

A Handbook

For Parents, Families & Supporters
of University of Toronto Students on the
St. George Campus

Student Life

Welcome

Welcome to the U of T community! As a supporter we acknowledge the significant role you play in supporting your student and helping them achieve their academic and personal best. It's important that you have access to information about the different resources available. We understand that it can be difficult to know what the best way is to assist your student, and so we would like to provide you with a few recommendations of ways you can support:

1. **Set expectations together:** Ask your student what would be helpful and how they wish to be supported.
2. **Check-in:** Let the student lead the way in how often, but check-ins can be especially helpful during half-way and end of terms when most mid-terms and exams occur.
3. **Make recommendations of programs and services:** If your student is facing a challenge – suggest to them what resources to look into and how they may get in touch with them.
4. **Be encouraging:** Remain positive and reassure your student that they can overcome any challenge with the right support and resources.

Thank you for being a part of the U of T community alongside your student. We hope that this handbook can work to support you as you support them start strong and finish stronger.

Sincerely,
The Division of Student Life in the University of Toronto

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First things First

TCard Services and UTORid

A *TCard* is your student's campus identification and gives your student access to the library, gym and other services. Your student can even carry a cash balance to spend on food, printing and more. To learn more about how you can upload funds to your students *TCard* as a guest, visit the [TCard+ website](#).

Before your student visits *TCard Services*, they should check that they have the right documents needed and that their information matches their legal status. **For international students, a valid study permit is needed, and Canadian students need to bring proof of citizenship.** Once your student's *TCard* is obtained and activated, they will have access to password protected services via their *UTORid* such as the U of T Wi-Fi and *UTmail+* email account

For more information on *TCard services*, visit the [TCard Services website](#).

For more information on *UTORid*, visit [UTORid website](#).

Paying for Fees

Your student's invoices for fees, residence and meal plans are available online through [ACORN, the student online information service](#). You will not have direct access to their account but can still make payments on their behalf. Payments must be made through a financial institution, via a bank machine, teller, online or by telephone. No payments are accepted on campus and credit-card payments are not accepted. To find out more about paying fees such as how to make payments from outside Canada, or about OSAP and other financial aid, please visit the [Fees website](#).

Health & Dental Insurance Coverage

As a student at the U of T, your student is automatically covered by extended health insurance. This is provided through your student's student union, known as the *University of Toronto Student's Union* (UTSU). Extended health and dental coverage fill any gaps in provincial health care and other basic health-care programs. If your student already has health coverage, they can opt-out of Health and Dental coverage, as long as proof of coverage by an equivalent health plan can be provided. For more information on health & dental insurance coverage and opt-outs, visit the [UTSU website](#).

Registering for Accessibility Services

Encourage your student to [register with Accessibility Services](#) as early as possible if they identify with any of the following disabilities, health concerns or injuries:

- Acquired [brain injury or concussion](#)
- [Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder](#) (ADHD)
- [Autism Spectrum Disorder](#)
- [Chronic health issues](#) (e.g. bowel diseases, epilepsy, migraines)
- D/deaf, deafened or hard of hearing
- [Learning disability](#)
- [Mental health challenges, both permanent and temporary](#) (e.g. anxiety, depression, schizophrenia, eating disorders)
- Mobility/functional issues
- Low vision/legally blind
- [Temporary issues](#) (e.g. broken limbs)

Following registration, your student may be eligible for specific accommodations such as:

- Deadline flexibility
- Note-taking services & peer mentoring
- Test and exam accommodations

Visit the [Accessibility Services website](#) for additional information.

The Student Life App

The *Student Life App* gives your student quick access to U of T resources, upcoming events, and tips and lets your student create lists to stay organized. Encourage your student to download the app (and download the app yourself) through the *Google Play* or *iTunes stores* now! For more information visit the [Student Life App webpage](#).

The Start Strong Summer 2020 Checklist

Student Life at U of T has put together a [checklist](#) for your student to help support their transitioning over the summer months. Within it your student can find a brief overview of many useful resources and important dates to keep in mind before the Fall term.

Orientation and Welcome Events

Orientation

Orientation at U of T is decentralized, which means that each college and faculty is responsible for its own orientation and transition programs. While each area may have different activities, all of these programs are to help new students make a smooth transition to their first year at U of T. During Orientation your student will learn about the awesome places and people on campus, and about the University's many programs and services. By participating in Orientation programming, your student will start to find their community on campus.

Each department, faculty and college has different dates but the majority of programming happens the first week of September before classes start. If your student is already affiliated with a college, they should have received some information from their college or faculty about registering for Orientation. If your student wants to attend their Orientation week events, we would advise that you and your student browse the various college webpages and social media pages for more information about orientation week schedules and how to register.

If you or your student wants to learn more about the different colleges and systems, visit the [Arts & Science website](#).

Orientation Week and Welcome Events Across Campus

Other than the various college and faculty orientations, we have a large number of orientation and welcome events across campus that are geared toward the diverse needs of our student population at U of T. Here is a list of some of the events we offer in order to best support your student in their transition:

- Mature and Transfer Student Welcome
- Centre for International Experience Reception for international students
- First Nations House Orientation
- Moving Forward for students with a disability
- Queer Orientation

To find out more information about these events such as dates, location, schedules etc., visit our [online Orientation calendar](#).

The University of Toronto Student's Union Orientation runs on Sept 8.

Programs to get your student started

Other than *Orientation Week*, U of T offers several additional programs to help your student's transition to post-secondary life. These programs can be done in addition to or in replacement of orientation events provided by the various colleges, faculty and other student groups. In order to ensure that your student can make the best of their experience here, we suggest they register for one or both of the following programs.

Starting Point Program

Starting Point is a build-your-own experience program that introduces your student to all the U of T has to offer and will set your student up for success during their first year. When your student signs up for Starting Point, they will receive a weekly email with helpful information including what is happening across campus, in order to choose which workshops and involvement activity fits their interests and schedule, in addition to timely tips on adjusting to life at the U of T.

For more information on the benefits of the program, how to participate and register, visit the [Starting Point webpage](#).

Learning Community Programs - FLC's and SLC's

First-year Learning Communities (FLC) and Second-year Learning Communities (SLC) are programs geared toward the transition needs of first and second-year students. Learning communities get together with a small group of students in their respective year, who are also registered in several of the same courses, labs and tutorials. Each group meets on a bi-weekly basis for academic, developmental and social activities facilitated by senior-year students and with the guidance of faculty and staff advisors. Coming together your student will create a community of learners that will help ease their transition from high school to university. For students that complete the program, a notation on their transcript and co-curricular record will be received.

For more information, visit [First-year learning communities](#) (FLC) and [Second-year learning communities](#).

Student Mentorship Programs

Another way students can find support for their transitioning is through various mentorship programs across campus. Your student can get inspired and motivated by connecting with an

upper-year student. Mentors provide valuable guidance to your student and challenge them to do their best. Some of our most popular programs include:

- [Access & Inclusion Peer Programs](#) - This mentorship program helps first-year students belonging to historically marginalized, minority or underrepresented groups. New Students are paired with experienced upper-year mentors to help avoid potential barriers to success, access and inclusion at U of T.
- [International Student Experience Ambassador Program](#) - Incoming international students can get as many questions answered as possible before arriving at U of T later this summer.
- [Access Us Peer Mentorship Program](#) - Students with disabilities can get connected with a peer mentor and a supportive community that includes social events, academic workshops and career development.

More mentorship programs can be found through the [Mentorship & Peer Programs](#) unit.

Academic, Wellness & Career Support

Academic Success

Adjusting to university life and [university expectations](#) can be tricky to navigate. That is why at U of T, we have a whole centre (and many departments) dedicated to supporting your student's well-being and overall success.

For individualized support, students have the option to meet with a [learning strategist](#) so that they can:

- Learn to manage time and address procrastination issues and stress
- Develop new strategies, including active studying, reading and note-taking, and exam preparation
- Improve research, writing, and presentation skills
- Learn about the university's academic systems and services

Learn more about programs and services at [Academic Success](#).

Career Education & Exploration

How will your student find their career? Perhaps they have a "gut instinct" about the path they've always wanted to follow. Perhaps they want to pursue a career that is directly related to

their degree, or they may talk to someone working in a career they are interested in and get inspired.

At *Career Exploration & Education*, students can attend workshops, book one-on-one appointments, attend Career Fairs and other employer events, job shadow, and more!

Visit the [CxED website](#) for more information.

CLNx & the Co-curricular record

In order to ensure that students are recognized for their involvement by employers and graduate schools, students are encouraged to contribute to a co-curricular record. The *Co-curricular Record* (CCR) is an official U of T document that recognizes your student's involvement as a significant part of their university experience. One great way for your student to find opportunities to get involved during their time here at the U of T is through the CCR database. Alternatively, students may also find opportunities as both a student and alumni, through the *Co-curricular Learning Network* (CLNx) website.

For more information, visit the [CLNx](#) and the [Co-curricular Record webpage](#).

Health & Wellness

Being in university can challenge your student. That is why *Health & Wellness* at U of T offers students a wide range of medical and mental health services to help support them in achieving their personal and academic best. Not only does *Health & Wellness* provide the same services as your family physician, but additional services offered include mental health services, nutrition counselling & education, sexual and reproductive health, and documentation services for disability registration.

For more information, visit the [Health & Wellness website](#).

U of T My Student Support Program

The *U of T My Student Support Program* (MySSP) provides all U of T students with immediate and/or ongoing confidential, 24 hour support for any school, health, or general life concern at no cost to your student. Your student can call or chat with a counsellor directly from their phone whenever, wherever they are. International students still have access to existing campus and community mental health services.

Encourage your student to read more about [MySSP](#) and download the **MySSP app**: [Apple App Store](#) | [Google Play](#).

Writing Centres

U of T has over fourteen writing centres available to students as part of their academic program, meaning there is no additional cost to your student to use them. Writing centres at U of T provide individual consultations with trained writing instructors, along with group teaching in workshops and courses. The mandate of writing centres is to help your student develop writing skills as they progress through their studies. These centres are hosted at various colleges, departments and faculties across campus.

For a full list of writing centres, read [WRITING CENTRES: How We Work and How to Work with Us](#) (PDF).

Supporting International Students

Centre for International Experience

The *Centre for International Experience* is a meeting place for a diverse community of international students coming to U of T and domestic students looking to go abroad. If your student is an international student, there are some things that they will need to prepare for before they arrive in Toronto - everything from organizing their travel documents to finding somewhere to live. To check out the Centre's [pre-arrival information](#).

Visit the [Centre for International Experience](#) for more information.

Academic and Language Support

As an international student at U of T, your student will encounter many new experiences and challenges. Academic culture can vary greatly from one country to another, and many students need time to adjust to new rules and expectations. Our transition advisors are here to help your student understand how things work at the U of T. CIE transition advisors can help your student:

- **Adjust to Canada** - they will learn how to form friendships in Canada, succeed in the U of T classroom, live in Toronto's climate or deal with feeling homesick
- **Build new community** - they will learn how to get involved on- and off-campus, find groups and sign up for activities
- **Make a plan** - they will learn how to make a plan to achieve their goals during their time here at the U of T
- **Find help when they need it** - they will get access to helpful programs, services and information

Learn how to book an appointment with a [CIE transition advisor](#).

Supporting Mature Students & Students with Family Responsibilities

Family Care Office

Here at U of T, we believe that family care responsibilities should never take away from any student's university experiences. The university is dedicated to supporting students with family commitments, aiding them in successfully completing their studies while caring for family members and themselves. The *Family Care Office* provides confidential guidance, resources, referrals, educational programming and advocacy for the U of T community and their families. They offer a peer mentorship program as well as a variety of workshops to assist your student in all of their transitions while at U of T such as caring for a newborn, kids, a partner, siblings, and/or the elderly.

Visit the [Family Care Office website](#) for more information.

Family Housing

U of T offers affordable housing specifically for students with families. Students with a partner, spouse, or children studying full-time are welcome to apply to family residence located at Yonge and Bloor – a five minute walk to campus. For more information on amenities, eligibility requirements and how to apply, please email family.housing@utoronto.ca, call 416-978-8049 or visit the [Student Family Housing website](#).

Robarts Library Childcare

U of T has designed a new family study space at *Robarts Library* (the first in Canada!) to help student-parents ease the stress of finding childcare and a place to study. The new space welcomes parents and their children under 12 and includes work stations, child-sized furniture, chalk boards, TV screen and a handful of toys to keep your students children busy.

To find out more information about the space and how to register, visit the [Family Study Space at Robarts webpage](#).

Early Learning Centre

The *Early Learning Centre* provides an inclusive learning and care environment that promotes the health, safety, nutrition and overall well-being of each child. There are three different locations that offer three different types of programs: Infant, toddler, and preschool.

For more information about programs and who to contact for location-specific questions, visit the [Early Learning Centre website](#).

Supporting a Diverse Student Population

First Nations House

First Nations House (FNH) provides culturally relevant services to Indigenous students in support of academic success, personal growth and leadership development. We also offer learning opportunities for all students to engage with Indigenous communities within U of T and beyond.

We know that navigating financial aid as an Indigenous student can be tricky and FNH is here to help students learn about and access a wide variety of scholarships and grants. If your student wants financial aid advising or wants to read about the many financial aid opportunities available to Indigenous students, they should contact Julie Ann Shepard, Co-ordinator of Academic Support.

More information about FNH, academic support and indigenous community building, visit the [First Nations House website](#).

Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office

The *Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office* (ARCDO) within the *Division of Human Resources & Equity*, provides services to support university members in their efforts to foster environments that are intentionally racially diverse and inclusive through the advancement of equitable practices, education and training and the provision of complaints resolution supports on matters of race, faith and intersecting identities as guided by the *Ontario Human Rights Commission*.

Your student can attend educational programming and connect to address complaints of harassment and discrimination.

For more information, visit the [Anti-Racism & Cultural Diversity Office website](#).

Sexual & Gender Diversity Office

The *Sexual & Gender Diversity Office* (SGDO) develops partnerships to build supportive learning and working communities at U of T by working towards equity and challenging discrimination. The SGDO provides innovative education, programming, resources and advocacy on sexual and gender diversity for students, staff and faculty across the university's three campuses.

U of T offers a wide range of opportunities for students to engage with sexual and gender diversity within and outside the classroom. The SGDO, along with a wide range of student organizations and university departments host a range of programs and services to support LGBTQ students, students who are questioning their sexual and gender orientation, allies and students who would like to learn more about LGBTQ communities.

For more information, visit the [Sexual & Gender Diversity Office website](#).

Faith Spaces

Multi-faith Centre for Spiritual Study & Practice

Beliefs are a big part of who we are and how we learn, and while U of T is a secular institution, we respect everyone's right to worship. The *Multi-Faith Centre* supports the spiritual well-being of everyone on campus and provides opportunities for people to learn from each other while exploring questions of meaning, purpose and identity. Our facilities and programs accommodate a wide variety of spiritual and faith-based practices and encourage interfaith dialogue and spiritual development as part of the learning experience for all students.

In addition to the *Multi-Faith Centre*, the University of Toronto, St George campus offers other multi-purpose spaces suitable for individual and collective prayer and spiritual practices.

Visit the [Multi-Faith Centre website](#) and/or the [full list of other faith spaces](#) on campus.

Student Clubs, Organizations & Unions

With over 800 clubs on campus, clubs and organizations are a great way for your student to find community at school and get involved within the U of T community. With a diverse range of interests, students can obtain membership to a wide range of social events, leadership programs and training programs geared toward club members and club leaders across the St. George

campus. Student governments, student unions or student councils are also a great resource for social programming, developing leadership skills and giving back to the community.

For more information about clubs, organizations, student governments, unions and councils advise your student to visit their faculty or college page or visit the [Clubs & Leadership Development unit website](#).

Resources for Student's Questions

Registrarial Services

We know that U of T and its many services can make it difficult for your student to know where and whom to turn to when they are looking for answers. When in doubt, we recommend you direct them to their divisional registrar. Your student's registrar is one of the best resources your student can have for navigating university services and resources.

Although there are some differences among divisions, in general, your student should call or visit their registrar for:

- **Academic Advising** - help in formulating and/or adjusting their short- or long-term educational goals, including course selection and interpreting degree requirements and understanding university regulations
- **Personal Counselling** - assistance with any matter that is getting in the way of your student's success as a student
- **Financial Counselling** - help with financial planning, budgeting and overcoming financial emergencies

Your student's registrar can also refer them to appropriate resources on campus if they are struggling with personal or academic issues that are affecting their school work.

For a list of registrar's and student life offices, visit the [Meet with your registrar/academic advisor webpage](#).

Key Information & Resources for Families & Supporters

Access to Information

While your interest in your student's progress is certainly encouraged, you may find it disconcerting to learn that you do not have automatic access to student records. It is university policy and by law that the university cannot release details about a student to anyone, even parents, without the student's written consent. If there are concerns regarding performance, rules and deadlines, for example, it is up to the student to address them directly. In most cases, that is done through the *Office of the Registrar*, which employs a staff of experienced and concerned academic and financial advisors to assist your student to succeed.

Social Media

Social media is one of the best ways to keep up to the moment on programs, services and resources available to your student.

U of T has a large [social media directory](#) that covers all university channels.

Student Life Social Media maintains the most followed student-focused social media channels on campus.

- **Instagram:** @uoftstudentlife
- **Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/UofTStudentLife>
- **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/UofTStudentLife/>
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/UofTStudentLife>