

# Academic Help Package

Fall 2019

Are you struggling academically? Do you realize that you need help? You're not alone. So what can you do? Here is a list to help you out.

1. How bad is it? You need to weigh your pros and cons. Is your term at risk, or just one class? Was it a midterm? Assignment? How much was all this worth?
  - a. Write it down
  - b. Look at the numbers (use the Grades Assessment sheet that is attached, using your posted marks from Quercus)
  
2. Can the term/class be salvaged? If so: what do you need to do?
  - a. Manage your time better or learn to study more effectively? (If yes, ask about meeting with a **Learning Strategist** at the front desk of GB 170)
  - b. Find a study group? Attend Guided Engineering Academic Review Sessions (GEARS) (<http://uoft.me/gears>)?
  - c. Quit that part-time job? Scale back on your co-curricular commitments?
  - d. Get help – a tutor (<http://tutors.skule.ca>) Academic Success Centre ([www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc)), TAs (in Tutorial), Profs (after lecture, or in office hours) – these are your resources. Use them.
  
3. If the term/class cannot be salvaged (you've looked at the numbers – you can't pass), what are your options?
  - a. Reduce your course load (drop just one course) (**Deadline: November 4, 2019**)
    - i. Yes, you may drop just one course. However, if you do, there are several implications. You will not get any fees refunded from the session. You will also be required to take a summer course to catch up (and you have to pay for that), it can affect student loan funding, scholarships and awards, and you still follow the regular promotion regulations as listed in the 2019-2020 Academic Calendar (<http://uoft.me/engcalendar>)
    - ii. Our programs and the way our courses are offered and structured are complicated, so this is not possible with every course.
  
  - b. Transfer to part-time studies (**Deadline: November 4, 2019**)
    - i. This means you will be required to complete your first year of studies over two full academic years.
    - ii. You need to consider funding if you are receiving any. Will you still be eligible?
    - iii. If you are an international student, what are the stipulations on your study visa?
    - iv. Part-time students are subject to the same promotion regulations as full-time students (check them out in the Academic Calendar)
  
  - c. Withdraw from the program (**Deadline: November 4, 2019**)

4. And what if engineering is not the right program for you? You want to transfer to a different campus/faculty at U of T?
- a. You can withdraw (**Deadline: November 4, 2019**), and if you would have met the Faculty of Arts & Science's admission criteria for September, they may consider you for admission in January. Other campuses of U of T may also consider you for admission in January. This is not guaranteed – you may risk the chance of not being accepted. (If you would like to explore these options, please see someone in the First Year Office well before **November 4, 2019**). It's also likely that you won't get into all the courses you want or need in January if transfer is granted.
    - i. Taking this option means you lose all tuition fees for fall term (100% refund for winter term).
  - b. You can transfer to part-time and apply for admission to Arts & Science (or other university/college/program) for **September 2020**.
    - i. Your marks earned in Engineering will be what other faculties, universities, or colleges use to decide your admission.
  - c. If you are not sure, you can apply for admission to Arts & Science (or other university/college/program) for **September 2020, and decide your course of action in the summer**.
    - i. Your marks earned in engineering will be what other faculties, universities, or colleges use to decide your admission.
    - ii. The process to apply to another U of T campus/Faculty is an Internal Transfer, and it is done through <http://www.future.utoronto.ca/apply>. Deadlines vary by program and campus, but are usually in January.

The list above outlines the most common options, but we encourage you to come in to see your advisor as soon as possible in GB 170 to talk about what would be best for your unique situation. We'll figure things out together.

The First Year Office Team

*Disclaimer: This is meant to be a helpful guide. It is not intended as an authoritative source. In case of any conflicting information, information and regulations in the 2019-2020 Faculty Calendar shall govern.*

*(<http://uoft.me/engcalendar>)*

# **ACADEMIC SUPPORT - TIP SHEET FOR FIRST YEAR STUDENTS**

## ***If you are having difficulty with lecture material....***

Be sure to ask your instructor for assistance before or after lecture, if possible. Otherwise, make use of the instructor's office hours to go over any lecture material to receive clarification. You can also use the lecture videos posted on Quercus to go over concepts that you're struggling with.

## ***If you are having trouble acquiring all the information taught in lecture...***

Learn to use good note-taking strategies. Feel free to pick up an instruction sheet on the Cornell Note-Taking Method in the First Year Office. Also, consider attending an Academic Success Centre (ASC) Lecture on Note-Taking ([www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/workshops](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/workshops)). At the Academic Success Centre you can also drop in to discuss learning strategies, study skills, etc, with a learning skills strategist: [www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/hours](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/hours). Learning Skills Strategists are available to meet with engineering students. Appointments can be booked through the First Year Office front desk.

## ***If you are having trouble with your homework or problem sets....***

Again, your instructor is a great resource. In addition, you may seek extra help from your TA. Forming a study group is always a good way to work together with your peers to discuss homework and problem sets. The Faculty has arranged Guided Engineering Academic Review Sessions where you can get help from peer mentors, and the schedule is available at <http://uoft.me/gears>.

## ***If you are having trouble with your homework or problem sets in linear algebra or calculus....***

Visit the Math Aid Office, run by Professor Burbulla in GB 149 (check your Quercus math course pages for hours). You can also visit the Math Learning Centre for drop-in help from TA's in PG 101 (hours at: <http://uoft.me/MLC>). There are also tutorial-style extra help sessions available through the Math Success Program (check your Quercus math course pages for details). You can also speak to your math TAs for extra help, and read the Math Study Skills pages (created by UTSC) at the following link:

<http://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/mslc/first-year-students>

## ***If you feel you are just not grasping the course material when you study...***

You may need a tutor in a particular course. Check out the Engineering Society's Tutor Exchange at: <http://tutors.skule.ca> Tutors are upper-year or graduate students that are strong in a particular area. Each tutor will have a list of courses next to their name for which they provide tutoring. The Engineering Society only posts this list, they do not monitor how much each tutor charges. Please be sure to negotiate a fair rate with the tutor, directly.

## ***If you are having difficulty with managing your time for the engineering course load....***

Use our Time Management template on the back of this sheet. Also, consider attending a Time Management lecture or workshop at ASC (<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc/workshops>), or meeting with a Learning Strategist.

## ***If you are overwhelmed with your engineering courses and/or your high school study habits are not working for you....***

All of the above tips still apply. However, there is a really good book by McGraw-Hill Publishing called *The Engineering Student Survival Guide*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. This book can be purchased from most major bookstores. It is also available from the Engineering and Computer Science Library for a short-term loan.

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The First Year Office is always here if you have any questions about your academic success. We are located in GB170 and can be reached at [firstyear@engineering.utoronto.ca](mailto:firstyear@engineering.utoronto.ca) or 416-978-4625.

# Grades Assessment

If you have an appointment with an advisor, please fill this in and bring it with you.

Example:

Course: APS123			
Assignment	Mark Earned	Value (% of Final Mark)	% Earned
Quiz #1	2/5	4 %	1.6 %
Quiz #2	4/5	4%	3.2 %
Test #1	15/20	10%	7.5 %
Total	n/a	18%	12.3 %

Course:			
Assignment	Mark Earned	Value (% of Final Mark)	% Earned

Course:			
Assignment	Mark Earned	Value (% of Final Mark)	% Earned

Course:			
Assignment	Mark Earned	Value (% of Final Mark)	% Earned

Course:			
Assignment	Mark Earned	Value (% of Final Mark)	% Earned

Course:			
Assignment	Mark Earned	Value (% of Final Mark)	% Earned



# Top Ten Engineering Study Tips

**1. Always do the following when starting a new course:**

Read the course syllabus carefully. Find out how to get in touch with your instructor (usually on the course syllabus). Mark important dates and deadlines on your calendar and login to Quercus and familiarize yourself with the course website.

**2. \*Always\* go to lectures and tutorials.**

It is better to get the information you need first hand. This also gives you the opportunity to ask questions right in class, and get your answers right away. You will be able to understand your notes much better than someone else's. It is always easier to fill in the blanks in your own notes from what you remember, than not realizing that your friends' notes completely missed an important point.

**3. Do your homework as it is assigned.**

Problem sets are one of the best ways to prepare well for tests and exams. You should always devote the time to learn how to do the problem rather than just getting to the final answer. Knowing how to do the problems effectively as you go along will mean that you only need to review for your tests and exams.

**4. Learn how to take good notes.**

If you don't already know how to take good notes - learn. The poor note taker only writes down 11% of the important information given in lecture. On average, good note takers perform 40% better than their poor note taker counterparts. We like to recommend a modified version of the Cornell Note-taking System. You can talk this method over with someone in the First Year Office, or the Academic Success Centre ([www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc](http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/asc)).

**5. Familiarize yourself with and use your textbook.**

Read the table of contents and the preface of the book early on. Always skim the assigned reading before and again after lectures. Look for helpful diagrams. Correlate your lecture to the text, and pick out the important points from each section. Find the problems that apply to the concepts focused on in lecture, and work through them.

**6. Study wisely.**

Spending more time studying isn't always better. You need to make the time you spend studying worthwhile. Spend more time practicing problems than reading through the textbook. Focus on the priorities in the course. If you get stuck on a problem, don't work backwards from the answer. Ask someone to help you get over your sticky spot. Take breaks, and don't study when you are too tired. Your brain needs time to recharge and to store the information you feed it.

**7. Form a study group for each class, and/or attend Guided Engineering Academic Review Sessions (<http://uoft.me/gears>).**

Study with classmates. Try to find a group of people with differences. By helping others, you often solidify concepts better in your own mind. And it is always nice to have someone in your group who can help you.

**8. Use all breaks in your schedule wisely.**

Have a three hour break? Study in the library, or see if you can get your regular study group together during those breaks. Remember that the "Study Days" and "Reading Week" during the terms are not holidays - they are meant for studying.

**9. Study "outside the box".**

As a method of review, solve your problem set and textbook questions out of context. Copy them onto cue cards, shuffle them up, and then try to solve them. On a test or exam, your instructor is not going to tell you what theory or topic a question relates to. You need to learn to identify the questions and solving methods on your own.

**10. Cramming is not the best way to prepare for a test.**

Your brain is a little like your stomach in that it needs time to digest the information you feed it before your body can use it. Learning things a little at a time and giving yourself the chance to work with concepts and build upon them gradually is the best way to study. All cramming does is leave you feeling full and awkward.

All of the above adapted from various online sources:

<http://www.eecs.berkeley.edu/Programs/ugrad/studytips.shtml>,

<http://www.cramster.com/study-tips/>,

<http://www.bcit.ca/distance/currentstudents/online/resources/studytips.shtml>,

[http://learning.concordia.ca/Help/handouts/Engineering/Tips\\_for\\_Engineers.shtml](http://learning.concordia.ca/Help/handouts/Engineering/Tips_for_Engineers.shtml)

## My Action Plan

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