

UNIVERSITY READINESS: UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN HIGH SCHOOL AND UNIVERSITY

FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL	CHOOSING RESPONSIBLY IN COLLEGE
High school is <i>mandatory</i> and usually <i>free</i> .	College is <i>voluntary</i> and <i>expensive</i> .
Your time is structured by others.	You manage your own time.
You need permission to participate in extracurricular activities	You must decide whether to participate in co-curricular activities.
You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.	<i>You</i> must balance your responsibilities and set priorities. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before.
Each day you proceed from one class directly to another, spending 6 hours each day--30 hours a week--in class.	You often have hours between classes; class times vary throughout the day and evening and you spend only 12 to 15 hours each week in class (plus labs).
Most of your classes are arranged for you.	You arrange your own schedule in consultation with your adviser. Schedules tend to <i>look</i> lighter than they really are.
You are not responsible for knowing what it takes to graduate.	Graduation requirements are complex, and differ from year to year. You are expected to know the rules and how they apply to you.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.	Guiding principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as for the consequences of your decisions.
GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES	SUCCEEDING IN UNIVERSITY CLASSES
High school classes often meet daily.	University classes meet 3 hours in the week – once for three hours, twice for an hour and a half, or three one-hour lectures.
Classes generally have no more than 30 students.	First-year classes are usually larger with 30-100 plus students.
You may study outside class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.	Successful students study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class (per course!).

You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough.	You need to review class notes and text material regularly.
You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.	You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class.
Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.	Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material; lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption that you've already done so.
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	COLLEGE PROFESSORS
Teachers check your completed homework.	Professors may not always directly assign homework or check completed homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests.
Teachers remind you of your incomplete work.	Professors do not generally remind you of incomplete work. Successful students monitor their own performance.
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance.	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.
Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class.	Professors expect and want you to attend their scheduled office hours.
Teachers have been trained in teaching methods to assist in imparting knowledge to students.	Professors have been trained as experts in their particular areas of research.
Teachers provide you with information you missed when you were absent.	Professors expect you to get from classmates any notes from classes you missed.
Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.	Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify the important points in your notes. When professors write on the board, it may be to amplify the lecture, not to summarize it. Successful students learn to take good notes.
Teachers present material to help you understand the material in the textbook.	Professors may not follow the textbook. They may give illustrations, provide background information, or discuss research about the topic you are studying but will expect <i>you</i> to

	relate the classes to the textbook readings.
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates.	Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded.
Teachers carefully monitor class attendance.	Successful students attend all classes although attendance is not usually taken.
High school is a teaching environment in which you acquire facts and skills.	University is a learning environment in which you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.
TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL	TESTS IN UNIVERSITY
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material.	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You, not the professor, need to organize the material to prepare for the test. A particular course may have only 2 or 3 tests in a semester.
Makeup tests are often available.	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them with documentation of an illness or unusual circumstances.
Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflict with school events.	Professors in different courses usually schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.
Teachers frequently conduct review sessions, pointing out the most important concepts.	Professors rarely offer review sessions, and when they do, they expect you to be an active participant who comes prepared with questions.
Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown how to solve.	Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new kinds of problems.
GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL	GRADES IN COLLEGE
Grades are given for most assigned work.	Grades may not be provided for all assigned

	work.
Consistently good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test grades are low.	Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade.
Extra credit projects are often available to help you raise your grade.	Extra credit projects are rare.
Initial test grades, especially when they are low, may not have an adverse effect on your final grade.	Watch out for your <i>first</i> tests. These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected--but they also may account for a substantial part of your course grade. You may be shocked when you get your grades.
You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D or higher.	You need a 2.0 or C average to graduate and many courses have specific higher grade requirements in order to proceed, especially in business courses.
<i>Effort counts.</i> Courses are usually structured to reward a "good effort."	<i>Results count.</i> Effort does not substitute for results in the grading process.

HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION TO UNIVERSITY

- Take control of your own education: think of yourself as a scholar and an active participant in your education.
- Get to know your professors – they are your single greatest resource.
- Be assertive. Create your own support systems, and seek help when you realize you may need it.
- Take advantage of the Academic Skills Centre; go to a workshop and make an individual appointment. Learn about the resources available to you.
- Take control of your time. Plan ahead to prioritize academic obligations and make room for everything else in your life. Time management workshops are held early in September!
- Seek the guidance of an academic advisor to make sure you are satisfying degree and program requirements.
- Make thoughtful decisions. Don't take just any course to satisfy a requirement (remember you usually have options), and don't drop any course too quickly (consult the Voluntary Withdrawal deadline).
- Be realistic – 4 or 5 courses per semester is a full-time job.
- Think beyond the moment – set goals for the semester, the year, your career.