



# The Girls with Grit Guide to College

v1.0

**A joint product by**

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(2017 awardees)

**With support from**

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## Foreword

The Girls with Grit Guide to College is advice from awardees to current and future awardees, based on our college experience.

### Why we created a guide

Like many first-generation college students, I did not have family to turn to with questions regarding college. I wanted to create this guide to share with other awardees what I wish I knew throughout my college experience, giving college advice as an older sister. - Vicktoria

### How we came up with the sections

In our guide, you will find everything from how to deal with difficult roommates to handling hard courses. Before we started writing, we took the time to think about the essential things one needs to know when navigating college/university. We sat together in a room and brainstormed the topics we thought needed to belong in a first edition. - Angie

### What we learned while making the guide

The Girls with Grit Guide to College started as an idea. Fran showed us “Being Not Rich at U-M,” and we all thought it would be a great idea to have one focused on our needs and experiences.

In the beginning, Fran warned us the guide would be a large project. She told us anything intimidating can become approachable if you first break it into smaller tasks. With that approach, we created version 1.0 of this guide. - Vicktoria

### What we hope the guide does for awardees

We hope the Girls with Grit Guide to College serves as a blueprint for girls entering college/university. We know there are many awardees who are and will be first-generation students. We hope the advice in this guide will make the path to higher education—and through it—easier to navigate.

Vick, Elena, Fran, and I took the time to brainstorm the best advice we could give and to review each other's work. The result is this guide. It does not mean the sharing of advice has to end because we finished this version of the guide. We hope this first version inspires other awardees to contribute to the guide and to add their input. We hope the Girls with Grit Guide continues to grow! - Angie

**NOTE:** This guide draws from publicly available information as well as lived experience. It doesn't replace the advice of college counselors, financial aid officers, health professionals, and other experts.

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## Chapter 1: Academics

### Picking out classes

Picking out classes is driven at first by your college's or university's requirements and your interests. As you decide your major(s), which classes you choose focuses almost exclusively on meeting requirements.

- **Classes for your first semester, first year.** You may have certain classes you have to take. A writing course, for example. Or other first-year seminars and requirements. Use other slots to take classes in topics you're interested in or curious about. That's how you find a major!
- **Undecided on major.** If you are undecided, that's completely fine! Consider the types of classes you'll have to take no matter what. You could pick a graduation requirement, a class from a potential major, and a fun class. Feel free to explore, and eventually you will find a major you love!
- **Decided on major.** If you have a major in mind, look on your college website for the major curriculum guide. The major curriculum guide will show you a typical flow of classes for a student in that major. If you have any questions, speak to your advisor!
- **Deciding between classes.** Your professor makes a big difference in your overall experience in a class. The professor can make a boring subject amazing. Ask alumni or upperclassmen for classes and professors they would recommend or avoid. Use [ratemyprofessor.com](http://ratemyprofessor.com). It's great for choosing between professors teaching the same class.
- **When classes are posted.** As soon as classes are posted, plan a meeting with your advisor in order to plan your schedule for your next semester. Come prepared with pen and paper to write out your classes and with questions to ask your advisor.
- **Track your credits and other graduation requirements.** Each semester, make sure to review where you are with your credits and your meeting of any and all graduation requirements. Review these and your plan for the next semester with your advisor. That way you'll be sure you can graduate on time and with what you need.

**See more about majors and minors in the “Choosing a major/minor” section!**

### First day of class

- **Prepare.** Find your classrooms ahead of time, so on your first day you won't get lost and be late. Make sure you bring all your materials to class. Day one is usually a syllabus day. However, you might have one of those teachers who decides to teach on the first day. Watch your email just in case there are communications from professors about pre-semester reading assignments or classroom location changes (or if the class has been rescheduled or canceled).
- **Seats.** Participation is actually graded, and it can boost your grade. Sit toward the front to have an easier time focusing and participating. Also, there is an unspoken rule of

assigned seats. The seat you take on the first day is usually the seat you're stuck with during the rest of the semester. So get there early and choose wisely.

- **Say hello.** Introduce yourself to your teacher. It might seem silly now, however if you need help in the future, approaching him/her will not feel as awkward.

## Making the most out of a class

- **Do the work.** It's probably obvious, but do the work before each class. You'll get more from whatever the professor or assistant is talking about and you'll be better able to ask questions or share your perspective. You'll also know where you're confused and need help.
- **Speak up.** As noted, participation matters. So do relationships. And understanding the material. Be sure to ask questions, share your opinion, and in other ways participate in class discussion.
- **Office hours.** Go to your teacher's or teaching assistant's office hours. You can get extra help with material that is unclear, and even get help with homework. The extra benefit of going to office hours is that it allows you to create a relationship with your professor. Having a relationship with your professor allows you to ask him/her for help when you're struggling in the class, talk about internships and other opportunities, and request a letter of recommendation in the future.
- **Lateness.** Tardiness usually impacts your participation grade. Don't risk your grade by being late in order to gain 15 more minutes of sleep. Learn what your professors' policies are on emergency and illness-related absences and how to communicate these situations to your professors.
- **Electronics.** Don't go on your phone or surf the web during class. It is distracting not only to you, but to people who can see your screen. Do not be that person! Also, the professor knows what people are up to when they have their devices out.
- **Notes.** Learn your note-taking style. Taking notes on your computer is faster, but you might get distracted by surfing the web. Taking notes by hand allows you to memorize things easier. If they are readily available, sometimes taking notes from the slides before class allows you to focus on what the professor says during class. Students also take notes on their tablets or other devices. If you choose to take handwritten notes on the PowerPoint slides, make sure to find free or discounted printing options.

## Dropping/withdrawing from a class

- **Timing is important!** Most colleges have policies about how they handle tuition refunds for classes you drop. It's better to quickly figure out if you'll drop a class, especially during any add/drop period, so you don't pay for a class you don't want.
- **Withdrawing vs. dropping.** Your school may make a distinction between withdrawing and dropping a class. Dropping is when you stop taking a class within a specific timeframe, usually a few days into the semester. Withdrawing is when you stop taking the class after the add/drop period. There are often grade and financial penalties for withdrawing, so know your school's rules.

- **Permission needed?** Some colleges require permission to withdraw from a class. Ask to speak with your professor to discuss what's not working for you. Maybe the professor can give you advice on how to approach the class differently. If not, the professor can also let you know how to go about withdrawing or dropping from the class.
- **Speak with your academic advisor!** Whether you're decided or undecided on your major, you have an academic advisor who gives you advice on what classes you should take and what classes/credits you need to graduate. Meet with your advisor to talk about any classes you're struggling with. Ask about what it will mean if you want to withdraw from the class. You can ask: How can I make up the credit? Will my financial aid be affected? Is there a deadline I need to withdraw by to avoid having to pay for this class?
- **Academic and development centers.** Universities provide you with professionals who are dedicated to advising you in all things related to academics and careers. If the class you're withdrawing from ties into your major requirements or a possible career, it's ideal to get as much feedback as you can. Visit your academic and development center to get advice on other classes you can take in place of the one you dropped. If you wish to reevaluate if the major is for you, they can help with that, too.

## Organization/time management

- **Planner.** Didn't use a planner during high school? Well, you might as well start now! They're actually useful during college. At the beginning of each class, teachers give you a syllabus containing homework and dates for future tests and projects. Some teachers won't remind you when homework is due, so you have to know and keep on top of the dates, and a planner's great for keeping everything in one place. Learn what planner style works for you: traditional planner, bullet journal, or electronic.
- **Find your system.** If organization isn't your thing, find someone who's really good at it and ask how they do it. Adopt their tips and see what works for you. Once you have a system you'll be better able to take notes, track deadlines, break projects down into smaller components, and handle everything else.
- **Start early.** Don't wait until the night before to get assignments done, papers written, or exams studied for. Create a semester schedule that shows all exam, paper, and assignment deadlines. You'll then know your busy periods. Next, add mini-deadlines to this schedule to help you make the workload manageable.

## Homework

College homework is different from high school homework. The purpose of homework is to read and familiarize yourself with the lesson. Then, in class, you're taught the lesson and have the opportunity to ask questions.

- **Reading.** Do your reading homework. You'll see such a difference between those who do the reading homework and those who do not, through understanding of the material and participation. You are paying thousands of dollars for school. Don't be that guy who doesn't do homework and then is surprised by your low grade. It *is* a lot of reading, though. So learn how to skim your readings.

- **Tips on skimming your readings.** Consider dividing readings up with classmates and sharing the important information. Review the table of contents for essential parts of the reading. Slow down when you see keywords. Check and see if there are “summary” sections at the end of a chapter. If you need more clarity on a certain topic, go back and read it a bit more slowly.
- **Office hours.** If you need help with homework, go to your professor’s or teaching assistant’s office hours. They would love to help and even tell you if your answers to your homework are correct.
- **Tips:**
  - Try to stay ahead of homework. It saves you a lot of stress.
  - Stay off your phone and don’t surf the web while doing homework. You might as well get it done and have the rest of your day stress-free.
  - Find your homework spot. Your homework time of day. And your style of doing homework.
  - Complete it independently or with groups, and stick with it.

## Group projects

Here’s the thing: Group projects can really suck. It’s hard to coordinate time to work on the project when everyone has different class schedules, and even harder sometimes to make sure that everyone is doing their fair share. While you might not be jazzed about your partners, the topic, or group work in general, group projects and team projects are very common in the workplace. Learning best practices for group projects now could actually make working in an office or professional setting easier.

- **Picking out partners.** If you’re lucky, you’ll be able to choose your partners. Choosing your friends is great. However, choose people in your group based on who you can depend on to actually do their work.
- **Not being able to pick your partners.** If you’re unlucky, your teacher will choose your group. Divide the work evenly from the beginning and set meeting dates for when you’ll get together as a group to see how everyone’s doing with their part of the project.
- **If any problems arise, try to resolve them as a group before reaching out to your professor.** For example, if one person is not pulling their weight, try to talk with that person as a group. If nothing changes, reach out to the teacher. Soon! Before the project is derailed and the whole group is scrambling.

## Essays

College is a LOT of writing! You’ll write more—and longer—papers than you did in high school.

- **Before writing your essay.** Make an outline and bring it to office hours so you can talk to your teacher about your ideas for your essay. Making the outline will help with the organization of your essay, and running it by your teacher will also make sure you’re on track with your ideas and thesis.

- **Starting your essay.** Start your essays at least **two weeks** ahead of time. You will not have time to properly proofread, visit the writing center, do rewrites, and make it concise and sound great if you start writing the night before it's due.
- **Outside help.** Use your writing center! It's free proofreading. But again, you can't take advantage of the writing center if you're writing your essay the night before. Also, ask a friend and take turns reading each other's essay.

## Midterms/finals

- **Studying.** Make a study guide on the PowerPoints a week in advance! It will be your lifesaver. Find your studying style. Do you prefer studying in groups or individually?
- **Office hours.** If you did not take advantage of office hours, this is prime time to go to your teacher before the test to clarify any lessons and the focus of the midterm or final.

## Advisors

- **Why have one?** Some colleges assign you an academic advisor. Whether you're assigned one or you choose to find one (or more than one), an advisor can help you with things like figuring out your major, which classes to take, professors to work with, how to balance academic and other issues, etc. Advisors are also great resources for recommendation letters and references in the future.
- **Choosing your advisor.** If you're assigned an advisor, that person doesn't have to be the only one you go to for advice. You want to find someone you feel comfortable talking to. Think about the professors, the sports coaches, or the administrators you like talking with, and ask them if they'd be open to advising you. You may end up with a few advisors—people you go to about different things.
- **Meeting with advisors.** Check your school's requirements for how frequently you meet with your advisor. At a minimum, make sure you meet with your advisor once per semester. This meeting will allow you to talk about the classes you plan to take, what you're thinking about your major(s)/minor(s), and any other academic questions you have.

## Choosing a major/minor

- **Undecided.** If you came into college not knowing your major, that's okay! Keep taking classes that you're interested in and you will eventually figure it out.
- **Decided.** If you came into college knowing your major, great! Keep working on it and you'll be fine. However, be aware that you may change your mind as you take more classes in the subject. You may realize you're no longer passionate about it, and that's okay! You'll probably have figured out what you are passionate about in the process.
- **Tips:**
  - Do not choose your major based on what others (friends and family) think you should major in. You're the one who's going to be stuck with the major and loans, so you might as well like what you're doing.
  - Also, a lot of people go into college liking the idea of being a STEM major. Try out one class in the major early on and determine if you truly like it.

- Ask questions—sometimes upperclassmen and alumni have great perspectives on what completing a specific major is really like.
- Talk with your mentor. She can help you consider potential professions, connect you with people working in a particular field, and in other ways help you figure out if you'd really like doing something in this field.
- **Minor**. Declaring a minor lets you take classes, besides your major requirements, that you are interested in. Many people double minor. For example, if you're an economics major but you're interested in Spanish and international studies, you can declare a minor in both! (Make sure to talk to your advisor to see if you have enough time and space to fulfill both your major and minor requirements.) Minors usually take less credits to receive. Check your requirements to understand how many credits you need for a minor, a concentration, or any other certificate.

## Studying abroad

- **What is it?** Studying abroad allows you to study while living somewhere other than your campus. Traditionally, studying abroad meant somewhere outside the U.S. and for a whole semester. Recently, more options inside the U.S. and over school breaks have become possible. Many campuses have study abroad offices where you can meet with an advisor to start narrowing down your options based on your wants and needs.
- **Finding your options.** Visit your college's global education center. There you can ask questions about the different countries you can travel to and the different programs that are offered. Pick a country and program based on your major and interest. There are study abroad programs that last a few weeks to a full academic year. Some study abroad options are organized by your college or university, and others require enrolling in a foreign institution.
- **Cost.** The cost of studying abroad can seem like a lot. That's part of the reason [too few students of color and first-generation students think studying abroad is an option](#). Studying abroad may be covered by your financial aid. So, start by looking into what programs your college or university offers and how they handle tuition and room and board. Then, talk with your financial aid officer about how your aid can be applied to the cost of studying abroad. Ask about work exchanges available through your school and look into scholarships designed just for study abroad (for example, <https://www.iie.org/gilman>). There are also sites full of good general info/resources: <http://allabroad.us> and <https://www.diversityabroad.com/>.

## Internships

- **Finding internships.** Internships are a great way to dip your toe into a possible future career path. An internship is also great to explore jobs you have no experience in. They can possibly trigger a new interest or career path. You can find internships through your school's career center, your professors, and your academic advisor(s).
- **Reach out to your JMB Award mentor and other mentors for internship recommendations.** If anything, go to Fran and she will work with you to come up with

people to speak with. See the “Work” chapter of the guide for an in-depth look into internships and other work options.

- **Timing.** Right after your first year of school is not necessarily the time to get an internship. You might need a rest after a rough first year. As you start going into your sophomore and junior years, you’ll want to start thinking about how an internship could help you figure out your major and your first job out of college.
- **Applying.** Most “hot” internships are filled FAST. Start looking for internships in the fall of the year before you want the position. If you want an internship in the summer of 2021, start looking in the fall of 2020. When summer comes around, it’s too late. All the good internships will be gone. Visit your school’s career center and use your school’s job searching platform. You can search LinkedIn, and even Craigslist, for internship opportunities.
- **Money.** Know that most internships are unpaid. Blech! Maybe not right, but definitely true. You may have to do the internship for experience and to build your network while working another job for \$\$\$\$. Also, some colleges have an option for internship grants. You have to apply for the internship grants and give reports to the college on the internship.
- **What to expect from an internship experience.** Some internships are super well organized and provide work that’s challenging, interesting, and meaningful. Some don’t. If yours doesn’t, you can still make the most out of it by meeting with people who are doing work you find interesting, performing really well at the job so you get a good recommendation, and remembering you’re probably getting more useful work experience than you realize.
- **Making the most out of your internship.** Internships can often lead to a job offer after college. So, set yourself up for that job offer. Show up on time. Show up on the days you’re expected. When you’re finished with work you’ve been given, ask for more. Ask questions to understand the work being done. Act professional. Dress like others in your office.

Find more about internships and work experience in Chapter Six: Work.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- **Professors.** Classes take time to adjust to! Make sure you keep your syllabus for each class. The syllabus has your professor’s email, office location, and schedule! If you have any questions you’re afraid to ask in class, you can always email your professor or meet him/her in person. Also, if personal emergencies come up and you need to be away from class for several days, see your professor sooner rather than later to come up with an action plan for staying in good standing in the class.
- **Tutors.** Some classes require extra help. Find out if there are tutors you can talk to. These are peer students who dedicate their time to helping others out. Sometimes it’s easier to

learn from a fellow student than from your teacher. Tutors can explain things differently and give you a new perspective on those difficult-to-understand topics.

- **Writing centers.** Colleges offer a lot of resources to help with academics, from help with writing and research to help with the stress that comes alongside these things. Get familiar with the writing center's services. Students there can help you think through the focus of your papers, their organization, and the writing. They'll make sure you understand how to approach—and deliver!—a college-level paper.
- **Psychologist.** College can take a toll on you, so don't be afraid to ask to talk to a psychologist. Some universities offer free sessions for the semester. Ask if you can sit down and have a conversation with someone. They can give you advice on how to reduce stress and anxiety from classes.
- **I feel stupid! I can't do it!** You were accepted by this college or university because you belong there. Know that you have the skills, the smarts, and the ability to succeed. Don't compare yourself to others. You might need to read things a few times, visit your professor to ask questions, or find a tutor. Remember your goal and compare yourself only to you.

### On-campus resources

- **Academic development center.** Find your university's academic development center. Here, you can find academic and career advisors, tutoring sessions, and other tools you can use.
- **Dean's office.** You can make an appointment to talk to an assistant dean so you can get honest advice.
- **Professors.** Remember that your professor is also a resource! You can email or make an appointment to discuss any questions you have about the class. It's also a great way to build a relationship with your professor.

### JMB Award resources

- **Mentor.** Your mentor is always open to speaking to you. They're always open to talking to you about academics—the good and the bad. Your mentor was previously a college student, so they can give you their genuine advice.

## Chapter 2: Dorm Life

### What to bring

- **Twin bed sheets, pillows, and a comforter.** Dorm room beds are usually twin size XL, so bring a pair of sheets from home to save money. You can also reuse any pillows or comforters after the semester ends.
- **Shower caddy.** In your first year, you may be sharing a communal bathroom. A shower caddy will keep your things clean and organized. The shower shoes are for sanitary reasons since you'll be using the same shower as 15+ other girls.
- **A fan!** First-year dorms don't typically have air conditioning, so make sure to pack a fan for those hot summer days. Don't be afraid to leave your window open to keep you cool.
- **Earplugs and eye mask.** You are bound to have loud neighbors at some point during the year. If you can't fall asleep with loud music, buy some earplugs to sleep. These can also help during finals week when everyone is studying. Also, your roommate might have early classes, so invest in an eye mask so your sleep isn't interrupted.
- **First aid kit.** You never know when you'll need a bandaid or ointment for a cut. Buy a first aid kit! Target and other stores sell kits that have band aids, OTC pain relievers, and lots of other things you might need.
- **Snacks.** Even though you might be enrolled in a meal plan, you want to be able to have some snacks around to eat in between classes or when you can't make it to the cafeteria. You never know when you'll get hungry, so having something to snack on is ideal. (See the "Health" section for more on food!)
- **Decorations and gadgets.** Bring any desk gadgets that are useful to you. You'll also want decorations to make your room feel like your own.
- **Don't forget self-care items!** This includes shampoo, conditioner, toothpaste, an extra toothbrush, pads/tampons, deodorant, perfume—basically anything that you need to take care of **you!** (Remember you'll receive a JMB Award toiletry kit three times per year to help with these items.) Laundry detergent and fabric softener are also a must-have for when you do laundry. (Some schools provide detergent and free laundry, but most do not. Check out how your school handles this as it's a BIG budget item.)

### What not to buy

There are some things you just don't need. There are other things you can find for free to save money.

- **Don't buy a TV.** Realistically, you will have little time for television. With all your classes, activities, and homework, you will spend your time doing other things. With today's technology, you only need your computer to access Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube.
- **Don't buy speakers** (unless you already have a pair). Headphones are more useful because it helps you when you study, especially if the library is packed. Being able to listen to your own music can help you concentrate better.

- **Don't buy a calendar.** If you look around, the academic center usually has free calendars for students to get organized. Also, if you buy a planner, these have calendars where you can also track your assignments and appointments.
- **Refrigerator—maybe?** This depends on your university. Some universities provide you with a mini-fridge and others don't. Make sure to ask before move-in day so that you and your roommate can make a plan to purchase one. A cheap one can sometimes be found in upcycle/recycle events on campus at the beginning of the year. Do the math before renting one. Renting can be more expensive in the long run.

## Other tips for furnishing your dorm room

- **Be careful with accessories.** Coffee maker, water filter, rugs, etc.—you'll read a lot of articles that promote buying items you might not need or miss. Bring the basics (see "What to bring" above) and live in your room for awhile before you go out and buy things that might not be important or necessary. If you can bring things from home, do it to save yourself money.
- **Coordinate with your roommate.** Reach out to your roommate over the summer to see what they are bringing and if you can split the cost or split the purchases for items you both want and need. Communication is very important here so you can both get what you want for your room.
- **Look for deals.** Check whether your school has a recycle/upcycle event. Many colleges and universities have low-cost events selling everything from rugs to mugs for much less than brand-new. You may be able to get a refrigerator, furniture, and much more.

## Living with a stranger and setting dorm rules

Establish rules from the beginning. It makes things a whole lot easier. And don't be afraid to go back and reset them if the first time didn't go so well.

- **Talk about morning and sleeping habits.** Everyone goes to bed at different times, and it's better to inform each other.
- **Create rules for the room:** like entering the room quietly at night in case the other is sleeping, or respecting each other's space, food, and property. This is common courtesy. If you want to borrow something, always ask before taking it.
- **Talk about having others in the room.** Discuss the times that guests are appropriate and how far in advance you should let each other know if someone is coming. Be sure to let your roommate know if you are uncomfortable having people sleep over. Communication is always key.
- **Know your school's policy and building's policy on guests.** Are there curfews or restrictions on having guys/girls over? What about students from other buildings or other schools? What about non-students? Familiarize yourself with the rules so you don't get in trouble.
- **Discuss keeping the fridge and microwave clean.** You are both using these appliances, so it's only fair that your roommate cleans up after herself, too. Also, you can establish

rules for how you want to maintain the room. Consider keeping a checklist of weekly chores for keeping your shared space clean.

- **In case you want to change the rules you've established, have a conversation about it.** If you think you'll have a hard time communicating this, you can always ask your RA for help. Your RA is there to help you with roommate situations, so don't be afraid to ask.

## When living with a stranger gets strange

Let's face it—you might have to live with roommates you don't like, or who may have personality quirks that don't vibe with yours.

- **Talk to your RA.** Your RA is trained to deal with situations like these. If you feel unsafe in your room, the RA should have solutions for you.
- **Talk to your friends.** Ask your friends for advice on how to deal with a difficult roommate (your friends might be going through the same situation).
- **Talk to your residential life office.** If you feel like you need to change rooms, let those in charge know. Some universities have emergency dorm rooms that are vacant and available for students in need of them. Ask to be placed in an emergency room until you are given a new roommate.
- **A note about privacy.** Your roommate may be struggling with things you don't know about and aren't entitled to know about. HIPAA is a privacy rule that makes sure others can't see or know about our medical records and history. Don't expect to be told about your roommate's medical issues—but if you ever feel in danger or uncomfortable, seek out help from your RA, your advisor, campus security, or campus health.
- **Sex + roommates.** Sharing a room with someone can make it difficult if you and your partner want to be intimate. Some schools have policies or roommate agreements regarding sexual activity on campus. Know your school's policies. Otherwise, a rule that never fails is talking to your roommate about having your partner in the room. If you want your partner to stay the night, ask your roommate in advance. That way your roommate can figure out where she can stay. Remember, your roommate is also paying to live in the space—so be respectful if they don't want to or can't leave to sleep or stay somewhere else.

**If you've tried talking with your roommate(s) to make any dorm room conflicts better and are getting nowhere, you can escalate the issue this way:**

- Talk to your RA when things aren't improving with your roommate. Your RA should be able to give you the name and contact information of the person you need to talk to.
- There is only so much an RA can do, so talk to your area coordinator as well. This is the person in charge of your entire dorm room building. They know what rooms are available and who you can reach out to.
- If you feel like no one is getting back to you in a timely manner, go to your school's office of residential life. They are the ones in charge of the entire campus. Ask about who you can talk to about moving to a new room. Make sure to explain your situation and why you want to move. Share what steps you've taken before coming to them. Ask questions like:

When will a room become available? When can I move in? How do I inform my current roommate that I'm leaving?

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- **Your RA.** He/she is your number one resource for dorm room questions and advice. Set up a time to talk with them. They are also a great resource for navigating college life and classes.
- **Area coordinator.** Get familiar with where the office of residential life is. Here, not only can you get in touch with area coordinators, but you might be collecting your room key from them. It's always good to know where they're located in case of an emergency.
- **Public safety office.** Keep your university's public safety number handy. If you feel in danger or if someone you know is hurt or needs help, public safety officers are there to help. Some campuses also have a blue light system, which is a small booth with an emergency button that contacts your university's public safety system.

## Chapter 3: Money

### Tuition basics

- **Think about financial fit!** Don't automatically assume a school with high tuition is out of your reach. They're often in a better position to give you the aid you need. If you're in the process of choosing a college, attend our JMB Award financial fit workshops to help you understand which schools are your best fit, including financially.
- **Review your aid packages.** What if the school of your dreams involves taking out loans, especially those with a high interest rate (see our "Loans" section below)? Maybe look into a different option. Instead of attending your dream college, look at a college offering you a better financial aid package, and if not all your options offer a good financial aid package, look into community college. You'll get an excellent education at a far lower price. Consider whether you have options first! Our financial aid workshops and sessions will help you review your packages.
- **Know what you'll owe.** When you take out a loan with interest, you need to calculate the amount of the loan and the impact of interest over the years it'll take you to repay your loan. That can add on thousands of dollars to your loan! Use a [loan repayment calculator](#) to see how long it will take to pay off the amount of your loan and how much you'll actually be repaying. And work with JMB's Justina Haynes to review your options. Refer to our Google contact list for her contact information, or ask your mentor or Fran for it.
- **Review your bill each semester.** Review your bill each semester before paying it so you make sure it's accurate. Tuition isn't the only thing you'll pay for. You'll also have room and board fees (dorm and meal plan), one-time fees for your first year (orientation fees, for example), and ongoing fees (like lab fees). You'll also have fees you can opt out of if you meet certain requirements—for example, health insurance (see the "Health" section for more information).
- **Billing and avoiding fees.** You will be billed separately for each semester. Check your bill to understand what you're being charged for. You will have line items for tuition, room and board (dorm room and meal plan), and many fees (labs, athletics, etc.). Make sure your bill is accurate and then pay your tuition on time. Why pay for a late fee when you can avoid it? You can pay your tuition by providing your bank routing number and your bank account. This will help you avoid any fee your school charges for using a credit card.
- **Payment plans.** If you are unable to pay your tuition on time, talk to your school early about a payment plan.

### Financial aid

- **Types of financial aid.** There are many types of financial aid: federal, state, college, and private. Then within these categories are other types of aid. For example, with federal aid you might get a grant, a work-study (a job on campus), or a loan. Attend JMB Award's available workshops and make appointments with Justina Haynes to understand your financial aid options and how they tie to college choices.

- **FAFSA!** The FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. It's how you get federal aid. Every year you need to complete your FAFSA through their website: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>. (If a website ever asks you to pay for submitting the FAFSA, you're on the wrong site.)
- **When to submit your FAFSA.** The FAFSA opens every October 1. It's best to get your application in *as soon as you can* because it can make a difference in how much money you get. There's a limited amount of aid, so get yours.
- **PHEAA.** PHEAA is how you apply for state aid. Like the FAFSA, you apply every year.
- **CSS.** The CSS is a very detailed online application required by some private colleges. Unless you transfer, you only have to complete this once, in the year you're applying to college. The CSS application has a fee to complete, but has the potential to generate a significant amount of aid money.
- **Familiarize yourself with your financial aid.** Once you have your financial aid packet that outlines what you'll be getting and from what sources, sit down with Justina and talk through it. Take out your pen and paper and get to adding because it's good to know what you're expected to pay (you probably will have to pay something) and what you'll owe. **Review your financial aid package every year, since it can change. If it changes, you can appeal.** Justina Haynes can help you write your appeal.
- **What to do with mistakes/questions.** If you see a mistake or something questionable about your financial aid, call or make an appointment with the financial aid office. You probably have a designated financial aid officer on your campus you can contact directly. Make an appointment and go talk with them. And keep up with them until you get the answers you need! It feels awkward, but it's better than spending thousands because of a mistake.

## Scholarships and awards

- **When to apply?** Scholarships exist for different schools, academic areas, groups of people. You can apply in high school and throughout college. You just need to do the research to find the scholarships and awards that are best for you, and to know their deadlines.
- **Where to find scholarships?** Reach out to your financial aid officers because they might know what would be a great fit for you. There is also a JMB Award scholarship folder! Reach out to Justina or Fran to learn more about it. Be wary of scholarships that ask you to pay when applying. They are often scams.
- **Processing your scholarships.** If you received scholarships, know that it takes time for your school's office of financial aid to process them. Your tuition might not be fully paid for the first month or so while you wait for this processing. Check in with the bursar's office to see if your scholarship payments have been received and processed and to get an updated bill.
- **Scholarships can alter your financial aid.** Talk with your financial aid office about whether your scholarships will alter your package.

- **Last dollar scholarships.** “Last dollar” scholarships are intended to fill gaps between financial aid and what you are required to pay. They are often intended to cover things like books and laptops, although each opportunity is different. If you are in the Philadelphia area, check out this resource from the Philadelphia Education Fund: <http://www.philaedfund.org/programs/supporting-students/philadelphia-scholars/last-dollar-scholarship>

## Types of loans and how to handle them

- **Direct subsidized federal loan.** This is a federal loan with a low interest rate. It does not gain interest during school. This loan is most highly recommended.
- **Direct unsubsidized federal loan.** This is a federal loan with a low interest rate, but it does gain interest during school. This loan is recommended, but it’s not as preferable as the subsidized loan.
- **Direct plus loan.** This is a high-interest-rate loan that is usually for graduate students, since the recipient needs to be approved based on credit score. Due to the high interest rate, it is not recommended.
- **Parent plus loan.** This is a high-interest-rate loan that is under a biological, adoptive, or stepparent’s name. There is no way for the parent to transfer this loan to their child’s name. Also, parents are expected to pay the loan while their child is in school.
- **Private loan.** These are usually loans given by banks. They have an extremely high interest rate. **Private loans are loans of last resort because of their high interest and lack of protections.**
- **Returning unused loan money!** If you get more loan money than you need, you can return it and immediately reduce your student debt burden. Talk with your financial aid officer about how and when to do this to avoid any penalties or fees.
- **When you’re ready to repay your loan:**
  - **Investigate loan repayment plan options.** [Income-based repayment options](#), for example, help you keep your monthly payment amount at a reasonable level.
  - **Grace periods.** Also investigate deferment options and implications before you temporarily stop paying back your loans. If you need to stop making loan payments for a little while, make sure to investigate [how stopping affects the interest on your loan](#).

## Making a budget

As a college student who already pays for tuition and room and board, your hierarchy of needs (food, water, and shelter) are already satisfied. That being said, your budget is “everything else.”

- **Deciding on a budget.** Decide on a reasonable budget for yourself, such as a budget of \$100–\$175 a month (which is more than reasonable). Stick to that budget, and write down everything you buy and spend. Do not go over!
- **How to spend your budget.** In the beginning of the month, spend on your necessities such as hygiene products and lady products that will last the entire month. After that, everything you have left will be your fun money.

- **Money left over?** Have money left over at the end of the month? Congratulations! Now, carry it over to the next month or put it in savings!

## Textbooks

- **Buying textbooks before vs. after classes.** There are two options when it comes to buying textbooks: buying them before or after classes start. Sit down and make it into a game to see how much money you can save on books.
  - Before: You often are able to save money because you can buy books for very cheap and wait two weeks for them to ship. If you find out you don't need the books, you can return them.
  - After: You can avoid buying books that are not needed, but you will need to either rent/buy them from the bookstore or use Amazon Prime (you can get Prime for free or a reduced price as a student) and they are often more expensive.
- **Slugbooks.** Use slugbooks.com! It shows you websites where the books have the best deals!
- **Rent vs. buying vs. e-text.** E-texts are usually the cheapest option when it comes to books. If you prefer a physical copy of the book, rent or buy your books used. Do not buy your books new. If renting is an option, do not avoid it. How often are you actually going to go back to your textbook in the future?
- **Access codes.** If you are forced to buy an online access code, sorry. Instead of buying the book brand-new to get an access code, buy a used book or rent it and buy the access code separately. Some classes that require an access code also have an online version of the book, so the student might not need to purchase a physical copy unless they highly prefer a hard-copy book over an e-text.
- **Borrowing books.** Look for friends who had the class previously and ask to borrow the book for the semester! Also, some professors don't require textbooks because they provide printable sources.
- **AVOID the bookstore if possible.** When buying books, the bookstore tends to upcharge and be the most expensive option. Avoid buying new books, and sometimes even used/rented books. Amazon usually has better prices.

## Where to shop

- **Necessities.** For hygienic/lady products, school supplies, food, and everything else, it's usually a cheaper option to go to one of the big discount store chains (like Walmart or Target). If there isn't a store near you, ask a friend if they need anything and order online so you can get free shipping! See about a free or reduced subscription to Amazon Prime as a student. You can get necessities shipped to you quickly, and a lot of campuses are starting to carry Amazon Lockers for rapid delivery.
- **Clothing.** For clothing, thrift stores are amazing! Plan a date with friends and take a trip to the thrift store together. It's so fun to find unique items for a good price. If you are uncomfortable shopping at thrift stores, try Ross, TJ Maxx, Marshalls, and other discount

department stores. The brand-name clothing can wait for when we have careers after college!

## Money pressures during college

- **Do you have friends who always go out to eat? Find new friends!** Joking. But feel free to be up front about your budget with your friends. Tell them “Hey, I am trying to stick to a budget.” You might feel uncomfortable, but your friends will be understanding. However, if you have spare money in your budget, feel free to treat yourself to a dinner with friends!
- **Make eating out a special experience by going only once or twice a month.** If you feel comfortable, be up front about your budget and find a way to say “I’m sticking to a budget so I can’t go out to eat all the time. I’m saving for [textbooks, tuition, a trip home].” You don’t have to reveal the exact dollar amount in order to make your point.
- **Studying abroad.** If you feel like everyone is studying abroad but you don’t feel you can pay for it, know that many people don’t study abroad and you’ll find friends who aren’t either! If you want to study abroad, check out our section that links to scholarships and other information to help make it possible.
- **Vacations.** Same thing here as with friends who always go out to eat. Some of the people you’ll meet are going to go on glamorous vacations all the time. (or at least, that’s how it’ll seem). They may want to plan spring break and other trips you can’t afford. Be up front about your budget and your situation. And see if you can find another way to spend time together.
- **Cars, clothes, etc.** Same thing as above!
- **Food scarcity.** If money pressures are making it hard for you to get the food you need, look for on-campus pantries and talk with your mentor or Fran.

## Tips and tricks for saving money

- **Free food.** Look for events on campus that include free food There are many!
- **Uber/Lyft/Ride share services.** Do not take Uber, etc. to the store or everywhere you need to go! Find a friend who has a car on campus and go to the store together. At many schools, there are bus/shuttle systems that will bring you to the store for free or at an affordable price.
- **Avoid the “pink tax.”** Buy men’s items. They are often more affordable and work better—for example, razors, shaving cream, and neutral-scent deodorant.
- **College credit card.** Avoid the temptation to use your student ID to double as a credit card on campus. Just like a regular credit card, failure to pay the bills on your student ID credit card can damage your credit score.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- **Learn about your spending habits and track your expenses.** The more you know about what you spend money on, the more you can be in control of your choices when it comes to spending, saving, and budgeting. You can save your receipts and analyze them weekly

or monthly, or you can use an app such as Mint (it tells you about patterns in your spending).

- **Be the queen of free!** If you want to hang out with friends but don't want to break the bank, keep an eye out for free or reduced-fee activities. For example, sometimes movie theaters will have student nights with reduced-fee tickets.

### On-campus resources

- **Financial aid office.** Feel free to create a meeting with your college's financial aid office if you have any questions about your financial aid.
- **Free clothing exchange.** Most colleges have free clothing exchange events or rooms. It feels great to bring an article of clothing you no longer wear and trade it for a new piece that you love. It's also free! If an exchange doesn't already exist, consider organizing one!

### JMB Award resources

- **Justina and Stephanie.** Justina is JMB Award's college financial fit resource. She can help you with FAFSA and other applications. She can also review your package with you and help you understand how to appeal your package or a change in it. For budgeting-related questions, Stephanie is available to help you figure out ways to better manage your available money and make a budget with you.

## Chapter 4: Health

### Health insurance

- **Providing access to your information.** Once you're 18, your parent or guardian doesn't have the same access to your health information. They can't speak with your doctors or look at your health charts or provide any direction on your health care, even in an emergency—unless you grant them that right. Work with your parent or guardian to sign all college forms that give him or her access (see [this article](#) for more). If you need help, your college admissions office should be able to provide answers to questions and direct you to their required forms, too.
- **Waiving the college plan.** When you're reviewing each semester's bills, there will be a line item for college-provided health insurance. If you are already covered under your parent's or guardian's plan, you can waive (turn down) the college's plan. Your college should provide instructions on how to waive the health plan. Pay attention to the deadline as you will automatically be charged for health insurance, and it would be a waste of money if you are already covered by your parents.

### Food: The meal plan

As a first-year student living on campus, you'll be required to choose a meal plan. Your college may dictate which one you use for that first year. Even if that's the case, it pays to really understand [how these plans work](#) and think about what you need. Consider the following whenever you choose a plan:

- **Flexibility.** Meal plans operate using swipes and points. Swipes are typically for a certain number of meals per semester and provide an all-you-can-eat for that swipe. Points are tied to the cost of a specific item. Look into what your campus offers and whether both swipes and points can be used at all dining options. Talk with a range of people about what plan they are using and why.
- **Quantity.** Besides considering where you want to eat, you'll have to figure out how much you want or need to eat. Depending on your college, there are meal plans that offer varying numbers of meals or points, from light to heavy, and what you choose will dictate whether you get, for example, only 14 meals per week (two meals per day) or your traditional three meals per day.
- **Your habits.** To find the best plan, think about you and your eating habits. Do you typically eat three meals each day? Are you going to get up for breakfast or would you prefer to keep breakfast food in your room? Are you an athlete, meaning you'll be eating A LOT and need the all-you-can-eat buffet a swipe would give you? And so on.
- **The rules.** Colleges have rules around meal plans you should be aware of before you commit. For example, can you roll over unused swipes and points? Can you change your meal plan mid-semester if you find out you don't like what you chose? Can you gift unused swipes or points to friends or fellow students? What happens if you run out before

the semester ends? Factor the rules into your decision of which meal plan fits best to your college lifestyle.

## Food: Other likely questions

- **How bad is the food?** Colleges have been working on food because they know it's something students care about. However, there will be bad days and great days in the cafeteria. You'll probably find a few things you like to eat regularly on campus. You might even memorize the good days in the cafeteria menu rotation until you can live off campus and have a place to cook for yourself.
- **Do they offer vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and other options?** Yes, most colleges are accommodating a variety of dietary needs.
- **How do I find people to eat with?** During your first semester of your first year, everyone is looking to meet people and make friends. Attend orientation events so you start finding your group of friends. You'll find people at these events you can arrange to go to meals with. Your roommate and hallmates are other people to ask to head down with you to the cafeteria or cafe. As you get to know classmates and clubmates, they'll also become people you'll feel comfortable arranging to meet for a meal.
- **How do I avoid the first-year 15?** This is a thing. There's a lot of food on campus and a lot of events revolve around food—and most of the time, the food offered is high-calorie and high-carb. You can manage the first-year 15 by:
  - **Eating your meals.** You paid for them! Skipping meals causes you to overeat later or grab a bunch of unhealthy snacks.
  - **Finding the healthy and tasty on-campus options.** There are so many healthy food options if you're willing to look for them! For example, yogurt and fruit and granola, the salad bar, a stir-fry station, a cafe serving rice and salad bowls. It's a great habit to add a healthy option in addition to your regular meals.
  - **Using a salad plate instead of a dinner plate.** A smaller plate can trick you into eating less, and you may be surprised to find you feel just as full.
  - **Watching your beer/liquor intake.** Alcohol's high in calories, and you may overeat after a night out.
  - **Skipping the late-night pizza order.** It might seem like an amazing idea in that moment! However, it hits your diet and wallet hard. Stock up on snacks that feel more like a treat (movie popcorn, for example!) and pull those out during your late-night study sessions instead.
- **Can I take the cafeteria food?** Each school sets rules related to taking food out of the cafeteria. Find out how your school approaches this first. Also talk with fellow students.
- **What are good snacks for my dorm room?** Cereal, pretzels, power bars, peanut butter, nuts, rice cakes, crackers, popcorn, dried fruit, and other shelf-stable snacks are all great snacks to have in your dorm room. If you have a fridge, pack it with cheese, yogurt, hummus, fresh fruit, milk, and eggs. To save money, arrange with roommates or friends to buy in bulk from discount stores (like Amazon, Costco, or Target) and use storage containers to keep anything out of its original packaging fresh.

- **Should I get a mini-fridge?** You don't need every appliance included on shopping lists from your school, but a mini-fridge is probably one you'll be happy to have. Before buying one, check in with your roommate to see if she has one or if you can split the cost. Then, check out your college's upcycling and recycling events, FB marketplace, Craigslist, Freecycle, and other online recyclers before buying a brand-new one. Buying a mini-fridge will be cheaper than paying to rent one from your college every year. You'll have to worry about finding space to store the mini-fridge during the summer, and transporting it to school. However, the money you'll save should be worth it.
- **How do I live with a food allergy on campus?** You and your campus need to figure out how to keep you safe in this new environment. There will be signs to inform you if food contains allergens, and you can always ask a worker or chef to ensure that the food is safe for you to eat. You'll want to get to know the dining services people, talk with your roommate about food preparation and storage, and plan for any emergencies with the health center. [Foodallergy.org](http://Foodallergy.org) offers great information to help you prepare in advance.

## Help! Food scarcity

Ensure that you have a meal plan that will sustain you until the end of the semester. However, running out of meal swipes happens! If you run out of meal swipes or are otherwise unable to access an appropriate amount of healthy, nutritious food (food insecurity), look for a food pantry on campus, ask a friend with extra points to buy a meal for you, and let your mentor and Fran know.

## Help! Eating disorders

### Self-advocacy

- **Recognize the symptoms.** Controlling what you eat, being preoccupied with what you eat and what you weigh, using exercise to burn off all the calories you've consumed, eating super-tiny portions of food as a meal, skipping meals entirely, or binging without control—these are some of the [symptoms of an eating disorder](#).
- **Understand it's an illness.** An eating disorder is an illness just like any other illness. To get better, you need the attention and care of a professional just as you would if you had the flu, a broken arm, or something more severe.
- **Find resources on campus and off.** If you are experiencing the symptoms of an eating disorder, please go to your on-campus health and counseling services and your own health insurance for help finding resources. You can also find help and information on [NEDA](http://NEDA), a national eating disorders organization. If you're over the age of 18, your privacy is protected by HIPAA. Nobody you turn to for help can share your request with your family or others.

## Sleep!

Sleep can make or break your studies, your feelings of homesickness, your general physical and mental health.

- **Aim for those eight hours.** You may not get a full eight hours every night, but try for them at least a few nights per week. Your body and mind will thank you.
- **Create a space you want to be in.** Decorate your dorm room as if it were your bedroom at home. It helps with homesickness and to make the space feel like it's yours.
- **Set some ground rules with your roommate.** Sleep is easier if your room is quiet and comfortable for you. Feel comfortable to talk to your roommate about how you're going to handle "quiet hours," hours when nobody's allowed to have music on, friends over, or anything else that interrupts your sleep. And agree ahead of time how you'll work through times when the ground rules need tweaking.
- **Get earplugs and an eye mask.** These two items are priceless. They help you sleep better because they will keep the room dark and quiet.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- **Exercise.** You'll sleep better if you get some exercise during the day, even if it's just taking a long walk around campus.
- **Watch what you eat and drink.** Alcohol, coffee, and late-night snacking can all alter your ability to sleep.
- **Power down.** Tech use also interrupts sleep rhythm. Power down an hour or so before bed.

### On-campus resources

- **Talk with your RA.** If your roommate is causing an issue in terms of sleeping, reach out to your RA on how to work this out with your roommate.
- **Visit the nurse.** If you're having continuous problems, go to the health clinic to rule out anything serious, including anxiety and depression.

### JMB Award resources

- **Your mentor.** Your mentor's a great person to turn to for ideas on how to make changes to improve your sleep.

## Exercise

Exercise is medicine for your mood and sleep, a natural aid for greater concentration and focus, and a way to meet people and see the world around you.

- **Find the gym.** There's a free fitness center sitting somewhere on your campus. It's probably packed with cardio and strength equipment, and it may even offer a ton of classes, pickup basketball games, a pool to swim in, walls to climb, rental equipment, and more. You're paying for the fitness center out of your tuition, so use it! You won't have a gym this accessible in the future, so make the most out of it when you can.
- **Intramural sports and clubs.** Colleges offer a bunch of sports and a lot of different ways to play them. You can join a team (competitive and the most time-consuming), try out for

intramurals (university-structured), or join a club (student-formed, no tryouts). Look into what you want out of a sport (how competitive you want to be, how much time you want to dedicate to the sport) and the options of sports that your university offers. and ask about costs. When trying to balance time and cost, clubs are generally your best bet. They typically don't cost much (if anything), and attendance is not required at every meeting.

- **The great outdoors.** Your college may offer an outdoors club that takes trips and schedules hikes and other activities. These are typically discounted and range in intensity.

## Homesickness +

There are LOTS of feelings that come with being away at college, especially over the first year. Here are some feelings you're likely to experience and ideas for working with them.

- **I'm homesick.** You're in a new place with new rules, new expectations, and new people. In other words, you have lots of reasons to be homesick. To lessen these feelings:
  - **Add your personality to your room** by including things that make you feel like it's yours. Add photos of friends and family so you see their familiar faces.
  - **Text and email old friends and family** while you're at school. However, don't forget to try to make new ones. Take advantage of all the orientation events you can and join clubs you're curious about. Say "yes" to invitations.
  - **Head home.** Going home every weekend won't allow you to build your comfort and confidence in your new home, but it's OK to go home when that's what you need. (Don't forget your travel stipend is available to help with these costs! Finding someone to share a carpool or taking public transportation is the most cost-efficient way home.)
  - **Remind yourself it's normal to feel the way you do** and that you're not the only one who feels this way. This is a big life change and it needs a period of adjustment. Give yourself time. By the end of the first semester, you will be adjusted to being away from home!
- **I'm stressed from all the work!** You might work harder than you ever did in high school and still not feel you can stay on top of the work, understand the material, or pull in the same grades as you did then. This is normal. College is harder, and you're more responsible for managing the work.
  - **Write down everything in a planner.** Don't count on remembering an assignment or a lesson or the date of an upcoming test.
  - **Practice time management.** Get really good at breaking big projects into smaller ones with their own deadlines. Mark these deadlines on a calendar where you keep all important dates.
  - **Set up a routine.** Create a routine that works for you in terms of using your breaks, your hours without class, your time after meals and before bed. Be sure to schedule exercise and downtime for yourself in this routine.
  - **Seek out help.** Visit your professor at office hours and ask for help understanding the material. Use the writing center to review and improve your writing and your

papers overall. Create a study group with classmates who understand the subject better than you do.

- **Exercise.** 'Nuff said.
  - **Be kind to yourself.** It's all a matter of steady improvement.
- Find more on academics in our Academics Chapter.

- **I'm depressed!** If you feel really down, you can't get excited about things you normally would get excited about. And if you're having trouble sleeping or you don't want to get out of bed—ever—you could be depressed. Check out our "Help!" section for places to find professional support.
- **I feel like I don't belong here.** Many people feel this way and are afraid of saying anything. Talking to others shows you how many others feel this way, too.
- **I hate everyone here!** It takes time to find your friend group. Some people find it within the first day of school, some people find it after a year. Keep yourself open to the possibility of finding people you like and try lots of clubs and other activities to find them. If at the end of the year you haven't found your people, maybe it's not the right place for you. By that time you can feel you made the effort and be OK about looking to transfer or make some other move.
- **I want to quit college.** Some days you're going to want drop everything and quit college. Don't worry. You're not alone. However, try to remember why you're there and what you want your life to be like. Really think about whether you wish to leave the money and time you've invested without finishing—whether it's a certification program, associate's degree, or bachelor's.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- **Exercise.** Exercise is a proven mood-enhancer. It's great for tackling stress, anxiety, and typical pressures.
- **Go out.** Hanging with friends or going out by yourself will give you time away from what's stressing you.
- **Power down.** Literally. Power yourself down, mentally and physically. Sometimes sleep is the hard reset you need.

### On-campus resources

- **Go speak with a counselor.** Your college has an on-campus counseling center and/or health service center. You should be able to arrange a set number of free appointments with an on-campus counselor.
- **Call your health insurance.** Your health insurance should cover mental health services. Look at the back of your insurance card for their toll-free number and call it to find out what's available to you.
- **Find a wellness group.** Many colleges offer wellness groups where you and your peers can talk and support each other.

## JMB Award resources

- **Your mentor.** Your mentor can help troubleshoot any questions or problems you're having finding available resources.
- **JMB Award peers.** Your peers wrote this guide. They've been where you are now. Reach out to them via the group text or individually via our [contact sheet](#) for help, ideas, and empathy.

## Help! Suicide prevention

Suicide and suicidal thoughts are common on campus, although more college students consider suicide than attempt it. If you or someone you know is struggling with suicidal thoughts, find help on campus or call the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 800-273-TALK**.

## Sex + sexual safety

Some things to know to keep yourself sexually safe and confident:

- **Free condoms are everywhere!** You should be able to find some in your college's health and wellness center, bathrooms, and even at certain clubs or houses. You can also ask your RA. Condoms protect you from both unwanted pregnancies and STDs.
- **Birth control is a free benefit,** thanks to the Affordable Care Act. So if you have medical insurance, talk with your doctor or gynecologist about what birth control is best for you. You can also visit a Planned Parenthood office or use [Bedsider's](#) search tool to find a convenient place.
- **Consent and sexual assault.** Title IX prevents you from being discriminated against, and sexual harassment and violence are covered under it. During orientation or in campus sessions, your college will likely cover its consent policies, on-campus sexual activity policies, and how to stay safe. Pay attention to the training they offer. Also know what the experts say to [stay safe](#) and know [your rights](#).
- **Just like establishing rules for your dorm room, relationships also need transparency.** If you and your partner are thinking of becoming intimate, you need to let each other know what's on your mind. If your partner brings up having sex and you have doubts, let them know how you feel.
- **STDs.** Be sure you know the different types of STDs, how you can be exposed to them, and what to do to protect yourself. If you think you may have an STD, visit your health center. Your college probably offers free testing.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- [Legit sources for sex health and education](#)

## Alcohol

Let's start with this basic: 21 is the legal drinking age in the United States. If you're under 21 years of age, it is not legal for you to drink. In addition, your campus will have rules governing the use of alcohol on campus.

- **Substance-free floors/buildings.** If you're uncomfortable with being around alcohol and other substances, or if you don't do substances and want to join a community that practices the same values, you can join a substance-free floor or building! All colleges have them, and all you need to do is apply!
- **Wet vs. dry campuses.** Some campuses do not allow alcohol on campus, regardless of whether you're of legal drinking age. These "dry" campuses ban all alcohol consumption or possession regardless of where you plan to drink. Know your campus laws.
- **Safety.** From drunk driving to sexual assault, there are all kinds of safety issues involved in drinking—especially for women. So, before you get too far into drinking, know:
  - **Your limits.**
  - **Who's pouring your drink.** It's best to pour your drinks yourself. If you cannot, watch your drink being poured or what went into the punch you're being served. If you didn't see it get made, don't drink it!
  - **Where your drink is at all times.** Do not leave a drink unattended, even to go dance or to the bathroom.
  - **Who's your buddy for the night.** Pair up and agree beforehand on your terms, your safety word, and any other agreements about hookups, etc.
  - **Where the blue lights are** on your campus
- **Normal drinking levels.** The definition of binge drinking for women is four or more drinks at one event. To understand what your blood alcohol percentage would be based on the drinks you consume, refer to the BAC Chart for Women. This is a guide. It doesn't account for body weight composition (muscle vs. fat), use of medications, mood, and other factors.
- **Mixing with other substances.** Mixing alcohol and other substances, including prescription drugs, can be dangerous. Understand how alcohol interacts with any prescription drug you regularly take because this mixing can lead to memory loss, coma, and even death.
- **Peer pressure.** There can be pressure to drink and to drink more than you might wish to, more than you can tolerate, and more than is safe for you. Talk with your friends, RA, and the available health services to find ways to respond to this peer pressure.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- [National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism \(NIAAA\) Treatment Navigator](#)
- [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#)

## On-campus resources

- Turn to your on-campus wellness services, counseling center, RA, or other trusted adult for help with your own substance abuse questions/concerns or your concerns about a friend's behavior.

## Chapter 5: Relationships

### Friends and family back home

- **Change is normal.** As if it wasn't enough that college will bring changes for you personally, your relationships with family and friends also are likely to change while you are in college. You'll probably have mixed emotions about leaving family and friends from home as you start school. This is totally normal! It's perfectly fine to be really excited for creating new relationships while also feeling sad or apprehensive about leaving friends (or watching them embark on different paths). There will be a lot of different factors: How close are these relationships in the first place? Are you going far from home or will you have easy access to seeing people frequently? Have you carried a lot of responsibilities at home that you will no longer be able to carry out because of the distance and time needed for studying?
- **Setting boundaries.** Some basics for managing and maintaining relationships with family and friends include setting boundaries. You can't only focus on friends back home, you have to make new friends at school. Same goes for family—you might not have time to help a sibling out with homework the way you used to. Set expectations for how often you want to communicate (let them know good times to talk and your availability). Consider putting reminders on your phone to check in with family and friends.
- **Maintaining relationships with family.** Remember: All families are different, so there is no "one-size-fits-all" advice for how to best maintain family relationships. Be open and aware that your family background may be different from someone else's. This is especially true when it comes to your parents', grandparents', or guardians' experience and familiarity with higher education. Some basics for managing your relationships with your family while you're away at college include setting boundaries and expectations early. Make a plan to keep your family up to date on your life and to hear about theirs. You can set times to text back and forth or call the people in your family who are important to you. Be up front about the time you need for studying. If you have carried a lot of responsibilities at home, there can be some growing pains around your departure. You won't have the same kind of time or proximity to deal with family issues, and you need to be clear about what support and space you need from your family in order to succeed at school.

**Pre-departure tip: Make sure your family is up to date with technology.** Do they know how to stay in contact through social media, texting apps, Skype, or FaceTime? If not, it might be a good idea to teach them before you leave so there's no hassle later.

- **Maintaining relationships with friends.** You want to honor your friendships while also being realistic about the fact that you will be apart and meeting new people. Find a way to celebrate your farewell as you go off to school—maybe spend the day together doing activities you enjoy, take a bike ride or walk together, or even just grab a bite to eat! Let your friends know that they're important to you and that they'll be missed. At the same time it's important to keep your goodbyes in perspective—it's not forever, and chances

are you'll see each other over breaks or holidays. Decide on the best way for you to stay in touch, and come up with some fun ways to think of each other (sharing playlists, care packages, etc.). Video chat every once in a while can be helpful for keeping in touch, and can also help with homesickness.

- **Time spent at home during the school year.** Breaks are going to pass by really quickly, so it's helpful to set aside time to see friends and family while managing any schoolwork you need to get done.

## Making friends and creating relationships on campus

Making new friends can take time. If you feel nervous, you're definitely not alone. It's okay if jumping into new social activities and hanging out with new people isn't exactly your jam. Making friends isn't something that magically happens—it takes time. Eventually you'll find a friend group. Remember—your mentor has been through this experience and is happy to talk to you more about it.

- **There are opportunities everywhere.** Be yourself. College is a fresh start with a whole new set of people to meet. Your school has many different ways that you can make new acquaintances and friends. It just takes time and a little bit of exploration (and it doesn't have to break the bank). If you feel like you're always ending up on your phone chatting with folks back home, think about setting a goal for doing one or two different activities to get you out of your comfort zone and more familiar with your campus.
- **Classes at your rec center or gym** are free and frequently available on a drop-in basis. Gather a group of friends to go try out a yoga or spinning class, and see if it becomes a regular thing. Check to see what the procedure at your facility is—sometimes there's information on how to register in advance and whether or not it's required to do so.
- **Studying and group projects** can lead to friendships. Sometimes libraries have study tables set up for multiple people, so don't be afraid to say hello if someone sits down and joins you.
- **Take advantage of what you've already paid for and use your student discount to its fullest**—don't leave free money on the table. If you want to go shopping or to dinner or coffee with new friends, see if your school provides a list of restaurants, cafes, or shops that will give you a discount with your student ID (and always ask at checkout no matter where you are!). Often these establishments have agreements with your school and will even let you pay if you have money in your student ID card (like a debit card), if you have that option enabled.
- **Dining together in the cafeteria** is also a great option for meeting new people, since people can come and go as they please (and you've already paid for those meals). It can also be helpful to become friends with the cafeteria staff, who will be glad to introduce you to students they know.
- **Keep an eye out for budget-friendly or free activities** such as excursions with your rec center, classes, film screenings, or cultural events. These are usually posted on the student newsletter. Activity schedules from the university are a great way to see what things are going on for you to do.

- **Consider joining a club or organization** that focuses on something you're passionate about. There's more out there than just Spanish or culinary groups—sometimes groups like Amnesty International or other women's and minority groups have active chapters on campus. Becoming involved in student government is also a great way to get to know people and make your voice heard.
- **Intramural sports** are great for getting people together from completely different backgrounds. Sometimes there are different groups for different skill levels, so don't assume that just because you haven't played volleyball for a few years that you can't join in somehow. If you play a sport that your school doesn't offer, you can chat with your rec center about organizing a team.
- **Find community service or volunteer groups on campus.** Small projects with these groups locally could lead to bigger opportunities to participate in service projects in a different city, state, or even country in the future.
- **If you have the option of joining a sorority,** they can be great ways to become part of a community, get academic support, and take on leadership roles. Note that not all colleges and universities have them. They can also come with high costs, both financially and in terms of time commitments. Do your research on the priorities and time commitments of the sororities on your campus if this interests you. Make sure that the requirements for housing, meals, and time spent in sorority activities work for you. If you're on the fence about it, find out if it's okay to rush but not to pledge—in case you realize after rush that it's not the right fit for you.
- Depending on the setup of your living space, consider setting a time when you **keep your door open for others to stop by and hang out.** Also be sure to be honest and up front with visitors when it's time for you to get back to the books.
- **Help out others.** Maybe you know you're a confident leader and good at bringing people together. Don't be afraid to put that strength to work on campus. Even if you're not the primary organizer of an activity, consider reaching out to people who might be a little more apprehensive about going out and trying new things and invite them to come along. You could consider asking your RA to send a reminder to your floor about activities, or you could ask to make flyers to invite more people along.
- **So you've made some friends. Now what?** The first few weeks of college can be overwhelming with all the opportunities for meeting people. Maintaining relationships in person on campus can pose some different challenges.
  - **Some relationships will last and others will fade.** That's normal as you become more comfortable on campus. A lot of the same ways that you can meet new friends and acquaintances are ways that you can maintain them. If there isn't time in your schedule to see everyone you want to regularly, think about sending texts to wish them good luck on an exam, at a sporting event, etc.
  - **Be honest and upfront with someone if you're going to go do something with a different group of friends but that person wasn't invited.** It's not your responsibility to invite everyone along (there might be constraints like space in a car), but you also don't want to come off as though you're explicitly excluding

them (especially if you've been spending a lot of time together). If your feelings are hurt by something a new acquaintance does, you can reach out to a friend or your mentor to talk about it.

- **Remember, your priority is schoolwork!** College is an expensive commitment and you want to be successful. It's okay to suggest making hangout time into study time. Libraries have rooms you can schedule to use and go with friends for a study session.

## Roommates

- **Living with a stranger.** Most students don't get to choose their roommates. Sometimes you might take a survey to talk about your preferences, but a perfect match is rare. Having a roommate or suitemates takes patience and openness about your boundaries and values.
  - Take advantage of the summer to get to know your roommate. Having conversations about who will bring what to the room, what your interests are, and what you're looking forward to will help break the ice so that you're not total strangers when you move in together.
  - Be open to talking about your needs in terms of quiet time (when you don't want visitors in the room), and what your expectations are in terms of doing things together (this is especially important in the beginning as relationships are forming—for example, will you always eat lunch together for the first week or will you just play it by ear?). Setting boundaries early can prevent problems later.
- **When it's not working out.** If you find that your roommate isn't respecting your boundaries and having polite but direct conversations about the issue isn't working, you can always reach out to your RA or residential life liaison for help. They can help guide you to a reasonable solution or provide mediation if you and your roommate are experiencing conflict.

Find more on living with a roommate in Chapter 2.

## Toxic relationships and breakups

- **Identifying and dealing with a toxic relationship.** Feeling like you're being controlled by a significant other, family member, or friend can be a sign of a toxic relationship. If your relationship is missing respect, trust, honesty, equality, and/or good communication, it's a good idea to stop and assess your feelings and whether this is a relationship that should be continued.
  - Remember, toxic relationships aren't just limited to significant others. For example, one friend might end up feeling hurt or jealous if the other is meeting new friends or trying out new opportunities. This friend might engage in passive-aggressive or even outwardly rude or hurtful behavior toward the other. Also, family members might not be willing to respect the time that you've said you need for studying.

- **Helpful resources for unhealthy relationships.** First and foremost, ask yourself if you feel safe. If the answer is no, inform a counselor, advisor, RA, your mentor, or a medical professional as soon as possible. If you're wondering whether you're in a toxic relationship, you can reach out to on-campus health and counseling services, as well as non-profit organizations such as the Mazzoni Center or Planned Parenthood.
- **Breaking up is hard to do.** You're not alone, and many of the same resources that can help with toxic relationships can help with initiating or moving on from a breakup.
- **Moving on.** Sometimes there might not be a good solution. Sometimes a partner might not accept that you want to break up. Talk to your mentor, counselor, or trusted friend about how to end the relationship with the toxic person. Consider approaching them and letting them know that you no longer want to be in contact with that particular family member, friend, or significant other. Consider deleting their phone numbers and unfriending and unfollowing them on social media. These are big steps, and you shouldn't rush into them or feel alone in doing so. You have a network to help you heal.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- One of the biggest challenges of college is setting boundaries. This applies to your relationships (both at home and at school), your time (go to the party or study for the exam tomorrow?), and your finances (stay in and watch a movie or go to the movie theater?). Don't be shy to let friends know when an activity or outing isn't going to work for your schedule or budget. The more you practice standing up for your own needs, the easier it will become.
- Don't be afraid to sample different activities and meet lots of people during the first week or two of school. You don't have to participate in everything you try out. But getting a sense of what works for you, what you enjoy, and what activities you can pass on will help guide you in the direction of people you'll enjoy spending time with.

### On-campus resources

Your school has resources to help make and manage relationships.

- There are a lot of ways your school will let you know about what's going on socially. This might be a clubs and activities fair, text alerts, or announcements displayed at the student center or student union.
- Relationships can be stressful and hard to manage sometimes. If you feel like you need help, seek out your school's counseling service or your RA, residential life, or area coordinators. They're there to listen to you and help you solve problems. Some schools offer multiple counseling sessions free of charge—you paid for them, so don't be afraid to take advantage of this resource.
- Get to know your school's resources for mental and emotional health, since this can have an impact on your ability to create and maintain relationships. You can learn more about these resources in the "Health" chapter of this guide.

## **JMB Award resources**

- Remember your mentor is here for you and has been through campus life, too. Don't be afraid to reach out if you need help navigating your social life, relationships back home, or are just plain feeling lonely or homesick and need someone to talk to.

## Chapter 6: Work

### Making money now: College jobs

- **Jobs on and off campus.** There are a lot of reasons why a job while you're in school is important, from having some extra spending money to building savings for unforeseen circumstances.
- **Use free resources** like LinkedIn, Indeed, and your school's job announcement portal to search and apply for jobs. Only agree to work as many hours as you think is reasonable, taking into account that the beginning of the semester may be a lighter load than during finals season (not many employers are going to be willing to give you a break just because school is tough).
- If you find that your work is interfering with your studies, you may want to **consider cutting back your work hours**. Make sure you know if your school has rules about how many hours students are allowed to work each week—you can check with your academic advisor on this.
- If you're going to get a job off campus, make sure to **research how you are going to get there** (what kind of transportation and how much it will cost you).
- **Work-study opportunities.** Work-study is a type of financial aid (just like loans, grants, and scholarships). You don't have to pay back the money you earn from work-study, but it definitely pays to be familiar with the option and how to land a work-study job.
  - Work-study can take place on or off campus, and if you're lucky there might even be a job that relates to what you're studying. The amount of money you can earn depends on when you apply, your financial need, and your school's ability to fund these positions (you won't have unlimited hours). If you're considering work-study, the earlier you apply the more likely you'll be to find an opportunity.
  - Depending on the state you attend school in, you may have to pay taxes on work-study earnings just like any other job. Some universities will provide a tax form from human resources that exempts students from deductions since the job isn't long term (some are only a semester, or even just a few weeks). Thankfully, work-study earnings don't count against your financial aid eligibility.
- **Summer and seasonal job opportunities.** Always keep your eyes open for opportunities to work over the summer or over the holidays.
  - A lot of specialized applications like summer camps or youth activities have early deadlines, so be sure to put reminders on your calendar to start looking for jobs early.
  - There are paid versus unpaid opportunities to be considered. Some universities offer to pay their students for summer work or offer similar setups. You may choose to take an unpaid opportunity to advance you professionally while taking a paid job to help you save for the next semester or year.
  - If your school has extended time off during the holiday season, you can keep your eyes open for retail jobs offering part-time seasonal work (just remember that

many of these opportunities might have you working on or around holidays that your family celebrates).

- Also, your old job might be willing to hire you back over the holidays, especially if the work is consistent, like serving meals.

## Forward thinking: Career planning

- **Internships.** Internships can be great resume boosters, help you prepare for a post-college career or graduate school, or even just build your network. Internships come in all shapes and sizes: some are paid/some unpaid (though some universities offer stipends for unpaid work); some seasonal/some yearlong; some will give you a lot of areas to grow your skills and leadership; some might feel like mundane tasks like responding to telephone calls or emails. All of these experiences are valuable. Work with your advisor, professors, or JMB Award community to think about when you would like to try to take on an internship and in what field. Other awardees can also be a source of sound advice on navigating the application process and the work environment of an internship. Be sure to start planning, “shopping around,” and applying early, as some internship applications can close as much as a year before they even start!
- **Research positions.** Research positions on campus are an excellent way to start your career. They exist in most areas of study (yes, there are opportunities for music majors), but are particularly common in the hard sciences (such as working with a professor on a long-term project in a lab). A good time to start identifying possible research positions is after you have declared a major and have a better sense of academic interests and professional objectives. Talk to your advisor and professors about professors or graduate students who may need assistance on projects. Reach out to those people, introduce yourself, and express your interest in joining their team (learn more about networking and information interviewing further on in the guide). Be mindful of whether you can commit to an unpaid work experience, as some research positions might not come with much or any funding.

## Toolkit: Networking

Networking can be intimidating, and its purpose can be misunderstood. Networking is not about selling or bragging—it’s about building relationships. Sometimes meeting the right person can change your job hunt—they might be able to put in a good word for you. College life offers a lot of opportunities for networking, so the more you know before you get started, the better prepared you’ll be.

- **Networking is a two-way street.** Some days you’ll seek help or a favor and some days you’ll be the one giving help or a favor. The old saying “It’s not what you know, it’s who you know” really does carry a lot of weight in the world of work.
- **Introduce yourself** to anyone you might want to have a conversation with later, that you share a passion with, or even that you can imagine as your future boss. Always ask who else you should talk with. Get one or two names from each person you talk with about a job, a career path, passion, etc.

- **Think about what you bring to the table** for the person with whom you're forging a relationship. Stay in touch with people who show an interest in you. Send them an update on what you're up to, what classes you're loving, etc. Or send them an article, photo, or something you think they'd enjoy. Example: "Hi Cheryl, I hope you're having a great week! I was at a panel discussion hosted by the College of Arts and Sciences last night, and one of the speakers mentioned an article on early childhood development that sounded interesting. I read it this morning, and I think you might enjoy it, too. Here's the link. I hope to talk to you soon!"
- **Networking can happen any time, any place.** You heard that right. You don't have to go to a fancy reception or a formal event (although these are all good places to network). Networking can be formal or informal. It starts with being ready to introduce yourself and ask questions of anyone and everyone around you who might be able to open a door.
- **Prepare your "personal elevator pitch."** This is a one-minute or less summary about who you are, what you're studying and/or looking to do for a job, and what you hope might happen as a consequence of meeting this person (for example, "I would love to set up a time to have coffee with you and learn more about your work in the psychology lab"). Practice saying it out loud to yourself in front of a mirror, and then practice it with your mentor or a trusted friend. You can also simply practice talking about your strengths and goals with people you trust for when there isn't time for a full introduction.
- **Targeted networking is important, too.** Think about who you want to meet and why. Even though it's important to be open to meeting and chatting with anyone, it's important to remember to keep your quality and quantity of connections balanced. Universities frequently bring in guest speakers and host panels featuring alumni that could be considered networking events on campus. Remember to follow up with the people you meet. If they've taken the time to sit down with you or have a phone call, consider writing a handwritten thank you note (if that's not possible, definitely send a thank you email!).
- **Don't forget about networking taking place virtually.** Be sure to research who you're reaching out to and be sure to be assertive in the email about what you're hoping to accomplish (a phone call, in-person meeting, continued email correspondence, etc.) Be yourself, and be professional and polite in your tone. If you don't hear back within a couple of weeks, try following up (your mentor can help you craft this email). Sometimes virtual networking can be a balancing act between patience and persistence.
- **Consider getting business cards** with your name, school name and class, and basic contact information. Websites like VistaPrint offer frequent sales on customizable business cards.

## Toolkit: Informational interviews

Informational interviews are conversations with people to help you figure out your major, understand a job, a career path, an industry or field. They also help you build your network.

- **Soak up the expertise and experience of others.** Don't be shy. You will find that many people are open to talking about their experience. Use networking to set the stage for a

conversation where you can learn from someone. You can get advice or assistance from someone in your field who has already “made it,” explore job, internship, and volunteer opportunities, or learn more about a specific job or line of work.

- **Having the conversation.** Your mentor, other mentors, and Fran are all open to introducing you to others for an informational interview. When you’re ready to reach out to someone, here’s an example email to help you create your own. “Hi Donna, my name is Sarah and I’m a political science major at Temple. I saw on your LinkedIn profile that you spent time working for the Mayor’s Office of Community Empowerment and Opportunity. I’m considering doing an internship there. Would you be willing to chat about your career path and the time you spent working for the city government? I would be happy to arrange a phone call at your convenience.” You never know when a connection and conversation could turn into a lead on a job or a connection to a hiring manager.

## Toolkit: Resumes

- **Why make a resume?** Resumes are important because they’re often the first opportunity you have to make an impression on a prospective employer. The person who decides whether or not to call you for an interview will use the information on your resume to decide if you seem like a good fit for the job. Create a LinkedIn profile and resume for yourself no matter how slim you think your experience is. Talk with Fran about connecting with JMB Award’s resume-writing coach! She can also help you with your LinkedIn profile.
- **The basics.** A resume should be a maximum of 1-2 pages. You should use the keywords in the job announcement, highlight your strengths, and focus on results. Remember to use a variety of action words (organized, constructed, redesigned, mentored, etc.).
- **What if I don’t have anything to put on a resume?** If you’re reading this, that’s probably not true! Keep a file with your accomplishments, awards (like dean’s list or special recognition for a project), jobs, etc. You can refer back to this file whenever you need to update your resume or LinkedIn profile (you can read more about this in the “Self-advocacy” section). Don’t forget to include notable accomplishments from high school: Did you babysit every day? Did you organize a food drive? Was your artwork on display? At this stage in the game, talk about all of your accomplishments—never assume that something you did isn’t resume material.
- **Remember to create a LinkedIn profile, too!** The good news is that you can use the same information from your resume on your LinkedIn. Be mindful of the email address and photo you choose to make public and be sure to keep it appropriate (need we say more?). Ask your mentor to review your LinkedIn from both the “public profile” and “connection profile” view. Remember, don’t list your address on the LinkedIn page just because it’s on your resume. The same rules that apply to staying safe online apply to LinkedIn.

## Toolkit: Interviews

- **Congratulations! You’ve made it this far.** Let’s face it. Interviews can be really intimidating no matter how much experience you have with them. It’s nerve-wracking to

know that someone you don't know is going to be asking you a lot of questions about you, your background, and your goals. If you do your homework, the process doesn't have to be so daunting.

- **Do your homework.** Be sure you know the basics: the name of the company or school or specific department, the job title, and the responsibilities and qualifications in the job listing (and why you think you're a good fit to get those done). Learn as much as possible about the person who will be interviewing you (are they an administrative assistant or the executive director?). Think about why you want the job and any questions you have. Be sure you have a professional outfit picked out and supplies to take along with you (pen, paper for notes, two printed copies of your resume).
- **Practice makes perfect.** Whenever time permits, check with your school's career center or mentor to see about doing a practice interview. If you're short on time, think through answers for anticipated questions and say them out loud (yes!). Employers frequently like to see the way you think toward the end of the interview. Think of a few questions to ask the person conducting the interview, and think of something about yourself that you definitely want them to know, even if it's not part of a response to a question.
- **Phone interviews.** Sometimes phone interviews are used to screen job candidates before an in-person interview. Don't assume that a phone interview is going to be easy just because it's not in person. There are a few things you can do in addition to your homework and practice that will make your phone interview more successful.
  - **Thank the interviewer** for their time at the beginning and end of the call.
  - **Book a study room** or make sure your roommate will be out. You want a quiet, distraction-free zone for the entire length of the interview.
  - **Don't eat, chew gum, or type while you're on the phone.** The person on the other end can probably hear!
  - **Smile when you're talking** and keep good posture. The difference is real!
- **In-person interviews.** These can also be intimidating, but with practice you'll do fine.
  - **Arrive on time.** If you're not sure where you're going, consider practicing getting to the office the day before or over a weekend. Give yourself plenty of time to get turned around and ask for directions if you're not familiar with the location.
  - **Use that fabulous, firm handshake** of yours to show that you mean business!
  - **Smile when you're talking** and keep good posture. Pause a few seconds to think about your responses before answering. Demonstrate active listening.
- **Ask when you can expect to hear back.** Your final question can be about their timing. You'll want to know how long it should be before you'll hear back so you can a) not worry if you don't hear back from them right away and b) know when you should reach back out to reaffirm your interest and check on their progress.
- **Don't end the interview before getting everyone's contact info.** So you can follow up with them and send a thank you note or email (see next bullet), be sure to collect the contact information of every person you spoke with.
- **The great waiting game.** After the interview, send a thank you note or email to the person who conducted the interview. Let them know you're looking forward to hearing

from them. Refer to any personal exchanges you had so you show them your attention to detail and personal relationship-building skills. Check in with your school's career center or your mentor on a case-by-case basis regarding questions about follow-up when you haven't received a response.

## Toolkit: On-the-job etiquette

- **So you got the job?!** Professionalism and etiquette don't stop once you have a job offer. Here are some examples of day-to-day situations, choices, and responsibilities you'll be faced with:
  - **Punctuality/time and attendance.** While you should always aim to be on time, life can happen from time to time. Be sure you're familiar with your workplace's policy. Is there a "three strikes" system? If you're running late, can you stay late on the other side of the shift? What are the consequences for being late? What should you do if you're having an emergency or delay?
  - **Complying with dress standards.** Be sure to wear work-appropriate clothing. This will depend on where you work and what the dress code is. It's better to be dressed professionally the first few days, then to relax your look a bit if it turns out your job is more casual.
  - **Professional language.** *Don't swear.* Also, avoid using slang or popular terms, especially if you're working in a multi-generational environment. As time goes by, you will pick up on what is considered appropriate and what isn't considered appropriate in your office (clerking at a law firm is a lot different from bartending).
  - **Respectful interactions.** Stay professional and polite no matter what the situation is. It could be a group meeting, one-on-one chat with your supervisor, or even responding to an email.
  - **Do unto others.** Show appreciation for the people in your office and acknowledge others when they do a good job. A little support and friendliness goes a long way, and what goes around hopefully comes around.
  - **Courtesy and common sense.** Always remember people can hear you. Don't have conversations in public places about others! You don't know who might be with you who also knows who you're talking about.

## Help!

### Self-advocacy

- **Don't doubt your own abilities and worth when it comes to applying for jobs and internships.** Apply for things even if you're not sure you'll be able to get the interview. You won't be selected, or even interviewed, for everything that you apply for, but that is for someone else to decide. Always self-select.
- **Don't be afraid to meet people, ask questions, and always be thinking ahead** and seeking out ways to develop skills you think you will need in the workforce.
- **Keep a "professional development" Google Doc or written notebook.** Use this document to keep track of what makes you great! When it comes to writing down your

accomplishments, think about how you could one day talk about them in an interview. Try to use the “STAR” model (Situation, Task, Action, Result). This “professional development” file is also a good place to write about challenging situations you handled well.

## On-campus resources

Yes! Your school wants you to succeed. Here are some ideas.

- **Take full advantage of the free services your career center offers.** Real-world professionals pay hundreds of dollars for job coaches and resume reviews. Don’t wait until it costs you money! There are career counselors available by appointment and walk-in (depending on your school) to provide resume and cover letter review, practice mock interviews with you, and provide a database of local jobs on and off campus.
- **Find information about job fairs and job announcements posted in the student center or online.** Useful online resources include your school’s HR portal/job announcements and the school jobs website, if it has one.

## JMB Award resources

The JMB Award has extensive resources for you at any stage:

- Our specialist Trista can help you with resume review, LinkedIn profile creation, interview practice, and other professional development. Refer to our Google contact list or email Fran for contact information.
- We keep a database of amazing humans(!), where they went to school, and what they do for a living.
- Your mentor, other mentors, and the JMB Award advisory board are there to help you.
- Other JMB Award recipients are great people to talk to about certain kinds of summer jobs, internships, and what they are doing to forge their career paths.