

SciComm Reflective Piece

By Adrian Hill

Before I even began the year, we were sat down in the first week and told how challenging this degree would be and how deep we'd have to dig. That was my first impression of Honours.

If I could go back and tell myself one thing, it would be to 'stop worrying about what everyone else is doing and focus on your own path'. I would see my undergraduate friends go off on holiday for a luxurious 2 months, way before I even had a sliver of a 2-week mid-year break and be left so demotivated. As they say, comparison is the thief of joy. So, I forced myself to put those blinkers on and focus on what I need to do to get to the finish line.

This year has really shown me that you do not grow in your comfort zone, and so this degree, as challenging as it is, has made me a better scientist and person. I have always avoided the bioinformatic and statistical aspects of research, as it was never really something I thought I was good at. But I couldn't hide forever, and so, this year I decided to embrace my weakness and try to hone this skill. But Rome wasn't built in a day, and you never stop learning, so I will probably be forever honing this skill. But what matters is that I took that step.

What I appreciate about honours is how tight-knit everyone is. The Human Genetics faculty has consistently shown me how much of a community science can truly build. Being constantly greeted by friendly faces who are always willing to help has shaped my year in the best way.

If you have never made a to-do list or calendared your schedule, now is the time. Managing and planning your time will be lifesavers if you master them, because leaving things last minute isn't a viable option anymore.

Getting past the mid-year exams was a big milestone in the year; for the majority of the first 'semester', these exams loomed over me like a "can we talk?" text. But what I realised is that if you consistently put in the work throughout the year, you will reap what you have sown, come exam time. Four exams in seven days isn't an easy task, but it sure is a weight off your shoulders when it's over.

Honours will be challenging; that is a fact. But a truth that overrides this daunting reality is that you are meant to be here; we've all proven ourselves worthy of filling these seats. It is a privilege to be furthering our education. So, utilise being surrounded by some of the best in their field, and build connections that could open doors you never knew existed.

I have realised that how your honours year goes is totally dependent on you and your attitude towards a challenge. Don't be deterred by all the looming deadlines. Don't let imposter syndrome convince you that you're in the wrong place. So many brilliant minds and facilities surround you; don't let yourself get in the way of fulfilling your own potential and achieving your dreams.