

First-Year Guide to Student Success

Welcome to UMass Amherst!

Our university is committed to providing an environment that fosters personal and intellectual development for all students. You will find our core values and community standards woven into classes, residential programming and activities across campus. Throughout your time here you will experience a campus culture that supports students as they prepare to enter the global community.

As you transition from high school to college life you will discover a new world of possibilities as well as challenges. Please know:

- Students who bring a strong personal drive and a willingness to **seek out new opportunities and build connections across campus** will be sure to have a satisfying and successful college experience.
- Research is clear that great successes come to those who **take charge of their lives by being fully present in the moment.** We encourage you to be: well informed, open to new ideas and experiences, thoughtful and reflective, and willing to grow.
- UMass Amherst is filled with upper class peers, staff and faculty at the ready to guide and support you in this new chapter.

This student guide is filled with tips and strategies designed to help smooth your transition to college and provide you with the foundation for an exceptional college experience.

Create a schedule...and be flexible about it

- ◆ **Homework**
 - ◇ Plan on an average of 3 hours of study time for each hour of class.
 - ◇ Choose the times of day when you are most productive.
 - ◇ Identify a study space — consider the library, a study room in your residence hall, an academic building, outside on the grass, a café in town...be creative!
- ◆ **Healthy lifestyle:** Be sure to balance the pressures that life may bring with activities that are just for fun. Hang out with friends, exercise, take time to relax.
- ◆ **Daily life:** Plan time for meals, laundry, and errands. And don't forget to sleep!

Live Intentionally

As you develop and implement your new habits in college, it is important to recognize both your strengths and your weaknesses. With this awareness you can make conscious decisions to follow a mindful path to success.

Consider this three-step approach:

REVIEW: Look back over your work (grades and instructor comments), your study system, your life balance.

REFLECT: Think about what is going well and what could use improvement.

REVISE: If it works, do it more. If it doesn't work, make necessary changes.

Apply this three-step strategy to:

Your Study Methods: Are you productive with your study time, place and strategies? Are your choices resulting in good grades?

Your Life Balance: Are you eating well? Exercising? Do you take time for relaxing? Are you taking care of personal business, communicating with family and friends?

Your Work: Get feedback on work so that you can make improvements before turning it in. Be sure to read, consider and respond to the comments that instructors write on your papers and tests.

The Power of Action & Interaction

Developing professional relationships with professors and teaching assistants will increase your success in college. Meeting with an instructor will help your motivation and engagement and often lead to a higher grade. And, when instructors know you they can write meaningful reference letters! Each instructor will have contact information on their syllabus. Don't hesitate to go to office hours or email for an appointment.

It is also critical to meet with your Academic Advisor. The advising staff from your major/college can help ensure that you are on track making progress toward your degree. Your advisor/advising center is listed under "Primary Advisor" in the Student Center section of Spire.

Remember, it is up to you to seek out these connections!

Academic Honesty: All students are expected to follow all the rules and policies regarding honesty. Details at umass.edu/honesty

Be intentional,

Expand Your Horizons

One primary difference between high school and college is that in college, the ball is in **your** court to explore the options and choose your path. **Make the most of your years at UMass — participate!** (Don't get stuck in your room watching shows!)

Here are just a few ideas to get you started:

Internships

- ◆ Gain valuable work experience on or off campus.
- ◆ Explore your career goals .
- ◆ Consider part-time and full-time options .

Attend an information session in Career Services (508 Goodell)
umass.edu/careers/career-services-calendar

Civic Engagement & Service-Learning (CESL)

CESL provides opportunities to connect your classroom experiences with meaningful work on campus and in the surrounding communities.

- ◆ Take courses and/or earn a certificate.

611 Goodell umass.edu/cesl 413-545-2015

Office of Undergraduate Research and Studies (OURS)

OURS is a resource for all undergraduates in all majors. OURS helps students find research and scholarly opportunities on and off campus at any point during college. Students are also supported in preparing for and navigating the application process.

10th floor Du Bois Library umass.edu/ours 413-545-5334

Education Abroad: International Programs Office

Explore the many options; semester, year, or even summer.

- ◆ There are more than 400 program options.
- ◆ Programs are offered in more than 50 countries.

70 Butterfield Terrace umass.edu/ipo/ M-F 10AM-4PM

Find an ever-growing list of clubs and events by logging into **Campus Pulse**: umassamherst.campuslabs.com/engage/

The college experience often includes encountering academic, social and/or emotional challenges. There are many offices filled with staff whose job is to help you. **Seek out support early.... don't wait until it's urgent!**

See your Academic Advisor or visit Undergraduate Student Success (5th floor Goodell) for more suggestions.

Your Community Resources

Learning Resource Center (LRC)

- ◆ Free drop in services Sundays—Thursdays 1-10 PM
- ◆ 1:1 tutoring for over 200 courses
- ◆ Large and small group support available

10th floor Du Bois Library www.umass.edu/lrc 413-545-5334

The Writing Center

- ◆ Free 1:1 assistance, face to face and online options
- ◆ Assistance at any stage of writing
- ◆ Register online to make appointments

Lower level Du Bois Library umass.edu/writingcenter

Center for Counseling & Psychological Health (CCPH)

- ◆ Mondays—Fridays 8:30 AM—5PM call 413-545-2337
- ◆ Weekends and holidays after 5PM call 413-577-5000
- ◆ Life threatening emergency—call 911

umass.edu/counseling

Center for Multicultural Advancement & Student Success (CMASS)

- ◆ Peer mentoring and social connections
 - ◆ Help navigating offices: FinAid, Bursar, Registrar and more.
- 101 Wilder Hall umass.edu/multiculturalaffairs

Disability Services

161 Whitmore Building 413-545-0892 umass.edu/disability

Financial Aid Services

243 Whitmore Building 413-545-0892 umass.edu/umfa