

Information for Prospective Mentees

Hello! If you are a new student to Deakin – welcome! If you are a returning student, welcome back for a new trimester!

Adjusting to university life can be difficult and overwhelming because there is so much to learn. This transition time can be especially difficult for autistic students – there are new online systems, new buildings to navigate, timetables to work out, crowded environments, new travel routes to get to uni and more! The NAVIGATE program has been designed to make this transition as easy as possible for you. Not every autistic student will want or need to be involved in NAVIGATE, but for some, NAVIGATE offers a way to pace yourself, and have someone provide regular guidance about how Uni works.

What is the NAVIGATE program?

The NAVIGATE Program pairs students with an experienced and friendly student mentor, who is trained to assist you in your transition to tertiary study at Deakin. Mentors and mentees meet once per week, on campus if you are a campus-based student or online if you are an online student.

NAVIGATE runs for a one or two-trimester period, depending on your needs, and aims to build your confidence and knowledge in accessing university systems and supports.

You will be offered the opportunity to participate in NAVIGATE social events which are generally held twice each trimester. These are small, friendly events that give you the chance to build confidence in meeting new people.

How can I be considered for NAVIGATE?

Acceptance into the NAVIGATE program is based on a conversation with the NAVIGATE coordinator at your campus to explore if NAVIGATE is a good match for your transition to uni needs. You can also ask any questions you may have. If accepted into NAVIGATE, you will meet your mentor for the first time with the NAVIGATE coordinator, who will help things get started.

Most students who participate in NAVIGATE are registered with the [Disability Resource Centre \(DRC\)](#) - but it's also okay if you're not. The DRC provides advice and support to help you participate in your studies. Find out more about the DRC on our webpage or chat with our friendly staff.

How might NAVIGATE be useful for me?

Your mentor is a student just like you, so they will be able to help answer any Deakin questions and address any concerns that you may have about your experience of university, such as:

- Using Deakin Sync and other online tools
- Finding classrooms and lecture theatres & reading your timetable
- Using the library, both on campus and online
- Managing assignments and linking you to study support resources

- Learning about Deakin clubs and societies
- Managing stress
- Having a friendly face around campus

In the early weeks, topics can be more focused on getting started at uni; the middle of the trimester might see conversations related to managing deadlines and priorities, and later weeks can often involve conversations about final assessment and preparing for the next trimester. Managing stress and well-being are topics that can come up at any point in the trimester. You can contact your mentor via email for concerns that just can't wait for the weekly catch-up!

Please note that NAVIGATE mentors are not tutors or support workers. They are fellow students who are happy to share their experiences with you in an environment that is supportive.

Not sure if NAVIGATE's for you? Here's what past mentees have said about the program:

- 'Talking with someone who 'gets it' was really helpful.'
- 'The social aspect was very enjoyable. Quite fun to interact with others on the spectrum, they helped me adapt to different environments.'
- 'Meeting regularly with someone helped me keep on track and not feel so stressed.'
- 'I attended 1 social event and it's something I wouldn't have been able to do before NAVIGATE. I was finding it fun to socialise.'
- 'Transitioning to uni was tough, but the program clarified things earlier which was helpful. Was reassuring to know someone was always there.'
- 'Not having to mask and having time to get to know one person who I could ask all sorts of Uni questions to was really helpful.'

What would my responsibilities be as a Mentee?

If you are accepted into NAVIGATE, you would be expected to:

- commit to one on-campus or online meeting each week with your mentor for the first trimester of the program, for approximately 30 minutes to 1 hour. If you would like to continue with NAVIGATE for a second trimester, you may meet with some different mentors and students. This will be discussed with you first to check what you feel ready for. You are encouraged to maintain weekly attendance as this has proven to assist students in managing the first year,
- communicate regularly with your mentor through a mutually agreed-upon platform such as your Deakin student email account, or the NAVIGATE Teams site. Your mentor can show you how to use Teams,
- always be courteous and respectful when communicating with your mentor, both face-to-face and in written messages. Remember, your mentor is a student like you and may not be able to immediately respond to all correspondence,
- attend social events with your mentor and meet other students and mentors,
- ask questions and consider what would be the most useful for you to discuss with your mentor.

Interested and want to know more about NAVIGATE?

Please contact navigate@deakin.edu.au or speak to your Disability Liaison Officer.