ADJUSTING STUDY HABITS AND STRATEGIES DURING COVID19

Attending school during a pandemic may create feelings of uncertainty. We are all continuing to face a lot of unknowns and disruptions. Try to be patient and compassionate with yourself, your classmates, and your instructors during this time. Take care of your wellbeing. Creating a plan for today, for the week, or for the term, as well as preparing your study habits, may provide you with a little more sense of control. Remember: you're not alone. We'll get through this together.

Your study habits may need to change when your coursework and activities have to be online and remote. Use this resource guide as a starting point for managing time and staying organized.

This guide will cover:

- Staying organized and learning online
- Avoiding multitasking
- Making the most of video lectures
- Setting a schedule
- Fostering a growth mindset and changing strategies
- Working with a group
- Staying connected to other people

1. Staying organized and learning online
With many things in your courses online for the fall term, you might experience increased confusion and anxiety as you adjust to the online learning experience.

HERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KEEP TRACK OF IN EACH CLASS:
What are the synchronous parts (activities that require attendance and occur at a specific date and time) of the class?
- Where can you find the synchronous parts or how do you access them? (Zoom meetings, Moodle, etc.)
  - Create an event in your online calendar to remind you of the correct date and time of each synchronous meeting. Pay especially close attention to ensuring this information is correct if you are in a different time zone than the meeting host/your class instructor.
  - Copy the Zoom link (or other URL) and any passwords, phone numbers, etc. right into that same event on the calendar. This prevents having to frantically search through email, websites, etc. looking for the information needed to connect to a meeting.
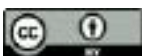
- o Use the "reminder" function in your calendar to alert you 15, 30, or 60 minutes before an event so that you have time to gather any materials needed to take notes, grab a mug of tea, etc. before you log into the event.
- What is the expectation or alternative if you can't attend a synchronous session of the class?

What are the asynchronous parts (activities that do not require in-person attendance or response) of the class?
- Where can you find lecture recordings or how do you access them? (Moodle, YouTube, etc.)
- How long are the lecture recordings? How much time should you schedule each day per class to view and review the recordings?
- What are the participation requirements for the class? Where are the requirements posted? (Syllabus, Discussion forum, etc.)
- How do you post discussion responses?
- Is there anything you need to download, open, or explore ahead of time to ensure you are ready for the asynchronous elements of the course?

How are assignments handled in the class?
- How do you submit assignments?
- What are the due dates and times for assignments?
- What is the consequence for submitting an assignment late?
- How are quizzes and tests being offered?

What should you do if you need help?
- Is your instructor offering virtual office hours? When and on what platform? (Time zone, by appointment, via Zoom, etc.—pay attention to time zone differences.)
- Is there an online forum in Moodle for asking questions?
- How can you request a content tutor for the class?
  - o Check with your instructor for a list of tutors and/or request assistance using the tutor request form in Voyager.
- When should you ask for help?
  - o If you spend 20 minutes a) looking for a course resource, b) trying to figure out assignment instructions, c) figuring out a technology-related issue, then it is time to ask someone for help. Do not deplete your mental and emotional energy unnecessarily: reach out! Your instructors, the Help Desk, content tutors, and other campus resources want to help you.

How do you create connection and engagement in distance learning classroom?
- Check into your online classrooms and discussion threads each class meeting day. This will help keep you up-to-date on announcements and class happenings, as well as build understanding of course content.
- Respond to classmates by name when responding to discussion posts to build community and connection: "I agree with you, Jazmyn, . . ." or "An idea that occurred to me after reading Tyler's post . . ."
- Reach out to classmates who post less frequently or more briefly. This also builds community and lets your classmate know you see them and their input is valued.

One example of a way you could keep track of course details is to create a chart:

Synchronous Meetings	Course 1 First Day Only	Course 2 First Day and Four discussions—see syllabus and Moodle for dates	Course 3 None—do check-in activity April 6 or 7
Assignment Dates/Test Info	Course 1 Labs due Sundays by 11:59 pm Quizzes and tests in Moodle	Course 2 All assignments due by 5:00 pm on due date—check syllabus/Moodle for due dates Take home tests only	Course 3 Reading summaries due Wednesdays by 11:59 pm No tests or quizzes
Important Links	Course 1 Office hours: link Content Tutor: link	Course 2 Group Discussion: link Office hours: link	Course 3 Office hours: link Reading resources: link

2. Avoiding multitasking

If you're doing more work on your own and your time is less structured, you might be more tempted to multitask. Many people think they can do multiple things at once. However, research shows us that only about 2% of the population can multitask. Even if you feel like you're multitasking, you're probably not…really, you're switching between tasks very quickly (some call this "micro-tasking").

The downsides of multitasking and microtasking:

- **Assignments take longer.** Each time you come back to an assignment (from scrolling through Instagram, for example), you have to get familiar with it again, find your spot, remember what you were going to do next, etc.
- **You're more likely to make mistakes.** Distractions and switching between tasks tires out the brain.
- **You'll remember less.** When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning to long-term memory (because it doesn't get encoded properly into your brain.)

What to do instead

When you need to study something important, consider The Magic of Monotasking*.*

- Focus on one thing at a time.
- Take breaks between tasks.
- Consider the "pomodoro method" to help you focus for 25- or 50-minute periods and then reward yourself with 5- or 10-minute breaks.
- **Schedule more time for tasks and assignments in a distance-learning environment**. The online learning environment is often more reading intensive, so allow more time for reading and breaks. Reserve time to get accustomed to the different classrooms your instructors have designed in Moodle. Developing new
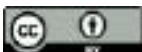
routines, learning new technology, and locating materials in an online classroom requires time, practice, and repetition. Remember to budget additional time for slow Internet connections, figuring out how to use Zoom or other apps for class, learning how to post discussion comments and submit assignments, and other technology-related issues.

3. **Making the most of video lectures**
   - **Stick to a schedule for viewing lectures as much as you can.** Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling behind.
   - **Find out how to ask questions.** Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?
   - **Close distracting apps and tabs.** Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think! (See #2 above.)
   - **Continue to take notes as you would if you were there in person.**
   - **Watch recordings at normal speed.** Research shows that playback speed of 1.5x can lower your retention and can result in lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multi-step material (which most of your lectures probably are). Remember: this is all about 1.5x. There hasn't even been research on 2x playback speed, which is probably even worse.

4. **Setting a schedule**
As the situation with Covid-19 continues to evolve, you may have household commitments, campus activities, or work hours that change, as well. Setting a school schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, such as Outlook in Office 365, try something like the example below to organize your time. Include time for meals, socializing, and self-care.

Schedule Template

	Scheduled Activity	Course Tasks	Personal/Self-Care
8am	X	X	Shower, Breakfast
9am	View 9:50-11:00 lecture	X	X
10am	View 9:50-11:00 lecture	X	X
11am	View 11:10-12:20 lecture	X	
12pm	View 11:10-12:20 lecture	X	Lunch, video chat with friend @12:30
1pm	X	Read chapter 2 for CHEM	X
2pm	X	Work on homework set for MATH	X
3pm	X	X	Walk or meditation app

5. **Fostering a growth mindset and changing strategies**
Your approach to schoolwork and routines may have to adjust during the pandemic. Look for ways to adapt your usual habits or form new ones.
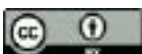
- **Curiosity, Compassion, Kindness.** As Lawrentians, we are all experiencing a new learning environment this term that requires us to be curious and try new things and experiment to find what strategies work best for us. At the same time, let's practice compassion towards ourselves and those we interact with because we are experiencing heightened levels of stress, and we will all make mistakes during this pandemic learning experience. No one has been trained in "pandemic teaching" or "pandemic learning": remember to be kind to each other as we learn from our mistakes, ask for help, and celebrate our successes.
- **Whether you have usually studied at home, a library, or elsewhere,** ask yourself what kind of environment helps you focus. See if you can recreate that in your current location. Perhaps it's studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, or moving to a new spot when you change tasks. Maybe having natural light will help some tasks, while shutting the blinds to prevent glare on a computer screen will help others. If you feel you need background noise, consider a white noise app.
- **If you usually study in groups,** try a virtual or even group-chat study session with your classmates.
- **If you thrive on tight timelines, but now have a more open schedule,** think about how working with others or setting up a schedule can recreate that for you. When that gets hard, see if you can even do 15 minutes at a time. Consider making an appointment with an Academic Counselor or Academic Skills Specialist for help with motivation, study habits, and time management strategies.
- **Self-care will be more important than ever**. Schedule time for yourself to relax, exercise, and do activities you enjoy. If possible, encourage others to join you virtually or in person as health and safety guidelines allow. Make use of campus resources, such as the Counseling Center or Academic Counseling when you need them.

6. Working with a group
Remote collaboration will be different than what you have used in the past, but it is definitely possible.

- **Try not to procrastinate.** A group project may be out-of-sight, out-of-mind if you aren't seeing each other regularly in class. Resist the urge to put it off. Make small progress, schedule regular check-ins, stay in touch via text, email, or Zoom. Set small, manageable deadlines to help you complete a project. Be specific about which tasks each group member is responsible for accomplishing.
- **Meet regularly,** especially if you usually meet up during class or lab. Consider a quick text via group chat about progress every couple of days. Ideally, have real conversations over video or socially distanced when possible any week you're working together.
- **Set a purpose for group meetings and use a shared notes doc, such as OneNote.** Group work might feel different when using video. Try to set the purpose of your group's meeting in advance. Take notes in a shared doc, so you can all contribute and follow along.
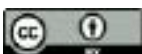
- **Keep videos open when you can.** As long as you can see whatever you need to collaborate, aim to keep the video visible on your computer screen. This will help you see the expressions of your classmates and stay connected to each other.
- **Check on each other and ask for backup:** If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chat, ask them directly if they're okay and still able to participate in the project. If you aren't getting responses within a day or two, let your instructor know. This isn't being petty: it's your group's responsibility.

7. Staying connected to other people

Even if we are limited to how much face-to-face time we spend with others, connecting with family and friends might be more important than ever. And staying in touch with instructors, classmates, and group mates is still important for continued classwork.

Here are two ideas:

- **Schedule video calls with friends and family.** Talking with loved ones is often really helpful when you're stressed or nervous about something. Taking a break to have a laugh is also important.
- **Attend virtual office hours** or study groups so that you can stay up on your coursework.
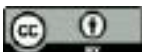
Please remember, this will pass.

Although COVID19 has disrupted many of the plans, activities, and classes we were excited about and may feel like it came at the worst possible time, remember: this is temporary. We are finding our way and developing new strategies. We will get back on track, and things will develop a new normal. We don't know when, but it will happen.

Until then, take a deep breath, do your best, get some rest, and wash your hands.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
- **LU updates on COVID19**
- **Preventing COVID19**
- **Counseling Services** and **Remote Wellness Resources**
- **Center for Academic Success**