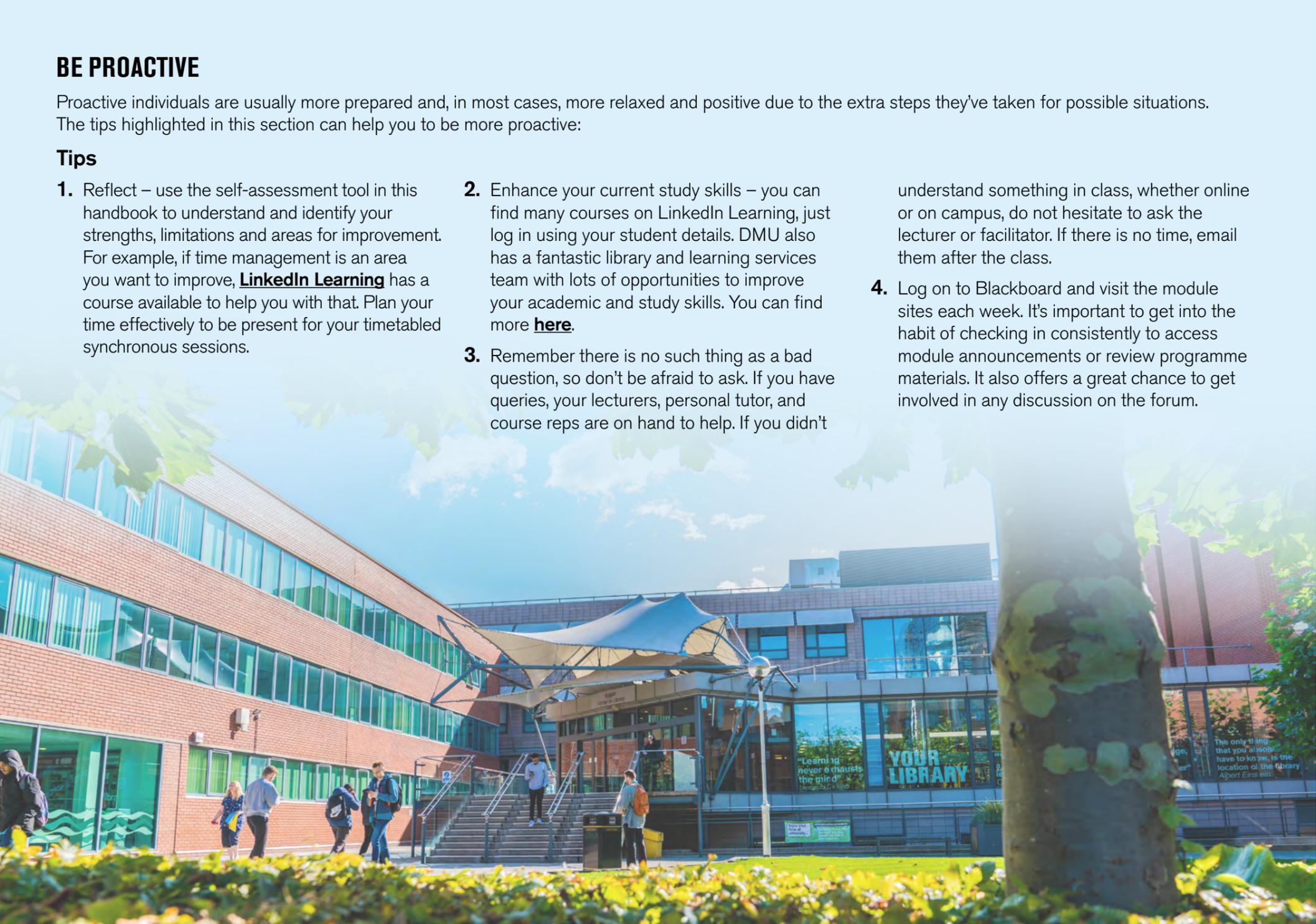
SEEK SUPPORT

At DMU we strive to create an environment that focuses on your health and wellbeing so you can live a healthy, happy and productive life. That includes providing you with resources that support your development and studies, helping you to succeed and achieve your potential.

1. **Funding and finances** – our student finance team can answer your questions about applying for funding or even just help you with managing your finances. For more information about these services or to book an online appointment, you can find the **contact details here**.

2. **Wellbeing** – Healthy DMU is here to support your health and wellbeing while at university, with an online hub that provides quick access to booking appointments, activities and hints and tips about staying well. For more information and resources, visit the **Healthy DMU Hub**.

3. **Disability/mental health disclosure and support** – we strongly recommend you inform us about any existing disabilities, medical or mental health conditions. By telling us about this, we can make you aware of the support you may need and are entitled to. **Disabled Students' Allowances** are government support packages available to UK students who meet the criteria and are designed to pay for the extra costs a student may incur as a result of a disability, medical condition, Specific Learning Difference or mental health condition that impacts your studies.

4. **Contacting the wellbeing and mental health services** – to ensure that we direct you to the appropriate service you must first book a Single Point of Access Appointment (SPA), where your needs will be assessed. SPAs are 45-minute appointments that give you the opportunity to discuss your situation with a member of support staff. At the end of the appointment, you will be given an action plan of what to do next. These appointments can be booked via MyGateway.

5. **The Disability Advice and Support team** are based in the Student Gateway and can arrange support for students with disabilities. Appointments can be made through MyGateway or by emailing **disability@dmu.ac.uk**.

You can also follow us on Twitter **@DMUwellbeing** for tips and information on a range of mental health and wellbeing issues.

Cyberbullying

We are committed to ensuring all students are treated with respect across all online platforms and face-to-face activities. We want students to recognise any discriminatory behaviours either online or offline, and report anything to your personal tutor or **faculty advice centre**.

What is cyberbullying?

- Spreading malicious and abusive rumours and gossiping
- Emails or texts with threatening or intimidating remarks
- Mobbing (a group or gang that targets you or someone else)
- Harassing you or someone else repeatedly
- Intimidation and blackmail
- Stalking you or someone else online and continual harassment
- Posting embarrassing or humiliating images or videos without consent
- Posting private details online without consent
- Theft, fraud or deception over the internet

What to do if you experience or witness cyberbullying:

- Don't respond to any texts, emails or any other online form of communication that you find offensive
- Save, copy and print the evidence
- Report the incident
- Alert your course team
- Seek advice from DSU

Mandala Project

The **Mandala Project** is available to support students who are victims or survivors of sexual and domestic violence and sexual harassment. When you contact the Mandala Project, our responders will discuss your options with you so that you can make decisions about the support you may need. There are a number of ways the project does this, including welfare support, referral to an external partner, a formal report to the university or to the police.

Other useful contacts:

Leicestershire Police

National Bullying Helpline

Show Racism the Red Card

Stamp It Out

Stop Hate UK

Tell Mama

True Vision

Victim First

STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

This self-assessment tool will help you reflect on where you are and identify areas of improvement to help you engage with your programme.
You should complete it and take it to your first meeting with your personal tutor, along with the self-assessment you complete as part of your
online pre-induction programme.

	In classroom-based environment	How will this be different online?
How do I engage with learning?	e.g. listening to the teacher at the front, solo study in class and working in a group in a seminar	e.g. I will have more distractions, so I will need discipline, less interaction with other students so I will need to interact more in the forum discussions and in the lecture
How do I manage my time and avoid distractions?	e.g. listen to the lecturer's instructions, put my phone away	e.g. I will need to make a conscious effort to put my phone away and interact with my online live lectures
How do I interact with the lecturer?	e.g. I put my hand up to ask questions and help	e.g. I can ask questions in the seminars and tutorials or I can send an email, or I can put my question on the discussion board
How do I interact with other students?	e.g. in group work or I sit together with my friends.	e.g. arrange online meetings with my group, interact with other students on chats, forums and discussion board.

What are my strengths and what skills do I need to develop to better engage with online learning?

What are my strengths or skills that enable online learning? For example, good understanding of using technology and online platforms	What skills do I need to develop to engage with my learning online? For example, staying away from my phone during online classes

DEVELOP YOUR LEARNING WITH PEER SUPPORT

Sometimes the best support is from other students. Peer-to-peer support is about creating those environments and learning activities together to support your wellbeing and learning.

Peer-to-peer support can include academic support and social and emotional support. Peer-led learning involves learning activities that are not directly linked to your curriculum or the interventions of academic or professional staff – it is a large component of your student learning experience. Sometimes peer-led learning happens through a system of mentoring.

We believe mentoring plays an important role in your learning and development. Mentoring can be used to respond to different levels of student need and help address any challenges you might face while at university. Mentoring has the potential to enhance your student experience and ultimately your success.

There are several mentoring schemes available to you, which aim to support you during your time with us. The different schemes are designed to address your needs in relation to **wellbeing**, **belonging**, and **excelling**.

At DMU we have five established schemes for mentoring:

Dare to Be: enables students to excel at their studies and succeed at university. It is available to all students. The scheme matches you with a mentor who is either a member of DMU staff, a DMU graduate, or a DMU honorand. Dare to Be mentoring provides a platform for you to gain a different perspective of the opportunities available to help you achieve your long-term goals and life aspirations.

Peer mentoring: this involves students working with other students, formally and informally, to support their learning and help improve academic achievement.

Employability mentoring: the aim is to improve the employability of our students using industry mentors. Students meet with their mentor to discuss and learn about the opportunities, demands and cultures of the working world. It's all about giving you insight into potential career paths and helping you to fulfil your aspirations for employment.

i-Buddies: is a peer mentoring scheme that matches newly arrived international students with current students. Coming to live in a new country is often exciting, though at first it may be daunting or even stressful. New international students can often be under pressure to adapt quickly to a new country, new culture and new life, and i-Buddies can help to support this transition.

MyUniPal: this scheme aims to welcome and support new students at the start of the academic year and throughout. MyUniPal volunteer mentors are current DMU students who are keen to help new students settle in at uni. They will support and organise a range of activities around key transition dates, to welcome and guide new students on campus.

Find out more and how to take part by visiting **Mentoring for All**.

Ideas for you to create peer-to-peer support systems

In addition to the peer-to-peer support mechanisms we provide as part of Mentoring for All (see section above), students can create their own opportunities for peer-to-peer support.

- You might like to consider remaining 'after class' on Blackboard in one of the available 'rooms' to discuss the content of the session with other students.

- You might like to create an online peer support group using social media (make sure that you have read the DMU social media policy first).

- You might like to become involved with one of the many clubs and societies arranged by DSU.

Whatever way you choose to study and spend your time at DMU, we want you to feel supported.

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