

SURVIVING THE FIRST WEEKS

Make a successful start in this new stage of your academic life

If you're taking classes online, we encourage you to consult the handout: **Survival Guide to Online Learning**, available on the Dawson website.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE BUILDING:

- Find a map of the college (take a picture of it) and learn the layout of the wings—A to H. This will allow you to find classrooms and offices easily—although the F Wing is tricky.
- The only classrooms outside the main building are in the P Wing —located in the Forum building (directly east of Place Alexis Nihon, across Atwater).
- Learn the location of the Registrar's Office, the Library, the bookstore, information kiosks, etc.
- Whatever you're searching for at Dawson, don't hesitate to ask for directions!

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH STUDENT SERVICES:

- Find out about all the free, helpful services available to you—the Academic Skills Centre, Academic Advising, Counselling, the AccessAbility Centre, Financial Aid, Health Services, Campus Life and Leadership, etc.

BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE SCHEDULING SYSTEM:

- All classes end 15 minutes earlier than the time shown on your schedule to allow you time to reach your next class. There are no bells or classroom clocks at Dawson, so you'll have to check the time on your phone or wear a watch.
- Be aware that all Dawson courses are about 15 weeks long. Once things get busy, the semester will go by very quickly! You have to keep up right from day one.

READ YOUR COURSE OUTLINES:

- Each teacher will give you a course outline containing essential information about the course. It's like a contract, specifying the responsibilities of both the teacher and the student.
- Read it and file it. If you have questions, ask the teacher.

STAY INFORMED:

- The Dawson website and Omnivox provide up-to-date information on all aspects of life at the College.
- Bulletin boards and TV monitors throughout the building also provide information and reminders.
- Teachers communicate with students using MIO messages in Omnivox. They often post course material online using the Léa and Moodle academic platforms.



SURVIVING THE FIRST WEEKS

Continued

BE AWARE OF TEACHERS' EXPECTATIONS:

- All teachers expect you to be punctual and not to miss a class unnecessarily. Be sure to have pens, paper, and other necessary materials—and keep your cell phone off during classes.
- Teachers expect you to ask questions when things are not clear and to write down important information without being told. They expect you to be familiar with their course outlines, and they expect you to see them during office hours whenever a need arises.
- Most teachers expect home assignments to be typed (double-spaced), dated, properly formatted, and carefully proofread.

TAKE A RESPONSIBLE APPROACH TO YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENTS:

- Begin the semester right by getting an early start on your first assignments.
- Read assignment instructions very carefully, underlining and numbering key tasks. Consult your teacher or someone at the Academic Skills Centre (ASC) if you need help understanding the instructions.
- Remember that meeting deadlines is extremely important.

ORGANIZE YOUR SEMESTER FROM THE START:

- The Academic Skills Centre provides a **Semester-at-a-Glance** planner—a very practical way to keep track of important deadlines. Download or print from the **Academic Skills Centre's** website in **Online Resources**.
 - See the handout: **Managing your Semester** to learn how to use it effectively.
- Start using your Dawson **agenda** right away. Use it to not only keep track of your readings and assignments but to create **'to-do' lists of tasks** you have to do to get your work done.

ORGANIZE YOUR TIME FROM THE START:

- Look at your class schedule and your other regular obligations. Remember that homework and study time can add up to many hours each week.
- Give some thought to making the best use of breaks, evenings, and weekends in order to succeed academically without sacrificing the time you need for rest, recreation, exercise, and your social life.
- If you need a part-time job, try to limit it to under 15 hours per week—less if possible.
- The Academic Skills Centre provides a **Weekly Schedule**—a very practical way to keep track of your regular commitments. Print it from the **Academic Skills Centre's** website in **Online Resources**.
 - See the handouts: **Planning a Weekly Schedule** and **Planning Productive Study Blocks**.

Have a great first semester!