

Top Tips on How to Navigate Your First Year!

Starting university is an exciting experience but it brings its own unique challenges. During the first couple of weeks of your first year, you may feel nervous and overwhelmed. It's natural to feel this way and it may take a while before you transition into life at university. The most important thing to remember is that you will not be alone in this and there will be many other students who are going through the exact same thing. As a second year Law student going in to my third and final year, I would like to share some of my top tips on how you can navigate your first year for an easier transition to university life.

1. Meet as many people as you can through participating in non-academic activities

There is no deadline for making friends. Don't worry if you feel like you have not been able to make many in the first few weeks of your first year. Friendships take time and you will find so many students who are in the same situation as you. Meeting as many people as possible will help you find the people who you really click with. So don't worry if you feel like you are drifting away from some people and moving towards others.

"Welcome Week" also known as Fresher's Week is a great opportunity for students to try as many societies and sports as possible on campus. Societies and sports clubs usually have taster sessions for free during the first two weeks of university. These taster sessions are a fantastic way for you to meet lots of people and to find out where your interests lie. My suggestion for you is to try not to get caught up with the fear of missing out. Sign up to lots of events but don't worry about the kind of experience you should be having over what you are actually experiencing. This is **YOUR** experience.



2. Respect your deadlines and try to stay on top of your workload

With more freedom at university, it may become a little bit challenging to focus solely on the educational side of things. My top tip for you is to start your work as soon as you can once you receive it. Putting your work to the side until the last minute may seem appealing, but from my own experience it creates a lot of hassle and stress. Trying to stay on top of your workload by creating a study timetable for your assignments and having a study group with your friends means you can socialise guilt-free afterwards. Going to the library in your free periods to work on your assessments is a good way to save time as well. If you start your assignments early, you'll also have time to visit your tutors if you need some extra guidance or have questions.

3. Managing your money

Budgeting will become a necessity once you arrive at university. You'll be amazed at how quickly you'll spend your money on things on campus. Budgeting and keeping a record of what you spend will help you to make sure you have enough money for the essentials as well as the fun stuff, like socialising at all the end of term events with your friends. I highly recommend you check out the [blog post on managing money](#) to learn more about budgeting at university. 😊

4. Choose your accommodation wisely before you arrive

This may be your first time living away from home and it might be hard to decide on where to live for the next few years of your life. You'll be given a range of options to pick from and you should do your research carefully. You'll be given the option to pick either shared bathroom accommodation, en-suite accommodation or even a studio flat which has its own kitchen. Assessing each one of your accommodation options is vital for you to make the right choice based on your needs and budget. Make sure to submit your accommodation application as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

5. Try to see your lecturers during their academic support hours and build a relationship with them

Get involved during your lectures and seminars as much as possible and do not hold yourself back. The more effort you put in, the more you'll get out of your university experience. Reaching out to your lecturers, the people who are responsible for delivering your classes, may seem scary but they are here to offer you guidance and advice throughout your studies. They will be happy to support you and help you on your way to a great degree result.

6. First year grades actually do count!

When you start your first year of university, you may keep hearing the phrase "first year doesn't count" from your fellow peers. Even though your first-year grades usually don't count towards your degree classification, you should try to perform as well as possible in your assessments. Working hard in your first year will not be the vital foundations for the rest of your studies but it will also play a massive role when you are applying for internships in your second year. Internships will be vital for you to gain work experience in a field which you plan to work in after graduation and your grades will play an important role in getting accepted into these work placements.

Your university experience will be unique to you and it's in your hands to shape this experience. These tips are just a couple of suggestions from my experience. I hope that these tips will help you make the most of your first year. 😊

Ece,
University of Essex Student



[Click here to chat live to staff and students from the University of Essex \(including Ece\)!](#)