

Making the transition to college classes comes with a lot of trial and error. It's normal for students to struggle and to experience some academic stress and anxiety. It's also normal for many first-year students to have midterm grades that are lower than what they achieved in high school.

- *Midterm grades provide a snapshot of academic performance in a class.*
- *A poor midterm grade doesn't define a student, but it can be an important wake-up call.*
- *Professors and others can – and will - help.*
- *Academic Coaches may be able to help students improve their study habits.*

If your student has received a grade, or grades, that were lower than expected, or not what they wanted at all, how can they bounce back between now and the end of the semester?

5 Steps for Bouncing Back After Midterms



If your student is concerned about a course grade, it's likely they have an opportunity to bounce back. Beware there's no magic solution or simple fix. However, talking with professors, trying new learning strategies, and using academic resources can help students learn more effectively and improve their scores on assignments and exams.

If your student is concerned about midterm grades, here are 5 steps they should take now:

1. **Meet with the professor.** Most Simpson faculty have posted “office hours” on their doors, in their course syllabi, and perhaps online. Those are times they set aside specifically to meet with students; encourage your student to use them. Professors can give students ways to improve their study skills for a course. They can also help them cover specific questions on tests or assignments, review content, and help them get caught up. Midterms are the perfect time for students to check in with their professors about their progress and to plan to finish strong!
2. **Study with others.** Simpson offers a lot of academic coaching and course support. Our data shows that students who engage in academic coaching earn higher grades than those who don't. All our coaching resources are listed at <https://simpson.mywconline.com/>
3. **Study smarter.** Different courses require different approaches to studying. Midterm is a great time to reflect on what course strategies are working and what are not.

Peer Academic Coaches (PACS) are here to work with students to help them discover and develop study skills that are a good fit for specific courses.

4. **Create a weekly action plan.** Tackling A LOT of reading, writing papers, and getting assignments turned in on time is a lot easier when students break tasks into smaller chunks and do them bit-by-bit each day. Making a Weekly Action Plan helps students make specific goals and deadlines that are achievable. Our academic coaching team offers tips, tools, and 1:1 support to help students create weekly plans.
5. **Study most days of the week.** Information that has been recently called up and frequently used is much easier to retrieve and apply. That's why it is important to study most days of the week. Focused Study Sessions can help students do this without being bogged down by long hours of study time, or worse, cramming. With Focused Study Sessions, students choose a goal and then study with focus for 30-50 minutes at a time (never more than 50 minutes), 3-5 times a day. Breaks are built into each session, too! Peer Academic Coaches (PACS) are trained to teach this strategy to students and will even study alongside them!

Putting these five steps into practice consistently can help students reduce stress and gain confidence as a college student. The Center for Academic Resources (CARS) academic coaches and staff are here to help students with all these steps and more. We are located on the first floor of the Dunn Library and can be reached at car@simpson.edu. Students can schedule with an academic coach by going to <https://simpson.mywconline.com/>