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ENGWellness Graduate Newsletter

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Welcome to Fall Term!

Fall term is here! As we embark on a new term, it's important to start off on the right foot with taking care of your mental health and wellbeing. Establishing routines early in the term can really help you later on. This term is full of excitement with some in-person activity returning to campus, but with change comes worries, challenges, and stress. With all this in mind, here are some things to keep in mind for the upcoming term.

Set Routines Early On

Routines are powerful. Motivation is often fleeting, but discipline and routines are reliable. Establishing routines early in the term can help you to cope when things get stressful later on. Forming good habits for checking in on your mental health, taking breaks, and practicing self-care early in the term will help you to keep these practices going when things get even more stressful later. Similarly, establishing good study habits and a solid school routine can help you to manage your time effectively. Taking time in the first few weeks of school to think about your habits and routines can really pay off down the stretch and can help to reduce stress when things get busier.

Be patient with yourself

This term is going to be difficult. Many students are returning to some in-person class activity for the first time in a very long time. Adjusting to the way things work is going to be difficult, and it's important to be patient and kind with yourself. It will take time to adjust to new course delivery methods and different work schedules. You won't be able to adjust perfectly right from the start. These sorts of changes take time, and that's okay. Remember that you're not alone in this. Everyone: students, faculty, and staff, are all doing the best they can given the circumstances. Be aware that you will make mistakes. You'll face challenges and sometimes things won't go your way. But you will get through your challenges, and you can do this. There are lots of supports available to you on campus both for mental health and academics. Remember to be patient and kind to yourself as you make this difficult adjustment.



Tips for Synchronous Learning

By Catherine Chan, BASC, MASc
Academic Skills Developer, Student Success Office (SSO)

It's a new academic year and you may be attending classes in a different format from what you're used to. You may also have heard that you'll be learning asynchronously or synchronously—but what does that mean for you?

Asynchronous learning occurs when you and your instructor(s) engage with the course content and interact with each other at different times ([adapted from Keep Learning Website](#)). This could mean independently watching lecture videos, reading articles, or posting messages on discussion boards.

Synchronous learning occurs when you and your instructor(s) engage with the course content and interact with each other at the same time ([adapted from Keep Learning Website](#)). This could mean listening to lectures, having group discussions, or completing activities together with classmates. Your classmates may be attending classes in-person on campus or online via live stream.

This fall, you'll likely have more opportunities to participate in synchronous learning. Review these common myths about learning environments to get the most out of your classes, whether you're participating in-person on campus or online via live stream.

Myth

Being prepared for class means bringing note-taking tools like a laptop.

Reality

Being ready for class means bringing all course materials that will allow you to fully participate. For example, bring your iClicker remote to complete quizzes during lectures or tutorials. Being prepared for labs means completing any pre-work and bringing safety equipment, like goggles, when appropriate. Check out the IST Knowledge Base for instructions on [registering your iClicker remote](#).

Myth

I'll automatically be focused and able to learn in class because I'm sitting in a lecture hall.

Reality

Learning comes from actively processing new information. You can support your learning by taking effective notes that try to make sense of what the instructor is presenting. In addition to copying down figures and diagrams, label the relevant units, dimensions or symbols and note how the illustrations connect to the topic being presented. [Book an appointment with a Peer Success Coach](#) to discuss strategies for taking better lecture notes.

Myth

The instructor isn't expecting an answer when they ask the class a question.



Reality

Coming up with your own answers to the instructor's questions allows you to check how well you're following along. Raise your hand to answer out loud if you feel comfortable, otherwise write down your answer in your notes. If you're unsure how to answer the question, ask the instructor clarifying questions like, "What information did I need to use to solve the problem?" To prepare for answering questions in class, check out these SSO tips to [remember what you read from textbook and lecture notes.](#)

Myth

It's ok to be late to my lecture because no one will notice when I tune in.

Reality

It's important to be on time even when you're streaming the lecture so you can listen to the overview and develop an understanding of the new topic. Instructors may also start the class with a quiz and being late could mean you have less time to complete the quiz - or miss it entirely. Get organized for the term with these SSO [time management resources.](#)

Myth

I can be more efficient by listening to the lecture while working on an assignment.

Reality

It's hard to fully comprehend and commit new information to memory when your attention is divided. Avoid multitasking and stay focused by asking yourself, "What does this have to do with the topic for today?" Engineering courses cover topics in sequence and new topics build upon previous ones. Try to make connections between the new material with what was covered in a previous lecture. Check out these SSO tips for [improving listening in lectures.](#)

Myth

I have a question about the content, but I can just re-watch the live stream recording later to figure it out.

Reality

It's important to check your understanding as you're listening. For example, asking why a particular formula is used to solve the problem can help you determine if there are conditions or restrictions for using the formula. Note the preferred methods for asking questions or sharing comments during class, e.g. hand-raise button, MS Teams chat. Check out these SSO tips on using technology when [participating in virtual classes.](#)

For additional tips on preparing for your learning, watch the [Learning Formats at UWaterloo video on YouTube.](#)



On-Campus COVID-19 Information

Testing Centre

The Health Services COVID-19 Testing Assessment Centre is open to University of Waterloo students, employees, postdocs and their family members who live in the same household. Testing is by appointment only. You can use [this form](#) to book an appointment.

Rapid Antigen Screening

The COVID-19 Rapid Antigen screening site is open and screening eligible asymptomatic employees and students. An appointment is required to be booked in the system, however same-day walk-in appointments are available if space permits.

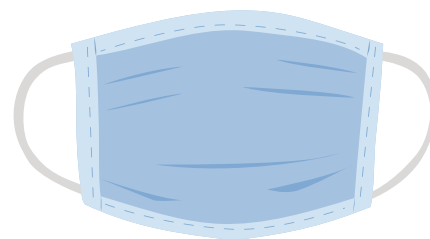
Rapid antigen screening helps identify asymptomatic individuals infected with COVID-19 that regular screening protocols such as symptom screening might otherwise miss and therefore helps break the chain of transmission by preventing these individuals from unknowingly spreading COVID-19.

Please note that this screening is for *asymptomatic* employees and students only. Students and employees experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 must contact the [Health Services COVID-19 Testing Assessment Centre](#).

Vaccination Centre

A vaccination centre is now open at Health Services and available to all students, employees, and family members of students and employees!

Vaccination against COVID-19 is now required in order to live in Waterloo residences and to attend campus. Students should aim to be fully vaccinated with both doses before their move-in date and before they come to campus. For dates upon which vaccines must be received and those vaccines that have been approved, please refer to the University's [COVID-19 Vaccine Requirement Page](#).



Some buildings on campus will be open during fall term! More information on which buildings will be open and their hours is available [here](#)



MOVE YOUR MIND

A peer-to-peer program dedicated to leveraging physical activity to support our mental health

PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE:

- » Support in finding enjoyable ways to be more active
- » Support in identifying goals and tackling barriers
- » Accountability
- » Access to a Buddy matching program (optional)

HOW TO JOIN:

- » Self refer at:
www.gowarriorsgo.ca/MoveYourMind

INTERESTED IN BEING A VOLUNTEER BUDDY?

- » Buddies are paired with participants to join in activities, provide support, and help with motivation and accountability.

Check **LEADS** for volunteer postings or email: athcpwel@uwaterloo.ca

Take Time to MOVE!



Going Back to In-Person Classes

The following is a blog post from the [ENGWellness Blog](#). Check it out for more reflections like this one!

It has been a very long time since I've sat in an in-person lecture. Friday, March 13th, 2020 was the last time I sat in a classroom and listened to a professor teach. And now, all of a sudden, I have an in-person class in Fall term. A lot of people are in a similar boat. We haven't had in-person classes in what feels like forever and now we're being thrust back into it. Even from a purely academic standpoint, this is going to take a lot of adjustments.

Online school (at least for me), has been very self-paced. I have been able to complete all my online classes asynchronously, learning at my own pace and working my way through lecture content on my own schedule. With the introduction of an in-person class, this all changes. Personally, I'll only have one in-person class in the Fall but many will have more. Even with the introduction of just one in-person lecture, a whole lot changes. There's now one more thing to work into my schedule and to work around every week.



One of the ways I plan on coping with this change is to change the way I treat the rest of my online lectures. For me, I think I would find it stressful to treat some of my classes as free-form, learn at your own pace experiences, and then to have other classes which are more rigid and locked into schedules. Since in-person classes require that rigidity in scheduling, I plan on adapting the way I treat the rest of my courses to match it. I'm going to try setting aside a specific time on specific days of the week to work on each of my courses. Setting up all my classes as if they were in-person classes, even though some are online, I think will help me to adjust to having an in-person lecture. Scheduling all my time more rigidly will help to adapt to the enforced rigidity of an in-person class.

Depending on how things look on campus, I may also spend time doing my coursework in a building on campus rather than in my room. The physical action of walking onto campus is something I haven't had to think about in a long time, and I think that working that walk into my schedule on a regular basis could help me to adjust for when I *have* to walk onto campus for my in-person class.



For me, uniformity and consistency is something I appreciate in my routines. I like to be able to treat all my courses in a similar way. It makes things feel more familiar and less stressful. I don't love having to juggle different course styles and routines. So one of the ways I can adapt to an in-person class is to change the way I view the rest of my courses. This might also include trying to get used to taking notes simultaneously with lecture videos and avoiding pausing as much as I can, just to get back in the habit of how notetaking works in an in-person setting. A lot will change with the return to in-person classes, and I think that easing myself into the style of in-person learning by emulating it with my online courses can help me to make the adjustment smoother.

This approach won't work for everyone, and everyone's adjustment will look different, but this is just an idea that I'm excited to try out in the coming term. Hope this can be of some help to you as you embark on your gradual return to in-person learning as well.

Joel Woods, 3A Math
Spring 2021 ENGWellness Ambassador

World Suicide Prevention Day

World Suicide Prevention Day: September 10th, 2021

World Suicide Prevention Day is observed on September 10th to spread awareness about the fact that many suicides can be prevented. The risks of suicide can be reduced by seeking treatment, care, and support for mental health concerns, building social support networks, and learning good coping skills to deal with problems. It is important to look out for ourselves and our peers and to be aware of warning signs.

The following resources contain more information on suicide and the warning signs associated with it:

- <https://cmha.ca/documents/preventing-suicide>
- <https://ontario.cmha.ca/documents/understanding-suicide-and-finding-help/>
- <https://www.crisisservicescanada.ca/en/>
- <https://wrspc.ca/>

The following mental health supports are available to you

- [Counselling Services](#) - 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- [Health Services](#) - Student Medical Clinic - 519-888-4096
- [Empower Me](#) - 1-833-628-5589

The following crisis supports are available to you as well

- [Crisis Services Canada](#): 1-833-531-2600 or text 45645
- [Good2Talk Helpline](#): 1-866-925-5454 or text GOOD2TALKON to 686868
- [1-847-4-644-467](#)
- [1-800-467-8847](#)



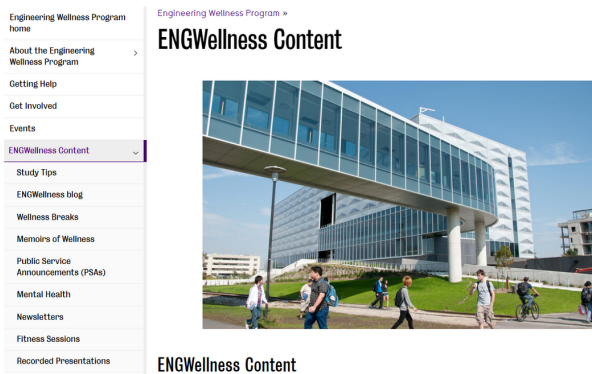
MMEGA

Hello graduate students of the MME department! We know it has been a tough year and some during the pandemic times, but you all keep persevering through with all your hard work to show for it. Some of you were able to present your amazing work during our 2021 MMEGA Research Symposium that saw over 100 attendees. And some have also participated in our new Lunch and Learn series (another one coming soon this month, watch out for updates). These events will not be possible without you all. We at MMEGA just ensure that we provide a platform for you to showcase your work. During these times, we have also provided opportunities for us to connect through our occasional Skribbl events.



ENGWellness Content

Check out our ENGWellness resources including mental health pages and PSAs. All resources as well as previous newsletters can be accessed under the [ENGWellness Content](#) section of our website.



Stay Connected

Be sure to follow us on social media to stay connected and updated.



[@uwengwell](#)



[@uwENGwellness](#)



[@UwengW](#)



[ENGwellness uwaterloo](#)

LEARN 'Course'

Get news and access to our content modules through our ENGWellness Learn 'course'! Students can enroll using the Self-Registration function within Learn.

**WATERLOO
LEARN**

Calendar Pebble+ **Self Registration** UW Resources ▾ Course Request Help

Wellness Resources

Crisis Support

- [Here 24/7](#) - Offers addiction, mental health, and crisis services
- [Good2Talk](#) - Free, confidential support service which can connect you anonymously with a professional counsellor.
- [Empower Me](#) - This student-focused service provides you with "one-stop" access to counselling and campus wellness services. Integrates off-campus resources with already existing on-campus resources and can be accessed 24/7 (within N.A.) in a variety of languages. Gender and faith inclusive services are available.

Mental Health Resources

- [International Student Guide-COVID-19 Resources](#)- Includes University and public health protocols for international students as well as mental health resources to support you during quarantine.
- [EngSoc's Guide on Accessing Mental Health Resources at UW](#) - A no-nonsense guide to the services and resources available at UW to ENG students.
- [Centre for Addiction and Mental Health \(CAMH\)](#) - Provides information on addiction and ways to identify if help is needed and how to access it.
- [Campus Wellness Online Workshops and Seminars](#) - Everything from managing emotions, to reducing stress, to improving sleep.
- [Mental Health Commission Resource Hub](#) - Information about mental health and wellness during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Campus Wellness Group Therapy and Workshops](#) - Group therapy can be beneficial by helping you find new perspectives on shared challenges, feel inclusion and relief knowing that others experience similar challenges, and allowing you to practice new skills in a supportive environment.
- [Canadian Mental Health Association \(CMHA\)](#) - Tips about managing your mental health during COVID-19.
- [Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction \(CCSA\)](#) - Offers free online resources, tools, apps, and information to support substance use issues by connecting with peers, support workers, social workers, and professionals for confidential chat services.

Academic Support

- [Student Success Office](#) - Compilation of learning and life skills resources.
- [OUSA COVID-19 Resources for Students](#) - Financial aid, learning tips, and other mental health initiatives.
- [Waterloo Assignment Planner](#) - Customizable planner for reports, essays, presentations, math assignments, and you name it!
- [Tutor Connect](#) - Connects people with student tutors

Contacts to book a one-on-one session: (limited in-person sessions available. Other sessions will take place virtually.)

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