

STARTING *the* SEMESTER

The months and days before you leave for college can be some of the most exhilarating and thrilling moments of your life.

Family members are proud; friends are sad; you have an opportunity to start over and be a new you. That's a nice thought. But people rarely address the fact that starting over and beginning college do not happen overnight. It takes time, and doing it well takes guidance—guidance which can feel scarce in your first semester. That's where we come in. This fall semester guide will give you insider's advice from students and faculty to help you excel at the University of Wyoming. Think of this like a strategy guide; use it for helpful advice on performing the best you can in your academics while maintaining as much time as you can to have fun and enjoy a rich life outside of college.

“

One of the hardest things about starting college was embracing the new and unknown. For a while, I kept to myself and talked to friends from home almost every night. Once I embraced new friendships as well as clubs and student organizations on campus, I realized I had a new home and a great community.”

Matt Kratochvil
UW Student



Starting the Semester

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“ People don’t talk much about the challenges that freedom presents at the start of college. I know I was excited to be outside of the house, but that was because of visions free time and fresh adventures. The first few weeks of school, I was challenged getting to class on time and getting my homework done. I didn’t know where things were or how long things would take me. I would recommend that any incoming student figure out how long it takes to get to class and ask their teachers how much time to allot for homework – professors won’t mind such questions, they’ll appreciate and remember you for it.”

Jaron Bartosvek, *UW Student*

Navigating ONLINE COURSEWORK

While more of your coursework and teamwork have to be online and remote, here are some strategies to keep in mind. The end of this document will include other UW-specific resources to help you through these times.

STUDY AND TIME-MANAGEMENT HABITS FOR AN ONLINE PLATFORM

Adapted from University of Michigan Center for Academic Innovation

1. Stay Organized

Here are some things you might want to keep track of for each class:

- What are the in-person parts of this course? (lecture, lab, etc)
- Where can you find it or how do you access it? (live-stream, lecture capture, etc)
- Is it at a specific time or can you watch it anytime?
- What are the assignments' due dates?
- How are you expected to submit assignments?
- Are quizzes or exams being offered virtually?

What should you do if you need help?

- Is your course offering virtual office hours? When and on what platform?
- Is there an online forum for asking questions?
- One example of a way you could keep track:

	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Important Dates			
Important Links			

2. Avoid Multitasking

If you're doing more work on your own and your time is less structured, you might be more tempted to multitask. Many people think they can do multiple things at once. But research shows us that only about 2% of the population can multitask. Even if you feel like you're multitasking, you're probably not... really, you're switching between tasks very quickly (some call this "micro-tasking").

The downsides of multi- and microtasking:

- Assignments take longer. Each time you come back to an assignment (from Instagram for example), you have to get familiar with it, find your spot, remember what you were going to do next, etc.
- You're more likely to make mistakes. Distractions and switching between tasks tire out the brain.
- You'll remember less. When your brain is divided, you're less able to commit what you're learning to long-term memory (because it doesn't get encoded properly into your brain).

What to do instead:

- Consider the Magic of Monotasking. (www.huffpost.com/entry/the-magic-of-monotasking_b_9239892)
- Try the "pomodoro method" to help you focus for 25- or 50-minute periods, and then reward yourself with a 5- and 10-minute break. tomato-timer.com



3. Make the most of video lectures

- Stick to your instructor's schedule as much as you can. Staying on a schedule will help you have a feeling of normalcy and prevent you from falling way behind.
- Find out how to ask questions. Is there a chat feature? Is there a discussion forum?
- Close distracting tabs and apps. Humans are not as good at multitasking as they think! (See #2 above.)
- Continue to take notes as you would if you were there in person.
- Watch recordings at normal speed. Research shows that playback speed of 1.5x can lower your retention and can result in lower scores on assessments. Faster playback speeds are worse for complex, multi-step material (which most of your lectures probably are).

4. Set a schedule

Setting a schedule for yourself can help provide structure and keep you motivated. If you don't already keep a weekly or daily calendar, try something like the example below to organize your time. Include time for exercise and self-care. See page 27 for more information and a template.

5. Find new strategies

If all courses must go online after you started some routines, you will need to adapt. For example:

- If you usually study in a coffee shop or library, ask yourself what kind of environment helps you study. See if you can recreate that at home. Maybe it's studying in a chair, rather than on your bed or couch, or moving to a new spot when you change tasks. If you feel you need background noise, consider a white noise app.
- If you always study in groups, try a virtual or even phone-based study session with your group.
- If you thrive on tight timelines, but now have a more open schedule, think about how working with others or setting up a schedule can recreate that for you. When that gets hard, see if you can even do fifteen minutes at a time.

6. Stay connected to other people

Even if we limit how much face-to-face time we spend with others on campus, connecting with family and friends might be more important than ever. And staying in touch with instructors, classmates, and group mates is still important for continued classwork.

Here are a few ideas:

- Schedule video calls with friends and family. Talking with loved ones is often really helpful when you're stressed or nervous about something. Taking a break to have a laugh is also important.
- Attend virtual office hours or study groups so that you can stay up-to-date on your classwork.
- Utilize resources available. On-campus tutoring, online tutoring, SI, are all available to help you stay connected to others.

7. Work with a group or team

Remote collaboration will look different, but it is definitely possible.

- Try not to procrastinate. That group project may be out-of-sight, out-of-mind if you aren't seeing each other regularly. Resist the urge to put it off. Make small progress and stay in touch.
- Meet regularly, especially if you usually touch base during the class or lab. Consider a quick text on your group chat about progress every couple of days. Ideally, have real conversation over video any week you're working together.
- Set a purpose for meetings and use a shared notes doc. Meetings might feel different when using video, even if your team was really good at working informally in the past. Try to set the purpose of your meeting in advance. Take notes in a shared doc so you can all contribute and follow along.
- Keep videos open when you can. As long as you can see whatever you need to collaborate, aim to keep the video visible on your computer screen. It'll help you see the expressions of your teammates and stay connected to each other.
- Check on each other and ask for backup: If someone has been absent from your group meetings or chat, ask them directly if they're still able to participate in the project. If you aren't getting responses within a day or two, let your instructors know. Know it isn't being petty, it's your team's responsibility.

8. Be considerate on video calls

Video conference etiquette adapted from blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2013/08/20/video-conference-etiquette/.

- Use your UW Pro Zoom account – all UW students have access to a free pro Zoom account. Access the account through WyoWeb (wyoweb.uwyo.edu) and click on the Zoom button
- Think about what image you are projecting. It's tempting to wear your pajamas, but dress for your video conference as you would for an in-person meeting. Adjust your lighting so you are easily seen. Move items from your background that may be distracting (such as a pile of old laundry). Avoid yawning or exaggerated motions that may be distracting.
- Practice speaking to the camera and not the screen.
- Utilize the mute button. Unless you are actively speaking, you should keep your mute button on. However, you should still actively participate in class discussions. Think of questions you want to ask and jot them down, or join in when a question has been thrown out.
- Reduce eating and drinking during calls.

Understanding COURSE FORMATS

Your instructor may choose a variety of design options to keep you engaged while online. Here are some formats and important terms that may come up.

ASYNCHRONOUS *online*

In this format, all of your lectures, assignments, activities, discussions, quizzes and exams are placed in modules. Modules are like storage bins in the Canvas learning system we call WyoCourses. Asynchronous courses can be completed on your own time rather than setting aside time like you would for face-to-face to attend lectures two or three times per week.

Example: You access all elements of the course at your own convenience according to deadlines set by your professor.

SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE (*hybrid*)

You will have no in-person face-to-face elements in this course, but you will need to reserve time each week for online work that occurs at the same time as your classmates. These synchronous activities may include lectures, study sessions, active learning, or discussion. All of quizzes and exams are placed on WyoCourses.

Example: You access lectures and other resources online at your own convenience, but you set aside time each week to attend classes where you interact with other students and your professor.

ASYNCHRONOUS CONTENT WITH FACE-TO-FACE ACTIVITIES (*flipped*)

In a flipped classroom, you will view the recorded lectures online during a time that works for you, but then you will attend face-to-face (in-person or online) classroom sessions where you will interact with what you learned through activities, such as group discussions, problem solving activities, online labs, etc.

Example: You watch short recorded lectures each week on your own prior to coming to class. Depending on your professor, class may be in-person or offered synchronously online. During those class sessions, you really interact with the material that you learned when watching the lecture and completing readings.

YOU CHOOSE: FACE-TO-FACE, ZOOM OR ASYNCHRONOUS (*HyFlex*)

A HyFlex course format is when your professor leaves the course design up to you. Class sessions are offered in a classroom for those who prefer face-to-face. Those sessions are recorded live on Zoom for those who prefer a synchronous format, and uploaded as videos for those who prefer an asynchronous format. If an instructor uses this course format, you may be asked to voice your preferred course method early in the semester so that classroom space is available.

Example: Some of your classmates may go in person to each lecture as the traditional face-to-face offerings of classes, others may be viewing the lecture at home as the professor delivers it, and others may choose to watch the lecture videos at a time that is convenient for them.

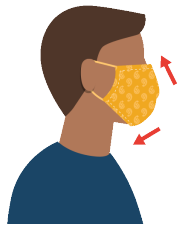
You may have four different classes with four different course formats, so it is important to really manage your time and utilize the resources that are available (see the last section of this booklet).

STAYING *Healthy* DURING COVID-19

COVID-19 has introduced a new reality for the University of Wyoming this year. In addition to the procedures outlined in UW's official page for COVID-19 communication (uwyo.edu/alerts/campus-return/) and Student Health Info (uwyo.edu/coronavirus), these guidelines will help you and your fellow Pokes stay safe and healthy.

MASK & HANDWASHING GUIDELINES

From How to Safely Wear and Take Off a Cloth Face Covering at cdc.gov/coronavirus



1. Wear your face covering correctly

- Wash your hands before putting on your face covering
- Put it over your nose and mouth and secure it under your chin
- Try to fit it snugly against the sides of your face
- Make sure you can breathe easily

2. Use the face covering to help protect others

- Cover your face to protect others in case you're infected with no symptoms
- Keep the covering on your face the entire time you're in public
- Don't put the covering around your neck or up on your forehead
- Don't touch the face covering, and, if you do, clean your hands



3. Follow everyday health habits

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others
- Avoid contact with people who are sick
- Wash your hands often, with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds each time
 - » Before, during, and after preparing food
 - » Before eating food
 - » Before and after caring for someone at home who is sick with vomiting or diarrhea
 - » Before and after treating a cut or wound
 - » Before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because that's how germs enter our bodies.
 - » After using the toilet
 - » After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - » After touching an animal, animal feed, or animal waste
 - » After handling pet food or pet treats
 - » After touching garbage
 - » After you have been in a public place and touched an item or surface that may be frequently touched by other people, such as door handles, tables, gas pumps, shopping carts, or electronic cashier registers/screens, etc.
 - » Use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available

4. Take off your cloth face covering carefully when you're home

- Untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold outside corners together
- Place covering in the washing machine
- Wash your hands with soap and water



RESIDENCE HALL *Etiquette*

You may not have a roommate, but you have more than a dozen neighbors living in close quarters. Here are some tips for having a peaceful residence hall floor experience. Always consult to Residence Life & Dining's website (uwyo.edu/reslife-dining/) for most up-to-date guidelines and requirements with regards to living in the residence halls and issues surrounding

From Campus Explorer's article, "How to Get Along with Your College Roommate"

FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER.

Like it or not, people are prone to making snap judgments. Whatever impression you give of yourself when you meet your new floormate is likely to stick with them, whether it's accurate or not. Even if you're still a little grumpy from moving in, try to be as amiable and positive as you can through the first few days. Make eye contact, be polite and show an interest in getting to know your new floormates. You don't have to be friends with everyone, but your needs and boundaries will be more respected if you extend that courtesy first!

RESPECT QUIET HOUR RULES.

Hall Quiet Hours are from 10pm to 8am Sunday through Thursday, and 12am to 8am on Friday and Saturday nights.

YOU ARE SHARING BATHROOM SPACE.

Clean up after yourself (don't leave hair in the drain) and don't leave anything in the bathroom.

COMMUNICATE

Address conflict or concerns early, before they become bigger issues. Talk to your RA if you aren't sure how to broach the subject yourself. Be civil in when you bring up conflicts with your floormates. It's crucial to get this out of the way early. The longer you wait, the more you risk a possible conflict due to clashing lifestyles. Remember, compromise is essential here. You probably won't get everything you want, and neither will your floormate, but the important thing is to create a comfortable, healthy living environment for all of you.

Ask yourself – am I being a good neighbor? Would I want to live with me?

DEVELOP GOOD LAUNDRY HABITS.

- Set a specific day/time every week when you will do your laundry (and yes, you should do your laundry every week).
- You must wash your mask after each use.
- Know the "rush hours"
- Budget your time (you don't want to start a load of laundry then have to rush to class)
- Set a timer on your phone so you don't forget to return to your laundry
- Doing laundry is no one's favorite chore. Be courteous to others (e.g. don't dump someone's wet laundry on the floor)!
- If you have issues with your laundry card swipe (WyoOne card) or a laundry machine not working, tell your residence hall desk
- Washing machines should only be filled $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way full. If you stuff a washing machine all the way full it will probably lock up, then you have to wait until it manually unlocks (about 10 minutes) and you will still have to rewash your clothes (if the machine locks it won't clean anything)
- Laundry Pods do not fully dissolve in the washing machines. Use liquid high efficiency detergent in the washing machines otherwise your clothes will not get cleaned very well.

For information about Residence Life, dining, and other first-semester issues, check out the Mobile App UWyo Guide and social media handles:



UWyo Guide



UWyo Reslife
& Dining



UWyo RLDS



wyorlds



CREATING *a* BUDGET as you START COLLEGE

From "College Budget Template: Keep Track of Your School Expenses." (mint.com)

College textbooks, a night out with buddies, furnishing your room - the expenses during your college years can quickly and easily burn a hole through your bank account in no time if you don't have a detailed college budget set up. No one enjoys counting pennies and controlling spending, but budgeting is a necessary part of financial health. Your college years in particular are the perfect time to learn how to budget properly before real adult life kicks in.

Don't think you need to maintain a budget? Here are some reasons why it's important to have one set up now, using a college budget template, as you start your first year of college.

Your Family Isn't Constantly Watching Over Your Shoulder

While your parents may have had a dominant handle over your expenditures while you were living at home, you don't have this type of supervision when you're off on your own. Many times this financial freedom can get the best of college students, who end up finding themselves tempted by the myriad of items that are available to buy. Without mom or dad there to say "no," you could find yourself with mounting debt. Having a budget is a responsible step towards adulthood and maturity that helps you take control of your spending.

Having a budget in place can help you delegate every dollar you make.

Your Funds Are Probably Limited in College

Most college kids don't exactly have a ton of cash to work with, which makes the art of budgeting even more crucial. No matter where the funds are coming from - mom and dad, a part-time job, or even a scholarship or award - you'll most likely have to be savvy and learn how to stretch your dollar. Money has a tendency to be spent on 'wants' rather than 'needs' when no budget exists (more in the November chapter!). Having a budget allows you to see if whatever money is coming in is adequately covering your expenses, or if you have to look for more ways to supplement your income, or lower your spending if possible.

Managing Your Money

Having a budget on a detailed spreadsheet with the help of a college budget template allows you to better control your money. It will show you where your money needs to go, including your savings, expenses, and extra spending money. This tool will also provide you with a reference to identify what your financial position is at the end of each month. For instance, if you've allotted \$100 to be spent on entertainment, but notice that all the receipts you've kept that month total \$150, you know you need to cut back \$50 from your entertainment expenditures.

What Should You Include in Your Budget?

A budget can be as detailed as it needs to be for you. When it comes to your expenditures, don't leave anything out. Include items such as textbooks, tuition, room and board, student loans, transportation, groceries, entertainment, and other miscellaneous items. When it comes to your income, make sure to include anything on top of your part-time job that may bring money in, including awards, allowance from parents, and so forth. At the end of the month, compare the difference between the two, which will tell you whether your income covers your expenses, or whether you're ending up in the red.

COLLEGE STUDENT BUDGET TEMPLATE

Monthly income for the month of: _____

ITEM	AMOUNT
Estimated Monthly Income	
Financial Awards	
Allowance from Parents	
Other Income	
TOTAL	

Monthly expenses for the month of: _____

ITEM	AMOUNT
Rent	
Utilities	
Cell Phone	
Groceries/Car Expenses	
Student Loans	
Insurance	
Medical Expenses	
Credit Card	
Entertainment	
Laundry	
Miscellaneous	
TOTAL	

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Semester costs for the month of: _____

ITEM	AMOUNT
Tuition	
Books	
Lab Fees	
Deposits	
Other	
TOTAL	

How am I doing?

ITEM	AMOUNT
Monthly Income	
Monthly Expenses	
Semester Expenses	
TOTAL	

SHORT & LONG TERM GOALS

Freshmen enter college with a range of real world experiences, from working full-time to never having done laundry to only having the culinary skills to make instant Ramen. Being independent is more about a mindset than an actual skill set. You can learn to do anything, from Calculus to making marinara from scratch if you are willing to own that you are responsible for learning to do it. This will apply to a range of tasks in the next four years, spanning from paying bills to academics.

Famous author, Annie Dillard, once said, “How we spend our days is how we spend our lives.” This is an important mantra as you move through college. Your college degree is not a golden ticket to a new life; rather, you spend four years working towards a degree, and those four years teach you how to live.



I want to quote the advice I received during my freshman orientation: “when you are in a new town, school, or place in life, sometimes the best thing you can do is show up. Show up and be open and willing to try new things.” Show up for class, for clubs, and for your friends. Remember that people here care about you, whether it’s the student next door in the dorms or your English 1010 professor. Make a great freshman year for yourself!

-Peyton Lunzer
 Graduate Student, College of Education
 Adjunct Faculty, Synergy

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Pre-Semester REFLECTION

Answer the following questions considering how you want to make a new home and how that will make your time at the University of Wyoming. Not only will this help you settle into the semester, some research shows that students who write down goals are more likely to overcome obstacles and to achieve their dreams.

Jot down five goals for your freshman year:

Now write down five “two-year” goals:

Write down five “five-year” goals:

Write down five “ten-year” goals:

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Finally, write a paragraph that considers how you want your life at the University of Wyoming to look, and what steps you can take this fall to work toward achieving your short term and long term goals.

“ Partying is a part of the college experience for many, but don't let it be your only college experience. It's fun. It's a great way to socialize, but remember why you are here and what will count four years down the road. You can go out, have a good time, and still get to bed early enough to stay on track. Set smart boundaries, watch out for yourself and your friends, make time for fun and your studies, and you will have a well-rounded and amazing college experience.”

Mary Grace Bedwell, *UW Student*

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