

How To Be A Dean's Lister

Personal Excellence



Celestine Chua

www.personalexcellence.co

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Celestine Chua

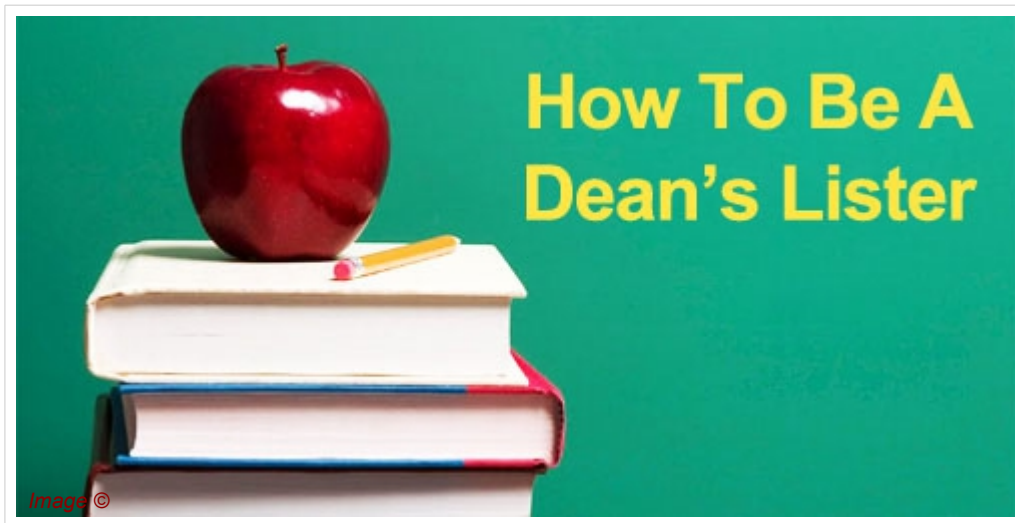
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How To Be A Dean's Lister – Part 1

This is a 3-part series on *How To Be A Dean's Lister*.

- **Part 1:** [What is Dean's List and 6 Key Benefits of Being A Dean's Lister](#)
- **Part 2:** [How To Be A Dean's Lister: Tips #1 – #6](#)
- **Part 3:** [How To Be A Dean's Lister: Tips #7 – #13](#)



Recently I noticed there's a good number of students (mainly university) who reads PEB. So I figure it'll be useful for me to write a post on getting on the dean's list. This post will be beneficial for any student, not just university students, as it's about achieving academic excellence. Even if you aren't a student, it's still a good read. I reckon some of the tips shared here can be cross-applied to other areas in life.

Coincidentally it's the exam periods of the local universities right now (all the best to those sitting for exams now!), so these might come a little late for this semester. Use it as the prep guide from next semester onwards, and you'll be set to graduate with flying colors. 😊

What is a Dean's List?

Dean's List should be a familiar term to university students / graduates. Here's what [Wiki has to say](#):

*A **Dean's List** is a category of students in a college or university who achieve high grades during their stay in an academic term or academic year. ... Its meaning varies from institution to institution, and other terms are sometimes used instead in place of dean (e.g.*

provost's list, chancellor's list, president's list).

Dean's List, as the Wiki describes, is an honorary roll assigned to the top students. The GPA cut-off to get into the Dean's List varies across faculties and academic terms. If I were to give a ballpark estimate, your GPA has to be at least 3.6/4.0 or 4.5/5.0 (i.e. average of A- and A for all subjects) and above to be considered on the Dean's List. If students were more competitive in a particular term, the cut-off will be higher.

When I was studying in NUS (National University of Singapore), I was on the Dean's List for all 3 academic years I studied there. NUS Business School was a competitive faculty (it's a leading business school in Singapore and the Asia Pacific region), with a good number of students from top junior colleges and scholars from the neighbouring countries, so it was an accomplishment to be on the list. I later graduated in 2006 as the top student in my specialization (Marketing). In my graduation year, I was also awarded gold medals for being the most outstanding student, which I was honored to receive.

Looking back, university years were easily my best years in my entire 2 decades of education, and I'm not saying that because I did well. The graduation from every academic phase from primary school -> secondary school -> junior college -> university would grant us students with increased freedom and liberty. It was something I really appreciated, especially being free-spirited at heart. (IMO, bureaucracies and disciplinarian approaches hardly bring out the best in us – while there's merit behind the approaches, it's only short-term. In the long-term, they tend to stifle and suffocate.)

Why get on the Dean's List?

There are definite benefits from being a Dean's Lister, some of which are deterministic and a couple I consider more as fringe benefits.

I'd like to highlight that these are benefits I experienced as a business student during my time (2003-2006). They might not apply to other universities/faculties/time periods, though I reckon they shouldn't differ much. The baseline upsides should be the same no matter where you are from.

6 Key Benefits of Being a Dean's Lister

1. **A sense of personal achievement.** The most important reason, IMO. Getting on the Dean's List is clearly a great personal achievement to be

proud of. Dean's List is not awarded on absolute GPA score; rather it's on comparative basis with your peers. Meaning if all your peers happen to be top academic whizzes, you have to be a super whiz to top them. Being on the Dean's List means you are pretty much in the top 1-5% of the faculty in terms of academic results.

2. Increasing your **employability factor**. Ultimately we study in university to get a good job – our best possible job. While results is not the sole determinant behind getting a good job (there are your leadership activities, attitude, personality fit, etc), it is highly important, especially for top jobs with Fortune 100 companies. In fact, I'd go as far to say that the 1st preliminary cut off top employers use in recruitment is academic results, especially for campus recruitments.
3. **Invitation to special events**. Since you're among the top in your cohort, you'll be invited to special events. Most common being networking events with executives from other companies, usually top ones – the ones you might want to join. To be honest, of all the ones I've been to, I only found some of practical use – but it's always good to just be there and meet new people. There are also international case competitions, where participation is generally on invitation basis. Again, invitees are usually selected from the Dean's List first.
4. **Exclusive access to top employers**. Top companies often hold recruitment events on campus. There are the recruitment seminars to masses, and then there are the exclusive networking sessions with smaller groups – whereby the students are selected on invitation basis. Not surprisingly, the HR in the top companies commonly request the Dean's Office to invite students of a certain cut-off GPA. Examples are Procter & Gamble (my ex-company as most of you already know), McKinsey, investment banks and consulting firms.
5. **Being on the Dean Office's radar**. When you are on the dean's list, people in the dean's office and university career office tend to know you. After all, there are several hundreds of students in the faculty, and only a small handful are selected to be on the dean's list. Ego-boosting reasons aside, this can be useful for random situations, say when you want to get the inside scope on what's going on, an inside favor of sorts, or just generally having a new friend to talk to about university matters.
6. **Prestige and recognition**. If all the special invitations and inclusions in exclusive events aren't already enough recognition, being on the dean's list is pretty much synonymous with intellectual smarts and success in university. As the board would put up the list of people on the dean's list online and also on school campus, students who read it generally know who you are, at least by name. People usually speak of dean's listers with a certain awe and respect.

While it was exciting being on the Dean's List back in university, I don't associate it as part of my identity today. (such thoughts, if any, crumbled away right about the same time I discovered my purpose) It takes me by surprise nowadays when someone refers to this aspect of my past. The conversation will go like: "I think it's really amazing you were on the Dean's List before", and I'll be like: "Dean's List? Wha..... oh, back in university. It's nothing, really."

The one thing I identify with myself the most today is my mission to help others achieve excellence and live their best life (my purpose). Anything else is just an external identity, a representation of certain values and beliefs. I don't connect much with labels and instead look at the message behind the labels, because ultimately labels are impermanent and will be shed away one day anyway.

Continue to: [How To Be A Dean's Lister – Part 2](#)

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How To Be A Dean's Lister – Part 2

This is **part-2** of a **3-part series** on [How To Be A Dean's Lister](#).

So how do you become a Dean's Lister? Here I'll share my personal tips on how I got on the dean's list. Since the tips are quite long (almost 5,000 words), I have split them into several parts. Part-2 will feature the first 6 tips 😊

1. Aim to be the best

Rather than think about “how to get on the dean's list”, think in terms of **getting the top results**. That's because dean's list is but a corollary of achieving top results, and the cut-off for the list fluctuates every semester based on the performance of the overall cohort. That means the cut-off is only determined **after the exams**, when results are tabulated. In an average semester, 4.5 or 4.6 out of a 5.0 score (4.5 is A-, while 5.0 is A or A+) gets you into the list. However, in a semester where all the students do extremely well, the cut-off may be as high as 4.7 or above. So if you start off the semester aiming for 4.5 score (average A-), you might not get into the list if everyone did well.

It's much easier to aim for the top and end up within the top 1~5%, than to aim to be the top 5% which is a very subjective goal. How do you calculate 5% of the cohort anyway? How would you know who's getting what grades? How are you supposed to set your targets if the context is fuzzy to begin with? And does it even matter? The most important thing is you are aiming for your best target.

If aiming to be the top is a little hard to stomach for you, then just focus on being the top student for each module you take. That isn't so hard, is it? From my experience, if you get your coursework in place, understand the materials thoroughly and do your best, being the top performer is an inevitable outcome.

2. Plan your modules in advance

What I love about university is you are now in charge of what you want to study, right down to the modules for each semester. This also means you are

responsible for your timetable and planning your workload across your 3-4 years of study. Some students like to have a heavier workload in the first 2 years of their study, leaving more room for other activities in their last year. Some students even out their course work throughout their semesters. I belong to the latter group. Ultimately it's up to you and what you prefer. There's no right or wrong way. You just have to make sure you are able to commit to the workload you have planned.

It's not just about selecting what's available when planning modules. Take note of:

- **Who's teaching What.** Some modules are taught by different lecturers in different semesters, who in turn have different styles of teaching. Subsequently, the materials and standard of exam papers are different. Some lecturers have open book exams, some have closed book exams, while some don't have any exams. These information are usually available on the university site. You can also consult seniors or peers who have taken the modules.
- **Course workload.** Each module has its own workload. Some require heavy commitment (I took a Japanese module which probably had heavier work load than any of my own Business modules), while some can be breezed through. You can get some indication from the course description.
- **Who's taking the Module.** Some modules are prerequisites for a higher level module. This means in a particular semester, there will be a lot more seniors taking it to clear their prerequisites.
- **Lesson timings.** You need this to plan out your time table.
- **Exam dates.** Different subjects have different exam dates. The dates can be any date within a 2-3 week exam period.

This means:

- If the module has multiple lecturers, **take the modules in the semester** with the better lecturer and when the style of teaching is more suited to you. Personally I hate rote learning (learning through memorization and without understanding of the topic at hand), so I would pick modules during the semesters with open book exams, where students are tested more for their understanding of the subject. If there's no exams it's even better :D. It's easier to manage your grades through projects/assignments, which are products of consistent work than exams, which is just your performance during 2-3 hours. I'm also a big fan of webcast lectures, since I can opt out of lectures and study when I feel like it.
- **Get an even playing field.** If you are a junior and many seniors taking this class this semester (to satisfy a prerequisite), take other modules if you can. Competition levels tend to increase over the academic years, as the students up their game to get their best results. Also, seniors will have advantage in their baseline knowledge. Some of my 3rd year modules were intensive, and if it was a junior taking the class he/she would have been squashed by the fellow seniors. Taking modules with peers evens out the playing field.
- Plan your timetable well. Strategically planning out your time table gives you time for other activities, whether outside school commitment, studying or leisure time. I always arranged my classes such that I only had 3-day weeks. Factoring in webcast modules where I would skip the lectures, sometimes I would just have 2-day weeks. That saved me a lot of commuting time since it would take me almost an hour to get to school and another hour to get back. I could use this time for other stuff, such as project work, sleep or leisure.
- Space **exam dates apart** (where possible). I hardly ever had exams crammed together in a few days. Sometimes, just having that extra day for revision can be crucial in the exam period. The further they can be spaced apart, the better (the time in between can be used to unwind and relax). I would have 3-4 exams spaced across 1.5 weeks. (some of my modules had no exams).

- **Have modules that balance off one another.** Unless your schedule permits, don't choose all your modules with heavy workloads. If you know a module you are taking for the semester is extremely intensive, pick lighter modules to go with it.
- **Pick modules with content synergy.** This is more of a bonus tip. If you see modules with similar themes, take them up so you can cross apply what you learned. Since I was a marketing major, I took this technopreneur module outside of business school, which was about marketing, technology and entrepreneurship. It was a great opportunity to apply what I learned in my major. Subsequently I scored well in the module.

3. Know what you are evaluated on

Each module is graded on different components. Out of the modules I've taken before, these are the possible components:

- **Exams and tests** – By far the most common component
- **Group project work** – A staple in university, especially Business
- **Assignments** - Tutorials or individual exercises
- **Lab work** – If you study sciences
- **Presentation** - Presentation skills and how well you handle Q&A
- **Participation in class** – Your contribution to class discussions. It was the lecturers' way of getting people to talk more. Asians tend not to speak up compared to Westerners.
- **Attendance** – Rare. I only had this for a Japanese module I took. It seems Japanese are particular about punctuality, attendances and timely submission of work.

The components are assigned different weightage. A sample allocation can be 40% for exams, 30% for project work, 20% for assignments and 10% participation. All this information should be available on your university site or given out by your course coordinator. If it's not, then someone is slacking on his/her job. Please ask for it from your university office.

Knowing what you are evaluated on tells you what you should focus your efforts on. Some of my coursemates spent a lot of time studying, when exams only contributed to 30% of the grade (the rest being project work, tutorials and participation). On the other hand, they never quite spent as much time on the other components. They don't participate in class, don't do much for their projects and finish their assignments in the last minute. I never really understood why, though now to think of it, it might be because evaluation from high school and junior colleges was 100% exams.

However, things are different in university. Coursework and engagement matter. Speak up in class, build a relationship with your teachers and apply your knowledge. If there is participation score assigned to the class, then speak up more. If projects have a high score, then do more preparation work. Reading textbooks is an overrated activity. I have classes where I barely touched my textbook and I scored an A or A+ on it. Read just so you have

enough knowledge to understand and apply but don't get stuck trying to theorize theory. Most of the times I read the text once to understand, and that's about it. (Unless it's a closed-book exam where memorization is needed.)

If your assignment is 10%, group project work 30% and exams 70%, then allocate your effort in that manner. Don't spend some 80% of your time doing your assignment, 20% on your group project, and 0% studying for your papers. You don't get extra marks for spending more time on a small component. The [80/20 rule](#) applies in studies too.

4. Don't hold back

Remember back in elementary school where it's normal to get full marks for your tests? Well it's no different in university. If you want to, it's possible to score full marks, whether it's for your project work or your exams. Why not? After all, if your work merits it, there's no reason why the professors wouldn't give you the best mark.

I didn't start my university aiming to be the top student in my modules, but halfway through the semester I realized I was the top student in some of my modules, and it wasn't anywhere as hard as one would think. I was just doing my own thing and getting my act straight, that's all. No magic tricks, no hocus-pocus, no hard-core mugging or anything like that (more on that in other tips). That's when I suspect a lot of common beliefs surrounding being the top are more self-created than anything else. I knew the other students who did well too, and they are real people like you and me. Just focus on putting your best foot forward, and everything else will fall into place.

So don't hold back. With every component you are evaluated on, aim to get the maximum marks. It's possible, but first you have to set that as a goal first. If you subconsciously place a mental limitation on what you can achieve, you'll only reach that height because you are holding yourself back. But if you recognize you can indeed get full marks, you will set yourself to achieve that.

5. Learn the content immediately when it's taught

If you are taught a new concept on the day, then understand it before the class ends. Finish reading the materials before packing up. If you don't know what the teacher is talking about, then ask your friends. Or better still, consult your teacher. There's no better way than to seek out the source directly.

Make sure you know what he/she is talking about before you leave. Don't leave it hanging in your mind.

This is important because otherwise, you are creating extra work for yourself. Some of us may say we will study later when we get home, but how many of us actually do that? I know I wouldn't. I would just hit the sack or go play games. At home, there are a lot more distractions, compared to in the school where the environment is conducive. You have to overcome a lot more just to study. What's more, even if you do overcome the distractions and study, what's to say you will understand the materials fully? The professor isn't there, your friends aren't around you, and it's just a drag to have to wait till another time to consult them. All this work which can be prevented if you just finish learning the content right when it's taught, with the resources at your perusal.

The burden of not understanding the content will weigh over you. It might not seem significant, but multiply this over the stretch of your entire semester, along with other modules. As the burden becomes bigger, you build up a larger resistance towards catching up on your materials. Whereas initially the thought in your mind is "there is this concept in this module that I don't understand", it eventually generalizes into "I don't know this module well", to "I'm not good in this module", to "There's no point studying since I'm not good in this". You keep saying you will catch up on it when you go home, but you never do because the weight of the work overwhelms you. All this while it's just the mental fear built up in your head. And so much energy wasted on your part trying to overcome that mental fear and get to the actual reading, which brings in a whole load of other work because you refused to learn the materials during the best moment. There's really just a thin line that separates the strong performers and the ones who lag behind, and this is the difference. Learning the things as they are taught, rather than deferring to an infinite time.

In lectures and tutorials, whenever there is something I don't understand, I'll make sure I clarify on the spot. Get all the issues zapped immediately so I don't have to deal with it later. Consequently, I rarely needed to study in my free time. I found out many seemingly complicated questions can always be easily addressed on the spot. In fact, the complications are more mental than anything else. Some of my classmates often lamented about all the chapters they needed to catch up on. They said the same thing week after week, saying they would read up on it but never doing so since the thought of catching up on the materials overwhelmed them. They procrastinated on the work, then they would anguish over their procrastination. All this, when it could have been avoided at the onstart. Seriously, don't create unnecessary problems for yourself. Get your stuff right the first time, and you spare yourself a whole lot of pain later on.

6. Prepare for your tutorials

Lectures are meant for theoretical understanding, while tutorials are meant for in-depth discussion and application. If you go to your tutorials unprepared, you are going to be lagging behind. Not only that, you can't fully benefit from what is discussed during class. Make sure you study your materials and do your tutorials before you go to tutorial sessions. It will go a very long way.

Back then, I almost always prepared for my tutorials. And because of that, I was able to gain maximum learning during the short 1-hour sessions. Subsequently, I never had to revise much afterward. I had a module where I participated actively during the classes, but didn't read the textbook. I only read the text for the first time on the night before the exams, and even then I skimmed through the text. I eventually scored an A+ for the module. (The exams were 40% of the final grade).

How much you prepare for your tutorials and how much of the content you understand during tutorials is a good indication of how you'll perform for the exams. The exam questions are usually similar to what's discussed during tutorials too. If you prepare well for your tutorials, that's already more than half the battle won. The remainder is doing well for your project work and occasionally revising to keep the content fresh in your mind.

Continue on to: [How To Be A Dean's Lister – Part-3](#)

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How To Be A Dean's Lister – Last Part

This is the last part of a 3-part series on [How To Be A Dean's Lister](#).

7. Optimize your time

Some students may feel bogged down by work, lamenting about the heavy workload and lack of time. Honestly speaking, it's not about the workload nor is it about lack of time. It's about [how you manage yourself](#).

Even though I participated in a lot more things in university than in JC or high school years, I felt much freer during university than ever. I had engagements like my graphic design business, my core-curricular activities, case competition and teaching tuition. Studies-wise, Business modules are project intensive. There is usually a group project and 2 individual assignment per module. Group projects often take up a lot of coordination and discussion. Some modules even have 2 group projects.

Yet, I had no problem getting things done and still have lots of time for myself. I remember online games were a daily staple. I was playing games like Gunbound (a Worms Armageddon-like game, it was really popular game during those years), Ragnarok Online, Maple Story or Warcraft 3 almost every day with friends. I also had lots of time to go shopping with my girlfriends. (my favorite pastime back then).

So is it really about the time then? I beg to differ. All students have the [same amount of time](#). All students of a particular module have the same workload, have the same teachers and are evaluated on the same criteria. All students have their personal commitments and responsibilities. There's nothing so special about you as a student that makes you busier than another. It's all about [how you manage your own schedule](#). The plus side of being a university student is you have full flexibility and full rein over how you want to map out your timetable (see [Tip #2: Plan your modules in advance](#)).

Some of my personal tips on how I optimized my time in university:

1. **Don't attend classes if they don't add value.** There were several modules where I didn't attend any lectures at all (save for the 1st lecture). If I didn't see any value behind the lecture, I wouldn't attend. For example, if the lecturers spent a lot of time talking about irrelevant content or if the

materials taught were generally extractable from the books, I would stop attending. Sometimes if the lecture looks like it's going south, I'll get out of the lecture hall and go to the computer lab to do my stuff. The time I freed up from not attending the lectures was spent doing other more valuable activities to me (whether resting, playing, doing project work, getting assignments done).

2. **Make use of pockets of time.** My bus ride to school was about 45 minutes. Multiply it by 2 and it's about 1.5 hours. I usually used the time to read my books, study my notes or even do my assignments. Similarly when waiting for the next class to start, I would use the time to work on projects or catch up on past materials. Hence, I never had to spend much time studying during my free time.
3. **Understand the content the first time its taught.** This minimizes rework later on. [See Tip #5.](#)
4. **Maximize webcast lectures.** If modules have webcast lectures, I would skip the actual lectures. Webcast lectures are just as good, if not better, than the real thing. You can just forward past a segment if it is irrelevant or replay sections where needed. You can also catch up on multiple lectures at one go, which is more effective.
5. **Do your tutorials during the same lectures.** Tutorials on a topic usually commence 1-2 weeks after the lecture is taught. By doing the tutorials immediately during the lectures (of the same topic), you (1) get the most out of the lectures as you are testing your understanding of the concepts (2) save yourself from having to recollect what you learned before (3) don't have to take out time to do the tutorials later on.
6. **Use study techniques to speed up learning.** See Tip #8 (below).

8. Use study techniques to speed up learning

The normal way of studying is to read the textbooks from cover to cover and do questions to test your understand. Then over time, you reread to strengthen your understanding. When exams come, you repeat the cycle as way of revision. This method takes up a lot of time and is hardly effective.

There are study techniques which can help you learn faster, with the same or better outputs. Below are some of them:

- **Speed reading.** It's inevitable to do a lot of reading in an academic course. Hence, learning to read faster will make the learning process a lot faster. Some resources on how to speed up your reading: [Double Your Reading Rate](#) and [Speed Reading](#).
- **Mind maps.** Mindmaps was my trusty ally during the varsity years – it helped me to grasp a big picture and see interlinking concepts easily. I usually draw a mind map for the important or very information intensive chapters. My mind map also doubled up as an index – I would list down the textbook page numbers where each information is introduced.
- **Pick the 80/20.** 80% of the value in your book can be found in 20% of the content (usually the formulas, summary notes, definitions). Pick out the 20% highlights and spend your time understanding them. Read the other 80% if you need to understand something, but don't read for the sake of reading. You don't learn much that way.
- **Writing notes.** I only read my textbooks once – after that, I would refer to my mind maps, since the information is laid out in a much more understandable and intuitive manner. I refer to the textbooks only when I want specific details after reading my mind map.
- **Active learning through participation.** See Tip #9.
- **Association.** Linking similar ideas in your mind, so it strengthens your understanding of the new concept. I often looked for common themes

- across my different modules and mentally linked them together. This had a synergistic effect in my learning.
- **Start with questions first.** Read with an objective. If you start off doing questions first (whether in tutorial or in the textbook), it gives you an idea of what you should be learning. It's learning with a purpose.
 - **Photo reading** is a reading technique that helps you increase reading speed and value extraction. It's a skill taught via courses by [Learning Strategies](#). I personally haven't tried it before, but I have a friend who tried it and said it really works. Based on what I've read about photoreading, it sounds similar to certain things I do intuitively (over the years) to maximize my reading, so I'm not surprised to hear of its effectiveness. [Learn more about photo reading here.](#)

More resources for your reading:

- [Memory Improvement Techniques @ MindTools](#)
- [Memory Techniques @ Academic Tips](#)
- [Study Hacks](#)

9. Speak up. Ask questions.

In NUS Business, participation is frequently a component in the grades, often contributing to 5~15% of the final grade. It was the professors' way of getting students to speak up. Asian students tend to clam up in group settings. I reckon this isn't a problem in Western cultures.

However, the reason why you should speak up in class is beyond getting participation points. Speaking up is a great way to clarify your thoughts on the subject. It also lets you know whether you know your stuff or you have your concepts wrong. It gets you thinking and increases your take away of the class. [Research has shown](#) that we only take away 10% of what is taught if we just listen, but we take away 70% and above if we listen and participate. I had a module where I participated actively during the classes, but didn't read the textbook. I only read the text for the first time the night before the exams. I eventually scored an A+ for the module. (The exams were 40% of the final grade). Active learning is more powerful than passive learning.

Speaking up also makes the class a more interesting experience. I can't imagine just sitting in a class and listening the whole time. That'll be really boring.

So speak more. Share your thoughts. Expand your mind. Ask questions. But don't talk so much that you dominate the class. I had a classmate who had a tendency to turn the class into a dialogue session between him and the tutor. That isn't being polite to the other students. Contribute to the class in a meaningful manner that also help all other students learn too.

10. Leverage on your professors

Your professors are there to help you. After all, they have been teaching the subject for years and they are the ones evaluating your performance, so they are the best people to help you in your studies. If you don't understand a particular concept or you need help, approach them. Whenever I had questions, I would directly email my professors to clarify the questions. If I have more things to discuss, I would set up consultation sessions with them. It saved me a lot of time than just trying to figure things out and not being sure whether the answer was right. It was a great way to know them on a personal level too.

11. Get good project mates

This is applicable if you have group projects in your modules. I'm not sure about other faculties, but it's a common staple in business courses. It's important to get good team mates, because this affects the group dynamics and subsequently the output. Ever watched *The Apprentice* before? The type of team members you have directly affects your team's results. The best team is one where the total output is more than the sum of what the individual members can achieve.

A common woe back among students is the project work hell due to bad team mates. What determines a good team mate then? Generally (1) Attitude (2) Knowledge, where (1) is more important than (2). During my early years, I had project mates who were less than committed. They saw project work as a liability, and only did the bare minimal that was required. Some produced shoddy work and it made the project development process painful. Most of the times, the stronger members in the team would step in to fill in the gaps so as not to affect the final grade. While this solves the problem, it's hardly a long-term solution.

The best way is to grab good team mates you have worked with, then arrange with them to take the same modules and be in the same project group for the next semester. If you have been a strong team member, they would want to work with you as well. If you are a freshman, that would be hard, but it shouldn't matter much as everyone is starting on the same ground. Always be on the lookout for the best people to form your dream project team.

After my 1st year, I had a network of friends who were strong project mates. We would make it a point to take the same modules and be in the same project groups. Subsequently, we always scored A or A+ in all our projects. It was always a great experience working together, and this was part of what

made university so fun too too. 😊

12. Consult people who took the class before

It doesn't hurt to get advice from people who took the same class before. Since you pick when you want to complete individual modules, sometimes your peers may take the module before you do. That's a great chance to consult them on what to expect, how the class is like, how you can better prepare and do well in the module. If it's possible, you can get their materials and notes too. Of course in return, help them out in other modules which they are taking too. As in the golden rule, treat others as you would like to be treated.

13. Consistency pays off

As with everything in life, don't leave things to the last minute. Getting the best grades is like running a marathon. Plan out your resources carefully and pace yourself. No one finishes a marathon in 10 minutes, just like you shouldn't expect to ace your exams with 1 day of studying IF you have **never** studied the materials, done a single tutorial or attended any lectures.

Do your tutorials on a timely basis ([see Tip #6 – Prepare for your tutorials](#)), participate actively in class (Tip #9) , consult your professors regularly whenever you have questions (Tip #10), among the other tips. Because I was consistent in my work, when the exams came I never have to spend much time revising. Whereas friends would become very fearful when exams come and spend the pre-exam weeks mugging away, I continued by my gaming, leisure and giving tuition. The day before my exams, I would be playing Gunbound or Warcraft with friends. I just needed to quick review my materials, and I was ready to go.

A lot of students fear the exams. To be honest, I don't think it's the exams they are fearing. What they really fear is what the exams represent – a moment of truth which reveals their performance in the semester. If you have always understood the content as they are taught and prepared for your tutorials, there isn't anything to fear at all. The ones who fear the exams are those who subconsciously know they have not been consistent and are afraid this lapse will return to bite them in the ass. Be consistent, and you will reap the fruits of your labor come exams and when you get your results.

Final note

For all students out there, I hope you find these tips useful for your schooling years. Even if you are working now, you might return to school in the future for further studies (never an end to learning after all), and this Dean's List series will come in handy. 😊 Feel free to pass it on to your friends in school so they can benefit this too.

Posted May 17, 2009 | [Original Article Link](#)



Afterword

The series in this book is just the icing on the cake. If you have enjoyed this book and found it useful, you will surely love all the other articles at Personal Excellence. Many readers continually feedback on how they have benefited tremendously from reading the site and how it's a staple for their personal growth. Here is a list of top articles to get you started:

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