

ACADEMIC SUCCESS - 7 HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL STUDENTS

A few years ago, the Counselling Centre did a survey of the best students at the U of C. We talked to students who had learned how to be successful in life at university. They hadn't always been successful. They ended up doing well in school but they were also involved with their friends, the community, part-time jobs, volunteering, and other important parts of their lives. When we looked at the data, we found that most of these excellent students had developed habits that helped them to be successful at life and university.

The Seven Habits Are:

1. **Passion.** The students in our study had found a major that was interesting and important to them. It's normal to not be sure about choosing a major area of study. In fact, most university students change their major in the first two years, in the process of discovering their passion. Once discovered, this passion can be a source of energy and motivation for academic work.

2. **Social Support.** Successful students are involved with other people. They spend time with their friends and put energy into their important relationships. Successful students utilize formal study groups. They also teach each other a lot when they socialize or talk about their courses over coffee.

3. **Talk to Professors.** Students who talk to professors in the first six weeks of classes are more likely to stay in university. Make sure you take the opportunity to start talking with your professors early in your first semester. It will make your courses more interesting and will help you learn about class requirements. Since most students feel a bit awkward about this, here are some guidelines to get you started:

- Say Hello! When you pass your professor on campus look at them and say hello.
- Questions After Class. Pay attention in lectures and ask questions about course content after class.
Posted Office Hours. Visit your professor during their regular office hours and ask relevant questions about the course. Check if you're on the right track with an assignment or find out if your understanding of course concepts is on target.
- Ask Questions in Class. Ask questions about the lecture. There are no stupid questions and most of your classmates probably need the same information you do.

4. **Organization.** There is no right way to be organized. Different people need different approaches. But you do need a method that keeps you on top of your assignments and helps you prepare in advance for projects and exams. Even excellent students end up doing things at the last minute, but they don't leave it until the last minute to get started. So, experiment and find a system that works for you.

5. **Strategic & Resourceful.** Successful students have a habit of thinking about upcoming demands and taking advantage of available resources to prepare for them. Think about your upcoming year and the types of skills that you may need to develop to be more successful. Utilize both your internal resourcefulness and ask about other resources that may be available. It can be strategic to ask for help and there are lots of services available to help you with any concerns you may have. Remember, we're all learning and it's OK to ask for assistance.

6. **Balance.** Your mother is right. Get sleep, exercise, eat properly, and spend time with people you care about and on your other interests. All work and no play makes Jill and Jack dull and uninteresting to themselves. So keep your energy up by maintaining all the important parts of your life.

7. **Committed.** Successful students make a commitment to do what it takes to be successful. Make a commitment to yourself to be successful in all aspects of your university experience.

Additional assistance for succeeding at university is available at the Counselling Centre. We offer a variety of services and resources including drop-in career clinics, career decision-making workshops, personal counselling services and a variety of personal development workshops.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS - EXAM TIPS

1. **Manage Your Arousal.** Take a few s l o w , deep breaths. Shrug your shoulders a few times. Gently roll your head, stretching your neck. Do this before you start and periodically during the exam.

2. **Manage Your Thoughts.** Think success. Remind yourself of your past successes, your ability, and the studying you have done.

3. **Eat Something Before the Exam** - preferably something with protein and complex carbohydrates. Avoid high sugar and high fat foods. Don't drink more coffee than you would any other day.

4. **General Instructions.** Carefully read the general instructions. Ask if there is anything you do not understand.

5. **Survey the Test.** Get an overview of what you will be required to do. Budget your time including time for review. If you think of something, jot it down in the margins.

6. **Read All Questions Carefully Word by Word.** The most frequent mistake is misunderstanding the question asked. Circle or underline key words.

7. **Do the Easy Questions First.** Build your confidence and get some easy points.

8. **Brain Waves.** If you think about something for one question while working on another, jot down your thought in the margin and then go back to the question you are working on.

9. **Getting Stuck.** If you cannot get a question with reasonable effort, go on to another question. Coming back to it later may help you see it in a new light.

10. **Review Your Answers.** Allow 10 minutes per one hour of exam time. Edit, insert additional points, change responses only if you are sure that your first response was incorrect. Avoid second guessing.