

Academics Skills and Support

Every one of us has different talents, strategies, and challenges when it comes to studying and succeeding academically. The following section will briefly discuss aspects of studying that you might discuss with advisees. It also provides a list of resources to help support academic achievement.

Attitude is Everything

There are endless sources of information, tips, suggestions, and tools to help improve grades and enjoy academic experiences. Before these can help, you need to make a commitment to being honest about evaluating your strengths and weaknesses and being open to developing relationships with people that can assist. The most important element of improving is becoming positive and pro-active.

Study Skills

Study skills are the strategies and tools that help in the learning and retention of material and in preparation for tests and assignments. Study skills can be continually refined and applied differently depending upon the course and requirement--it just takes a little introspection and problem solving.

Questions that help you assess study habits and skills:

- How do you organize class handouts, notes, readings, and assignments?
- When and where do you study most effectively?
- Do you have a system for keeping track of upcoming assignments?
- Do you set goals and objectives for your work and progress?
- Do you set your own deadlines for work?
- What people help you learn? What people distract you?

Developing success strategies

Based on the questions above, think about how to maximize your study skills? Develop a strategy, set goals, and track progress. Try thinking about the following skills:

Get organized—develop systems for keeping track of assignments, reminders, and planning use of your time

Learn the rules—find out what the rules and regulations are, how they may affect you, and what administrative tasks are important to completing a degree.

Communicate—with professors, teaching assistants, and classmates.

Reach out—get help whenever you do not understand content, need help on how to study, or do not understand the expectations of the instructor.

Monitor—keep track of your success and your challenges!

Academic Difficulty

Any student may experience academic trouble, whether overall or in a particular course. This may happen with a particular course or with a certain semester. If you feel that a student is having academic trouble, you may want to discuss or look for the following signs:

Below average test scores and assignment grades

Not knowing about assignments or due dates; Not understanding the purpose of assignments

Misunderstanding or not catching the main points of reading assignments

Being consistently frustrated in class or while doing coursework

Missing class

Feeling apathetic, unconnected, or unconcerned when not doing well

Feeling unenthusiased or disinterested in the major, coursework, and career goals

Academic Support and Strategies

Students who are experiencing academic difficulties should:

1. Contact your faculty advisor

You should be able to explain the difficulties, and develop a plan for assessing the situation and resolving the problems. Identify campus resources.

2. Contact the course instructors

Speak with the course instructor to:

- Figure out what your course grade is currently
- Identify areas of misunderstanding and trouble with content
- Clarify assignments, expectations, and grading policies
- Identify tutoring, study groups, and other academic support
- Discuss study strategies for tests and other assignments

3. Consider other issues that may be affecting academic performance such as physical problems, interpersonal conflicts, transition issues such as homesickness, or a feeling that you cannot quite identify. There are many people and resources that you can reach out to for support. This could be a family member, a counselor, resident assistant or other campus staff, or a friend.

4. Utilize Campus Resources to Improve

Academic Support and Achievement Program (ASAP)

Associate Deans are great resources for academic improvement.

Office of Disability Services provides screening and support to students who have any type of disability including learning disabilities.

Advisement and First Year Programs offers walk-in assistance to help clarify issues with requirements, academic decisions (e.g., change of major; withdrawal from course), and academic planning.

Academic Peer Mentors are students trained to assist their peers with studying and academic skill building.

Peers in classes can be great source of clarification and provide insight on how to best study and prepare.