



Resource TipSheet for New Students and their Supporters: Managing the Transition

The transition to the university experience is exciting and filled with new challenges. It's natural to have some apprehension; however, students bring with them skills, experience, and aptitude to manage the transition and flourish at SDSU.

The following are some common transition challenges new students may experience and some tips.

Challenge: Creating and managing an **academic schedule** (creating own weekly structure)

- Use a planner/calendar. Schedule class meetings AND study time of 2 hours per unit, per week. One, three-unit class requires six hours of learning/study on your own per week. If you take five, three-unit classes, schedule 25-30 hours of study time each week, plus class time of 15 hours per week, you're looking at 40-45 hours of school per week.
- Use technology to help plan: how long to get across campus, set reminders, order books, etc.
- Are you an early bird or a night owl? For the first semester or two, try to get classes that match your best time-of-day to be alert and focused. Always plan your studying, research, and writing in these times, too, even in later years.

Challenge: Managing the transition to the **time demands of university**

- Remember that being a full-time student is a full-time job, so don't take on a full-time, paid job as well. You may have to make some choices. Speak with retention counselors in Student Account Services or Financial Aid to discuss options to help with finances so you can focus on school.
- The beginning of semesters will seem easy; don't be fooled into thinking you can handle more activities or more work. It will get tougher and demand more of your time, often all at once.
- For the first semester, choose just one or two extracurricular activities.

Challenge: Managing all the **extracurricular activities** to choose from

- For the first semester or two, I suggest just pick one or two (maximum) activities that require time commitments outside of class. You'll have plenty of time for more activities once you get used to the rhythm and self-awareness of what you can successfully handle.
- Not sure where to start? Choose activities or clubs similar to what you've liked in the past. Sports? Join your favorite sport club team. ASB? Get involved with Associated Students. Yearbook/school paper? Join the Daily Aztec or KCR Radio, etc.

Challenge: Managing **physical and mental health** in a new environment

- There's a lot of newness in starting at university. I suggest continue to do those things that helped you stay healthy and grounded before. (Going to gym, exercise classes, art, music, spiritual activities, etc.) Find their "equivalent" here at SDSU. Once you're settled and feel ready for something new, then try new activities.



***Things won't go wrong.
But if they do...***

- SDSU Campus, Assistance, Response, Evaluation Support Team (CARES Team) is one single office you can contact to help manage personal situations or crises that are going to impact your academic responsibilities. <https://sacd.sdsu.edu/cares-team>
- After the add/drop deadline, students may petition to drop some or all classes for **serious situations** beyond your control and with appropriate verification. There may be financial implications so please first discuss with a counselor in Student Financial Services.
- Students who need to take a semester off for any reason may take a “**Leave of Absence.**” Students are allowed a maximum of four semesters and must file a “Leave of Absence” form in their WebPortal. New, first-semester students, however, are not allowed to take a Leave their first semester.
- Students can retake classes in which they earned a C- or lower and replace the grade with the new grade in their GPA, up to 16 units. This is called **Course Forgiveness.**
- **Conflict with professors:** Speak first to professor during office hours. If that doesn't resolve the issue, then speak to the Department Chair/School Director. See Student Ombudsman website for tips on how to discuss. At any time, you may speak to Student Ombudsman or Assistant Dean for Student Affairs.

The Assistant Dean for Student Affairs office is here to help:

Main number: (619) 594-5124

Office Location: PSFA 217

Email: PSFAassistantdean@sdsu.edu