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# Becoming A Successful Student

## Getting Off To A Good Academic Start

1. Wear or carry some type of watch or timepiece, preferably one with an alarm function. (Buy one if you don't have one already.)
2. Get one appointment book/planner with a daily calendar. Carry it with you to all classes. In your planner record all class, work, appointment times, test dates, and due dates of assignments and papers. Review your appointment book/planner at least once each day. Do not rely on your memory.
3. Have a separate notebook for each class, labeled with your name and the name of the class. Some students find it helpful to have each notebook in a different color.
4. Go to every class, and get there a few minutes early. Students who skip class or habitually arrive late not only miss out on learning, but also make a negative impression. Instructors respond more positively if they perceive that you are a motivated, hard-working, responsible student.
5. Sit as close to the front of the class as possible.
6. Make use of the instructor's office hours to ask questions about the lectures or reading materials.

7. Review your notes as soon as possible after each class. Frequent, short review periods are an enormous help in remembering and retaining information over the course of a semester.
8. Begin reading and studying during the first week of class. Do not let yourself fall behind. Schedule regular periods for studying 6 days per week.
9. Reserve one day (or at least a half day) for recreation, and do no class-related work on that day. The risk for "burnout" is great if you push yourself to work hard 7 days per week without a break.
10. Take care of yourself with nutritious eating, regular exercise, and a consistent sleeping pattern. We recommend that you put these activities in your schedule and consider them as important as your classes. You may be surprised at how much these simple self-care activities may enhance your alertness and concentration, as well as help you handle stress throughout the academic year.
11. Not surprisingly, there is a

negative correlation between level of alcohol use and G.P.A. Use alcohol only moderately, if at all.

12. If you would like to speak confidentially with a counselor for any personal or academic concern, visit the Counseling Center (Student Services, Building 1300), office numbers 706-771-4068 or 4067. Referrals will be made to community agencies for mental health concerns.

13. If you have a disability, and need reasonable academic adjustments be sure you have disclosed your special need/disability with [Karissa Wright](#), Special Needs/Disabilities Counselor. Her office is located in the Counseling Center (Bldg 1300), or 706-771-4067. *After obtaining your official academic adjustments notification form, make an appointment with the instructor of each class for which you may need accommodations. During the appointment, be prepared to discuss the academic adjustments you may need for that class.*

[Counseling Center](#)

Adapted from [Tulane University](#)

## Creating SMART Goals

Internationally renowned business philosopher Jim Rohn says, "We want to set the goals that our heart conceives, that our mind believes and that our bodies will carry out." We are intelligent beings and as intelligent beings we need to have SMART goals. The acronym S.M.A.R.T. outlines the set of criteria that your goal must follow in order for it to be a well-focused and achievable goal. That set of criteria is:

**Specific:** Do you know exactly

what you want to accomplish with all the details?

**Measurable:** Are you able to assess your progress?

**Attainable:** Is your goal within your reach given your current situation?

**Relevant:** Is your goal relevant towards your purpose in life?

**Time-Sensitive:** What is the deadline for completing your goal?

### Create Specific Goals

There is no place in your life for vague goals. You want to make your goal as detailed as possible in order to achieve the specific results that you desire. A specific goal is one that is clearly defined in such a way that anyone could come by and understand what you intend to accomplish. Your goal should contain a detailed description of what you want ...*continued on page 3*

## Learning Styles: What Are They?

There are many types of learning styles. Often, these types coincide with our personality style. Each of us has a different style or combination of styles. Though the majority of us have the capacity to use most modes, we tend to rely on or prefer certain styles. Hopefully, these are the styles that have brought us success in the past. If this is not the case, it may be helpful to reassess one's approach. We all learn differently but we can all learn effectively. It is important to understand your own learning style and use it to your best advantage in the classroom.

There are also many teaching styles. We do best when our learning styles match with an instructor's teaching style. Below is some information about learning styles, teaching styles, and how to bridge the two.

### Eyes or Ears

Do you remember best what is said to you or what you read? Do you prefer television or newspapers as your source of news?

Some people learn best by reading. They need to see something to remember it. Others learn best by listening. Information sticks once they hear it.

If you have a visual style, you may have difficulty with an instructor who believes telling people what to learn and know is enough. Instructors who rely heavily on class discussion will also cause you some angst. Handouts, reading assignments, and writing information on the blackboard are most helpful to you.

On the other hand, if you have an auditory style, you may be in trouble with an instructor who writes a lot and assigns reading that is not discussed in class. Class discussions and study groups are a better way for you to learn.

### Movement

Does it help you to rewrite your notes or take notes as you read?

Some people's learning is enhanced by motor movement. In other words, they learn as they write notes in class. Or when they are reading an assignment, they remember the content best if they take notes as they read. Sometimes the act of highlighting important information that is read works in the same way.

### Group or Solitary

Do you find you remember more when you study in a group or alone?

Some people draw their energy from the outside world, that is, interacting with other people, activities, or things. This is often called extraversion. Others prefer to gain their energy from their own internal ideas, emotions, or impressions. Some people call this introversion.

If you tend to be more extroverted, you communicate freely and like to have other people around. Thus, working in groups and talking material over with others helps you understand and process new ideas more fully and completely. You may be impatient and distracted working on your own. A class that is less varied and not as action-oriented may be a particular challenge. You like instructors who are active, energetic, and enthusiastic. You also prefer a more friendly and personal approach. In addition, you probably find larger classes exciting.

If you are more introverted, you probably work contentedly alone and don't mind working on one project for a long time without interruption. As such, you may be quiet in the classroom and dislike classes with a lot of oral presentations and group interaction and work. Sometimes having to communicate with others is hard. You work best if you read lessons over or write them out before discussion, think before participating, and ask questions before completing tasks or exercises. You like classes that require being thoughtful and introspective. You may dislike a professor with a more personal style of attention and closeness. A quiet and tactful style works best for you. Smaller classes are your preference.

### Practical or Innovative

Do you like to follow an established way of doing things? Or would you rather follow your inspirations?

Some people prefer to take information in through their five senses, taking note of what is actually there. They want, remember, and trust facts. They are sometimes called practical types. Others prefer to take information in through a "sixth sense," focusing on what might be. These people like to daydream and think about what might be in the future. One could call them innovative.

If you are a practical type, you probably like an established, routine way of doing things. You prefer using skills you already know rather than new ones. Taking note of de-

tails, memorizing facts, and reaching a conclusion step by step is your ideal. You learn best if you have clear directions to follow. Films, audiovisuals, hands-on exercises, and envisioning practical examples are most helpful. You learn best when instructors are factual and thorough, working out details in advance and showing you why things make sense. If you are more innovative, you probably like to solve new problems. You may dislike doing the same thing repeatedly and may be impatient with routine details. You may also find yourself daydreaming during factual lectures. You work best when you can see the big picture, have independence and autonomy, and incorporate new approaches into your work. You like enthusiastic instructors who indicate challenges, point out future benefits, and let you figure out your own way.

### Thinking or Feeling

Do you respond more to people's thoughts or feelings?

Some people prefer to organize information in a logical, objective way. They respond more easily to people's thoughts and are more analytical. If you are such a person, emotions play less of a part in your life, decisions, and interactions with others. You work best if you can organize and outline a subject, know your objectives and goals, get to the task, and receive rapid feedback. You are most motivated when you can see a logical rationale for studying certain material or working on a particular project. You probably prefer teachers who are task-focused, logical, well-organized, less emotional, and who offer feedback.

Other people prefer to organize and structure information in a personal, value-oriented way. If this sounds familiar, you are likely to be very aware of other people and their feelings. You prefer harmony. You probably learn best if you can identify with what you are doing and have an emotional connection to it. You like an environment with little competition and with opportunity to respond more personally. You probably prefer teachers who are personable, friendly, and easy to work with. You also like a teaching style that is positive, tells you why what you are doing is valuable, and supports your personal goals. ...continued on page 4

## Ten Tips For Motivation

1. Develop realistic expectations for yourself; set your own goals. Develop a positive attitude towards learning and earning your degrees.
2. List your motivators for achieving your academic goals: extrinsic (grades, good job), intrinsic (mastery of material, desire to learn) and other personal reasons.
3. Make a commitment as to when you will work on an assignment. Be specific about when you want to complete it and put the date for starting on your calendar where you will see it daily.
4. Break down big assignments into smaller parts and work on the assignment a little at a time; set dates for completing each part.
5. If you need a jump start on assignments, complete small, easier tasks first in order to build your confidence.
6. Ask for help if you don't understand an assignment. Obtaining clarification from a professor or tutor may put you back on the right track.
7. Find ways to relate class material and assignments to your life or future career.
8. Find ways to deal with distracting personal problems that are making it difficult for you to focus on academics.
9. Minimize self-defeating behaviors and thoughts (negativity, procrastination, low confidence) which are impeding academic achievement. Look for small improvements and small successes, as you can change behaviors.
10. Reward yourself when you finish each task and complete an assignment. Feel good about what you have accomplished, don't just focus on what's left to complete.

[gwired.gwu.edu](http://gwired.gwu.edu)

## SMART Goals continued...

to accomplish; when you want to accomplish it by; and the action(s) you will take to accomplish it.

*Bad example:* "I want to write a book."

*Good example:* "I want to write a book on time management that is at least 200 pages in length and have it done by December 16th. I'll commit myself to writing at least 2 pages every workday until I reach completion."

### Create Measurable Goals

Always set goals that are measurable in some way. You need to establish a measuring stick for assessing the progress towards your goals because if you can't measure it, you can't manage it. A good measurable goal will be one where anyone can come up to you at the deadline and, by viewing the results, determine whether or not you have completed your goal. You also want to be able to see the progressive changes that you make on your goal so that you can judge whether or not you are reaching the completion of your goal. Select a standard unit of measurement that will enable you to see exactly how far you have come from the start of your goal and how far away from the completion of the goal you are.

*Bad example:* "I want to be rich."

*Good example:* "I want to generate \$100,000 in passive income within 5 years from this date."

### Create Attainable Goals

Having high goals that stretch you is important, but you need to also need to create goals that are realistic for your situation and skill level. Many people unfortunately set their goals and dreams so high that they are just not very realistic and, as a result, they never seem to reach

their dreams in life. Remember to set high goals, but be realistic about your goals. On the same note, goals that are too easily accomplished do not stretch you or make you grow as a person because they are not challenging enough. You will want to find that right mix of goal that is challenging, but not extreme.

*Bad example:* "I want to become a millionaire in 2 months."

*Good example:* "I want to become a millionaire within 10 years by starting my own personal development company and doing seminars all over the world and by creating a line of passive income products."

### Create Relevant Goals

Having goals is great, but what is the underlying purpose for those goals? You want to create goals that are in-line with your personal mission statement or your purpose in life. Relevant goals ensure that you are dedicating your effort towards goals that are focused towards who you are as a person. It is similar to a college curriculum that focuses on specific courses for each major. All of us should create a mission statement for ourselves which is basically our purpose in life and all of our goals should spawn from that mission statement. Goals are just a means of achieving that mission in life. A goal can be very evil in nature and still abide by all the other criteria, but relevancy is the ethical check on that goal to make sure that this particular goal fits within your purpose in life.

*Bad example:* "Within one year, I want to become a warlord and have many loyal soldiers who will commit acts of terrorism on my behalf."

*Good example:* "By the end of the year, I want to build a philan-

thropic foundation that helps feed the homeless."

### Create Time-Sensitive Goals

Every goal that you create must be time-sensitive in nature. Not having a time element attached to your goal breeds procrastination. We would simply be motivated to put the goal off for a later time and never get around to it.

Goals must have definite starting points and ending points and milestones along the way.

*Bad example:* "I am going to do my homework."

*Good example:* "I am going to finish my homework by 8pm tonight and I'll achieve this deadline by spending one hour on each subject."

By spending some time towards making sure that your goals fit the SMART criteria, you will ensure your success.

*Adapted from an article by  
Tristan Loo  
[SelfGrowth.com](http://SelfGrowth.com)*



## Tips For Success At College

### Location, location, location...

Are you serious about getting work done? Find a good location. Use the libraries, study rooms, or empty classrooms.

### Make It a Habit: Do Coursework Every Day

Cramming is *not* conducive to understanding and retaining large amounts of information. Time on your courses each day is the best way to learn. Use the time between classes to stay on top of readings.

### Help Exists! Seek It Out and Improve Your Grades

Whether you're an 'A' student or a 'D' student, you can strengthen your skills. Check out Augusta Tech's Tutoring Center, Building 200, Room 218. Get to know your professors and tutorial assistants. Use study guides and other helpful resources.

### Write It Down

Use a day planner or wall calendar. Plan time for coursework. Plan ahead for assignments and exam periods.

### Get Energized - Eat, Exercise, Sleep

Fatigue and stress weaken memory and comprehension. Eat properly, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep.

### Perform Like a Pro: Go to Class Prepared and Take Thorough Notes

Don't miss class. Someone else's notes aren't going to be as good as having gone to the lecture yourself. While taking notes, listen for emphases and examples. If you have questions after the lecture? Go to your professor's or tutorial assistant's office hours. Learn as you go and you won't find yourself unprepared the night before an exam.

### Lectures and Textbooks: What's the BIG Picture?

College learning requires understanding how pieces of information fit together to form a "big picture." Use course outlines, tables of content, and headings and subheadings to organize information.

### Do Something to Remember Key Information

Be active! Generate examples, create mnemonics, make summary notes, identify key words, highlight textbooks, or add margin notes. Improve your memory by being creative and interested.

### Think You'll Remember Key Points? Prove It.

No matter how well you understand something, without practice forgetting will occur. **Before** a test, recall information *without* looking at notes or textbooks and by doing practice questions.

### Be Test Smart

Don't lose marks because of test-writing errors. Use strategies to tackle different types of tests (e.g., multiple-choice). Read instructions, budget time to marks, and do less difficult questions first to build confidence.

- [University of Western Ontario](http://www.uwo.ca)

Visit the Counseling Center  
Building 1300  
706-771-4068 or 4067  
[www.augustatech.edu](http://www.augustatech.edu)

## Learning Styles continued...

### Open-ended or Closure-driven

Do you like to get things settled and finished? Or would you rather leave things open for alterations?

Some people prefer to live a planned and organized life. They go on vacation and plan out all of their activities before they go. Other people like to be more open-ended, living more spontaneously and flexibly.

If you need closure, you probably work best when you can plan your work and follow that plan. You like to get things finished and do not like to be interrupted. In an effort to complete a task, however, you may make decisions too quickly. You learn best if you can stick to a routine and follow a specific time frame and precise guidelines. You probably prefer instructors who are structured, timely, precise, and organized. You also like specific performance guidelines.

For those who are more open-ended, you probably like change and undertaking many projects at once. You may have trouble making decisions and may postpone unpleasant jobs. You probably learn best if you can be original, physically active, and spontaneous. You gravitate toward instructors who are more open, creative, spontaneous, and informal. You dislike deadlines and too much direction, wanting to follow your own path.

### What if your learning style and a teaching style are mismatched?

It is tempting to respond to this dilemma with the outlook- "If people would only change their approach, my life would be much easier." However, this doesn't get anyone very far and there are better solutions.

- Try to get as much as you can out of every course.
- Try to "translate" the material into a form you understand.

- Practice approaching the class in another way. Be open to a new way of learning. Adapt to the instructor's style and see what you can learn. You may be surprised. If you are successful, you will add a new dimension to your skills without giving up what you already do well.
- Ask questions. Talk to the instructor. Ask for what you need (i.e. more structure, more freedom, additional readings, clarification of course goals). A clear, direct, respectful, and responsible communication is optimal. Also remember that communication is both verbal and nonverbal.
- The other piece of this puzzle is studying. We all have to study. No one likes doing it.

Adapted from the [Pace University](http://www.pace.edu) Counseling Services Website