

Take frequent breaks, possibly every 30 minutes, to stay alert. If you study for 3 hours and have not learned anything, you have wasted your time.

- Be creative while studying so you can learn efficiently and effectively!

Build a college schedule that increases the chance of success

- How many classes should you take without feeling overwhelmed? Don't just think about the number of hours you'll be in class, but also consider the amount of time needed to study, remembering other activities and responsibilities in your life. Some students underestimate their time commitments, which can result in course withdrawals, low grades, and suspension.
- Should you take a reduced course load? Students who take longer to process information, have health issues, work full-time, or get easily over-whelmed may want to consider enrolling for a reduced amount of credits.
- How many hours should you work at your job? 10-15 hours a week is usually the most students can work and be a successful full-time college student. Students working full-time usually find one class per semester is a manageable course load.

More study skills information is available in the Tutoring Center at Normandale in C2120 or at:

www.normandale.edu/tutoring.

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This brochure is available in alternate formats upon request.

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Self-Advocacy

Steps you can take to help you be a successful student

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YOUR COLLEGE. YOUR COMMUNITY.

Advocates are people who know what they want and will stand up for their rights. In college, **YOU** are responsible for getting the help you need, so you must be able to advocate for yourself.

Before you can self-advocate, you need to understand your personal strengths and educational needs.

- **Strengths** – What do you do well?
- **Areas to improve** - What are the academic skills that you need to improve to be successful?
- **Interests** – What are the career areas you would like to explore?
- **Study skills** – What study strategies have you implemented in the past that helped you learn and retain information?

As your own self-advocate, you will need to explain your educational needs based on your disability in a way that other people will understand. What educational needs do you have that you should fully understand before speaking with an instructor?

Documentation

Make sure you have the documentation of your disability to assist in the process of receiving college accommodations. This may include high school special education records (last IEP and last 3-year evaluation), or a report from a licensed psychologist, disability specialist or medical doctor.

I have a copy of my personal disability documentation . YES NO **

**** If no, this should be one of your immediate priorities.**

Take Action

A skill needed to reach your goals in college is being able to talk with your instructors when you have a question or need. It may seem intimidating to speak with college faculty, so here are some strategies to prepare for a meeting with them:

- Visit each instructor the first week of each semester. This will “break the ice” and give you confidence for future discussions.
- Write some notes as a conversation guideline and practice what you want to say before visiting your instructor.
- Email the instructor to confirm that s/he will be available during an office hour. Faculty hours are noted in the course syllabus and are posted next to each faculty office.
- It is your choice whether or not to disclose your disability when speaking with an instructor, but be prepared to discuss your educational needs and concerns based on your disability in your discussions with them.
- Refer the instructor to the disability services staff if they need more information about your individual accommodations.
- Be confident!

Build the Skills Needed for College

Successful students have learned time management, organization, and study skills strategies before entering college:

Use an organization tool such as a paper or electronic planner, calendar, or phone.

Include all your activities in the tool:

- When you are in **class**
- When you **work** or have **fun** activities
- When you are going to **study** – include what you are going to study (this helps to

break down assignments), how long, and where. Blocking off time when you will study is like making an appointment with yourself. This decreases procrastination and is a reminder of homework due.

- Where you study is also important, whether it be a quiet place on campus, a coffee shop, or your own home. If you study at home, make sure the area is neat and organized to minimize distractions.
- Look at your organizer at the beginning of each week. **Think** about assignments due for the week and beyond so you can plan your time and activities accordingly.
- Reading: Look at the end of the chapter for key ideas and vocabulary, outline the chapter or write post-it notes on each column of a book, ask yourself questions based on the chapter questions. Read over several sittings to improve comprehension.
- Writing: Use an outline or map to organize your thoughts. Think about your paper early and write down or audio record every idea to build on later because good writing takes time. See your instructor or a tutor if you do not understand the assignment, cannot develop a topic or are frustrated with your progress.
- Use memorization techniques consistently such as flashcards, songs, pictures, mnemonics, formulas, or principles.
- Use a white noise maker or music to minimize distractions while studying.
- Try reading or memorizing while on a stationary bike or while doing a physical activity that can be done safely while studying. For some, this decreases the time it takes to learn new information.