

ACADEMIC HELP PACKAGE



HOW TO GET BACK ON TRACK



OCTOBER 2024

Prepared by the University of Toronto
Engineering First Year Office

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES?



You're not alone! Here is a flowchart of questions you need to ask yourself. It is important to go over the damage and do an academic risk assessment of your situation.

What effect does it have?

- Assess the damage by reviewing your previous scores.
- Consider if this was a quiz, assignment, midterm, or project, and how much it counts for your final grade.
- Evaluate your current situation and see if that score is a deal breaker. If your overall term average will fall below **60%** or your average in this course will fall below **50%**, it might significantly impact your overall performance.
 - Take some time to write everything down: your options, the pros and cons, etc.
 - Assess your grades and calculate the scores you need, using the grade assessment worksheet on the next page.
- Consider checking the promotion regulations to better understand where you stand.



GRADES ASSESSMENT

*We recommend creating a version of this chart yourself using Excel or Google Sheets so that you can use it from semester to semester.

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

Example:

Course: APS 123			
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

GRADES ASSESSMENT

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I can do better, what do I need to do?



I need to manage my time better or learn to study more effectively!

Meet with an engSuccess Peer Mentor or a Learning Strategist:
uofteng.ca/learning.

Visit the Centre for Learning Strategy Support:
uoft.me/clss



I need to find a study group!

Attend GEARS:
uoft.me/gears



I don't have enough time to do everything I need to do!

Scale back on co-curricular commitments, reduce hours for your part-time job



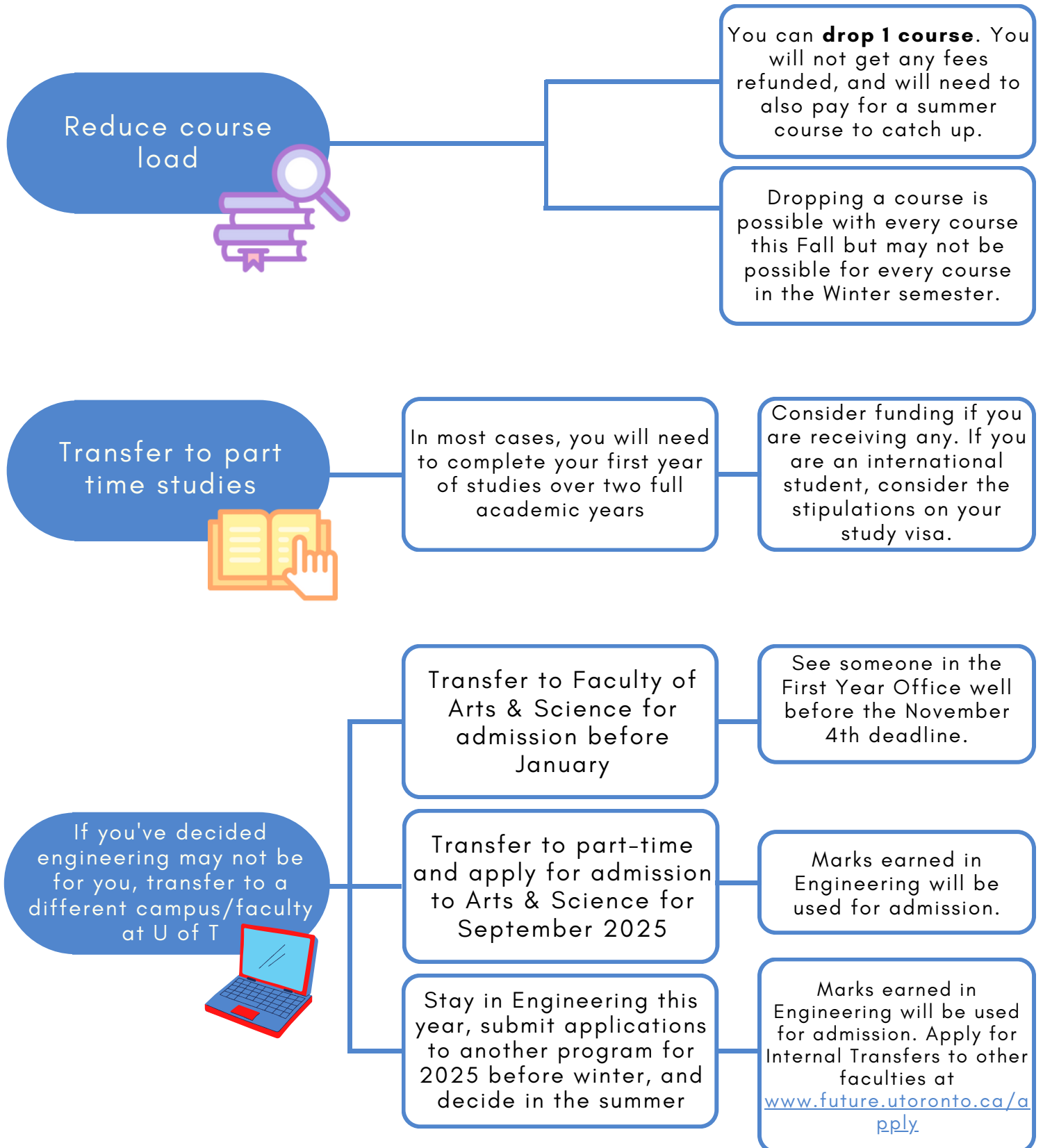
I need help in my courses!

Get help from your TAs, professors, Math Learning Centre; attend Office Hours and ask questions

Get a tutor:
tutors.skule.ca
(this may be a bit costly)

I don't think I can pass, what are my options?

*Deadline to drop a course, transfer to part-time studies, or withdraw from the Fall term: **November 4, 2024**



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/drop-in 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. Explore the Better note-taking resources from the Centre for Learning Strategy Support (CLSS), including information about the Cornell Note-Taking Method: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/centre-for-learning-strategy-support/>.
- Consider attending a Centre for Learning Strategy Support (CLSS) Lecture on Note-Taking: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/centre-for-learning-strategy-support/>.
- You can also set up an appointment with a learning strategist through the Advising Portal: uoft.me/EngAdvisingPortal or CLNx.utoronto.ca.

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 (schedule and details can be found at uoft.me/gears)

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

Make use of the drop-in hours offered by the math teaching team in your math courses, and the hours offered at the Math Learning Centres (see Quercus for details. These drop-in hours allow you to ask questions and clarify concepts. You can also seek help from peers in a GEARS session, speak to your math TAs for extra help, and read the Math Study Skills pages (created by UTSC) here: <https://www.utsc.utoronto.ca/mslc/first-year-students>.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT - TIP SHEET FOR 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 the time management assignment resources from your APS100 Orientation to Engineering course, and consider attending a Time Management lecture workshop at the Centre for Learning Strategy Support or making use of their online resources on time management and study skills: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/department/centre-for-learning-strategy-support/>, or you can find academic help workshops in the clnx.utoronto.ca events listings.

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, *The Engineering Student Survival Guide*, 3rd edition. This book can be purchased from most major bookstores. It is also available to borrow from the Engineering and Computer Science Library. Additionally, the First Year Hub has great resources on time management and learning strategies.

The First Year Office is Here to Support You!

The list and flowcharts above outline the most common options, but we encourage you to connect with your advisor as soon as possible through the advising portal to talk about what would be best for your unique situation. We'll figure things out together.

You can always drop by FI 106, or email or call us for questions and additional support: firstyear@engineering.utoronto.ca or **416-978-4625**.

TOP TEN ENGINEERING STUDY TIPS

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 log in to Quercus and familiarize yourself with the course website.



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 learning 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.



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 the lecture, and work through them.

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

It is better to get the information you need firsthand. 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.



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 the 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 Centre for Learning Strategy Support: uoft.me/clss



TOP TEN ENGINEERING STUDY TIPS

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.



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.



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

Your brain is a little like your stomach, as 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.

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 backward 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.



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.

