

## A Guide to Succeed in Your First Six Weeks

In university, successful students plan for success. They find support early, manage their time using schedules and tools, study actively, participate during and after classes and keep a healthy school-life balance.

As part of your new university support system, the Student Success Centre academic skills team is here to help you stay on track and develop your skills. The following tips and strategies will ease your transition to McMaster.

### Week one

- Use course outlines to fill in your four-month calendar to include:
  - Exam dates
  - Major assignments
  - Personal responsibilities
- [Get to know OSCARplus](#). Register for an academic skills workshop on time management, note-taking, online learning and more on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Events. Then, you can filter the calendar by “academic skills.”
- Practice different note-taking strategies. Review the LibGuide: [Reading and Note-Taking](#).
- Find an organization system to keep your notes in order.
- Become familiar with technology like Avenue to Learn, Teams, Zooms and more. Visit [Online Learning Support](#) for online learning tools. Visit [Technology Resources for McMaster Students](#), a page we developed in partnership with University Technology Services (UTS).
- Favourite online resource pages, such as the [academic skills pages on our website](#) and [academic skills LibGuides](#) for tip sheets and workshop schedules.

### Week two

- Create a [weekly schedule](#) that includes:
  - Your class schedule
  - Dedicated time for each class to complete studying, reading, writing, researching and other tasks
  - Volunteer or work commitments
  - Time to relax and reward yourself for your accomplishments
- Make an appointment with an [academic coach](#) to develop skills in goal setting, time management, note-taking and much more. Book an appointment on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Appointments > Academic Skills.
- Use to-do lists to prioritize tasks.
- Start breaking down large assignments into manageable chunks or tasks.



### Week three

- Improve your study habits by reviewing materials and notes often and using active study strategies:
  - Use graphic organizers to make connections in content.
  - Test yourself.
  - Teach others.
  - Review the LibGuide: [Studying and Taking Exams](#).
- Start a study group and meet often.
- Discover campus resources that can support you: Faculty, Student Affairs, McMaster Students Union, McMaster Library and more.
- [Research clubs](#) or other ways to network, socialize and have fun.

### Week four

- Make an appointment with the [Writing Centre](#). They can support you with brainstorming, outlining and drafting your first assignments. Book an appointment on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Appointments > Academic Skills.
- Make a mid-term study plan:
  - Schedule time to review course material over multiple days.
  - Use the Pomodoro Technique.
  - Find out the test format.
  - Keep using active study strategies like graphic organizers.
  - Review the LibGuide: [Studying and Taking Exams](#).
- Meet with professors during their office hours. This is time specified on the syllabus that professors set aside to meet with students outside of class to discuss material and other issues. Review the LibGuide: [Communicating with Professors](#).
- Find a tutor through the [Undergrad Peer Tutoring Network](#). Tutoring costs \$18 an hour; all tutors are current McMaster students who have earned an A- or above in the course.

### Week five

- Attend academic skills workshops on studying and preparing for tests. Register on [OSCARplus](#) > Student Success Centre > Events. Then, you can filter the calendar by “academic skills.”
- Focus on a healthy school-life balance. Include self-care and time to relax and reward yourself. Visit the [Student Wellness Centre website](#) to learn more.
- Check out [McMaster Library research consultations](#) for support with assignments.



## Week six

- Reflect on your current status:
  - How are your grades?
  - How is your well-being?
  - What support do you need?
- Review your short-term goals and revise as needed. Check out the LibGuide: [Goal Setting](#).
- Do a midterm performance review.
  - Did you start studying early?
  - Did you use active study strategies?
  - Were you prepared for the test format?
- Find supporters to keep you on track: accountability buddies, academic coaches, instructors and more.
- Find ways to stay motivated:
  - Start for five minutes.
  - Envision success.
  - Find purpose in the task.
  - Review the LibGuide: [Motivation](#).
- Sign up for Academic Reboot in October to develop academic and writing skills. Registration will take place on [OSCARplus](#) several weeks before the date. Go to Student Success Centre > Events. Then, you can filter the calendar by “academic skills.”

## Need extra support? Check out these resources:

-  [SSC Academic Skills](#)
-  [Undergrad Peer Tutoring Network](#)
-  [OSCARplus](#)
-  [SSC Academic Skills LibGuides](#) (tip sheets and workshops)
-  @MacSSC on social media

