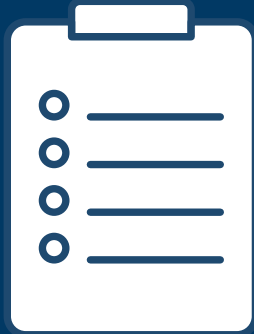


HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN UNIVERSITY

14 tips by students, for students.



1. Get organized.

A normal course load is five classes in a semester. Typically, a class has multiple assignments, midterms, and/or exams. At the start of the semester, it is important to **read through the syllabus** for each of your classes! Make note of when assignments are due. Mark them on a calendar and check it regularly so you know what is coming up. Responsibilities pile up quickly and unless your professor reminds you, it is easy to miss deadlines. University is all about self-motivation and self-discipline.



2. Keep up!

Do your best to stay on top of things. Assignments for different classes will often be due around the same time and lecture material adds up. In an online learning environment, commit a certain number of hours a week to reading, watching lectures, writing assignments, and studying. If you fall behind one week, things will quickly spiral, possibly leading to added stress.



3. Don't feel guilty about taking breaks

Take a step back and give yourself time to relax. It is easy to lose track of time and overwork yourself—especially in an online learning environment. Take a break, go outside, do something you enjoy! It might be difficult to enjoy activities when you have multiple deadlines on your mind. However, taking breaks to avoid burnout is as necessary as doing the tasks themselves. You will have a clear and refreshed mindset when you return to your task.

4. Go to Class/ Watch Lectures.

In most cases, relying on the readings is not enough. Lectures and labs have a purpose. They provide added context to course material and will help you draw connections between different content.



What to do during class:

- Try to participate actively in discussion. Raise your hand. Ask for clarification when you need it.
- Minimize distractions: In an online learning environment, this may prove even more difficult. However, try to treat this time as seriously as you would a face-to-face lesson. Put your phone away and try not to have social media tabs open on your computer. You will soak up tremendous amounts of information just by being there.
- **More work during lecture is less work trying to catch up after!**

Professors may even offer extra information like exam hints for students who attend lecture!



5. Ask for help if you need it.

If there is something you do not understand, ask your professor or GA/TA. Their email is on the syllabus for a reason. They hold office hours for a reason. Professors know what it is like being in your shoes and they are there to help you succeed. In an online environment, it is difficult for instructors to know if students are having problems. Speaking up is important, as other students may have the same concern as you.

Can't make it to office hours? Email or ask at the end of class if your professor or GA/TA is available at a different time. They will be more than happy to schedule a meeting with you at a time that works. Quite often, they will provide you with extra information that may be helpful for assignments, midterms, or exams!

6. Discover how you learn best

How you study matters: No student is the same. The earlier you figure out what learning style works for you, the better. Some people learn best by listening, others are more visual learners. Ask yourself:

- Is there a time of day I learn best? Are you a morning person or night owl?
- Do I study best alone or with a group? Perhaps you need to study by yourself first and then review with classmates.
- Is it sufficient if I re-read my notes or do I have to rewrite notes and condense?

The list goes on. This skill, along with note-taking, is important to develop in first year.

Where you study matters: Find a learning environment that works best for you. Some students work best when listening to music, while others like peace and quiet. If you can, experiment by trying different locations or rooms. Find a place with limited distractions. In an online learning environment, it is important that your workspace has a strong internet connection.



7. Prioritize learning how to write and cite.

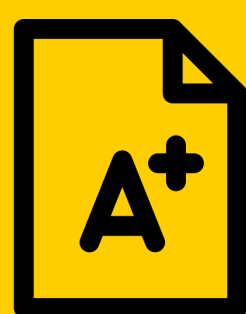
No one will prepare you for the amount of writing you will do in your undergrad. This is why most FAHSS students have to take Effective Writing I and II. Understanding the material is not enough to do well on a written assignment. You need to present your ideas clearly - arguments are more compelling when they are effectively communicated. Improvement in academic writing takes time and practice, but it is necessary if you plan on entering a career that depends on persuasion and explanation.

It is difficult to find flaws in your own writing. Have someone read your work before handing it in. Take advantage of the Writing Support desk in Leddy Library (now online). You can schedule a one-on-one consultation and get help with various aspects of writing. <https://www.uwindsor.ca/success/writingsupportdesk>



8. Grades aren't everything.

It is okay to be upset when you receive a bad grade; however, by no means does it make you a failure. In fact, it is moments like these where you will do the most learning. Ask yourself, why did this happen? Perhaps the way you are studying is not working. Maybe you did not sleep well the night before the exam. A bad grade could be just the push you need to finally speak to your GA/TA or professor. Look at it as an opportunity for growth and self-improvement.



9. Make friends and stay connected.



You cannot isolate yourself to focus on studies. Whether it is a partner to study with or a support system to pick you up when you are down, there will come a time where you will need a friend. Although it may take you out of your comfort zone, do not wait for people to talk to you. Initiate conversation. In an online course, this might mean participating in online discussion posts or in the chat on the side of a live meeting.

Try to find a friend in every class. That way you can help each other out when you need it (e.g. catching each other up if one of you misses class).

10. Get involved.



Having trouble making friends? Join a student society, a club, or a sports team! Attend an upcoming event that may be of interest to you. This is a great way to find other students who share similar interests. These activities will make you well-rounded, and well-roundedness looks great on a resume for grad school or job applications. More importantly, these are the activities you will remember most about university when it's all over.

Get involved early on: It is never too late to join a student group; however, climbing your way up and holding an executive position may prove difficult if you're just joining in your third or fourth year.

Do not get involved in everything all at once. Be careful not to take on too much and overwhelm yourself. Choose activities that best align with your interests. Find a balance between school and social activities.

11. Seize every opportunity and apply for everything!



If you get the chance to do something that challenges you, do it (if you can)! Do not doubt your skills. You are in university to learn and develop skills—no one expects you to know everything your first day on the job.

- Is there an internship opportunity that interests you? Apply.
- Not sure if you qualify for a scholarship or bursary? Apply.
- Did someone ask you to volunteer for an event? Say yes.

Even if you initially think you won't be interested, you may surprise yourself and end up discovering a hidden passion that changes the course of your career.

12. Trust your own experience in learning



Your first year of university is a time to find your passions and explore new ideas. There is no general rule that states a class is hard or a professor is a good instructor. What one student may appreciate, may be the same thing another student dislikes. It is beneficial to ask others about their experiences, but at the end of the day, you know yourself best. Do not give in to peer pressure and take classes that YOU want to take.

13. Get to know your professors.



Make an effort to get noticed. This will require following previous tips like attending class, asking for help, or going to office hours. Professors appreciate it when students try. You will ultimately be more successful in a class, if you build a rapport with the professor. These professors will also be able to write high-quality letters of recommendation for you when you apply for internships, jobs, or grad school in the future.

14. Take care of your health.



University can be stressful, but you should never prioritize academics at the expense of your mental and physical wellbeing. Make time for yourself and enjoy the company of family and friends. Eat well, exercise, and get some sleep, especially before major assignments. **Being less prepared but well-rested is more important than being over-prepared and exhausted.** A healthy mind is critical for optimal academic functioning. Beware of too much stress and reward yourself when you reach a goal.

As previously mentioned, it is important to slow down and take a break when you need to. If you find yourself struggling, ask for help or visit/contact the student counselling centre:
<https://www.uwindsor.ca/studentcounselling/>

10 more quick tips & reminders...

1. Professors are human.
2. Check your email.
3. Respect Deadlines.
4. Enjoy the ups and the downs.
5. Take a class that frightens you.
6. Do not dismiss assignments that are weighted low.
7. Don't be afraid to question where your grades are coming from.
8. Be open-minded.
9. You're not just a number.
10. Sleep.