

## 6 Essential Skills for Your Academic Career at UTM

### What is Academic Integrity?

Academic Integrity is a commitment, even when we are tempted or challenged, to 6 fundamental values:

1. Honesty
2. Trust
3. Fairness
4. Respect
5. Responsibility
6. Courage

These values allow us to take ownership of our learning and engage in opportunities to develop as students and as individuals.

As a UTM student, you're a part of our learning community and we all share a commitment to academic integrity.

### What does Academic Integrity Look Like?

For you, it can mean providing proper citations to acknowledge other people's work, completing your independent work independently, and doing your fair share in a group project.

These may seem like obvious and easy things to do, but sometimes competing priorities can make it hard to remember and uphold your responsibilities.

### What is the Opposite of Academic Integrity?

When you behave in ways that go against academic integrity, you are engaging in academic misconduct and you could be charged with an academic offense.

#### **Academic Misconduct = Cheating**

Sometimes people cheat by accident. They didn't understand the rules, they were short on time, or they were overwhelmed by the pressure to succeed. **Whatever the reason, cheating is never acceptable.**

At UTM, there are severe consequences for academic misconduct that can range from earning a 0 on the assignment to expulsion.

### What Can You Do to Uphold Academic Integrity?

By reading this booklet, you're taking steps to understand academic integrity and ensure that your learning is fair and honest. This booklet will help you develop a variety of skills and access campus resources to support your academic career.

## Pop Quiz! What do you already know about Academic Integrity?

Try these questions on academic integrity. Find the answers to these questions in the next section.

1. Martin is having difficulty with his CHM110 course. He decides to pay for a tutor to teach him the content and help him with his assignments. Could Martin be committing an academic offence?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
  - c. It depends on the type of tutoring Martin receives
2. Laura is taking MAT133 and her friends are taking MAT134. Laura's MAT133 syllabus says that calculators are authorized aids. Her friends tell her that no calculators are allowed for math classes. Is Laura allowed to bring a calculator for her tests?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
3. Muhammad wants to make sure that his iPhone is safe during his test. He keeps his device in his pocket during the test, but doesn't use it. Is Muhammad committing an academic offence?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
4. Hafsa gets a doctor's note to excuse her absence from an exam. She notices that the doctor spelled her name incorrectly. She fixes the spelling and hands in the new note. Is Hafsa committing an academic offence?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No
5. Darya's essay contains only her own writing and a few quotes. There are no in-text citations, but all her sources are cited in her bibliography. Is Darya committing an academic offence?
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

## Pop Quiz! Answers

1. **It depends on the type of tutoring Martin receives:** Tutoring is allowed if Martin's tutor does not use the professor's content or discuss Martin's assignments. A tutor can review the textbook and course readings with Martin.

Paying for a tutor is your choice. However, be aware that there are a variety of on-campus resources that you can use. If you need support with the course content or clarifying assignment instructions, talk to your professor. You can also get support at the RGASC to develop your study skills. The RGASC also runs the Facilitated Study Group (FSG) program for a variety of courses. FSGs won't teach you the course content, but you will learn the skills to be successful in the course from upper year students.

2. **Yes:** If Laura's course syllabus says calculators are an authorized aid, she can use them.

Make sure that you always check your course syllabus to review your professor's expectations. Courses can change from professor to professor and year to year.

3. **Yes:** iPhones and other smart devices (including but not limited to cell phones and SMART watches) are not permitted in exams. Even though Muhammad didn't use his device, just having it on his person is an offence.
4. **Yes:** Hafsa committed forgery by changing the doctor's note. If she needed any modifications (name change, date change, etc.) to the note, she should ask the person who made the note.
5. **Yes:** Darya needs to include embedded citations in her work. As is, she could be charged with plagiarism for the lack of proper citations in her essay.

If you need help with creating citations and conducting research, you can visit the UTM Library. As well, you can book an appointment with the RGASC to get feedback on your writing.

## How to Send an e-mail to Your Professor

### Before you write your email

1. Check your professor's e-mail policy
2. Find the answer to your question on the course syllabus and Quercus
3. Use your mail.utoronto.ca email

### The Typical e-mail

General Format:

1. Include your course code in the Subject
2. Address your professors by name.  
Don't know what to call them? Use "Professor [last name]."
3. Introduce yourself
4. Ask your question. Be brief
5. End your e-mail by signing off. Include your name as it appears on ACORN, your preferred name, and your student number.

Example:

**Subject:** BIO100 Alternate Research Assignment

Hi Professor Jackson,

I'm in your BIO100 course.

Would you be able to meet to discuss the alternate research assignment? I am available on Mondays and Thursdays after 3 PM.

Thank you,  
Terry Lee

Student Number 1234567890

### Ready to Send?

Proofread your email.

Don't panic if your professors don't reply right away. Check their e-mail policy to gauge when they will reply.

## 3 Time Management Tips to Improve Your Productivity

Your commitments change, but the amount of time you have doesn't. Try these 3 tips to get your started on effectively managing your time.

### 1. Prioritize Your Tasks

You have a lot of things to do, but are they all priorities? Prioritizing your tasks based on importance and urgency helps you determine a logical order to tackle them.

#### Priority Levels

Determine if your task is important or urgent.

Is it **Important**?

Will you face consequences if you don't complete the task?

Is it **Urgent**?

Is there a deadline? Do you need to do it now?

Complete your tasks in this order:

Priority Level	Meaning	Example
1	Important and Urgent	30% lab due in 2 days
2	Important and Not Urgent	Exploring career pathways
3	Not Important and Urgent	Answering an e-mail you don't care about
4	Not Important and Not Urgent	Surfing the internet to pass time

### 2. Break Down Tasks into Smaller Pieces

Even if your Professor doesn't tell you, there are many steps to producing an A grade assignment.

For example, writing an essay doesn't just involve writing. It also involves research, planning, and editing.

### 3. Plan with Action Words

Use specific action words when you plan your tasks.

“Study for Test” is ineffective because you won't know what you need to do.

Try something like “Re-read Chapter 5 summary notes” or “Complete Chapter 5 questions” because these are concrete actions you can do.

## How to Create an Effective Study Plan in 6 Steps

### 1. Determine Your Academic Goals

Ask yourself these questions:

- What skills do I want to develop through your program?
- How will my course performance affect my career pathways and future?
- What grades do you want to earn in my courses?

Estimate your GPA using the cGPA Calculator Tool: <http://uoft.me/CGPAcalculator>

Access Volunteer and Employment Opportunities and Career Tools:  
<http://cln.utoronto.ca>

### 2. Reflect Upon How You Study Best

Ask yourself:

- Where do I study best?
- How often do I need a break?
- When do I like to study?

### 3. Create a One-month Calendar

Note the important dates from your course syllabus and the Office of the Registrar's Important Dates.

Check out the Important Academic Dates: <http://uoft.me/Important-Dates>. You want to know when you can drop courses and when Reading Week is!

### 4. List your Upcoming Priorities

What's due in the next two weeks? Make sure you look at your weekly and preparation requirements.

**Weekly requirements:** Readings

**Preparation requirements:** Study Time, Going to Office Hours

Break down your tasks into smaller pieces. Set your own due dates for each one. Use UTSC's Assignment Calculator Tool to make a schedule:  
<https://ctl.utsc.utoronto.ca/assignmentcal/>

## 5. Make a Two-week Calendar

Block in all your activities that repeat every week

**Class:** lectures, labs

**Volunteer/Employment:** meetings

**Social/Personal:** meals, commute

Block in all your week-specific activities

**Class:** extra help office hours

**Volunteer/Employment:** work, meetings

**Social/Personal:** appointments

Highlight the available time for studying

Remember to take breaks from studying. It's healthy to schedule time to exercise, see your friends, and have fun!

## 6. Revise Your Study Plan

Study plans are flexible, and they can change. Assess how realistic your schedule is and re-prioritize your tasks.

## How to Take Notes in Lecture

### Before the Lecture

- Complete your readings
- Power off your distractions
- Bring your note-taking tools

### Use an Effective Note-taking Style

**Mapping:** Show comparisons and connections visually

**Matrix:** Organize information using headings

**Cornell:** Take notes, brainstorm questions, and summarize the key points

For more information, check out the RGASC's note-taking resources:

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/asc/note-taking>

### After the Lecture

- Fill in the gaps in your notes
- Participate in study groups
- Create questions based on your notes

If you don't review what you learned from lecture, you could forget 50% of it after 10 minutes.

## 5 Strategies to Improve Your Memory

### 1. Chunk the Information

Make meaningful connections to group the information. Create groups based on similar concepts.

## 2. Create Mnemonics

Try creating an acronym like “OCEAN”. The first letter of each word in “OCEAN” is one of the Big Five Personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism).

Create a visual story. For example, Green Bananas Dance For Apples is a story that helps you remember the line notes for the Bass Clef. The first letter of each word gives the order.

## 3. Engage in Self-referent Encoding

Make your learning personally relevant. Ask yourself:

How does this connect to me?

How do I relate to this?

## 4. Practice and Overlearn

Solve problems without help

Summarize key points in your own words

Engage in study groups

## 5. Use Distributed Practice

Having eight 30-min study sessions before a test is more effective than cramming one four-hour study session before the day of the test!

## Access Campus Resources

Remember, **everyone** is committed to academic integrity.

This is not something that you do alone. Access these campus resources to support your academic career.

### Academic Departments

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Do you need support with program planning? Talk to your department’s academic advisor. Contact your professor for support with course content.

### UTM Library

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The Library is more than a place to study. Visit the Research and Reference Desk to learn about creating citations and avoiding plagiarism. You can also learn about using the library databases.

### Health and Counselling Centre (HCC)

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For all your health concerns, visit the HCC in DV 1123 A. The HCC offers a range of services that address all topics related to student health and wellness.

### UTMSU

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The UTMSU has an Academic Advocacy Office to help you understand academic integrity cases in student friendly language. You can learn more about resources, appeals, advice, and policy.

## **Office of the Dean**

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The Office of the Dean is the expert in Academic Integrity. They can help you understand your responsibilities and the processes for academic discipline.

## **Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre**

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Learn more about the appropriate use of sources in our workshops. Book an appointment with one of our instructors to get help with citations and strategies to avoid plagiarism in your essays.

### **Looking for more resources?**

Check out this link: <http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/academic-integrity/resources/students>.

## **The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre**

We offer a variety of academic services and resources to help you develop and improve your skills.

Here's a snapshot of what we offer:

- Study skills appointments
- Critical reading workshops
- Critical writing workshops
- Math skills
- Facilitated Study Groups
- English language enhancement

Visit us in the North Building, Room 3251

Connect with us to learn more:

<http://uoft.me/RGASC>

[academicskills.utm@utoronto.ca](mailto:academicskills.utm@utoronto.ca)

(905) 828-3858

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