

100 Tips for First Year Students



By: Ryan Hamby

1. Get outside and explore Ann Arbor (not just campus)
2. Use Google Calendar. The app is really helpful for on-the-go, and if you add a bookmark or make it accessible from your dock/desktop on your computer, it's really easy and convenient to use. The written planner works too, but most people use something online.
3. Double-check exam times, especially the day of/before the exam. It will be helpful to enter all of your exams into your calendar during the first week of the semester. This way, you won't schedule anything during an exam and plus you can start preparing earlier.
4. Hydrate often... and make sure to reuse your water bottle! Pretty much every building has the water bottle refill stations.
5. Use ALL of your BlueBucks + Dining Dollars before the school year ends (you can check your balance online at <https://get.cbord.com/umich/full/prelogin.php>). Some people don't use them and they end up going to waste at the end of the year.
6. Explore going abroad for the spring or summer. If you have any questions about it, I went to Berlin this spring and I learned a lot, plus had a great time.
7. It's okay if you don't have an internship after your first year. In fact, a lot of people work normal summer jobs, volunteer, travel, and spend time with friends and family.
8. You don't have to sign your sophomore housing lease first semester; you can wait until Winter
9. Rush greek life if it appeals to you... and make sure to be yourself. Just a heads up: sorority dues are about \$400/semester and fraternity dues are about \$800/semester for most chapters.
10. Jimmy John's Italian Club Sandwich
11. Try No Thai! for a cheap, healthy meal. You'll get tired of the same rice and General Tso's chicken from the dining hall and want better Asian-style food.
12. Find a way to explore Detroit... sports games, concerts, plays, parades, date parties etc. Ubers can be expensive so try to find a buddy with a car and go as a group.
13. Apps to get: U of Michigan App, Google Calendar, Double Map, Duo Mobile, VENMO, Canvas Student, Spotify (student discount \$5/month), Slack (clubs), PayRange (laundry), GroupMe (clubs/dorm/everything), CamScanner (scanner app)
14. Get to know the layout of the streets. The campus is huge so studying them before getting to campus will help you know your way around.
15. Power ranked study spots (best to worst):
 - a. Dude 3rd floor
 - b. Law Library
 - c. Hatcher Stacks
 - d. Hatcher Reference Room
 - e. Alice Lloyd study room
 - f. GG Brown Blue Room
 - g. Ugli floors 2-4

- h. Ugli 1st floor (usually for small group projects or people in a rush/lazy to go upstairs)
- 16. If you start a relationship with someone in the first month, make sure you know what you're doing because there are many other things you can dedicate your time to in the first semester.
- 17. Be a Michigan football fan and go to the games; don't be disappointed when we lose to our rivals, it's sadly become a bit familiar lately. If you don't want to go, you'd be surprised by how much you can scam people for them, especially in the Facebook group (I hate to say it, but it's true). And don't lose or forget your tickets on game days.
- 18. Do not carry alcohol unconcealed alcohol in the streets and do not be doing dumb drunk stuff in the streets. Cops will not go out looking to hand out MIPs unless you're doing one of these.
- 19. Try to arrange your classes back to back to back... or do work near your next class. Time is essential.
- 20. Block off time to not worry about schoolwork or clubs at all. I found this to be good for Friday afternoons and part of Saturdays. Having time to destress and plan is good and you can just enjoy college.
- 21. Make sure you have a HEAVY winter jacket and boots. This past winter it was a -36°F wind chill. (And most days don't feel much warmer than that)
- 22. ENGR 101: Try skipping class and watch the lecture online later. See if you like it online because you will save a lot of time from not commuting to North Campus. Do the projects when you first get there and go to office hours if you need help. I found doing the projects by myself helped me a lot for exams. DO NOT EVEN LOOK AT OR GIVE OTHER PEOPLE CODE. THEY WILL CATCH EVERYTHING YOU CAN THINK OF (and no, changing variable names and a few functions will most certainly not do the trick).
- 23. ENGR 100: It really depends on which teacher/class you have, but meet with your team early and make sure you're on pace to finish early and organized.
- 24. Calculus 1-2: Read the book (try to find a free downloadable PDF on FaceBook or something), but absolutely study mostly the Exam Shop site and Team HW; it has almost every type of problem from the past 15 years. Team HW and quizzes can be important and you should try, but they had no impact on my or many other people's final grades. Exams are everything. (Do the 5% WebWork and try to get all of that, since that definitely goes on your grade).
- 25. CHEM 130/131: The lab is more work than the course. Do your best in lab, but the lecture part is more impactful on your grade. Read the book, do Problem Roulette, read the book again (and look through all the steps of the problems). OWL can be tough but is very good practice.
- 26. Physics 140/141: Sign up for a study group. The first exam is easy-ish, but it gets very hard after that. Review lecture slides, do the practice exams multiple times each, and go to office hours. Flip-It Physics can be skipped through if you click through the slides if you're in a rush (then go back and watch) and Mastering Physics should be started and hopefully done well in advance of Wednesday nights. 141... easy-ish to start but try to learn some Python before and it won't be too bad. Study for the pre-lab quizzes and do the assignments.

27. Don't feel rushed to pick a major. (I'm a sophomore and still am picking my major). Michigan Engineering is phenomenal, so don't worry about national rankings or department sizes (they're all good). CS, EE, ChemE are sort of known as the hardest, IOE(-Z) is "easiest", but is still hard. Best way to explore: talk to people in each major, research jobs you're interested in, take classes in them. Don't be intimidated by any EECS courses or Organic Chem; you'll do fine if you try your best.
28. Power ranked dining halls:
- South Quad (Sandwich station and lunch in general are best)
 - MoJo (very close to 1st, cookies are impeccable)
 - Panda Express/Fireside Cafe (BlueBucks + Dining Dollars)
 - East Quad (can be too fancy sometimes)
 - Bursley
 - Markley (burgers and personal pizza)
 - Oxford Twigs (Late Night Hours: open until 11pm Mon-Thurs)
 - North Quad (never been there)
29. Don't think that a dining hall open until a certain time means that there will be food; go at least 30 minutes before close for decent food. They start throwing it away or just let it run out about 30 minutes before it closes, unless it's a weekend night typically.
30. Weekend dining hall hours aren't great, so get some protein bars/fruit if you get up before 9am on weekends. Eat a solid breakfast and lunch because they close from 1pm-5pm.
31. If you find someone's M-Card/wallet, look on the back bottom left corner above the barcode of the M-Card to find the username; email them and figure out where to meet them to give it back to them. I dropped mine before so whenever I found someone's I did this for them.
32. A lot of people listen to music between classes, but if you need to memorize something, try recording yourself and playing it through your headphones when you walk around.
33. Bird scooters-- don't get on one drunk, don't park it in the street, don't ride in the ice/snow, don't be dumb and floor it to cut people off. (They might not be coming back this year for safety reasons I think).
34. Check out the Arb! There's an entrance across from Oxford, by Markley, and near the hospital helicopter. Kayaks, running, reading, relaxing, anything really. Note: police have been known to catch a lot of people smoking weed here, so be careful if you do (this is still University property so it is not just a cheap fine).
35. Video games and Netflix are a waste of time, pretty much no exceptions. There's always something better to do in college. You can still do them, just limit them.
36. Set a limit on your phone for social media use. Snapchat and Instagram can especially be addicting with your new friends, but do your best to not get carried away in what other people who you might not even be sure are your true friends are doing.
37. Be careful about dorm parties. Never open the door until you look and see who it is. If you let an officer inside, he/she can search the whole room. Keep the volume down and the door closed and you should be fine.
38. Be considerate of your roommate. Make your bed everyday, keep the room clean, do your laundry, offer to get meals together, get to know each other. My roommate and I are still

very good friends and having this friendship made any mistakes that we made or tough days that we had much easier to get over.

39. Call your parents/family at least once a week.. It should not be the other way around. Be engaged and don't forget some of your biggest supporters. If you do poorly, if you do well, or just want to complain, you'll feel much better after talking to them.
40. To get to the airport, try to split an Uber with 3 others (and book early) or use Michigan Flyer/ CSG AirBus. These are \$9-\$15. I spent \$80 on a 6:00am Uber to the airport for fall break because I booked way too late. Get to the airport at least an hour before, because you might have to walk about 20 minutes to get to your gate from security. Once I had to walk a mile through security in a hotel connected to the terminal, so anything can happen at Detroit Metro.
41. Zingerman's is obviously delicious but it is very far and expensive. If you want to get a similar experience, try Amer's on State or Church St.
42. Some restaurants in Ann Arbor are 21+bars after 9pm or so, so they may deny you to eat if you come past then.
43. Food Recommendations (no particular order, bold = nicer/not fast food):
 - a. Tropical Smoothie Cafe
 - b. Zingerman's
 - c. Panda Express
 - d. Potbelly
 - e. Jimmy John's
 - f. No Thai!
 - g. Panchero's
 - h. Chipotle (LONG lines often)
 - i. Elevation burger
 - j. Salads Up
 - k. Buffalo Wild Wings
 - l. NeoPalis
 - m. NYPD
 - n. Blue Tractor**
 - o. Mani**
 - p. Sava's**
 - q. Pacific Rim**
44. UberEats and other food delivery services are a dangerous game for your wallet
45. Text and call your friends from home often and get a sense of their experience. A lot will change in college, but you have to make an effort to stay in touch with people from home, or else you may never really reconnect again.
46. Try a design team! Solar Car, M FLY, M-Racing, Baja, Rover, Autonomy, among others are favorites. These are some of the best ways to get hands-on with engineering materials and techniques. It may be a hassle to get up to the Wilson Center, but it is worth it. Sign up for Wilson Center I and II training ASAP if you want access to the shop.
47. Check out the Museum of Art. It has some outstanding and inspiring pieces there in the heart of campus.

48. If you think you might need that textbook, that charger, or that notebook, bring it with you. You never know what will happen during the day and what you will have to do while out on campus. The most successful days are the ones when you leave early and get back late.
49. Health is everything. The flower-looking diagram that the university posts everywhere looks corny, but each of them will most definitely impact how you are feeling at some point during the year.
50. Pay people back and make sure that people pay you back. Finances in college are complicated enough, but be respectful of others and don't let others take advantage of you. Venmo request people for money if they don't pay you back.
51. Set timers for your laundry so that you get done faster and others do not have to wait. It is rude to take people's stuff out if it's in there for too long, but sometimes you have no choice. PayRange has timers on the app that may be 5 minutes off from the actual time on the machine, so be cautious about that.
52. A bike, skateboard, or scooter is very helpful until December and after mid-March. Don't feel weird about using them on campus while a lot of people walk; it saves so much time.
53. Take out your trash frequently and make sure to recycle. Don't let your old food stink up your room.
54. Go out with a group, especially if you're a girl. Not only is it more fun, but it is important that you keep track of people to not let people with bad intentions to make bad decisions.
55. Campus is generally safe, but people tend to steal things or misplace things when alcohol is involved. For something like an expensive jacket or wallet, consider putting a Tile (about \$15) into it so that it can be tracked on campus.
56. Boots for the winter are almost a must. It gets cold, icy, slushy, and miserable out there. On a campus where people walk outside a lot, make sure to have a good pair of boots.
57. Try to schedule for the morning and force yourself to be a morning person. If you don't have early classes, then make a deal with a good friend to go to the gym, library, coffeeshop, or wherever decently early so that you are excited to get out of bed. If you have to work a job early in 4 years, get in the habit now and you will see how much more you can get out of your day.
58. Try to buy or rent used textbooks. I bought new ones first semester and they are still sitting on a shelf in my room at home as a waste of hundreds of dollars.
59. It's maize, not yellow.
60. Take day trips to the surrounding area. Sometimes you just need to get out of an area of 18-22 year olds for a bit. Try going to the Briarwood Mall, Matthaei Botanical Gardens, a Tigers game, or a fall farm festival.
61. No one is going to force you to do anything or participate in anything. It is the beauty and also the trap of college. Remember that you got into this university to engage, create, and innovate. If you try something and don't like it, you're learning more about yourself than you have before, which is good.
62. If your parents come to visit, let them meet your friends but make sure to spend the bulk of your time with them (especially if you live far away).
63. To get from the Diag to the Hill or vice versa: cut through the chemistry building. It is faster (think hypotenuse) and usually is better than the weather outside.

64. Bursley-Baits is the fastest and most frequently-running bus from Pierpont to CCTC. From 10am-2pm it will be packed, so make sure to be polite but also make it your mission to get on the bus.
65. Do something productive on the bus. Sometimes I would listen to music and stare out the window to think about something on my mind, but I felt a lot better if I tried to do small tasks like memorizing a formula, look over a few slides, respond to texts and emails, or briefly check social media.
66. Email is huuuuuuuge in college. You may not be used to checking at least 5 times a day, but you have to make it a habit. Try to set up a notification system so that you see them all right as they come out. Read all emails and stay on top of things that come your way.
67. It may be tempting to study in bed, but for me it was my worst idea to do this. You will get really tired in college and laying down to study will end up being either a very long nap or a night wasted. Therefore, sit down at your desk or get out of your room to study.
68. Take a few trips to the fountain on north campus past the Dude. It will close some time in October until late April and is one of the most peaceful places to get some work done.
69. Look into applying to MDP. They have awesome opportunities that can be difficult for freshmen to get, but some do land positions and find it very interesting.
70. Check out MudBowl. It is a huge muddy football event that raises money for cancer and takes place around 10am on homecoming or one of the last game days at the field in front of Maize and Blue Deli. Also check out WinterFest, a similar event featuring broomball that takes place on a Saturday in early February near Oxford.
71. Never get on the Northeast shuttle (unless you absolutely know where you are going). This will take you an hour out of the way with no way of getting back soon. So no, do not take this from central to north or vice versa.
72. Go to the events that ECRC hosts. I found the resume reviews and interview tips to be extremely helpful. They offer much more than this and are a great source if you are looking for internship help. Just because you may be a freshman does not mean that you should not be preparing your credentials.
73. Take some time to appreciate the Law Quad. This is known as the most scenic place on campus and is worthy of sitting in the grass and reading a book, tossing a frisbee, or whatever.
74. Do not go to a quiet library (Law, Hatcher, top 2 floors Ugli) with a cough or sneeze. People want these floors to be quiet for a reason and are not willing to catch a plague or hear what it sounds like while they are studying.
75. One of the best places on campus to get group projects done is in Ross. The Winter Garden area is particularly good for this, and Blau can also be a good study spot.
76. People jaywalk all the time on campus. If you do it, make sure to look both ways at least twice. Also, check behind you to make sure people aren't ignorantly absorbed into their phones and will follow right behind you to get hit by a car.
77. Try to be responsible when crossing at CCTC to let the bus go when there is a natural break. There is nothing worse than having to wait 20 minutes for a bus because random students cut off the buses.

78. Be environmentally conscious. Try to limit the number of paper towels/hand dryers you use, turn off the lights, fans, and electronics when you aren't in the room, Uber less, eat healthy, recycle. It does not take much effort, but it does make a difference.
79. The university factors in \$60 for the year in each student's meal plan to account for broken/stolen plates and utensils. I am not telling you to steal, but don't feel bad if you break something or accidentally bring something back to your room.
80. The CCRB offers classes in many different activities that are relatively cheap. These are a good way to learn new things, start a workout plan, and meet new friends.
81. Don't be overwhelmed by the amount of money that people have or appear to have based on clothing, devices, or what they say they have. A lot of wealthy people attend Michigan, same as a lot of other top schools.
82. Don't go to class just to do work on projects in other classes or go on social media. A fair number of classes are optional, so if you choose to go (which you should), pay attention and learn something. Your tuition does not pay for exams and grades; it pays for an education that you get from everything you experience in Ann Arbor.
83. Bite off as much as you can chew. You do not know your limits and will not know your limits until you push yourself hard enough. Be smart and prioritize things so that you can cut back if you have to, but you should never feel like you're wasting time doing nothing.
84. Things often will take a lot longer than you think they will. This can be reading a chapter of a book, getting from South Quad to North campus, or just eating a meal. It is essential that you keep your schedule organized and allow time for things to get done.
85. Get a good medium-sized umbrella that you can use for rainy days. Many people just wear rain jackets and tough it out, but then your backpack gets soaked, as does your laptop.
86. Sometimes a Google Doc or Word document will look completely different from what you submit on Canvas. Usually, downloading it as a PDF and uploading it that way will be best. Be careful, as PDFs may change the format slightly.
87. Organization is key. You will likely have to organize a system of electronic and physical documents/notes to keep track of. Some people use planners, but a lot use a notes app on their laptop to keep track of assignments. Google Calendar is great for classes, exams, and events. Notes are up to you, but some classes do not allow electronic devices.
88. UHS can sometimes be a mess. Many of my friends were misdiagnosed with injuries and illnesses. A trip to the ER may end up costing you thousands of dollars, so be careful about going there. Minute Clinic at CVS has an online sign-in with maybe an hour long queue and can be good if you want to also pick up your prescription almost immediately.
89. Consider keeping some sort of a written or online log of what you do and what happens in your life. You might forget it if you do not keep track of it.
90. If you ever need any tech support, go to the Computer Showcase and ask them your questions. They aren't there just to sell you products; they'll help you with whatever.
91. To avoid the freshman 15, make sure that you weigh yourself every so often. It can be hard to judge your exercise and eating, so go to the locker room at the gym to weigh in. Try to keep your "cheat foods" (MoJo cookies, pizza, etc) to 1 dish per meal.
92. If you're playing music in your room to chill, try to be mindful of the people around you. Others may be studying, sleeping, or on the phone so try to keep it down.

93. Hold the door for people who would get to the door before it closes behind you. It may be a small gesture, but it is kind of expected on campus.
94. The Fishbowl has a reserved corner in the back left for just engineering students, as these are the CAEN computers. If you sit down at a busy time, make sure to actually use the computers and not just the desk space because other people need it.
95. If you're on the Hill and need to go to a 7-11-type convenience store, check out Victors located in the lobby of Mojo at the top of the dining hall.
96. You won't need a fan ever again after the first three weeks, so try to put it away somewhere or send it home.
97. People will try to rip you off or steal your information because they know that you are an oblivious college kid. Make sure to not give any personal information out to people you do not know or are not part of the university.
98. Familiarize yourself with the acronyms. The better job you do with this now, the less headaches you will get.
99. If you are looking to work a job, consider working at the dining hall. The pay is decent and it is close to where you live (if not in the same exact building).
100. Lastly, have fun. College is meant to be more fun than stressful. Go Blue!