



PREPARE FOR COLLEGE ACADEMICS

by the student editors of **LEAPING FROM PUBLIC HIGH TO A TOP U.**
a Students Helping Students™ book

Probably the most challenging part of going from public high to a top U. is academics. If you're lucky to go to a public high with great academics and amazing teachers, this part of your transition will be less difficult. Still, give it some thought—there are a few things you can do to prepare and make your first few months on campus go smoother.

"I think the one mistake I made was not perfecting my study skills in high school. Like most good students, I did well in classes without studying all that hard. When my teachers talked about study skills I wouldn't bother paying attention. In college, study skills can make or break your performance. I spent the first few weeks on campus changing the way I study to make it more effective and efficient."

**Freshman,
Emory University**

The first thing you should do is get a good idea about what your next four years will be like academically. Understand how each semester is structured at your school—midterms, finals, breaks, etc.—what types of classes are offered—lectures, discussions, tutorials—and what core curriculum requirements you'll have to fulfill. The more you know before you come to campus, the easier your adjustment will be. To help you get organized, here's a brief list of questions to consider:

- How many classes or credits are you required to take each semester? Can you take more than the requirement? Do you need special permissions? Is it common for students to take more/less than the standard course load? Sometimes students may take more than the standard course load during the first few years so that they can take a lighter course load while writing their senior thesis.
- Is there a core curriculum, or set of required classes, and what does it include? Are you required to complete any part of the core curriculum during your freshman year? Can you substitute higher-level courses if you have AP credit?
- In general, what are the rules about getting credit for the AP courses that you took in high school? What do you have to do to get it?
- Are there any special programs or majors that you're interested in? Are there any specific rules about declaring these majors? When, in general, will you have to declare your major?
- What is the process for signing up for classes at the beginning of each semester? What are drop/add rules?
- How does the advising system work? Are you assigned an advisor or can you pick one?

By August, your university will have probably inundated your mailbox with letters and packages containing everything you ever wanted to know about your new school—and more. It's very easy to throw everything in a pile and think: "Oh, I'll look at it later." If nothing else, check the information pertaining to your academics. It may seem uninteresting or overly complicated, but you don't want to miss anything important.

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For more helpful tips and proven strategies from students and recent grads on preparing for academics, getting adjusted, tackling tough classes, avoiding intimidation, getting the most out of your education, and much more, visit **www.StudentsHelpingStudents.com** and buy the Students Helping Students™ guide titled **LEAPING FROM PUBLIC HIGH TO A TOP U.**, available at bookstores and online stores, such as Amazon.com.