Your level of confidence at university can have a massive impact on what kind of time you have here, how open you are to learning and how much you achieve.

The approaches listed overleaf can help create inner confidence so you can grow your own potential and remain open to learning from others.

For more information or to talk through further ways to boost your confidence, come to the Student Life Centre in Bramber House.

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1. Own your place here

Feeling like it's not OK to be you?

Remember that you are a student here so this is your university. We are committed to supporting diversity and equality and wish you to contribute to our university culture by being free to be yourself. There is no one group of students who are more 'Sussex' than another. If you are here, you are US whatever your capabilities and background.

2. Everybody hurts

Thinking everyone is stronger than you?

Whatever it looks like from the outside, everybody can be vulnerable. Even people who seem confident have issues, they just use confidence to help them cope with vulnerability. It works, you don't have to be 100% strong to cope, you just have to try. Knowing you have the courage to try brings the confidence that you can cope.

3. Expect knock-backs and be prepared to learn from them

Defeated by a disappointing mark?

University is a competitive environment and competition can be tough. However, University is also about your own personal learning journey. Remember that you are entitled to be where you are in your life. Getting a knock-back like a disappointing mark gives you useful information about how you need to improve. It’s fine as long as you can learn from mistakes.

4. If you knew it all already you wouldn’t be here

Just don’t get it?

University is an opportunity to learn not to demonstrate you know it all already. Anxiety about what you are going to say can be distracting, so first simply focus on developing understanding. Remember that it’s OK not to know everything. Being honest or answering a question with a question is sometimes the most intelligent thing to do to show you have tried.

5. Know the frame

Confused by what’s expected of you?

Give yourself the best chance by getting clear about the 'rules of the game.' Familiarise yourself with all the information available regarding how to do well. Get to know the learning outcomes you will need to demonstrate when you attend classes and start assessments.

6. Put yourself in the frame

Feeling like an outsider?

The best way to feel left out is not to join in! You are invited to attend all your classes. Attend them all so you will have the information you need to do well. You will be best prepared to attempt assessments and feel more confident to speak up in future classes. You are paying for your classes, don't exile yourself from them.

7. Be kind to yourself and others

Worried about what others think?

You can't control what anyone thinks. Why not try to think positive thoughts about others and about yourself? This will build good feelings between people and builds confidence. When your own internal critic starts up, switch it off. Don't let it bully you. Don’t dwell on the negative about other people. We all have permission to be ourselves.

8. Support is an integral part of university life

Ashamed about wanting help?

At university support is not intended to be a last resort or only for emergencies. You have tutors to provide regular feedback, an Academic Advisor, Course Leader and Year Tutor for guidance about your academic progress. Also there is a dedicated network of professional support services for you to access at any time during your studies to help you build your confidence.