

Preparing Yourself for University; Starting a New Academic Term.

So, your place on a higher education course is confirmed, and you now realise it's time to prepare yourself for a big change in both your academic and home life, but how do you prepare? What do you now need to start thinking about? How will you manage your finances? Will you get on with people?

Don't fear these are questions every prospective student asks themselves and with a bit of planning hopefully you can put your mind at ease.

In fact there is actually lots you can do so you can prepare yourself for University and then settle into student life comfortably;

Before you go - You should have got an induction or introduction pack from your university or college, either in advance or upon arrival.

Read this thoroughly, fill in and return any forms and take note of where and when things need to be done.

Subject staff may have included information on background reading or required materials. You might be able to get additional information on how to prepare for your course from departmental pages on your or college's website.

What to take - Your university or college induction pack will probably include a list of suggested items to bring along. Think carefully about what you are likely to need, what you can buy when you get there and how much you really need to pack.

If you're planning to take equipment to watch or record TV programmes as they're being shown - whether it's a television set, computer or other device - you'll need to be covered by a valid TV licence.

Where to go - If you're moving into halls of residence, your university will give you a date and approximate time to arrive at your new accommodation. You'll probably be arriving at the same time as the people who'll be your neighbours for the next year - an ideal opportunity to make new friends!

If you're living in private accommodation, you'll have organised a moving in day with your landlord. Your house-mates may arrive at the same time, or may be there already. If you visited on the open day you may know where some of the key buildings are - if not, it's worth familiarising yourself with your new surroundings as soon as possible. It's also a good idea to check when and where you need to be to sign up for your course. If you need to travel to get to university or college, you can plan your journey online. You might even consider a 'dry run' to see exactly where things are and how long it takes to get there.

Settling in and getting support - The first few days at university or college are a busy time - settling into new accommodation (if you've moved away to study), getting your bearings, registering for your course, and generally preparing.

You'll need to join the university library, and may also want to consider joining the student union and a local bank. It's also a good idea to register with a local doctor and dentist. Very soon you'll know your place of study like the back of your hand by the end of the first term or semester, but you're bound to have problems finding your way around during the first few weeks. Be sure to allow plenty of time and invest in a good map. It's perfectly normal to feel homesick if you've moved away to study. Student welfare advisers will be able to help if you need someone to talk to.

Good luck!

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