GENESEO

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

Supplemental Instruction
Faculty/Instructor FAQs

What exactly *is* Supplemental Instruction?
Supplemental Instruction (or SI) is a voluntary academic assistance program that utilizes peer-led group study to help students succeed in traditionally difficult courses—those with high unsuccessful completion rates (D, E, W). SI targets courses that are historically difficult, regardless of the faculty member or instructor who teaches them or the material that is used. Each week, SI Leaders (peer students who showed competency when they took that course) offer regularly scheduled study sessions on campus in designated classrooms.

While it is important to know exactly what SI is, it is equally important to understand that SI is ***not*** a remedial program for three important reasons:
1. SI supports <u>high-risk courses</u> rather than high-risk students
2. <u>All students</u> enrolled in a targeted class are encouraged to attend SI
3. SI starts within the <u>first week of classes</u> and continues to the end of the term

What does an SI Leader do?
SI Leaders serve as peer facilitators for SI session group study. This role requires SI Leaders to attend the targeted course (similar to auditing) to ensure constant and consistent knowledge of the lecture and classroom expectations. Responsibilities include:
- Attending all lectures
- Being a visible presence to the students in the class
- Acting as a model student during lectures—listening and taking notes
- Reading assigned texts and supplementary materials
- Organizing and facilitating two to three hours of regular study sessions per week
- Designing and distributing SI promotional material
- Encouraging student participation (via in-class announcements or weekly emails)
- Communicating consistently with you and the SI coordinator

Is this SI Leader my new teaching assistant?
No. While your SI Leader will inevitably receive guidance from you throughout the semester, he or she is doing so to facilitate further understanding of the material you teach. In order for the SI leader to be effective and well perceived by the students, tasks such as test administration, grading, co-teaching, or any other responsibilities typical of a teaching assistant or graduate student must be avoided.

What can I expect on day one?
You can expect for the SI Leaders to use 3-5 minutes on the first day of class to complete these tasks:
- Give their initial announcement, called the First Day Speech, to introduce SI and its benefits
- Provide a link to an online survey to schedule SI sessions

What can I expect in my classroom throughout the semester?
It is ideal to allot space on the board in the classroom for the Leader to write his/her SI schedule and any announcements before every class. If your class utilizes Canvas, you may choose to provide the SI Leader with access to the announcements tool to update students on weekly SI session plans.

How can I support the SI Leader in my class?
Please expect to support your SI Leader throughout the semester by encouraging student participation in sessions. Faculty endorsement of SI for all students, not just those who struggle, helps to eliminate the stigma that only those who are failing the course should attend. As such, prompts about SI—as regularly as every class period—remind students of its availability and encourage attendance in a positive manner.

How will I stay up-to-date with important SI information?
You and your SI Leader should meet at least weekly, even if only briefly. During this time, you and the SI Leader will be able to exchange information about student performance, issues you're seeing, etc.   You can also expect regular communication from the SI program coordinator (Rob Feissner, feissner@geneseo.edu).

What happens in the SI sessions?
Each week, SI Leaders offer regularly scheduled SI sessions which are held on campus in designated classrooms. SI Leaders promote their sessions as "guaranteed study time" because by attending SI students have an opportunity to meet with classmates outside of class and engage themselves in the course material. During a typical SI session, students compare and clarify lecture notes, review textbook readings, and discuss key course concepts. SI also provides an opportunity to complete study activities while developing study skills specific to the course.

Who manages and trains the SI Leaders?
SI Leaders are hired and trained by the Supplemental Instruction Coordinator. Each semester SI Leaders are mandated to attend an intensive two-day SI training program which is always held just before the start of the term, so SI Leaders are ready to begin working and attending lecture on the first day of class. Training topics include:

- The role of the SI Leader
- Developing working relationships with faculty
- Planning and conducting SI sessions
- SI session samples and demonstrations
- Study skills and collaborative learning techniques
- Public speaking: SI announcements in the classroom
- Policies & Procedures

What if I have a concern with my SI Leader?
Immediately call the SI Coordinator 245-5022 or email (feissner@geneseo.edu) to discuss your concerns and to resolve the issue**.**

How much work do I have to do for the SI program?
SI is maintained through the Office of the Associate Provost for Student Success and coordinated by Rob Feissner. All we ask of faculty in SI-supported classes is that they provide the following:

- A few minutes at the beginning of class for the SI Leader to make weekly announcements
- Time to meet with the SI Leader, allowing him/her to keep faculty apprised of what's happening in the SI sessions
- Access to necessary course materials including a copy of the textbook and access to any subscription based resources used by students (e.g. MasteringBiology, MyMathLab).   These are often available at no cost from textbook reps by request of faculty.

Do I need to change how I teach?
No! SI attempts to help students learn how to be successful in the course, regardless of the way you teach. It is not our intention to dictate how you should teach your class. SI will support your teaching.

What is the purpose of SI and what are its goals and objectives?
The purpose of SI is threefold:

1. Improve student understanding of concepts in targeted historically difficult courses (measured in terms of higher grades)
2. Reduce rates of attrition within targeted historically difficult courses
3. Increase the graduation rates of students

With regular attendance, SI aims to help students improve their class standing by one-half to one full letter grade. To accomplish this, SI helps students to:

- Understand what to learn and how to learn
- Successfully complete the course by earning an A, B, or C
- Develop transferable study skills
  The goal of SI is to help students become independent learners; objectives of such are to:

- Understand and plan for the demand of college-level courses
- Gain problem-solving experience through trial and error
- Become more actively involved in the course
- Develop more effective study skills

This program seems great, but how do you know SI is effective?
SI has developed into a reputable international presence since its inception in 1973. 40 years of data consistently show that students who regularly attend SI study sessions outperform their peers who do not by a half-to-whole letter grade better. Data also suggest that students who attend SI regularly are retained at the university at a rate of 10-to-20 percentage points higher.

How is data collected and monitored?
Students who attend SI sessions are required to sign in. SI program officials then track each student's individual attendance in SI throughout the semester. Minimally, the SI program coordinator will collect end-of-term grades in Banner, add them to the SI program's attendance tracking system, and compare the grades of those who attended SI to those who did not attend. Additionally, professors can elect to share students' test grades with the SI program coordinator to have similar data available through the semester.

Wouldn't sharing students' test grades violate FERPA?
No. According to the Registrar, "The University discloses education records without a student's prior written consent under the FERPA exception for disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the University in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff)…" because the Associate Provost for Student Success has responsibility for managing academic support services, reporting staff members are considered to have legitimate educational interests and are included in this exception.

Can I give extra credit for SI attendance to encourage participation?
As a rule, the SI program does not encourage providing extra credit to students for attending an SI session for the following reasons:

1. Some students may not be able to attend SI because of schedule conflicts. As a result, these students would have no way to participate in the extra credit.
2. Asking the SI Leaders to police attendance gives conflicting messages. For example, if a person attends the SI session for five minutes—signs in and then leaves—should the SI Leader report or ignore it? Having to monitor attendance in such a way takes the SI Leader's attention away from the purpose of SI.