

THE TOP TEN CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCCESSFUL UMBC STUDENTS

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| 1. They practice responsibility and a commitment to academic integrity. Successful students get involved in their studies and accept responsibility for their own education. | Responsibility means control. It's the difference between leading and being led. Your own efforts control your grade, you earn the glory or deserve the blame, and you make the choice. Your peers at UMBC have made the following agreement: <i>I hereby assume the responsibilities of an engaged member in a scholarly and civic community in which academic work and behavior are held to the highest standards of honesty. It is my active participation that affirms these principles and gives them true meaning as well as value in my education. I realize that by committing acts of dishonesty I hurt myself and place an indelible mark on the reputation of UMBC. Therefore, I will not cheat, fabricate materials, plagiarize, or help another to undertake such acts of academic dishonesty, nor will I protect those who engage in acts of academic dishonesty.</i> "Undergraduate Student Academic Honesty Statement" (Spring, 2004) |
| 2. They know that a student and a professor make a team. Instructors want what you want: for you to learn in classes and earn good grades. | Successful students reflect well on the efforts of any teacher; if you have learned your material, the instructor takes some justifiable pride in teaching. Join forces with your instructors, they are your teammates. |
| 3. They manage time. Time control is life control; you can choose to be in control of your life. | An elemental truth: you will either control time or be controlled by it! <u>Failure to take control of TIME is probably the #1 study skills problem for college students.</u> It ultimately causes many students to become non-students! Procrastinators are good excuse-makers. Don't make academics harder on yourself than it has to be. Stop procrastinating, and don't wait until tomorrow to do it! Faculty expect your work to be handed in by specific deadlines and that it will be of the highest quality. Specifically plan time into your week to prepare for each project, homework assignment and test, and do this several weeks in advance of the due date. |
| 4. They understand that personal actions and choices affect learning. | If you act in a certain way that normally produces particular feelings, you will begin to experience those feelings. Act like you're bored, and you'll become bored. Act like you're disinterested, and you'll become disinterested. So the next time you have trouble concentrating in the classroom, "act" like an interested person: lean forward, feet flat on the floor, maintaining eye contact with the professor. Nod occasionally, take notes, ask questions. Not only will you benefit directly from your actions, your classmates and professor may also get more excited and enthusiastic. |
| 5. They develop educational goals. Successful students have legitimate goals, and are motivated by their personal aspirations and desires. | Ask yourself questions: What am I doing here? Why have I chosen to be sitting here now? Is there some better place I could be? What does my presence here mean to me? Answers to these questions are the most important factors in your success as a college student. If your educational goals are truly yours, not someone else's, they will motivate a positive academic attitude. |
| 6. They <u>listen</u> and <u>ask</u> questions to provide the quickest route to gaining knowledge. | In addition to securing the knowledge you seek, asking questions has at least two other extremely important benefits: it helps you pay attention to your professor and helps your professor pay attention to you! Listen to the information in class and ask for clarification if needed. There are no foolish questions. |
| 7. They take notes that are understandable and organized, and review them often. | Why put something into your notes you don't understand? Ask the questions now that are necessary to make your notes meaningful at some later time. A short review while material is still fresh in your mind helps you learn more. The more you learn then, the less you'll have to learn later and the less time it will take because you won't have to include time to decipher what you have written. The whole purpose of taking notes is to use them. |
| 8. They sit in the front of the class and minimize classroom distractions that interfere with learning. | Students want the best seat available for their entertainment dollars, but willingly seek the worst seat for their educational dollars. Why do they expose themselves to the temptations of inactive classroom experiences and distractions of all the people between them and their instructor? They choose the back of the classroom because they seek invisibility or anonymity, both of which are antithetical to efficient and effective learning. If you are trying not to be part of the class, why, then, are you wasting your time? |
| 9. They <u>talk</u> and <u>write</u> about what is being learned in class. Successful students get to know something well enough that they can put it into their own words. It is a proven learning tool. | Having conversations with others and writing down in your own words what you are learning, provide the most direct path for moving knowledge from short-term to long-term memory. So, next time you study, talk about your notes, practice problems and discuss them, write summaries of what you have read or debate issues discussed in the text; in whatever way works best for you, actively engage with the material you are learning even if you find yourself reciting to a chair, organizing a study group, talking to yourself in the mirror, or writing multiple drafts of papers. |
| 10. They do not cram for exams. Study skills professionals agree that divided periods of study are more effective than cram sessions. | You'll learn more, remember more, and earn a higher grade by studying in four, one hour nightly sessions for Friday's exam than studying all night on Thursday. Short, concentrated, preparatory efforts are more efficient and rewarding than stressful, last moment marathons. Many students fail to learn this lesson and repeat it over and over again until it becomes a wasteful habit. It's your choice! |