

High School to College: Maximizing Success in UNC Classes

Some of the biggest changes from high school to college are the classes. You'll likely find the classes to be less structured, longer, and require increased work demands like regular reading and studying. Also, a large portion of your grade is often decided by a few exams or big assignments (e.g., papers and group projects), so it's important to plan carefully.

Here some tips, tools, and strategies to optimize your performance in class.

1) Plan a realistic and effective schedule.

- When picking your courses, plan a schedule that gives you the sleep you need, and capitalizes on your most effective modes of productivity.
 - If you aren't alert first thing in the morning, consider avoiding early morning classes.
 - Think about when you are most alert and productive, and schedule courses accordingly if possible. If you take medication that affects your attention, you may also want to plan for that.
 - Remember your other obligations (e.g., work, study time, meals, extracurriculars).
 - Plan for the day and the week. Consider how your schedule may look and feel for each day, and also across the entire week.
- You can practice drawing out your schedules (<https://learningcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>)

2) Practice walking through your schedule before classes begin.

- Use a campus map (<https://gismaps.unc.edu/campusmap/>) to help you find all of your classes and familiarize yourself with the campus.
 - A practice walk-through will help you plan how long it takes to get to and from classes. Time yourself to get an accurate estimate of length of time needed to travel between different points on campus.
 - This practice can also improve punctuality and help you be prepared for your courses (e.g., knowing what you need to bring with you when you leave your dorm – will you be returning before your next class or do you need to bring all materials?)

3) Attend all classes!

- Even if there is no attendance policy, attending your classes is beneficial because of the higher likelihood of performing well
 - Increases exposure to content that helps with learning/recall
 - Allows for opportunities to synthesize course content to improve comprehension
 - Supports an understanding of course assignments and exams
 - Provides opportunities to interact with professors and classmates
 - Demonstrates interest and dedication to the professor
 - Maintains a consistent schedule, which is critical for keeping helpful routines!



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4) Planning your time, tracking assignments, and completing assignments.

- Make an appointment with an Academic Coach to help with this process!
- Keep a calendar and make to-do lists
 - You can also use the electronic calendar on your computer or phone, or try out a hardcopy calendar/planner.
 - Be sure to PRACTICE using your calendar/planner before arriving on campus so it becomes an easy habit/routine to stick to.
- Use technology such as the reminder or alarm function on your phone/computer for even the little things that need to be done so you can stay on top of your to-do list.
- Use productivity and organization apps. Here are a few we suggest
- Complete assignments in chunks instead of all at once.
 - This helps improve the quality of the assignment, minimize stress, and keep your schedule manageable.
- Get started on assignments right away so they don't pile up and catch you by surprise.
 - First, use the Semester Calendar to identify when your long-term assignments are due
 - Next, identify mini-deadlines, or check points, for these assignments.
 - Then, use a weekly planner to outline the specific steps/tasks you will complete (and when), so you can stay track.

5) Get to know the UNC websites linked to your classes

- Sakai is the website used by UNC where you can find all of the information you may need about your classes (assignments, grades, syllabus, etc.)
 - Every professors makes their own Sakai site for their class, so check how each course page is structured
 - Some professors use additional websites for further resources or practice, so be sure to familiarize yourself with these too!



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