



## TOP 10 TIPS FOR SUCCESS AT RANKEN

---

Whether you live on campus or commute, acclimating yourself to college requires many changes to your lifestyle and daily routine.

Below are 10 tips that previous Ranken students have found to be helpful in their path to student success.

### 1. Prioritize and find balance.

For almost every student, there is life outside of Ranken. Students have responsibilities and desires that range from working a part-time or full-time job to raising a family to enjoying social activities. It is often difficult or impossible to neglect these other areas of life. However, you invest a great deal in order to come to Ranken and everyone wants you to reach your goals at Ranken.

- **Organize your time.** Use a calendar to set daily and weekly schedules and stick to them. See the Time Management Strategies handout for further tips.
- **Remind yourself of your goals.** It is tempting to take an extra work shift or go out for an enjoyable evening. However, the cost of having to repeat a course or damaging your grade point average (GPA) is steep. It is advised that you only take part in such activities if you can do so without it affecting your academic performance.
- **Do not procrastinate.** It is easy to think that there will be plenty of time to complete assignments later, but time is quickly filled. Work ahead because the time might not be there later on. Moreover, if you complete some work every day, it will create strong academic habits and make it far more likely for you to be successful.

### 2. Know the expectations.

Some expectations apply to everything you do at Ranken. Other expectations are specific to a course or a department. Be proactive and take the initiative to know what is expected of you as a Ranken student.

- **Adhere to the attendance policy.** Ranken has a strictly enforced attendance policy. Make sure you understand it in full by reviewing the Ranken Student Handbook. Ask your instructors or the Student Success Center staff members questions if anything is unclear. Do not trust information you do not read or hear first-hand from a reliable source. If you are not authorized to attend class for financial reasons, you will be marked absent. Therefore, it is important that you take care of financial obligations prior to the first day of class.
- **Follow the proper chain of command.** While everyone at Ranken is more than willing to answer questions and help you succeed, it is expected that you first make every effort to inform yourself. If an issue or confusion arises, the Student Success Center can answer your questions or promptly direct you to someone who can. You can also consult your instructors and, if necessary, the department head. For attendance appeals, all students should first consult their instructors, followed by the department head, and then the dean.

- **Familiarize yourself with each course syllabus.** Instructors carefully construct their syllabi to include all assignments, policies, and expectations. You are expected to know this information, and if you follow it, you are more likely to be successful in your courses.

### 3. Use resources.

Make use of all study resources on and off campus, such as on-campus labs, videos, computers, and tutors like those found in the Student Success Center. Attend any orientation sessions on campus. Get to know the key people that will be vital to your success: students and instructors. Do not be afraid to ask questions when you are unsure. Below are some commonly used and needed locations and personnel:

- **Academic Advising.** You should always be aware of your progress throughout your degree pursuits at Ranken. Academic Advising ensures that students are scheduled for the proper classes and can resolve scheduling conflicts. Should you need to withdraw from or add a course, Academic Advising can help. You may also visit Academic Advising to find transfer credit information, request a degree audit, and complete a petition to graduate.
- **Business Office.** The employees in the Business Office process all payments to the college. They can also help you review payment options and potentially set up payment plans. The Business Office is also the place to go for information regarding potential refund checks.
- **Career Services.** Career Services can help you locate jobs targeted to Ranken students and graduates. They can assist you in writing your résumé and cover letters. They can also help you access the job search databases and properly upload your files. Career Services coordinates job fairs throughout the year to further help put you in contact with potential employers.
- **Counselor.** There are many reasons to see Ranken's Counselor, including (but not limited to) the following: relationship issues, family issues, adjusting to college (coping with stress and anxiety), academic issues, eating disorders, grief or coping with loss, time management or financial budgeting, improving social or communication skills, and specific mental health diagnoses. The Ranken counselor helps students with personal and academic issues, acts as a confidential sounding board, listens to students' concerns and struggles and helps to find solutions, offers a safe and trusting relationship, and meets with students on either a one-time basis or over multiple sessions.
- **Financial Aid.** Financial Aid can assist you in investigating and applying for financial assistance. The employees there can help you fill out federal aid forms and direct you to other potential resources.
- **Inside Ranken.** Most documents distributed by Ranken are available on the online portal Inside Ranken found at [www.insideranken.org](http://www.insideranken.org). Additionally, syllabi, schedules, grades, attendance records, and more can be found on this site for each class. All instructors expect that you keep up with your grades and attendance records and many require that some or all assignments be submitted through the system. Make it a habit to check Inside Ranken at least once a day.
- **Registrar's Office.** Visit the Registrar's Office to complete good student discount forms, get copies of the President's List, inquire about Latin honors, request transcripts, update contact information, or verify your enrollment status (letters).

- **The Student Success Center.** The Student Success Center (SSC) is often described as a testing and tutoring lab, and at its most fundamental purpose, that is, indeed, what it is. The SSC is a resource for all customers of the College: students, parents, faculty and staff members, industrial workers and industrial employers, and the general public. The SSC is also the place to contact regarding potential disability accommodations and/or to receive assistance with the online catalog, eBooks and online databases. Resources for checkout as well as some free resources are also available in the SSC.

#### 4. Communicate with instructors.

In addition to checking Inside Ranken regularly, you are also expected to check your Ranken student email account. These accounts are provided to every Ranken student and are often the best way for instructors and staff to relay important information to you. Similarly, you should be sure to return phone calls and inform the Registrar's Office if your contact information changes. Instructors and staff members might need to reach you for urgent financial or academic issues.

#### 5. Conduct yourself professionally.

Ranken stresses the importance of work ethic and properly preparing students for the job force. With this emphasis comes an expectation that all Ranken students look and act professionally at all times. Details of the dress and appearance codes may be found in the Ranken Student Handbook and should be followed at all times. It is equally important that you speak clearly and appropriately to Ranken employees and your peers. Foul language is unacceptable not only in the classrooms and shops, but anywhere on Ranken's campus.

#### 6. Behave ethically.

Sexual or racial harassment, or discrimination of any kind, is strictly forbidden at Ranken. Perceived threats or actions leading to an uncomfortable environment for any student or employee are grounds for immediate disciplinary action up to potential dismissal from the College. If you witness any harassment toward yourself or others, you should report the incident immediately.

#### 7. Study with others.

Studies have shown that students who study with their peers often get better grades. Studying with others can also be motivating as you have others sharing the same experiences (the highs and the lows). Being able to teach a new concept to someone else is also reinforcement of understanding of the idea. Be careful, though; study groups can have a negative effect if they become too social. Remember to stay focused, and do not let study partners become distractions.

8. Establish a place to study.

Your study place should have a desk, a comfortable chair, and good lighting. It must be free of distractions, ideally not a place where you routinely do other things. It should be your study place. However, a study place that is too dissimilar from the testing environment can lead to difficulty when testing. For example, if you study best while listening to music on your couch, you might have difficulty recalling information in a quiet room with uncomfortable chairs. If you have, or suspect you have, a documentable learning disability, contact the Student Success Center to see about possible accommodations, such as an alternative testing environment.

9. Begin with what is most comfortable.

When studying for an exam, if you start with your worst subject, you may easily become frustrated and feel defeated. Start with the areas that are most comfortable to you in order to build confidence and get your brain into a thinking mode. The same logic applies when you go to take exams. If you start with the questions with which you are most comfortable, you will have the best chance of success.

10. Live healthily.

Be good to your body and your body will be good to you. If your diet is high in sugars and junk food, your energy levels, motivation, and general well-being will suffer. Regular exercising and healthy eating will give you increased energy throughout the day; you will feel better, look better, sleep better, and study better. Do not forget to give the mind and body short breaks from studying and the grind of being a student.

**Remember that Ranken's counselor and the Student Success Center staff members are available to provide further assistance.**