New Student Checklists

Before the Semester Begins Get Your Education Benefits in Check

☑ Veteran Education Benefits

Visit the VONAPP (Veterans On Line Application) website to apply for your GI Bill benefits. It is an official U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) website that enables service members, veterans and their beneficiaries, and other designated individuals to apply for benefits using the Internet. (https://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp/default.asp

If you have questions or concerns about your eligibility please call the GI Bill benefits information line at 1-888-442-4551 for assistance.

You should also connect with the UMass GI Bill education benefits coordinator at 413-545-5792.

Lynn Gates, Certifying Official
Veteran Benefits Certification Manager
vetbenefits@umass.edu (email)
413-545-5792 (telephone)
215 Whitmore Administration Building

☑ Paying Your Bill

Always verify the status of your bill in Spire.

UMass Amherst uses a paperless billing system—bills will not be mailed to your residence. Instead, bills for the semester will post to the “Finances” section of your SPIRE account. Bills will be due before the start of each semester. For more information about billing, please visit the Bursar's Office.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Waiver: If someone is assisting you pay for your education, they must have a FERPA PIN number to access your account. For more information on the FERPA waiver, visit the Office of the Bursar.

Excess Express: If you want to receive excess funds via direct deposit, make sure you sign up for Excess Express
Newly Accepted Student Checklist for a Successful Transition to UMass Amherst

Your successful transition to becoming a student at UMass depends on taking care of requirements and planning ahead. Please review this checklist carefully, address all the requirements, and make your plans to ensure an easy start to the semester.

☐ Choose Your Date for Transfer Registration
Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis so make sure you sign up as soon as possible. Choose a date that doesn’t conflict with work, graduation, vacation or any other prior commitments. (If you are considered a transfer student chose a transfer new student orientation date)

☐ Sign up for the Veterans Scholar Program

(Link generates an email to David Vacchi [dvacchi@umass.edu]).

☐ Explore the Residential Life

If you intend to live on campus check out the many residential options UMass has to offer on campus.

Off Campus Housing Referrals are available to help students who wish to pursue housing off-campus.

Off Campus Student Services: http://www.umocss.org/

Also check out the UMass living off campus certification website: http://www.umocss.org/files/PosterLOC.pdf to help make the most of your off campus experience.

☐ Get Familiar with SPIRE

SPIRE is the student information and registration system and it will be a major part of your life at UMass! During advising session, you will use SPIRE to register for classes. Spend some time learning to use it before you arrive. Browse the course catalog and check out the search for classes feature to explore the course offerings at UMass Amherst, so you can jump right into the registration process.

You can learn more about SPIRE on the OIT website.

There are also several video tutorials to help you get started with SPIRE: Getting Started
Searching for Classes
Enrolling in Classes

☐ UMass Google Email

Starting in mid-May OIT will send you information about your UMass Google Email account. Email is the official mode of communication between the university and its students. It's a good idea to get in the habit of checking your UMass Google Email account on a daily basis.

☐ Online Math Placement Exam

All incoming students must take the Math Placement Exam online before attending their advising and registration session. This exam will help you and your advisor identify the right math/science courses for you. Ready to take a placement exam? Click here to read the directions and get started.

☐ Online Foreign Language Placement Exam

Students who have studied French, German, Latin, or Spanish for two or more years and will continue with the same language at UMass Amherst, must take the Foreign Language Placement Exam online prior to their advising and registration session. Ready to take a placement exam? Click here to read the directions and get started.

☐ Test Scores and Transcripts

If you have questions about the ACT/SAT, just email the Undergraduate Admissions office at mail@admissions.umass.edu and ask for an SAT/ACT waiver, which is routinely granted to military applicants.

Veteran Frequently Asked Questions about Admissions:


In order to receive credit for AP or SAT II testing, the university must receive official copies of your score report(s). You may have already requested this when you took the test. If not, please go the College Board website and request an official report be sent to UMass. Our CEEB # is 3917.

☐ Immunizations

Massachusetts law requires that all college students have certain immunizations before coming to school. The New Student Immunization Program (NSIP) at University Health Services oversees these requirements.
Go to the NSIP web page, for information on required immunizations and to download a copy of the Massachusetts Required Immunization History form. This form must be completed and returned to the NSIP before your first semester on campus. If information is not received by the end of the Add/Drop period, a registration hold will be placed on your record. It’s best to complete all required immunizations before beginning school. For more information, go to the immunizations website or call the NSIP, 413-577-5275.

**Health Insurance**

Massachusetts law requires full-time college students to have primary health insurance. If you don’t already have insurance, or if the plan you have won’t meet your needs while at school, you can take advantage of the university-sponsored **Student Health Benefit Plan (SHBP)**.

Students taking five or more credits are automatically enrolled in the SHBP; charges will appear on the semester tuition bill in SPIRE. Depending on your insurance coverage and student status, you may be eligible to waive the plan.

For information, visit the UHS website or call UHS Patient Services, 413-577-5192.

**My Student Body**

All new students are required to complete and pass **MyStudentBody** – an online alcohol education program before their first semester. MyStudentBody offers a lot of interesting and useful information just for students. Once you’ve finished the course, bookmark the site and visit anytime!

If you don’t complete this requirement, you won’t be able to register for your next semester classes. If you have any questions or concerns about passing the course by the deadline, e-mail the MSB Coordinator, **MSB@uhs.umass.edu**, to set up a time to take and pass the course.

**UMass Amherst Alerts**

Sign up to receive emergency text messages and learn more about emergency preparedness through **UMass Amherst Alerts**.

Be sure to update your emergency contact information in Spire.

**Get Involved**

Log into and explore **Campus Pulse** our online community that lets students find out about campus events and clubs (known at UMass as Registered Student Organizations or RSOs).
Jobs

Are you looking for a job in the area? The Student Employment Office lists work study and non-work study jobs available both on and off campus. Auxiliary Services also posts a number of student jobs on their website.

Veterans Administration work study positions are also available on a limited basis. Visit the Student Veteran Resource Center (Rm 19 Dickenson hall) for more information.

RefWorks

Sign up for a RefWorks account today and make your research easier. RefWorks keeps track of your references and creates bibliographies in the correct style that your professors will require. Go to the Library's homepage, click on RefWorks then click on Sign Up for an Individual Account. Choose a username and password that is easy to remember as you'll be using RefWorks often.

To find out how to use RefWorks, visit the library or go to the library website to speak with a reference librarian. Librarians are eager to help you. "Every single new student should learn how to do this early on!"

Books

A list of required course materials can be found on your SPIRE account. The Campus Bookstore offers the opportunity to rent, buy used or buy new textbooks. There are also several local bookstores in town as well as ways to find your books online.

Parking

If you do choose to bring your car to campus, make sure you purchase your parking pass as soon as possible. There are many different options for students. Visit Parking Services for more information. If you have a disabled veteran license plate you do not need to purchase parking. You can use any of the properly identified handicapped spots on campus. If you have disabled veteran plates you should stop by parking services to inform them of your plate number.

Luggage

Coming from far away? International and out of state students that live in the residence halls may have luggage shipped to UMass Amherst before their arrival on campus. Residential Life will store your luggage at an off-campus storage facility at no cost to you. The Luggage Program guidelines will be available on the Residential Life website prior to the beginning of the semester. Information is generally posted over the summer months but not before the Spring semester is complete.