

Achieving Academic Success as an International Student



Resources

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By Laurence Chen

Let's face it, being an international student is not an easy task. Apart from the struggle of achieving academic success, we also have to adjust to being away from home and using a language that we're not fluent in, among many more other issues. Students who go overseas often already excel in their home environment, and may have developed a certain expectation of themselves in academic settings. As an international student, I understand that we often have to be responsible not only for our expectations, but also our parents'/sponsors' expectations. With the our Spring 2022 semester underway, and a warm welcome to our new international students, I would like to share some tips and tricks that will make your pursuit of academic excellence a lot easier.

One of the many wonderful attributes UC Merced has to offer is it's low student to faculty ratio; it significantly enhances the immersive learning experience for all students and professors, teaching assistants, and all other academic resources are more easily accessible. An easy way for students to connect to their professors and keep track of their academic performance, is to attend weekly office hours. Professors hold office hours weekly to provide clarification on course materials and to answer any questions regarding the course. Students who attend office hours may not always have better grades than those who don't, but will certainly have a better relationship with their professors. For international students, I believe it is crucial to maintain a connection with your professors and let them know if you have any trouble with course materials-they will be more than happy to help you out.

Collaboration among your colleagues is as important as attending office hours, especially for international students. I understand if some of us are shy or afraid to speak up during class, but being communicative among your group (class) is an essential element for success within Western culture. And I can guarantee your colleagues and professor will appreciate your input during class. Personally, I seek out, or even form, study groups within the class myself to ensure that I am not alone when I encounter any academic difficulties and have someone to contact throughout. In addition, participating in a study group is also a great way to make local friends and enrich your international experience here at UC Merced.

For students that don't necessarily have time to attend office hours or collaborate with their colleagues, there are numerous applications and online resources available for self-learning on almost every subject of study UC Merced has to offer. As a Management and Business Economics major, I often find myself spending a lot of time on [Investopedia](#), a leading source for financial content on the web, which has and will continue to assist me during my academic career. While there is rarely the case where one online source can benefit all students studying in different fields, [Grammarly](#) does comes close. I highly recommend installing Grammarly on your laptop or any device, so whenever you are writing an official email to your professor or writing an essay, you won't have to worry about having major grammatical errors. Nevertheless, do try to actively seek out online sources that can potentially make your academic life easier-ask a fellow colleague if they know any too!

To conclude, I would like to stress that it is no doubt a challenging thing to be an international student, and it is completely fine if you are struggling from time to time. The important thing to keep in mind is that UC Merced has all the resources to help you achieve academic excellence. And again, we welcome all continuing and new international students: May you all have a wonderful term!