



# Welcome to Munster Technological University (MTU)

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The Prepare entry guide is designed to support you as you transition or move into university. The guide aims to inform and help you feel more prepared as you make this change. The Disability Support Service (DSS) and Transitions Support are available with any additional information that you need. Transitions support is part of the supports the DSS offers autistic students for their first year of university.



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Email the Disability Support Service [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) to enquire about support options.



## Food Options on the Bishopstown Campus What to Expect

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The Food Court and the Snack Bar are based in the main campus building. The Bistro is situated in the Student Centre. These all serve a variety of hot and cold food options. MTU food services sign posts their menus on the walls inside or on a notice outside the door so you can see details of the menu. Times of opening and closing should also be available.

An Siopa Shop is based in the main campus building and The Quick Pick shop is in the student centre. The Quick Pick also has a food outlet that serves deli type hot food and sandwiches.

Each of the MTU campuses has a canteen or restaurant.

### To get prepared

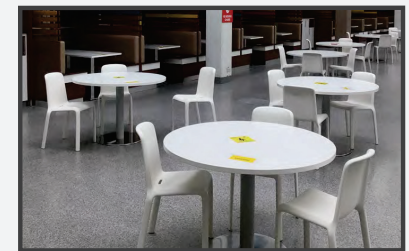
As part of getting organised for your new daily routine you could make a What and Where to Eat Plan.

#### What to Eat

- Will I bring my own food or buy food on campus?
- If I choose to buy food on campus. How will I pay?
- Will I use the payment facility on my student card?
- Where is the nearest ATM machine?

#### Where to Eat

- Will I eat at the available seating areas?
- Would I like to eat inside or outside?
- Where will I eat if I feel I am not able to eat in the student eating areas?



### Seating options

Food Court: You do not have to buy food at the food court to use this seating area. The Daily Grind, the Bistro, Costa Coffee, and the Quick Pick have seating areas available for customers that buy food at those outlets.

During lunch hour all these areas can be busy and noisy.



## The New Learning Environment What to Expect

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Learning at university can be very different to your previous education experience. There is less structure and teaching staff will expect you to take responsibility for your own learning and supports. As a university student, you will be expected to manage and organise your studies independently. If you would like support with developing your independent learning skills email the DSS at [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) to discuss options available at MTU.

### Here are some of the main differences

#### You will be expected to

- Prepare for classes by reading class notes, textbooks and recommended materials.
- Attend lectures and classes.
- Take relevant notes or record information from lectures and other classes.
- Find learning material from the library or internet to complete your assignments.
- Make sure you complete and submit assignments by the due date.
- Discuss your needs assessment (learning, teaching and exam supports) with each of your lecturers.
- Use your MTU email to communicate with lecturers and support services.
- Ask for help when you need it. This skill is called self-advocacy.



#### Prepare Activity

Highlight the learning tasks in the examples that you think you will be able to do. If you are not sure, or think some of the tasks will be challenging for you, it is a good idea to discuss learning support options available at MTU.



**The DSS can help you with organising supports relevant to your learning needs and educational goals.**

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## Communication at University What to Expect

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University uses online communication systems for sharing information and learning. Much of the communication with your lecturers and university staff will be by email. Or it will be through an online learning application - in MTU this is called Canvas.

**We recommend that you check your MTU student email and Canvas daily.**

### Here are examples of online learning activities

- Lecture or class notes/ study material available to download.
- Videos/Recorded study material available to view.
- Details of assessment tasks communicated.
- Assignment deadlines outlined.
- Class discussion boards and blogs.
- Email communication with lecturers and student services.
- Links to readings held in the library.
- Links to related websites and online articles.



Highlight any of the activities that you think you will find manageable.

If you think you will find any of the activities challenging, you can email the DSS at [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) to discuss your support options.



### Communication Information

Below are information links to support with using your email or Canvas.

Email: [www.mycit.ie/email.support](http://www.mycit.ie/email.support)

Canvas: <https://edtechstudents.eu.helpdocs.com/>





## Communication with Lecturers What to Expect

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### University courses usually involve attending lectures.

They are often held in a variety of settings; classrooms, large rooms, lecture halls or online. On campus lectures are usually attended by many students. Often a presentation is given by academic staff in lectures.

If you have a question, it is a good idea to wait to ask questions until the lecturer asks "any questions". You can make a note of the questions you want to ask during the presentation. If the lecturer does not have a section for questions during the lecture, you can email your lecturer with your question.

### Lecturers at university often have other work to do along with lecturing.

This includes conducting research, supervising higher degree students, maintaining equipment, doing fieldwork, and presenting at conferences. This additional work can mean that they are quite busy.

### Lecturers may have different ways they offer one to one support for questions.

- They may schedule student consultation times available every week to ask questions about lecture material or assessments.
- Or they may ask you to email them any questions you have, and they will reply when they have time.

If you feel comfortable, you can go to their office to speak to them during the allocated times. If you are not comfortable doing this or the times do not suit you, you can send an email asking your question or to ask for a meeting.

If you would like support to develop your email communication skills, email the DSS at [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) to discuss support options.



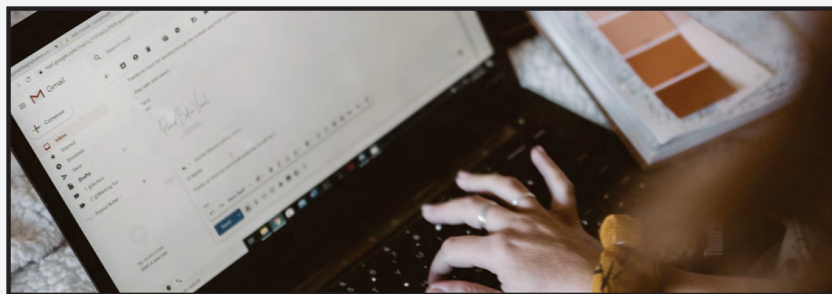
## Communication by Email What to Expect

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Communication by email is the main way that the university will communicate with you. They will use your MTU student email. Important and general university information will be sent to you by email such as information about events, updates and exam information. The DSS will also communicate with you by email.

Communication from your lecturers and university staff will often be done by email and/or Canvas announcements. For example, changes to assignments deadlines or times of classes. It is okay to email a lecturer directly with a question.

It is essential to check your MTU student email every day.



### Here is an example of an email to a lecturer

**Email Address:** You can find lecturer's email addresses through your department. You may be given a list at the start of the year. If not, your year co-ordinator or department secretary will have the contact details of staff for your modules.

**Subject Title:** Question on Assignment for Maths for Biological Sciences, Module Code MATH6056

**Dear Ms XXXX**

I am a first-year student on the BSc Biological Science course. I have a question about the Maths assignment for module code MATH6056. I am finding it difficult to understand the assignment question. I think more detail about section A of the question would support me to begin my assignment.

Regards,

Max O' Student

Student number: R00123456

If you would like support to develop your email communication skills, email the DSS at [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) to discuss support options.

### MTU Contact Information

Below is a link with contact details for MTU Services and Dept secretaries.  
[www.cit.ie/citcontacts](http://www.cit.ie/citcontacts)



## DSS Needs Assessment Explained

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The Disability Support Service (DSS) provides supports for teaching, learning and exams for students who apply. These are specifically around your learning difference, health condition or disability and your MTU course.

To access these supports, you will need to complete an online application with the DSS and provide the requested documents. Once this is completed the DSS will carry out a needs assessment with you. You may be offered a meeting (either in person or online).

After this meeting you will receive a needs assessment document by email in the form of a PDF. The Needs Assessment document confirms the supports or reasonable accommodations you are entitled to. It is important to take the time to read your needs assessment and the information within the email you receive. In university you are expected to arrange your supports with your needs assessment document. You will be given instructions on how to do this when you receive your PDF.

You will need to send your needs assessment document to your lecturers by email to request supports/make them aware you are with the DSS. Lecturers are familiar with the DSS and needs assessment document. Lecturers understand that your information is confidential. If they wish to speak with you about your needs assessment document, they will do so privately.

### Prepare Tips

- Make a list of the supports and reasonable accommodations that you think would be helpful for you in the university environment.
- Please bring this list to your needs assessment meeting if you have one!
- You can bring a support person to your needs assessment meeting. You need to email the DSS about this before your meeting so we are aware.

### Needs Assessment Meeting Information:

We will provide details on What to Expect at your Needs Assessment meeting before you attend this meeting. We will send this information to you by email.

The DSS online application form is at: [www.mycit.ie/dss](http://www.mycit.ie/dss) - under Applying for supports





## Transitions Programme: One to One Support What to Expect

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Julie O'Donovan organises the Transitions Programme as part of MTU Cork campus Disability Support Service (DSS). As part of this programme Julie provides one-to-one support for autistic students in their first year of university. Conversations with Julie will be about supporting you as you settle into the university environment.

### How to start one-to-one support.

Support options are discussed at your DSS Needs Assessment Meeting. If you indicate in your meeting that you are interested in one-to-one support from the Transitions Programme you can email Julie, or the DSS may contact Julie on your behalf to make a time to meet.

### What is One-to-One Support?

One-to-one support can take place in person or online (video call or email). This support is available for your first year of university. How often you meet Julie and for how long will be discussed when you have your first meeting. You can discuss anything that you feel is stopping you settling into your first year at MTU.

Here are some examples of topics you might discuss with Julie.

- Getting to know your campus.
- Finding the right people to support you.
- Understanding how university works.
- Communicating with university staff.
- Using your needs assessment document.
- Managing when you're feeling worried or overwhelmed.

University is an adult learning environment and Julie deals with you (the student) directly. If you would like Julie to speak with a family member, you (the student) will need to provide written consent for this conversation to take place each time.

**To book a one to one support meeting. Email [JulieA.odonovan@MTU.ie](mailto:JulieA.odonovan@MTU.ie)**



## Student View

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### My first-year experience at MTU

2nd year MTU Student



As an autistic student attending MTU and going into my second year of my degree this year, I would really recommend and think it's quite beneficial for you to join the Transitions Programme and the DSS. Before I started university, I was very overwhelmed with social and general everyday anxiety. I used to tend to overthink situations a lot and would need things to be rationalized for me and a lot of reassurance was needed. Since starting college, my anxiety has decreased, and I feel a sense of belonging in the campus. I get on really well with my lecturers and peers. Also, I get on really well with the DSS staff members.

My main focus when starting college was to be my true self and start putting myself out there more than when I was at school. This was a new chapter of my life and it was exciting. The DSS staff were amazing to deal with from the beginning of my journey to college. I attended the online Transitions Talk and it really calmed me down about starting college as I listened to other DSS clients talk about their college experiences' and it was very reassuring that everything was going to be alright. As I started college during the height of Covid restrictions, mostly everything was online



#### Prepare Tip

It can help to find someone you feel comfortable talking to. Email the DSS at [dssCork@mtu.ie](mailto:dssCork@mtu.ie) to discuss finding a staff member that can support your transition into university.

and once my needs assessment was sorted out, I met with Julie (Transition Support) once every two weeks. I enjoyed meeting with Julie as she was very friendly and approachable about all aspects of college or questions that I needed answering. She was very assisting and supportive.

I feel it was the best decision I made in college joining the DSS and I never looked back. I would encourage you to do the same as they are very helpful and make college life that bit easier.

I'm not ashamed or embarrassed by my autism, it's made me the person I am today. Without it I wouldn't be me. My autism hasn't or never will stop me from achieving my goals or reaching my full potential. The DSS have supported me and have never judged. You can talk to them about whatever is upsetting or distressing you, and also you can talk to them about good aspects to college life. They love to see their clients thrive and do well.

I hope this makes you feel a bit calmer and more reassured about starting college, and that you all have as good an experience in your first year of college as I did.

To discuss one-to-one support options email [JulieA.odonovan@mtu.ie](mailto:JulieA.odonovan@mtu.ie)



## Planning for Each Week What you can do

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### Prepare for each week at University

#### Organisation & Planning Suggestions

- Make up a daily and weekly study plan.
- Follow these plans when possible.
- Make sure you understand your assignments and what's expected.  
If you are not sure, check with your lecturer.
- Practise stress reduction techniques weekly or daily.
- Take time for relaxation and recreation that you enjoy each week.

### Planning Story - Cate

Cate noticed that they were not feeling prepared for some assignment deadlines and began to feel overwhelmed. Cate decided to meet with one-to-one Transitions Support and discuss how they were feeling. As a result of this meeting Cate decided to write up a weekly activity plan. This included study, assignment work and relaxing activities like exercise, video games and attending their university society. This plan was reviewed weekly to make sure they were staying on track with university work and including fun as well as work in their weekly plans.

The Transitions Programme is supported by the PATH (Programme for Access to Higher Education) fund from the HEA and Department of Education and Skills. It is part of the SOAR Project which is an inter-institutional collaboration on Access [www.soarforaccess.ie](http://www.soarforaccess.ie)

