



What to do when you get to campus

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 nine things you can do on and around campus to help you settle in.

My to-do list

- Pay housing deposit
- Purchase books
- Explore campus
- Find a study spot
- Visit my academic advisor
- Finalize my schedule
- Meet people
- Be confident
- Make a budget
- Learn about my neighboring community
- Have fun

1. Explore campus.

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. Exploring the campus and surrounding neighborhoods is also a great way to meet and bond with other students in your dorm or apartment complex.

2. Find a study spot.

The goal of college is to 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 academic 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, bring an idea of your class

schedule and be prepared to discuss your academic/career goals. Together you can construct the best schedule 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.

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.

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5. Meet the 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. You never know when or with whom you'll strike up a lifelong friendship.

6. Be confident with who you are.

One invaluable aspect of college is that you have the chance to evaluate the situations based on what you think, feel and want. 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.

7. 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, your bank or take a personal finance course.

8. 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.

9. 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. 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.