

Student (Mostly) Academic Stress Calendar for Caregivers

General Guidelines:

- 80/20 rule: college requires 80% of learning outside of class, 20% in class.
- 3-4 hours of study time per 1 hour of class time. Really.
- Every 3-4 weeks: students will have a round of exams/tests and/or assignments due.
- Check out the Success Guides at learningandwriting.ku.edu for strategies and resources.

Fall Stress Points	Academic Milestones and Support Needs
End of August/September	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students start out excited and nervous and then experience a reality change as classes start. • Feelings of inadequacy sometimes develop because of the discrepancy between high school status and initial college performance. • Students feel stuck between adult college responsibilities and high school rules. • Students may miss high school friends in other places. • Students begin to develop patterns that affect their first semester (skipping vs. attending class, using apps/calendars to manage time vs. not, using support resources vs. trying to work on their own, joining activities vs. isolating). • Students' personal coping skills start to show away from home (healthy or restricted eating, healthy or unhealthy amounts of exercise, healthy or unhealthy drinking/drug use, asking for help vs. isolating). • First-year students are less likely to ask for help. 	<p>Weeks 1-2, Start Strong: Get a strong start with academic and personal behaviors and habits.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have your student get to know their syllabi and commit dates and deadlines to apps and/or calendars. • Ask your student if she/he/they have made appointments with Wingspan services and other campus services, like the Student Access Center if the student has a disability. <p>Weeks 2-4: Students may receive progress reports from faculty about performance issues. KU staff will reach out to arrange appointments.</p> <p>Weeks 3-5: Students have their first round of exams/tests and major assignments due.</p> <p>Reflect and Adapt: Encourage students to connect with resources like the Wingspan; there's time to learn new study/learning behaviors/habits and to adapt.</p>
October	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new challenges of college life surface and cause self-doubt. • Social anxiety increases due to new social groups forming and old ones splitting. • Mid-term workload pressures are followed by questioned self-esteem. 	<p>Weeks 7-9: Midterm exams/tests and major assignments are due.</p> <p>Weeks 7-11: Students may receive a second and final round of progress reports from faculty about performance issues.</p> <p>Change Now! If students are struggling, behaviors and habits must change now. If students have not</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even 2nd year students start asking “Who Am I?” 	<p>visited with faculty and the Wingspan, it is time to do so to see what is needed. Suggest looking at syllabus policies and talking with faculty grades and suggestions for what to do to improve. Peer academic coaching is highly recommended for struggling students. Many faculty limit make-up assignments, extra credit, or retesting.</p>
November	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procrastination and/or poor performance results in increased workload and stress (“Can I make it? Should I give up?”). • Economic anxiety surfaces due to summer funds running out and less time to work. Flu season and stress results in illness. • Students feel stressed about choosing majors and classes. 	<p>Weeks Surrounding Thanksgiving: Students are most likely to withdraw from/drop classes, stop attending, and/or otherwise give up during this time. Prep for a third round of exams/tests and assignments.</p> <p>Weeks 7-11: Students may receive a second round of progress reports from faculty about performance issues.</p> <p>Full-Press Support Needed and Assess What is Possible: Students need help honestly assessing behaviors, habits, and grades to determine whether to continue with all classes, how much effort is needed to earn goal grades, and what to do in classes where students are struggling. Students need to talk with faculty, advisors, financial aid, Wingspan staff, and possibly CAPS and Peer Listeners for mental health/stress support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If behavior change is needed, is the student ready to take steps to change? • What strengths and resources can your student bring to the end of the semester?
December	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extracurricular events (seasonal parties, finals, club events) strain energy. Conflicts (if any) at home can result in worries. • Financial strain results from holidays and travel. • Students feel major stress from finals and then relief. • Financial worry may result as students begin to contemplate paying for next semester. 	<p>Weeks 12-Finals: Students need to work closely with Wingspan staff to prepare for finals and projects.</p> <p>Provide Food, Comfort, Encouragement, and Care: Students benefit from reduced activities/responsibilities to focus on finals and need food, comfort, time/space, and extra encouragement. Study support is good!</p> <p>After finals, students process their first semester and may question their fit for classes, majors, and the university.</p>

Adapted From:

A Model for Identifying and Responding to Stress Periods of Students, Paul Larson and William Laramie, Berea College, KY.