



IMPROVE Your Test Performance

Ignore the temptation to do nothing or to blame other people

Some students decide that their best response is to ignore the problem, which does not help them to prevent similar difficulties in the future. Blaming roommates for preventing you from studying enough or blaming the professor for making the exam too difficult does not help you either. Instead, move ahead and focus on acquiring skills and strategies to enhance your test performance - remember you are in control.

Measure the mark: Put it in perspective

Sometimes marks that do not initially meet our own goals nevertheless are satisfactory when we consider the class average on the test. If your mark was at or above the class average, this indicates that you still did well compared to other students in the class. It is also a good idea to review the mark distribution for the course: was this test worth a significant portion of your mark in the course, or was this a relatively small percentage of your mark? What marks should you strive for in the remaining components of the course to meet your goal for the course?

Preparation issues: Quantity and Quality are both important

Consider whether you gave yourself enough time to cover all of the pertinent information for your test. Were there topics that you neglected to study? Did you "skim" some chapters because they seemed boring, too difficult, or because you assumed you already knew the information? Quality is important too. It's not very useful to read a textbook or your notes if you're not understanding what you're reading or if you're not retaining any of the concepts in your memory.

Review the test in detail

Looking at the questions you answered wrong on a test can help you figure out why you lost the marks and give you ideas about what you can improve for the next test. If you are not given your test paper back, make arrangements with your professor to review the test or exam. [SDC's Learning Skills Counsellors](#) review some exams with students as well. E-mail learning@uwo.ca for information about this service. See [Learning From Multiple-Choice Exams](#) for suggestions on what to look for when reviewing incorrect responses on a multiple-choice exam.

Observe your course outline

Most course outlines contain information about the objectives of the course; these give you ideas about your professor's perspective and about what your professor expects





you to learn. Course outlines also often provide structure to the content that you are required to learn. As you think about each piece of information or concept in the course, relate it back to the topics on the course outline; try to see how the concepts fit together.

Visit a [Learning Skills Counsellor](#) or search out other campus help resources

Counsellors who specialize in the area of learning skills can help you assess your exam preparation and writing strategies and can make suggestions for improvement. Also, many faculties have departmental help centres where you can access additional resources and expertise to help you succeed; check the course outline or website for information. Your professors and teaching assistants are also available to speak with students about concerns; most have office hours or are available by appointment.

Envision success!

Adopting a positive attitude will help you stay motivated to work on making improvements. Tell yourself that you can do it, and then choose some of the options above to help get you started. Learning new strategies takes time and effort, but it's well worth it!

Learning Skills Services provides presentations on a wide range of learning-related topics in the fall and winter terms. Most sessions are 50 minutes in length. To register, click [here](#).

