UMass Amherst

UMass Amherst ranks among the nation’s Top 30 public universities (U.S. News & World Report, 2015). It is rated one of the most affordable public universities in the nation and is committed to innovation, sustainability, and social justice. Of all your student’s educational options, your family chose UMass Amherst.

UMatter at UMass is an initiative intended to affirm the values the university set in motion 150 years ago: care, compassion, and active engagement. UMass Amherst is committed to supporting all students and ensuring that they receive academic, emotional, and practical support throughout their time in college.

This guide is designed to give our parents and guardians an overview of campus resources and general support services for concerns you may have about your student including alcohol and other drug abuse; bias; harassment and violence; sexual misconduct; and depression and suicide. If your student needs assistance while at UMass Amherst, these resources can help.

Don’t know where to begin? Contact the Office of Parent Services: (413) 577-4444, www.umass.edu/parents, or the Dean of Students Office: (413) 545-2684, www.umass.edu/dean_students.
Our commitment to a culture of caring

Every day we witness many things (both good and not so good). This makes us all bystanders. We also make decisions about how to respond to what we see. These choices can turn us into active bystanders.

At UMass Amherst, students are encouraged to be active bystanders by taking action instead of just passively observing or walking away if they observe a concerning situation. We support students to do this safely and appropriately through active bystander techniques.

The 3Ds of Active Bystandership:

Direct: Step in and interrupt a concerning situation by pointing out the problem and engaging participants in conversation about better alternatives.

Distract: If you aren’t comfortable, try interrupting the situation by distracting and redirecting the people involved.

Delegate: If you can’t do it alone, involve others.

Learn more: www.umass.edu/umatter

Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) are a great way for your student to get involved at UMass Amherst: https://umassamherst.collegiatelink.net/organizations
Help for your student
Going to college can be a difficult transition. It’s normal for students to feel lost, lonely, confused, anxious, inadequate and stressed at times during this stage of life. This difficulty can be compounded by stereotypes of college life and college students. A first step in self-discovery is shaping who they want to be and learning skills for the rest of their life. Encourage your student to…

Trust their instincts
If something doesn’t feel right, chances are it isn’t right.

Listen sensitively and carefully to others
Learn to listen carefully without interruption or judgment. Express concern and care. Ask direct questions if they aren’t sure.

Involve others
Reach out to friends, to you or other family members for support and connection.

Ask for help
Several campus offices have staff trained to handle difficult situations sensitively, with respect for student privacy. Campus care coordinators are available to help your student or their roommates/friends.

Take care
We want your student to know that it’s okay to be true to self, not buy into stereotypes about college, and honor their own values. It helps to have others acknowledge what they’re going through and to be encouraged to receive adequate support.
Help your student learn to cope with stress by becoming aware of their personal stress triggers and learning to let go of or change situations that cause them stress. Below are several strategies that you can share with your student. Some may help immediately, but managing constant or recurrent stress may require lifestyle changes or support from the counseling center.

**Focus on time management.** Plan ahead, schedule enough time for schoolwork, obligations, and social activities.

**Take one thing at a time.** When overwhelmed, deal with one urgent task at a time. When it’s done, move on to the next.

**Be realistic.** Don’t feel pressured into taking on too much. If overwhelmed with school, say no to certain extracurricular activities.

**Meditate.** When stressed, find a quiet place to breathe deeply for a few minutes or take a quick walk. Five to ten minutes of quiet reflection can clear the mind and bring some relief.

**Exercise and sleep.** Thirty minutes of physical activity and eight hours of sleep per day helps both body and mind.

**Take a break.** Sometimes it’s best to stop working and do something you enjoy.

**Share feelings.** It’s important not to try to cope alone. Friends and family can provide support and guidance.

**Be flexible.** Conflict only increases stress. It’s okay to stand your ground, but do so calmly and rationally. It’s important to learn to compromise and to make allowances for other people’s opinions.

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Students can check out Campus Recreation at [www.umass.edu/campusrec](http://www.umass.edu/campusrec) and the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) at [www.umass.edu/counseling](http://www.umass.edu/counseling) for physical activities, mindfulness, and meditation resources!
Dealing with a Mental Health Setback

Some of our students suffer from anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns. So, it’s not surprising that with the demands and stress of college, setbacks can occur. Finding the right approach to managing an emotional condition and knowing what to do when a setback happens can get your student back on track.

To minimize setbacks and their impact, students should learn their personal warning signs. We recommend that students work with a counselor or therapist to create a list of signs they should watch out for, such as crying easily, waking up anxious every day, eating less, getting mad quickly, skipping class, or having a tough time concentrating on work. **By spotting the warning signs early, students can get help sooner, and get better faster.**

Use their Support Network

Managing the daily demands of college life can be difficult, especially if a student is struggling with an emotional health issue. Having a support system – including their treatment team, a college advisor, and a few trusted friends – can make a big difference. So, if your student is falling behind academically, feeling stressed out, or struggling in general, remind them to **speak up and use their support system.**

**TIP! Learn About Accommodations**

If your student has a psychological, physical, auditory, medical, cognitive/learning disability, or another chronic condition, as defined by a qualified professional, they can register with **Disability Services (161 Whitmore)** for support and accommodations.
Stay Well and Keep Safe

The Center for Health Promotion (CHP) supports students in making health-enhancing choices for academic, personal, and community success. For students in recovery, CHP offers connection to campus and local drug and alcohol addiction recovery resources.

The UMass Police Department (UMPD) offers services and resources including: Project Protect (register valuables to help recover lost or stolen property); Like it – Lock it – Keep it (tips for preventing theft); UMass Amherst Alerts (sign up for important safety texts); a free walking escort service (available 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. daily when classes are in session).

Talk About Alcohol
Studies show that when parents talk to young people directly and honestly about alcohol consumption, they are more likely to respect rules, listen to advice, and avoid high risk drinking behaviors. Resources to help you talk to your student about alcohol can be found at www.samhsa.gov/underage-drinking/parent-resources.

TIP
It is illegal to possess, consume, or transport alcohol if under the age of 21. Open containers are not allowed in the residence halls or on UMass campus. The University’s alcohol and other drug policies are available at www.umass.edu/studentlife/community/standards.

Add An Emergency Contact
Make sure your student is reachable in case of emergency. Remind them to complete and regularly update emergency contact information on SPIRE, the university’s secure, online student information system:

1. In the SPIRE Menu, go to My Personal Information > Emergency Contacts. The Emergency Contacts page will open.

2. On the Emergency Contacts page, click Add an Emergency Contact. The Emergency Contacts Detail page will open.
Financial Wellness
Encourage your student to practice smart money management by:

- **Making a budget and sticking to it.** Sites like mint.com and spendster.org can help track spending and distinguish between wants and needs. Students are eligible for many discounts with college I.D.

- **Renting or buying discounted textbooks.** UMass Amherst partners with Amazon.com to help reduce the cost of textbooks. At umass.amazon.com, students can rent, buy, and resell textbooks. Orders receive free one-day shipping to campus pick-up locations.

- **Leaving cars at home.** Save money on parking permits, insurance, and repairs by leaving cars at home and using public transportation, walking, and biking.

- **Asking for assistance.** If a crisis impacts your student’s finances, they can contact the **Dean of Students Office** at (413) 545-2684.

Financial Aid
The **Bursar’s Office** issues online bills and credits accounts for tuition and fee payments and financial aid awards. The **Financial Aid Services** website (www.umass.edu/umfa) includes a guide to understanding financial aid. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**) must be completed annually to qualify for aid: www.umass.edu/umfa/undergraduates/apply.

If your family’s financial circumstances change after receiving your financial aid package, contact the **Financial Aid Office**.

Scholarships
Scholarships and awards are like grants – they are financial aid that you do not have to repay. Listings of potential scholarships can be found at: www.umass.edu/umfa/scholarship.

Campus Jobs
If your student is seeking work, the undergraduate **Student Employment Office (SEO)** is the place to start. The SEO provides listings for work-study and non-work-study part-time and seasonal jobs. The student job board is at: www.umass.edu/umfa/seo/umass-amherst-student-job-board.

Student records are confidential and protected under the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**. The university will not disclose information to anyone unless designated by your student in a FERPA waiver: www.it.umass.edu/support/spire/set-up-your-ferpa-privacy-waiver.
Behavioral:
• Problems concentrating
• Lack of energy
• Personal hygiene changes
• Alcohol or other drug abuse
• Changes in eating or sleeping habits
• Difficulty making decisions

Academic:
• Lateness or absenteeism
• Procrastination
• Poorly prepared work

Emotional:
• Withdrawal from activities and friends
• Personality changes
• Lack of pleasure in things they used to enjoy
• Inappropriate outbursts, angry or belligerent behavior
• Appears fearful, anxious or nervous
• Conversation, writing or social media posts preoccupied with death or mentions the desire to harm self or others
• Statements of hopelessness such as, “I hate this life” or “Everyone is better off without me”

These are some warning signs that your student needs help. If you’re troubled or concerned, try speaking with your student directly. You can also contact one of the resources on the following pages. **Always call 911 in a potentially life-threatening situation.**
Take a stand against bias

Students have the right not to be discriminated against by any university agent or organization for race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, mental or physical disability, political belief or affiliation, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, or genetic information.

All members of the UMass Amherst community are asked to actively foster an appreciation for diversity by not tolerating bias-related acts.

Students who have been impacted by bias, whether as a target or bystander, may report the incident online (http://bit.ly/1zN59iF) or by contacting the Dean of Students Office or UMPD.
Campus Resources for Support and Safety

IMMEDIATE ASSISTANCE (AVAILABLE 24/7)

UMass Amherst Police: (413) 545-2121 • Emergency: 911
585 East Pleasant Street, www.umass.edu/umpd – CONFIDENTIAL
• immediate response for all emergencies including threatening or dangerous behavior, accidents, injury

University Health Services: (413) 577-5000
150 Infirmary Way, www.umass.edu/uhs – CONFIDENTIAL
• medical care and 24/7 on-call service
• free sexual assault evidence collection for sexual assault victims/survivors

Center for Counseling and Psychological Health: (413) 545-2337
After-hours emergencies: (413) 577-5000 – CONFIDENTIAL
127 Hills North, www.umass.edu/counseling
• 24/7 emergency services, crisis intervention, assessment, consultation
• brief psychotherapy, anxiety, depression, mindfulness training

Center for Women and Community: (413) 545-0883
Rape Crisis: (413) 545-0800 – CONFIDENTIAL
180 Infirmary Way, New Africa House, www.umass.edu/ewc
• 24/7 rape crisis hotline for people of all genders
• safety planning, free counseling and support groups for survivors, friends and families
• community training on issues of consent, sexual assault and harassment

FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT

Center for Health Promotion: (413) 577-5181
150 Infirmary Way, third floor, www.umass.edu/studentlife/chp
• alcohol screening and brief intervention (BASICS)
• support for students in recovery and living sober at UMass

Center for Multicultural Advancement and Student Success: (413) 545-2517
101 Wilder Hall, www.umass.edu/multiculturalaffairs
• cultural enrichment, academic support, student development and support for institutional diversity
• mentoring, workshops, advocacy, scholarship and internship opportunities, graduate school preparation and career development
Dean of Students Office: (413) 545-2684
227 Whitmore, www.umass.edu/dean_students
  • advice and support in managing challenging situations
  • emergency loans for students in financial need

Disability Services: (413) 545-0892
161 Whitmore, www.umass.edu/disability
  • registering and accommodating students with all types of disabilities

Equal Opportunity & Diversity (EO&D): (413) 545-3464
243 Lederle, www.umass.edu/eod
  • campus affirmative action and equal opportunity policies, procedures and complaint administration

Off Campus Student Center: (413) 577-1005
314 Student Union, www.umass.edu/studentlife/ocsc
  • resources and support for students who live or plan to live off campus

Ombuds Office: (413) 545-0867
Campus Center room 823, www.umass.edu/ombuds
  • facilitation and informal mediation; resolution of grade disputes

Psychological Services Center: (413) 545-0041
Tobin Hall, room 123, www.umass.edu/psc
  • free confidential initial consultation and sliding-scale psychotherapy

Residential Life
www.housing.umass.edu
  • Support and referrals on any issue for students living on campus
  • Help addressing roommate disputes, residence hall quality of life

Stonewall Center: (413) 545-4824
Crampton Hall (Southwest), www.umass.edu/stonewall
  • support, resources, programming, and advocacy for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, intersex, asexual (LGBTQIA) students and allies

Student Legal Services Office: (413) 545-1995
922 Campus Center, www.umass.edu/rso/slso
  • confidential legal counseling, advice, research, education, representation, and referral for all fee-paying students
  • confidential support with misconduct issues, crime victimization, bullying and harassment and violence Issues

Student Veteran Resource Center: (413) 545-0939
18/19 Dickinson Hall, www.umass.edu/veterans
  • a welcoming place for veterans and active members of the U.S. military to study, network, learn and seek support
  • veterans benefit questions
Important State and Federal Laws and University Policies

These laws and policies are important to understanding student rights and responsibilities within their UMass Amherst experience.

Academic Honesty Policy
UMass Amherst’s Academic Honesty Policy applies to all students and is administered by the Ombuds Office: www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy.

Code of Student Conduct/Residential Life Community Standards
All University of Massachusetts Amherst students are responsible for complying with the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures contained in the Code of Student Conduct, as well as those in other official University communications. Find them at www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct.

Guidelines for Classroom Civility and Respect
Faculty members are required to maintain classrooms that promote the safe and open exchange of ideas. Students are responsible for personal behavior that supports these goals. The full policy may be viewed at www.umass.edu/dean_students/campus-policies/classroom.

University Alcohol and Drug Policies
It is illegal to possess or consume alcohol if under the age of 21. Open containers are not allowed in the residence halls or on UMass campus. Students are responsible for reading and following the University’s alcohol and other drug policies: www.umass.edu/studentlife/community/standards.

“Minutes Matter” Medical Amnesty Policy
If your student seeks help for someone under the influence of alcohol or other drugs who needs medical attention, neither person will be charged with a Code of Student Conduct or Residence Hall Community Standards violation. For full policy, see www.umass.edu/studentlife/minutes_matter.

Town and State Bylaws
Amherst, other neighboring towns, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts all have bylaws outlining community standards that local residents (including college students) are required to uphold. View Amherst town bylaws at www.amherstma.gov.