

Becoming a Straight-A Student: Irrefutable Keys to Unlock Your Potential for Maximum Academic Excellence

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Abstract

One of the greatest Joy a person can have is attaining the maximum in every sphere of endeavor even including their academic pursuit. Having a potential to get an “A” and being able to get the “A” is what it means to attain the maximum. There are many graduates that couldn’t attain First Class at college because they couldn’t maximize their academic prowess. This paper seeks to give a summary of the irrefutable keys proven by straight-A students that will open the door to the room called “Straight-A” to them. This paper talks about Self – Discipline and Academic Excellence which expands the various areas to be disciplined, making your academic work a priority, having mentors who will guide and make you more responsible, how to approach each semester, tapping into your limitless potential, effective study approach to score higher marks in quizzes and exams, and balancing your academic with extra curricula activities. These keys are proven by the author himself and many others that made Straight-A at college.

Keywords: Straight-A student, Self-Discipline, Mentors, Limitless Potential, Persistence and Resistance

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1. Introduction

Let’s begin with a question: “Why do some students become straight-A while others are not even though, they all had same grades from high school; or even the grade of the later might be better than the former? Have you ever wondered why such a thing happen?”

Ok before we move on let’s define Straight-A. Straight-A is the highest grade or superior accomplishment especially scholastically, according to the Dictionary.com.

There are lots of people who say all that matter is being able to graduate no matter the class. Giving flimsy excuses like First-Class doesn’t automatically give you a job. Upon all these contemplations, how will you feel after graduating with second class or lower and then realizing that you could have been a Straight-A or getting to know that you could have unlocked your potential to have an excellent academic performance?

And the sad news is that knowing this after graduation might be too late to go back to make changes since you cannot reverse time.

But you don’t need to worry at all. That is the reason why this book is a must read for you. Here is the good news that you will be guided practically with the right Keys that open all doors to those seeking Straight-A.

In this book you will learn what Straight -A students do at lectures, their study strategies, how to plan and spend each day – making each day count, health and nutrition practices, examination preparations, vacation, project work preparation and many more.

I had the passion to seeing students excelling academically and overcome their challenges. This desire led to the birth of my first book titled ‘soaring through the storms on campus life’ which gives solutions to the daily challenges’ students face. As a straight A student while on campus, I had learned a lot by experience that most students who graduate with second class upper or lower could have made straight-A easily if only they had the keys that open the door of “Straight A”. After consulting many other ‘straight-A students from the University of Mines and Technology, and other universities including many lecturers I came up these Irrefutable Keys to unlock your potential for academic

Excellence.

As the New York Bestselling Author and Speaker - Brian Tracy stated, “if you do what successful people do, you will be successful” (Brian T. 2001). When you put into practice the keys written in this book, you will excel academically fulfilling your dream.

This the greatest philosopher, King Solomon summarizes as “there is nothing new under the sun”. That which has been that which will be, and that which has been done is that which will be done. (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

Who is this book written for? Anyone willing to learn and apply the things Straight -A students do to attain the same results Straight -A students attained.

Let’s walk to the door as the reading unfolds with the first key at hand – Self Discipline and your Academic Goals.

2 Self -Discipline and Academic Excellence

“Self - Discipline is the ability to make yourself do what you should do when you should do it, whether you feel like it or not” according to Brian Tracy (2010).

Having great potentials alone is not enough to excel in your academics. It takes great self- discipline to bring out the best within you. There are many talented and gifted people who never rise above an average student because of lack of discipline to unlock their full intellectual potential. On the other side too, there are lots of students with average IQ who are disciplined rising to be genius in academia.

You must be disciplined to doing what you have planned and written to become the Straight-A Student you desire.

2.1 Self - Discipline and Social Media

You can now apply discipline to learn. Use your social media platforms like LinkedIn and Facebook to learn as much as you could according to CEO of Alpha Great company.

The main reason for being in the university is for your academic purposes. Therefore, every avenue and opportunity you have at any time should have a place for academic purposes. For example, on LinkedIn and Facebook, you can learn things like how to prepare a CV, how to organize a meeting, and many more.

2.2 Self - Discipline and The Lecture Room

In the lecture room most students dress up and come for a two-hour lecture only to sit at the back to have one and half hours of conversation with your course mates, giggling and having fun while lecture is ongoing. Or at times, spend nearly the two hours on WhatsApp with someone and scrolling through all social media platforms.

Wouldn’t it have been better if you had stayed in your hostel and converse or chat or better sleep than to come to the lecture hall to have fun? And yet this is what most students do. Using the University of Mines and Technology (UMaT), as an example where I had my Bachelor of Science degree. UMaT students’ attendance to lectures is about 99% but effectiveness in the lecture hall while lecture is ongoing is very low. Most students I have seen pack up at the back and make noise, others chat and on social media and others turn the lecture room as their bedroom where they come to sleep.

To get maximum from your lecturers you must be active and attentive in class. Tell yourself I have come to learn for two hours. Make short notes while lecture is ongoing. “Read ahead before coming to class”, a lecturer stated, ask questions and go back to revise what you have learnt. Make conscious effort to listen attentively during lectures.

You can record the audio of the lectures. Write assignments and writes the deadlines for submission. Make it a point to understand about 70 % of what you learn at lectures.

2.2 Self-Discipline and Assignments

Days or weeks are given to submit assignments. And one of the commonest things students do is to wait till the last minute and be calling course mates for the answers to dub. As stated earlier, make your academic work a priority in all things. Do you intend to be a First-Class student who would earn it by hard work and not just by luck? Then, you should be the one students ask whether the assignment is done.

I suggest that once an assignment is given even if it will be submitted the following week start work on it immediately. Latest by three days' time you are done. If it's difficult, consult some of your friends or the internet like YouTube. This gives you enough time to rectify any mistakes.

2.3 Self-Discipline and Your Sleep

Another definition of self-discipline I learnt from my Spiritual father, Bro Zac Poonen is "sleep when you should and wake up when you should". From this definition I can say that knowing when you should sleep and when to wake up is key to your excelling in your academic work. In today's world, one can spend time to sleep doing unprofitable stuffs and get to bed late. This will keep you inactive in class and some will come for lectures late. Knowing that you have a 6 :00 AM class might mean that you sleep by 10 or 11 PM so you can wake up early.

According to medical practitioners, humans need about 8 hours sleep every day. As a student you can say that 8 hours of sleep can cause failure in your exams, but I submit to you that most time is wasted on unprofitable activities that could have been of profit to your body if you sleep during such times. Scrolling on social media doing arguably nothing seriously for hours before you go to bed can be a way of wasting time. The next chapter will talk about time management and Academic Excellence.

Go to bed early and have enough rest and wake up early to have enough vitality for the next day's activities.

2.3 Discipline and Your Nutrition

Nutrition is the fuel for the body to drive to places of academic excellence. Therefore, you cannot reach anywhere without the body being properly fed. Eat well. Exercise well. You must be very conscious about what you eat.

Some practices to put in place regarding nutrition and studies;

2.3.1 Don't go studying on an empty stomach

Research has shown that the better and healthier we eat the better we feel and the more we can focus on the task at hand. People who rely on sugary fixes too often, drink too much coffee, or eat fatty foods are at risk of being sluggish, jittery, or feeling burned out. When studying for exams, we can be inclined to stay up late and forget to eat and drink properly because of stress. But bad eating habits before and during exams will leave you with less energy both mentally and physically. No matter what your diet, vegan, dairy-free, vegetarian or carnivore, good nutrition will always keep you at your optimum and help you concentrate better. Some of the best nutritional tips for healthy eating during exam time are stated below.

- Avoid skipping meals. When you have your head in the books and time is ticking by fast, you might forget or skip a meal to keep up momentum. Don't do it! Your brain needs food and water to keep working. Mental fatigue can cloud your brain, especially if you are about to take an exam. Have a quick snack, such as a banana, apple, or low fat/carb sandwich to keep you going.
- Eat 'brainy' food. Proteins from lean meat, fish and eggs, fruit, nuts and whole grains are foods that help keep the brain mentally alert. Snacking on nuts and dried fruit as well as keeping hydrated with water will help stop your concentration from wavering. Remember, fruit like bananas, blueberries, and oranges all have natural sugars that will give you a lift when you're feeling down and out.
- Eat smaller meal more often at a regular interval. Large meals tend to make us feel stuffed and bloated, and the idea of 3 meal a day is a modern cultural convention and scientific research opinion is divided. However, our energy levels start depleting around 3 hours after we eat food. Having 5/6 small meals instead of 3 large ones will keep you balanced throughout the day.
- Keep caffeine to a minimum. Caffeine is great pick-me-up and is proven to help concentration. But too much will leave you jittery and dehydrated. If you're a coffee addict, try and cut back to one a day.

- Avoid sugar! This seems obvious, but we are all guilty of eating high fat-high sugar snacks sometimes, such as muffins, chocolate, or pastries when we are stressed out and have not prepared any food. High fat/sugar items take time for your stomach to digest and will leave you feeling sluggish. If you have a sweet tooth, why not make a sugary treat part of your rewards in your study planner! Whether you are studying or about to write an exam, eating right, carrying healthy snacks and plenty of water will greatly aid your concentration levels and give you lots of energy. Remember, a poor diet will affect your sleep, your mood and will leave you struggling to focus, so start preparing your favourites healthy snacks.

A lecturer stated, discipline: No one should tell you to do this or that. You must know when to go to bed, and when to wake up. You must plan your day and what you do at each time. This is how you can make effective use of the day.

In a day, you consider the activities that are important and the unimportant ones. The unimportant tasks are the ones that do not add any value to what you achieve. Those ones don't do them. The important ones too are many and you can't do all at the same time. Therefore, you prioritize them. You do the most important ones and finish them before moving on to the others. You should plan the time to go to bed and have enough rest to get prepared for work the next day.

Studies do not mean you have to always be tensed and glued to your books. You plan and study for some time, and then play a game, have some short discussion with friends for say 10 to 20 minutes. Then afterwards comeback to your studies.

3. Make Your Academic Work A Priority

As a student in the university, it's possible to spend most of your time majoring on the minors. Almost everyone in the university knows the reason they are there - thus academics excellence. Yet still they end up spending most of their time on the secondary matters of life such as entertainment, movies, chatting with friends just to mention a few. In today's world it is easy to get side-track by the easy to do things in life.

3.1 Majoring on the Majors

The major reason for being in school is to study and get a degree or a diploma. That is your primary goal. Therefore, your excelling in your academic work should be the pivot of your life. When you are playing, chatting or whatever, never forget this goal. When friends come around and try to engage you in all sorts of activities you must ask yourself if that will help increase my CWA or GPA. If not find an excuse and don't let anyone waste your time. The time you should be using to study.

3.2 Have a Study Group

A study group must contain like-minded students. Don't be unequally yoked. Form a study group with serious minded students. I mean serious minded students not intelligent students. Once a person is serious, whenever it's time to have studies meeting, he will make time for it. He will show up at the venue and will also participate intensively. In forming your study group, it shouldn't be more than five people. Larger numbers just result in fun and nonseriousness at meetings. Select among your course mates whom you trust and have confidence in.

To make your study group very effective, there must be a timetable for your studies. This will be expanded in detail in the next chapters ahead.

3.3 Have a Clear Written Goal About Your Academic Work

One of the key propellers to reaching the dream of excellent Academic Performance is to have a goal concerning your education. A goal can be defined as a target set to achieve by an individual. These goals must be written down. According to Brain Tracy a goal not written down is just a mere wish. It has no energy behind it to enable one achieve it. You can say it's my goal to get 90% in the courses in the semester or be in First-Class. But without it written down, the semester May end, and you barely achieve any of these goals. Why? This is because

your subconscious mind work on the things that are consciously stored in the mind.

When you continually write your goals regularly, the subconscious mind takes it from there and keep reminding you about what you want to do. This keeps your mind occupied always with something you must do and make you busy daily. You can then make good use of your time. Cultivate the habit of writing your academic goals daily. The more you write something the more it is imprinted in your mind. Cultivate the habit of putting a pen on paper to write your academic goals every morning. In today's world you can type it also on your phone or Laptop. Write them daily and must be in the present tense. For example: I get 90 % in Linear Algebra. I get 85 % in Computer programming I get 20/20 in my first quiz in Remote Sensing Having these goals written daily make you remember what you seek to achieve in each course even as you go to lectures. When you are reading Environmental Management lecture notes and in your subconscious mind you know that this is the course, I want to get 90 %, it will motivate you to take is seriously. For instance, you have a quiz tomorrow in applied electricity and in your sub - goal you intend to get 20/20 in your first quiz. It will compel you to see a friend who can help you understand the chapter 3 of the PDF that you are finding it difficult to understand. On the other side if you don't have a goal, you don't see any urgency to strive for more because there is no specific target to meet.

I remember those days when I was a student at UMAT, before we began each semester, I typed the courses and marks I wanted to get in each. So anytime I was studying a particular course, I had in mind the marks I was expecting to get. This kept me alert and ready to learn more.

3.3.1 How to Have Effective Goals Written Down

- Be clear on what you want in each subject for the semester. Also know exactly the other areas of your life what you seek to achieve each semester aside your Academic work.
- Write them down. Let's talk on paper. As clearer as you are with what you want at the end of your three or four years at the university or any tertiary institution, write it down. Before you begin any semester write the goals you want to achieve in your education and other social life. Make the list in present tense.
- Set a deadline for your goals. Deadlines gives you a sense of urgency and responsibility to accomplish your goal. Without a deadline your Academic goals will have no beginning or end. Have weekly, monthly, and even mid-semester deadlines. For example, by the end of the first 4 weeks I have to finish reading through my handout; before I write quiz one, I have to finish chapter 3 of this subject.
- Write everything you will do that will help you to achieve your academic goal. I call this your mission statement. The step-by-step activities that will move you a step closer to your goal.
- Organizing the list into priority and sequence. This I called the master plan - the road to success. What must be done first and what must follow. Once you are clear on what you want, you become clear on what must be done first. For instance, you study first before you solve past questions. So, in your list, reading through your handout or performing calculations should come before you search for past questions. Act immediately on your plan. One thing I have noticed among most students is the habit of procrastination. When a semester begins most students make good plans of, I will do this and that. But they wait too long to start. Some students spend the first 4 weeks when school resumes watching movies and engage in other extra curricula activities that adds no value to their academic performance. They later start serious studies when it's almost time for quizzes. But that shouldn't be your case. Take the step day one and another until the semester is over. Don't wait to start working your plan after 4 weeks later.
- Commit to doing something every day that brings you closer to your bigger goals of academic excellence. Let not a day go by without you having read something related to your programme of study. To have this done requires great discipline. That's why the power of Self - Discipline and Academic Excellence were discussed in the first chapter.

Before We End Let's Do This Exercise

- a. What three things when done diligently this semester will make you more prepared for your exams? Write them done.
- b. What will you do differently this semester

4. Think Continually About Your Academic Work

We become our predominant thoughts. As a man thinks in heart so he is. (Proverbs 23:7). You become and find yourself doing what you mostly think about - either the good stuffs or the bad ones. The Law of attraction says that what you continuously gaze upon seems to become attractive to you. Let's consider the instance in the Bible about the serpent and Eve. In Genesis 3: 1 - 6 it reads that when the woman saw the tree to be good for food, pleasing to the eyes and a tree desirable to make one wise, she took its fruit and ate and ...

Eve had the tree of the knowledge of good and bad with her from the beginning but didn't see it desirable and pleasing until she began to gaze at it. Then its beauty began to show. In the same way as you think continuously about your academic work, you begin to see good things you have done, what best to start doing, and ways to improve your CWA or GPA.

There is no way you can tell me that you keep thinking about your academic work and had no new ideas in improving it. In other words, FOCUS on your academic work, day and night and there you unleashed your thinking power to fix any obstacle that might come.

Think more and more often about your assignments, the quizzes ahead of you, the applications areas of the courses you are doing per semester and how to increase your CWA or GPA.

Get yourself busy daily with your academic work. Getting your mind focused on how to better your CWA or GPA will make you have less or no time to think of unprofitable conversations and meagre things.

Some areas to think about in relation to your academic work will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

5. Have a Mentor(s)

As a student you must have someone you greatly revere and let him or her mentor you. Mentorship in academic work is key. And the good point is that you can choose as many mentors as possible you want for your education. Select lecturers who did well in the field of academia and approach them. Talk to them that you admire and aspire to be like them. Therefore, you want them to mentor and coach you as you begin your academic journey on campus. It will be very helpful if you start when you are in first year. You will be amazed what you will become in four years' time (i.e., during your graduation). This is because as you strike acquaintance with them and humble yourself to learn from them, they will start giving you the knowledge (information) that made them who they are today.

You will begin to subscribe to their convictions and sooner or later you will see yourself talking, behaving, and responding to situations as they do.

5.1 The Gateway to Mentorship

The first and second step to mentorship is HUMILITY and ACTION. With humility, you go to someone to learn anything from and taking- action is the real doing. You can make plans of going but never taking the action to go. This will not yield any good results. Ask great questions and act on the information given you and that will make you excel as your mentors.

5.2 Conquer Your Fear of Approaching People

One of the worst limitations to one's Destiny is the fear of stepping into new dimensions. Have confidence to approach your lecturers. Have confidence to approach your fellow students and ask for guidance. If only you know how people are willing to help you solve your problems, you will have gone to them quickly. Break that barrier and get to your lecturers.

One of the benefits of having a mentor is that it makes you accountable and responsible in life. You will have to give an account of your recent undertakings and report on task assigned to you. Your mentor can ask you to prepare a CV and show it to him or finish a chapter of a handout. Because you do revere him / her you are likely to do it and show it to him.

Let me tell you this fact. All great people in any field you see has mentors. I was at a conference where the VC was then the Dean of FMRT was one of the speakers. He talked about mentorship, and he gave an incident where someone came looking for him. He told the person that he has just returned from his mentor's place. And the person was surprised to hear that the VC had mentors.

In the book of proverbs 15:22 Solomon the man of great wisdom said that plans fail because of lack of counsel but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety. Your safety in getting First Class depends on the number of good counsellors you have.

5.3 Humility, the Platform for Learning

Humility means coming down to learn. If you are not humble, you cannot learn anything. Coming down to learn from others. Samsung is owned by South Koreans. No shame of copying. Copying is an act of humility. Melcom, Shoprite and other big companies are not owned by

Ghanaian. Why can't we easily learn from them? It is Pride! according to CEO of Alpha Great Dynamic Services. Never be ashamed to say I don't know and want to learn. Humble yourself to learn from others. The humbler you are the more you recognized that you don't know and so want to learn. When you think you are too big to ask for help, it's a sign that you are proud. Humble yourself to ask your course mates for help in some courses. Approach the lecturers and ask for clarification. When you notice that a course mate of yours is academically good in a course, swallow your pride and ask for help. It becomes easy to learn from others when you place value on the potential of others and with you always saying I don't know it all. One of the benefits of having a mentor is that it makes you accountable and responsible in life

5.4 Know Yourself; the Cure for Dealing with Setbacks

John C Maxwell stated "if you don't challenge yourself, you don't know yourself". Have knowledge about yourself in the areas of your strength and what you can do. Challenging yourself to do something difficult which you feel lazy doing is what helps you to know your abilities.

I learnt a lesson when I started working on this book. There were many weeks that I didn't type anything. I felt like there was nothing I could write. But the day I gathered the courage to sit by my laptop, I typed about five pages. The ideas kept flowing and I asked myself, so I could write such amazing points, but I wasn't aware earlier?

How did I know I had ideas to write? It was when I challenged myself to start writing. The same with some courses when I pursued my bachelor's degree. Operations

Research is one of the courses almost all students in year 4 are afraid of. Because of that many are reluctant in studying it.

But something happened during my time. I used to sit down and lament about the course till a day came that I said to myself that I am going to solve questions on the integer programming". When I started the calculations by first going through what the lecturer did, I realized it's not difficult as I thought. I began doing calculations till I realized there was nothing to fear about OR.

How did I do it? By first challenging myself. That's how come I got to know myself.

There are some courses that are difficult, and everyone would be complaining about it. But you must give it your all to study it seriously. You would develop love even for such courses

5.5 Learn from the Experts and be Ready to Learn Always

There are always people ahead of you in whatever you want to do or wherever you want go in life. As a student there are continuing students ahead of you who probably have insight in the courses you are yet to take in a semester. Can you just humble yourself and ask for lecture materials and also how the lecturers of those courses handle their subjects? Would you sometimes observe how they do things related to studies and learn from them?

Your lifestyle as a determined First-Class student should be that of readiness to learn always from the great as well as the small.

5.6 Persistence in Meeting Your Mentors

The presiding Elder of my church, E.K Dadzie, made this statement to me once that persistence breaks resistance. Why this statement? He gave me a task of getting people to perform a task at church but the people were giving excuses. I went to complain to him. After making this statement, he asked me to contact them again. I called and

they showed up after several calls.

The lesson I learnt was that every door of access could be opened to you once you have resolved to be consistent. When I was doing my final year project work, there were numerous occasions that I went to meet my project supervisor. And most of the time when it's my turn to see him then another lecturer would come or he was caught up with something else. There were certain times I couldn't see him after waiting for four hours. But I wasn't discouraged. I needed his help and not that he didn't want to see me. He had a lot of responsibilities at that level.

There are times you will visit your lecturers (mentor) and he may not even have time for you. He may be busy with his office work. Never mind. He may be working on his technical paper for publication. Don't lose heart that you had gone to him or booked an appointment to meet him. He might not have time for you but the day he does, even if he just had five minutes with you, the knowledge he might share with you would change your life. Remember that he doesn't need your help. You are the one who needs his attention.

5.7 Have an Accountability Partner

Sometimes you may have good plans but may end up not carrying out those plans as you plan. What then would you do? Get someone you trust and can rely on. A person who is diligent in performing his responsibilities. Tell him / her what you seek to achieve with deadlines and ask him to follow up on you. Once you know that you are accountable to someone by this time you will strive to complete your plans.

6. Tapping into Your Limitless Potential

6.1 Do not limit your Potential

John C Maxwell stated "When you think you're done, you're only at forty percent of what your body can do. That's just the limit that we put on ourselves."

I then asked why certain people don't seem to study more than they do and earn the same semester average over and over while others look like supermen who seem to study more than and more hours and get their semester average increasing semester by semester. It's the limit they have set for themselves that makes them obtain the CWA or GPA they have currently. You might say thus far I can go but that might be only 40% efficiency of what your body and mind can do. Can you challenge yourself to go an extra mile in whatever you are do? You have a quiz of which the lecturer says it is up to chapter 3 of your Pdf, yet challenge yourself to study a little bit of chapter 4.

I had numerous occasions where students come out of an examination hall complaining that the lecturer mafias them by bringing in an additional chapter, he didn't tell them about.

What I say then is if they had known earlier, they would have read wildly. For some of you there's a mindset of studying three hours in a day or I can't sit down reading my lecture notes for hours. I just spend a few minutes and I am done studying. But let me ask; has those few minutes of scanning through the lecture notes earned you a good mark?

I suggest you have a changed mindset of reading through the lecture notes once before end of the first one month. Make it a habit of finishing your handout before entering an examination room.

Some also have the habit of sleeping same hours just as they were at home but that might not be helpful. Don't say I can't. Intentionally cut down on your sleep to add up to your study time.

When you study widely and prepare well for a quiz, you are not at jeopardy of your marks. You earn the 80% by hard work and not by luck.

Elon Musk made a statement that is 'if you give yourself three weeks to clean your room and if you give yourself three hours, you will use three hours for the same work'. Challenge your mind and body to expand and do more. Increase your capacity. Overcome the limit of I can't do this, and you can overcome the next limit you've set in the mind. As John C Maxwell asserted, "risk, is not just part of life. It is life. The place between your comfort zone and your dream is where life takes place".

Remove the limitation of "I can't make First Class". You can make it. When you are studying, tell the mind that it is Straight-A and it should study as for that. I'm studying as a straight-A student to make the First Class I want. Therefore, when the limitations of settling for something lower than straight A comes, you push hard on yourself.

As John C Maxwell quoted “If you want to be pushed to your limits, you must train to your limits”. Train your mental faculties for First Class and that settling for Second Class Upper will be a limit to your potential. Failure is about not growing. Do not limit your Potential reaching for the things you value. It means you’re not fulfilling your potential according to John C. Maxwell

6.2 Resolve to Pay the Price

Success, however, you define it, is not like a restaurant where you pay after you have enjoyed your meal. Instead, it is like a cafeteria, where you can choose whatever, you want, but you must pay for it before you eat it according to Brian Tracy.

The price for success in your academic work of becoming a Straight-A student is not paid during your end of semester exams or just few weeks to start exams. It must be paid in advance as Brian Tracy stated. It must be paid even before the beginning of every new semester. Just like football clubs like Real Madrid, Man City and others go for pre-season training, so is it with your academic work. Finishing top on the league depends on how serious the coach builds the team and trained during the preseason.

Same with those who make Straight-A semester after semester. They resolve to have the lecture materials on time, knows what each lecturer expects of them in each course, how to study each course in advance before midway of the semester.

You must count the cost of being a straight-A student and pay the price in full and in advance. Over the years, I have observed students who want to make an A in a course only during the examinations. They want the invigilator to allow them dub from course mates or send foreign materials to the exams room. But this is not the time to pay the price for an A.

NO! The three -hour exam is just a moment to reproduce what you trained and fed your mind with 100s of hours ago when the semester begins.

Assignments and quizzes are also very important in paying for the price. Take them seriously. And always remember that no one else is responsible for paying the price but you. Only you can pay the price for the academic success you want. And you know how much the price you have paid by looking at your current CWA or GPA. Are you happy with your CWA or GPA? If not, then resolve to increase the price you have paid so far!

6.3 The Great Law

“Iron Law of the Universe” says that if you want to achieve success in any area, you must determine how success is achieved in that area and then practice those skills and activities repeatedly until you achieve the same results.

Here’s the rule: “If you do what other successful people do, over and over again, nothing can stop you from eventually enjoying the same rewards that they do. But if you don’t do what successful people do, nothing can help you” according to Brian Tracy. Applying this rule around your academic work will make you a straight A student. There are overall best graduating students and many First-Class students who made it, and you can rely on this book to get the insights shared by this people. Practicing the rules stated in this book will make you a Straight-A student.

6.4 The Secret to Success

The secret to success at anything can be sum up to three things as stated by the greatest self-made Billionaire H. L. Hunt “There are only three requirements for success. First, decide exactly what it is you want in life. Second, determine the price that you are going to have to pay to get the things you want. And third, and this is most important, resolve to pay that price.”

After deciding that you want to be a straight A student, the next important decision is willingness to pay the price for the excelling academic performance you want. The straight A students are willing to pay the price to do whatever and for everything until they achieve the desired CWA or GPA they want.

Every student desire to excel academically, - becoming Straight-A, but only very few have resolve to pay the price for what they desire and to pay it in full. Success in your academic work requires payment of the whole price not partially. It is a conscious and deliberate decision. Not casually being serious one semester and relaxing the next semester. A desire without willingness is just a wish without any energy to carry out that desire to an

end. Choose today to be different, that you are ready to pay the price and pay it in full.

Learning the rules of the game is much more important than playing the game.

I watched a movie titled “REMEMBER THE GOAL” which has blessed me a lot. In that movie, while the other coaches were busy doing things, the coach for Orange Hill Academy was busy teaching her athletes the rules in running cross country. The lesson I learnt was to know what was required of one at any competition before one starts such an endeavour.

6.5 Be Persistence and Consistent

People in the world have their own perception about everything. But you must know what you want and be determined to stay committed to it even if everyone in the world is against you.

“Be persistence with your studies. I meet difficult concepts in some courses that I am likely to fail but say to myself; I can’t quit but continue till I make it. Some of such courses are Soil and Rock mechanics, and Mineral Resource Estimation. I persisted” by Samuel Tetteh, overall Best Graduating student (2021, UMaT) with a CWA of over 90%.

One lesson I learnt in a movie titled “remember the goal” was that people fight you not because they are bad people but because they do not understand what you are doing; and it will be difficult for them to understand you at the beginning. Therefore, people will understand you at the end and no need wanting people to understand you at the beginning. Only understand what you do and be determine never to give up. Once you understand and know what you want, go get it no matter the obstacles that would stand your way. At the end those who are against you will be on your side because they can see the results.

One of the important lessons I have learnt in life is that people are not really interested in the process but the result. The outcome is what they want. Therefore, there is no need trying to explain the process to them. Once you have the results then they will listen to the process.

Why am I saying all these? At college, most of your course mates may call you names and might not agree on most things you do. Some of the processes like having a good semester plan, sleeping well and others. They may want short cuts and mock you for what you do but the result of making a Straight-A will speak for itself. Try to understand yourself and what you do! Others will hardly understand you.

A lecturer stated, no one had an advantage over the other once you have admissions to the University. It doesn’t matter if someone comes with 6 As, and another 2 As and Bs. Once anybody gets to the university, s/he is qualified to do the university’s programme. Is it possible for them both to make it to first class? Yes, it’s possible. But getting there depends on how you work. To be a First Class student, you must know the rules of engagement. Know what is required of you to make the First-Class. Once you know what is expected of you, start working hard consistently semester after semester.

You don’t study hard in a semester; get 85%, 90s% and then go to rest. You start getting average marks and for you to bounce back to first class you have to put in much effort. You must work hard consistently. Consistency is key. Attend lectures, do your assignments on time, and submit.

Once you stay focus and keep doing these things, I believe s/he can make it to First Class. You will be fine.

6.6 Relating with Your Course Mates and Lecturers

Apostle Joshua Selman made a statement that the word “be fruitful means be relational. And everything succeeds or fails through relationships”.

In the academic climate also, becoming a Straight- A student depends basically on your relationship with your lecturers, course mates and how well you honour and obey the University or College rules and regulations. Your ability to have and maintain relationships with lecturers, course mates and administrators shows the degree of how far you will go in life.

6.6.1 Why the need to have a good relationship with course mates and lecturers

- You may need their help in one way or the other.
- And people are willing to help those they have good relations with.

- The world is a global village so the person you might not treat well may be connected to a big man or woman you may need help from.

6.8 Be a Team Player

The university is a community where excellency is rewarded but not on the bases of competitive standpoint. We help one another so we all come out as straight - A graduate. Therefore, there is the need to help and receive help from one another. On the next page are some of the ways of being a good team player or building and maintaining healthy and good relationships with course mates and lecturers:

6.8.1 Be Trustworthy

Speak no evil about your course mates in their absence. Author Stephen R. Covey stated in his book “7 Habit of Highly Effective people” that Loyalty to those absent is a proof of trust. When you gossip and speak about a course mate in his or her absence to me, it also proves that you could equally gossip about me in my absence. Be the type that your course mates have confidence in. same with your lecturers and administrators. Even the Bible says so that we should speak evil of no man (Titus 3:2). People do things to damage a teacher's relationship with their course mates more than spilling secrets, gossiping, or talking smack about administrators. So, don't. When—not if, but when—someone tells you something in confidence, keep it to yourself. When you hear gossip, don't participate. And never talk trash. It will always come back to bite you. Showing your course mates that they can trust you is a fundamental step in building strong relationships with them.

6.8.2 Be a contributor to the wellbeing of your course mates.

Consider ways of adding value to your course mates. If you're a new teacher, it's imperative to listen to the vets around you. We get it: You're full of enthusiasm, and you're eager to contribute to meetings. But be careful - you don't want to come across as a know-it-all when you're a novice. Of course, veteran students want to hear new students' voices. But presentation is critical. Veteran students and staff will help you acclimatize to the culture of your building. They'll help you navigate the ups and downs of teaching. Observe how veterans speak in meetings, during professional learning group time, and with other course mates. You'll learn valuable information.

6.8.3 Ask Questions

Asking questions is an easy and effective way to build relationships with your course mates. If you don't understand something or need help, don't be afraid to ask questions. Your administrators, your course mates, and especially your mentors—they want to help you. They'd much rather want you ask a question than watch you flounder. Ask your course mates questions about their interests and hobbies outside of studies, too. Get to know them better. Maybe you both love jogging—that could help build your bond. I love listening to my course mates share their child-rearing tips and cooking ideas and talk about their travel adventures.

6.8.4 Support Your course mates

Almost every course mate and even the lecturers I know are working on an initiative, engaged in committee work, or piloting new task. Supporting your course mates' work shows them that you care about their interests and you are willing to show up when they need you. And if you see something that resonates with you, talk to the lecturer handling that work. They'll appreciate the support and interest.

6.8.5 Offer Your Help

My mentee this year, Patrick, was very technologically savvy. He helped me and several other students navigate our new online testing system, and we were eternally grateful. If you have a special skill, let your course mates know and offer your help. Reverse mentoring is powerful.

6.8.6 Respect Boundaries

Look, you don't need to be told that everyone is busy trying to live their purpose and destiny. If you see your

course mates busy with studies, talking to someone or engaged. Do not bother them. If you borrow something, return it on time. Respecting your fellow students' boundaries is critical to building bridges—and keep working continually. Modelling this respect can also help others learn how to identify and respect your boundaries, something kids learn through practice, the Child - Mind Institute says. Developing your emotional intelligence will help you empathize with your course mates and know when to engage—and when not to.

6.8.7 Be Real

No one likes a phony. When you interact with a course mate, be yourself, and be honest. Look to create genuine relationships with your fellow students, not transactional ones. This will show your course mates that you're invested in the relationship.

6.8.8 Celebrate

Get to know your course mates better by creating memories with them. Students who frequently go out for dinner and sometimes attend cultural events together turn to build much stronger relationships and connections with one another. Schools throw holiday parties. Teachers' union hold soirees. At my school, most of the teachers go to prom every year. Many teachers attend student sporting events, musical performances, and school plays. Take part in these outings when you can. You don't need to attend every school-related event but showing up at least occasionally shows that you're a team player.

6.8.9 Branch Out Forming relationships with lecturers course mates can help you feel more fulfilled in your career, but it's also perfectly acceptable to develop relationships with your administrators, too. Over the years, I've counted many of my bosses as dear friends. Friendships with administrators can lead to complications, however, keeping the relationship healthy is key. To avoid blurring lines, make your intentions clear when speaking to an administrator by saying things like, "I'm speaking to you as a friend now," or "As an employee, I think..." Entrepreneur suggests remembering that the purpose of your relationship with your principal isn't to win favour; it's to build a connection based on "mutual respect, which will lead to better communication, the ability to work through disagreements and ... a partnership where you can support one another through difficult times."

6.9 Leadership and Responsibility

The first step to becoming a Straight-A student, - having an excellent academic performance is taking responsibility for your life. As Winston Churchill said responsibility is the price for greatness. Every student desire an outstanding academic performance which is very good but only the remnant that pays the price of taking responsibility for their lives gets their resides fulfilled. Therefore, being in the university or any tertiary institution, the first decision you should make is to decide to be responsible for the grades you get at school. This means you say to yourself that I am responsible for the way I spend my time, the day to day plans I make, the things I spend time on and many more.

As John C. Maxwell put it "Every significant accomplishment begins with one person stepping up and committing to make a difference. That person then takes responsibility to pass it on to others. If you don't take responsibility for yourself, then don't expect your life to become any different from what it is right now".

And some of the ways of taking responsibility to excelling academically is by asking these questions:

- What do I seek to achieve at the end of today?
- What could I want to achieve in this area and that area?

6.10 Value People

According to John C. Maxwell (2011) in his book 5 levels of leadership, 70 percent of the people who leave their jobs do so because they do not feel valued. To keep your study group active, value your course mates and study group members. Tell them how much you value them. Let them feel valued at group meetings and give remarks that shows that you valued them.

7. Master Keys to Quizzes and Examinations

Your approach to quizzes and exams determines your overall performance. A person with the right mindset and orientation is likely to score higher mark in quizzes. Therefore, the need to practice some important keys to ensure excellent approach to exams and quizzes.

7.1 How to Shoot an Academic Jump Shoot?

The nuts and bolts of smart exams preparation refined by straight A students over countless semesters. Before I continue with these tips, know this; -Leadership is a decision. You must decide to lead. It means you must make tough decisions. So, before we continue to learn about these irrefutable keys to unlock your potentials for maximum academic performance, you must make an intentional decision to practise these tips. Be a leader. Take responsibility. Now back to how to shoot your academic jump shot. These keys when practiced will make you a Straight -A student. Since these are the proven tips that helped Straight- A students in the past.

7.1.1 Have Dynamic Study Methods / Be Ready to Change

It is not wise to get glued to a way or method of study which is not yielding you the results you want. Be willing to adapt new ways of studying. Practise studying alone. Try that for some time and see the outcome. Try studying for long hours and see if it is yielding the results you want? If it's not working, change the plan. Study for a few hours and take a break for five minutes and come back to continue for another hour. Don't stick to something that doesn't work and keep saying this is how I am. No! Be ready to embrace change.

7.1.2 Know Yourself

John C. Maxwell (2000) state” If you know who you are, make the changes you must learn and grow, and then give everything you've got to your dreams; you can achieve anything your heart desires”. When you know yourself, it gives you the edge to identify your strength as well as your weaknesses. Knowing your strengths in your academic work such as good at remembering things, and watering these strengths brings massive improvement in your life.

Having a foreknowledge of your weaknesses also gives the ability to adjust improve and get the best out of you in terms of your academic work. For instance, knowing that you understand what you studied after reading the lecture material three times. This gives you a chance to adjust like start reading the lecture handouts as soon as school resumes so you can finish the third reading by two months' time.

7.1.3 Beat the Edge to Procrastinate

All humans have the trait of waiting a little more before starting anything. There are times you may be given assignments to be submitted the following week and naturally you may say I will do it the day before submission. That is not bad but why don't you immediately start on the assignments so that you can finish it early and then go over it. Straight A students don't let go of a mark in an assignment. They score everything. Why? Because it's only assignment that you have enough time to search answer to the questions and consult friends and other professionals. This natural tendency of procrastinating things especially difficult things in your academic work must be conquered! In dealing with procrastination,

Practical Steps to take includes;

- Feed the body. The body is the engine that would help you get the Straight-A is to take good care of the body. Some of the things to do are to drink water regularly and treat food as a source of energy, not satisfaction. Eat snacks that promise long term energy boost. Don't skip meals. Eat on time.
- Make an event out of the worst situation. There are days that your initial plans such as going for lecture, and so on will be interrupted by natural occurrences such as rain, cancelation of lectures and the list goes on... In such situations, you can make something good out of it such as having a two-hour personal study instead of just wasting the time. Find something good you could profitably do with that time. For example, you can choose to go to the library to study a course when you come to campus just to know that a two-hour lecture has been cancelled instead of just walking thirty minutes back to the hall without making good use of that two hours.

- Keep a work in progress journal. Keep records of the things you are doing. These helps you to remember the things you are doing and where you have gotten to.

7.2 Strategic Steps to take During Examinations

During examinations, there is limited time to answer lots of questions. There is the need to make effective use of your time to get almost all the questions answered and correctly within this space of two or three hours. Before moving on to the main points in answering questions, let's look at how to provide information on the front page of your answer booklet.

Per my recent interactions with some lecturers at UMaT, it came to my notice that most candidates do not fill the spaces at the front page of the answer booklet correctly. This should not be so.

Most students no matter how intelligent they may be will not do well in examinations if they don't fill the order in which they answer the questions or the question number they answer. How will you feel if upon knowing the answer to a question in an exam, scores low marks because you didn't number the questions answered well or omitted some important information such as your index number when filling the front page of the answer booklet? I guess you will feel very disappointed!

Therefore, take your time and carefully fill the front page of the answer booklet, and the question number and page number you are answering.

Now follow the rules below during exams and you transform yourself into a task – taking machine – a cool, confident, and ruthlessly efficient in providing the best possible answers, as you move from question to question.

7.2.1 Review All the Questions Before Answering Any Questions

Take a few minutes to read through all the questions before starting to answer any question. The rule does two things: it helps you know the questions to answer. You can analyze all the questions and select the ones that when answered will give you the highest marks.

The next thing is that your mind gets informed about questions ahead to be answered. The mind according to psychologists can process lots of information at a time. Reviewing helps the brain to prepare for the topics ahead. The brain can focus on the other questions at the background while answering one question at a time. This helps you answer later questions quickly.

Finally, when you leave the mind blank not knowing the questions ahead, while answering a question, the mind would be wandering around asking yourself questions. "Can I answer these questions? Did I study enough? Have I forgotten some important information? These questioning in the mind builds stress and tension in you. Instead of thinking about answers to the questions asked in the exams, you will end up answering these rhetorical questions you've set for yourself.

Remember the duration for the exams is short and there is no need to spend a minute on other things aside answering the questions asked.

Reviewing all the questions in the exams make you relaxed, confidence increase and focused on the questions you've seen. You begin saying: I can answer them, I have learnt this before, I can do it. Your heartbeat lowers, the many wanderings taught cleared off, and you can turn your full attention into giving standout answers.

7.2.2 Time Yourself on Each Question

It's a good practice to set a time limit on each question you solve. Spending too much time on a question would make you exhaust the time allocated for exams having many questions unanswered. Subtract 10 minutes from the time apportioned for the exams and share the remaining time on the question.

Doing this make you aware of the time to spend on each question. When you are spending more than the allocated time (say 20 minutes) on a question, it already raises an alarm that you must speed up. Once you are done answering the questions, use the remaining ten minutes as a buffer to check through your answers.

7.2.3 Start Answering the Easiest Questions before the Difficult ones

Spend the first hour of the exams period answering all the questions that do not keep you thinking too much. The

answers will flow easily, and you can answer more questions within a short time. Most Straight-A students start by answering the easy questions first. The tragedy is starting on a difficult question. Never start answering a difficult question first. Because it will make you panic, lost concentration and the fear of failing will make you forget what you even know. As you review as the questions as stated earlier, the questions that are difficult skip them and singly focus on the ones you know. As you answer those ones, the brain at the background would be thinking about it.

After you are done with all the questions, you can answer correctly and there is still time, think for the suitable answer to provide. Think and write something. After all, there is no other questions, you are going to answer.


7.2.4 Check Your work

Read through your work to check for petty mistakes such as grammatical errors and writing mistakes. And most often you would be amazed to remember some important points to add to your answers.

When you are done and there is time check your work. Till the last minute, read over and over your work. Don't be in haste to submit your work and leave the exams hall.

7.3 Preparations Before Exams and Quizzes

You can predict the result you would get during an exam or quiz based on your preparations. Some of such are; develop the habit of asking questions in class or talk to your professor briefly after class.

As you listen attentively during the lectures, write  down questions you want clarity on. What do you do with these questions? One may ask. Always lecturers give room for questioning during the lecture. Use that time to ask for clarity on such questions. There may be some questions that might seem personal to you. This is what to do with such questions. keep making notes and jotting things that you are not clear on during the lecture; keep the questions. Once the lecture ends, approach your professor or lecturer immediately and ask him those questions. Get those questions cleared of the mind immediately. You will be amazed how well the lecturer would explain to you.

After you have gotten the answers, immediately write them down before leaving the lecture hall. You will forget the explanation given if you don't write it down. Go to your lecturers after each lecture because they normally wait for about 5 minutes to listen to your questions.

The next is to Ask classmates. If you're still unclear, a Straight-A student, recommends "talk with other people about the topic." Send them WhatsApp messages or corner them in the hall soon after the lecture. "If they understand the topic, it will take them only a few minutes to explain it to you while it's still fresh in their minds" according to Newport, Cal (2006).

Success demands more than most people are willing to offer, but not more than they are capable of giving. The thing that often makes the difference is good leadership according to John C. Maxwell. Not matter how much you sacrifice is not yet enough than what you could offer. Enough of the excuses so keep doing your best. Try all possible means to understand what has been taught. If you say you are giving in your best, I tell you that is not enough a reason for you to plateau. There are still higher mountains to climb in your academic pursuit. For some of you, the thinking pattern is that "I can't make an A". But you sit back and start giving in your maximum.

7.3.1 Effective Study Guide

Effective means producing a decided, desired effect according to the Meriam Webster Dictionary. Here re some of the things to do to have an effective study;

- Avoid pseudo learning. The word pseudo means false. Therefore, pseudo learning means learning that does not yield much result in terms of what you grasp during the study. This may be due to multitasking together with less important task. This means when you say you are studying, you are studying. Not time to be chatting alongside with friends on social media or with someone in person. When you engage in pseudo learning, you may spend four to five hours studying but just two hours of effectiveness. Stay focused when studying. Avoid distractions.
- Get a conducive environment. An atmosphere free of disturbances.
- Get a comfortable table and chair.

- Have all the needed materials for learning. At times a student sits down to study or may lie down with only the handout. No jotter, a pen, or a pencil to write anything. They just read and get up and go. You know you've studied a topic if and only if you can say it without looking into a book or write it without looking into a book. This is the only prove that you are ready to pass an exam / quiz with a straight-A.
- Have a regular break period to relax.

7.3.2 Fear the Lord and keep his commands

To succeed in life, a lecturer stated, you must live in the fear of God daily. There is one great virtue in Joseph that is he fears the Lord. It is the fear of God that withholds one from doing what is wrong. Live in the fear of God the whole of your life. By the fear of God, you will not cheat in the examinations and hence you can confidently come to God in prayer for help in your academic work.

7.3.3 Overcome the Edge of Giving Up Easily on Becoming a Straight-A Student

A lecturer said that he made the First-Class mark in the last semester of the final year. That was when the semester's result was released. To get First Class at UMaT, one should have a CWA of 80 or above. Before then his CWA was around 79... but he had the determination that he will make a First-Class. That was what sustained him at the latter periods in his academic work. Life is not easy, and studying is neither. But you must subdue the edge of giving up on the First Class [Straight-A] you want to get. Giving up on the dream of making a first class is not an option. A lecturer stated "I always increase semester by semester when I am conscious of what I want till the last semester in final year when I made it".

But here is a fact: at times you will study as much as you can, but some courses will be tough. No matter what getting an A in such courses isn't easy, but you must force. Don't let such one or two courses weigh you down on your dream. Not necessarily that such courses are difficult but it's the lecturers lecturing such courses that make the subject difficult. It's as if giving 80 + in their subject to students is a taboo. I didn't make an 80 % in some tough geomatic Engineering courses, but I still made a First Class.

Such lecturers are there to balance the system so that it's not all easy going but you must always be aiming at the sun, and you can get the stars.

7.3.4 Aim at Getting at Least 80% in Each Course Per Semester

First Class is attained by the cumulation of all your semester's courses grades. Therefore, to get a First class or be in First Class from level 100 as a fresher you must aim at getting at least 80% and maybe 75% in one course will not draw you back from class [80 or more % for CWA] at UMaT.

But on other campuses like KNUST, I learnt First Class starts with 70%. That means an 80% will be of great advantage to you.

7.4 Fore-Plans for A Semester

Before lectures begin, I suggest you do the following as I did when I was a student;

- Write down or type in MS Excel the courses names, the credit hours,
- And the marks you want to make. An example is given below as,

Courses	Credit	Mark, I make
Geodesy	2	91%
Applied Electricity	3	87%
Geology of Ghana	2	84%

You must be sure about what you are writing (typing on your computer). This little art of writing the grades you want in each semester before lectures begins give you FOCUS. Focus on what you are to get in the semester.

After you are done with that, write such marks on the handout. At the front cover page write it say 85%.

Do that for all the courses you will be doing in the semester.

For those of you using PDFs you can draw or if you are using editable format of Adobe Acrobat, you can enter the marks say 89% on the cover page of the Handout PDF.

- Time to commit to God

To start lectures, spend at least 15 minutes before God and pray to God about the marks you want to attain the semester. The Bible says in proverbs 16:3 “Commit your works to God and He will establish your thoughts. So, you stand on such as these verses and pray to God”. Pray for FOCUS, DETERMINATION and PERSISTENCE to see the goal of obtaining such marks.

Once you invite God in the beginning and show to Him what you want to get through His help, God will be committed to helping you achieve it. Praying for FOCUS, PERSISTENCE AND DETERMINATION will make God help you when you’re FOCUSED, DETERMINATED AND PERSISTENT with your studies.

7.5 As You Study Your Handouts

When you open the chapter 1 of the handout, write boldly at the top the mark you want to get say 84%. Each page of the handout should contain the mark you want to get in that subject.

So, as you read through the page you will see the marks and have the marks in mind. When you want to read casually and go to bed or roam on social media you ask yourself, have I studied enough to make an eighty- five percent (85%).

The marks written on each page would make you aware of the expectations on what you are studying. Over the years I have learnt that my mind does more to reach whatever target I have set for it. But on the side also, it doesn’t do much if I start something and do not set a target for myself. Your mind knows what is at stake and will work hand in hand with your body to achieve it.

- Solve past questions. There are certain courses that the only way to score high marks is to solve past questions. Solve most past questions on each course because most of them are repeated.

7.6 A Proof That You Have Studied

The prove that you’ve studied is when you can say what you’ve studied without looking on it or write it down without looking on it. This is the only proof that you studied something. If you can’t do that then go back and Re-study!!!!

I always say this to my S.H.S. and J.H.S students I teach. And I know you may forget some days but keep practicing it until it becomes a habit one semester, and you can practice writing the marks on your pages of handout semester by semester.

I always tell my students that every difficult thing becomes easier through continuous practice. This principle of keeping your mark before you is a principle I learnt from Jacob in the Bible (Genesis 30:37-39).

Jacob, however, took fresh-cut branches from poplar, almond and plane trees and made white stripes on them by peeling the bark and exposing the white inner wood of the branches. Then he placed the peeled branches in all the watering troughs, so that they would be directly in front of the flocks when they came to drink. When the flocks were in heat and came to drink, they mated in front of the branches. And they bore young that were streaked or speckled or spotted (Genesis 30:37-39 NIV). At Laban’s house, Jacob used the poplar, almond and plane trees streak white and brought it to the water troughs such that as the animals come to eat and drink may mate there and looking at the streak or spotted stick, they gave birth to spotted flocks. Jacob kept in front of him what he wanted (the vision) and it became a reality later on. Let the habit of keeping your marks for each course be before you everywhere when studying and your brain can focus to attain that mark.

The only way of making your subconscious mind aware of this mark is by saying it. Verbalize it.” Let the redeemed of the Lord say so” The Bible says I believe and therefore I spoke” 2 Cor. 4:1. Say what you believe. For instance, “I believe I make 90% in linear Algebra”. Say it most often to yourself. Talk to your close friends about your goals. Tell your parents or even your lecturers about your goal of making this mark. Ask them to remind you about what you want to achieve. And this is easier if you have accountability partners.

7.7 Before You go Home for Vacation

As you are about completing your semester exams, I suggest you do this. This was what I did when I was pursuing my bachelor's degree. I went to the continuing students who are ahead and get their PDFs and past questions. When you approach them right after exams, their past questions and PDFs are readily available, and you can get them. Waiting to collect them next semester when school resumes might be too late since some are in the habit of deleting the PDF and past questions to free up space on their phones and laptops.

Once you have next semester's learning materials you can glance through the PDF to know what to expect in the upcoming semester. And since the learning materials are with you, when the semester begins, you can start learning on your own without waiting for the lecturer's PDFs.

7.8 Doing Well in Assignments

Doing assignments by yourself is one of the ways to learn, Rahman, a straight-A student from UMaT stated. There are chapters you may feel lazy to study or learn but once you are given an assignment of which you want to submit you are compelled to do it. He added "I did almost 98% of my assignments by myself".

To become a straight-A student in Ghana it is not just passing your examination but also doing well in your continuous assessment being 40% at UMaT. Therefore, it is necessary to take your assignment and quizzes seriously. Some students do not take their assignment and quizzes seriously and even though they perform well in their end of semester exams still cannot come out as straight-As. You must aim at getting at least 35% out of 40% for the class Assessment. Do your Assignments on time and review it for corrections. This will ensure that the answers you submit are correct.

7.9 The Right Way to Approach Examination – a Lecturer's Comment

Most students fear examination because of lack of enough preparation before the exam. Passing examination very well does not come from the few days intensive learning prior to examination. It starts from the first day of commencement of lecture, fully participating in class, doing assignments and quizzes well. All culminate to good continuous assessment scores from a total of 40% at UMaT. The total score for continuous assessment may vary from institution to institution. The remaining 60% is allocated for the end of semester examination. A student who learns every well and prepares adequately towards exams will have a good exam score.

Let us have a look at some tips to help students perform well in the examination

7.9.1 Personal Preparation

- **Spiritual preparation:** The life we live is spiritual hence having victory in any facet of our lives means we must have strong spiritual life. Spiritual life means sound mind, emotional balance, wisdom, knowledge and understanding. I will credit doing well in exams to 50% of your relationship with God. There are altars fighting us from our families and the territory of we live, either you know it or not. I know people who study as much as they can and yet during the examination, they forget almost everything. There are some who answer the questions well and yet when the results come out, they fail. What will you say about such happenings? This proves that you must submit to a superior authority that can protect you. God is the ultimate giver of victory. It says that horses and chariots are prepared for battle, but victory comes from the Lord (Proverbs 21:31). Authors commentary.
- **Physical preparation:** The spirit is hosted by the body. To have to good success in exams one must maintain good health. Maintaining good health involves eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly and have enough rest. You can give health references that support this. Just as stated in the verse about, though victory comes from the Lord, we don't downplay the preparation of horses and chariots. The preparation of horses and chariots in relation to examination are the physical preparations one does. Eating well, having good sleep, and above all studying enough. The physical and the spiritual are like the two sides of a coin, both are equally important. And hence must be taken together. Don't over focus on one and neglect the other. Authors commentary

7.9.2 Academic Preparation

Student must have and know the rules and regulations concerning examinations. To be for worn is to be for armed. Knowing the rules of examination will save you from failing the examination. The examinations rules and regulations can be found in the Conduct of Undergraduate Programmes of the University's Recorder Vol. 15, No 5.

You can list salient points in the Recorder on pages 12 to 14.

Be abreast of the Examination Timetable. Students have to know the current examination time table and any changes that were made in it.

Finally, I would like students to perceive examination with this mind set: "Examination is necessary for my next stage in life". Hence if you desire to move to the next stage in life or in your academic work, then you need to embrace examinations with all eagerness to prove yourself worthy of it. This type of mind set will motivate students to prepare well for examination with confidence and not out of fear. Read the student guide and be conversant with all the rules stated. Do well to follow them and you will be fine.

8. How to Score Higher Marks in Your Project Work

Becoming a Straight -A Student requires both a good start and most importantly a very good finish. Why this statement? Because there are numerous scenarios where students do not make FIRST-CLASS during first or second year but end up graduating with First-Class. Better is the end of a thing than beginning thereof (Eccl 7:8). Therefore, making a good grade in your final year is very important.

In the final year, a project work can be a booster to your CWA. The project work is 4 credits hour and getting a 90% is a real boost to your CWA.

Therefore, your project work must be well planned. How do you go about your project?

Go to your lecturers who teach courses where you have interest in and ask for topics. They can give you one and add books that you must read.

Also, you can tell them about your project topic and ask for their opinion.

Once the topic has been proposed start doing much research work around it. Read wide and see how you can break down the work into bits. You can go to the library and read through the projects done by your predecessors in your department. You can take their recommendations and research on them.

8.1 What Matters most in your Project work

Formatting is the most important thing that earns you majority of the marks you require I your project. Therefore, the need to pay close attention to it. You may have one of the best ideas to communicate in academia but if your formatting doesn't follow the UMaT thesis guide standard you might end up getting a low mark on the final score. I therefore humbly suggest you follow the rules and format according to what the University wants, and you will make the make. A lecturer jokingly made this statement once "that in the university we those who do not know book we follow rules. If you follow rules, you will be fine". Someone might take a simple topic and do proper formatting according to the UMaT style and might end up with a 90%; and another with a very complex topic with many illustrations but will end up with an average mark if formatting is not done well.

Let your supervisor review your work before project defence and ensure that s/he reviews the final work before you print your work and submit for marking. There are some students who don't go to their supervisors at all and just show up only on the day of presentation. How then would such persons have a good mark for their presentation and the final work itself?

8.2 Make your project work a priority

Some students are of the habit of leaving everything in the hands of others. They barely take responsibility for anything. Don't jeopardize your results. Work on the project yourself and only seek help when needed. Do majority of the work yourself. Know almost everything going on your report.

8.3 Summary of Steps to Scoring High Marks in Final Year Project Work

- Appreciate the disciplines in the Programme of Study and align yourself with at least one.
- Start with the aim of tuning your findings into a conference or journal publication.
- Do independent study about your area of interest and identify current problems in your area of interest.
- Conceptualize possible solutions for the problem(s) and write down possible topics that can address the problems.
- Identify a lecturer in your department, who would appreciate your interest, and help you select the SMART topic.
- Do further literature search to have a firm grip on the research area and develop your synopsis for approval.
- Develop an outline for your literature and experimental plan for your supervisor's approval before you start with the details.
- Always critique your own work and reduce ambiguity before you submit to your supervisor.
- Keep your supervisor abreast of your progress, and receive feedback positively
- Prepare yourself well for your presentations and play by the rules.

9. Balancing Your Academic Work and Other Extra Curricula Activities

9.1 Blending Academic Work with Church Leadership

There must be a balance between your academics and other activities since you live in a community and cannot live without taking any other responsibilities aside your studies. According to Elder Ebenezer Agyabeng, a Straight-A student who was also former PENSA-UMaT president (2020/2021), the guidance below are what made him attain First-Class though he had other responsibilities aside his academic work;

- Planning. I plan my week considering the things I must do. I wrote the things I want to do. Though I was busy immediately after church service, because I have a plan, I know exactly what to do. I just look through the schedules and know what to do. Maybe to study my lecture notes right after service. First-Class is more about mindset. Having a mindset of First-Class is what will enable you to make First-Class. It's not church leadership. I have learned that church leadership is not the reason for anyone not to get first class. No. its rather a wrong mindset that people have. For instance, when I came to level 100, I had this mentality that once I'm a devout Christian, even if I don't study, I will get First-Class. I hit First-Class in level 100 but in level 200 I dropped though I was still in First-Class and at that time I was a school's coordinator. So, when I went for vetting again for a more demanding portfolio, the panel asked whether it was the church responsibility that caused that. But I said no because deep down within me, I knew I had not been studying as I should and didn't plan my day well. And never utilized my time effectively. When I was at level 300, I was a prayer secretary which was more demanding, but I increased my CWA and moved to First-Class again and graduated with a First-Class. From my own experiences I can conclude that wrong mindset about church and leadership is what might make some people not make First-Class.
- Building rapport with your lecturers. I was the PENSA UMaT President at final year and being the president, it was sometimes demanding. Yet I ensured that anyone who taught me I had a good relationship with them beyond the classroom. I entreat students to have good relationships with their lecturers.
- Ask for help from course mates. "One thing I have learnt" he stated, was that sometimes the best people to teach you are your own course mates. This is because they are in the same level of thinking as you and can explain things well to you. There are sometimes I studied on my own and didn't understand. So, I go to my friend and ask for help. They would normally use a few minutes to teach me and I was

okay. Especially the calculation courses I asked for help and once I was taught, I solved more practice exercises. Afterwards, I went to show it to my course mates. Save yourself time by simply asking a friend for help.

- Prayer. Doing my final year project work, I didn't really know and understand what to do. So, my partner and I spent time in prayers and by God's grace, project work which is 4 credit hours, I had 94%. I truly believed in prayer, and it worked. God helped us whenever we call on him.
- Constant practice of solving questions. Most of the times we turn to forget some things during the examination because we do not study well. Several practice of what you learn will make you gain mastery over it. I solved questions several times. For instance, I prepared for exams by watching YouTube videos on some topics. I practised most of the exercises over and over. With adequate preparations, when such calculations come in exams, I barely spent much time to answer them.
- Watch YouTube videos. Search courses like circuit theorem on YouTube.
- Have a right perception of yourself. In fact, you can be successful if others don't believe in you, but you cannot be successful if you don't believe in yourself.
- Balancing your activities and don't give excuses. A lot of people had taken leadership role at church and still made First-Class. Taking PENZA-UMaT for example 3 out of the last 4 president all had First Class. This proves that going to church and taking leadership roles is not a hindrance to making First Class. Imagine what you are supposed to do, if you've done it. Would you give an excuse? People only give excuses to fill in the gap for not being responsible. Trying to create a lie to cover up for the lack of discipline. One of the ways to excel academically and in life is to stop giving excuses. Take responsibility for your life. Over the years of my work with TS one thing I learnt is never to give excuses.
- Jump over any obstacles that comes our way. Overcome your fears. One of the things to do in life is to learn to jump forward in the midst of obstacles. Let courage arise amid danger. During examination, don't let fear cause you to forget the things you've learnt. For instance, when a dog is coming near you fiercely, the common action to take is to run. Meanwhile if you are calm, you can even take a stick to hit it that you don't need to run. So, as you can see fear prevents us from seeing the solution that leads to First-Class. In the exam's hall be calm, when you forgot something, relax, and think through, you can connect one thing the lecturer said and some incidence that happened at lectures and before you realize you have remembered everything to write. That's why it not good to be distracted during exams.
- If you want to get a First-Class, check your companions. I have observed that people who are not First-Class minded, will prevent you from getting First-Class. Therefore, associate with people who are First-Class conscious. As the scripture says bad companion corrupt good manner (1 Cor. 15:33). Surround yourself with individuals who have same ambition as you. They can influence you to get FirstClass. On the other side those who are not first class conscious will discourage you from learning much. Their conversations, and charisma would never let you challenge yourself to discover your full potential. Check your company.

9.2 Widen Your Social Network

Be versatile. Expand your horizon. Below are some things to do.

- Get to Know a Lot of Students and Lecturers. Know a lot of the lecturers on campus. Apostle Joshua Selman made a statement that somebody knows somebody who knows somebody who has what you were looking for. Therefore, honour and value men. Like Naaman wife's slave girl from Israel. The girl cannot help Naaman herself, but she knows someone (the prophet Elisha) who can heal Naaman of his leprosy (2 Kings 5:115). The lecturers may not be able to give you job but may have connections with

many people, managers, and course mates in the job industry that he/ she might connect you to.

- Join Professional Associations or Groups on campus. Your tertiary education period is a crucial moment to learn as much as you can. You must use your time wisely to learn as much as you. Join professional associations that will build your competence. Associations like Enactus, Full Gospel men fellowship, and many more. Join with the aim of learning. Learn things like how to organize meetings, proceedings at meetings, how to write a professional CV, how to chair a program, how to lead but just to mention a few.

9.3 Summary of Ways to Balance Academic Work and Extra Curricula Activities

- Plan your days and weeks.
- Build a good relationship with lectures and your course mates.
- Don't be too proud to ask course mates and lecturers for help.
- Have the right perception and mindset.
- Solve more exercises and watch YouTube videos for some courses.
- Avoid giving excuses for lack of disciplines.
- Associate with First-Class conscious people.

10. Conclusion

Congratulations for having read this book to the end. You have been given the irrefutable keys. Keep practising the steps you have read until they become a habit and let these habits become your character. You are guaranteed your Straight-A in your academic work. God Bless You.

Here are the Summary of Irrefutable Keys to Becoming a Straight- A Student;

- Be sure to attend all academic-related meetings, prominent among which are lectures. Do not miss lectures as you may miss an important nugget not present in the handout.
- Be conversant with the general assessment structure of UMaT; 10% for attendance, 30% for continuous assessment and 60% for end of semester examination; and the specific assessment structure for every course as presented by the Course Lecturer.
- Organize yourself and manage your time well with a progressive to-do list.
- Visit the library, study centres, and study resources as regularly as your schedule allows.
- Study consistently and do self-assessment to test your understanding of the course.
- Take key interest in participating in group assignment as an active Team member, and helping other passive members to come along. vii. Form study groups and purposefully take interest in leading discussions for others to understand the concept at stake.
- Do not miss appointments with your Academic Tutor.
- Cut down on the time you spend on social media.
- Take very good care of yourself and stay healthy always.

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