

Self-Assessment Worksheet*

*Exercises adapted from the Northern Arizona University Academic Success Program (2001)
and from *Turning Point* (1993) by Joyce Weinsheimer

Learning from the Past: Factors contributing to Academic Difficulty

"How did I get here?"

--David Byrne

A critical step in figuring out how to resolve your academic difficulties is understanding what caused them in the first place. Take a few minutes to do the following self-assessment of factors that might have contributed to your present academic situation. Schedule an appointment to talk with your advisor, and bring this form with you to your appointment.

Check all items that seem to fit.

1. What course problems have made learning difficult for you?

- Inappropriate background for a course
- Course load too heavy
- Unrealistic choice of courses
- Course does not fit my academic/career goals
- Courses unavailable when I need them
- Unrealistic amount of work assigned in course
- No interest in a particular course
- Too little time available in my schedule to complete the coursework
- One difficult course brought down all my grades
- No tutors or other support for course
- Other course problems (describe briefly):

2. What personal issues may have interfered with your performance?

- Poor health
- Financial difficulty
- Too many commitments
- Lack of confidence in my abilities
- Clash between job and school
- Family problems
- Loneliness
- Burnout from taking classes
- Social distractions
- Substance abuse
- Change in relationship with someone important to me
- Other personal issues (describe briefly):

3. What institutional factors have made learning difficult for you?

- Poor teaching
- Problems with an instructor
- Classes too large/too small
- Campus values differ from my own
- Lack of communication with my adviser
- Unaware of support services to help students with problems
- No opportunity for involvement with other students
- Lack of good tutors
- Inadequate facilities for studying on campus
- Other institutional factors (describe briefly):

4. Has your approach to studying hindered your academic progress?

- Good intentions but poor follow-through
- Concentration easily broken
- Worries about failure interrupt study
- Spotty reading of textbooks
- Unprepared for classes
- Unexpected questions on tests
- Lecture notes useless for studying
- Too little time for review
- Material quickly forgotten
- Memorization substituted for understanding
- Too little time to prepare for tests
- Unsure about how to study
- Uncertain about what is important
- Other difficulties with studying (describe briefly):

5. Other factors that might be making learning difficult

- Enrolled in college only because I was expected to
- Uncertain about my academic and/or career goals
- External expectations rather than internal motivation keeps me on campus
- Off-campus activities distract me
- Prefer job responsibilities to school work
- Difficulties related to transferring from another school
- Energy low for completing assignments
- Unsure how college fits into my goals
- Learning is rarely fun
- Negative emotions (stress, boredom)
- Other motivational issues (describe briefly):

6. Are there any other factors that might be making learning difficult for you?

Now, as you start working with your adviser to set some goals for the semester, think about how you can address some of the problem areas that you identified. For example, you might make it a goal to get help with a specific learning problem, work on specific study skills, or learn more about counseling services that are available to you on campus.

➤ What are your suggestions for improvements / changes?

➤ Are there any changes you have made already?