parent and family guide

PARENTS, KEEP THIS BOOK ON-HAND AS YOUR RESOURCE

ARTS 2018–2019

“AN INVESTMENT IN KNOWLEDGE PAYS THE BEST INTEREST.”

— BENJAMIN FRANKLIN
ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Everyone star athlete has a coach and support team backing them up. Think of your academic advisor as your coach. They will help you develop your individual plan for success.

As parents and supporters, you’re one of our key partners in assuring your student’s success, both academically and personally. Knowing that you still have an extremely important role to play – supporter, resource, sounding-board, and loved one – we’ve developed this Parent and Family Guide to help you with the transition to university life. Using this guide we can work together to provide the best possible support for your student.

Now that your student is in the Faculty of Arts, your role will change somewhat from the one you had while your student was in high school. Our relationship with you will also change. To respect your student’s privacy, and in keeping with our Policy 19 (Access To and Release of Student Information), our communication will need to be directly with your student. We always hope that students share information with their families, but the decision of what information to share rests with the student.

THE BOAR: Porcellino, Arts’ mascot, is a bronze statue of a wild boar which represents courage and bravery in the face of adversity. You’ll find Porcellino in the Arts Quad in front of the Modern Languages building.
ACADEMIC ADVICE

In the Faculty of Arts, first-year advising is done in several offices – Arts Undergraduate Office; Renison Registrar’s Office; St. Jerome’s Registrar’s Office; Global Business and Digital Arts Office; Accounting and Financial Management Office. Your student will know what office to use based on their program and where they are registered. The first-year advisors help students navigate first year and prepare for second year. Once your student declares their major or moves into second year, they may have a new advisor, but can use the resources of the Academic Advising Centres at any time.

WHAT DOES AN ACADEMIC ADVISOR DO?
› helps your student plan a program that matches their abilities and interests
› explains academic requirements and policies
› is knowledgeable about your student’s academic record
› helps your student develop realistic educational goals

WHAT’S YOUR STUDENT’S ROLE IN THE ACADEMIC ADVISING PROCESS?
› be an active participant in their academic success
› communicate with their advisor on a regular basis
› use the Undergraduate Calendar to understand their degree requirements
› be open and honest with their advisor
› accept ultimate responsibility for their success at university

WHAT’S THE ROLE OF FAMILY AND SUPPORTERS?
› engage with their experiences in ways that respect their independence and support their success
› know that your student will be the primary contact for the University and empower them to be proactive in their studies
› keep this Guide handy and refer to it throughout the year

Students who seek advice on a regular basis are generally more successful in their studies. It’s less about getting help, and more about developing a plan for success. Plans change.

ENCOURAGE YOUR STUDENT TO BUILD A STRONG RELATIONSHIP WITH THEIR ACADEMIC ADVISOR.
SUPPORT RESOURCES

Arts 101 - Faculty of Arts incoming student web resource

This webpage is where incoming Arts students, regardless of program or campus, will find information to help ease the transition to Arts at Waterloo. It will have important dates, how to connect with academic advisors, services available to support academic success, and content from the on-campus Arts 101 day on Monday, July 16, 2018.

Visit campus on Monday, July 16 for our ARTS 101 incoming student transition event. There will be parent-specific sessions throughout the day.

uwaterloo.ca/orientation/events/arts-101

UNIVERSITY COLLEGES

In partnership with the Faculty of Arts, the four on-campus University Colleges – Renison, St. Jerome’s, Conrad Grebel, St. Paul’s – offer living and learning opportunities. Students are part of a small community while having full access to all Waterloo offers. Depending on the program, your student can register at Renison or St. Jerome’s and be part of the residence and/or academic communities while completing their Waterloo degree.

STUDENT SUCCESS OFFICE (SSO)

The SSO is a critical campus resource, offering a wide array of services including success coaching, university transition programs, academic success workshops, and peer-to-peer student support.
CAMPUS-WIDE RESOURCES

ACADEMIC AND CAREER

ARTS ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTRES

- Arts Undergraduate Office
  519-888-4567, ext. 35870
- Renison Registrar’s Office
  519-884-4404, ext. 28609
- St. Jerome’s Registrar’s Office
  519-884-8111, ext. 28303
- Global Business and Digital Arts Office
  519-888-4567, ext. 23000
- Accounting and Financial Management Office
  519-888-4567, ext. 36537

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Needles Hall (NH) 3006D
uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity

BOOKSTORE

South Campus Hall (SCH)
bookstore.uwaterloo.ca

CO-OPERATIVE EDUCATION AND CAREER ACTION

Tatham Centre (TC) 1214
uwaterloo.ca/ceca

FEDS USED BOOKS

Student Life Centre (SLC) lower level
feds.ca/fedsusedbooks

THE LIBRARY

Dana Porter (DP)
Davis Centre (DC)
St. Jerome’s University College (STJ)
Renison University College (REN)
Conrad Grebel University College (CGR)
Optometry (OPT)
School of Architecture (Cambridge)

uwaterloo.ca/library

WRITING AND COMMUNICATION CENTRE

South Campus Hall (SCH) second floor
uwaterloo.ca/writing-centre

FINANCES AND ADMINISTRATION

REGISTRAR’S OFFICE

Needles Hall (NH) second floor
uwaterloo.ca/registrar

STUDENT AWARDS AND FINANCIAL AID

Needles Hall (NH) second floor
uwaterloo.ca/safa

STUDENT FINANCIAL SERVICES

East Campus 5 (EC5) 4053
uwaterloo.ca/finance

WATCARD

Student Life Centre (SLC) lower level inside Campus Tech
watcard.uwaterloo.ca

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Needles Hall (NH) 1401
uwaterloo.ca/accessibility-services

ATHLETICS AND RECREATION

Physical Athletics Complex (PAC)
Columbia Icefields (CIF)
warriors.uwaterloo.ca

COUNSELLING SERVICES

Needles Hall (NH) 2401
uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services

HEALTH SERVICES

Health Services building (HS)
uwaterloo.ca/health-services

UW FOOD SERVICES

Various locations across campus
uwaterloo.ca/food-services

SAFETY AND PARKING

PARKING SERVICES

Commissary (COM) 154
uwaterloo.ca/parking

POLICE SERVICES

Commissary (COM) 154
Available 24 hours, 7 days a week
519–888–4911
uwaterloo.ca/police

WATSAFE

uwaterloo.ca/watsafe
STUDENT EXPERIENCE
FEDERATION OF STUDENTS (FEDS)
Student Life Centre (SLC) 1102
feds.ca

GLOW CENTRE
FOR SEXUAL AND
GENDER DIVERSITY
Student Life Centre (SLC) 2102
feds.ca/glow

RETAIL SERVICES
South Campus Hall (SCH)
retailservices.uwaterloo.ca

RESIDENCES
Waterloo Residences
uwaterloo.ca/housing

STUDENT SUCCESS OFFICE
South Campus Hall (SCH) 217
uwaterloo.ca/sso

TURNKEY DESK
Student Life Centre (SLC)
uwaterloo.ca/slc/turnkey-desk

WATERLOO ABORIGINAL
EDUCATION CENTRE
St. Paul’s University College (STP)
uwaterloo.ca/stpauls/waec

WOMEN’S CENTRE
Student Life Centre (SLC) 2101
feds.ca/women

VISITOR CENTRE
South Campus Hall (SCH)
uwaterloo.ca/find-out-more/visit-waterloo/visitors-centre

COMMUNITY RESOURCES
GOOD2TALK
Confidential helpline for postsecondary students, providing professional counselling, information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being.
1-866-925-5454
good2talk.ca

GRAND RIVER HOSPITAL
835 King Street West
Kitchener, ON
519-724-3611
grhosp.on.ca

HERE 24/7
A community resource that assists in figuring out programs available for addictions, mental health and crisis services across Waterloo-Wellington.
1-844-437-3247
here247.ca

SEXUAL ASSAULT
SUPPORT CENTRE OF
WATERLOO REGION
24 hour support line:
519-741-8633
sascwr.org
ONLINE SYSTEMS

LEARN
Waterloo LEARN, your student’s online classroom, is what most professors will use to supplement their in-person lectures, post assignments, build classroom community and hold group discussions about course materials. Within Waterloo LEARN your student will automatically be part of an online advisement community where they can connect with their academic advisor, seek help and advice, learn about important dates and activities, and connect with other students in their program.

OFFICE 365
Your student has an official University of Waterloo email account (userid@edu.uwaterloo.ca). All University communication, including updates, news, course selection periods and fee deadlines, will be sent to your student using this account. Office 365 is the cloud-based email and calendar service for students to access and manage their email account and to access Office 2016 (e.g. Excel, Word).

uwaterloo.ca/ist/get-started-with-365

STUDENT PORTAL
Portal pulls together personalized information from across campus into one convenient place. Your student can customize Portal to fit their needs, whether they’re looking for study space, a part-time job or vegetarian food options.

uwportal.uwaterloo.ca
**QUEST**

Quest is the University of Waterloo’s student information system. Your student will use Quest to view their finances and academic standing.

[uwaterloo.ca/quest](uwaterloo.ca/quest)

**WatIAM**

Thanks to WatIAM, your student will log into most online systems at the university using the same user ID and password (LEARN, Quest, WaterlooWorks, etc). They should visit the WatIAM website to change their password or authentication questions.

[watiam.uwaterloo.ca](watiam.uwaterloo.ca)

**WatSAFE**

The WatSAFE app provides quick and convenient access to campus safety resources, including emergency contact information, maps and push notifications in the case of an emergency.

[uwaterloo.ca/watsafe](uwaterloo.ca/watsafe)
CAMPUS LINGO FOR PARENTS AND FAMILIES

ACADEMIC ADVISOR
Upon enrollment, each student at UWaterloo is assigned to an undergraduate academic advisor for their specific academic program or major. These advisors assist students with questions about course selection, timetable concerns, regulations, policies and grade appeals or petitions. They can advise students on program and plan requirements, academic standing or academic difficulties.

ACADEMIC LEVEL
Your student will explain which academic term they’re in using a number and letter (e.g. 1A). The number, ranging from 1 to 4, refers to your student’s year. The letter, either A or B, refers to the term, with ‘A’ being the first term of the year and ‘B’ being the second. Note: In some academic plans, advancement to the next level depends on the successful completion of the previous term. In other academic plans, advancement depends on the successful completion of a specified number of units (or courses).

ACCESSABILITY SERVICES
AccessAbility provides services to students with permanent or temporary disabilities. AccessAbility can connect your student with note-taking assistants, learning tools, tutoring/editing support, exam accommodations, and physical resources, including the student access van.

BOMBER
The Bombshelter is UWaterloo’s on-campus pub. It offers a relaxing place for your student to eat and hang out with friends and faculty.

COUNSELLING SERVICES
Counselling Services offers coping skills seminars, workshops, peer support programs, and meetings with clinicians where students can learn about different ways to manage or overcome obstacles.
**DON**

Dons are upper-year UWaterloo students, who are responsible for the development of inclusive and positive housing communities. There are two types of dons – on-campus and off-campus – and both support and encourage student goal development.

**FDA**

Front Desk Assistants work behind the reception desk at each main campus residence. These student leaders will answer questions from students and visitors, receive packages and provide outstanding customer service.

**FEDERATED UNIVERSITY AND AFFILIATED COLLEGES**

Each University College is a small, unique community with its own character, history, traditions and programming. The University College residences are not-for-profit institutions that maintain an independent identity, but are fully affiliated with and integrated into the larger UWaterloo campus.

**FEDS**

The Federation of Students (Feds) is UWaterloo’s undergraduate student government. Feds has a mandate to serve, empower and represent students, and oversees over 200 student clubs. Feds offers a variety of services, operates several businesses, supports student societies and facilitates a wide range of special events and activities for students, both on and off campus.

**FEES ARRANGED**

Being Fees Arranged means that your student has shown how the cost of fees for that term will be paid, and made a commitment to pay all the fees charged to their student account, even if financial aid is denied or turns out to be less than expected. Fees are charged one term at a time and your student must become Fees Arranged each term.

**FLEX DOLLARS**

Flex dollars provide all students the option of purchasing food outside of residence cafeterias and functions similar to a debit card. Many establishments in Waterloo allow students to pay with their WatCard, including a number of restaurants and grocery stores. Flex dollars are separate from meal plan money and can be loaded securely online by students or family members. For more information, visit [watcard.uwaterloo.ca](http://watcard.uwaterloo.ca)

**GRAND RIVER TRANSIT (GRT)**

Grand River Transit (GRT) is the local transit system used in Waterloo Region. Their buses go directly to the University of Waterloo and Wilfrid Laurier University from all over the city. A new light rail transit system, called the ion, is coming soon. Your student’s WatCard grants them unlimited riding privileges on GRT, making it easy to explore Waterloo Region.

**HEALTH SERVICES**

Medical staff are on campus to provide your student with primary healthcare and to promote a safe, healthy environment for all. Your student can access walk-in care, immunizations, testing, allergy injections, family planning and nutritional counselling at Health Services, as well as an on-site laboratory and dispensary.

**KING WARRIOR**

The Athletics and Recreation mascot at the University of Waterloo is a lion named King Warrior.
**OSAP**
The Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) offers financial support to students and families paying for post-secondary education. To be eligible for funding, students need to apply for OSAP and complete the required paperwork. For information visit [osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal](http://osap.gov.on.ca/OSAPPortal).

**PAC**
The Physical Activities Complex (PAC) is one of Waterloo's two athletics facilities on campus. The PAC houses the university pool, a large gymnasium, a high-performance zone, squash courts, studios and the Athletics Office. Many students will have final exams in this building.

**REGISTRAR’S OFFICE**
The Registrar's Office is responsible for academic dates, course scheduling, transcript requests and final exam scheduling. For more information, visit [uwaterloo.ca/registrar](http://uwaterloo.ca/registrar).

**SLC**
The Student Life Centre (SLC) is the hub for student life at UWaterloo. Home to the Federations of Students and their many services, the building also offers study space, prayer rooms and piano rooms.

**STUDENT ACCESS VAN**
The Student Access Van (SAV) is a shuttle service for students with a temporary or permanent disability. This service is primarily for students registered with AccessAbility Services and is intended as campus transportation only.

**SYLLABUS**
A course outline, or syllabus, is a contract between the instructor of a class and their students. The syllabus sets out the weekly schedule, required readings, assignment parameters, class expectations and contact information for the instructors.

**TA**
Teaching Assistants (TAs) are assigned to help professors facilitate lectures, tutorials, office hours and marking.

**TURNKEY**
The Turnkey desk is an information and service kiosk located in the SLC. It is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, including holidays. Turnkey has discounted movie tickets and an inter-city transportation desk, and is the place to go should your student want to book space in the SLC or ask questions.

**WATCARD**
WatCard is your student’s most important piece of identification on campus. They use their WatCard for library services, travel on the local bus system (Grand River Transit) and to access campus athletics facilities. During the final exam period, your student must show their WatCard to be admitted into exam rooms. WatCards also function as method of payment, allowing your student to use it like a debit card to purchase food and other items. To add money to your student's card visit [watcard.uwaterloo.ca/parent.html](http://watcard.uwaterloo.ca/parent.html).
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

You're highly influential in your student's life. While it's their time to spread their wings, your advice and support will continue to be important.

› listen intently when they share their experiences.
› encourage your student to solve their own problems.
› be familiar with campus resources.
› understand that your student may change their mind about their program or major; first year is a time to explore and learn.

It's a balancing act between giving too much advice while still allowing your student to grow. You know your student best.

ASK QUESTIONS
Initially, your student may feel like you're interfering, but then may grow to appreciate that you're still interested in what they're up to. Try to avoid “I have the right to know” statements. Learning more about your student's university experience is important. Letting them know you're interested and willing to listen will help keep you connected.

BECOME A COACH
› Arts programs at Waterloo are known for their academic rigour. Help your student understand the benefits of the knowledge they are accumulating, even if the work is sometimes difficult for them.
› time management is critical at university. Help your student find and use tools that work for them.
› remind your student to use their support services on campus, such as the Arts Academic Advising Centres, the Student Success Office, and the Registrar’s Office.

› every so often, ask your student if they’re attending classes, making use of their teaching assistants, dropping in for their professor’s office hours, how their assignments are progressing, and if they’ve checked-in with their academic advisor.

BECOME A CHEERLEADER
› email, Skype, or send mail! Care packages with treats, clothing, pictures, and a note from home go a long way in helping your student feel connected.
› Halloween, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick’s Day, or a day special to your family is a great excuse to send a care package.
› text quick messages so they know they’re on your mind. They are thinking about you as well, even if they aren't in touch all the time.
› check in to hear about the results of exams, tests, and assignments. Congratulations and encouragement are always welcome.
YOU MAY BE WONDERING

HOW MANY COURSES? HOW MANY HOURS?
Normally students take five classes per term. Depending on their program, they may choose to take a lighter load. In consultation with their academic advisor, your student will be encouraged to take the number of courses (maximum of five) that will support their academic success. Taking five classes per term generally equals 15 hours of classes per week. We then expect that for every hour of class your student will spend approximately two hours studying, reading, and completing assignments.

MISTAKES, CHALLENGES, AND CHANGES TO COME
First-year university is full of inspiration, discovery, exciting times, and new friends. Your student will also face indecision, disappointments, and mistakes. It may take time for them to accept that being thrilled, sad, confused, confident, and disappointed are part of growing up. Understand that not all students get good grades, are sure of what they want to major in, have fun-filled days all the time, or make lots of friends. Being prepared and open to discussing the ups and downs will go a long way in making your student feel supported. Your student’s journey will be unique and you can be there to support them when they need it most.

MAKING NEW FRIENDS
Help your student understand that it can take some time to create new and lasting friendships. Encourage them to get involved in residence life or the off-campus don program, get to know some people in each of their classes, and take part in important social and academic activities like Fall Orientation and Fall Welcome Week.
STRESS AND STUDIES

Stress can negatively impact academic performance if it gets out of hand. There will be slow, busy, and sometimes stressful times each term. There may also be stressful times at home as you adjust to your student being away, sort out finances, or establish your own new routines. Emails and calls from an anxious student can also be stressful. Be prepared to hear more from them when they’re discouraged than when they’re soaring with success. Listen to them, express your care and concern, and perhaps share some of your insight, experience, and advice.

WHAT ARE SOME PROVEN METHODS TO COMBAT STRESS?

- regular exercise
- adequate sleep
- managing time wisely
- healthy eating and regular meals
- scheduling time for relaxation and fun
- completing and submitting assignments on time

If your student ever shows serious signs of physical, emotional, or mental stress, please encourage them to speak to their academic advisor, and visit Counselling Services, or Health Services.
We have trained health professionals available to support your student.

› **COUNSELLING SERVICES** – Occasionally students deal with unexpected issues and need help coping. Free counselling is included with full-time tuition fees. After a simple evaluation process, your student can meet with a counsellor in a confidential setting.

› **HEALTH SERVICES** – This on-campus Student Medical Clinic provides convenient, confidential, and comprehensive medical care to all registered students.

### VISITING CAMPUS

Visit your student, but not too often. If your student has not been quick to invite you to visit, you may want to suggest a trip to campus. In all likelihood, your visit will be very much appreciated, especially if it includes a treat, such as dinner out or a trip to the grocery store. Visits are a chance to bring news from home, but more importantly, to have a glimpse into your student’s life at school. Surprise visits are not usually appreciated; making plans in advance is best.

### TRIPS HOME

Often families find it a bit of an adjustment when their student returns home for the first time or at the end of the school year. Just because they’ve been away doesn’t mean that life at home has stopped. You’ll have developed some new routines and habits. Changes at home can be disconcerting for your student (and for you). While you work to respect the individual your student is striving to be, your student still needs to know that you have, and will enforce, established rules and household expectations. Having conversations early about summer jobs or internships, studying abroad, and living arrangements for the summer or while on work terms will allow everyone to plan ahead, discuss finances, and understand expectations.

### TRANSPORTATION

With the payment of student fees, your student will have a fully paid city bus pass. The Federation of Students bus, the Go Bus, and Greyhound have regular, daily departures from campus, and the VIA train runs from the downtown Kitchener station.

### WATCARD

It’s the most important piece of student ID your student will have. They’ll use their WatCard to write exams, participate in Waterloo activities, sign books out of the library, and get student discounts on-campus and off-campus.
HOMESICKNESS

Being homesick is often as much an issue for you as it is for your student. It’s okay to admit you’re missing them! The first few weeks of school are full of events designed to help your student become part of campus life. Meeting new people, learning about life at Waterloo, and getting used to the pace of classes can take a lot of time and energy. Remember, even if they don’t tell you, they do miss you. Let them enjoy these first few weeks without having to worry too much about you.

HAVE “HOW-TO” CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ...

› laundry, cleaning, and cooking healthy meals
› ironing a shirt or pants … maybe for the first time
› credit card use and your expectations around finances, and who will pay for what
› getting around town by bus, car, or foot and your expectations
A YEAR AT A GLANCE

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST

It’s exciting and a bit frightening. The summer before school begins can often bring mixed emotions for the whole family. Everyone is excited in some way about the adventure ahead, but there are a lot of unknowns as well. Talk to your student about how you can help them with this transition in their lives, share your excitement for them as they take on new challenges, and be sure to tuck some special reminders of home in their suitcase. If your student is living at home, look into the resources we have to connect off-campus students with the University of Waterloo community.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?
› prom, graduation, and saying goodbye to high school friends
› choosing classes and where to live
› exploring ARTS 101, our online new student transition community; attend the Arts 101 incoming student transition event on July 16
› registering for Fall Orientation
› budgeting for the school year
› ensuring any on-going medical needs can be met in the coming year
› reviewing personal safety and security practices
› enjoying summer vacation

ARTS NEW STUDENT TRANSITION
First-year course selection – June to September course selection for the Fall Term happens over the summer. Winter course selection is completed when your student is on campus in September. Depending on your student’s program they will have specific course selection steps to follow. It is important they do exactly what their academic advisor suggests.

NOTE: this may be the only time we email your student at an email account other than their @edu.uwaterloo.ca email account.

ARTS 101 – INCOMING STUDENT WEB RESOURCE
This online resource is for all incoming Faculty of Arts students and will help with the transition to university life. Information on the webpage will help students stay on top of important dates, connect with their academic advisors, discover services to support their academic success and find resources that they need for their success at Waterloo!

› Visit campus on Monday, July 16 for our ARTS 101 incoming student transition event. There will be parent-specific sessions throughout the day.

VISIT ON MONDAY, JULY 16 FOR OUR ARTS 101 INCOMING STUDENT TRANSITION EVENT.
Students will have the option of getting their WatCards while on campus for ARTS 101.
UWATERLOO.CA/ARTS-101-INCOMING-STUDENT-RESOURCE
SEPTMBER

ORIENTATION
Orientation is a week of social and academic programming designed to help students meet other new students, get used to campus, and get off to a good academic start. All students are expected to attend the academic events and are highly encouraged to participate in all Orientation Week activities. You’re welcome to attend Parent Orientation and Family Send-off on Labour Day weekend!

Communication from Waterloo – We’ll normally communicate with your student through their University of Waterloo email address, through LEARN (online classroom), and on Quest (student registration system). We’ll post important dates and announcements on the Registrar’s Office website. It’s critical that your student checks their @edu.uwaterloo.ca email account on a regular basis. Take some time to review Important Dates online at uwaterloo.ca/quest/undergraduate-students/important-dates to learn when classes begin and end, when fees are due, when students can add and drop classes, and when official University holidays take place.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?
› social life – new friends, relationships, parties
› living with a roommate – the good and the bad
› academic demands – homework, tests, assignments, attending class, selecting winter courses
› experiencing newfound freedom
› money – spending, saving, keeping track

OCTOBER
Ask questions. Most students want their parents to express an interest in what they are doing at school and will welcome some advice or discussion about their plans.
Ask open-ended questions, such as, “What are some of the assignments you’re working on?” or, “What are you learning in a particular class right now?”. Make opportunities to share your thoughts and opinions and allow your student to express theirs.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?
› time management, setting priorities, boundaries
› excitement about Thanksgiving weekend
› Fall Study Break, October 9 and 10 – discuss your student’s plans for their 2 day study break
› mid-terms, assignments, first grade results
› feeling that university may not be what they expected
› establishing exercise, self-care, and stress relief routines

Each term is 16 weeks long, including the final exam period. The Fall term begins in September and includes a two day Fall Break following Thanksgiving Monday in October. Thanksgiving weekend is also mid-way through the Fall term. Often students are caught off guard by how quickly the term passes. Before your student returns for Christmas holidays, they’ll have completed all of the requirements for their first term, including their final exams.
OCTOBER

Phone calls or texts about unexpected grades or challenging relationships are tough to listen to, but it’s not the end of the world! Be patient when you get a “nothing is going right” or an “I hate this place” call. Your student needs a sympathetic ear at this time.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?

› increased academic responsibilities with end of term assignments, papers, and reports
› missing home and old friends
› final exam schedule posted

NOVEMBER

HAS YOUR STUDENT CHECKED IN WITH THEIR ACADEMIC ADVISOR?

A proactive student is often a successful student. Encourage your student to contact their academic advisor to discuss any concerns and to get advice well before their final assignments are due and exams begin.

Every successful athlete has a team to support them. University is no different. Your student’s academic advisor can be seen as one of their coaches. Encourage your student to get the right advice early.
DECEMBER

Your student is changing. This is to be expected. At Waterloo, they’ll experience new friendships, academic expectations, and cultural and social activities which will broaden their world-view and contribute to their emerging understanding of the world around them.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?
› concern about final projects and exams
› extra-curricular activities usually decrease at the end of term
› looking for letters, treats, and news from home; perhaps send an exam care package
› talk about expectations for Christmas Break and discuss family traditions
› unofficial Fall term grades available on Quest late December

JANUARY

A fresh start! Some students find their first term at University to be a challenge, others breeze through; but it is more likely that your student has experienced both highs and lows. When they return to studies in January, they’ll be ready to explore a new set of classes, and for some, turn over a new leaf.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?
› re-adjusting to being away from home again
› adjusting level of campus involvement in extra-curriculars. Is it time to get more involved or time to pull back a bit?
› official Fall term grades available mid-January

The Winter term starts with a bang. There’s no Orientation “Week” in the Winter term to ease back to student life. Classes begin and expectations are outlined as soon as the term begins.

FEbruary

Your student may begin to hear from their academic advisor about Fall course selection and if they need to declare an Arts major for 2nd year. Honours Arts and Honours Arts and Business students declare their major for second year at the end of first year. Social Development Studies, Global Business and Digital Arts, and Accounting and Financial Management Students are already in their major. Don’t be surprised to learn that the area of interest your student has chosen is not the one they had in mind when they started university.

The Faculty of Arts has many different programs, majors, and minors to choose from. Up to 70 percent of students change their mind in some way by the time they choose the subject they want to focus on.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?
› Reading Week – discuss your student’s plans for their week-long study break
› keeping up with tests and assignments

DAILY BULLETIN

The Daily Bulletin is the University of Waterloo’s online news source. It’s a great place to learn about your student’s new school.

UWATERLOO.CA/DAILY-BULLETIN
MARCH

Any warmer days on campus, even if you think it's still a deep freeze, prove to be a real distraction for students. Understanding your student's desire to relax a bit is helpful, but do remind them to keep giving their best to their classes. Exams begin in April!

WHAT'S IMPORTANT NOW?

› mid-term grade results
› finalizing course selection for next Fall
› final exam schedule posted

APRIL

First year is almost over! Your student has experienced so much, has had success and some challenges, and is already looking toward second year. While they still may seem like “kids”, they have changed and are well on their way to adulthood. It’s a time to celebrate accomplishments and to encourage them to look forward to the next steps.

WHAT’S IMPORTANT NOW?

› final assignments and exams
› academic pressures increase
› unofficial Winter term grades available late April; official grades available mid-May
› discussing your expectations and your student’s expectations around moving home, goals for summer employment, and family holiday plans so everyone is on the same page
› saying goodbye to friends at school

The University of Waterloo operates 12 months of the year, offering Fall, Winter, and Spring study terms. Consequently, it’s possible for students to take a course over the summer or during a co-op work term. If your student is interested in studying in the Spring term, either on-campus or online, have them contact their academic advisor in March to discuss.
EXAMS

The final exam schedule is set approximately six weeks before exams begin. Travel plans are not an excuse for missing an exam. Be sure that your student (or you, for that matter) does not make travel plans before knowing the day and time of each of their final exams.
RESOURCES AND GUIDES

EMPOWERING PARENTS OF FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENTS: A GUIDE FOR SUCCESS.

HELPING YOUR FIRST-YEAR COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCEED: A GUIDE FOR PARENTS.
National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition.

NAKED ROOMMATE: FOR PARENTS ONLY.
Harlan Cohen.

DON’T TELL ME WHAT TO DO, JUST SEND MONEY: THE ESSENTIAL PARENTING GUIDE TO THE COLLEGE YEARS.
Helen E. Johnson & Christine Schelhas-Miller, publ. St. Martin’s Griffin.

LETTING GO: A PARENTS’ GUIDE TO UNDERSTANDING THE COLLEGE YEARS.
Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger, publ. Quill.

YOU’RE ON YOUR OWN (BUT I’M HERE IF YOU NEED ME).

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