UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

STUDENT LIFE | Centre for Learning Strategy Support

LEARNING STRATEGY APPOINTMENTS: Q&A FOR STUDENTS

What can I expect generally from an appointment? How should I prepare?

Firstly, ask any questions or share any concerns about your study and learning at U of T. There's no pressure here — we can work together to figure out what you need. It's all welcome. Some possible things to reflect on:

- How have you learned or approached learning in the past?
- What study skills do you use well and what do you want to better develop?
- Are your current study skills working?
- What challenges or worries do you have about studying and learning here?
- What goals do you have? What do want to work on with your learning strategist?

Our main goal is to support you in enhancing your approach to study and part of that means helping you be independent. We can support you in refining your study habits and learning strategies over the short term, so you can learn new and healthy approaches for effective learning over the long term. You may meet just once and get what you need, or you may want to meet a few times over the semester, to set some goals, and have some check-ins on progress. But there are no hard and fast rules about what a learning strategist appointment is. We'll figure it out together – there are many possibilities.

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Learning strategies are things to practice. We will offer suggestions for things to try, and it will be important for you to be open to the advice and suggestions and to commit yourself to practicing them. This is the necessary work to assess whether the strategies work for you or not.

How many appointments can or should I book?

Again, this will vary according to needs, but we do have some well-informed suggestions for how to use the time productively and get the most out of your sessions.

- At your first appointment , you will work together with the learning strategist to assess your needs and develop short and longer-term plans for you.
- We recommend at least 1– 2 weeks between appointments so that you can practice any suggested strategies and develop any follow up questions you might have.
- Typically students need no more than about three appointments to reach their specific learning goals and practice their strategies. Your learning strategist will advise you on when and how many appointments you may need for follow-up.
- But, rather than thinking of the number of appointments, think of it as a plan with a few parts. (1) Get to know your learning strategist. (2) Articulate some meaningful goals together. (3) Learn some suggested strategies to meet those goals. (4) Do some practice work with those strategies. (5) Follow-up to discuss how it's going.
- It's rarely that neat and tidy, but that's how it often works best. In our experience, three appointments per semester works well for that plan, but you may need less or more depending on how it goes. This is something you will discuss with your learning strategist but the key is making progress. Learning strategy appointments are most helpful when there is something concrete to discuss.
- Life happens, so sometimes you need to cancel your appointment. We ask that you do this in advance so we can make ourselves available to other students. Simply not showing up for a booked appointment without canceling does not allow us to do this.

What if I need more regular check-ins?

Some students might need more regular or ongoing meetings, and this is something that you can discuss with your learning strategist to see what's possible, feasible, and advisable. There are other supports on campus that may be better suited to this kind of arrangement – Accessibility Services, counseling, private coaching, peer groups, etc., and the learning strategist can assess this and refer appropriately.

Can I bring someone with me to an appointment?

We encourage students to take charge of their learning and also uphold privacy. As such, we prefer working directly with you during an appointment.

However, in certain circumstances, you may request having someone accompany you as a necessary accommodation, and this may require written permission.

Can you help with course content/appraise grades or marks on my assignments?

Learning strategists are not instructors or teaching assistants and do not, generally, offer direct support for course content. Questions about specific course content should be directed at your instructors and TAs.

Learning strategists will not question or scrutinize grades or assignment marks. Again, these are issues to raise with your instructors and TAs. Learning strategists support your learning experience but do not intervene in what should rightly be between student and instructor.

Many students have questions about course loads and degree requirements etc. And, for these questions it is best to consult with your departmental academic advisor.