

COLLEGE SKILLS CHECKLIST FOR NEW STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND FAMILIES
TEXAS WOMAN'S UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER
www.twu.edu/o-sl/counseling

It's time for you and your family to begin college experience. Besides buying books and supplies, there are a few other things you and your family need to bring to the university so that you will be a successful student. Taking some time now to review these items will make your transition to the university much easier. Directly below is a general list of skills you and your family will have to work on. Following this list, you will find these skills re-arranged in an annual calendar. Please read both.

COMMUNICATING

- Communicating with your parents about school.** This includes information about which classes you are taking, how things are going, how you did on tests and finals, what your grades are, people you are meeting, and other things that are happening. This also includes when you will communicate. Once an hour? Once a day? Once a week? By telephone, cell phone, email? By letter?
- Meeting new people - students, faculty, and staff?** Can you be open to new ideas and different ways to think about the world?
- Asking for what you need.** Unlike high school, if you need help with something, you will need to ask for it. This includes help with academics but also with getting involved on campus. Asking for what you need or what you need help with is an important skill for academic success.

HANDLING MONEY

- Budgeting.** You need to be able to make and keep to a budget.
- Handling the money you have.** You will need a checking account. You need to know how to keep a checkbook, accurately. You also need to discuss with your parents how you will receive additional funds, and who will have access to your account (joint or individual). This also includes the proper use of ATMs and debit cards.
- Misusing credit cards. Leave this skill at home.** Instead, learn and understand the appropriate ways to use credit and credit cards. Credit card debt is the number one reason why students leave school today. Don't be a victim.
- Completing Financial Aid forms.** Learn the ins and outs of the financial aid system and understand how the system works so it can work best for you.

ACADEMIC SKILLS

- Studying.** Seems obvious, but it isn't. You must assume that as you progress through school the work will be more demanding and that there will be more of it. Plan now to continue to change and improve your study skills to stay ahead of the increasing demands.

- **Managing time.** You will be responsible for doing the work you need to do and be where you need to be. There will be lots of demands for you to do many other things. Now is the time to learn how to manage your time effectively.
- **Talking with professors.** Professors want to help, but they will not seek you out. You must learn to seek them out as early as possible when you have questions or concerns. This includes visiting them during office hours and communicating with them in other ways they allow (e.g. email).
- **Using academic resources.** Write Site, Science Learning Resource Lab, Math and Computer Science Lab, etc. Know what they are and where they are - and use them.

PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

- **Being responsible.** This is a big one. You must understand what responsibility is, the consequences of the choices you will make, and how to behave in ways that will keep you safe and happy. Yes, sorry, this includes things like sexual behaviors, use of alcohol and drugs, engaging in physically risky behavior, mis-using credit etc. It also means reading about how the university works and what you need to do to remain a student each semester (e.g. like how and when to register for next semester's classes, how and when to apply for financial aid, etc.)
- **Managing stress.** Stress is defined as the demand you feel being placed upon you. School will be stressful because it will be demanding. Learn ways to maintain your health and lower your stress level. If your family isn't good at, find help and learn new skills from others, including the Counseling Center when you get to campus.
- **Maintaining your health.** Do you have health insurance? Do you know how it works? Do you know how the TWU Student Health Service fits into the health insurance you may have? You must learn that you are responsible for maintaining your health now. This includes seeking medical consultation and help. It includes knowing about any prescription medication you are taking, how to take it, when and how to order refills, etc. It also means understanding the concept of preventative medicine to avoid difficulties in the future, including regular check-ups.
- **Managing your laundry.** Learn to do your laundry now.
- **Managing your eating.** Now is a great time to have family members show you how to cook and to collect favorite recipes. If you live in the residence halls and have a meal plan, it is also time to learn about how to eat when the food is potentially unlimited. You must also learn that food is only a tool for fueling your body to be productive, rather than using food as a reward or punishment for other things.
- **Managing your self-esteem.** You must learn to understand that how you feel about yourself is more than what others might think of you. This includes how you feel about yourself on intellectual, mental, and physical dimensions. You can learn, within limits, to appropriately challenge yourself to change those things which are not pleasing to you instead of feeling helpless.

GOING TO SCHOOL CALENDAR CHECKLIST

SPRING BEFORE COMING TO TWU

STUDENT

PARENT

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read general information about the university (from the catalogue or the website) - learn about the academic departments, the advising process, the typical registration process (you will register the first time during summer orientation), the payment system (including the current year's tuition and fees). http://www.twu.edu/ACADEMICS/catalogs.html</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read general information about the university (from the catalogue or the website) - learn about the academic departments, the advising process, the typical registration process (your student will register the first time during summer orientation), the payment system (including the current year's tuition and fees). http://www.twu.edu/ACADEMICS/catalogs.html</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Gather information from the website or catalogue about the major(s) which interest you OR learn about remaining undeclared and how to make use of you advisor to help pick core courses for your first year. http://www.twu.edu/admissions/programs-majors.asp</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss information from the website or catalogue about the major(s) which interest you OR learn about remaining undeclared and how to make use of you advisor to help pick core courses for your first year. http://www.twu.edu/admissions/programs-majors.asp</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read about the opportunities outside the classroom through the Center for Student Development (student organizations, volunteer opportunities, trips, events, etc.) http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/csd/</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Read about the opportunities outside the classroom through the Center for Student Development (student organizations, volunteer opportunities, trips, events, etc.) http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/csd/</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> When you are accepted, and if you will live away from Denton, have parents consider making hotel reservations for the dates they will come with you to drop you off for the fall. http://www.discoverdenton.com/</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> When your student is accepted, and if you will live away from Denton, consider making hotel reservations for yourselves the dates you will come to drop her or him off for the fall. http://www.discoverdenton.com/. Hotel rooms fill up fast!</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for an orientation session - Orientation is the best way to meet classmates and, remember, the earlier you come, the better selection of classes during registration! http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/Orientation/</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Be sure your student signs up for an orientation session. Orientation is the best way for students to meet classmates. New students register for classes during orientation, so, the earlier you come, the better selection of classes during registration!</p>

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sign up for an orientation session - Orientation is the best way to meet classmates and, remember, the earlier you come, the better selection of classes during registration! http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/Orientation/</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Be sure your student signs up for an orientation session. Orientation is the best way for students to meet classmates. New students register for classes during orientation, so, the earlier you come, the better selection of classes during registration! http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/Orientation/</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Families begin to discuss basic financial issues including expectations on both sides - basic budget information is available on the TWU Financial Aid website. Financial Aid forms for the next academic year become available in early February each year. http://www.twu.edu/finaid/.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Families begin to discuss basic financial issues including expectations on both sides - basic budget information is available on the TWU Financial Aid website. Financial Aid forms for the next academic year become available in early February each year. http://www.twu.edu/finaid/</p>

**SUMMER
STUDENT**

Students - Now is the time to begin to learn or improve self-management tasks you will need to become more responsible for yourself (as applicable). Parents, your student may need your help with some or all of these skills. These can include:

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to do your laundry http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-cleaning.htm</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to do your laundry http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-cleaning.htm</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to keep your room and bathroom clean http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-cleaning.htm</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to keep your room and bathroom clean http://home.howstuffworks.com/home-cleaning.htm</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to choose what foods to eat from a buffet of choices http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/usda-diet-strategies-for-dining-out-ga3.htm</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to choose what foods to eat from a buffet of choices http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/usda-diet-strategies-for-dining-out-ga3.htm</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to develop and use a budget effectively http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to develop and use a budget effectively http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to understand and use credit effectively</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to understand and use</p>

PARENT

(e.g. credit cards) http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance	credit effectively (e.g. credit cards) http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to use and balance a checkbook (including fees for ATM use, overdrafts, etc.) http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to use and balance a checkbook (including fees for ATM use, overdrafts, etc.) http://money.howstuffworks.com/personal-finance
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to use health services and your insurance (if applicable) http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/shs/	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to use health services and your insurance (if applicable) http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/shs/
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to manage your time, stress, and anxiety effectively http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/counseling/workshops.html	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to manage your time, stress, and anxiety effectively http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/counseling/workshops.html
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to say "yes" and "no" appropriately for your needs http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/counseling/workshops.html	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to say "yes" and "no" appropriately for your needs http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/counseling/workshops.html
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn how to get to know new people and join groups http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/csd/	<input type="checkbox"/> Teach your student how to get to know new people and join groups http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/csd/
<input type="checkbox"/> Understand your rights and responsibilities as an adult at TWU http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/StudentLifeOffice/StudentCodeofConduct.html	<input type="checkbox"/> Understand and discuss the rights and responsibilities of your student as an adult at TWU http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/StudentLifeOffice/StudentCodeofConduct.html

If you are a traditionally-aged student and your parents will be involved in your college experience OR if you are a non-traditionally-aged student and will be sharing your college experience with your own family, now is the time to have discussions about a variety of issues which will impact all of you. These include:

STUDENTS

- How will things be different now that I am going to college (and am an adult)?

PARENTS

- How will things be different now that your student is going to college (and is an adult)?

<input type="checkbox"/> If I live away from home, how will I communicate with my parents?	<input type="checkbox"/> If your student lives away from home, how will they communicate with you?
<input type="checkbox"/> If I live away from home, what expectations will we have about my behavior when I come home for visits? When will I visit? What about holiday breaks and summers?	<input type="checkbox"/> If your student lives away from home, what expectations will we have about their behavior when they come home for visits? When will they visit? What about holiday breaks and summers?
<input type="checkbox"/> If I commute from home, what expectations do we have about how things will be similar or different while I am living at home? How will my role(s) change?	<input type="checkbox"/> If your student commutes from home, what expectations do we have about how things will be similar or different while they are living at home? How will our role(s) change?
<input type="checkbox"/> What expectations do we each have about communicating about school-related issues including classes taken, grades, needs for more money, problems and concerns, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> What expectations do we each have about communicating about school-related issues including classes taken, grades, needs for more money, problems and concerns, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> What expectations do we each have for how I will handle money, what my responsibilities are for earning some portion of my costs, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> What expectations do we each have for how they will handle money, what are their responsibilities for earning some portion of costs, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> How will I handle the increased demand in the quantity and quality of my work the college will expect?	<input type="checkbox"/> How will they handle the increased demand in the quantity and quality of work the college will expect?
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend summer orientation - get to know new friends and register for fall semester classes. Learn about student organization and university services. Learn about ordering course texts on-line from the campus bookstore.	<input type="checkbox"/> Attend summer orientation - your student will get to know new friends and register for fall semester classes. Learn about student organization and university services. Learn about ordering course texts on-line from the campus bookstore. Meet university faculty and staff.
<input type="checkbox"/> If you are living away from home, begin to assemble the things you will need when you move to your new residence. This should include clothes, linens, cleaning supplies, decorations, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> If your student is living away from home, begin to assemble the things they will need when they move to their new residence. This should include clothes, linens, cleaning supplies, decorations, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/> After summer orientation, read about services available	<input type="checkbox"/> After summer orientation, read about services

<p>on campus for academic and other issues. When you arrive at campus, allow yourself to have the freedom to use these services as they can be helpful to you. http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp</p>	<p>available on campus for academic and other issues. When they arrive at campus, encourage them to have the freedom to use these services as they can be helpful to them. http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Check the calendar to understand when you will need to arrive on campus for the fall semester - including Pioneer Camp (as applicable) http://www.twu.edu/academics/academic_calendars.htm</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Check the calendar to understand when they will need to arrive on campus for the fall semester - including Pioneer Camp (as applicable) http://www.twu.edu/academics/academic_calendars.htm</p>

FALL

Using the summer to plan ahead and learn about the university and to learn the skills you may need will help make your transition to the university much easier.

STUDENTS

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Take a day or two to prepare for your transition/arrival to school for the year - rest, relax, check lists, etc.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Welcome to campus for the next school year! Obtain a parking permit from the Department of Public Safety, if needed. http://www.twu.edu/dps/master.asp?page=parking.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> If you live on campus, you will need a US Postal Service Post Office Box to in order for you to receive your mail. Please go to the USPS office on the first floor of the Student Union to complete paperwork and pay for your post office box.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Take advantage of organizations fairs and other opportunities that take place early in the semester to learn more about campus and how you want to get involved. http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/csd/</p>

PARENTS

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Take a day or two to help prepare your student for transition/arrival to school for the year - allow time for rest, relaxation, and checking lists, etc.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Students will need to obtain a parking permit from the Department of Public Safety, if needed. http://www.twu.edu/dps/master.asp?page=parking</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> If your student will live on campus, they will need a US Postal Service Post Office Box to in order for them to receive mail. The USPS office is on the first floor of the Student Union. The student will need to complete paperwork and pay for their post office box</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Encourage your student to take advantage of organizations fairs and other opportunities that take place early in the semester to learn more about campus and how they can get involved.</p>

	http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/csd/
<input type="checkbox"/> Learn to use whatever academic and other services available on campus to help you be more successful. http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp	<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage your student to learn to use whatever academic and other services available on campus to help them be more successful. http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp
<input type="checkbox"/> Keep a copy of the Schedule of Classes and the TWU Catalogue. Know and understand the semester calendar including: add/drop periods, last day to drop a class without academic penalty, when advising and registration start for the following semester (usually just after mid-semester), and the schedule for final exams. http://www.twu.edu/academics/catalogs.html	<input type="checkbox"/> The Schedule of Classes and the TWU Catalogue are available on-line. These help your student know and understand the semester calendar including: class add/drop periods at the beginning of each semester, the last day to drop a class without academic penalty, when advising and registration start for the following semester (usually just after mid-semester), and the schedule for final exams. http://www.twu.edu/academics/catalogs.html
<input type="checkbox"/> Understand that the fall and winter semesters are 15 weeks long, with finals during the 16 th week. It is common to have tests in each of your classes every 3 to 4 weeks and to have projects due, in addition to tests, in some classes. Weeks when tests are given and projects are due can be very stressful. Use good time management and prepare in advance to avoid feeling overwhelmed.	<input type="checkbox"/> The fall and winter semesters are 15 weeks long, with finals during the 16 th week. It is common to have tests in each class every 3 to 4 weeks and to have projects due, in addition to tests, in some classes. Weeks when tests are given and projects are due can be very stressful. Encourage your student to use good time management and prepare in advance to avoid feeling overwhelmed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> Your student will love to get mail from you, even if it's just a postcard. Think about sending something to them every 2-3 weeks. Do not expect them to write back - they usually won't. You might consider sending things about the time they will be having tests - usually weeks 4, 8 (mid-semester), 12, and 16 (finals).
<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly consider getting a flu shot. Our experience is that the more all students, faculty, and staff are	<input type="checkbox"/> We strongly encourage you to strongly encourage your student to get a flu shot. Our experience is that the

<p>immunized, the fewer cases of flu on campus and the more likely you are to stay healthy. Flu shots generally become available around October 1. http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/shs/</p>	<p>more all students, faculty, and staff are immunized, the fewer cases of flu on campus and the more likely your student is to stay healthy. Flu shots generally become available around October 1. http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/shs/</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Schedules for finals are often different than your normal class schedule. Final exam schedules are available by going to: http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp and looking for the link for final exams. Somewhere close to Thanksgiving, you should look to see when your finals are scheduled and you are well advised to begin studying for them as early as possible.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Your student may or may not be proactive about understanding when their final exams will be held. Schedules for finals are often different than their normal class schedule. Final exam schedules are available by going to: http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp and looking for the link for final exams. Somewhere close to Thanksgiving, your student should look to see when their finals are scheduled and they are well advised to begin studying for them as early as possible.</p>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> If you are going home for the holiday break, be prepared to discuss with your family things like your grades, your finances, your friends, your interests, etc. It is likely your family will want to know about these things. Also, be sure to plan some "down" time to rest and recuperate from the semester. Jamming your break full of too many things will only bring you back to campus tired and less ready to work.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> If your student is coming home for the holiday break, they may or may not wish to discuss with you things like grades, finances, friends, interests, etc. But, there is no harm in asking and, as you noticed, they have been warned that this is a likely event. Also, if you can help them to plan some "down" time to rest and recuperate from the semester, that would be very helpful. Jamming a break full of too many things will only bring them back to campus tired and less ready to work.</p>

WINTER/SPRING

<p><input type="checkbox"/> Complete income tax returns and financial forms for the following academic year. Financial Aid forms for the next academic year become available in early February</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Complete income tax returns and financial forms for the following academic year. Financial Aid forms for the next academic year become available in early</p>
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each year. http://www.twu.edu/finaid/ .	February each year. http://www.twu.edu/finaid/ .
<input type="checkbox"/> Remember, most federal and state financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis - the earlier you turn your materials in, the more likely you are to receive aid, if you qualify.	<input type="checkbox"/> Remember, most federal and state financial aid is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis - the earlier you can turn your materials in, the more likely your student is to receive aid, if they qualify.
<input type="checkbox"/> Search for scholarships and complete applications http://www.twu.edu/finaid/scholarships.asp	<input type="checkbox"/> You can encourage or help your student to search for scholarships and complete applications http://www.twu.edu/finaid/scholarships.asp
<input type="checkbox"/> Register for summer and fall classes (registration usually begins for both around the middle of April).	<input type="checkbox"/> Students register for summer and fall classes starting about the middle of April. Encourage your student to check with their advisor in early April to plan for both summer and fall courses.
<input type="checkbox"/> In late April or early May, if you are leaving campus for the summer, make plans about how you will pack things up, what you might be able to leave in a Residence Hall storage area (if you live in the halls and they have space) and how you will transport the rest to where you are going.	<input type="checkbox"/> In late April or early May, students leaving campus for the summer need to make plans about how they will pack things up, what they might be able to leave in a Residence Hall storage area (if the student lives in the halls and there is space) and how they will transport the rest to where they are going.
<input type="checkbox"/> In late April you should look to see when your finals are scheduled and you are well advised to begin studying for them as early as possible. Schedules for finals are often different than your normal class schedule. Final exam schedules are available by going to: http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp and looking for the link for final exams.	<input type="checkbox"/> In late April students should look to see when their finals are scheduled and are well advised to begin studying for them as early as possible. Schedules for finals are often different than their normal class schedule. Final exam schedules are available by going to: http://www.twu.edu/academics.asp and looking for the link for final exams.
<input type="checkbox"/> If you have a post office box and are leaving campus for the summer, stop by the Post Office to discuss options about your mail...before you leave campus.	<input type="checkbox"/> If your student has a post office box and is leaving campus for the summer, they need to stop by the Post Office to discuss options about their mail...before they leave campus.

SUMMER

Students will have lots of skills they gained over the year which they can continue to use in the summer. However, it is very important to understand that most classes are 5 weeks or less, instead of 15 weeks. This means, in effect, that each day of class in summer is the equivalent of about a week in the Fall and Spring. Students should carefully consider which courses they might take. They should also realize that the summer experience is very intense academically. It is wise to take no more than one or two courses each short semester and to consider whether it is possible to work in addition to going to class.

For more information about these issues and for services which you may find useful, please visit our website: <http://www.twu.edu/o-sl/counseling/>.

<i>TWU Counseling Center Locations:</i>	<i>Denton West Jones Hall 940-898-3801</i>	<i>Dallas-Parkland FPH 120 214-689-6655</i>	<i>Dallas-Presbyterian DPB 16 214-706-2416</i>	<i>Houston 3rd Floor, S. Res. Hall 713-794-2059</i>
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