

Study Smart

Each course has 3-4 hours in class and ~7 hours self-study per course per week. This implies ~42-56 hours class time and a further 140 hours total study time in 14 weeks per semester. If you have 5 courses this would mean maybe 15-20 hours timetabled and 45 hours self-study per week! Plus recreation! Were you thinking about employment? It's not really possible... This explains why you need to organize and prioritize your time!

Many Ways to Study Smarter

1. Attend classes. Get involved. Sit at the front of the class. Ask and answer questions.
2. Take time to study the course requirements. Know what your instructor wants you to learn.
3. Have a focus for each study session. What are you studying? Where does it fit with other materials? How will you know if you have learned?
4. Schedule regular study periods. The most effective way to learn anything is to rehearse it regularly.
5. Be realistic. It's better to spend half an hour on each subject than to plan one hour for each one and not follow through.
6. Establish a regular study area. When you study in the same place every time, your mind will automatically kick into gear, even when you don't feel like studying.
7. Avoid Distractions. Don't give yourself a chance to be diverted. Television, phone calls and nearby conversations will all hamper your concentration.
8. Study short and often. Your brain takes in information faster and retains it better if you don't try to overload it. Four short study periods a week are more effective than two long ones.
9. Study when you are wide awake. You accomplish more when you are alert so schedule your study time accordingly.
10. Study your most difficult subjects first. You'll be in the best shape to tackle the tough stuff. You'll also feel better getting the hardest out of the way.
11. Read the textbook! Read the textbook! Read the textbook!
12. Take good notes and review them regularly. The Cornell Method of note taking works well in conjunction with the SQ3R Method of textbook reading. See a Learning Strategist for details.
13. Learn Key Concepts. No one retains everything they read or hear so be selective.
14. Categorize materials. Use pictures diagrams, charts, or lists to organize.
15. Look for the meaning. Information that means something to you is learned more quickly, remembered longer, and is easier to retrieve from long term memory.
16. Like what you learn. When you are interested in something, the details are easier to remember. If you can turn the material into a personal interest, it will be easier to retain.
17. Write out or say out loud what you think you know. If you are unable to find the words to express your knowledge, then you have gaps in your understanding that may cause problems on the exam.
18. Problem solve. Spend half of your study time working on problems. This will prepare you for exam time. If you get stuck on a homework question, go on to the next question and ask for help the next day.
19. Start assignments as soon as they are given. Your workload will be spread out, so you'll avoid being overwhelmed as you get near the deadline.
20. Reward yourself. When you complete one of the goals you set for yourself, give yourself a reward. This gives you an incentive to reach your goals and achieve success.
21. Keep on top of it. Work at your courses every day and don't let work pile up. If you find yourself falling behind, identify the problem and don't let it become unmanageable.
22. Don't worry about what you can't change. Try to put your problems aside while you're studying. Consider talking things over with a friend or making an appointment to see a Learning Strategist in the Learning Centre or a Counsellor through Counselling.

Adapted from: Fraser, L. (2003). *Making your mark* (6th ed) and
<http://www.thelearnwellprojects.com/mental-exam-metrics-three-better-than-cramming-study-tips/>