

# Top tips for English as a second language student academic success



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## 1. Get to know the people who can support you.

Your professors are your first academic support but if you need more help, the English as a second language (ESL) specialist at Student Academic Learning Services (SALS) can help you with any academic English language problems you are having at college. In addition, the Office of Student Diversity can provide assistance if you ever find yourself in a situation where a cultural misunderstanding occurs between you and someone else.

## 2. Continue to improve your English.

English will likely create challenges for you during your time at college. Take every opportunity to improve your language skills by participating in on-campus events or joining a club through the Student Association. You can also apply for a peer tutor or book an appointment with a peer writing tutor. Schedule an appointment with the ESL specialist in SALS for more ideas about developing your English language skills.

## 3. Get to know your resources.

You should take time to explore the Campus Library and SALS. Find out the office location and hours for your professors and learn who your student advisor is and how to contact him or her.

## 4. Learn how to use DC Connect.

DC Connect is the online learning management system used by DC to link students to their professors for class information, instructions and content. It is important to know how to use this system in order to access assignments, class notes, class discussions and more. To access DC Connect and view tutorials for its use, visit [www.durhamcollege.ca/connect](http://www.durhamcollege.ca/connect).

## 5. Learn about rubrics.

Rubrics are documents that professors include with assignments to explain expectations and requirements and show you exactly what they expect from your work. Find out more about rubrics and how to use them to understand the requirements of your assignments by speaking with your professor or visiting SALS.

## 6. Learn how to improve your in-class participation.

At college, your professors not only expect you to be a good listener, they also expect you to join discussions, ask questions and volunteer answers. Your participation in class will help to ensure you understand course content.

## 7. Attend SALS workshops.

A workshop is similar to a small class that covers one topic in 50 minutes. SALS offers many workshops including acculturation, writing skills, presentation skills and learning skills. Since there is limited seating for each workshop, students need to sign up for them at the front desk of SALS.

## 8. Ask questions when you do not understand or when you need help.

Your education is your responsibility. There are many people at the college who would be happy to help you, but you need to tell them you need help. You must learn to ask for help or get clarification when something is not clear. You must ask someone for help very soon after you realize that you need it. Do not wait for someone to ask you because it might be too late.

## 9. Use the academic supports available.

Speak with your professors and classmates, register for SALS ONLINE or visit SALS to make an appointment with the ESL specialist.