



2017-2018

# Student and Parent Handbook



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# What is in the Book

The transition to university holds special challenges for new students and their families. This handbook is designed to address your needs, as the family member or support person of a new student at Connect. During their studies here, the students will undergo many new life experiences as they make the transition to university life and study in the US.

We have compiled information from Connect and our partner universities so that this Handbook may serve as a resource to explore the many support services available to assist the student in their transition to Connect and the US. You can also use it throughout the year as a guide to important dates and deadlines, including visa and college application checklists.

Connect cultivates holistic learning that has a lasting and transformative impact on students and their communities. At Connect, we believe the journey is the reward. Our programs and services are designed to help students pursue their passions; learn by doing; contribute to their communities; explore their identities; develop transferable skills; achieve their academic goals and graduate in the US with a stronger sense of who they are and what they can contribute.

In addition to academic pursuits, we know that student engagement outside the classroom is critical to success in the classroom. Connect provides a diverse calendar full of events and intentional involvement in co-curricular activities that can help each student develop transferable skills, meet new people and broaden their knowledge and experience!

This Handbook is divided into two parts: **2 Years at Connect**, which includes resources and tips for our student to adapt more easily into university expectations; as well as a guide to scholarships and financial matters; and **2 Years in the U.S.** which includes visa and application checklists as well as guides to choosing a major, campus, and accommodation.

We recognize that we may not have anticipated all of the questions you may have; if you have suggestions or feedback for future editions of this Handbook, please contact us at [info@connect.edu.mm](mailto:info@connect.edu.mm). We look forward to hearing from you.

# History and Message from Founders

At Connect, we believe that ideas and people are the two most powerful elements of learning; connecting these can lead us to new worlds. A worthy education challenges the way we see things and enables us to better understand the world around us. Each and everyone of us deserves a good education.

## History

Founders of Connect Institute, Ei Phyu Theint and Aung Phone Myint, are two Myanmar nationals who each attended Liberal Arts Colleges in the U.S. Ei Phyu Theint, under a full scholarship, excelled in Mathematical Economics at Scripps College in California. During her second year in college, Ei Phyu Theint set up Connect Myanmar Organization, which later became Connect Institute, to promote educational and professional initiatives in Myanmar. Aung Phone Myint has the distinction of placing sixth on the 2005 country-wide matriculation examination. He was awarded a full scholarship to study Political Science and Economics at Bates College in Maine and was later awarded a fellowship in Public Policy and International Affairs at Princeton University. Reflecting on what they experienced on their own academic journey, they dreamed about designing a great learning environment connecting ideas and people. In 2014, Connect Institute was born.

## Message from Founders

Congratulations!

We know how you feel. We were in your shoes back in 2005. We finished high school and were figuring out what life would be like. We wanted to know how the college experience would enable us to see the world around us differently. For the next few years, you, as students, will embark on a very interesting and exciting journey — the journey to discover your own self and the world around you.

Connect is the place for those who like to explore the possibilities and wonders of themselves and the world's. This is not a place for those who merely want a degree or diploma. You are not going to just learn a bunch of subjects over the next two years. You are, in fact, going to learn, how to learn for every single day of your life. Apple co-founder Steve Jobs once said that you can only connect the dots looking backward and that you just have to trust that whatever comes your way will somehow and someday connect. We hope your two years at Connect will become meaningful dots in your future.

# 2 Years at Connect



# Academic Transition at Connect

New students at Connect are about to embark on a journey of self-discovery, exploration of academic interests, careers, friendships, and so much more. Throughout this process, parents continue to play an important role in the student's development and education.

Parents may have mixed feelings throughout this time of transition, including a sense of excitement and loss. New students may exhibit habits or traits that are unfamiliar. You may see changes in eating habits, sleeping patterns, how they see themselves, how they question, and how they interact with the rest of the family.

These changes are a result of the student's expanding view of the world and his or her exposure to a diverse range of people and ideas. The key is to be prepared for these changes and to be supportive during a challenging transition period.

Regardless of the challenges faced by students, especially leading up to their departure for the U.S., Connect still expects them to adhere to our policy on Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct. More information on this can be found in the sections Policy & Information and Academic & Non-academic Misconduct (Pages 38). Please read these sections carefully.

In these sections, we'll explain some of the differences between learning at high school and university, and what is available at Connect to support the student's academic transition.

Connect also has numerous services, including individual academic counseling, workshops, handouts, and online resources, to assist students in the academic transition, all of which are available upon request.

**“Every student accepted by Connect has the base tool set to succeed; encourage them to ask for help from us if they are struggling.”**

# Academic Support

Learning in high school and learning in university are not the same. While many students attain good grades in high school, first year courses in the American University Program at Connect emphasize new skills and ways of learning. At Connect, it's not just about working hard; it's also about working differently - most incoming students simply haven't had the opportunity to develop the range of academic skills required to succeed in university courses. These skills include managing time and controlling procrastination; adapting to new kinds of learning, advanced writing, research, and working independently. All students benefit from information and support on how to study or write at a university level, advice from successful senior students, or reassurance that they're approaching their course work in an effective way.

## Getting A Head Start

Even before the Connect term begins, students can find out more about what's expected in the ISP courses and other activities held at Connect. This includes information about discussions, debate, sample demo classes and other online resources at Connect Institute's facebook page at [www.facebook.com/theconnectinstitute](http://www.facebook.com/theconnectinstitute).

## New Responsibilities

University students have more freedom in their courses and are expected to set goals and establish priorities for themselves. Self motivation is critical for getting to class, keeping up with course work, and completing assignments on time. Students must decide for themselves what homework to do first, how much is necessary, and when to get it done.

## The Workload

The workload is different in each program, varies from course to course, and fluctuates through the term. Instructors may move through new content at a much faster pace than in high school, and new students are often caught off guard when instructors lecture and assign work in the first class. Keeping up with the workload of 4-5 university courses for the whole term can be challenging, and if a student falls behind, it can be very difficult to get caught up. Students will have to work more strategically, more consistently, and more effectively. An important skill for students to develop is to learn and use strategies to help them analyze and synthesize information, understand and apply concepts, and think critically and creatively.



## **Procrastination and Time Management**

In a university environment, there is usually other activities which students will find to be more enjoyable to do than studying, and sometimes studying gets pushed to the bottom of the list. Maintaining a balance of work and fun is a key component to surviving and thriving in the student's first year. Good time management not only allows students to stay on top of their work, but also allows them to fit in the required extracurricular activities, part-time work or volunteering. There are many opportunities for students to get involved in enriching, rewarding and enjoyable activities at Connect. A healthy balance means that extracurricular involvement and other fun events don't monopolize study time, but also that other interests are not put aside to concentrate solely on academics.

## **University Tests and Exams University**

The number, length, and format of assessments, as well as what they cover and how many marks they are worth (or their relative value in determining a course grade), are course specific. Exams can range from multiple choice, fill in the blank or short answers to essays. Details of exams are found in the course outlines or syllabi. Students need to be aware of how each test or exam is weighted, and to allocate their time and effort accordingly.

Midterm exams present unique challenges for some students. Some courses may have a midterm exam halfway through the term and a final exam at the end, while other courses have weekly quizzes or midterm projects. Since midterms can occur anywhere in the term, students have to balance studying for them with keeping up with day-to-day course work and assignments.

Final exams are course-based, and are administered in the final week each term. Many students find that they need to start studying at least a week before finals begin.

## **High School Essays vs. University Papers**

The topics assigned for university writing assignments are often more complex than in high school, and university papers are, as a general rule, less descriptive and more analytical. At Connect, students need to:

- know the difference between a topic and a thesis,
- be able to identify and define a problem, and/or support an argument or position
- anticipate and address counter-arguments,
- summarize and organize,
- write in a formal, academic style particular to a discipline.

Students are also expected to have an in-depth understanding of what plagiarism is, understand the ethics of scholarly work, and know how to paraphrase and cite properly following a particular disciplinary style, so as to avoid plagiarism.

# Academic Calendar 2017-2018

## Holidays and Notable days

<b>September</b>	11	-	First day of Fall Term
<b>October</b>	4	-	Pre-Full Moon Day of Thadingyut
	5	-	Full Moon Day of Thadingyut
	6	-	Post-Full Moon Day of Thadingyut
<b>November</b>	2	-	Pre-Full Moon Day of Tazaungmone
	3	-	Full Moon Day of Tazaungmone
	13	-	National Day
<b>December</b>	15	-	Last Day of Fall Term
	16-31	-	Term Break
<b>January</b>	1	-	Term Break
	2	-	First day of Spring Term
	4	-	Independence Day
<b>February</b>	12	-	Union Day
<b>March</b>	1	-	Full Moon Day of Tabaung
	2	-	Peasant's Day
	27	-	Armed Forces Day
<b>April</b>	6	-	Last Day of Spring Term
	7-30	-	Term Break+Myanmar New Year Holidays
<b>May</b>	1-6	-	Term Break
	7	-	First Day of Summer Term
<b>July</b>	19	-	Martyr's Day
	27	-	Full Moon Day of Waso
<b>August</b>	10	-	Last Day of Summer Term
	11-31	-	Term Break

\* Other parent and student events will be communicated throughout the year.

\*\* Dates are subject to adjustment as needed by Connect Institute.

# Courses and Courses Descriptions

Year 1+2 Courses	Credits
<b>Arts, Media and Communication</b>	
Academic Literacy	3
Argumentation and Persuasion	3
Art History - Modern World	3
Fundamentals of Public Communication	3
Introduction to Music	
<b>Humanities</b>	
American History from 1865	3
Beginning French	4
Humanities from Baroque to Modern	3
Introduction to Literature	4
Methods of Reasoning	3
<b>Science and Technology</b>	
College Mathematics	3
Computer and Applications	3
Introduction to the Internet	3
Life Science (Biology) w/online lab	4
Lifespan Development	3
Natural Disasters and Earth Resources w/lab	4
<b>Social Sciences</b>	
Advanced English Strategies	3
American Government and Institutions	3
Cultural Geography	3
Introduction to Language	3
Principles of Microeconomics	3
Principles of Sociology	3
	—
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## Arts, Media and Communication

**ENGL 10, Academic Literacy, 3 credits** — This course is designed to assist students in expository writing with an emphasis on research, source citation and longer expository essay development. American college-level literacy is crucial to the survival of our students when they transfer to an American university. The course develops these skills through the reading of essays, the analysis of rhetorical strategies, and the exploration and expression of ideas through the expository writing process, which includes formulating topics, constructing arguments, organizing information, revising, and editing.

**COM 7, Argumentation and Persuasion, 3 credits** — Persuasion is a social tool for resolving controversy and forming opinions from the perspectives of both the persuader and the persuaded. An overview of logical analysis, evidence, reasoning and proof will also be presented.

**ARTH 11, Art History – Modern World, 3 credits** — This course provides an introduction to Western art styles from the mid-14th century until the end of the 18th century, including Mannerism, Baroque, Rococo, and Neoclassicism. Effects of precedence on modern art will also be examined.

**COMM 3, Fundamentals of Public Communication, 3 credits** — This is a course in public speaking, emphasizing the required procedures for planning, writing, and delivering speeches in various expository topic areas, such as the “impromptu” speech, the persuasive speech, the informative speech and others.

**MUSIC 9, Introduction to Music, 3 credits** — This is an introductory music appreciation course. Students will be asked to listen to various pieces of western music, and identify key elements such as the period of writing and the instrumentation. Music theory and aesthetics will be studied, including notation of rhythm and pitch. Students need not have the ability to play an instrument.

## Humanities

**HIST 12, American History from 1865, 3 credits** — This course covers American history from 1865 (The American Civil War) until the present day. This course includes a review of significant events in American history and a review of the role of various ethnic and social groups in the ongoing formation of the American nation. A review of American foreign policy (how it is formed and what influences it) and its impact on the rest of the world will be studied.

**FRENCH 1A, Beginning French, 4 credits** — This course is designed to equip students with the learning of conversational and written French.

**HUM 11, Humanities from Baroque to Modern, 3 credits** — This course covers interrelationships among art, literature, music and philosophy from the 17th century Age of Reason in Europe to the present era. A preliminary survey of Greek and Roman through Renaissance periods will help students grasp the context of the development of western humanities. Where possible, a comparative approach will be taken, which gives students an opportunity to compare western and eastern humanities.

**ENG 20, Introduction to Literature, 4 credits** — Literary appreciation and criticism will be encouraged through reading and close written analysis of short stories, selections from novels, drama, and poetry from diverse Western and non-Western cultures.

**PHIL 25, Methods of Reasoning, 3 credits** — This course examines methods of good reasoning; identification of argument structure, development of skills in deductive and inductive reasoning, assessing observations and testimony reports, language and reasoning and logical fallacies.

## Science and Technology

**MATH 45, College Mathematics, 3 credits** — This course is a “bridge” course designed to help students with mathematics-related vocabulary and western-style critical thinking skills. The problems are not difficult from a mathematical perspective, but students are often asked to explain how they come up with the answers. Mathematical exercises in algebra, geometry, and some trigonometry are included, and students are also given work in graphs, statistics, and probability.

**CSCI 5, Computer and Applications, 3 credits, and CSCI 30, Introduction to the Internet, 3 credits** — These courses are an introduction to using the computer: tools, applications and graphics. The course covers an overview of the components of computer systems; discussion of software systems, electronic mail, influence of computers on society and the future of computing; extensive hands-on experience with application tools. In CSCI 30, students will have an opportunity to design a web page.

**BIOL 10, Life Science (Biology) w/online lab, 4 credits** — This is an introductory Biology course which is both a GE requirement and a requirement for anyone going on to study in the sciences. It includes virtual lab work done by internet research. The course consists of an overview covering the basic chemical and physical foundations of Biology to evolutionary and ecological processes, with a special relation to human affairs.

**CFS 38, Lifespan Development, 3 credits** — This course covers a balanced study of basic theories, research, applications and principles of physical, cognitive, and psychosocial development from birth to death. It includes behavior, sexuality, nutrition, health, stress, environmental relationships, and implications of death and dying.

**EES 1, Natural Disasters and Earth Resources w/lab, 4 credits** — This course begins with plate tectonic theory and illustrates the relationship between geology and humans by examining geological resources and hazards such as earthquakes and volcanoes.

## Social Sciences

**LING 6, Advanced English Strategies, 3 credits** — This course is designed to assist students in the types of sentence-to-paragraph development of expository composition expected at the college and university level. Emphasis is on developing good support for topic sentences and avoiding irrelevancy, developing sound reasoning, and creating effective introductions, conclusions, and transitions. Students will study and practice description, comparison-contrast, cause-effect, classification, argumentation, and other means of paragraph and expository essay development.

**PL SI 2, American Government and Institutions, 3 credits** — All students in America must complete a basic GE course in American government and institutions. The course summarizes the development and operation of the government in the United States. Students study how ideas, institutions, laws and people have constructed and maintained a political order in America. A comparative approach asking students to learn more about how their own government functions help students become better citizens in their own country as well as understand how American systems may differ from their own will be adopted.

**GEOG 2, Cultural Geography, 3 credits** — This course covers emphasis on cultural rather than physical geography: topics such as population, patterns of settlement, agriculture industry, leisure and tourism, energy and water supplies will be covered. There is also an introductory coverage on plate tectonics, weathering, rivers, marine processes, weather and climate, and ecosystems insofar as they affect human activity. These topics are covered more extensively in another ISP course – Geology or EES. The text in use is designed for ESL students and so sacrifices complexity in favor of emphasis on critical thinking skills for second-language learners.

**LING 10, Introduction to Language, 3 credits** — This introduction to language, including its nature, structure, use, history, and acquisition has the goal of imparting an understanding of the importance of language in human affairs (including social and cultural functions) and an appreciation of its complexity and diversity. Although English is the focal language, a comparative approach will be taken.

**ECON 40, Principles of Microeconomics, 3 credits** — This course is an introduction to microeconomic theories of demand, production, and income distribution; price determination and resource allocation, under alternative forms of market organization; government regulation of economic activity; applied economic analysis and policy formation in selected topic areas.

**SOC 1, Principles of Sociology, 3 credits** — This course gives an introduction to the principles and theoretical perspectives of sociology and their applications to problems of social life. Examples of sociological methods and findings in such areas as family, race relations, and deviance will be studied.

# Extracurricular

At Connect we require students to attend at least three extracurricular activities so that students don't solely focus on academics. Extracurricular activities teach students skills not learned in the classroom such as community awareness and participation, leadership and organizational skills, sportsmanship and creative talents and other necessary socialization skills that will encourage adaptability to life in the U.S. after Connect.

## **Music Club**

The Music club offers an opportunity to keep the student's passion for music alive. We provide an environment where students can learn from or collaborate with fellow music lovers and talented musicians. Our music room has wireless microphones, keyboard, guitars, a violin, tambourine and a cajon. Students of all levels of musical talents are welcome to join.

## **Volunteer/Fieldtrip Club**

Every other week on Friday, students can go to a charity organization and sometimes do clean-up in some public areas. As volunteer/ fieldtrip club members, students learn about team work, friendship and also start to be more aware of the environment and people's lives. Volunteer work is about helping people and the community. With Fieldtrips it is about becoming aware of your surroundings and building lifelong friendships.

## **Stretching/Yoga**

Stretching, yoga and meditation can relax the body, mind and soul. The aim of this class is more flexibility, ability to manage stress, clearer thinking, improved body awareness, better sleep, make you happier overall, lose weight, improve balance and posture.

## **Social Club**

The goal in this club is to create a committee that will organize and put together school social events such as end of year party, Halloween, Easter, Christmas. The students will have a budget and have to learn to work as a team and share responsibilities i.e. decorations, music, and food.

## **Chess Club**

A chess club is a club formed for the purpose of playing the board game of chess. Chess clubs often provide for both informal and tournament games and sometimes offer league play. This club will be ran by our very own chess champion Aung Bo!



## **Public Speaking**

Do you want to become a confident public speaker and strong leader? Then this is the club for you; in a casual environment with your fellow students you will be able to PRACTICE, PRACTICE and PRACTICE some more of your ability to speak in front of a crowd. We will also have motivational speakers from time to time.

## **Book Club**

Share your passion for reading with your fellow classmates. A book club is a group of people who meet to discuss a book that they have read and express their opinions, likes, dislikes, etc about the book. It is a fun way to hear different views on the book read.

## **Cooking Club**

Explore the wonderful world of culinary. In this club we will start with the basics of boiling an egg, setting a table, and using a microwave. We will teach you how to make simple and healthy meals in a quick fashion. Knowledge is food for the mind; we will feed your stomach.

# Policy and Information

The following sections include policies and information on all matters related to Connect. Parents are encouraged to read and review this information very carefully with their children. Parents will be required to sign the mandatory confirmation slip below and submit it to Connect. We hope your child will adhere to the rules and regulations indicated below to ensure a better educational environment for everyone during their time at Connect.

## **Notice**

This handbook serves as a guide for students and parents to be familiar with the policies and regulations at Connect. Students are expected to know and accept these policies and regulations as part of the terms and conditions outlined during admission and enrollment. If students require clarification or assistance pertaining to information in this handbook, they may consult with the program team at. From time to time, as Connect reviews the academic programs, policies and administrative procedures, the handbook will be updated with revisions. Connect has the right to make these revisions and put them at any point in time, without prior notice.

## **Equal Opportunity Statement**

All students who are Myanmar citizens and meet the admission qualifications are eligible for enrollment into Connect. Connect takes into consideration when enrolling students and recruiting faculty and staff members, their individual merits, qualifications and requirements. Connect does not and will not discriminate against any person on the basis of racial background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, national or ethnic origin, political beliefs or disability, as this would be inconsistent with the policies of the American universities we work with and the purposes of an educational facility in general.

# Campus Operations

## Opening Hours

The opening hours for Connect are from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, unless students request to use school facilities for projects/meetings beyond 5:00 pm. Office hours for parent enquiry are from 9am - 5pm.

## Contact Information

In the event of absence due to medical reasons, emergencies or any other matters, students should contact Connect's front desk at 09 77 9000 900.

## Visitors on Campus

All visitors on campus including family members must sign in at Connect's front desk.

## Office Hours for Faculty

Generally, office hours for faculty members are set by individual faculty members. Students who may wish to seek consultation outside these hours should email the faculty member(s) individually about other available time slots.

## Entering Administrative Offices

Students should not enter administrative or faculty offices without a prior appointment, authorized permission or approval.

## General Space Regulations

Students are welcome to use the open space areas and library areas during Connect's opening hours. There are areas available for collaborative work and others that have been designated as "quiet zones." Students are reminded to be respectful of others and to keep noise to a minimal level when using these spaces. Open space areas are to be used primarily for school-related study and work.

## **IT Use**

Connect subscribes to Internet access, which all students, faculty and staff members are entitled and authorized to use.

Students are only allowed to use the Internet access for the purposes of study and research and are thus not allowed to engage in unauthorized activities. These include:

- Disclosing and distributing username and password accounts to visitors and outsiders.
- Using software including scripts, agents and robots, and which may result in denied access.
- Installing or using peer-to-peer sharing programs such as Kazaa, BitTorrent and DC++.
- Infringing on copyright and trademark licenses of others. Students need to be aware of the copyright implications of using the Internet. Downloading, reproducing, sharing or emailing material off the Internet risks the potential breach of copyright law if students are not aware of their rights and obligations.
- Using or downloading unregistered or unlicensed software without authorized or explicit approval.
- Accessing pornographic material or creating, storing or distributing pornographic material.
- Playing of games. Students are not allowed to use any of Connect's work-stations or computers, or access the Wi-Fi for such purposes at any time.
- Engaging in business-related activities or any type of activities for pay.
- Using Connect's logo or name on personal web pages, email or in any manner that will be misleading.
- Using Connect's Wi-Fi in a manner (abusing or misusing) that may result in criminal or civil legal action or damages against Connect. Connect does not and will not condone students using Wi-Fi for illegal and unlawful purposes.

## **Safety**

Safety is our utmost priority. All students, faculty and staff members of Connect have the responsibility to ensure the safety and security of our campus. There are available resources that students, faculty and staff members can get access to, to learn about safety information and procedures. Such information materials are periodically given out to remind students, faculty and staff members. Students may clarify with or notify the Program Coordinators of any safety information and concerns.

In the event of an incident taking place outside Connect campus, students are advised to report the incident to the relevant authorities. The Yangon Police Department can be reached at the hotline 199; the Yangon Fire Department can be reached at the hotline 191/192. Failure to comply with directions, or interference with the duties of any Connect staff, the relevant authorities, or the public safety officer may result in student disciplinary action.

## Lockers

Each student is provided with a locker. Students are expected to know the dos and don'ts of using the lockers. Students are reminded that the use of lockers is a privilege, not a right, and thus the privilege may be withdrawn on the accounts of mistrust, misuse and abuse. The general rules of using the lockers include:

- Each student is provided with only one locker. Students may choose the lockers of their choice on a 'first come, first served' basis.
- Students are responsible for the safety of their personal items both inside and outside their lockers at all times. Connect will not be liable for any loss or damage of items both inside and outside the lockers.
- Students are not allowed to store perishable items such as fruits overnight. Liquid containers e.g. water bottles must be sealed tightly to prevent leakage to the other (lower) lockers.
- Students are not allowed to bring or store alcoholic drinks and tobacco products both inside and outside their lockers.
- Students are not allowed to possess or store potentially harmful and dangerous items and equipment such as inflammable material, explosives, knives, etc. at all times.
- Students are not allowed to store any of Connect's materials, including library books in the lockers and use them as personal items.
- Students are responsible for the cleanliness of their personal lockers and are encouraged to do periodic spring-cleaning. Students are required to clean and clear out their lockers before the December break, May break and August break.
- Students are responsible to keep their locker keys safe. If the key is lost, a penalty fee of \$ per key will be incurred.
- Students are responsible for the condition of the lockers. Any damage to the lockers will be liable to the student and the student may be charged for the damage incurred and lose locker privileges.
- Students are not allowed to make duplicates of locker keys. If found convicted, the student may lose all locker privileges.
- Lockers are non-transferable to other students.

In the event of any arising or reports of suspicious activities, Connect Institute school officials have the right to conduct a search on all lockers at any time. Students who impede in the officials' investigation will face disciplinary action.

# Academic and Non-academic Misconduct

## General Code of Conduct

Connect is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy living and learning environment for students, faculty and staff members. Students must be mindful of their behavior inside and outside Connect, which reflects upon themselves and Connect's image, at all times.

Students should exercise graciousness to one another and others in the campus community including faculty members, staff members, interns, volunteers and guests. Students are encouraged and expected to contribute positively to student and Connect life.

Student behavior that is deemed as poor conduct will be addressed through a protocol that has been designed to promote good citizenry and as and when necessary, impose strict disciplinary orders. Warnings will be given for behavior deemed as 'unbecoming' to the greater Connect community and which may inflict harm, abuse or similar, onto others.

Connect takes student conduct and behavior seriously. This is to ensure that our relationships with international institutions are maintained in good faith as well as the welfare, safety and reputation of Connect's students, faculty and staff members are well taken care of.

Students are reminded that serious offenses, if convicted, may result in suspension or expulsion from Connect, depending on circumstances and the nature of offense. A committee will be set up to handle and manage such infractions on a case-by-case basis and where necessary and accordingly, met out appropriate disciplinary action.

## Academic and other Forms of Misconduct

Students are responsible for ensuring the integrity of their work and for understanding what constitutes as Academic Misconduct. Disciplinary Action will be taken depending on each offense.

- Altering, forging or falsifying documents
- Possession or use of unauthorized aids
- Impersonation
- Plagiarism
- Submission of work for which credit has previously been obtained
- Submission of work containing purported statement(s) of fact or reference(s) to concocted sources
- Cheating or any other form of dishonesty that is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage
- Assisting another student in committing an offense

Other forms of misconduct include:

- Declaration and provision of false information to a Connect official, faculty member, or any of our partner universities.
- Forgery, alteration, or misuse of a Connect document, key, or identification instrument.
- Misrepresentation of one's self to be an authorized agent of Connect.
- Unauthorized entry into, presence in, use of, or misuse of Connect property.
- Participation in an action that disrupts or obstructs the normal operations of Connect or an official Connect activity, or infringes on the rights of members of Connect.
- Disorderly, lewd, indecent, or obscene behavior in class or at an event, or directed toward a member of Connect, including indecent or lewd attire.
- Conduct that threatens or endangers the health or safety of any person within or related to Connect's community, including physical abuse, threats, intimidation, harassment, or sexual misconduct. Such conduct may include disparagement related to ethnic or religious affiliation, age, gender or sexual orientation.
- Hazing, or conspiracy to haze. Hazing is defined as any method of initiation or pre-initiation into a student organization or student body, whether or not the organization or body is officially recognized by an educational institution, which is likely to cause serious bodily injury to any former, current, or prospective student of any school, community college. The term "hazing" does not include customary athletic events or school sanctioned events.
- Use, possession, manufacture, sale, or distribution of illegal drugs or drug-related paraphernalia or the misuse of legal pharmaceutical drugs.
- Consumption, possession, manufacture, sale, or distribution of alcoholic beverages at a Connect-related activity, unless otherwise officially approved by Connect at certain official Connect events. Students must be mindful of their behavior at all times during such events.
- Theft of property or services from Connect, or unapproved use of Connect resources.
- Unauthorized destruction or damage to Connect property.
- Possession or misuse of any weapons, including pocket knives.
- LAN Gaming and other non-academic use of electronic devices during school hours.
- Unauthorized recording, distribution, or publication of Connect's academic presentations or materials (including handwritten notes) for any public or commercial purpose.
- Unauthorized or inappropriate use of Connect computer equipment or any action using Connect computer equipment that violates the law, is used to send obscene, intimidating or abusive messages, causes interference with normal Connect operations, or results in damage to the equipment.
- Violation of any other Connect policy or rule initiated by order of Connect.
- Failure to comply with directions, or interference with, any Connect administrator, faculty, or staff or any public safety officer while acting in the performance of his/ her duties.

## **Attending Class**

Students should be on time and attend all of their registered courses. Each faculty member may define attendance requirements for each course and students are expected to abide by those requirements. Generally, students are required to attend 80% of each class in order to pass the course. For a class that meets 3 times per week for a term of 3 months, a student is only allowed a maximum of 5 unexcused absences.

Only absences due to medical reasons or death in the immediate family will be excused, but a medical certificate or death certificate must be provided on the day the student returns to class. This will be presented to the Administrative Office for approval.

For absences due to trips within or out of the country, the student must notify the Administrative Office one week in advance to determine if the absence will be excused or not.

The student should take initiative and responsibility to catch up on missed lessons or assignments from fellow classmates or professors. If the student leaves on a long absence that eventually hinders progress of his/her own, the class or group assignments, the student will be reported to the Academic Department. The department will notify the student's parents (for students under the age of 18) and may issue a warning letter. The student may be required to be called for an interview and if necessary, the department will put forth recommendation that the student receives suspension. In the consideration for recommendation, the department takes into account the student's class standing, academic records and other important factors.

## **Academic Disciplinary Action**

When an academic offense is suspected, the faculty member will make every reasonable effort to meet as soon as possible with the student(s) and provide an opportunity for explanation or defense against the allegation. The faculty member may consider having another faculty or staff member with her/him when meeting with the student, in which case, the faculty member will provide an opportunity for the student to bring another student to the meeting.

If the student fails to respond to a request for a meeting or does not attend a pre-arranged meeting or does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the suspected academic offense, then the faculty member or staff member may decide to notify the student's parent guardian or proceed with a formal charge.

Disciplinary action by the Student Affairs Board will be taken, according to the seriousness of the offense which can include a failing grade for the course, suspension with remedial work (see 7.2), or expulsion from Connect.



## Student Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom

Students may not use cell phones, digital music players, and any other electronic devices during class unless designated by the course instructor. If the student needs to attend to his/her cell phone in case of emergency during class, he/she should inform the course instructor at the beginning of the class session as well as keep the phone on in silent mode so as not to disrupt the course.

Electronic devices – which include laptops, tablets, mobile phones, and smart watches – will be confiscated immediately if used during class time without the course instructor's permission. This includes use during any scheduled exam or test.

## Dress Code

Students should dress appropriately in a manner that respects the customs and cultural expectations and norms of Myanmar. The attire should not be offensive to classmates or faculty members. If the student is unsure about appropriate attire, he/she may consult with the Academic Department.

## Grading System

Connect Institute and most U.S. universities use a letter-grading system. Each letter grade is assigned a number of points: A = 4 points, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1 and F = 0 points. These letter grades are used to establish a student's GPA, which ranges from 4.0 (Excellent) downwards. A Cumulative Gross Point Average (CGPA) is a quantitative figure representing a student's accumulated grades. A student is expected to maintain at least a 2.4 CGPA during the course of the program.

Students who fall below this average will be called in for counseling on the continuation of studies. On a case-to-case basis, students may or may not be granted continuation of studies or be put on probation.

Letter Grade	Percentage	GPA
A	90-100	4.0
B	80-89	3.0
C	70-79	2.0
D	60-69	1.0
F	0-59	0.0

Students who receive a grade of F have the option to do remedial work for a fee of \$10 per course unit. Upon accomplishing the remedial work to a standard approved by the course instructor, the student may receive a grade of P, signifying that he/she has passed the course but credits will neither be obtained nor transferred. P grades are not calculated into GPA/CGPA.

A Grade Report will be given to each student at the end of each term (1–5), and a Student Transcript will be given to each student at the end of first year (Term 3) and second year (Term 5). The Grade Report and Student Transcript are for student reference only and cannot be used for applications abroad. The official Transcript included with a student application is sent from school to school directly.

### **Remedial Work and Retaking Courses**

Having an F in the final transcript will disqualify the student from graduating from Connect Institute and affect his/her chances of transferring to our partner universities. Therefore, remedial work is mandatory in order to get a grade of P or “Passed,” rather than F or “Failed.”

Faculty member will submit Remedial Material to Connect administration.

A student takes a total of 70 course units at Connect Institute and needs 60 course units to transfer. If a student is unable to obtain 60 units due to three to four grades of P, he/she must retake these courses in order to formally receive grades and credits.

The student must follow the schedule of the classes in the following terms as no special classes will be designed or added to the timetable. If a student must retake more than one course with conflicting schedules, then he/she must wait until the course is offered again in the next term. Retaking will incur a fee of \$ 900 per course.

The consequences of failure are high and Connect Institute would like to avoid these events. Students are encouraged to fully utilize faculty consultations, tutorial classes, and student-run study groups.

### **Grade Changes**

A faculty member may change a grade for a legitimate reason (for example, if the original grade was the result of a miscalculation of points by the faculty member) if it is done within one term of the original grades having been issued. Changes of “F” to “P” must be made within one term of the original “P” grade.

# Student Records

## TOEFL

The TOEFL ITP examination will be conducted every year at the Connect. Students who score 550 and above in the examination will be exempted from further examinations, although all students must take the Term 4 TOEFL examination as TOEFL results sent abroad must be dated within six months of application. Any student who applies to any school that requires an iBT examination result must take that examination at his/her own expense, have the result sent directly to the relevant school, and furnish a copy of the result to Connect administration.

## Extracurricular Activities

Participation in Connect's extracurricular activities such as community meetings, student clubs, field trips and ESL or remedial classes is strongly encouraged as this will contribute towards the institute's recommendation that will be sent with the student's application to schools abroad. The student's attendance and active participation in these will be both beneficial and required, but it shall never be a reason to neglect academic obligations.

## Education Records

Connect routinely maintains education records of students that describe and document their work and progress. These education records generally include records such as permanent and local addresses, admission records, enrollment status, course grades, reports and evaluations, completion of requirements and progress toward the completion of course, records of disciplinary actions, letters of recommendation and other correspondence with or concerning the student.

Students who may wish to gain access to their education records must submit a written request to the Academic Department. Students will note in the written request the specific record(s) they would like to retrieve. Depending on the request, access may be granted within 15 days from the receipt of request. If a record contains information on more than one student, the student requesting access may review only the portion of the record relating to him/ her. Any queries related to a student's education records should be directed to the Academic Department. Students will be awarded grades for each term and a student copy of the official transcript listing all courses completed and grades awarded will be issued to the student at the end of each year.

# Financial Matters

## Payment Terms

Payment arrangements for tuition and other school fees vary for each school term and enrollment into Connect Institute is conditional on the meeting of all financial obligations within its payment terms. Students should be aware that all payment due dates must be dutifully met, including students who receive external financial aid. If a student's account is not satisfied prior to arrival on campus, he or she will not be admitted to class. Balances that remain unpaid after the due dates stated above will be charged interest. Transcripts for credits completed will not be released until the account status is resolved. A per-unit fee for all accredited coursework will be collected at the end of each term.

## Refund Policy

A student who withdraws must notify the school in writing prior to his or her departure. This office will determine the student's official date of withdrawal. No transcript or recommendation will be issued after the departure or in the future for the students who did not notify the school and followed proper procedures for withdrawal. No refund will be made for students who withdraw for any reason after tuition and fees have been paid.

A student withdrawing for financial hardship or medical reasons may petition the Finance Office for a partial refund of tuition and fees, depending on the date of withdrawal and the reason. The final decision on whether a refund will be made and how much will be refunded is the sole prerogative of Connect and is not subject to further appeal. Fees for books, materials, other fees are not refundable.

**Suspensions or Expulsions:** Students who are suspended or expelled are subject to the standard refund policy mentioned above.

**Force Majeure Events:** Payments can not be discharged during the term if the school can no longer operate due to reasons beyond the control of Connect, such as government shut downs or war, strikes, embargoes, government orders, or any other force majeure events.

## **Financial Aid, Stipend and Scholarships**

Financial aids, stipend or scholarships may not be applied by continuing students. Regarding financial aids, stipend or scholarships the institutions decision is based on its current policies.

The schools with which Connect has agreements were selected on the basis of affordability and are generally state universities. Although such schools do offer merit-based scholarships based on GPA after transfer, it is rare for these schools to offer any financial aid to incoming international transfer students.

Connect Institute's partner universities may offer partial scholarships, depending on GPA and availability. Scholarships can be subject to change from year to year depending on the University. It is best to maintain at least 3.0 CGPA for scholarship consideration. Connect also provides one-on-one advising for need-based scholarships from external charities and companies to ensure the student has a variety of choice and opportunities needed to obtain a scholarship.

## **Limitations of Liability**

There are limits to guarantees that Connect Institute can provide. Connect is responsible for conveying the above limitations of liability to students and parents such that they are clearly understood and agreed to.

As such, Connect is not responsible for the following:

- A refusal on the part of the U.S. Embassy to grant a student visa for study in the U.S. (This also applies to any other embassy or country.).
- Any expenses upon the completion of the ISP at Connect, which may include transportation, housing, tuition, fees and all other expenses incurred to/at the school to which the student chooses to transfer. All expenses from the point of transfer are to be borne by the individual student.
- Any legal obligations that the student is bound to abroad.

Connect cannot guarantee that a student accepted into the American University Program of Connect will be accepted by the school of his/her choice. Acceptance criteria (Grade Point Average, TOEFL score, and financial statement requirements) are set forth in the Articulation Agreement made between that school and Connect. Connect cannot guarantee that the student will graduate, and/or will graduate in a specified duration of time, from the school to which the student transfers, since this is determined by the school to which the student transfers as well as taking into account the individual student's performance and academic choices.

# 2 Years in the U.S



# Student Visa Guide

The visa application process consists of 3 parts:

- The application to and acceptance by a U.S. University from which the student receives the I-20 (student visa) form.
- The payment, completion of the NIV application and form D-160, and submission of all visa documents and completed I-20 form to the embassy.
- The booking and waiting process for appointment and interview as well as submission of additional documents and fingerprints.

Between each part is a wait of about 4-6 weeks. Therefore the visa process will require parents and students to allocate enough time in early days leading up to the last term to prepare all documents for submission.

Each student will receive a visa packet that includes additional needed documents and affidavits, including Myanmar translated FAQs and instructions for the application process.

Appointments for visa interviews are usually fully booked between the busy Summer months of June - August and the embassy encourages student applicants to apply earlier if entering the Fall term.

F-1 student visas can be issued up to 4 months in advance of your course of study start date. However, you will not be allowed to enter the United States on F-1 status earlier than 30 days before your start date.

Please use the Visa Application Checklist on the next page to help you organize your documents.

## **F-1 Student Visa Application Checklist**

- Passport (expiry not within 6 months) + photocopy
- Nonimmigrant Visa Application and fee of \$160, Form DS-160 confirmation page (CEAL Barcode)
- Application fee payment receipt (amount varies by school)
- Passport Photo
- Form I-20 + photocopy
- \$200 SEVIS Fee Receipt + photocopy
- Documents relating to your academic preparation, such as: Transcripts, diplomas, degrees, or certificates from schools you attended; and standardized test scores required by your U.S. school
- Your written intent to depart the United States upon completion of the course of study
- 2 Original copies of a bank statement to show how you will pay all educational, living and travel costs. Must include your student's name and relationship to the account holder and show an amount equivalent to one year of study in the U.S. The account must be a checking or savings account - no investment accounts accepted.
- Notarized English translated birth certificate or property documents (only needed to prove relationship of student and account holder of bank statement).
- Previous visa (if any, especially for returning students, interview will be waived).

## **Contact the U.S. Embassy**

If you have any concerns or questions, please send an email directly to counsellors at [counselorrangoon@state.gov](mailto:counselorrangoon@state.gov). Students can call the U.S. Embassy, Rangoon, at 01 536509 to get a free consultation session with the counsellors from 2pm to 3:30pm every Monday to Friday.



## **Frequently Asked Questions About Student Visa**

### **Can you tell me what I need for the bank statement?**

You will need to deposit an amount in your checking or savings account that is equal or higher to one year expenses and tuition cost at the student's designated U.S. university. The bank must produce an original bank statement in English attesting that the amount is on deposit. Each bank statement has a 6 month validity meaning you can use the same bank statement for the I-20 process as well as the visa application.

A bank statement must include:

- Original letterhead with bank contact, information, phone number or address
- Full name on account, account number and date of statement
- Currency Rate and type of account: Checking, Saving
- Official printed bank name and signature
- Must be in English or be accompanied with notarized English translation
- If account holder is not the student, additional documents such as birth certificate or household registration might be needed to prove relationship of account holder to the student.

Property documents cannot be used as a bank statement.

### **Do I need to reapply for my F-1 visa if I leave the U.S.?**

The F-1 visa allows a single entry into the U.S. for the sole purpose of studying. If the student wishes to visit other countries during the duration of his or her studies or come back to Myanmar for during term breaks, the student may need to allocate enough time to reapply for an F-1 visa again at the embassy. The student must also consult with the visa officer at the school in the U.S. prior to leaving the U.S. for any reason. Your interview will be waived but your Form D160 and visa fees will need to be re-submitted. Please note that Connect is not responsible for visa denials or for visa-related matters after transfer.

### **Can I find work while I am on the F-1 visa?**

The F-1 visa does not allow students to work off campus since it is a study visa with the sole purpose of studying in the U.S. Any student found in breach of the rules and regulations stated by the F-1 visa will be deported from the U.S. This includes: Paid work that is not an on campus job by the university, failure to attend classes (3 maximum absences per semester), committing fraud or plagiarism, and getting expelled from the University.

### **What is OPT?**

Optional Practical Training (OPT) is a period during which undergraduate and graduate students with F-1 status who have completed or have been pursuing their degrees for more than nine months are permitted by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to work for one year on a student visa towards getting practical training to complement their education.

## What work privileges are available on OPT?

Under an F-1 visa, students can complete their entire degree, and they have certain rights to work while they are on a valid F-1 status.

While there is some right to work under OPT while still in school (“pre-completion OPT”), the main use for OPT is the right to work for 12 months after completion of a degree (“post-completion OPT”). So as you near graduation, you can apply for OPT, which will permit you to work for any employer in the US (subject to all of the rules of OPT). You can apply for a new OPT period for each new degree level you complete - for instance, if you receive a Bachelor’s degree, you can apply for OPT and work for a year, go back to graduate school, then when you complete your Masters or PHD, you can apply for OPT again and work for another year (many students actually do this).

## What about OPT with STEM Fields?

One twist to OPT is that students who have graduated from a US college or university with a specific degree in the STEM fields - science, technology, engineering and mathematics - can apply to extend their OPT for an additional 17 months, bringing their total post-graduation OPT available time up to 29 months.

The specific degrees that qualify for the extension are:

- Actuarial Sciences
- Computer Science Applications
- Engineering
- Engineering Technologies
- Life Sciences
- Mathematics
- Military Technologies
- Physical Sciences

**Note: OPT rules and regulations do change; students interested should consult with school advisers in the U.S. after transfer.**

## What are reasons for visa denials?

- Incomplete Application or Supporting Documentation
- Visa Qualifications and Immigration Intent
- Public Charge
- Fraud and Misrepresentation
- Unlawful Presence in the U.S.

Visa denials due to Immigration Intent apply only to non-immigrant visa categories. If you are refused a visa under section 214(b) it means that you:

- Did not sufficiently demonstrate to the consular office that you qualify for the non-immigrant visa category you applied for; and/or
- Did not overcome the presumption of immigrant intent, required by law, by sufficiently demonstrating that you have strong ties to your home country that will compel you to leave the United States at the end of your temporary stay.

### **What are considered strong ties to my home country?**

Ties are the various aspects of your life that bind you to your home country. Strong ties vary from country to country, city to city, and person to person, but examples include:

- Your job or job prospects in the future
- Your home
- Your relationships with family and friends

Property documents are encouraged not to be used for the visa application but can be used during the visa interview to demonstrate a source of income, used as immovable property, and to show ties back to Myanmar.

Whether you intend to work in the U.S. after OPT or graduation cannot be mentioned during the visa interview and will lead to a visa denial.

### **What requirements does my passport need?**

Applying for a visa means having a passport. Please make sure you have a passport ready before you approach the U.S. embassy for visa application. The passport should not be expiring anytime soon and should show at least 6 months validity from the date of when the student enters the U.S. Myanmar passports can be renewed at the Embassy of Myanmar in Washington or New York during their valid F-1 visa status. Please make sure to remember to check the validity of your passport so that you are not in breach of the F-1 rules and regulations.

# Choosing a Major

A major is a specific subject area in which a student specializes. After the student leaves Connect, he or she will be focusing on a major. At some colleges, you can even:

- 1 Major in two fields.
- 2 Have a major and a minor (a specialization that requires fewer courses than a major).
- 3 Create your own major.

## When to Choose a Major

While at Connect, you will have time to choose your major before you transfer to the U.S. In some cases, you can even decide your major when you reach the U.S. This gives you plenty of time to check out various subjects and see which ones interest you. Some majors like areas of Engineering are exceptions to this rule. You have to commit to these fields of study early so you have time to take all the required courses. Engineering may also require more than 2 years after transfer to a U.S. college to complete the requirements.

## How to Choose a Major

Take courses in areas that appeal to you, and then think about which subject truly motivates you. Stephanie Balmer, dean of admissions at Dickinson College, suggests you take “classes in which you’re going to be confident, but at the same time, take some risks.” She notes that a class you never planned to take could end up helping you choose your major. At Connect, students should use the General Education requirements to help them find a major.

## You Can Change Your Mind

If you’re not sure about your college major while you’re at Connect, don’t worry. Many students switch their major during college. Even students who think they are sure about what they want to major in often change their mind. This is both possible and usual in American colleges.

## Majors and Graduate School

Some colleges offer advising programs or sequences of courses, — such as premed or prelaw — to students who plan on attending medical school, law school or graduate school. These programs are not the same as majors; you still need to pick a major. College students who are planning to continue their education in professional or graduate programs often choose a major related to their future field. For example,

undergraduates in premed programs often major in Biology or Chemistry. It is not a requirement, as long as students fulfill the course requirements of the graduate program they want to enter, they can major in any subject they like as an undergraduate.

### **Majors and Professions**

If you specialize in something like Nursing, Accounting or Engineering, you're learning a specific trade. Many majors, however, prepare you to enter a range of careers once you graduate. For many students, picking a college major is not the same as choosing a job. It will be up to you to pick a career path you like. For example, a degree in English literature might lead you to a job in publishing, teaching, advertising, public relations or law, among other fields.

Remember, you're not alone when choosing a major. Ask Connect's Academic and Program advisers for help.

**Source: Big Future by The College Board**

# Choosing a Campus

One of the steps in finding the right college for you is deciding what type of campus setting you prefer. Rural, suburban and urban campuses all have different advantages. The key is to find which setting will allow you to make the most of your college experience.

## Rural Campuses

Rural campuses are located in the country, often near farms and wilderness areas and usually in or near a small town rather than big city. Here are things to consider about rural campuses:

- Most rural campuses are self-contained, with a majority of the students living on campus. This can increase a college's sense of community.
- Rural campuses can provide access to outdoor learning opportunities, particularly in fields like agriculture or environmental science.
- Many rural colleges bring entertainment to their students and provide free events. Comedians and bands may perform on campus during college tours.
- Most rural colleges provide on-campus transportation options, such as buses, for students.
- The landscape of rural campuses can vary widely. A rural campus in Ohio, for example, will be much different from a rural campus in Alaska.

## Suburban Campuses

Suburban campuses are in small cities, large towns or residential areas near cities. Here are things to consider about suburban campuses:

- Suburbs often combine some of the best features of urban and rural areas.
- Suburban campuses usually offer access to nearby cities and to outdoor activities.
- Suburban colleges are frequently self-contained, which can create a strong sense of community.
- Suburban colleges often have connections to the towns where they are located. This can provide opportunities such as jobs and entertainment.
- Public transportation may be available in addition to a college's transportation options.

## **Urban Campuses**

Urban campuses are located in cities. Here are things to consider about urban campuses:

- Some urban campuses are spread throughout a city while others are self-contained within a city — some urban campuses do not have a large “campus”.
- Many urban colleges offer off-campus learning experiences. These may include opportunities to explore the work world through cooperative classes and internships.
- Urban colleges tend to attract culturally diverse students.
- Students can find entertainment options — such as museums, concerts and plays — on and off urban campuses.
- Cities usually offer strong public-transportation options.

# Choosing an Accommodation

For many Connect students, college represents the first real opportunity to live away from home. As you spread your wings and slowly ease into adulthood, you'll definitely need a place to stay. While most universities provide dormitories for their students, many schools also allow undergrads to live off-campus. It can be difficult determining which option is best for you.

Many schools mandate that freshmen reside on-campus for their first year. Students transferring from Connect will be upper classmen (juniors) so this will not apply to transfer students; however, we strongly recommend that students spend at least the first semester in university residence halls. This is most assuredly the easiest (and best) way to acclimate/transition to college life.

For those of you struggling with the decision, here's a brief breakdown of the positives and negatives of each option.

## Living On-Campus

### Pros:

There's a lot to be said about living in a college dorm. To begin with, your residence hall places you in the middle of a vibrant campus life, and you can't help but feel like a part of the community when you're living right in the center of it.

Moreover, dorm life translates into easy living. Living on-campus guarantees all sorts of facilities and amenities will be readily accessible – from the gym and the dining hall to your classrooms and the library, and the shorter the trip, the more likely you'll make it there! Beyond the quick commute, living on campus also means you're probably on the meal plan. You won't have to worry about buying groceries or setting aside time to cook. Everything will be done for you. Similarly, the school will also provide people to maintain the bathrooms, common areas of your dorm, etc. Your room will already be wired for the internet/Wi-Fi.

Further, living in campus housing puts you within arm's reach of numerous fellow undergrads. Yes, dorms are a fabulous way to meet people and cement friendships. There's almost always someone with whom to hang out or grab lunch. The relationships you establish will inform your collegiate experience as much as your time spent in the classroom or hitting the books.



**Cons:**

Of course, dorm life does have its drawbacks. While it's fantastic that there are so many social options and outlets mere feet away, that also means it can sometimes be a struggle to focus or carve out some quiet time. Indeed, it can be difficult to study cell division while your classmates are racing desk chairs in the hallway.

Additionally, space and privacy are often at a premium. Yes, there's a good chance you'll be sharing a modestly sized room with one or more people. Further, bathrooms are typically communal which means you might find yourself fighting for shower time, etc. Simply put, it can be hard to escape your peers.

**Living Off-Campus****Pros:**

Living off-campus certainly holds some advantages as well! For starters, off-campus apartments will likely afford you more space and more privacy. You might find yourself feeling more comfortable if you're able to spread out and if you don't have to share a bathroom with 20 floor-mates. Plus, it's quite likely that your apartment will be much quieter than a dorm. Hence, it'll probably make a great place to study!

Renting your own apartment or house also allows you to escape the college bubble. Your neighbors might be local families or young working professionals, and you may discover that they are more mature than your collegiate counterparts.

Living off-campus also affords you the opportunity to get a deeper taste of independence and adulthood. You will be running your own (mini) household. Moreover, your apartment won't have all the rules and regulations dictated by your college and/or dorm RAs (resident advisers).

**Cons:**

Depending on where you live off-campus, you might find yourself feeling isolated from your school and your peers. You likely won't have as many friends residing around the corner or around the block. Depending on how far away you live, your commute might affect how and when you choose to socialize.

Further, that taste of independence we mentioned above comes with increased demands and responsibilities. It will be up to you to take care of installing amenities such as cable or internet. You'll have to keep up with all your bill paying. Additionally, it will be your job to clean (not to mention furnish!) your new digs. Are you really prepared to start cooking for yourself on a regular basis? While we're sure you have the skills complete these tasks, don't forget that they will also eat into your schedule.

## **Weighing the Cost**

Another factor to consider is cost. To figure out whether it's a pro or con (for either option), you'll have to carefully compare the price of room and board with apartment/house rentals in the surrounding area. Don't forget - your off-campus expenses will be greater than just your monthly rent. You will also have to calculate utilities (they aren't always included), cable/internet, food, etc. And, if you don't think you'll reside within walking distance of campus or an accessible school shuttle, you will need to determine transportation costs (whether for car, public bus, etc.) as well. Of course, depending on where you live/attend school, all of these expenses might still end up being more affordable than room and board. But you will definitely have to do the math.

# College 101

Choosing a college is stressful and making sure you make the right decision can often feel like a daunting task. To help out with the process, here are some common mistakes to avoid along the way:

**1. Rushing the process.** Finding the right college takes time and effort, not to mention research and an often lengthy application process. Waiting until the last minute or just “falling into a college” is never a good idea. It takes the most important factor out of the equation—you.

**2. Being a follower.** Following a boyfriend, girlfriend, best friend to the college of their choice may seem like a good idea at the time because you want to be near them, but this is one of the most pivotal points in your life, too. You need to remember to make the best decisions for yourself and, if your relationships are strong, they will outlast time and distance anyway.

**3. Rebellion.** Only considering colleges your parents DON'T want you to go isn't beneficial either. Sometimes, they have some good insight that may help you decide on what may be best for you. Don't choose—or not choose—a college out of spite. This is sure to lead you down a path of regret. Choose a college based on what you want, not based on what someone else doesn't.

**4. Assuming the worst.** Not applying to certain schools because you assume you won't be accepted underrates your potential and potentially limits your future. You never know what you can achieve if you don't try, so at least make an attempt.

**5. Location, location, location.** Whether you're a homebody who wants to stay close or an escape artist who wants to get as far from home as possible, the location should be a factor in choosing a college, not the sole decision maker.

**6. Relying on reputation.** Just because it's a “highly-ranked”, “prestigious” or a “designer” school doesn't mean it's the right school for you. Don't always assume that the difficulty of getting into the school equates to the quality of education you'll receive. Some students need smaller classes and more one-on-one interaction to thrive in a learning environment.

**7. Parent Control.** Letting your parents decide which college is right for you, or being forced by your parents to attend a certain school is not healthy. You need to think about what you want out of a college. After all, you're the one attending the school.

Source: Elizabeth Hoyt, [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com)

