

FRESHERS' SUCCESS GUIDE

(FSG)

A PHARMAVOX PRODUCTION

With contributions by:

Present and Past members of the staff and students of

Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife,

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Why Guide?

Two dictionary definitions of it particularly tells it all:

1. A guide is a book that gives you information or instruction to help you do or understand something.
2. A guide is something that can be used to help you plan your actions, or to form an opinion about something.

Therefore, if something guides you somewhere, it gives you the information you need in order to go in the right direction.

Generally, life is all a race; a multi- marathon race. A lot of people begin the race together but only a few eventually reach the finish line. Also, everyone who reaches this finish line does it in their own records; some set a record time, some also finish quite well, some averagely, and some others quite poorly. However, remember: it's a lot of people that started the race. Obviously, some quit along the line, some get overtaken, while some others get disqualified. Such is life, and the university is yet just another phase. Matriculation marks the 'GO' whistle while convocation signifies the finish line.

Some set a race record finishing strongest and making history, some others finish quite well without setting any record, while some finish not so well but they do so in the due time.

Yet, there are those that do not finish in due time. For one reason or the other, they add extras to their original course duration. Many even switch lanes along the line, and sadly, some never finish at all; they either dropped themselves out, or were compulsorily disqualified.

Based on all the above, the university athletes are categorized into three (3);

The Quick Finishers

The Late Finishers

The Quitters

- A Quick Finisher is one that finishes in the supposed time.

You can either be a strong quick finisher (first class; distinction, or second class upper), a fairly good finisher (second class lower), an average finisher (third class), or the one that only crosses the line (pass).

- A Late Finisher is one that doesn't finish in supposed time.

There are two basic reasons for not finishing in supposed time:

1. Failing some courses in the same department without crossing.
2. Crossing from one department to another with or without having failed any course. These factors add extra year(s) to a student's stay on campus. However, similar to that of a quick finisher, you can either be a strong late finisher, a fairly good one, a very average one, or the one that only crosses the line.

- The Quitters is a category for all who start but never get to finish.

A host of factors may be the cause: involuntary university withdrawal, voluntary withdrawal, involuntary natural withdrawal (death, accident.....).

Now, the question you would like to ask yourself is:

How would you like to run your race?

How would you like to finish? Strong? Average? Or only to cross the line?

What kind of athlete would you like to be?

When you search your heart deeply, I believe you'll find the necessary answers. If you might consider quitting along the way, you might as well drop this guide right now! However, if your answer is to be that Quick Runner who finishes real strong, or the one that even sets a record statistic, then congratulations! This guide is for you.

This guide is a hundred percent assurance of quick strong finish if followed consciously. It is a summary of lessons from the lives of many students who have come before you and have learnt the rather hard way. It's also an extract from the several interviews of lecturers from various departments and faculties. It is indeed a compendium of wisdom; a gem of an inestimable value.

Read it, memorize it, practice it, and never let its words depart from your heart!

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All the information necessary to achieve your goal is concisely categorized into three (3):

- 1. The Director (D)**
- 2. The Survivor (S)**
- 3. The Adventure (A)**

1. THE DIRECTOR

The director is that non-physical force that helps direct your steps in the university and in life generally. It helps you make quality decisions and take calculated risks.

The directors include: (i). the mind scale, and

(ii). the will to repay those you owe with honor and pride

Note: They are not mutually exclusive; they work hand-in-hand.

The Mind Scale

The mind scale is a balance that helps you weigh the outcome of every action or inaction before making a decision.

Remember, you already have a defined goal which is to finish quick and strong. Therefore good decisions would represent those that guide to the achievement of your goal.

What your mind scale does is to weigh a potential action on the balance of 'necessary' and 'not-necessary'.

In simple terms, the necessary scale is that which weighs every action that leads towards achievement of your goal while the unnecessary is that which weighs down those that leads you away from your goal.

At every point in time, you must always use this scale if you want to be a very strong quick finisher. While passing time with your friends in your various hostels or residential places; when being lured to do something by friends or senior colleagues; when being cajoled to join an association or run for a posts, bring yourself back in line with your mind scale - always use yourself: is it necessary or is it not?

An action might be beneficial or profitable but highly unnecessary; depending on your goal. For instance: For a medical student, engaging in long hours of argument may be beneficial, but of course highly unnecessary in achieving your goal because medical practitioners & doctors are trained to be listeners not arguers. However, for a law student, such action is beneficial and necessary for his career.

The importance of a well developed mind scale is key in making wise decisions and time management, so therefore, develop it earnestly.

ii. The Will to Repay Those You Owe With Honor and Pride

One thing you must always understand is that in this life, **you owe no one nothing but yourself, God, and your parents/benefactors/guardians.**

Yourself because you own the life, you've got to make it count.

God, because He gave you the life without taking a dime. You should give Him a strong reason to let you keep it for much longer.

And your parents because it is through them that you got the life, and without them, there may never be a you. Should your parents then also be your benefactor or guardian, then, you owe them much more, as they didn't just bring you to life, they are also the reason you are where you are.

However, for those whose parents are not their benefactors/guardians, you owe a lot to whoever serves that role in your life because without them, things would get a little more difficult.

Therefore, at every point in time you must endeavor to never let any one of them down. This is a very important thing that has to be firmly established before every other thing, because it is what guides every step, every action, and every inaction as an undergraduate, and a reasonable chunk of your lifetime. Hence, at every point in time, endeavor to make them proud. In your actions, engagements, results, studies etc. put in all it would require to have them say eventually:

‘Young man/Lady, I am very proud of you.’

Let this be a motivating or driving force. Along with the mind scale, they forge a powerful combination when used properly. Let them be your director.

2. THE SURVIVOR

Life, they say, is a survival of the fittest. Hence, to be among the fittest would mean to survive- to be a survivor. **The university constitutes a microcosm of the highly competitive society, hence it is necessary to learn and develop how to be your own survivor.**

This chapter however, centers on the academic principles for whoever wants to be an academic survivor. **The golden rule is this: be SMARTT!**

More often than not, especially as a fresher i.e a 100level student in any university, you hear from the senior colleagues, i.e , the stalites, “It’s not really difficult to do well, just be smart....be SMARTT!”.

That is all they say. But they never mention what being smart really entails- they wouldn’t. Why would they? The world out there is highly competitive, so do you think they’ll show you the way? Just like that? No! Most of them also learnt the hard way, so they say it simply: be SMARTT! But don’t be deceived, it’s an adage, being smart is deep, and to have taken your time reading this book, you have paid the price to learn the easy way- you made a wise choice.

SMARTT is an acronym & each of the acronyms have deeper meanings. Be:

S - **Sharp**

M - **Mobile**

A - **Active**

R - **Restless**

T - **Treating past questions**

T - **Time conscious / management**

BE SHARP

To be sharp is to know what is required to pass. And what are the things required to pass? Things needed to pass are only the things given to you by your lecturer; the class notes, materials, assignments etc. Any further study is for your own good. Essentially, you do not need it to pass, therefore you must set your priorities right. Know very well the things you need to pass first of all before you then go on for further knowledge, research or study to broaden your horizon. If you haven't completely understood your class notes, materials, and assignments, then never proceed to gaining extra knowledge. If you do, you put yourself at risk of not knowing the answers that will be contained in your lecturers' marking scheme.

BE MOBILE

To be mobile is in two categories;

1. To not be confined to a place. Move about! Move with your class, your colleagues etc. The essence of this is for information not to elude you. Be online. Have an open attitude towards your colleagues so that you can be easily approachable. Make yourself available to acquire information because there are students with inner eyes and/or better lecturer-student relationship, who have by one way or the other known places to concentrate efforts in preparing for test or exams. You must make yourself available to acquire such information so that when the news is spreading so it doesn't pass you by. (Tip: always be around your colleagues and department 2 weeks to exams)
2. Have a good number of your materials- if not all, on your mobile devices(asides from the hardcopy), and always carry a pocket jotter & pen everywhere you go. The essence of this is to ensure you don't waste quality time while you're in some environment where taking out hard copies of your class notes to read might be considered inappropriate, or even make you feel uncomfortable. Examples of such places or environment include: canteens, events, get-togethers, birthday parties, or while waiting for someone/something to arrive etc.

BE ACTIVE

After receiving all information as it spreads about, you must be ready to act on them. Don't just hear and stay inactive, it makes no sense at all. Make sure you act on everything you hear: There's an assignment to be written and submitted at a certain time, write and submit. There's a material that just got released, get your copy of it. There's an extra class that just got fixed out of the blue, do all you can to make it...ACT accordingly!

BE RESTLESS

To be restless means never being comfortable with the level of information you have, or the kind of grades you get. When there's an assignment, don't rest until you've done it. When there's a project, always be willing to be involved. When there's a test result, always be ready to give more. Never be

contended with where you are, keep moving. Don't relent! Even if it seems like things are not going your way; the courses seem tough to comprehend, don't rest till you have it solved. Keep working. (Tip: you should never sleep for more than 6 hours in a day).

TREATING PAST QUESTIONS

A wise man once said, "There is nothing new under the sun". God is the only creator, humans are just modifiers- we recreate or modify what we already have on ground. No one creates or manufactures a thing from something else that has never been. Hence, no lecturer sets questions from questions that has never been set before at some point or place or time. What they do is to modify the ones that have been set in the past. Therefore, treat past questions religiously. Treat them right from resumption- it makes you familiar with the things to be taught and the kind of questions to expect from them. And another thing is this, for those questions you can't solve, you get the opportunity to know the solutions well before examinations. Your fellow colleague or senior colleagues can put you through or best case scenario, the lecturers taking the courses. They are not demons; some of them, in fact, a lot of them are approachable. Are they not paid to solve your problems? If yes, then enjoy your money to the fullest capacity.

BE TIME CONSCIOUS

Know when you are wasting time. The line between things that are necessary and unnecessary is a very thin one which is why your mind scale is highly important. As the saying goes, 'Time is money'. But I prefer saying time is more than money. Because money spent can sometimes be recovered, however, time spent can never ever be recovered. So spend your time more wisely than you do of even that money.

If you can religiously follow the SMARTT principle, there's no doubting it, you'll be a good quick finisher.

3. THE ADVENTURE

This is the most enticing and intriguing part of the University.

The University presents you with lots and lots of side attraction; social, religious, mental, developmental, philanthropically et c. It presents you with a host of bodies and association you can be part of to harness some of your deep rooted talent or skills that requires proper forging into a powerful tool. This is where many students lose it. Some get carried away along the line and sometimes lose their primary focus. Some end up helping others build their careers and resume while theirs suffer stagnation.

However, to be different, the following are crucial to not ending up like them:

- a) Let your mind scale guide you to the association necessary for you
- b) Let your reputation matter more to you than anything else
- c) Be careful to understand the true course of nature that everything has its own time and season, a step before another, so don't be too much in a hurry to impress.
- d) Learn to observe and listen a lot more than you speak and show off.
- e) Lastly, think over all your daily steps before you sleep at night, then assess and reassess yourself for quick reprimand. Just to ensure you don't get carried away.

OTHER ADDITIONAL BENEFIAL TIPS

- Seek foresight from those two classes ahead of you, that is, if you are in part I, seek foresight from those in part III. The essence of this is that they are the ones in the best position to inform you on the significance of every course you will be taking for that class in relation to the next class. They would tell you how great the deficiency of knowledge in a certain course could go on to affect several other courses to be taken in the next class because they've been there. Foresight of such future would then inform how seriously you should take each and every one of the courses.
- Read your lecturer very keenly as he or she delivers his or her lectures. In other words, pay attention to details. A lot of lecturers give away their peculiarity in their lectures. For instance, you should know that a lecturer who is very careful with his or her words while lecturing reads meaning to words' use a lot. Because of this, it would be unwise to answer his or her questions in your own words, you may not pass across what he or she needs exactly as he or she would have loved. For this reason, the wise thing would be to read his or her notes as to memorize while understanding alongside.
- Have some sort of discussion group. Be careful to not create something out of control. As a guide: 5 is good, 7 is large enough, 10 and up is a crowd, and you have to beware of crowd. Discussion group helps you maximize the other modes of committing information to memory via speaking, listening and demonstrating.

In terms of what we learn, research says 85% of what we learn is visual, 14% is audible, and 1% from other sources. However, in terms of the knowledge we take in, research says we remember 20% of what we read, 30% of what we hear, 40% of what we see, 50% of what we say, 60% of what we do, and 90% of what we hear, see, say and do. And of course, this is what you do at your groups' discussion sessions; after you must have read(20%), you go to listen to others(30%), see others demonstrate(40%), say a few things yourself(50%), demonstrate a few things yourself(60%), and eventually you discover you've read, heard, seen, said, and done all that's in your note- a whopping 90% note's knowledge committed to memory.
- Surround yourself with people in your art of study. Spend most of your time with people that help you get better in your field, not people outside your field of study. Only on occasions

should you spend time with people from other fields, and these occasions should be to share knowledge and benefit from one another in order to be a well grounded literate.

- **Enjoy the campus; be social, attend entertaining events, shows, drama, concerts, sports...be a part of the university community, but don't at any point forget to be 'SMARTT'.**

Thanks for choosing to be wise by reading to this point. I wish you all the best.

Authored by Rtr. Ogundele George Oluwadamilola (Mistigino),

The Editor-in-chief, Pharmavox / Chancellor House of Magma,

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For enquiries, questions, sponsorship etc, contact @pansoauife@gmail.com