

QUESTIONNAIRE

In the last month, how often have you:	Never (0)	Almost Never (1)	Some- times (2)	Fairly Often (3)	Very Often (4)
Had difficulty concentrating?					
Not felt prepared to deal with academic responsibilities?					
Felt overwhelmed?					
Worried about your academic progress?					
Experienced worry to the point where it interfered with your daily activities like class, sleep, diet, or social?					
Found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?					
Avoided asking for help?					
Experienced your mind “blanking” during an exam?					
Felt extreme stress and mental fatigue due to the volume of work required for medical school?					

Note: This questionnaire is not intended as a diagnostic instrument, but rather used as a tool along with other tools to determine if further evaluation is warranted. All information contained herein is confidential.

INTERPRETING THE SCORE

0- 8: Low perceived anxiety

9- 16: Moderate perceived anxiety

17- 24: Moderately high perceived anxiety

25+: High perceived anxiety

REMEMBER THE BASICS

Students preparing for tests often neglect basic biological, emotional, and social needs. To do your best, you must attend to these needs. Think of yourself as a total person—not just a test taker. Remember to:

- Continue the habits of good nutrition and exercise. Continue your recreational pursuits and social activities—all contribute to your emotional and physical well-being.
- Follow a moderate pace when studying; vary your work when possible, and take breaks when needed.
- Get plenty of sleep the night before the test—when you are overly tired you will not function at your absolute best.
- Once you feel you are adequately prepared for the test, do something relaxing or fun.

If you have any questions or would like to make an appointment please contact:

Ed Magalhaes, PhD, LPC

Director of Academic and Counseling Services
Virginia Campus
emagalhaes@vcom.vt.edu
540-231-1944

Or outside counseling services at the New River Community Services:

700 University City Blvd / Blacksburg, VA 24060
Phone: 540-961-8400
(Be sure to identify yourself as a VCOM student)

For emergency care, 24 hours a day, call ACCESS at 540-961-8400

Natalie Fadel, PsyD

Director of Academic and Counseling Services
Carolinas Campus
nfadel@carolinas.vcom.edu
864-327-9875

Or outside counseling services at Spartanburg Area Mental Health Center:

250 Dewey Avenue / Spartanburg, SC 29303
Phone: (864) 585-0366
(Be sure to identify yourself as a VCOM student)

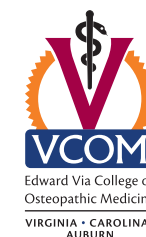
For emergency care, 24 hours a day Crisis Hotline: (864) 585-0366 or 1-800-277-1366

Mary Ann Taylor, PhD

Director of Academic and Counseling Services
Auburn Campus
mtaylor@auburn.vcom.edu
Room 214 // 334-442-4037

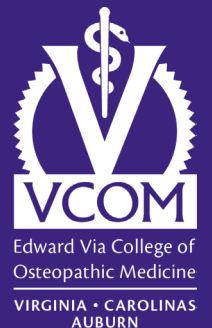
Or outside counseling services at Auburn Student Counseling Services:

861-D North Dean Road / Auburn, AL 36830
Phone: 334-877-4343
(Be sure to identify yourself as a VCOM student)



Anxiety

The Center for Institutional,
Faculty, and Student Success



Anxiety

DEALING WITH ANXIETY

Generally, we all experience some level of nervousness or tension before tests or other important events in our lives. A little nervousness can actually help motivate us; however, too much of it can become a problem—especially if it interferes with our ability to prepare for and perform on tests.

The first step is to distinguish between two types of anxiety. If your anxiety is a direct result of lack of preparation, consider it a normal, rational reaction. However, if you are adequately prepared but still panic, “blank out,” and/or overact, your reaction is not rational. While both of these anxieties may be considered normal (anyone can have them), it is certainly helpful to know how to overcome their effects.

PREPARATION CAN HELP

Preparation is the best way to minimize anxiety. Consider the following:

- Avoid “cramming” for a test. Trying to master a large amount of material the day before the test is a poor way to learn and can easily produce anxiety. This is not the time to try to learn a great deal of material.
- Combine all the information you have been presented throughout the block and work on mastering the main concepts of the course.
- Estimate how much time you will need to cover the material and set daily, specific goals to master the material.
- When studying for the test, ask yourself what questions may be asked and try to answer them by integrating ideas from lectures, notes, texts, and supplementary readings.
- If you are unable to cover all the material given throughout the semester, select important portions that you can cover well. Set a goal of presenting your knowledge of this information on the test.
- Seek help from your instructors, tutors, or experienced classmates.
- Hold yourself accountable!

CHANGING YOUR ATTITUDE

Improving your perspective of the test-taking experience can actually help you enjoy studying and may improve your performance. Don't overplay the importance of a grade—it is not a reflection of your self-worth nor does it predict your future success. Try the following:

- Remember that the most reasonable expectation is to try and show as much of what you know as you can.
- Remind yourself that a test is only a test—there will be others.
- Avoid thinking of yourself or the test in irrational, all-or-nothing terms.
- Reframe negative self-talk to positive self-talk
- Reward yourself after the test—watch a movie, go out to eat, or visit with friends.

THE DAY OF THE TEST

To be able to do your best on the day of the test, we suggest the following:

- Begin your day with a moderate breakfast and avoid coffee if you are prone to “caffeine jitters.” Even people who usually manage caffeine well may feel light headed and jittery when indulging on the day of a test.
- Try to do something relaxing the hour

before the test—last minute cramming will cloud your mastery of the overall concepts of the course.

- Plan to arrive at the test location early—but not too early.
- Avoid classmates who generate anxiety and tend to upset your stability.
- If waiting for the test to begin causes anxiety, use this time for mindfulness or distract yourself with music or pleasure reading.

DURING THE TEST: BASIC STRATEGIES

Before you begin answering the questions on the test, take a few minutes and do the following:

- Brain Dump—when you get the test, write down necessary material (formulas, definitions, concepts, etc) to help clear your brain and make room for thinking and strategizing.
- Review the entire test; then read the directions twice. Try to think of the test as an opportunity to show what you know, then begin to organize your time efficiently. To increase confidence, work on the easiest portions of the test first.
- For essay questions, construct a short outline for yourself—then begin your answer with a summary sentence. This will help you avoid the rambling and repetition which can irritate the person grading the test. For short-answer questions, answer only what is asked—short and to the point. If you have difficulty with an item involving a written response, show what knowledge you can. If proper terminology evades you, show what you know with your own words or examples.
- For multiple choice questions, read all the options first, then eliminate the most obvious. Next, focus on the stem part of the question, then determine the most important part of the stem—which may help

guide you to the correct answer. Rely on your first impression, then move on quickly. Beware of tricky qualifying words such as “only,” “always,” or “most.”

- Do not rush through the test. Wear a watch and check it frequently as you pace yourself. If it appears you will be unable to finish the entire test, concentrate on those portions which you can answer well. Recheck your answers only if you have extra time—and only if you are not anxious.

DURING THE TEST: ANXIETY CONTROL

Curb excess anxiety in any of the following ways:

- Take slow, deep belly breaths.
- Tell yourself “I can be anxious later, now is the time to take the exam.”
- Focus on answering the question, not on your grade or others' performances.
- Counter negative thoughts with other, more valid thoughts like, “I don't have to be perfect.”
- Tense and relax muscles throughout your body; take a couple of slow deep breaths and try to maintain a positive attitude.
- If allowed, get a drink or go to the bathroom.
- Think about the post-exam reward you promised yourself.

AFTER THE TEST

This time is equally important and can help you during future exams:

- Reward yourself whether you did well or not.
- Don't dwell on the mistakes.
- Use the test as a learning tool for future tests by examining weak areas.
- Discuss the test with your instructor and/or classmates.
- Don't immediately begin studying for the next exam—take some time to relax.