

Academic Advising

PLANNING FOR ACADEMIC STUDENT SUCCESS

YOUR GUIDE TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS



IN THIS PUBLICATION:

- ☐ Academic progress
- ☐ The four steps to academic success
- ☐ Academic advice

For Students in Undergraduate Programs

This workbook is designed to help promote your academic success. Please take some time to review the information and apply it to your particular situation. Throughout the course of your degree, you will be faced with challenging decisions and questions; the purpose of this guide is to help you navigate your way through these challenges.

At Nipissing, we are committed to providing you with the resources and support needed to achieve your academic goals. Be sure to seek the resources available to you throughout Nipissing University. They will work to provide you with the clarification you need and point you in the right direction.

This workbook supplements the Academic Calendar with additional advice and information relevant to undergraduate students. You must still familiarize yourself with the information published in the Academic Calendar as it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure you meet the requirements of your program.

You are always encouraged to visit an Academic Advisor with any questions about your academic program. So, while we are always here to help you with any academic situation, the onus is ultimately on you to take control of your academic career. Seek advice early and often whenever you need it: we are here to help you.

Sincerely,

Academic Advising

TABLE OF CONTENTS

iii

ACADEMIC PROGRESS

TRACKING YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRESS	1
ACADEMIC STANDING	1
ACADEMIC DIFFICULTY	2
MEDICAL DIFFICULTIES	3
PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES	3
ACADEMIC SUCCESS	3

THE FOUR STEPS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS

ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY	4
KNOW YOUR SITUATION	4
ACCESS CAMPUS RESOURCES	9
TAKE ACTION	10

ACADEMIC ADVICE

ACADEMIC ADVISING	12
READING THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR	13
ADDITIONAL GOALS	14
PLANNING FOR YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM	14



ACADEMIC PROGRESS

"Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new."
-- Albert Einstein

TRACKING YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRESS

In January of each year, the Academic Advising Office compiles a list of students who may be at academic risk. We contact any student on probation who has a grade below 60% and any student in good academic standing who has two grades below 60%. By contacting you, we are simply informing you of your academic progress based on your first-semester final grades.

If your name appears on the list, it is a good indication that you may be experiencing moderate-to-significant difficulties in some of your classes and you should seriously consider addressing the issues that are preventing your success.

You will be contacted if your name appears on the list to discuss the steps you can take to turn your situation around. Our goal is not to single you out or lecture you about your performance during the past semester; rather, we want to see you do well in your classes and we will make every effort to work with you to achieve your academic goals.

We strongly encourage you to book a Planning for Academic Student Success (PASS) appointment with an Academic Advisor. This appointment is intended to help you better understand your progression requirements, as well as options and resources that are available to you. The difficulties will not solve themselves; the decision to improve ultimately rests with you. We are here to help you, but you must take an active role in improving your situation.

If you are not contacted, but feel that you are experiencing academic difficulties in your classes, you are also encouraged to take advantage of the services we offer.

ACADEMIC STANDING

It is important for students to understand the academic standing requirements for their degree program. Academic standing regulations may be found in your Academic Calendar. The current Academic Calendar may be found on-line at: www.nipissingu.ca/calendar. Prior versions of the Academic Calendar may be found on-line at: www.nipissingu.ca/calendar/Pages/Calendar-Archive.

Your Academic Standing is determined by the Registrar's Office. Your Academic Standing determines which degree you will be allowed to pursue and how many credits you will be able to enroll in.

ACADEMIC DIFFICULTY

Be proactive in your academic career to ensure success. From the beginning of a course be sure you are understanding the material being covered. To consider how you are doing academically, ask yourself these questions:

YES	NO	Do I understand the course syllabus?
YES	NO	Am I able to keep up-to-date with the course readings and assignments?
YES	NO	Do I understand the readings?
YES	NO	Do I see the relationship between the readings and the in-class content?
YES	NO	Do I understand the questions that other students ask in class?
YES	NO	Do I leave class feeling that I have understood most of the concepts presented?
YES	NO	Do I understand how to do the assignments?
YES	NO	Have I completed the assignments on time?
YES	NO	Am I passing most of my assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.?

If you answered 'no' to any of these questions, you are probably experiencing academic difficulties. You should address these difficulties with the instructor whom you have the most contact with in your course (professor, seminar leader, lab instructor, etc).

These people are in the best position to help you make a realistic assessment of your ability to succeed in their class. If you are not able to see your professors during their scheduled office hours, make an appointment to see them at a mutually agreeable time. If you are unsure about how to raise the issue with a professor, consult an Academic Advisor.

MEDICAL DIFFICULTIES

If a medical issue is interfering with your ability to succeed in a course, you must contact your professor as soon as possible. You must discuss with him/her whether any alternative options are available to you (ex. hand in an assignment late, take a test at a different time, etc.).

Please note that even if alternative arrangements are made, you must still meet the academic expectations of your courses.

PERSONAL DIFFICULTIES

Some problems are of a personal or private nature. If a personal concern is interfering with your ability to focus on your studies and you are worried about your ability to complete your assignments, you may want to contact a personal counselor in the Office of Student Development and Services.

Counselors provide a free, confidential atmosphere in which you can discuss your concerns. For an appointment, please see the Secretary for Student Counselling Services in Room B210 or call 705.474.3450, ext. 4507.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Sometimes it is difficult to pinpoint why you are experiencing academic difficulties but the first step to academic success is to take responsibility. On the following pages please work through THE FOUR STEPS TO ACADEMIC SUCCESS.

STEP ONE: ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY

If you are experiencing difficulties, do not wait until it is too late to turn things around. There are numerous on-campus resources available to help you with almost any difficulties you may be experiencing. You must take action if you want to address your situation. Nobody can force you to do anything; you must be honest with yourself and take whatever action is necessary to remedy your difficulties.

STEP 2: KNOW YOUR SITUATION

You may be worried that you will receive a low mark in one of your classes and you are worried that the low mark will adversely affect your program and/or overall average. If you find yourself in this situation, it is an excellent idea to figure out your grades to get a sense of where you will stand.

GRADE CALCULATOR

In order to calculate your grade in a course, you will need to know how the grade is broken down.

For example, the fictitious course, ABCD 1005 may have the following breakdown:

Participation	15%
Short Essay	15%
Mid-Term Test	15%
Research Essay	25%
Final Exam	30%
Total	100%

To illustrate this breakdown of marks an example has been provided on the next page. In this scenario, a student received a participation grade of 10 out of the possible 15 marks. She received 11 of the possible 15 marks available for the short essay. The class test was evaluated out of 50 and the student earned 35 marks. The research essay was evaluated out of 100 and the student earned a 65%. The final exam was worth 30% of the course grade and the student earned a mark of 72%.

GRADE CALCULATOR

Use the model below to calculate your average in any of your classes. If you have yet to complete a few assignments, you can project what you will receive on any given assignment to get an idea of your final grade in a class.

ABCD 1005	Partici- pation	Short Essay	Mid-Term Test	Research Essay	Final Exam	Final Mark
Value	15%	15%	15%	25%	30%	100%
Grade	10	11	35/50	65/100	72/100	
	10	11	$\frac{35}{50} = 0.7$	$\frac{65}{100} = 0.65$	$\frac{72}{100} = 0.72$	
	10	11	$0.7 \times 15 = 10.5$	$0.65 \times 25 = 16.25$	$0.72 \times 30 = 21.6$	
	10+	11+	10.5+	16.25+	21.6	=69%

CALCULATING AN OVERALL AVERAGE

Nipissing University calculates averages using a weighted-average. Please refer to the example on the following page which demonstrates how to calculate your overall average. A worksheet is also provided which you may use to calculate your average here at Nipissing. Your overall average is calculated using the marks from all your courses.

CALCULATING A PROGRAM AVERAGE

Program averages will be based on the calculation of all attempted credits used to fulfill program requirements, as well as all failed credits in a program. For example, the program average for an Honours Specialization student in Psychology, will be calculated on only the Psychology courses presented in the Honours Specialization as well as all failed credits for the Honours Specialization in Psychology .

EXAMPLES:

Calculating an Overall Average: Program of Study — Psychology

Course	Grade		Credit Value		
ENSC 1005 FW001	61	X	6	=	366
ACAD 1501 WI002	35* (40)	X	(3)	=	120
HIST 1405 FW001	70	X	6	=	420
MATH 1036 FA001	55	X	3	=	165
MATH 1037 WI001	59	X	3	=	177
MATH 2036 FA001	45**	X	(3)	=	135
RLCT 1025 FW003	73	X	6	=	438
ENGL 2006 WI001	60	X	3	=	180
PSYC 1106 FA002	60	X	3	=	180
PSYC 1107 WI001	58**	X	(0)	=	0
PSYC 1107 WI001	72	X	3	=	216
PSYC 2006 FA001	75	X	3	=	225
PSYC 2007 WI002	70	X	3	=	210
PSYC 2126 FA002	69	X	3	=	207
PSYC 2127 WI001	73	X	3	=	219
SOCI 1016 FA001	69	X	3	=	207
PSYC 2616 WI002	71	X	3	=	213
Totals			57	3678	Weighted Average
(Divide by number of credits earned) ÷				57	= 64.53

Calculating a Program Average: Program of Study — Psychology

Course	Grade		Credit Value		
PSYC 1106 FA002	60	X	3	=	180
PSYC 1107 WI001	58**	X	(0)	=	0
PSYC 1107 WI001	72	X	3	=	216
PSYC 2006 FA001	75	X	3	=	225
PSYC 2007 WI002	70	X	3	=	210
PSYC 2126 FA002	69	X	3	=	207
PSYC 2127 WI001	73	X	3	=	219
PSYC 2616 WI002	71	X	3	=	213
Totals			21	1470	Weighted Average
(Divide by number of credits earned)				÷	21
				=	70

Notes for calculating a Nipissing average

* Final grades below 40% will be included in average calculations as 40%. Final grades from 40% to 49% will be included in average calculations as the actual grade assigned.

** Credits attempted refers to all courses in which a grade has been received. All courses attempted will be used in the calculation of a Nipissing average with the exception of those courses that are re-taken (in these cases, the higher grade obtained will be used in the calculation of an average).

In some subjects there are minimum grade requirements that must be met. Please check the minimum grade requirements for your program(s).

CALCULATING A NIPISSING AVERAGE (WORKSHEET)

	Course	%		Credit Value		
	ENSC 1005 FW001	61	X	6	=	366
1			X		=	
2			X		=	
3			X		=	
4			X		=	
5			X		=	
6			X		=	
7			X		=	
8			X		=	
9			X		=	
10			X		=	
11			X		=	
12			X		=	
13			X		=	
14			X		=	
15			X		=	
16			X		=	
17			X		=	
18			X		=	
19			X		=	
20			X		=	
	Totals					
			Divide by number of credits earned ÷			
			Weighted Average=			%

STEP 3: ACCESS CAMPUS RESOURCES

Review the following list of resources and assess which resources may help you achieve academic success. To learn more about a particular resource or to book an appointment, call 705-474-3450 and the appropriate extension or visit the office.

Academic Advising (Undergraduate Advising) A207 ext. 4358

- Course Planning
- Degree Requirements
- Course Overloads
- Distance Learning Courses
- Academic Policies and Procedures
- Changing Your Program
- Withdrawing

Academic Success Program B210 ext. 4459

- A program designed to build academic motivation and success strategies by developing an individualized academic success plan with an upper-year Academic Success Program Assistant and a Student Learning Coordinator.

Campus Health Centre B205 ext. 5261

- Bodily Health
- Referrals

Counselling Services B210 ext. 4507

- Relationship Assistance
- Mental Health

Library Services L102 ext. 4223

- Research Skills
- RefWorks/RefShare
- Electronic and Print Resources

Student Accessibility Services B210 ext. 4362

- Adaptive Technology
- Learning Strategies
- Identifying a Learning Disability
- Alternative Exams

CAMPUS RESOURCES CONTINUED

Student Financial Services

F216 ext. 4419

- Sources of Alternative Funding
- Budgeting
- Fees
- Installment Plans

Transition Programs

B210 ext. 4459

- Academic Skills Drop-In Centre
- Peer Tutoring
- One-on-One and Small Group Appointments for Academic and Life Skill Development, Writing, Math, and Science
- Student Success Workshops and Group Learning Opportunities
- Long Nights Against Procrastination
- Orientation and Transition Programs (from New Student Orientation to Laker Orientation and Laker Reorientation)
- Gen 1: First in the Family and the Mature/Transfer Student Network
- Crown Ward Student Support

STEP FOUR: TAKE ACTION

The next step is completely up to you. You can opt to do nothing or you can take the initiative. Here are some suggestions:

1. Meet with the campus resources that may assist you in addressing the source(s) of difficulty.
2. Review your course material and discuss your progress with your professors/seminar leaders/lab instructors.
3. Reassess your course load and make any necessary adjustments.
4. Arrange for a tutor.
5. Attend a Student Success Workshop.
6. Arrange a study support group with your classmates.

***If you are unsure where to start, book a PASS appointment with an Academic Advisor.**

Use this page to record your priority items and your appointments with the specific campus resources which may be able to help you. It is up to you to take the initiative as you plan for your academic success.

Priority 1:

Resource(s):

Appointment Date and Time:

Priority 2:

Resource(s):

Appointment Date and Time:

Priority 3:

Resource(s):

Appointment Date and Time:

ACADEMIC ADVISING (UNDERGRADUATE)

As part of our student-focused approach to academics, you have the benefit of having regular contact with an Academic Advisor - someone who can help you determine and develop strategies to achieve your academic potential and academic goals. An advisor is able to answer any questions you may have on the academic structure of undergraduate degrees and programs at Nipissing as well as the policies and regulations associated with them.

In a one-on-one setting, you are able to discuss your academic goals and plan for the best way to achieve them with an individual who is knowledgeable about Nipissing University policies and regulations. We strongly recommend that you meet with an Academic Advisor on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track to meet your degree requirements and to address any academic questions or concerns you may have.

TOP 10 REASONS TO SEE AN ACADEMIC ADVISOR

1. To develop an academic plan for your undergraduate studies;
2. To verify that you are satisfying your degree and program requirements;
3. To explore the requirements for an Honours Specialization, Specialization, Major, Minor, stream, Concurrent Education etc.
4. To clarify academic regulations, policies, and procedures;
5. To get help exploring adjustments to your course schedule;
6. To discover what sources of assistance are available if you are experiencing academic difficulties;
7. To explore and plan for graduate studies or admission into the Schulich School of Education;
8. To get approval to take courses from another Canadian university or for course overloads;
9. To obtain transfer credits for courses taken on international exchange;
10. To figure out what you want to do with your academic career!

READING THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with the information outlined in the Academic Calendar. Please make frequent reference to your Academic Calendar for information about program requirements, course descriptions, degree requirements, university regulations and university policies. This information is important when planning your academic program. The current Academic Calendar may be found on-line at: www.nipissingu.ca/calendar/. Prior versions of the Academic Calendar may be found on-line at: www.nipissingu.ca/calendar/Pages/Calendar-Archive.

BE FAMILIAR WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF YOUR DEGREE PROGRAM

Each degree has different core requirements. You will need to be familiar with the requirements of your particular degree program in order to be successful. Simply stated, for an honours degree, you will need to accumulate a total of 120 credits. For a four-year degree, you will need to accumulate a total of 120 credits. For a three-year degree, you will need to accumulate 90 credits. In each case ensuring those credits conform to all the particular rules of your degree. Those numbers may seem rather large, but you will be surprised how quickly you will satisfy those requirements.

When you plan your degree (i.e., Bachelor of Arts), you must understand the program requirements of your area of study (i.e., History). Consult the Academic Calendar or see an Academic Advisor if you are unsure of the requirements.

In addition, you must be aware that most degrees require you to satisfy breadth requirements. For most students, that means you will have to take at least six credits of study in Humanities, six credits in Social Science/Professional Studies, and six credits in Science. Be sure to check the breadth requirements of your individual program and plan to include those courses in your degree program.

Also, please note that all degrees place limits on the maximum number of first-year courses. The maximum allowable number varies depending on the degree. Be sure to recognize the limit prescribed by your degree; you may take more first-year courses, but only the maximum allowable number will count towards your degree.

In some degree programs there is a limit on the number of courses you may take in a single discipline (courses with the same four letter prefix ex. SOCI). In most four-year programs it is a maximum of 84 credits and in most three year programs it is 54 credits. Ensure that you check if your degree has a limit and that you adhere to it.

Again we remind you that this workbook does not serve as a substitute for the Academic Calendar; you must still familiarize yourself with the information published in the Calendar because it is ultimately your responsibility to ensure that you meet the requirements of your program. This workbook supplements the Academic Calendar with additional advice and information of relevance to all undergraduate students.

DECIDE ON ANY ADDITIONAL GOALS

In most degree programs, you may also choose to pursue additional goals while completing your degree. In most degrees, there is room for a number of electives (courses taken outside your primary area of study).

Your electives may be used to pursue courses of interest to you such as certificates, minors, professional designations, Concurrent Education requirements, streams, teaching subjects, etc.

You do not have to pursue any of these additional goals if you do not wish. However, if you do, you should make an academic plan as early as possible so that you will be able to accumulate all of the required credits.

Below are some questions that you should consider while planning for your academic career:

- Do I plan to obtain an honours degree, a four-year degree or a three-year general degree?
- Do I plan to obtain any certificates or professional designations?
- Do I plan to pursue a minor?
- Do I plan to proceed to a professional program, graduate school, or post-degree diploma program?

PLANNING FOR YOUR ACADEMIC PROGRAM

One of the most important issues in planning your degree is course selection. You should ensure there is a good mix of courses that interest and excite you along with those courses that will fulfill core requirements of your degree. Keep in mind that in each fall/winter session that you are limited to taking 30 credits. Your course load must also be balanced evenly between your fall and winter semesters.

The current degree structure dictates a minimum number of courses to be completed in each area of study. If you are completing an Honours Specialization, you will complete 60 credits in your area of study. If you are completing a Specialization, you will complete 54 credits in your area of study. If you are completing a Major, you will complete 36 credits in your area of study.

The chart on the following page is a year by year breakdown of the courses required for a Bachelor of Arts degree with an Honours Specialization in Psychology. Please note that this is just an example of a possible way to plan an Honours Specialization in Psychology. You may use the same format to plan your degree requirements.

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
6 credits: PSYC 1106 and PSYC 1107	6 credits: PSYC 2126 and PSYC 2127	3 credits: PSYC 3356	12 credits: PSYC 4005 PSYC 4105 or PSYC 4215
6 credits of Science	12 credits of Upper Level PSYC	15 credits of Upper Level PSYC	6 credits Upper Level PSYC
6 credits of Humanities	12 credits of Electives	12 credits of Electives	12 credits of Electives

Use the following “My Course Plan” chart to layout a long-range plan for your program and goals. Ensure that you are meeting any prerequisite requirements as you move from year to year.

[illegible]

CONCURRENT EDUCATION

Concurrent Education is applicable to all honours undergraduate programs with the exception of the BScN and the BSW.

Students who are admitted to a degree program with Concurrent Education, and who complete their Nipissing Honours degree, including the Concurrent Education specific courses, by the end of April, will transition into Years 5 and 6 of the Bachelor of Education professional years. All courses required for the Honours undergraduate degree and/or teachable subject requirements must be completed by May 1 of the year for which the BEd Year 5 transition is being made.

Students must comply with the requirements for their degree program and include specific Concurrent Education courses. To review the specific courses required for Concurrent Education please consult the Academic Calendar (academiccalendar.nipissingu.ca/~Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=2&topicgroupid=1030).

PLANNING FOR NEXT YEAR

Use the chart on the next page to list the courses that you are required to take and those courses that you would like to take. It is also a good idea to make a list of alternatives (for both courses and labs/seminars) in case some courses/labs are not available when you register.

Remember in each fall/winter session (September-April), you are limited to taking 30 credits.

Required Courses (Core)		General Interest Courses (Electives)		Alternatives (If first choices are unavailable)	
<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Winter</i>

Before registering for classes, take into consideration the following:

YES	NO	Are you taking the prerequisite course(s) first?
YES	NO	Are you willing or able to study adequately for each course?
YES	NO	Are you aware of the required courses?
YES	NO	Are you aware of your Group, Minor or Stream requirements?
YES	NO	Are your reading, writing and verbal skills adequate?
YES	NO	Are you following the appropriate degree?
YES	NO	Have you attempted to complete a long term plan?
YES	NO	Do you have alternate courses in mind if the course you were planning to take is full or not offered?

If you answered “NO,” to any of the above questions, it is a good sign that you should book an appointment with an Academic Advisor.

LONG RANGE PLANNING

Students are able to download a long range degree planner at the following link:
www.nipissingu.ca/departments/academic-advising/Pages/Student-Resources.aspx

Each sheet is tailored for degree options at Nipissing, so be sure to select the correct one based on degree type and program option.

If you have any questions, make an appointment with an Academic Advisor.

At Academic Advising, our goals include assisting students in making informed and responsible decisions regarding their academic programs, seeing the value in learning, setting priorities and making realistic plans. We do so by providing accurate information about the university, its programs, policies, procedures and resources.

Prepared By:

Academic Advising

100 College Drive, Box 5002,

North Bay, ON, P1B 8L7

tel: 705.474.3450 ext. 4358 • fax: 705.474.6773



TTY/Teletypewriter users: 705.474.8797

advising@nipissingu.ca

www.nipissingu.ca/academicadvising

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