

## **Book an RGASC Study Skills Appointment to Help Prepare for Your Exams**

Study skills instructor Dr. Sean McPhail explains how study skills appointments can support students with academic struggles.

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With final exams only a few weeks away, UTM students are redoubling their preparation efforts by booking study skills appointments at the RGASC.

Study skills appointments function slightly differently than the writing and math appointments also offered by the RGASC, lasting 25 minutes instead of 50 and focused on helping the student with more general academic struggles rather than a specific assignment. Dr. Sean McPhail is a study skills instructor at the centre, and he works with students in these appointments to set them on the correct path.

“For a writing session, they’ll upload their assignment instructions beforehand, whereas for the study skills session, they’ll say ‘I have three midterms coming up and I’m panicking, please help’. And then, you know, we discuss it in more detail,” says McPhail.

The appointments address a broad variety of academic skills that students seek assistance with, such as effective note-taking, navigating degree requirements, test writing, developing a study plan, and preparing for midterms or final exams. These are big ideas, and they can’t be taught in a single session. Often, students have to develop them over time while pursuing their degree.

“When we’re talking about study skills, we’re talking about working habits that take years to build and years to really get up to the level where they’re self-sufficient,” says McPhail.

His recommendation is that students come in early and come often so that they can build those skills over the course of a semester. This would limit the panic that often afflicts students around exam season, when they’ve waited too long to get help. Fortunately, an increasing number of students seem to be taking this advice to heart. “It seems more popular than ever,” notes McPhail.

“Not every student who comes in is a student who has a problem that needs to be fixed, right? The returning students, the ones we see often, they’re here building writing skills. They’re building editing skills. They’re building study skills that are kind of complementing their degree as much as they are tackling a specific assignment or problem,” says McPhail.

Students can book in-person or online study skills appointments through a portal available on the RGASC website.