

Surviving Exam Season: A Student's Guide to Success

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Preparing for exams can be one of the most difficult times during our academic journey. At times I felt it was too much for me to handle, especially when I had multiple tests, exams, projects and personal responsibilities to balance, which can increase stress. But through these challenging experiences, I've learned valuable strategies that have transformed my approach to exam preparation. My name is Jaishnav, an international student in my 4th semester, and here's what I did to manage those difficult times and how you can too.

Start Early: The Two-Week Rule

Start preparing at least two weeks before the exam to avoid any unnecessary panic. This schedule has saved me countless times because it gives me enough time to review material without the stress of cramming. I do best when I can visually see what is due or when an exam is happening, so I add everything to my calendar to see what is on the horizon.

Balance Work and Study Commitments

If you work while studying, like I do, make sure you update your availability. You do not want to get scheduled for work on exam days and the day before exams. Nobody wants to take an exam after a long day of work, feeling tired and sleepy. I learned this the hard way and now always communicate my academic schedule with my employer well in advance. Your brain needs rest to perform optimally.

Leverage Professor Office Hours

I talk with my professors and book office hours to understand difficult topics better. They can provide support with difficult topics that can then help prepare for the exam. This has been a great way for me to better understand material. Don't be intimidated – professors want to help you succeed, and these one-on-one sessions have made a huge difference in my understanding of complex concepts.

Maximize Seneca's Learning Resources

I use [Seneca's Learning Centres](#), which offer 1:1 tutoring and SLG (Supplemental Learning Group) sessions if they are available for your courses. These are absolute game changers because they make a huge difference when students teach their peers. I've noticed that peer

tutors have helped me understand certain concepts better because they might have gone through the same phase themselves. The Learning Centres have become my go-to resource when I need that extra support.

The Power of Group Study

In the days before exams, I call a few of my friends from class and book a [group study](#) session. There is something powerful about collaborative learning that individual study can't match – different perspectives, shared resources, and the accountability that comes from studying with classmates who are just as invested in success as you are.

Self-Care Isn't Optional

Remember that sustainable exam success requires taking care of yourself. Maintain regular sleep schedules, eat nutritious meals, and schedule short breaks. Your brain is a muscle that needs proper fuel and rest to function at peak capacity.

During exam week, the Seneca Student Federation (SSF) hosts amazing events to help students relax and recharge – oxygen bars, massages, free coffee and cookies, and various other stress-relief activities. These events are lifesavers during intense study periods! Follow their Instagram [@senecassf](#) to stay updated on all the events they offer throughout the semester.

Exam season doesn't have to be a period of overwhelming stress. With strategic planning, utilizing Seneca's incredible resources, and building a strong support network with your peers, you can navigate even the most challenging academic periods with confidence. These strategies have helped me turn what used to be my most stressful time into manageable, successful exam periods.

I wish all the best for your midterms! Happy learning!

Follow [@senecastudentlife](#) on Instagram for more tips to improve your campus experience here at Seneca!

Useful Resources:

[Learning Centres](#)

[Group Study Rooms](#)

[Accessible Learning Services](#)

[Counselling Services](#)

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