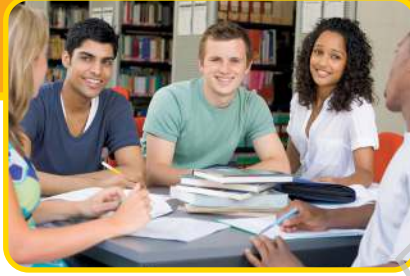


STARTING COLLEGE

A Guide for New College Students



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Dear Student,

Congratulations on making the decision to further your education and take on a new challenge. You are embarking on an adventure that is sure to benefit your future!

Your college years will be some of the most memorable years of your life. To make the most of these years, it's important that you get your college career off to a great start. This booklet is packed with tips and advice to help you do just that.

Enjoy this special time in your life!

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Table of Contents

Get Acclimated.....	4
Adjust to New Living Quarters.....	5
Prepare for Your Classes.....	6
Register Wisely.....	7
Get Your Classes Off to a Great Start.....	8
Develop Good Study Habits	10
Manage Your Time.....	12
Make Friends and Get Involved	13
Stay Safe / Be Healthy.....	14
Seek Assistance	15



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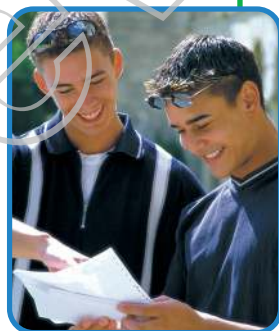
GET ACCLIMATED

College is your new home for the next several years, so it's important that you know your way around, and that you familiarize yourself with all that your college has to offer.

Scope out your new surroundings.

Find the places they didn't take you on the campus tour. Use a map of the campus to locate dining options, libraries, labs, rec centers, announcement boards, and student services.

As you explore, look for study lounges, coffee shops, and other quiet places to study. Empty classrooms are a good place to study—but never alone at night.



Explore the community.

Familiarize yourself with the nearby community—theaters, bookstores, parks, cafes, groceries, retail stores. Coffee shops and public libraries are great places to study and get away from campus for a while. Ask upperclass students for their off-campus recommendations.



"I've discovered so many great services on campus this year. I wish I would have known about these my freshman year." Sophia, junior

Adjust to New Living Quarters

Whether you are living in a dorm or sharing an apartment, how you handle and adjust to your new living arrangement will impact your overall adjustment to college life.

Colleges use the term “residence life facility,” but for simplicity sake, let’s stick with the term “dorm.”

■ Living with a Roommate

Roommates need to make every effort to get along. This requires making compromises and setting ground rules regarding visiting hours, noise levels, chores, and bedtimes.

■ Dorm Rules and RAs

If you live in a dorm, you’ll be given a list of rules, or directed to a website that spells out what you can have in your room, what you can do, and when you can do it. Failure to abide by the rules can result in warnings, probation, or removal.

Resident Assistants (RAs) are upper level students who live among dorm residents. Their job is to enforce the rules and to provide assistance and support. They are veteran students who know the ropes, and who can provide advice on course registration, campus resources, and things to do.

■ Getting Enough Sleep

By far, the biggest problem faced by first-year students is inadequate sleep. With too little sleep, your grades, personal appearance, and health will all suffer. *Make it a priority to get enough sleep!* That might mean asking roommates to take a get-together with friends to another room, or using a pair of ear plugs.



Prepare for Your Classes

Here are some things you can do before classes begin to improve your likelihood of success.

Get supplies.

Purchase textbooks, notebooks, an academic planner, and any other supplies you'll need for your classes.



Walk through your class schedule.

Locate your classrooms and figure out how much time you will need to get to each class. By knowing where to go, you can arrive early on the first day and claim a much coveted first-row seat.

Buy an academic planner.

Using a planner can greatly help you organize your life. Don't rely on your memory or random scribbled notes—write everything down in your planner.

This includes:

- Class times and locations
- Assignments and due dates
- Test and exam schedules
- Instructors' office hours and help sessions
- Study and meeting times
- Course withdrawal deadlines
- Course registration dates and deadlines

Register Wisely

Registering for the correct classes is one of the most important things you do in college.

Be informed.

Many freshmen are clueless or misinformed about course registration policies and procedures, and they often make poor decisions as a result. Read about the registration process on your school's website, and speak to an academic advisor about which classes to take, when to take them, and how to get into them. Ask your RA or another upperclass student for course registration tips.

Take a College 101 class.

Many colleges offer an optional, one-credit "College 101" or "Intro to College" course. Research shows that students who take these courses are more successful in their classes.

Schedule classes wisely.

Selecting the right courses is important—but so is the way your courses are scheduled. Let's face it, many students (especially freshmen) stay up way too late. So unless you're a morning person, avoid early morning classes.

Be careful scheduling back to back classes.

Back to back classes give you little time to get to your next class. They also make it almost impossible to arrive early or stay after class for questions. Only schedule back to back classes if they are located in the same building or very close by.



Get Your Classes Off to a **GREAT START**

How you spend your time in class will have a direct impact on your academic success.

1. Attend every class.

Every senior and recent college graduate we've spoken to has stressed the importance of class attendance. Relying on classmates to tell you what was covered in the class you missed is a recipe for disaster.

2. Sit up front.

Front row seats offer a distraction-free classroom experience devoid of texting, chatting, and web browsing classmates. You can hear the professor and see the whiteboard/screen. You stay alert—and you send a positive message to your professor.



3. Turn off your cell phone.

Don't switch it to vibrate, turn it off. There's no better way to alienate a professor than to disrupt a class with a ringtone or a vibrating phone.

4. Meet your instructors/professors.

Developing positive relationships with faculty is one way that you can directly influence the quality of your education. Sit up front, ask questions, and get to know your professors. Visit your instructors/professors during office hours and ask for assistance when needed.



5. Come prepared.

If you are covering Chapter 2 on Thursday, read Chapter 2 in advance. You'll get more out of the lecture, you'll know what's going on, and you will be able to ask and answer questions in class. Check your course syllabus regularly.

6. Use your computer responsibly.

If permitted, laptops or tablets can be valuable for taking notes in class, and for accessing course materials. But avoid the temptation to text, snap, tweet, chat, share, tag, etc.

7. Participate in class.

Optimize your classroom experience by participating in discussions, asking questions, and taking notes. The material will be more interesting, time will pass more quickly, and your professors will get to know you.

8. Have contact information for classmates.

If you miss a class, you'll want to contact a classmate to get a copy of any handouts—and to find out if any assignments were made or revised.



"If I could tell new college students only one thing, it would be to go to every class." James, college senior

Develop Good Study Habits

To succeed in college you need to have good study habits, and you need to study smart.

Academic success isn't about studying a lot, it's about studying smart. If your college offers classes or workshops on study skills or test taking, enroll in them.

Study in a Quiet Place

Avoid the distractions and temptations of your dorm room or apartment—friends, TV, music, computer, bed. Seek out quiet, secluded places to study.



1. Study according to your body clock.

Whether you're a morning person or a night owl, you want to study during your body's most alert state. Studying when you're fatigued is almost worthless.

2. Study the "worst first."

Avoid the temptation to put off your least favorite topic to the end of a study session when you're rushed and/or tired. Study the less interesting material while you're fresh.

3. Turn off your cell phone when studying.

Nothing, and I mean nothing, wastes time more than cell phone usage. Don't let overuse of your cell phone sabotage your academic success.

4. Space your studying.

A good rule is 30 to 45 minutes of studying interspersed with 5 to 10 minute breaks (stretch, get a snack, check texts and emails). This will help keep you fresh and alert.

If you're enrolled in 15 hours, plan to study 30 or more hours per week outside the classroom.

5. Join study groups and attend review sessions.

Group study is a great way to prepare for exams, share and gain knowledge, and reinforce what you covered in class.

6. Save and back-up computer files often.

Avoid every student's nightmare of lost or corrupted assignments, papers, and projects. Use external hard drives and/or online back-up systems.

7. Know your software.

Learn the shortcuts and features of MS Word and PowerPoint. You will save yourself hundreds of hours over the course of your college career.

8. Just say no.

There's plenty of opportunity for socializing and fun during college. But academics must come first. Know what you need to do, and don't let anything get in the way of your schoolwork.



Seek help early

At the first sign that you're struggling or falling behind in a class, speak to your professor or academic advisor about the availability of extra help sessions or tutoring.

Manage Your **TIME**

Time management is a skill successful students use every day to effectively handle their many tasks and responsibilities.

Here are some useful time-management tips.

- **Create a daily and weekly To Do list.**

Write down the things you need to accomplish, and rank them in order of importance. Focus on one task at a time. When that task is completed, move on to the next.

- **Make good use of the time between classes.**

Use this time to study, review notes, meet with professors, do research, or prepare for upcoming classes.

- **Don't wait until the last minute.**

Waiting until the last minute to complete assignments or study for exams increases your anxiety level—while decreasing your productivity. Finish all assignments several days in advance. This will give you time for revisions, and free up time for other tasks and activities.

- **Arrive early to classes.**

Professors often make class announcements or answer questions before the class officially begins. Latecomers miss important information, and they don't win any points with their professors.



Make Friends and Get Involved

Do you know what you'll remember most about your college years?

The people! College is more than just an academic setting—it's a social environment. Put yourself out there among your classmates. Invest in the "human capital" that surrounds you every day at college.



Participate in student organizations.

One of the most enjoyable and rewarding aspects of college is the opportunity to get involved in student activities and clubs. Check your college website for a list of organizations, and get involved!

Stretch your boundaries.

College life offers unique opportunities to gain exposure to people, activities, and ideas that may have been unavailable during your high school years. Meet people from different cultures and backgrounds. Attend events, and participate in activities to which you've previously had little or no exposure.

Fulfill your potential and grow as a person by embracing change, taking measured risks, and stretching your comfort zone.



Avoid the temptation to return home every weekend to be with family and friends. This will hamper your early adjustment to college, and limit your opportunity to make new friends on campus.

Stay Safe

College is a microcosm of the real world, and crime occurs on college campuses just as it does everywhere else.

Theft Happens

Never leave valuables unattended in dorm rooms, dining facilities, libraries, or classrooms. Always lock your door, even if you're leaving for just a few minutes.

Be Smart

80% of college crime is student vs. student, and 90% involves alcohol. Attend parties with trusted friends. Avoid open containers, and when out at night, stay in well-lit areas. If you must walk alone at night, keep a whistle in your hand. Also, program your cell phone with 911, the Campus Police, and a taxi service.

Be Healthy

Eat a well balanced diet, exercise regularly, get enough sleep, and avoid self-injurious behaviors. You know all this—it's just a matter of doing it.

Alcohol and drugs? According to a recent study, almost half of college students binge drink or abuse prescription drugs. Plenty of students abstain. Ask yourself if alcohol or drugs will contribute to your well-being and academic/career success.



Seek Assistance

There's no need to go it alone. Seeking help when needed is a sign of wisdom, not weakness.

Academic problems?

Speak to your instructor/ professor or your Academic Advisor. Visit a Tutoring Center or Writing/Math Lab.

Dorm issues?

Speak to your RA or visit the Residence Life office.

Medical/Nutrition/Sexual issues?

Visit the Health Center.

Undecided about your major or career?

Schedule an appointment at Career Services.

Money problems?

Check with the Financial Aid office about loans, grants, scholarships, and/or student work opportunities.

Personal, emotional, or substance abuse problems?

Visit the Counseling Center.

Spiritual/Religious concerns?

Visit the Campus Ministry or a nearby place of worship.

Need to get in shape or lose weight?

Take advantage of the facilities and activities offered through Campus Recreation and Wellness.

Computer/Phone issues?

Visit the Information Technology Help Desk.



If you have problems, questions, or concerns but don't know where to go, visit your college's Student Affairs or Student Life Office. They will direct you to the services you need, and help you navigate your college journey.

"Success doesn't come to you. You go to it." Marva Collins

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