Common Concerns of Mature Students

I can’t compete with younger students
Usually mature students know their goals and have sacrificed to come to school. At NAIT mature students are often among our highest achievers. You already know how to prioritize, how to juggle commitments and how to use your time effectively.

My memory isn’t what it used to be
While certain memory functions do appear to deteriorate with age, current research is showing there is less deterioration than researchers once thought. As well practice keeps memory going – and you will get lots of practice here at NAIT! It may take a few weeks to adjust to the pace and load at NAIT. Be patient. While you may feel like your memory isn’t what it used to be, neither are your social needs or your party habits!

I won’t fit in
You may be the only “adult” student in your class but that doesn’t mean you won’t fit in. Try to make friends with some of the younger students. Many of them will enjoy having a mature friend and they may look to you as a mentor. Develop a support network. While there may not be a lot of mature students in your class there are many at NAIT. Likely they are feeling the same way you are. When you see another mature student in the hall approach them and compare experiences. If you can get a “mature student coffee club” going that will be a great support.

Instructors don’t like older students in class
Most instructors love having older students in class. You have life experience to share and they will find it easier to communicate with you. You are likely motivated to learn and will play closer attention and ask more questions than the younger students.

I have forgotten how to do math
Take advantage of the free Tutorial Centre in Room A133 for math, physics and chemistry questions. If they can’t offer enough help hire a peer tutor through the Peer Tutor Registry on your My NAIT Portal. We do recommend, however, that you upgrade in math if you have been out of school for more than 5 years. It is one of the skills that is lost most quickly.

I forget how to study
Adult students can learn and remember as well as younger students. However getting into a good study routine will take some practice. Attend study skills workshops, read about study techniques (e.g. Strategies for Success from the NAIT Counselling Centre or Becoming a Master Student by David Ellis) or see a counsellor for advice.

I don’t know how to use computers/I don’t have a computer
The Computer Commons, 2nd floor of the HP Centre, has computers available for student use and is open 24 hours a day every day. Ask your instructor what computer skills will be necessary for your course. If you don’t have those skills consider hiring a tutor or getting help from a classmate or friend. The Tech Store, (located in the NAIT bookstore), will give you advice if you are planning to buy a computer.

I’m not sure if I have enough money
Making sure you have the money to get through the semester is really important. Financial strain can interfere with your success. You can pick up a budget planner from the Financial Aid office, Room 0111. Have you accessed student loans or appealed your student loan if you didn’t receive the full amount?

My family will be neglected
It is true that you won’t have as much time with family as before, however setting aside regular quality time can help reduce your guilt. Remember you are doing this partly for them and you are also providing a good role model for your children. Sit down with significant others in your life and work out a plan to divide up responsibilities and to choose family time/couple time/friend time.

Taking a lighter course load will take me too long
Many students, mature or not, choose to spread their program out over three rather than two years. In some programs this is not possible but if you are feeling overwhelmed check with your program head to see if this is an option. Don’t reduce your course load too soon though – most students feel overwhelmed at some times, especially during the first semester. You may be setting your standards too high or not allowing yourself enough downtime to feel refreshed. If you do decide to reduce your load, look at it as a way of taking care of yourself and of coping with all the commitments that you have.