Overcoming Self-doubt

Starting University as a mature student can be extremely exciting. We also know it can be a stressful time where you’ll be dealing with many new experiences and feelings. Students often tell us that in the early days they worried about whether they’d fit in, whether they’d cope with the demands of study, or even whether they’d made the right decision in the first place….

These are all completely normal feelings! Below are some tips on how you can address these, and remind yourself that you’re not alone.

1. **Acknowledge your fear**

When put in a new environment or situation you may find yourself comparing yourself to others in the same position, and worrying about all the reasons you feel you don’t deserve this opportunity. This is a perfectly normal reaction to your new situation. Recognise and acknowledge these feelings and why you are feeling this way.

2. **Realise the Truth**

Once you have acknowledged your fear, start to then remember all the reasons you are here. The truth is that you were offered a place on your own merit, and you felt you were good enough at some point to have got this far! Take time to acknowledge all you have accomplished so far.

3. **Share your fears**

Speak with others and ask for help. Whether this be a member of staff, a fellow student, family or friends, it’s often easier for someone else to recognise all the reasons why you should feel positive and focus on your accomplishments. You’ll probably discover that others are feeling exactly the same as you!

4. **Take Control**

You may feel that your self-doubt is holding you back, and that recognising your fears is a negative trait, but look at it positively; you are able to self-reflect and recognise your own challenges and strengths. This is a vital skill for success and one which you will use throughout your studies.

5. **Set Goals**

Set yourself realistic and achievable goals. When you accomplish these, you can then celebrate the small victories and build your self-confidence. We usually forget to acknowledge what we are doing well and focus on problem areas, so celebrate successes whenever you can.

6. **Get to know others in the same situation**

If you’re feeling worried about any aspect of your University experience, you almost certainly won’t be alone. You can take practical steps to meet other students in similar situations, for example by joining the Mature Student Committee, or attending the regular social events, chatting to your course mates, or joining the University’s mentoring programme.

To find out how other students have managed the transition into student life, you can see their stories at [www.sheffield.ac.uk/dll/meet-our-students](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/dll/meet-our-students)