

## 10 Steps to Academic Survival

1. Adhere to your job description. Ensure your job description reflects your expertise, experience and career goals. Ensure that your Divisional Director will support the time allocations and resources required to allow you to achieve your job description. Your job description is the focus by which your academic performance will be judged. If it does not reflect reality or your career goals change, make sure your job description changes as well.
2. Know the system. Familiarize yourself with the criteria for merit increments, promotion, tenure, and the workings of the Faculty Evaluation Committee. Understand that “doing your job” may be insufficient for promotion and the development of a national or international profile as required.
3. Focus your career. Success is based on academic excellence in one or two areas rather than good performance in many areas. Develop special expertise in one or two activities of academic life and link it to a special area of interest clinically.
4. Document your achievements. This is no time to be self-effacing. Develop a CV that includes all your activities including a teaching and clinical dossier. Be sure to include as much objective evidence of your performance as possible. You will be the only source of this information. No one will do it on your behalf. It will serve as the evidence for decisions about your academic performance.
5. Plan ahead. Develop a timetable for your objectives (manuscripts, grants, courses taught, materials developed, etc.) over one, two, and five years and stick to it. These accomplishments are labor intensive and time consuming and cannot be generated on short notice.
6. Develop a thick skin. Statistically, you will likely not be successful with every grant, manuscript, course taught, or CME activity. Understand that these activities are “works in progress”. Utilize the feedback to make a better submission or presentation in the future.
7. Plan your daily activities. Set aside a defined time to work on academic projects daily and develop a method to deal with necessary activities (phone calls, reviewing charts, mail, etc) that allows for maximal efficiency.
8. Say no to administrative duties but yes to personal requests. If asked to perform administrative duties, you may say no politely if the activity clearly does not conform to your job description. However, if colleagues want help reviewing a manuscript, teaching a course, or providing expertise on a patient, don't refuse, as mentorship is a part of everyone's job description.
9. Make Friends. Cultivate colleagues, collaborators, and experts in your field who can testify to your achievements. Since you will eventually require both internal and external referees, you will need supporters from inside and outside the U of A.
10. Be nice to yourself. This probably should be number one. No matter how busy you are, make sure you have time for family, friends, and yourself, as contentment is the foundation for academic success.