

A Guide for First-Year Students

The decisions that you make and the actions you take during your first year of university will have a major impact on the rest of your university experience. Here are some tips on how to survive your first (and subsequent) year of university:

Tip #1: Attend Orientation Sessions

The faster you learn your way around campus, the more at ease you'll feel and the better prepared you'll be when issues arise. Western's Orientation Week is designed to welcome new students to Western's campus community and orient them to its physical, social, and cultural environment. The Program is also about introducing new students to the academic community and to the educational ideals of Western University. In addition, the Orientation Program aims to provide a smooth transition for new students from their previous environment to university life, and to assist them with the adjustment to their new circumstances.

Tip #2: Time Management

University students tend to spend an average of 3.8 hours per day on their homework. You should plan to spend 2-3 hours studying for every hour of lecture. We recommend that you use an effective time management system, such as day timers, monthly schedules, weekly schedules, to-do lists, etc. Make sure that you look at the task before you decide how much time you'll need to accomplish it.

Tip #3: Avoid Procrastination

It may have been easy in high school to wait until the last minute to complete an assignment and still get a good grade, but that kind of stuff will not work for you in university. Give yourself deadlines, make a study schedule and try to stick to it.

Tip #4: Develop Good Study Habits

- Cramming is not conducive to understanding and retaining large amounts of information. Spending time on your courses each day is the best way to learn. Use the time between classes to stay on top of readings
- Work in small chunks over time rather than leaving assignments until the last minute
- Concentrate on assignments that are worth more of your final mark first

Tip #5: Attend All Your Classes

Besides learning the material by attending classes, you'll also receive vital information from the professors about what to expect on tests, changes in due dates, etc. Also, sit near the front (especially in large lectures) to avoid distractions.

Tip #6: Read Your Course Outlines

Professors spend a lot of time preparing course syllabi so that you will know exactly what is expected of you -- and when. Visit departmental websites to access course outlines.

Tip #7: Develop Essay Writing Skills

Political Science is an essay-driven discipline. Students at Western can consult the Writing Support Centre for online advice and one-on-one appointments.

Tip #8: Get Involved

Consider joining a student organization, club, or sports team. You'll make new friends, learn new skills, and feel more connected.

- Western is home to over 175 different clubs for academic, religious, cultural, philanthropic, and other pursuits, governed by the University Students' Council
- Check out student political clubs such as the Political Science Association, UWO Tories, UWO Liberals, and UWO New Democrats. The UWO Liberals are the largest campus Liberal club in Ontario, and one of the largest in the country
- One of the largest clubs on campus is the infamous Purple Spur Society, which has been ranked in Macleans Magazine as having the number one student ski trip in all of Canada

Tip #9: Make Healthy Lifestyle Choices

In order to succeed and have fun in university, it is important to prioritize sleep, healthy meals, and exercise. Keep caffeine and sugar intake within usual levels, especially during exam time.

Tip #10: Student Support Services

The [Student Development Centre](#) has a variety of services specially designed to meet the needs of undergraduate students. Students can obtain resources on key academic skills, improving test performance, memory and thinking skills, preparing for exams, and time management strategies. If you're sick, go to [Student Health Services](#), where you will find physicians, nurses and counsellors who are available for all types of health problems. If you're feeling isolated or depressed, the [Student Development Centre](#) provides professional, individual confidential psychological services free of charge to all Western students.