



# Pre-sessional Preparation Pack

## Welcome

Welcome to the pre-sessional preparation pack. We understand that many students like to know more about the Pre-sessional Programmes and have some materials to work on beforehand. You will have access to our online materials approximately a week before the programme starts so this pack will help you until you can access them.

This pack gives you the opportunity to develop your general skills, academic English skills and your understanding of the programme. There is also a section towards the end of the pack for you to write down any questions you may have. Some of these may get answered during the induction but there may be some left for you to ask your tutor in your first seminar.

We really look forward to you starting your learning journey with us, here at Loughborough University!

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When you can access the online materials, make sure you download all required software and spend time working on the 'Additional Materials' as you won't have as much time when the programme starts!

# Developing General Skills for the Pre-sessional Programme

Learning in an online environment and studying at a UK university means that you may use skills that you have never used before. You may want to develop these skills so you can be more effective with your learning on your online Pre-sessional Programme. This pack includes tasks you can do to prepare yourself and we suggest you review the open access resources below. We have compiled this list of relevant and appropriate resources that will help you to prepare for our Loughborough University Pre-sessional Programmes.

## Section 1: Planning and Preparation

The checklists below have been developed to help you to self-assess your skills in different areas. Reflect on whether you think you are 'very confident', 'confident', 'not very confident', 'not confident'.

| No. | Skill  | Very Confident | Confident | Not Very Confident | Not Confident |
|-----|--|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1   | I can use video conferencing software and I have a good stable internet connection that I can successfully run video conferencing software on. |                |           |                    |               |
| 2   | I can use a range of software and am able to learn to use new software for my studies.   |                |           |                    |               |
| 3   | I can use my camera and microphone on my computer.   |                |           |                    |               |
| 4   | I have a quiet space to study when I attend live online sessions.  |                |           |                    |               |
| 5   | I can follow a timetable of work and manage my time.   |                |           |                    |               |
| 6   | I can avoid procrastination and not be distracted by social media.   |                |           |                    |               |
| 7   | I can complete work to a deadline.   |                |           |                    |               |



On the Pre-sessional Programme, we use video conferencing for live sessions. The software that is used is Microsoft Teams. This is free to download from the university just before your Pre-sessional Programme starts. You may want to practice using video conferencing software so that you are more comfortable using it on the programme, it doesn't have to be Microsoft Teams. A stable internet connection that can run the different technology that you use is vital. **You need to make sure that your computer and connection is adequate.**



You may find that you are using technology you haven't used before on your Pre-sessional Programme. This could be technology such as our online virtual learning environment (which we call 'Learn') or accessing your personalised feedback from your tutors. If this is something you find challenging, think about investing extra time during the induction week to make sure you feel more confident and comfortable using the technologies.



On a Pre-sessional Programme, you must have your camera on during live sessions and you will need to use your microphone. Make sure that both are working and that you feel confident using them.



This may not be a skill, but it is important. It is very important that, if possible, you have a dedicated study space where you can focus on your studies. During your live sessions and your assessments, you will need to be in a space alone and where you won't be interrupted. If you live with others, be prepared to discuss this with them and make plans.



A pre-sessional is a full-time programme and you will need to put the commitment and time in to be successful. You are provided with a weekly syllabus which you can use to help plan your time at the start of the programme. If you find managing your time difficult, why don't you plan a weekly or daily timetable for yourself between now and the start of the pre-sessional and try and stick to it? Make a note of any reasons you aren't able to stick to your timetable and consider ways to avoid them.



Deadlines are very important on the Pre-sessional Programmes and you will have many. If you miss a deadline, for a task or assessment, it is very serious and can impact on your final grades.



You will be able to access Weekly Syllabus and also an Overview Scheme of Work. The Overview Scheme of Work gives you an outline of the whole programme including dates for assessment and coursework. Use it to help plan ahead for important dates.

### TASK 1: Strategies for Planning and Time Management

Consider what strategies you use or could employ to avoid being distracted and to better manage your time.

| Face to face | Online |
|--------------|--------|
|              |        |

Are these different in a face to face or online environment?

#### RESOURCES: Planning and Time Management

- Loughborough library has further helpful information on managing your time which can be found [HERE](#).
- Tips on studying from home – click [HERE](#).
- How to stop procrastinating – click [HERE](#).

## Section 2: Communication

| No. | Skill   | Very confident | Confident | Not very confident | Not confident |
|-----|---|----------------|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| 1   | I look for and use opportunities to speak with others, especially in English. |                |           |                    |               |
| 2   | I can be patient and listen to others.  |                |           |                    |               |
| 3   | I can express my opinions.  |                |           |                    |               |
| 4   | I am capable of communicating with others in a professional manner.           |                |           |                    |               |
| 5   | I can ask questions and ask for help when needed.                             |                |           |                    |               |
| 6   | I can work well with others.  |                |           |                    |               |



During the seminars you will be expected to contribute and express your opinions. Is this something you feel comfortable and confident doing? If not, try practising with friends or even with yourself in a mirror. Have a look at the resources at the end of this section for vocabulary you can practise using.

### TASK 2: Strategies for Communication

In your live sessions you will have plenty of opportunities to practise your spoken English. You may feel shy but with the small group seminars (maximum of 6 students) there's not as much pressure as when you speak in front of larger groups of people.

Think of ways you can practise with friends. List them below.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Ask others what they think about your communication skills and what you might need to work on. List them below.</b></p>   | <p>The way we communicate is different with different people and in different situations. In the induction, we will discuss appropriate ways of communicating with others. Speaking to others online respectfully is very important, as is appropriate use of language. For example, not using slang/text speech in emails to your tutors (wdym, brb).</p> |
| <p>Asking questions of others can be a bit scary, especially if you're shy. If you need help, it is very important to talk to your tutor. They are there to help and guide you in your learning. Have a look at the vocabulary in the resources at the end of this section to help you phrase your questions and try to practise.</p> | <p><b>What strategies can you use to help you feel more confident about asking questions? List them below.</b></p>   |
| <p><b>Do you find it difficult to concentrate when listening to others? What strategies can you use to help you focus?</b></p>  | <p>Listening is a very key skill and is a skill you will work on in an academic context during the Pre-sessional Programme. However, listening isn't just about listening to lectures, it's also about listening to your tutor and other students. This can include not interrupting people and actively listening to what they say.</p>                   |



On the Pre-sessional Programme, you will work on some tasks with a 'buddy'. This person is assigned by your tutor and you will normally work with different buddies during the programme. Just like in normal life, you may be partnered up with someone who is different from you, but you still need to be able to work with them. You will need to complete tasks together to meet deadlines, and be able to not only work with them, but schedule some of your learning at a time that suits you both.

### RESOURCES: Communication

- For information about working with others, click [HERE](#).
- For academic phrases to use in discussions and seminars, click [HERE](#).
- For information about active listening, click [HERE](#).





# Developing Academic English Skills for the Pre-sessional Programme

When you start the programme it is **very intensive** and we understand that you may want to work on developing your academic English skills before the programme starts.

## Section 3: Evaluating Strengths and Weaknesses

At the beginning of the Pre-sessional Programme, you have exclusive access to tailor-made resources designed to help you develop your skills and successfully complete your programme. These resources are only available once the programme starts and only for Loughborough University pre-sessional students. Please also be aware that material provided on Learn and in teaching sessions is copyright protected and you cannot share it with third parties. It is for your own personal study.

We recognise that each student is different and can have different strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, once you start the programme, you will complete Action Plans that are personal to you, and your strengths and weaknesses. You will also be guided by your tutor on how you can improve.

This section is about resources that you can access before the start of your pre-sessional programme and allows you to work on the areas you think you need to develop. Start by considering what you think your strengths and weaknesses are. Think about each of the four key skills – reading, writing, speaking and listening. Choose two for each skill and complete the table below:

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|-----------|------------|
|           |            |

### TASK 3: Mini Action Plan

Review the resources below. Some sites aim to develop multiple skills such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Make a list of what you want to work on from each site on the table below, include when you will work on them and tick them off when you have completed them.

| Resource | Topic to work on | When I will work on it | Completed |
|----------|------------------|------------------------|-----------|
|          |                  |                        |           |

## RESOURCES: Academic English

- Using English for Academic Purposes – click [HERE](#).
- EAP Foundation – click [HERE](#).
- Note-taking – click [HERE](#).
- Reading (types of texts) – click [HERE](#).
- Academic writing – click [HERE](#).
- Paraphrasing and summarising – click [HERE](#).
- Listening to lectures – click [HERE](#).
- Pronunciation – click [HERE](#).
- Academic vocabulary – click [HERE](#).



There may be some new vocabulary you come across when working in the different skills. Consider keeping a notebook especially for the new words and definitions that you come across. Don't forget to check it regularly to practice the new words and not just to write them down and forget about them 😊



# Developing Understanding of the Pre-sessional Programme

We appreciate that this programme may be different from what you are used to on your educational journey. Once you start the programme, we help you to understand academic conventions that are typical within a UK Higher Education Institution. This part of the preparation pack will introduce what you can expect in terms of teaching, learning and feedback specifically on the Pre-sessional Programme. By understanding some of the key aspects beforehand, you will hopefully feel more prepared.

## Section 4: Pre-sessional Teaching and Learning Expectations

Think of all the times you've been in a classroom and spent most of the time on completing tasks, reading something, or spending your time writing. The time you spend discussing, building on learning and sharing ideas is often only a small part of your time in a classroom. One key feature of the Pre-sessional Programme that you may not be familiar with is that we use a flipped learning method. This means you have to work through materials to learn about a topic and then go to seminars with an understanding of the topic. The time is then spent on clarifying what you know, building on learning and sharing ideas. Learning about a topic before your seminars also enables you to have any questions ready to ask. After the seminar there is normally homework based on what you've learnt to further consolidate understanding.



### Independent learning

This is a key skill you will need to work on during your academic career at Loughborough University. Again, this may not be something you are used to so you can use the opportunities on the Pre-sessional Programme to develop this skill. When we talk about independent learning, what we mean is that you take charge and are responsible for your learning. Your tutor will guide you, but it is up to you to complete the materials, recognise other areas you need to improve and work on them, and meet deadlines.

## Flipped learning on the Pre-sessional Programme

### Before Seminar

- Complete materials set for the day including tasks.
- Work with your allocated buddy on specific materials.

### During Seminar

- You may have been asked to present on learning by your tutor or undertake a specific role.
- Share your ideas and opinions with your classmates.
- Ask questions and develop your understanding.

### After Seminar

- Complete homework and consolidation tasks.



In a seminar discussion, you may not be invited to speak. This is normal in UK academic culture. When in a conversation or discussion in the UK we tend to wait until someone finishes speaking or politely interrupt each other. Why not try practising if this is something unfamiliar to you?



## Seminars

### Programme Materials

You will have undertaken the scheduled materials before the seminar. This learning can be scheduled by you to suit your learning style or when you learn best. However, it must be completed before your seminar.

### Attendance

For all live sessions including seminars, attendance is compulsory. You attend one seminar a day, but be prepared to move between your tutor's seminars group and attend at a different time as your tutor does this to maximise learning.



### Presenting

Your seminar enables you to develop your speaking and presentation skills. Sometimes you may be chosen by your tutor to present about a topic that is the focus of the seminar. You can practise valuable skills such as paraphrasing and summarising.

### Engagement

If you're not presenting, be prepared to ask and answer questions, share answers, and engage with discussions. You will still need to complete the materials. You may be given another specific role by your tutor such as chairperson.



### Environment

You need to make sure that you attend seminars in a quiet space where you won't be interrupted (e.g. not a coffee shop). If you live with others, you might want to talk to them about when your seminars are and agree not to be disturbed during that time.

### Safe Space

The Pre-session Programme is a safe space to learn and develop. You're in a small group with students in a similar situation. This is a chance to make mistakes and learn from them to help better prepare you for your academic programme.



## Tutorials

Tutorials are held between you and your tutor and generally occur once a week. These tutorials normally have a theme based on work you submit. Your tutor will have provided feedback (we discuss feedback in the next section of this pack). The more prepared you are for your tutorials, the more you will benefit from them as you only have a set amount of time. Make sure you read any feedback before your tutorial and prepare questions you can ask your tutor about the feedback or other academic aspects of the programme. Your tutor may have also asked you to prepare something such as your Action Plans so make sure you have them ready to maximise the time you have in your tutorial.

### TASK 4: Planning for Success in Seminars and Tutorials

Take a moment to reflect on what you have read about flipped learning, seminars and tutorials. Consider what parts of these are new to you and write them in the table below. Next, consider how you feel about these – are you nervous, excited, worried? Add these to the table. Finally, consider how you can change any of these feeling to more positive ones? Perhaps you need to practise something like presenting to others to feel more confident? Maybe you want to work on your presentation design skills before starting the Pre-sessional Programme?

| New to me | How I feel | What can I do to feel more positive |
|-----------|------------|-------------------------------------|
|           |            |                                     |

## Section 5: Pre-sessional Feedback Expectations



During the Pre-sessional Programme you will be set tasks to undertake and submit as well as coursework and assessments. These submissions start during the induction week and continue through to the end of the programme. It is important that you complete these to get feedback from your tutor and so you can work on the areas you need to improve upon.

### Instruction Sheet

For each task or coursework piece you submit you can access an instruction sheet which gives information about what you need to do, guidance on what you may want to include and also details about how you should present it (layout). Read this carefully to make sure you follow the instructions. If it is assessed work, you can lose marks if you miss anything.

### Marking Criteria

Your tutor marks your work according to a set of marking criteria which is available for you to look at before you submit work. It is always good to know what a tutor will be evaluating in your work, and you can use it to ensure you meet the highest requirements you can. This marking criteria is also available once your work has been marked so you can see exactly how your tutor has marked you. You can then see what you need to improve upon to receive a higher level for your next piece of work.



## Forms of Feedback



### VERBAL FEEDBACK

During your seminar your tutor may verbally give feedback about you specifically or generally to your group. It is your responsibility to record the feedback and think about how you can improve. You will also attend one to one tutorials with your tutor who will give you feedback about your work and also give you the opportunity to ask questions about it. The better you prepare for your seminar, the more beneficial you will find it.



### WRITTEN FEEDBACK

You will submit written work and receive useful, personalised and targeted written feedback from your tutor. Unless your submission is coursework, you will not receive a mark. This is because it is important to focus on what you did well and how you could improve. The Pre-sessional Programmes focus on academic skills and conventions and will not provide extensive feedback about spelling or grammatical errors. For example, your tutor may indicate one example of a grammar error and then it would be up to you to use resources to improve and identify other similar errors in your work.

## Applying Feedback to Improve your Work

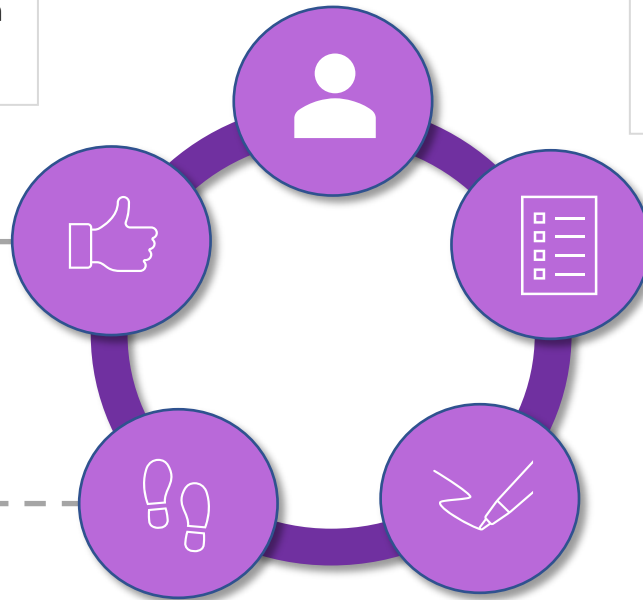
Make sure you recognise your strengths as well as areas to improve upon. It is important to recognise when we do things well and feel happy and proud about our achievements.

When you apply improvements and then get positive feedback about these, it can be an amazing feeling.

Make sure you understand what your tutor has said in the feedback. Your 1-1 tutorials are provided to enable you to clarify your understanding by asking questions. Always read your feedback and have questions ready before you attend your tutorial.

You will be provided with Action Plans for each of the 4 key skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). From both written and verbal feedback, you can identify areas you need to improve upon and include them in your Action Plans. Your action plans help you to consider how you will improve and enable you to keep track of what you've done to improve.

You can talk through these Action Plans with your tutor who can help to guide you on other ways you can improve.



Try and focus on main areas to improve. The Pre-session Programme is only the start of your learning journey here at Loughborough University and we are not expecting you to be perfect by the end of it.

You will also not have time to perfect everything you receive feedback about so be strategic – choose main areas that are having the biggest impact on your work or ones that are recurring through the feedback and work on those. There are only so many hours in the day and you need to focus on what will have the greatest impact.

Use your feedback to improve on later submissions. This may seem like common sense but the improvements you make based on feedback will help you to improve in later submissions on the Pre-session Programme, and, as you move forward in your academic career. Put in the effort and improve and you will find it beneficial later.

## TASK 5: Analysing and Planning Using Feedback

Imagine you have been given the following written feedback from your tutor. Read it carefully and consider which skills they suggest you work on, how you will improve them and how often you work on them. You can add them to the table below.

### Structure

Your introduction provides some background to your topic which is helpful. Although can be rambling and unclear. Review the work on introductions and key features. For example, I'd expect to see aims and preferably a thesis statement. Having clear aims would also help you with your conclusion. Remember the features of a conclusion, yours is quite vague at the moment. Clear aims stated in the introduction and then re-expressed with the core ideas/analysis from the body is required. Review the materials on Introductions and Conclusions from last week to help guide you on this. A thesis statement would also help to further give direction and structure.

### Sources

You make a good attempt to paraphrase. You need to use supporting evidence for some of your statements which needs substantiating – I've indicated in the text where these are. There is some evidence of synthesis where you include different authors with the same or similar viewpoints but without contrasting perspectives or opinions, the synthesis is weakened.

| Specific Skill | How can I improve? | When I will work on it |
|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|
|                |                    |                        |

## What previous students would like you to know

We asked students who have previously undertaken a Pre-sessional Programme what they would like new pre-sessional students to know. Look at some of their advice:

I think you should complete your homework seriously and actively answer questions in class. You will gain a lot of knowledge and make many friends.

Find your weaknesses from your self-study and go to class with your questions about the materials of that day.

Don't be afraid to make mistakes.

Develop a good relationship with your buddy before you study and talk with them about the Pre-sessional Programme.

Do your tasks, homework and coursework carefully, such as the literature review, which is very helpful for future learning. Please use more additional materials, which will help to improve your English level.

Try to express your views as much as possible. Communicate more with your classmates and tutors.

Follow the learning steps and practice every day. Always know the feedback from the tutor, and the tutor can give very effective suggestions.

Plan well, don't procrastinate!

Don't think that the programme is a long time! It passed quickly and I strongly recommend this course to students who hesitate about this in the future.

After submitting your work, you should check it twice or even many times to prevent embarrassment caused by network problems. Finally, use the classic sentence 'run like a rabbit, before everyone starts'.

Make a summary of what you learned each day, you will find it's helpful.

Pre-learning before class is important. Online learning requires self-awareness, self-awareness to complete homework, self-awareness to preview and review

Complete daily tasks carefully, because these tasks are very helpful for us to bridge undergraduate or graduate courses. And it can help us understand the academic characteristics of British universities well.

Time flies, these will become your good memories.

## Questions I have

A large, empty, rounded rectangular box with a purple border, intended for writing questions. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the vertical space below the title.

# Glossary

We understand that some of the words or terms in this preparation pack may be new to you, so we have created a glossary to help your understanding.

## A

**Academic conventions** – the ways in which something is done within a UK academic environment.

## B

**Buddy** – another student from your group allocated by your tutor, whom you work on specific tasks with.

## F

**Flipped learning** – when you work through the materials to learn about specific topics before you go to your seminar where you develop your understanding.

## I

**Induction week** – the first week of the programme (also called Week 0) where you learn about the programme, undertake tasks and submit work. It is a very important week you need to attend.

## L

**Learn** – the name of Loughborough University's virtual learning environment where you can find your materials and submit your work.

**Live session** – a session that happens in real time, normally using Microsoft Teams. This includes seminars and tutorials.

## M

**Marking criteria** – a set of criteria that a tutor uses to mark specific areas related to your work. It is helpful to read and understand these as they explain what you need to do to achieve the best marks. It is also helpful to review to see what you need to do to improve once a tutor has provided feedback.

**Microsoft Teams** – the video conferencing software we use for live sessions and some assessments.

## O

**Open access** – materials that are freely available to everybody and are listed in the resources section. Materials for the Pre-sessional Programme are only available to pre-sessional students. A selection of these will be made available approximately a week before the start of the programme.

**Overview Scheme of Work** – document containing an overview of the whole programme including dates for assessments.

## P

**Paraphrase** – where you express something either verbally in written form in different way to the original without changing the meaning.

**Procrastinate** – when you delay or put off doing something.

## S

**Seminars** – live, small group sessions you have with your classmates and tutor. These are conducted using Microsoft Teams.

**Submission software** – software Loughborough University uses to enable students to submit work and assessments they have completed. It is part of Learn, the virtual learning environment and the software is called Turnitin or Grademark.

**Supporting evidence** – when you express an idea or concept and use evidence from other people to support your idea. This is something you learn about how to use on the Pre-sessional Programme.

**Synthesis** – how you include and combine supporting evidence. This can also include comparing or contrasting different ideas.

## T

**Tutorials** – one-to-one live sessions you have with your tutor. These are normally scheduled weekly and focus on specific aspects of your learning journey.

## U

**UK Higher Education Institution** – a general definition is that it is an organisation in the United Kingdom that provides a higher level of study such as a Postgraduate degree.

## V

**Virtual learning environment** – the online environment that the university uses for learning and teaching. On there, students can find specific material related to their programme of study and it allows students to submit work electronically. The virtual learning environment (VLE) at Loughborough University is called Learn.

## W

**Weekly Syllabus** – schedule of work provided weekly that gives information on what materials need to be completed. For example: buddy tasks, homework and information about deadlines.