What would you guess is the average number of hours instructors think you should be studying each week? In the view of instructors queried in a national survey, students should spend, on average, 6 hours per week preparing for ***each*** class in which they are enrolled. And if they’re taking courses in the sciences and engineering, instructors expect their student to put in even more hours.

Keep in mind that study time does not include actual class time. If you add that in, someone taking four classes would need 24 hours of outside class preparation and would be in class for 16 hour—for a total of 40 hours, or the equivalent of full-time employment.

If you’ve underestimated the amount of time instructors believe is necessary to devote to class preparation, you may need to rethink the amount of time you’ll need to allocate to studying. You might also speak to your individual instructors to see what they believe is an appropriate amount of preparation. Although they may not be able to give exact figures, their estimates will help you to prioritize what you need to do to be a successful student.