

Reflecting on Honours in Human Genetics

By Trinity King

Honours so far has been a journey, that's for sure. They weren't lying when they said it would be a completely different ball game compared to undergrad. I feel as though no amount of preparation could have helped, as they truly push you into the deep end. The pressure, while at times overwhelming, has sparked enormous growth in me both emotionally and academically.

The most difficult thing hasn't been the workload or the technical difficulty of the work itself, if anything, I overestimated those aspects when I imagined postgrad life. In my opinion, the hardest part has been the shift in mindset required to adjust to this new environment. As someone who has always struggled with taking initiative and preferred being told what to do and when to do it, that change didn't come easily. Right from the start, you're encouraged to take the reins of your academic career and steer it toward what you're most passionate about.

It's been a learning curve to move from following clear instructions to setting my own goals and planning how to reach them. I've had to learn to prioritize tasks, manage my time effectively, and decide when to ask for help rather than waiting for someone to point me in the right direction. That shift brought more ambiguity than I expected, as science often doesn't follow neat little paths, so I've had to get comfortable with small failures and use them to adjust my approach. Overall, it's been frustrating at times, but it's also forced me to grow. I'm more proactive than I was before, better at making decisions under uncertainty, and more aware of how low, consistent workload is more sustainable and productive than intense bursts of work to get things done as soon as possible.

Despite the challenges, there have been real highs that keep me motivated. I've enjoyed the sense of ownership over my work, and the pride in learning techniques that once seemed incredibly intimidating. I believe the people I've met and the friends I've made in the HumGen Division are the main reasons I'm still afloat amid the chaos of this year. Sometimes it's just helpful to know you're not alone.

Looking ahead, the rest of my honours year still feels uncertain, especially with our projects and lab work having officially started now. That uncertainty is unnerving and a little scary, but I'm learning to treat it as part of the process and hopefully by the end of it all I will be a better researcher for it.