

Getting Organized

Below are the top five steps to getting organized and prepared. They are meant to provide you a framework to begin to get organized. The list is not exhaustive and what works for some might not work for others.

- **Create a Schedule**

The first step to getting organized is planning. Managing your time is not an easy task. You may be juggling work, school, family commitments, etc. It is important to make a schedule for yourself. Some things in our schedules are “non-negotiable” like sleep, class, work and personal events. Be sure to block off special time for these.

Begin making a schedule for yourself to help plan your day/week. This will help you to focus your attention on classes/school work.

- **Get a Planner/Organizer**

After you have scheduled your daily and weekly schedule, you will need to start keeping track of tasks to complete during your week. An important tool for getting organized is an organizer or day planner. Be sure to choose an organizer that is user friendly. You can find good organizers/day planners at any bookstore.

- **Organizing for Classes**

You will receive a lot of information in your classes including handouts, notes, and resources. Your teachers give you this information because it is useful to have and keep for studying or for your future career.

Organize Your Documents

Get folders or dividers to organize the resources from your classes; you may also consider getting notebooks that come with pockets already for added organization. If you choose to use separate folders, consider having a different colored folder for each class to track the resources that your teachers provide.

Get a Notebook for Each Class

You should have a separate notebook for each of your classes. Each notebook should be taken to each class and be sure to take notes. Consider getting spiral notebooks as the “tear-away” notebooks can lose pages more easily.

Notes are a useful way of tracking information for studying. Do not mix your classes up in one notebook as you will not be able to easily track your notes. Consider getting a different colored notebook for each class, this way you have a visual representation of a notebook for each course. You can coordinate your notebook colors to your folder colors for added organization!

Get a Flashdrive

Flashdrives are used to store lots of data/information for your classes. Try to find an inexpensive flashdrive that can hold 8 or more gigabytes (8GB). You can house a lot of information on these

flashdrives, and it is better than carrying around your entire desktop or laptop computer. However, be sure to have a backup! Those flashdrives are small and easily left in the library or forgotten in class

Get a Fashionable Classroom Accessory (Backpack)

Find a bag or backpack that can hold your things for class. It should be spacious enough to hold your notebooks, books, pens, pencils, snack, etc. This is essential to ensuring that you have enough resources while in class and while studying on campus. Bags with pockets are useful for stashing extra pens, erasers, etc. They are also good for hiding a snack away to keep your body and mind fueled.

- **Establish a Study Area and Find a Place for your Things!**

Establishing a schedule means nothing if you are unable to adhere to it! Be sure to schedule time and a place where you will be able to study. The location of your studying is very important. Some people are unable to deal with noises around them when studying because they are easily distracted. You should find a place conducive to your studying strategies.

Location, Location, Location!

The ideal study location is one that is quiet and has little chance for interruption. This includes self-made interruptions like your cell phone! Turn your phone off or put it on vibrate during your study time. You have dedicated this time to focused studying and the environment should be conducive to the task.

Organize the Study Area

You should have enough supplies and resources to help you throughout the study period. You do not want to get up and search for a pencil or pen when because this can distract you from the task at hand. You should have (at least) the following:

- Pens/pencils
- Dictionary
- Computer
- Your class essentials (notes, textbooks, etc.)

The space in which you study should be well lit and as free from distractions as possible.

- **Develop Good Habits**

It is not easy to break old habits! Establish a routine (or re-establish it if you are off track) and stick to it. Your schedule is key to maintaining a steady routine and getting organized. Create your schedule and stick to it!

Check your organizer/day planner often. See what tasks you have to work on each week and organize your days accordingly. Do not wait until the last minute for your tasks, projects, and assignments!