



IMPROVE YOUR GPA

Steps Toward Recovery *From Poor Grades*

STEP1: CHOOSE EDUCATION WITH A PURPOSE

- Why are you in college?
 - ◆ To get career preparation
 - ◆ To get a “good” job that pays “good” money
 - ◆ To avoid working full-time (right now)
 - ◆ To learn a particular skill
 - ◆ To become a more cultured person
 - ◆ To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas
 - ◆ To improve reading and study skills

STEP 2. BE CLASS WISE

- Attend class every day.
- Do not plan a vacation during the semester.
- Save “sick days” for real emergencies.
- If you have excessive absences, consider withdrawing from the class.
- If you must miss class, contact the instructor ASAP to find out what was missed and the deadline for making up work.

STEP 3. MAKE SMART TRADE OFFS

Typical scenario for Pellissippi State students:

Student A wants to “get to UT as soon as possible” but must work to make tuition, gas and car payments. The student signs up for 15 credits (5 classes) and works 20 hours per week. Student A passes 3 classes, gets a “W” in one class and an “F” in the other.

Possible Alternative Scenarios:

Scenario I: *Student A continues to work 20 hours/week but signs up for only 3 classes. Jane can also take 1 class during the summer instead of a 3-month vacation.*

Scenario II: *Student A continues to take 5 classes in the fall/spring but does not work. She works 2 jobs and about 50 hours during the summer to save extra money to make payments while not working.*

Scenario III: *Student A works with counselors to identify types of scholarships that she might apply for.*

Scenario IV: *Student A works with her employer to identify areas of possible assistance: (1) financial help (tuition repayment program) and/or (2) increased flexibility with work hours (e.g. reduce to 10 hours during major exam periods – midterm, finals week)*

STEP 4. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR GRADES

- Review your class syllabus for the grade calculation formula for each class.
- Ask about your grades – before the withdrawal deadline.
- If you are doing poorly, talk with your instructor about what effort is required to make up work and pass the class.

- If it appears that you cannot make up the work to achieve a passing grade, drop the class.

STEP 5. CHOOSE A DIFFERENT APPROACH FOR DIFFICULT COURSES

- If a particular subject gives you trouble, consider these options:
 - ◆ Take it as an only class.
 - ◆ Take it in a different format.
 - ◆ Speak with an instructor or counselor about how to study for this course.
 - ◆ Attend stress management, test-taking workshops.
 - ◆ Choose your instructor carefully (talk with a counselor or the department head about a referral to a specific instructor's class)

STEP 6. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR GRADES

- ◆ Stop making excuses. The grade you received is the grade you earned!
- ◆ Repeat classes in which you earned a "D" or "F".
- ◆ Be prepared to make compromises.
- ◆ Choose wisely. Your choices will either have positive or negative consequences. You often control the outcome.

STEP 7. SET REALISTIC GOALS

What are your goals? Here are some examples

- Academic
 - ◆ Improve grades (maintain a 2.5 GPA)
 - ◆ Increase study hours
 - ◆ Turn in assignments on time
- Personal
 - ◆ Join a team, club or organization
 - ◆ Improve a relationship with someone important
 - ◆ Improve your health
- Financial
 - ◆ Create a daily budget
 - ◆ Start a savings plan
- Work/Career
 - ◆ Get a job
 - ◆ Investigate career choices
 - ◆ Negotiate better pay or a better work schedule

STEP 8. USE EFFECTIVE STUDY SKILLS

- Start studying for 10-15 minutes at a time and then build up to longer periods of time. Take adequate breaks
- NEVER CRAM!
- Use a daily planner. Write down all appointments (include work, classes, meetings, etc.) in the planner. Always know what's ahead for the day (and for the week).
- Organize. Use a 3-ring notebook for each class.
- Eliminate distractions.
- Be an active learner.

- ◆ Sit near the front of the classroom.
- ◆ Ask questions.
- ◆ Keep up with assignments
- Use the SQ3R Formula for textbook reading:
 - ◆ Survey: Survey the text; look at chapter headings, captions, and diagrams; read the summary.
 - ◆ Question: Turn chapter headings into questions.
 - ◆ Read: Read to answer the questions you formed. Read one or two chapters at a time.
 - ◆ Write: Write answers to the questions you formed.
 - ◆ Recite: Recite the answers to questions you have formed.
 - ◆ Review: Review each step to get a clearer understanding of the text (especially before a test).
- Learn strategies for managing test anxiety. Contact a counselor for help.
- When you need help, ask for help. Support resources are available to you.

STEP 9. VISUALIZE SUCCESS

- Keep sight of your goals – expect to achieve them.
- Do your best and then let go.
- Combat negative thoughts with positive self-talk.
- Take care of yourself (eat well, get necessary rest, exercise, etc.).

**WHAT YOU DECIDE TO DO TODAY AFFECTS
YOUR LONG-TERM GOALS.**