College is very different from any other place you have studied or worked. It has its own way of operating, its own set of rules and regulations, and its own procedures. To function effectively within any new environment, you have to learn how it works and how to make it work to your advantage. Before continuing with the chapter, assess your knowledge of how your college works by completing the questionnaire shown in Figure 1.1 on page 12.

**Information Sources**

Important official sources of information include the college catalog, the college’s Web site, one’s academic advisor, and the student newspaper. An important part of learning the college system is knowing where to find needed information.

**Using the College Catalog**

The college catalog is a primary source of information for staying in and graduating from college. Be sure to obtain a current edition. It is your responsibility to know and work within the college’s regulations, policies, and requirements to obtain a degree. Although faculty advisors are available to provide guidance, you must be certain that you are registering for the right courses in the right sequence to fulfill requirements to obtain your degree. Furthermore, be sure to obtain a complete catalog, not a preadmissions publicity brochure. Keep the
catalog that is in effect during your freshman year. It is considered the catalog of record and will be used to audit your graduation requirements. A complete catalog usually provides several types of information:

- **Academic rules and regulations**
  - Course registration policies, grading system, class attendance policies, academic dismissal policies

- **Degree programs and requirements**
  - Degrees offered and outlines of degree requirements for each major

- **Course descriptions**
  - A brief description of each course, the number of credits, and course prerequisites (Note: Not all courses listed are offered each semester.)

- **Student activities and special services**
  - Student organizations, clubs and sports, student governance system, and special services

**Your College’s Web Site**

Many colleges have a Web site on the Internet that contains useful general information about the college, as well as information about degrees, programs, and services. It may contain such valuable information as course descriptions, schedule planning, course and program information, and financial aid.

Many college Web sites have links to sites that offer grammar hotlines, study skills workshops, library research assistance, and term paper writing tips.

---

**FIGURE 1.1**

Rate Your Knowledge of Your College

*Answer each of the following questions about your college.*

1. What are the hours of the college library?

2. What is the last date by which you can withdraw from a class without a penalty?

3. Where do you go or whom do you see to change from one major (or curriculum) to another?

4. How is your grade point average (GPA) computed?

5. Where is the student health office located?

6. Who is your advisor and where is he or she located on campus?

7. Does your college use pluses and/or minuses as part of the letter grading system?

8. Where are computer labs located on campus?

9. How would you contact each of your instructors if it should be necessary?

10. What assistance is available in locating part-time jobs on campus?
EXERCISE 1.1

Learning About Your College

Directions  Use your college catalog or Web site to answer the following questions.

1. Does the college allow you to take courses on a Pass/Fail or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis? If so, what restrictions or limitations apply?
2. What is the last date on which you can withdraw from a course without academic penalty?
3. On what basis are students academically dismissed from the college? What criteria apply to readmission?
4. What is the institution’s policy on transfer credit?
5. What rules and regulations apply to motor vehicles on campus?
6. List five extracurricular programs or activities the college sponsors.
7. Describe the health services the college provides.
8. What foreign languages are offered?
9. Is a course in computer literacy offered?
10. What courses are required in your major or curriculum? Are any general education courses required?

Course Management Systems

More and more instructors use a computer-based course management system to provide information about their courses and to handle their day-to-day operation. The system may contain the course syllabus (see p. 20), lists of assignments, announcements of quizzes and exams, and so forth. The system may also allow you to communicate directly with classmates and with your professor. With some systems you can submit assignments electronically and receive graded papers back from your professor.

Your Academic Advisor

In most colleges, each student is assigned an academic advisor. Your advisor’s primary function is to help you select appropriate courses and make certain that you meet all requirements for your degree. Meet with your advisor early in the semester and get to know him or her. Many advisors on campus have e-mail addresses. Often you can use e-mail to schedule an appointment with him or her or to ask a quick question. Be sure to consult with your advisor before adding or dropping courses or making other important academic decisions. Sometimes he or she can help you resolve a problem by “cutting through the red tape” or knowing whom to call. Your advisor is an important source for a letter of recommendation, which you may need for college transfer, graduate school, or job applications, so it is important to develop and maintain a positive relationship with him or her.

Student Newspaper

The student newspaper is another useful source of information. It provides a student perspective on issues, problems, and concerns on campus. It may also contain important announcements and list upcoming events.
College Services

A large portion of your tuition is spent to provide a wide range of academic, social, recreational, and health services. Since you are paying for these services, you should take advantage of them. Table 1.1 lists the most common services offered on college campuses. Check to see exactly what services are offered on your campus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Office</th>
<th>Services Offered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Health Office</td>
<td>Handles illnesses and injuries; may dispense over-the-counter drugs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Activities Office or Student Center</td>
<td>Offers a range of recreational activities; sponsors social events; houses offices for student organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling and Test Center</td>
<td>Provides personal and career counseling and testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Office</td>
<td>Offers assistance with loans, grants, and scholarships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Placement Office</td>
<td>Lists job openings (full time and part time); establishes a placement file that records student references and transcripts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Lends books, CDs and DVDs, provides computer access; provides listening and study rooms; has photocopy machines; offers assistance in locating reference materials; obtains books and research materials from other libraries through interlibrary loans; offers access to electronic databases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Lab/Academic Skills Center</td>
<td>Offers brush-up courses; individualized instruction or tutoring in study skills, reading, writing, math, and/or common freshman courses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EXERCISE 1.2 Identifying College Services

Directions Answer the following questions about college services on your campus.

1. What services does the student health office offer?
2. List five student organizations sponsored by the college.
3. Where would you go to find out if tutoring is available for mathematics courses?
4. In what intercollegiate sports does the college participate?
5. Where are computer labs located?

Campus Diversity

For many students, college is an opportunity to meet people unlike themselves: students and instructors from different social, cultural, and national backgrounds. This means you are likely to encounter people whose beliefs, values,
and experiences differ significantly from your own. If you consider this diversity as an opportunity to broaden your horizons and think from different points of view, you will benefit more than if you socialize only with other students who come from backgrounds similar to your own.

1. **Look for opportunities to meet students from diverse backgrounds who share your interests.** Get involved with sports activities and clubs, for example. Most colleges present many opportunities for students with common interests to meet and think about matters of concern at the local, national, and even international levels. Don’t restrict your activities to those that include only others of your own background.

2. **Share your experiences and background when relevant in class discussions.** Most students are interested in the customs, traditions, and viewpoints of others. You possess a unique body of information based on your life experiences. Sharing it adds depth and texture to relevant class discussions.

3. **Consider study and research projects that will give you a chance to learn about unfamiliar cultures.** Take advantage of any course-related opportunities to study unfamiliar cultures, whether in the library, on the Internet, or by conducting person-to-person research on campus. Use academic assignments as a way to move beyond familiar territory and into contact with new people and new ideas.

Thirty years ago, first-year college students typically were 18-year-olds who lived on campus in dorm rooms. Today, 40 percent of college students are age 25 or older, and well over 50 percent are commuters who travel to and from campus daily. As a result of these and other changes in the college population, many colleges and universities now offer services for students with different needs. Be sure to check what services are available on your campus, as well as using the following suggestions.

**Commuter Students**

Check to see if your campus offers special services for commuter students. Your college may coordinate “ride boards” for sharing rides; it may offer commuter lounges; it may lend laptops to commuters who do not have ready access to the college’s computer labs. Table 1.2 on page 16 identifies common problems commuting students experience and offers suggestions for coping with each.

**Adults Returning to College**

Many adults are returning to education. This means that if you are an adult beginning or returning to college, you are not alone. Many other students on your campus face the same concerns and problems as you do. Get in touch
with these students; they can offer moral support, serve as sounding boards, and provide valuable advice for succeeding in college. Your college’s activities office may sponsor a club or offer workshops.

Use the following suggestions to make your transition back to education a smooth one.

**Make sure your family understands and supports your decision.** You may need to ask them to pick up part of the household workload that you had previously carried.

**Do not study all the time.** Many adults feel they are behind or out of touch and, consequently, study nonstop. Instead, develop a realistic study plan and stick with it. (See Chapter 3 for specific suggestions.)

**Start slowly.** Ease yourself into college. Take courses that you are likely to do well in and that will strengthen your self-confidence.

**Recognize that your first semester will be the hardest.** During your first semester you are not only working on each of your courses, you are also working on developing a new lifestyle.

### TABLE 1.2 Tips for Commuting Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. You are trying to balance responsibilities of family, job, and college. | • Time management skills are essential. Pay particular attention to Chapter 3.  
• Establish your priorities. Once you list what is most and least important to you, you won’t feel guilty about choices you must make. |
| 2. Family and friends don’t understand your new commitment to college. | • Explain the new demands college has placed on you.  
• Make clear when you have reserved times for study.  
• Learn to say “no” to friends and family who expect you to be able to live as you did before you began college. |
| 3. Commuting takes time. | • Use your commute time for learning.  
• If riding, work on assignments. |
| 4. It’s difficult to meet other students; you don’t feel as if you belong. | • Talk to others; don’t wait for them to talk to you.  
• Get to know one person in each of your classes.  
• Exchange phone numbers.  
• Join clubs and attend student activities on campus.  
• Spend extra time on campus; don’t leave immediately after your last class. |
Cultural Diversity

College offers you an incredible opportunity to meet students from many different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. If you actively seek them out, you’ll learn as much about different ways of seeing and being in the world from other students as you will in your college classes. The rich variety of cultural and spiritual practices represented by diverse students and instructors can help you see your own culture from a very different point of view.

Many colleges organize student groups that enable students of color to get in touch with one another and discuss problems, and sponsor activities that encourage students to share their cultural and ethnic heritage with others. If your college does not sponsor such student clubs or activities, consider starting your own group or club or see what is available in the larger community. Also, check for Web sites sponsored by cultural organizations in order to find out about services and resources and activities at the national level. For example, Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan has Web sites at many college campuses around the country, and Hillel is a national Jewish student organization that promotes unity among the members of the Jewish community.

No matter what your background, the following tips can help you get off to a successful start in college.

Consult with a campus mentor frequently. Try to find a person—either a student or a faculty or staff member—who is familiar with the college and who is willing to guide you through your first semester and offer advice.

Find a role model from your community. Talk to a relative, friend, or acquaintance who has attended college to find out what strategies helped them succeed. Use their experiences and expertise as a guide to develop your own.

Once you become familiar with college expectations, become a mentor to a younger person from your community. Define your academic and personal goals (see Chapter 3) and then share them with a junior-high or high-school student who wants to attend college. Share both the problems you encounter and the successes you experience. Doing so will help reinforce a continuing tradition of success in your community.

Students with Disabilities

College is fully accessible to students with physical or learning disabilities. Federal laws mandate that colleges provide specific services to disabled students. Most colleges have an office or counselor designated to assist students with disabilities, as well as a full range of services and equipment, including interpreters for hearing-impaired students, writers, note takers, and so forth.
Student organizations for disabled students may provide social networks or peer counseling, for example. If you are a student with a disability, here are a few suggestions to help you succeed.

**Communicate with your instructors.** Explain any kind of assistance or special accommodation you may require or certain preferential treatment you want them to avoid. Most instructors are anxious to assist; it is your job to let them know how to help.

**Take advantage of available facilities and accommodations.** Some students who have special needs try not to use the services available to them unless absolutely necessary. They do not want to be given an unfair advantage or seem privileged to other students. Your goal is to succeed in college; take advantage of whatever services will help you.

**Get to know other students in each of your classes.** Many students are genuinely interested in you, but they are unsure of how to initiate a conversation. Help them along; introduce yourself to them.

**Multilingual Students and ESL (English as a Second Language) Students**

If you are an international student or from a family or community in which English is usually not spoken, you face the challenge of reading, listening to lectures, writing papers, and participating in class discussions in a language that is not your first, native language. Here are a few suggestions.

**Take ESL courses, even if they are not required.** These are taught by specialists in second-language learning; you will learn more quickly and easily than if you try to teach yourself.

**Acquire a comprehensive two-language dictionary (English-Spanish, English-Japanese, etc.) and use it regularly.** Carry it with you to classes; refer to it as needed during lectures.

**Consider recording lectures.** You can play back the lectures and catch ideas you missed during the lecture.

**Discuss problems or limitations with your professors.** Once they are aware of your special needs, most will be eager to assist.

**EXERCISE 1.3 Identifying Problems and Finding Help**

**Directions** Working with a classmate, brainstorm a list of potential problems—academic, social, or personal—that a student may encounter while attending college. For each problem, identify a source of help.
Course Organization

No two college courses are conducted in exactly the same manner. Each course is tailored by the instructor to best express his or her approach to the subject matter, teaching style, and educational objectives. Two sections of the same course offered the same semester may be structured entirely differently from one another. One instructor may require a text; the other may assign readings. One instructor may lecture; the other may conduct class discussions. One instructor may give exams; the other may assign papers. The key to success in college courses, then, is to understand and work within the instructor’s course organization. On the first day of class many instructors distribute a syllabus that explains their organization and approach. These, too, vary according to instructor, but they usually list the following:

- the required text
- the attendance policy
- the grading system
- the course objectives
- weekly assignments or readings
- dates of exams or due dates for papers

An excerpt from a syllabus for a human anatomy and physiology course is shown in Figure 1.2 on page 20. One of the most important parts of the syllabus is the course objectives. Objectives state, in general terms, what the instructors intend to accomplish and what they expect you to learn through the course. Objectives state what you are to learn; exams, then, are built to measure how well you have learned it.

Online Courses

Many colleges offer online courses; they require a great deal of independence, self-direction, and the ability to work alone. Avoid taking online courses during your first semester or first year. It is better to learn what is expected in college classes by attending traditional classes. Once you are familiar with college expectations, you will be better prepared to take an online course, using the following tips:

Read, read, read. Reading is your primary source of information. You read textbooks and communications from professors and other students. If you aren’t a strong reader or feel as if you need personal contact and in-person support from other students, get in touch with a classmate or find a friend who will register for the same online course.

Keep up with the work. Most students who fail online courses fail because they fall hopelessly behind with the required reading and written assignments and cannot catch up. Devote specific hours each week to the online course. Make a work/study schedule and follow it as you would for any other class.
## Course Syllabus

**Course Number:** BIO 201  
**Course Name:** Human Anatomy and Physiology I  
**Instructor:** Dr. Jack Eberhardt  
**Prerequisite:** BIO 102 with a grade of C or higher  
**Office Location:** 322 Olympic Towers  
**Office Hours:** MWF 1–3

### Course Objectives:
1. To identify the major parts of a cell and know their functions.
2. To understand the structure and function of the human organ systems.
3. To learn the types of human body tissues and understand their functions.
4. To perform laboratory activities for collection and analysis of experimental data.

### Course Grade:
Grades will be based on 3 multiple-choice exams and weekly laboratory reports. Exam questions are based on lecture notes, textbook assignments, as well as the lab manual. The exams will test factual knowledge as well as critical thinking skills.

### Attendance:
Regular attendance is required for both lecture and laboratory. If you miss a class, you should get the missed material from a classmate. The instructor will not distribute or post lecture or lab notes. Make-up labs will not be allowed. If you miss an exam, you must provide written documentation to explain your absence. If you fail to do so, a grade of zero will be entered.

### Tentative Lecture Schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Course Introduction, The Scientific Method</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 21</td>
<td>Atoms, molecules, water, chemical bonding</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 1.2  
A Sample Course Syllabus Excerpt

Your instructor tests you on these objectives. Use this list to test yourself.  
Exams test your recall as well as your reasoning skills. Lab is important. Don’t miss classes or labs.  
Develop a weekly reading schedule based on this list.
**Keep your focus.** Turn off music, instant messaging, and e-mail while working on your computer for your online course.

**EXERCISE 1.4 Studying a Syllabus**

**Directions** Study the syllabus for one of your courses and answer as many of the following questions as possible.

1. What types of thinking are emphasized? (Refer to Chapter 2, p. 43.)
2. How is the subject matter of the course divided?
3. Summarize the grading system.
4. Predict three topics that might be asked on a final exam consisting entirely of essay questions.

**Grades and the Grading System**

Most colleges use a letter grade system in awarding final grades. Each college has its own variations, special policies, and unique designations, so be sure to read the section in your college catalog on grading policies. Specifically, find out about the following:

**Pass/Fail Options**

Some colleges allow you to take certain courses on a Pass/Fail basis. You earn the credit but receive only a Pass or Fail grade on your record. The Pass/Fail option, if available, allows you to take courses without competing for a letter grade. You might consider electing a Pass/Fail option for a difficult course. If, for example, you are required to take one math course and math has always been difficult for you, then consider taking that course on a Pass/Fail basis. Be sure to check your college catalog and with your advisor to be certain that required courses can be taken on a Pass/Fail basis. The instructor’s permission may be required. Also, there may be a restriction on the number or types of courses that may be elected using this option.

The Pass/Fail option also provides an opportunity to take interesting elective courses without worrying about grades. Suppose you are interested in taking a history of modern music course but know that it is a difficult course taken mostly by students majoring in the arts. A Pass/Fail option would allow you to enjoy the course without competing for a letter grade.

**Course Withdrawal**

Most colleges have a provision by which you can withdraw from a course up to a given deadline in the semester without academic penalty. Be sure to check the college catalog for the deadline for course withdrawal. If you know you are doing poorly in a course, discuss the possibility of course withdrawal with your
instructor. Some students who think they are in danger of failing learn otherwise by speaking with their instructor. Also, consult your advisor and the financial aid office to learn what impact, if any, course withdrawal will have on your academic and financial aid status.

**Incomplete Grades**

Many grading systems have a provision for students who are unable to complete a course for which they are registered. This grade, often called an Incomplete, is awarded at the discretion of the instructor when he or she feels the student has a legitimate reason for being unable to complete the course. Instructors may award an Incomplete if you are injured during the last week of classes, for example. Be sure to contact your instructor as soon as possible; offer to provide the instructor with verification of your reason. Many colleges have a deadline by which an Incomplete must be converted to a grade. This means you must arrange with your instructor to complete whatever course requirements he or she specifies by a given date. Be sure it is clear what assignments must be done, how to do them, and when they must be completed.

**Grade Point Average (GPA)**

Each semester an average is computed using the individual grades you received that semester. This average is computed by assigning numerical values to letter grades. An A may be assigned four points, a B three points, a C two points, a D one point, and an F zero points, for example. Consult your college catalog to discover what numerical values are used at your school and how they are calculated. Find out if pluses and minuses are considered.

A cumulative GPA is computed over successive semesters by averaging all the grades you have received since you began attending college. Many colleges require a specific cumulative GPA for admission to an academic department and for graduation. Grade point average may also influence financial aid eligibility and your academic status. You may be required to maintain a minimum GPA to receive financial aid or to remain in good academic standing.

**EXERCISE 1.5 Understanding the Grading System**

**Directions**  
*Answer each of the following questions about the grading system at your college.*

1. What is the deadline for course withdrawal?
2. Is the Pass/Fail grading option available? If so, is there a limit to the number of courses you may elect using this option?
3. Is there a time limit by which the work for Incomplete grades must be completed?
4. Are pluses and minuses considered part of your grading system?
5. What is the point value of D grades in your college’s grading system?
THINKING CRITICALLY

... About Grades

Grading is an important part of most college courses. Successful students learn to use the grading system to their advantage. Here are a few questions to consider:

1. **How can you use the grading system to help you organize your study?**
   Suppose, for example, biweekly quizzes on textbook chapters in your business marketing class constitute 50 percent of your grade. How should you schedule your study?

2. **How can the grading system help you decide what is important to learn?**
   Suppose that 40 percent of your grade in sociology is based on weekly summaries and critiques of films shown in class. What can you do while watching the film and immediately after each film to improve this portion of your grade?

3. **How can the grading system help you make choices?** Suppose, for example, you have the choice of taking a final exam or writing a paper for your history class. What factors would you consider in making your decision?

SKILLS IN ACTION

Using the Pass/Fail System to Your Advantage

The Pass/Fail system is intended not only to reduce students’ stress and anxiety levels but also to encourage them to expand their horizons. The following is a list of courses offered at a typical college. From this list, choose no more than three courses that you would choose to take on a Pass/Fail basis. Explain the reasoning behind each of your choices.

- Art history survey
- Introductory statistics
- Survey of poetry
- Interpersonal communication
- American history
- Principles of chemistry
- Principles of economics
- Personal finance
- American Sign Language
- History of Russia and the Soviet Union
- Anatomy and physiology
- Introduction to health
- Psychology of children and adolescents
Classroom Success Tips

The following suggestions will help you be successful in each of your courses.

Attend All Classes

Even if class attendance is optional or not strictly monitored by your instructor, make it a rule to attend all classes. For most students, class time totals 12 to 15 hours per week, except for laboratory and studio courses. This amounts to less than 10 percent of your time each week! If you say you don’t have enough time to attend all classes, you are not being honest with yourself. Remember, class instruction is a major part of what your tuition is paying for. You are cheating yourself if you don’t take advantage of it. Seldom is a class taught in which you do not learn something new or gain a new perspective on already familiar ideas.

Get Acquainted with Faculty

Get to know your professors; you will find your classes more meaningful and interesting, and you will learn more. Challenging and stimulating conversations

REAL STUDENTS SPEAK

Sophie Crafts
Clark University
Worcester, Massachusetts

Background: Sophie is a senior at Clark University majoring in psychology.

Goal: To obtain a bachelor’s degree in psychology.

Advice on Getting Academic Help: If I don’t like a class, writing papers is a big chore. I’m a big procrastinator and at the last minute have to do a lot of studying for tests and final exams. It stresses me out. I’ve found that meeting with a professor and explaining that I’m having a hard time keeping up really helps. They often offer really good advice on how to get through the class successfully. I’ve also found that teaching assistants help a lot. They can be easier to talk to than professors and more available.”
often result, and you can gain new insights into the subject matter that you might never obtain by merely attending class. Talking with your instructors is an opportunity to apply and connect the course with your academic interests and goals. Talking with your instructor will also help you establish yourself as a conscientious and interested student.

**Keep Up with Assignments**

It is tempting to delay work on projects and assignments until you feel like doing them or until you have an exam or quiz on them. This approach is a mistake and can lead to a failing semester. Students who procrastinate end up with an impossible amount of reading to do within a short time. As a result, they don’t do the reading at all or read the assignments hurriedly and without careful thought.

**Form a Study Group**

Choose several classmates and form a study group. Schedule a regular meeting time and place. Use the sessions to review, quiz each other, and study for exams.

**Project a Positive Image**

Be sure to approach each class positively and demonstrate that you are a serious student. Unfortunately, some students do behave thoughtlessly or rudely in class. The unspoken message they send is that the class is unimportant and uninteresting, and instructors are quick to perceive this. Work on establishing a positive image by

- arriving at class promptly
- asking or answering questions
- participating in class discussions
- sitting in the front of the room
- making eye contact with the instructor
- completing assignments on time
- reading assigned material before class
- saying “hello” when you meet your instructor on campus
- shutting off your cell phone during class

**Take Action If You Are in the Wrong Course**

You may find yourself in a course that is either too easy or too difficult. Courses in which this most often occurs are mathematics, foreign languages, and the sciences. If you suspect you are in the wrong course, talk with your instructor
immediately. If he or she confirms that you are misplaced, ask for advice. Also consult with your advisor. Generally, it is inadvisable to continue in a course that is too difficult; dropping the course, if possible, is a reasonable alternative. Be certain, however, that dropping the course does not reduce your course load to below the minimum if you are a full-time student. If you make your decision to drop a course early enough in the semester, you may be able to add another course in its place.

**Purchase Recommended Materials**

While most instructors require a textbook, some make the purchase of other materials optional. These materials include review books, workbooks, dictionaries, or other reference books, manuals, or style sheets. Your instructor would not recommend the materials unless he or she felt they would be helpful. Therefore, make sure you purchase these optional materials. Often you will find that these materials make review easier and/or are helpful in completing required assignments or papers.

**Take Action When You Miss an Important Exam or Deadline**

Hopefully you will never have to miss an important exam or deadline for a paper. However, if you should wake up with the flu on the morning of a midterm exam, for example, you may have to miss the exam. Be sure to contact your instructor before the exam. Leave a phone message in the department office if you are unable to contact him or her directly. Explaining the situation ahead of time is preferable to making excuses later. If a paper is due and you are ill, ask a friend or fellow student to deliver it for you.

**Get Involved with College Life**

Academic course work is, of course, the primary reason for attending college. However, if all you are doing on campus is taking courses and studying, you are missing an important part of college life. College is more than textbooks, exams, and lectures. The academic environment is a world of ideas, a place where thought, concepts, and values are of primary importance. It is a place where you can discuss and exchange ideas, explore new approaches to life, and reevaluate old ones. College also provides an opportunity for you to decide who you are (or who you want to be) and how you would like to spend the rest of your life.

Considerable research indicates that students who participate in college activities tend to be more successful in college than those who do not. Activities provide an opportunity for you to get involved and to feel part of a group with similar interests. On large campuses, where it is easy to feel lost, involvement is
especially important. If you are preparing for a career, getting involved with college life is important. Most employers are interested in hiring well-spoken, interesting people who are aware of the world around them and can interact with others effectively. College can help you become well rounded, if you take advantage of it.

To get involved with college life, find out about activities and issues on campus. Many interesting lectures, debates, films, and concerts are sponsored weekly. Make it a point to meet someone in each of your classes; you will feel better about going to class, and a worthwhile friendship may develop. Find out if there is a student group that shares your interests, and join it. You may meet interesting people in the ski club, chorus, nursing students’ association, or black students’ union, for example.

If You Plan to Transfer

If you are attending a two-year college and plan to transfer to a four-year school after completing your associate’s degree, plan accordingly. Do not assume that any course you take at one institution will be accepted for a degree at another. Each college and each academic department has its own policies and guidelines for the acceptance of transfer credit.

To ensure that most or all your credits will transfer, be sure to do the following:

◆ Obtain the college catalog of the institution to which you intend to transfer and read about degree requirements and transfer credit policies and procedures.
◆ Contact an admissions counselor to answer any questions.
◆ Make your current academic advisor aware of your plans. He or she can assist you in determining and selecting appropriate courses for transfer.
Five Key Points to Remember

1. **Learn about campus resources.** Colleges offer a wide variety of valuable services; find out what is available and take advantage of them.

2. **Benefit from campus diversity.** Widen your horizons by taking the time to get to know students, faculty, and staff who represent various social, cultural, and national backgrounds.

3. **Study course syllabi.** These are valuable tools that help you know what to expect and what to study in each course.

4. **Learn about grades.** Be sure to learn your college’s policies on grading including Pass/Fail, course withdrawal, Incomplete grades, and grade point average (GPA).

5. **Build classroom success.** Project yourself as a serious student by attending all classes and keeping up with assignments and deadlines.

**The Work Connection**

The workplace of the 21st century, researchers agree, is quite different from the workplace of the past. Corporate mergers, acquisitions, downsizing, new technologies, and global competition are only a few of the factors that are causing...
a shift in the qualities, skills, and capabilities that employers will expect of successful employees. Research also suggests that the average person will make three to five major career changes in the course of his or her work life. Now is the time to start considering how the decisions you make in college are likely to affect your future employment. Begin by answering the following questions:

1. What are three careers that you might enjoy pursuing during your lifetime?
2. What skills will you learn in this course that relate to your career and life goals? List four or five skills.
3. What college courses might you consider taking that will make you versatile and employable in a variety of career settings?

**The Web Connection**

Each chapter in this book ends with a list of Web sites that include information and activities helpful to college students. Visit them when you need more assistance with particular topics, strategies, or skills.

1. **How to Flunk Out with Style and Grace**


   This site uses humor and irony to tell students how to succeed by telling them how not to succeed. Print out this list and record whether you have been exhibiting any of these behaviors. Jot down strategies to change your behaviors if necessary.

2. **Three Credits and a Baby**

   [https://secure3.electronet.net/RWUniversity/stories.cfm?id=21&action=Show&cid=42](https://secure3.electronet.net/RWUniversity/stories.cfm?id=21&action=Show&cid=42)

   From the Real World University site, this brief article describes one young woman's struggle as a single mother going to college. Choose one of her tips and explain how it could apply to your own situation.

3. **Commuters and College Life**


   Some tips for commuters are presented here as part of a larger guide to starting college. Interview a commuter about the information presented on the Web site. Are there issues that could be added?