

Transitioning into Student Life 101

Hello students!

Welcome to the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus. We are *really very happy to have you join us on your academic journey.*

Everything is new to you and so you can expect some changes and challenges along the way. But just know that you are not alone and you have an outstanding support structure set up to aid you from the start. Many and most of your concerns can be answered with some ease, and any that cannot, we will be happy to research them and get right back to you.

Most importantly, rest assured that by keeping your head on, you will be able to get past most challenges and make it through the transition satisfactorily.

Now, here are a few scenarios which you might face along the way and a few suggestions on how you might handle them. Don't forget, use your discretion and judgment: there is no right or wrong way to handle anything. But each particular situation which you are faced with will have to be assessed at the time and you make a decision of how best to proceed. In any case, don't hesitate to contact us if you simply don't have an idea of how to proceed.

1. I can't seem to organise my time properly! I keep having difficulty to balance out my classes with other activities, with my friends and I feel I'm getting out of control!

The key to a well organised schedule is **prioritising**. You will need to decide what's most important for your life for the next few years while you are a student, and in some cases, a working student. This might mean having to concentrate more for the time being on attending and participating in your lectures and tutorials during the semester and leaving some of your usual social activities for weekends and after hours. There is such a short time to absorb and digest all the information that is going to come in during a semester, you will need to be properly focussed in order to process and to manage it properly. *Lots of tips for studying and finding a good balance during your University life will be made available during the Orientation Programmes and in the First Year Experience(FYE) Programme as well.*

2. I am not accustomed to living with strangers and I find that I don't get along with my room-mate or my group members.

This is a normal challenge in human interaction, and you will find a similar difficulty with room mates and if you have to work in groups during your University life. So at least you know that your colleagues are probably going through exactly the same thing! The recommendation: Allow yourself to get to know your room-mates or colleagues by extending yourself in friendship and by keeping an open mind. All of your fellow students are also trying their best to assimilate to being a student in a pretty rigorous academic environment, which is difficult to most persons, so it is very important that you do your best to not take things personally and do your small bit to make things go smoother. What you give out, you are most likely going to receive back. *Tips on Working with Others and Working in Groups will form a part of the Orientation Programmes and the FYE Programme.*

3. I am not accustomed to academic writing and I feel really insecure about my skills here. I'm really concerned I am going to fail as a result of this.

Many students, although very knowledgeable about the subject matter, do find difficulty in expressing themselves in concise and effective ways without some instruction practice. We encourage you to participate in the English for Academic Purposes course if you have any doubts at all in this area, and also to take the opportunity to practise essay writing during the semester for review by your tutors, who can give you good guidance on your progress from stage to stage during your course.

There will be several other opportunities to look into Student Life Scenarios and how best to handle them during our Orientation Week workshops and we encourage you to sign up for these and the FYE Programme as well.

4. You have been locked out of the E-learning system, you are unable to locate your classroom, your student information has not been updated, you cannot print in the computer labs, you are feeling overwhelmed or disoriented; any of the above situations may occur and you are not sure where to start or where to go for help.

In these circumstances and any other such situations contact the Student Enrolment & Retention Unit (SERU) – your One-Stop Hub for information, guidance, referrals and assistance.

Don't hesitate to bring us your suggestions on how you believe other students might transition more easily as well into the University, so that we can continue to improve the entrance process for our University family!

Again, welcome to the University of the West Indies. We look forward to journeying with you!

**Yours sincerely,
The Student Services Department**