



Seven Steps to a Successful Semester

1 Evaluate Your Academic Habits and Past Performance

- What went well and why?
- What did not go well and why?
- What changes can/need to be made?

2 Set Your Goals and Objectives

- Put goals and objectives in writing (This provides focus, clarity, and direction).
- Review your goals. Are they reasonable, attainable, and specific?
- Set objectives. These are measurable tasks/activities that support you in achieving your goal. (Ex: If your goal is an A in Chemistry, objectives could be to attend every class, attend weekly tutoring, and meet with the professor during office hours)
- Hold yourself accountable and ask others to do the same.

3 Manage Your Time and Stay Organized

- Use a planner to map out your semester, making note of all assignments from your syllabi. Look weeks/months ahead, not just to next week's assignments.
- A time management grid or Excel file can be used to plot your classes and all other ongoing commitments such as work, student organization meetings, exercise and meals. Then plot your study time for each course. Treat this study time as an equally important commitment!
- Spread out your study hours and avoid exceeding 2-3 hour study sessions, making sure to allot for short breaks. Begin early to avoid last minute all-night cramming sessions!
- Avoid the "nap trap!" Use this time for reviewing and/or preparing.
- Make to-do lists and prioritize tasks.
- Break down larger assignments into small, manageable tasks. Assignments done over time can mean less stress for you!

4 Position Yourself to Succeed

- GO TO CLASS! Perfect attendance should be listed as your first objective to meet your academic goals.
- Be prepared with the tools (textbook, note books, binders, highlighters...)
- Sit as close to the front of the class as possible to help pay attention.
- Be an active learner: take notes, ask questions, and engage in class discussions.
- Review after class, as much of what you're taught begins to fade soon after class ends. Reviewing is more efficient than relearning weeks later.
- Find your "spot" on campus. Avoid studying where you sleep (your brain is already conditioned for sleep in this area).

- Avoid distractions when you study (Ex.: Turn off your smartphone) and know your triggers (Can you study with background noise or do you need complete silence?).
- Consider study partners and study groups to gain a variety of perspectives and motivation.

5 Be Aware of Your Academic Resources and TCNJ Policies/Procedures

- The Center for Student Success, Tutoring, the Career Center, Counseling & Psychological Services, Disability Support Services, and your academic departments are all here to help you make this a successful semester, so reach out early and often for support.
- Utilize your professor's office hours and meet them at least once outside of class.
- Pay attention to detail and deadlines. Understand the TCNJ calendar and all important dates.
- Navigate online resources such as PAWS, Canvas, the Undergraduate Bulletin, and departmental websites.
- Read all TCNJ emails!

6 Monitor and Evaluate Your Progress Regularly

- Self-evaluate your academic progress toward each goal.
- Monitor your grades in all of your courses using a CSS "Record of Achievement" form.
- Consider what may be impeding on your success and focus on any necessary adjustments that can be made.
- Seek help early (Ex: Utilize tutoring services consistently and well in advance for exams).
- Meet with instructors throughout the semester for feedback.

7 Build Your Momentum

- Learn how to respond to any challenges, pitfalls, or failures appropriately.
- Seek additional advice or assistance and continue to learn from others.
- Consider other alternative pathways to reach your ultimate goals.
- Maintain good physical and emotional health, get plenty of sleep and maintain a healthy diet.
- Celebrate any and all areas where you have seen improvement.
- Remember that the small accomplishments do matter in meeting your major goals.
- Don't give up. Just because you may have setbacks doesn't mean you can't get back on track.

What will YOU do this semester to succeed?