



What to Do When You Get to Campus

My To-Do List

- ☐ Log In to Your Student Portal
- ☐ Find a study spot
- ☐ Visit my academic advisor
- ☐ Finalize my schedule
- ☐ Purchase books
- ☐ Meet people
- ☐ Explore campus and find campus resources
- ☐ Make a budget
- ☐ Learn about my neighboring community
- ☐ Be confident and have fun

You've paid your housing deposit, purchased your books, and have a few days left before classes begin. What now?

Whether your school is across country or just across town, you'll have to make some adjustments to college life. Here are ten things you can do on and around campus to help you settle in.

1. Log In to Your Student Portal

To log in to your student portal, start by navigating to your school's portal website. Your login information, including your username and password, will be sent to the personal email address listed in your enrollment paperwork. Once you have your credentials, enter them to access your dashboard, where you can find course materials, grades and communication tools. If you encounter any issues, contact your school's IT support or your instructor for assistance.

Logging into your student portal is important because it provides centralized access to essential academic resources and information. It facilitates efficient communication with professors and peers, helps manage assignments and schedules, and offers support services like tutoring and counseling. Overall, the portal enhances your educational experience by making vital information and services easily accessible.

2. Find a Study Spot

The goals of college are to learn, grow, develop, gain experience and graduate, and in order to do so you will need to study. Find a place that works best for you, and look for things such as adequate lighting and few distractions. A quiet place in the main campus library is a good place to start your search; you could also try a local café or a study lounge—these can be found at different locations around campus.

3. Visit Your Academic Advisor

Develop an education plan with the help of your advisor so that you can graduate in a reasonable amount of time. When you first meet with your advisor, be prepared to discuss your class schedule and academic and career goals. Additionally, review your campus academic calendar and take note of important dates, such as the last date to drop a class and finals week. Together you can construct the best education plan for your time and major. Meeting with your advisor a few times a year will help ensure that you are on track with your graduation goals.

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4. Finalize Your Schedule

After you speak to your academic advisor, review your course load. Make sure you have the necessary classes, but also check the difficulty of each course to avoid overloading. The general rule is to spend at least three hours a week per credit doing outside work (i.e., a typical college class is three credits, which would require nine hours a week working on the course material outside of class). A full-time student is required to take at least 12 credits per semester. Most colleges do not recommend taking more than 18 credits per semester and it is often required to have approval from your advisor or dean to do so.

Adjust your schedule as needed and then attend your classes. Skipping class can lower your academic performance and waste your money.

5. Purchase Books

There are a variety of ways to purchase textbooks, so check out all of the options to find the right fit for you. If you have financial aid, you may be able to visit your college campus bookstore and use your financial aid funds to purchase books and supplies. This may be the right option if you are limited in paying for these items out of pocket. Another option is to look for a local bookstore near your campus that sells used or new textbooks. The price savings may be substantial when purchasing off campus versus on campus. There are also a variety of online options (e.g., Amazon, Chegg, etc.) where you can buy or rent textbooks. If you are tech-savvy, you may even want to consider renting e-books.

6. Meet People

Like you, other students have recently embarked on this academic journey. Be outgoing and take time to get to know fellow students in your classes, at social events and all around campus. Keep an eye out for freshman mixers—different activities hosted during the first couple of weeks as an icebreaker for new students. Attend a campus club fair and join a club or two in areas of interest. You never know when or with whom you'll strike up a lifelong friendship.

7. Explore Campus and Find Campus Resources

Get out there and see what your college campus has to offer, such as a football stadium, fitness center, student center, libraries, bowling alley, dining areas, movie theater, aquatic center or performing arts centers. Knowing what is available will help you take advantage of on-campus services.

You also may need extra help at some point. No matter what you might need, there is someone on campus who can help. Campus resources are designed to support you and make college life easier. Resources may include a writing center, tutoring center, career services, financial aid office, counseling, health and wellness care, food pantry, disability services and child care.

8. Make a Budget

This might be the first time you have ever been solely in charge of your money and livelihood. A budget can help you manage your finances so that you have enough money for essentials—like food, books and housing—as well as fun throughout the school year. If you are unsure how to create a budget, talk to your parents/legal guardians, your bank or take a personal finance course.

9. Learn about Your Neighboring Community

Learning about the surrounding neighborhoods can help you become acquainted with the area. Find out where the locals eat and relax. You might also want to learn more about ways to give back through service or some other kind of community involvement.

10. Be Confident and Have Fun

Think of college as a launching pad for your future—a time when you have the chance to meet new people, test out your independence and your capabilities, gain knowledge and experience for your future career, and recognize what in life is most important to you. Surround yourself with people you can trust to support you. Acknowledge and listen to your inner voice, then make decisions you can stand by and enjoy life as it unfolds. Don't second-guess your worth. This time will be unlike any other time in your life. Enjoy the experience.

Need More Information?

The College Place is here to help you with free college-planning resources and personal advice. Visit our website at www.ecmc.org/TCP.