



First Edition

First-Generation/Low-Income Partnership

The "How to Brown" Guidebook

A guidebook on how to succeed at Brown University, written for first-gens, by first-gens.

First-Generation College Students at Brown University

First Edition

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Introduction + First-Gens@Brown Community

Amongst the many other welcomes you have probably received so far, welcome to Brown! It's truly amazing that you were chosen to attend such an established and revered institution, even more so because you are the first in your family to go to college! Over the next four years, you will see yourself grow academically, professionally, socially, and personally, among other aspects. Brown has the resources to make those things happen, but this abundance can be very overwhelming. Indeed, this resourceful abundance is very overwhelming to many first-generation college students who have not seen so much opportunity in their lives! How does one balance academic work with extracurricular activities and work-study programs alongside the search for internships / fellowships / career experience?

This guidebook intends to help by breaking down everything there is to know at Brown University, to show you "How to Brown". Written by fellow first-generation college students, this book provides an insight as to what we had to endure, and the knowledge and experience we want to share with the next generation of first-gens at Brown. We hope to make this book as detailed and informational as possible so that not only first-years but upperclassmen may use this guidebook as a resource. We hope that the first wave of first-gen first-years who inherit this book remember its contents and continue to refer to it throughout their time at Brown. We hope that they will later expand on this guidebook and help others navigate Brown.

Life@Brown

1. Meal Plans

- a. Because having a meal plan is mandatory for first years, it is vital that you understand all of your options so you may choose the best plan for your individual circumstance.
- b. Explanation of meal plans
 - i. Difference between regular and flex plans ([link](#))
 - 1. Regular Plans
 - a. You get a set number of meal swipes per week but you can only use 3 swipes a day for any plan (Ex. 20 meals/week but you're limited to 3 meals a day).
 - i. A meal credit is worth \$7.30.
 - ii. You can only use 2 swipes per hour.
 - iii. Meal credits do not roll over to the following week.
 - 1. In order to get the best value for your money, you should try to use all of your available meal swipes each week. For the 20 meals/week plan, for instance, you should ideally use 3 swipes a day.
 - b. You also get a certain amount of flex points per year that you can use as extra cash/points outside of a "meal" (Ex: You just want to buy a pb&j snack from Jo's, and it's only \$2.45, so you use flex points instead of a "meal" swipe).
 - i. One point is worth \$1.
 - ii. You can also combine meal swipes and flex points to complete a transaction.
 - iii. Points roll over to the following semester.
 - c. Each plan comes with 2 guest meals per semester. They can be used both on guests and on yourself.
 - i. Guest swipes roll over to the following semester.

2. Flex Plans

- a. You get a set number of meal swipes for the entire semester. You are not limited to how many you can use a day, but--as with the meal plan--you can only use 2 swipes per hour. You also get guest meals, which can be used on guests and on yourself.
- b. Additionally, you get a certain amount of flex points that you can use as extra cash/points outside of a "meal."
 - i. Meal swipes and flex points roll over from one semester to the next, so don't feel pressured to use them all at the end of your first semester; however, to get the most bang for your buck, you should

strive to use all of your swipes and points by the end of your second semester.

- ii. “Full” meal plan (20 meals/week) v. other plans (which one’s right for me?)
 - 1. Unless you know you will definitely eat three meals a day (or will you often skip breakfast as many end up doing?) it would be wise to switch to a flex plan. On a flex plan it’s much harder to ‘lose’ your money, as you have two full semesters to use up all your meals thanks to the roll-over. On a regular meal plan it’s simply not worth it if you won’t be eating all those meals by the end of the week; you’re essentially wasting your money.
 - a. Though possible, many find it inconvenient and impractical to use 3 meal credits a day--as you would on the 20 meals/week plan--to maximize the return on your investment.
 - 2. Flex plans always give you more flex points than the equivalent regular plan.
 - a. However, spend them wisely. You can easily run out of points too soon in the semester if you don’t track and limit your spending.
 - 3. As for which tier to purchase, you should base your decision on how often you think you’ll be eating in the dining halls (i.e. The Ratty and The V-dub) versus smaller eateries like The Blue Room. Click [here](#) for more details on these eating locations.
 - 4. You can also switch tiers between semesters (Ex: First semester, I get the biggest flex plan, second semester, I switch to the lowest flex plan). You can switch meal plans within the first 10 days of arriving at Brown each semester. You pay meal plans by the semester, so you can always go for the more expensive option if you’re unsure the first semester and then switch the next. You’re refunded the extra cost via eRefunds (see <http://www.brown.edu/about/administration/bursar/policies>).
 - 5. You can check your meal credit and flex point balance on the Get Card Account Balance Portal at <http://www.brown.edu/getportal>
- iii. Getting the most out of your swipes
 - 1. Towards the end of the semester, everyone will be trying to use up their swipes in order to get the most out of their money, meaning snacks at Jo’s and Blue Room will quickly be running out of stock. So I usually start a bit earlier and start stocking up on dried goods or drinks a couple of weeks before the semester ends. Just buy lots of snacks along with your meals if you run out of points!
 - 2. If you have the opposite problem and are out of meal credits, never fear. There is a [Facebook page](#) called “Brown University Meal Share” where you can post on the page to ask for swipes.

This really only works towards the end of the year when others are overloaded with swipes.

a. If you have an abundance of meal credits, offer them here!

3. Each plan comes with a certain number of guest swipes, which can be used for guests or yourself when meal credits or points run low.
4. Dining Dollars: This is yet another kind of currency that isn't primarily used by students. They are mainly for faculty to provide to guests, but there are cases where professors will credit students with dining dollars for doing certain things (like scribing notes) in their classes. "Purchased by university departments for their visitors. Available in denominations of \$1, \$5 and \$10."

iv. Dining Halls, Eateries, and More

1. There are a total of 13 eating locations on Brown's campus: two dining halls, four eateries, four café carts, two markets, and one other. These 13 locations, in bold, are described below. See this ["Campus Map of Brown Dining Eateries"](#) for an illustration of where these are all located!
2. **Dining Halls** - gain access to one of the two dining halls with a meal credit (best option) or 7.30 in points. Cash, dining dollars, and bear bucks are also accepted. Both halls offer buffet-style dining and are vegetarian-friendly.
 - a. You can check out what's being served at the dining halls as well as at the Blue Room, Jo's, and The Ivy Room each day [here](#). Just click on 'Eateries' at the top left and scroll down to an eatery to see what's on the menu.
3. It is not uncommon to see students eating alone in the dining halls, often studying (there is wi-fi) while other students take their food to-go in takeout boxes and study elsewhere. Both are acceptable options!
 - a. **Verney-Woolley Dining Hall**
 - i. Officially coined "**The V-Dub**," the smaller of the two dining halls is located below Morris and Emery Halls on Pembroke campus, the north end of campus.
 - ii. It is open weekdays from 7:30am to 2pm and 4:30pm to 7:30pm, but is *closed weekends*. Thus, if you live on Pembroke campus, opt for Andrews, the Blue Room, or the Ratty on weekends.
 - iii. Breakfast is served between 7:30am and 9:30am. The V-dub offers common breakfast plates like pancakes, scrambled eggs, and oatmeal during this time. There is also an omelet station, which is always busy -- so arrive early (i.e. before 7:30). *Continental* breakfast is then from 9:30am to 11am,

during which only limited foods--including cereal, fruit, and yogurt--are available. Lunch and dinner follow, during which the salad bar is open. The V-Dub is especially vegetarian-friendly, boasting a pasta bar, stir fry line with vegetarian options, and a sidebar with vegan entrees.

b. Sharpe Refectory Dining Hall

- i. Officially dubbed by students "**The Ratty**," it is located on the south end of campus, near the main green. It is open everyday from 7:30am to 7:30pm, except Sunday when it opens at 10:30am.
- ii. Like breakfast in the V-Dub, the Ratty has an omelet station that is usually busy. There is also a daily oatmeal bar and, exclusively on Sundays, a crepe bar. For lunch and dinner, the Ratty's salad bar is open, and you can find vegan and vegetarian options in the east end of the hall -- at the "Roots & Shoots line" -- while the "Bistro line" serves a variety of other dishes.

4. Eateries

a. Andrews Commons

- i. Located in Andrews Hall, in-between Metcalf and Miller halls, on Pembroke campus.
- ii. Open daily from 11:00am to 2:00am -- get there early if you want pho! (served 11am-3:30pm) The line grows really quickly.
- iii. Brunch is offered on weekends from 11:00am to 2:00pm
- iv. Accepts meal credits *all day*, along with points, cash, dining dollars, and bear bucks.
- v. Anytime: Pizzas, calzones, baked pasta, paninis, salads, prepackaged sushi, fruit, yogurt, chips, cookies, brownies, Odwalla bars, juice, soda.
- vi. Variety of Asian dishes, which rotate daily.
- vii. If you're on the 20 meal/week plan and live on Pembroke, use unspent credits here!

b. Blue Room

- i. The Blue Room, located in Stephen Robert Campus Center (you'll see this name a lot), more commonly referred to as "Faunce," is famous for its muffins! It also has a sandwich/salad/wraps station and rotating dinner entrees. Treat yo'self to a Focaccia Deli Sandwich between 11:00am and 3:00pm. Choose from an assortment of bagels and

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- baked goods. You can also purchase snacks such as salads, yogurts, fruit, and energy bars.
 - ii. The Blue Room accepts *meal credits on weekends* and only *after 4:00pm* on weekdays as well as points, cash, dining dollars, credit cards, and Bear Bucks at any time. In general, food runs low extremely quickly on weekends, so make sure to get there early (around noon). Though scheduled to close at 4:00pm on weekends, the Blue Room often runs out of food by 1:00pm.
 - iii. Look online for its breakfast specials (discounts)
 - c. **Ivy Room**
 - i. Stationed below The Ratty, the Ivy Room operates during lunch and dinner.
 - ii. Open Mon-Fri 11:30am to 1:45pm for lunch and only accepts points, cash, dining dollars, credit cards and Bear Bucks. Meal credits in addition to the aforementioned payment methods are acceptable during the night hours which are from 7:45pm to midnight, Sunday through Thursday.
 - iii. This is the only all-vegetarian eatery during night hours.
 - iv. Night hours offer a smoothie station (line grows very quickly), falafel wraps, veggie burgers, grilled soft tacos and pizza.
 - d. **Josiah's**
 - i. **Jo's** is located in the Vartan Gregorian Quadrangle, on the first floor of building A.
 - ii. It is a late-nite eatery, open from 6:00pm to 2:00am.
 - iii. It is known for its unhealthy-yet-satisfying grill items—variety of burgers; rotation of grilled cheese sandwiches or quesadillas; seasonal rotation of treats like dumplings or wings; and late-night breakfast (omelette in a wrap or croissant) on certain nights— but also contains a salad station.
 - iv. Forms of payment (all night): Meal credits, points, Bear Bucks, cash and dining dollars
 - 5. Café Carts - all café carts exclusively accept points, Bear Bucks, dining dollars and cash
 - a. **Poppy's** - inside Nelson Fitness Center, the exception to the rule, as it also accepts credit cards in addition to the aforementioned payment methods.
 - b. **Rockefeller Café Cart** - in Rockefeller Library (the Rock)
 - c. **Friedman Café** - in the Sciences Library (Sci-li)

- i. Little-known secret: the Sci-li café has delicious muffins! My personal favorite being its red velvet muffins -- in fact, I enjoy them more from here than from the Blue Room. The parfaits are also made differently, so if you enjoy fresh fruit, this is the place to go for them.
 - d. **Barus and Holley Café Cart** - good if you're in the area
- 6. Mini-marts
 - a. **Campus Market** - a mini-mart downstairs from the Blue Room, open weekdays from 10:00am to 11:00pm and weekends from 2:00pm to 11:00pm. When necessary (e.g. during a snowstorm), you can purchase essentials with points, cash, dining dollars, credit cards, and bear bucks.
 - i. Treat yourself to a F'real milkshake or smoothie
 - b. **Little Jo's** - a mini-mart located next to Josiah's, in the Vartan Gregorian A dorm, similarly open from 6:00pm to 1:45am everyday.
- 7. Other
 - a. **Faculty Club** - A fine-dining eatery accessible only to Brown faculty and undergraduate seniors who purchase an add-on to their meal plans ([link](#)).
 - i. Faculty Advising Fellows—a program in which professors invite students to discuss a series of topics related to students' undergraduate careers—is hosted here and is free for students to attend.
 - v. Nutrition Facts - You can view nutrition facts online via Brown's Dining Services website ([link](#)).
- c. Going off meal plan
 - i. Pros
 1. Healthier! You don't need to eat all the nasty Ratty food anymore!
 2. More variety. You get to make exactly what you want or just to switch it up a bit, and you know exactly what you're consuming because you have direct access to nutrition labels.
 3. Cheaper than meal plan (if you do it right, AKA take advantage of deals and more importantly: buy what you'll actually eat and actually eat all that you buy)
 4. You practice cooking for and cleaning after yourself, a favorable and lifelong skill.
 - ii. Cons
 1. If you're living in a dorm, it can be very hard to cook in a dorm kitchen, but if you're willing, it is doable.
 2. Takes more time since you do have to prepare everything yourself, including travelling, grocery shopping, cooking, and cleaning.

3. You have to go grocery shopping and learn how to shop on a budget and potentially how to plan meals (to save time). But these might be useful skills to have down the road.
 - a. Getting around: [RIPTA busses](#) and [Brown OnCall](#) can be used to get to nearby places.
- iii. [Wait, how do I get around again? What the heck is RIPTA?](#)
- iv. Supermarkets (Least to Most Expensive)
 1. Aldi's (539 Smith St.) - take the 57 from Kennedy Plaza and get off at the Smith FS Frederick stop (or when you see the building).
 2. Price Rite (325 Valley St.) - take the 92 West from Kennedy Plaza and get off at the Atwells NS Valley stop (should be right in front of Price Rite).
 3. Shaws (585 Taunton Avenue) - You can take the 78 from the Thayer St. Tunnel (or along Waterman) to the Shaws in East Providence (~25 minutes bus ride), directly across from the "Wampanoag Mall Shopping Center".
 4. Stop & Shop (has a delivery option)
 - a. A bit of a ways away from campus but reachable via bus.
 - b. You can take the 78 from the Thayer St. Tunnel (or along Waterman) to the Stop & Shop in East Providence (~25 minutes bus ride), in the "Wampanoag Mall Shopping Center".
 - i. In the vicinity: Savers (affordable clothing, including sweaters and winter coats) and Dollar Tree.
 - c. There is one in Cranston and is reachable by the 30 bus, which takes about 35 minutes from Memorial FS Exchange St.
 5. [Peapod.com](#) (Stop N Shop Online)
 - a. An alternative to taking the bus to Stop n Shop is ordering your groceries online and having them delivered for a small fee. There is a \$60 minimum, so you can either order in bulk or order with friends. There are often deals where they'll waive the delivery fee which makes this a much cheaper option than going to East Side or Whole Foods.
 6. Eastside Marketplace
 - a. Expensive but close to campus (165 Pitman St.). It has all of your needs in terms of your generic supermarket.
 - b. The produce here is more organic and they are big on healthy food options as well.
 - c. Has a great bakery with surprisingly cheap baked goods (if you're ever in need of a cake for a birthday!)
 - d. Student Discounts on Wednesdays!
 - e. If you want to save time, you can order online!
 7. Whole Foods (there are two in Providence)

- a. A big one farther away from campus on North Main St, in the vicinity of Petco and Staples.
 - b. A smaller one on Waterman St. (a street away from Eastside Marketplace).
 - c. “Whole Foods Whole Paycheck.” It’s true, so I don’t recommend going here, but if you’re craving some of their yummy desserts, I don’t blame you!
- v. Ethnic food markets
 - 1. V-Mart (176 Narragansett Avenue)
 - a. A pretty decent Asian supermarket that has its own butcher and seafood section.
 - b. Everything is decently priced and gives you authentic Asian goods (from Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese to Thai).
 - c. Can be a bit annoying to get to but there’s a 22 bus that goes there and it takes about 40 minutes.
 - 2. Central Meat Market (113 Gano St.)
 - a. centralmeatmarket.com
 - 3. Chinese American Mini Mart (834 Park Ave, Cranston, RI)
 - a. Take the RIPTA 22 outbound from Kennedy Plaza to Rolfe NS Park Ave (should be at the intersection of Park Ave. and Pontiac Ave.).

2. Housing

- a. The [Office of Residential Life](#) (colloquially called “ResLife”) manages all housing at Brown, and is located in Graduate Center E, at 42 Charlesfield Street.
- b. On-campus
 - i. Your first year ([link](#))
 - 1. “Residential Education and Staffing at Brown University is dedicated to fostering community, providing support, and facilitating educational opportunities for students who reside in the residence halls.”
 - 2. “All first-year students live in residential ‘units,’ which are comprised of 40-60 first-year students and 3-4 peer counselors. The first-year units are staffed by Resident Counselors (RCs), Minority Peer Counselors (MPCs), and Women Peer Counselors (WPCs) [collectively called Residential Peer Leaders (RPLs)] who work together to build community within their units and to provide their residents with information about campus resources and opportunities for dialogue around academic, wellness, and diversity topics. Each residential region of campus also has a Community Director (CD) who coordinates the efforts of the units and provides supervision and support for the peer counselors.”
 - 3. You probably won’t see much of Community Directors, but you will more likely than not live on the same floor as one of your RPLs, be that an RC, MPC, or WPC. Take advantage of them! They are

valuable resources and can help you navigate various aspects of college life and Brown, specifically. Approaching them might seem a bit daunting at first, but remember that they're your peers and they *want* to help you because they've likely been in your shoes.

ii. Dorms and Descriptions ([map](#))

1. First-Year Dorms

- a. New Pembroke #3 - The New Pembroke complex sits next to the north part of Thayer St. and is known for sinks in the hallways, nicely-furnished kitchens and lounges, and semi-private bathrooms.
- b. Morriss, Champlin, Emery, Woolley - Affectionately called "MoChamp" and EmWool", these dorms are known for their cinder block walls and not much else.
 - i. These dorms are directly connected to the Verney-Woolley Dining Hall, meaning you can literally walk downstairs in your pajamas to get breakfast!
 - ii. You also have direct access to the Emery gym, which is right downstairs next to the V-Dub!
- c. East Andrews, West Andrews, Metcalf, Miller - Located at the top of the Pembroke campus, these dorms are purportedly the nicest ones on campus, having been recently renovated.
 - i. [Andrews Commons](#) is downstairs from East Andrews and West Andrews, making it really convenient to grab food!
- d. Keeney Quadrangle - This building consists of three dorms, Archibald-Bronson, Everett-Poland, and Jameson-Mead, and is 5 floors high, including a basement and an elevator. (However, there is no elevator in Everett.)
 - i. Kitchens are located on the 4th floors where spacious lounges, study rooms, and tv rooms are also located.
 - ii. These dorms are also recently renovated.

2. Sophomore Dorms

- a. New Pembroke #1, #2, #4 - The New Pembroke complex sits next to the north part of Thayer St. and is known for sinks in the hallways, nicely-furnished kitchens and lounges, and semi-private bathrooms.
 - i. Even though New Pembroke #4 is near the bottom of the list of non-preferable sophomore housing, such as Perkins, part of New Pembroke #4 sits on top of Blue State Coffee and receives all the benefits of being nearby Thayer St-- like being

directly across from CVS and next to a US post office.

- b. 111 Brown St. - Housing only 13 students, this dorm has a kitchen, living room, and a backyard.
- c. Caswell - Located on Thayer St. adjacent to the Ruth J. Simmons Quadrangle, Caswell is one of the older dorms on campus but boasts being the most centrally-located dorm on campus. It is divided into North, Middle, and South Caswell, which are all connected through the basement.
- d. Littlefield - Located on the Main Green behind the John Carter Brown Library, Littlefield has common rooms/lounges on each floor.
- e. Hope - Located on the Main Green next to University Hall and the Stephen Roberts Campus Center, Hope is known for its spacious rooms and its proximity to the Blue Room cafe/bakery (in the campus center).
- f. Minden - Located next to the Center for Information Technology (CIT), Minden is an eight-story dormitory known for having private showers in each room / suite.
- g. Graduate Center D - The Graduate Center is a massive four-tower complex constructed out of brick and concrete, originally designed to house graduate students (as its name implies) and rumored to be “riot-proof” (giving the towers their unique shape).
 - i. Each floor of each tower contains a “suite” of 4-6 rooms, but during the Housing Lottery, the rooms are selected as singles.
 - ii. The four towers are connected to Graduate Center E, a common building containing the Office of Residential Life, a gym called the Bear’s Lair, and the Graduate Center Bar.
- h. Vartan Gregorian Quadrangle A (floors 5-6) - Affectionately known as “New Dorm”, Vartan Gregorian Quadrangle is located adjacent to the Graduate Center along Thayer Street and is known for its very nice accommodations, boasting large (and clean) rooms.
 - i. Jo’s, a late-nite eatery, is located on the first floor of VGQ-A.
- i. Perkins - Regarded as the worst dorm on campus, Perkins is the most-removed dorm from campus, located on Power Street on the east side of campus. If you have a class on the Pembroke campus, expect to take 15-20 minutes walking there.

- i. Complaints about Perkins include it being too hot and stuffy and the kitchens and bathrooms smelling bad.
 - j. Barbour - Located on Charlesfield St., Barbour consists of suites containing a common living/dining room, small kitchen, bathroom, and single or double bedrooms.
- 3. Junior/Senior Dorms
 - a. 315 Thayer - Renovated in 2012, this dorm is located next to the New Pembroke complex and contains mostly suites, with singles on the fourth floor.
 - b. Slater - Located on the Main Green next to University Hall, Slater is known for rooms with high ceilings and large windows. It is four floors high and is divided into North and South Slater, which are connected through the basement.
 - c. Hegeman - Located on the Main Green adjacent to the Ruth J. Simmons Quadrangle and next to Caswell, Hegeman is composed of units A, B, C, D, and E, where units B through E are connected through the basement.
 - d. Graduate Center A, B, C - The Graduate Center is a massive four-tower complex constructed out of brick and concrete, originally designed to house graduate students (as its name implies), and rumored to be “riot-proof” (giving the towers their unique shape).
 - i. Each floor of each tower contains a “suite” of 4-6 rooms, but during the Housing Lottery, the rooms are selected as singles.
 - ii. The four towers are connected to Graduate Center E, a common building containing the Office of Residential Life, a gym called the Bear’s Lair, and the Graduate Center Bar.
 - e. Vartan Gregorian Quadrangle A, B - Affectionately known as “New Dorm”, Vartan Gregorian Quadrangle is located adjacent to the Graduate Center along Thayer Street and is known for its very nice accommodations, boasting large (and clean) rooms.
 - i. Jo’s, a late-nite eatery, is located on the first floor of VGQ-A.
 - f. Young Orchard #2, #4, #10 - Located on Young Orchard Avenue, “Young O” is similarly-distant from campus as Perkins, but much better otherwise.
- 4. Program Houses ([description of all program houses](#))
 - a. All program houses accommodate sophomores through seniors, and are focused on specific areas of living.
 - b. Machado House - Located on Prospect St., west of the Pembroke campus, this dorm is home to the French and

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- Spanish program houses, where students get to experience Spanish language and Hispanic culture, and French language and culture.
 - c. West House - Located at the corner of Brown St. and Meeting St., this house is home to the Environmental program house.
 - d. North House - Located across from Machado House's Brown St. entrance (north of West House); also affiliated with the Environmental program house
 - e. King House - Located at the corner of Hope St. and Benevolent St., this house is home to St. Anthony Hall, a national, co-ed literary fraternity (unaffiliated with any religious organizations).
 - 5. Wriston Quadrangle - Nine dormitories occupy this city block, most of which contain Greek organizations and Program Houses:
 - a. Buxton (International House)
 - b. Chapin (Harambee House, Theta Delta Chi)
 - c. Diman (Social Action House, Kappa Alpha Theta)
 - d. Goddard (Alpha Delta Phi, Delta Phi)
 - e. Harkness (Technology House, Kappa Delta)
 - f. Marcy (Alpha Epsilon Pi, Zeta Delta Xi)
 - g. Olney (Delta Tau, Sigma Chi)
 - h. Sears (Alpha Chi Omega)
 - i. Wayland (first-year / sophomore dorm)
 - j. Greek life isn't particularly large at Brown (compared to other colleges), so you wouldn't miss much by not joining a Greek organization, but it still is worth considering.
 - k. Rooms that aren't occupied by any of these organizations are designated for sophomores (termed "independents").
 - iii. Housing Lottery ([link](#))
 - 1. While first-years are assigned housing, sophomores, juniors, and seniors planning to live on-campus must enter the Housing Lottery.
 - 2. The Housing Lottery is a system for all upperclass students to choose the dorms they want to live in for the upcoming school year. It happens every spring for all students who decide to not live off-campus.
 - 3. If you are a first-year, your Residential Peer Leaders (RPLs) have swipe access to every residence hall! Ask them to take your unit on a tour before the lottery!
 - iv. Pros of On-campus Living
 - 1. You are generally very close to campus life and main buildings such as classrooms, eateries, and libraries.
 - 2. Facilities generally clean bathrooms, lounges, and the kitchens for the dorms. (Almost every place is cleaned except your room.)

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- v. Cons of On-campus Living
 - 1. Presumably, it is more expensive to live in, and pay for, a Brown dorm. Taking the estimated cost of “Room and Board” (acquired [here](#)) and subtracting the cost of a Standard 20 meal plan (acquired [here](#)), it presumably costs $\$12,700 - \$4,728 = \$7,972$ to live in a dorm, whereas it may cost substantially less to live off-campus.
 - c. Off-campus ([link](#))
 - i. Students are eligible to live off-campus during their junior and/or senior years. You can apply here:
https://reslife.brown.edu/forms/off_campus_application/.
 - 1. Very few juniors are granted off-campus permission - the odds are a lot higher for juniors who go abroad in the Fall to be off-campus in the spring.
 - 2. Since ResLife strings juniors along for a long time before they confirm you’re off-campus, do not sign a lease with a landlord until after ResLife approves you for off-campus permission. All seniors are eligible for off campus permission, but they must still apply.
 - a. This approval lasts one year, meaning that if you’re a junior who wants to continue living off campus, you must fill out this application again.
 - ii. Timeframe
 - 1. Most juniors begin looking for off-campus homes about a year before they move off campus, so typically in the fall before their off-campus year. Leases are signed quickly between September and November.
 - 2. Best approach for finding a home: ask seniors who are off-campus what they think of their home. If you’re interested, ask them for their landlords email address or phone numbers. Being a proactive shopper is key - ask hard questions, and for positives and negatives.
 - 3. Housing comes in a variety of sizes - you can find apartments or houses for one, two, three, four, five, or six+ people. Think considerably about who you want to live with, and the type of environment you’d like to promote.
 - iii. Costs
 - 1. All students living off-campus are required to pay the [non-resident fee](#) (\$750, split to \$375 per semester). This is automatically charged to your Bursar Bill.
 - 2. In 2015-2016 the cost of Brown dorms (housing for Fall and Spring semesters) was \$7972 without a suite fee. Living off campus can be a lot cheaper, typically ranging between \$400 - \$750 a month, with a median of ~\$600. However, most

off-campus leases are year round, either starting in June 1st - May 31st or September 1st - August 31st.

- a. This means you are charged rent for 12 months, regardless of whether you inhabit the home or not.
- b. Summer: Students with off campus apartments often stay at Brown over the summer and live in their homes. If they are in another area, they must pay rent or find a subletter--another student to stay in their home and pay the rent.
- c. Finding a subletter can be challenging, because you must both find someone who can pay and who you trust. Students often start by asking their underclassmen friends.
- d. By the same token, students looking to sublet should ask their friends with off-campus homes first. It's highly recommended that you sublet with another friend to spend the summer with.

3. Bills

- a. Some off-campus homes include utilities in the price of rent, while some don't. Those that do typically are more expensive than those that don't in the Summer/Spring months, but due to the cost of heating in the Winter, prices can spike for those paying their own bills monthly.
- b. If you must pay your own bills, you must proactively contact the home's prior residents and have the billing names changed to your accounts. You must also negotiate with your roommates how to split costs. Venmo often helps.
- c. Bills can range around \$30 - \$75 per person per month, depending on the number of people in the home, the time of the year, and usage.

4. Keep in mind that you are still able to remain on a meal plan when you're off-campus. While this isn't ideal (meal plan isn't a great value when you have a kitchen), some very busy students do this.

iv. Off-Campus Housing Options

1. Students typically live in two areas relative to Brown:
 - a. Southeast: Around streets like Hope, Brook, Governor, Ives, Williams, and John Street. A large number of off-campus parties take place in these areas, and they are located along the RIPTA 92, which conveniently takes you to either PriceRite or Eastside Marketplace.
 - b. North: Around streets north of Pembroke. These houses are often cheaper and slightly larger, but less seniors live there. These houses are ideal for students who are looking for a more independent experience, or a quick walk to the Nelson.

2. Visit off-campus houses that belong to your friends. Inquire about laundry and utility bills (are they included in rent?). Ask about the state of the house, whether furniture is included, how cold it gets, etc.
3. Brown also owns 80 residential units that are distributed every year to undergraduates, graduates, and medical students. You can [request the availability of these houses here](#). This is your best (and safest) bet in getting a good off-campus house--but they can be pricey.
4. There is also an [Off-Campus Housing Service](#) where landlords in Providence can promote their available rentals. While Brown hosts this service, Brown can't guarantee the condition of the units advertised.
5. You will also encounter paper fliers posted around campus, and while you're free to negotiate these on your own, [be careful](#), and [make sure you know what you're doing](#).
- v. The Office of Auxiliary Housing has written [a comprehensive guide to off-campus living](#).
- d. Commuter - "Commuting students are students living at home with their parent or guardian (within a 30-mile or 30-minute radius) who choose to commute to the University. This is not the same as living off-campus and does not require off-campus permission. All commuting students are required to register with the University and to pay the non-resident fee."
- e. Winter Break Subletting
 - i. If you need to stay on-campus during Winter Break (where all dorms except one are closed), you can make arrangements to sublet a dorm room from a person housed in the Graduate Center.
 - ii. You need to choose a student currently living in Grad Center to sublet from and discuss with them the specific arrangements.
 - iii. Fill out [this form](#) with the other student and submit it to ResLife.
- f. Summer Subletting
 - i. Subletting is the process of tenants acting as "landlords" in that they may not occupy their rooms over the summer, and they wish to lease it to someone else for the duration of the summer.
 - ii. You will see Facebook posts (mostly in groups like [this](#) and [this](#)) of Brown students looking for other students staying in Providence over the summer to rent out their rooms. Feel free to join these groups and talk to them!
- g. Room Change - If you're having problems with your current dorm room/mate, [you can change it!](#)
 - i. The first step is to talk to your Residential Peer Leaders (RPLs) to try to resolve the problem(s).
 - ii. RPLs can refer you to your Community Director (CD), the person who can officially recommend you for a room swap if the problems with your current living arrangements can't be fixed.

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- iii. There are three ways to switch rooms:
1. One-for-One Swap: If you know another classmate of the same class year who is willing to switch rooms with you, both of you can approach your CDs and ask to switch rooms.
 2. Vacancy Pull-in: If you know of a vacancy in a room or suite (if there's only one person in a double, or 3 people in a suite that fits 4, for example), you can approach the students in those suites and ask to move in with them. [Fill out this form](#) (between you and the current roommates) and deliver it to the ResLife.
 3. Room Change Request: Otherwise, if you don't know of any students you could move in with, [fill out this form](#) and give it to ResLife. This process does not guarantee you a new room, unless your CD recommends it at the "highest priority", so make sure you talk to your CD about this process.

Advising

1. Faculty advisor + Meiklejohn

- a. Meiklejohns are peer advisors who provide academic advice from how to register for your classes to walking you through the thought process behind having a balanced course cart that is reflective of your different interests.
- b. Brown's Meiklejohn Advising Program pairs advisors with a faculty or staff advisor to provide academic advice and counseling primarily to first-year students.
- c. Essentially, Meiklejohns will meet with a small group of first-years and the faculty advisor regularly over the course of a year. Meiklejohns advise students on course selection, study habits, housing, summer internships, and research opportunities.
- d. Faculty Advising Fellows
 - i. Faculty Advising Fellows (FAFs) are academic advisors who typically interact with students in informal settings, frequently over meals.
 - ii. Events are usually organized around a specific topic and offer an opportunity to get to know faculty members outside of the classroom setting.
 - iii. A full list of Faculty Advising Fellows can be found on [ASK](#) under "Advising Materials."
- e. Randall Advisors
 - i. Work exclusively with sophomores.
 - ii. They provide assistance on academic and co-curricular matters, potential concentrations, and even broader life plans.
 - iii. Randall Advisors work with assigned advisees but are also available to any sophomore **by appointment**.
 - iv. Randall Advisors may also provide supplementary guidance in addition to that of the student's sophomore advisor.
 - v. A full list of Randall Advisors can be found on [ASK](#) under "Advising Materials."

2. First-gen mentor

- a. The first-gen mentorship program was recently created in hopes of developing and maintaining a strong community among first-gens of all years. The 1vyG Conference highlighted the need for a support system among first-gens.
- b. We as first gens need to support each other and care about each other's well-being and success. This mentorship program encourages us to strive for more and empowers us to say, "Yes, I belong here." It provides vital mentorship and support for first generation college students and also lays the foundation for more meaningful connections and conversations.

3. Residential Peer Leaders (RPLs)

- a. First-year RPLs

- i. Residential Counselors
 - 1. RCs offer programming that supports first-years' transition from high school to college, targeting topics such as homesickness, isolation, getting involved on campus, and academic/curricular support.
- ii. Women Peer Counselors
 - 1. WPCs offer programming that encompasses topics including, but not limited to sexism, gender issues, contraception and safer sex, eating concerns, sexuality, relationships, assertiveness, sexual harassment and assault, and other matters impacting women on Brown's campus.
 - 2. WPCs currently offer expanded gender-based programming to all students regardless of their gender identity/expression! We also have training in addressing cissexism, intersectional feminism, gender & mental health outcomes and Title IX concerns (i.e. sexual violence, relationship abuse, stalking, sexual harassment and gender bias in the classroom/workplace).
- iii. Minority Peer Counselors
 - 1. MPCs offer programming that support matters related to the experiences of students of color. They facilitate campus-wide workshops on race and its intersections with class, gender, sexuality, and other social identities. This position is supervised by the Brown Center for Students of Color and the Office of Residential Life.
- b. Upperclass RPLs: Community Assistants
 - i. CAs in *sophomore* residential communities offer programming that supports and promotes academic success, wellness, identity exploration, and personal development.
 - ii. CAs in *junior/senior* residential communities offer programming that helps students develop independent living skills, prepare for life after Brown, and begin to create a professional network.

4. Open office hours with faculty

- a. How to approach
 - i. It's not easy to seek out guidance from faculty members, but it gets easier with practice. Professors and faculty members serve as an incredible resource not only for the classes you're enrolled in, but also can be mentors with regard to larger goals and career plans. Professors can answer questions you have relating to coursework/material in a fraction of the time it would take you on your own. Additionally, they have a better understanding of their department and opportunities within it, which could provide a launching pad for future work.
 - 1. Ways of approaching faculty: via email, after or before class, during open office hours, scheduling appointments to meet one on one.

2. Choose at least one or two professors each semester that you're interested in getting to know better—schedule a meeting or intentionally develop that relationship. The worst case scenario leaves you exactly where you started so there's nothing to lose.
 - a. Even when you are no longer enrolled in their classes, try to meet with them at least once a semester to continue strengthening the relationship—your time at Brown is short! Take advantage of being close geographically.
- b. List of “starter” questions
 - i. How did you end up being a professor at Brown?
 - ii. What is your research?
 1. Most have their CV's/bio's online—read it at least briefly to get a better sense of their work and the pieces you're most interested in learning more about.
 - iii. Tell us about your trajectory.
 - iv. If you have specific questions about assignments or class materials, it's helpful to ask about which concepts they find are most important so that you can spend more time on mastering them.

5. Scholar programs

- a. Sidney E. Frank Scholars
 - i. There are a variety of events geared towards assisting Sidney Frank Scholars throughout the year, such as study abroad and financial aid sessions.
 - ii. There is a Sidney Frank Buddy program in which you can sign up to be a buddy or have a buddy. The buddy system is very informal, depending on the mentor/mentee.
 - iii. Dean Bhattacharyya is the the dean for Sidney Frank Scholars and works closely with Sidney Frank Coordinators to run the overall program. You can email her at maitrayee_bhattacharyya@brown.edu.
- b. Quest Scholars@Brown
 - i. Quest Scholars is completely student-run
 - ii. Workshops and other events are held for Quest Scholars, including social gatherings, study sessions, and academic events such as workshops on searching for an internship.
 - iii. Quest Scholars has a mentor/mentee program
 - iv. Not everybody in Quest applied to QuestBridge or are Quest Scholars, etc. Quest Scholars typically consists of low-income and/or first-generation college students, but Quest is a very inclusive group on campus.

6. Advising after first year

- a. Concentration advising

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- i. During your second term sophomore year, you will be required to declare your concentration. At this time, you will be asked to pick a new advisor to help you navigate the rest of your curriculum.
 - ii. This person would be who you turn to if you're not sure if a class will count to fulfill a requirement or for general advice on what you should take if you want to go into a certain field.
 - iii. This person can either be your lifeline, giving you all the advice you want about classes, or simply a yes person that will sign off on everything you do.
 - 1. That is based on what kind of advisor you want—a hands on person or a hands off person.
 - b. How to find a sophomore advisor
 - i. When picking a sophomore advisor, if you like your current one and they are in the department you want to concentrate in, then feel free to continue with them.
 - ii. If you want to try a different advisor, you can look towards past professors you've had or professors of classes you are interested in taking so that you know your interests are aligned.
 - iii. Once you've picked out one you like, just email them telling them you are looking for a concentration advisor and would love it if you could speak with them to see if you guys would be a good fit. Usually this works out and they'll take you on. If not, don't worry about it, sometimes professors just don't want to deal with advisees - it's not you. Pick a new professor and start the process over again.
 - iv. There will be a form you'll have to fill out but your specific concentration department will let you know what they want. (Sometimes it's a paper form, sometimes you fill it out on ASK, and sometimes it's both.)
 - c. Matched Advising Program for Sophomores (MAPS)
 - i. MAPS pairs second-year students with junior and senior mentors for one-on-one support related to concentration declaration, course selection, research opportunities, and internships. Mentors also provide general support as students transition from their first year to their second year, and then from their second year to their third year.
 - ii. In addition to one-on-one peer advising, MAPS organizes panel presentations geared toward sophomores as well as focus groups that provide a forum for MAPS participants to discuss the opportunities and challenges unique to the sophomore year at Brown.
 - d. Others
 - i. Women in Science and Engineering
 - ii. New Scientist Program
 - e. Informally
 - i. Seek out older students or alumni (via Facebook, email, LinkedIn) to ask questions or learn more about their work.
 - 1. Ex: contacting DUG leaders to learn more about your concentrations of interest and opportunities within that, talking to

students working at companies you're interested in, talking to those who've gone abroad, etc. Even if the people you reach can't help, chances are they will know someone who can.

- ii. Every single faculty member can serve as an informal mentor throughout your Brown career, even if they are not "officially" your advisor on ASK. Even if you switch advisors between your first and second years, this does not mean that one necessarily needs to replace the other. As you grow throughout Brown, these mentors will exist to play different roles. Be intentional about cultivating relationships with your professors and don't be afraid to ask for help!

Academics

1. How to navigate the Open Curriculum

- a. What is an “Open Curriculum”?
 - i. At Brown, there are no core requirements. You don’t have to take a certain number of science courses, a certain number of English courses, or a certain number of math courses. The only requirement is to fulfill the classes needed for your concentration. The rest of your courses can be whatever you want.
 - ii. Brown encourages you to take classes across disciplines to explore different frameworks and to become better rounded in different areas. This allows students to be surrounded by people that are truly passionate about the course topic.
 - iii. You do have to fulfill the Writing Requirement by demonstrating that you have worked on your writing at least twice: once during the first half of their college experience, and once during the second half. Students meet the first half of the writing requirement in their first four semesters by completing an approved writing course at Brown. In semesters 5 through 7, students work on their writing a second time, either by taking another approved Brown course or by documenting that they have worked on their writing in any other course at Brown.
- b. Emphasize exploring interests for the first couple of years
 - i. Due to the Open Curriculum, you can take any classes you want. This can be most taken advantage of your first couple of years before you’ve declared your concentration and are required to take those classes before you graduate.
 - ii. You can, as always, shop around for classes during the first two weeks to decide on what classes you enjoy or never want to step foot in again.
 - iii. Take this time to explore your other interests! You never know - you may realize you are an amazing filmmaker and decide to pursue that instead of taking another science class that you hate. It’s also interesting to see how your interests can interact with another discipline and maybe find a way to combine them.
- c. Curricular Resource Center
 - i. The Curricular Resource Center for Peer Advising (CRC) is a place where students help each other engage with Brown’s open curriculum and utilize its academic resources.
 - ii. Founded in 1976 to support the fullest use of the New Curriculum, today the CRC’s Director, student coordinators and volunteers coordinate information sessions, community-building events, and individual meetings with students for advising about independent studies and concentrations, applying for funding opportunities, issues related to the sophomore year, and more.

- iii. The CRC staff works with other departments and peer advising programs to best provide a broad spectrum of advice about the wealth of curricular resources at Brown. The CRC is a part of the Office of the Dean of the College.

d. Finding Courses

- i. [“The Critical Review”](#) is a useful resource for figuring out your schedule. Every semester, students review participating courses on the basis of what the course is about, what professor(s) is/are like, the level of overall difficulty, and workload required.
- ii. Focal Point ([link](#)) allows you to look at concentration information, including concentration requirements. This site allows you to explore different academic options and understand what each of the undergraduate concentrations entail.
- iii. [courses.brown.edu](#) ([video](#)) is a website that allows you to search through the courses available by subject, curricular program, or instructor. This website allows you to explore all the classes offered and depending on if it is available- the course syllabus.
- iv. Pre-registration Advice
 - 1. Pre-register as soon as you can to get the courses you want.
 - 2. Pre-register for the classes that are capped at a limited number of students to secure your spot. During shopping period, you can change your mind, but at least you have a definite place in the course.
 - 3. Don’t stress it too much!!! Shopping period is there for a reason. If you do not get the course that you wanted, you may still be able get in during shopping period. If you really wanted to get into a particular course, it is best to email the professor, as they often have waitlists that you can get placed on. Additionally, it always helps to show up on the first day of class, even if you are not registered.
- v. Mocha ([link](#)) is an unofficial search site providing information about courses available at Brown.

2. Types of Courses

- a. First Year Seminar (FYS)
 - i. These are courses exclusively for first-year students. For you first-years, take advantage of them while you can!
 - ii. Each year, Brown offers around ninety of these special seminars, each one having a maximum of twenty first-year students.
 - iii. Students enroll in first year seminars by lottery during the summer before they arrive at Brown. Don’t worry if you don’t get a place in the lottery, there is still a chance to get a spot. During shopping period in both the fall and spring semesters, these courses are listed on Banner and ASK and first-year students may register for them on a first-come, first-served basis.

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- b. WRIT (Writing-designated)
 - i. All undergraduates are required to fulfill a writing requirement during their time at Brown. This requirement dictates that students take at least one approved course during the first half of their college experience (semesters 1-4) and at least one more during the second half (semesters 5-7).
 - ii. Any class that fulfills the writing requirement will be marked with a “WRIT” designation at the end of the course description in Banner.
 - iii. There are three types of courses that students can take to fulfill the writing requirement:
 - a. Writing-designated (WRIT) courses
 - i. These courses are usually smaller in size, offered in nearly all departments, and aim to provide students with feedback about their writing
 - b. Writing Fellows courses
 - i. These courses allow students to work on their writing with a Brown undergraduate called a Writing Fellow, who has been trained to provide assistance and feedback to other undergraduates. Writing Fellows read drafts of students’ papers and meet with students to discuss their drafts. When grading papers, professors in Writing Fellows courses consider both the process the student went through, as well as the final product.
 - c. English, Comparative Literature, and Literary Arts courses
 - c. Liberal Learning Courses (LILE)
 - i. These courses introduce students to various ways of thinking and approaching material that characterize a liberal education. These courses emphasize active student involvement and stress participation through papers, projects, and class discussion.
 - ii. Examples of previous Liberal Learning courses include “An Introduction to Africana Studies,” “Anthropology of China,” “Principles of Nutrition,” and “Introduction to Computation for the Humanities and Social Sciences.”
 - iii. These courses are also designated with an “LILE” at the end of course descriptions in Banner.
 - d. Diverse Perspectives in Liberal Learning Courses (DPLL)
 - i. One of the goals of Brown’s open curriculum is to encourage students to broaden their own perspective of the world by embracing new ways of thinking and understanding the experiences of other people.
 - ii. Diverse Perspectives in Liberal Learning course offer students the means to understand the many complexities of social inequity, exclusion, and the differences among people.
 - iii. Some DPLL courses may focus on questions of race, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, gender, age, disability, or socioeconomic status.

- iv. Previous DPLL courses include “Race and Remembering,” “Epics of India,” “Television, Gender, and Sexuality,” “The Bible and Moral Debate,” and “Pre-Columbian Art + Architecture”.
- e. Sophomore Seminars
 - i. Limited to twenty students each, many of these seminars focus specifically on issues of social justice identity, and difference.
 - ii. Previous sophomore seminars include “Race and Visual Culture,” “Childhood and Culture in Japan,” and “Conservation Medicine.”
- f. Humanities Seminars for Juniors and Seniors
 - i. Offered every year through Brown’s Cogut Center for the Humanities, these seminars explore critical issues in humanities scholarship.
 - ii. These courses are listed under “HMAN” in Banner, as well as on the Cogut Center’s [website](#).

3. Studying

- a. Study Spots
 - i. Libraries ([link](#))
 - 1. SciLi (Science Library)
 - 2. The Rock (Rockefeller Library)
 - 3. The Hay (John Hay Library)
 - 4. Orwig (Orwig Music Library)
 - 5. RISD Fleet Library
 - 6. John Carter Brown Library
 - 7. The Providence Athenaeum
 - ii. Classrooms
 - 1. Faunce House - open 24/7
 - 2. Andrews Study Lounge- open 24/7
 - 3. Wilson Hall - open 24/7
 - 4. Sayles Hall - closes at 1:00 AM
 - 5. J. Walter Wilson - closes at 3:00 AM
 - 6. Smitty-B (Smith-Buonanno Hall) - open 24/7
 - 7. Rhode Island Hall
 - 8. Watson Institute
 - iii. Other locations
 - 1. The Brown Center for Students of Color
 - 2. The Nightingale Brown House
- b. Study Tips
 - i. Study with friends: create a study group at the beginning of the course
 - ii. Take small breaks at regular intervals (suggestion: 10-minute break for every 60-min study session)
 - iii. Create a study plan
 - iv. Break your work down into digestible parts
 - v. Find the study environment that is best for you

4. “How to succeed” for intro courses

a. General Tips

- i. Add exam dates to your Google Calendar/planner at the beginning of the semester! Make sure to then consult your calendar throughout the semester.
- ii. Try to keep an open mind about different disciplines.
- iii. Keep in mind that intro courses generally cover some dull, foundational knowledge at the beginning of the course before heading into the meat of the material. It will get better!

b. STEM

- i. General Advice: Try your best to keep up with the material because most STEM courses do not observe shopping period.
- ii. CHEM0100/0330
 1. If you are unsure as to what CHEM course to take, be sure to go to both classes during shopping period. Also, if you had to take the chem placement test and found it even moderately difficult, you should go to CHEM0100. If you have doubts as to what CHEM course you should take because you did not have the AP credits to skip CHEM0100, go to CHEM100. There is nothing wrong with starting with CHEM0100 first!
 2. Professors for CHEM 0330 change every semester. Therefore, professors matter and can greatly affect how you perform in the course! Be sure to ask upperclassmen/advisers as to what they know about the professor and what may be necessary for you to do in order to succeed in the course. (For ex. more self-studying, attending tutoring, etc.)
 3. If, mid-semester, you are not doing well in CHEM0330, there is also an option for CHEM33T. CHEM33T allows you to take CHEM0330 over the span of the 2 semesters. However, keep in mind that this is only offered for those taking CHEM0330 during the fall semester.
 4. If you are a first-year and think that you fit better into CHEM0330 but are still hesitant about taking CHEM0100 or 0330, consider taking the course your second semester. CHEM0330 is a fast-paced course and may be a difficult course to begin with during your first semester.
 - a. Note for First-Year Pre-Meds: If you take CHEM0100, you cannot take CHEM 0350 (Organic Chemistry Part 1) during your first year. This is because you will most likely be taking CHEM 0330, a prerequisite to CHEM 0350, that following Spring semester and CHEM 0350 is only offered during the Spring. However, do not worry; you are not necessarily in a disadvantageous position just because you didn't take CHEM 0350 your first-year. The majority of those in CHEM 0350 are actually sophomores.

5. There is also a 1.5-2.5 hr lab. There are lab quizzes and reports. You can will do well in the quizzes if you attend section, which is meant to go over the lab. During section, the lab professor (especially Professor Wang) will give you very helpful hints as to what will be asked on the quizzes. The reports take time, and it may be helpful to attend TA office hours for the more intensive questions/calculations.
- iii. ENGN0030/0040
 1. For pre-meds: You can replace the PHYS0030/0040 sequence with the ENGN0030/0040 sequence, even if you ultimately do not concentrate in Engineering
 2. Both courses are project-heavy and can be time-consuming, so be careful what other courses you pair either with.
 3. Must take at least MATH0100 concurrently with ENGN0030
 - iv. CSCI0150-0160/0170-0180
 1. CS15-16
 - a. CS15 is always taught by the legendary, amazing, awe-inspiring Andy Van Dam. It is
 - b. First semester is CS15, which teaches you Java. Second semester is CS16, which is still in Java but now teaches you more of the data structures and algorithms.
 - c. If you're not sure CS is right for you, I suggest taking this intro course because if you only take CS15, you now have a marketable skill: Java. And it's a nice easy introduction that shows you what cool projects and graphics you can make including PacMan, Connect-Four, etc. CS15 tries to teach you a marketable skill right off the bat and then teaches you the backbones through CS16. Some find this approach appealing since this gets them interested in CS, but others do not like it because they are not learning the theory throughout the year.
 2. CS17-18
 - a. CS17-18 is the intro course that's more geared towards learning the fundamentals. The focus starts with functional programming and then moves toward object oriented programming.
 - b. In CS17, you are taught Racket and Ocaml. In CS18, you are taught Java and Scala.
 - c. If you are serious and definitely going to concentrate in CS, then I suggest taking this intro course because CS17-18 is only a cohesive class if both are taken. If you stop at CS17, you will have learned interesting algorithms and data structures, but you will not be able to code in any mainstream language. But, you learn the fundamentals thoroughly and understand the basic concepts of CS a lot

better since it is taught from bottom up. CS17 is initially a harder class than CS15 for this reason.

3. CS19

- a. If you are already a veteran coder, scoring a 5 on the AP test, and are acing CS17, then you are allowed to apply for this accelerated CS19 intro class. If you notice, there is not CS19-20. It's just CS19! One semester. That's it, and you're done with the intro sequence. It's essentially an accelerated version of CS17-18.
- b. Be warned. Shriram Krishnamurthi (the Professor who teaches it) will NOT appreciate you being there if you are not driven, inquisitive, and open to hard work and long hours. This class is **hard**.
- c. **This is subject to change depending on Shriram's mood:** How to get in is you take CS17 as normal while taking CS19 alongside. You do both class's works and if you are doing well in both, after a couple of months, you are then officially moved into solely CS19 and finish up CS19.
- d. This means your next semester, you can move onto the upper level CS classes. Yet again, this course is not recommended unless you love coding and you know what you're doing.

v. BIOL0200

1. You can place out of it if you receive a 5 on the IB Higher Level Biology Exam or a 4 or 5 on the AP Exam.
2. As with CHEM0330, think carefully about placing out of BIOL0200. Attend the course during shopping period while shopping other biology courses you're considering, and keep up with the material and coursework. BIOL0200 covers a wide breadth of material and can help you build a strong foundation for advanced courses. If you did well in AP Biology and are pre-med, consider taking an advanced biology course. A great resource and refresher of the material is Khan Academy.
3. When taught by John Stein, the course is fast-paced and reading-intensive. As a neurology professor, Professor Stein focuses on small details, though he expects you to know the "big picture" of things.
4. The course is paired with a 1.5 hour lab. The lab is neither time- nor energy-intensive.

vi. NEUR0010

1. There are no prerequisites for Neuro 1 although *a background in high-school or college biology and chemistry is assumed*.

2. By the end of the course, you will understand a good deal about how the brain is organized and functions and what is amiss in neurological and psychiatric disorders.
- vii. MATH0090/0100/0170/0190
 1. Echoing points made prior, if you had any difficulty with Calculus AB, take MATH0090. Otherwise, shop advanced courses and *test out different professors*.
 2. Choose the level of difficulty and professor best for you.
- c. Social Sciences
 - i. PHP0320
 1. Introduction to Public Health is an introductory course designed to provide an overview of public health concepts and systems; with an emphasis on the core functions of public health, challenges and strategies for working with communities, and specific health issues that impact the health of populations, both in the US and globally.
 2. There is a weekly section to reinforce concepts regarding the functions, challenges, and impacts of public health. Students are evaluated for their participation, attendance, and assignment completion.
 3. Not terribly time-consuming; relatively painless course

5. Academic help ([link](#))

- a. Make an appointment with the professor or visit them during office hours
 - i. Chances are they have taught this class before and know what works and what doesn't for their particular class-- pick their brains. Explain what you're having difficulty with. Figure out what is most important to spend your time on and develop a plan of action.
- b. Science Center
 - i. Group & Individual Tutoring through the Science Center
 1. The earlier you sign up, the more one-on-one tutoring you'll receive! However, it is never too late in the semester to ask for guidance in your coursework.
 2. Making the most of group tutoring:
 - a. Ideally, you want to review lectures and go to tutoring with questions prepared. Having a tutor can be an effective way of holding yourself accountable prior to exams.
 - b. For problem-solving based courses, talk through your thought process and try to pinpoint your specific area of difficulty-- sometimes a minor point can make a seemingly impossible problem more manageable.
 - c. Some tutors have open-forum like tutoring sessions (they expect you to ask questions) and others have lesson plans based on what you've said you needed help on, so make

sure you email your tutor/keep in contact with them or else they won't know what to help you with.

c. Writing Center

- i. Be sure to sign up earlier in the year if you're taking classes that require papers as finals.
- ii. A writing center appointment is a very non-intimidating and helpful way to have your paper proofread or even to brainstorm ideas! You can go to the writing center during any part of the writing process so there is no excuse not to go! Make sure to leave yourself ample time between the appointment and the due date to incorporate the feedback you receive.
- iii. Be sure that you go to the appointments that you schedule (or, if necessary, cancel at least a day before)
 1. I use these appointments as pseudo-deadlines that would motivate me to begin working on big projects sooner than I would have done so otherwise
 2. If you are a no show without canceling ahead of time, you could have your writing center rights revoked.

d. [Academic Support Services](#)

- i. *Academic workshops* are offered almost every week on a wide range of topics related to academic strategies, study skills, personal development and Brown experience. Topics include: Time Management, How to Do Problem Sets, Making the most of your First Year at Brown, Choosing a Concentration for Sophomores, Stress Management, Exam Preparation, Taking Lecture Notes and Writing Research Papers.
 1. You can see and sign up for upcoming workshops at <https://ask.brown.edu/events/>
- ii. *Individual Academic Coaching* is available by appointment; to schedule an appointment with an academic coach, please email academic-coaching@brown.edu. You can also make an appointment with Julie Lee, Assistant Dean of the College for Academic Support, to discuss resources, strategies, and the possibility of scheduling additional workshops.
 1. An academic coach will individually meet with an interested student to discuss academic strategies or skills or questions pertaining to specific classes. The topics can include but are not limited to finding one's optimal learning style(s), developing specific studying skills (such as reading, writing, taking notes, or completing problem sets in STEM courses), and preparing for midterms and exams.
- iii. *Discussion Groups* are offered on topics related to Brown students' academic and personal experiences. Groups will discuss concerns such as motivation, aspirations, adjustment to college and relationships with family and friends.

6. Discussing your academic interests with your professors

- a. **Don't be afraid to talk to them.**
- b. Your professors are there to see you succeed and they have office hours for a reason. In fact, they get really bored when no one comes to see them! I've had many a professor seem elated when I walked through the door because they've been waiting! Never feel bad about disturbing them. You're probably the relief they've been looking for after having to write so many research papers.
- c. You can discuss how you're doing in a class with them or ask them how to approach a problem. You can discuss a topic for a paper or you can just discuss what a professor is researching. You can ask them to write you a letter of recommendation or even just ask them for life advice. Professors are there for you, so ask away.

7. What is a concentration?

- a. Timeline
 - i. In Freshman year, you enter, bright-eyed and able to take any class you want! But by second term sophomore year, you must declare...a concentration! At Brown, we don't call them majors, we call them *concentrations*.
 - ii. When declaring your concentration, Brown will ask you to map out a tentative plan of all your classes that you'll take in order to fulfill your concentration on your [ASK portal](#).
 - iii. Once you declare your concentration come sophomore year, you are expected to finish it up and by second term senior year, your department(s) and advisor(s) will check to make sure you have done so or will do so upon graduation.
- b. How to choose a concentration
 - i. If you have no idea what you want to concentrate in, check out [Focal Point](#), a website listing all of Brown's official concentrations. Check out the [University Bulletin](#) for a shortcut to each concentration's requirements.
 - ii. There is also a list of advisors for each concentration [available here](#), who you can talk to about concentrating in their fields (created by the Undergraduate Council of Students).
 - iii. If you end up not liking any of them, you can [create your own concentration](#)!
 - iv. [Departmental Undergraduate Groups](#) (DUGs) are student-run student groups affiliated with an academic department at Brown, which hold events pertaining to their concentrations, such as talks by alumni in the field, networking opportunities, info sessions about their concentrations, and even study breaks and other fun events.
- c. How to switch
 - i. You can switch your concentration, even if you've already declared one in the spring of your sophomore year.
 - ii. You don't even really have to inform anyone until you're graduating, really.

- iii. But it's better to let your advisor know, so they can fix up your tentative concentration classes plan and make sure you're still on track to graduate on time.
 - iv. To switch, you literally just stop taking the classes for the concentration you don't want to be in and start taking the new ones you do want to concentrate in. Then, inform your concentration advisor what you're up to so they can update your forms accordingly. However, don't do this too often, or if you do do it often enough, don't inform your concentration advisor until you are set on another concentration so they don't hate you after all the paperwork you've put them through.
 - v. The process for changing your concentration, degree or track starts out the same way as making any changes to your declaration. You start by going to your "My Declarations" screen and clicking on the "Change" button. *Do not use the "Declare a new concentration" button, which is only if you want a second concentration.*
- d. [Double concentrating](#)
- i. If interested in double concentrating, filing for one isn't an immediate necessity. Students have until the end of their seventh (7th) semester to declare a second concentration.

8. What is a thesis?

- a. Honors track
 - i. Honors requirements vary by department, and most students apply either during the spring semester of their junior year or during the first month of their senior year. Most departments require students to have more As than Bs in their concentration-specific coursework, but other departments require all As. Honors projects also can differ from capstone projects depending upon the expectations of your primary advisor. Students are also expected to either turn in a paper and/or give a presentation of their work at the conclusion of the academic year (i.e. April or May).
 - ii. It's strongly recommended that you find a primary and secondary thesis advisor (or "reader") during the semester before you formally apply for the honors program in your respective department. At least one of your advisors should be a faculty member within your department, but your secondary advisor can be affiliated with other Brown departments!
 - iii. Sometimes departments will also cover the cost for printing your research posters and/or thesis, but this is also dependent upon the resources available to your primary advisor/department.

Adjusting/Getting Involved

1. Self-care

- a. What is Self-Care?
 - i. Self-care is actively participating and working towards enhancing the quality of one's health and well-being. The act of self-care needs to become a habit, so that when you are dealing with stress, you remember to take good care of yourself in that situation. You can practice self care in a variety of activities and through different methods. There is no one specific way of practicing self-care.
 - ii. Some individuals may consider self-care selfish. However, taking care of your needs lays in a balanced, steady place on the middle of a continuum, with intense selfishness on one end, and extreme sacrificing of what you need or want for other's' sake on the other end. In fact, nurturing oneself is a key factor in being able to keep up your strength, your resolve, your motivation and your inner resources to continue to give to others, whether that be your immediate partner, family, and/or the larger community around you. It is a vital part of your mental, social and spiritual well-being.
- b. Various Types of Self-Care:
 - i. Sensory: You practice this by focusing on the sensations around you: the sights, the smells, the sounds, the tastes, and touch. Focusing on these sensations can provide a break from everyday worries. This can be anything from enjoying a walk or anything that allows you to slow down and take a break from busy student life. You deserve it!
 - ii. Mental: You practise mental self care by challenging and stimulating your brain in a novel way that can provide a boost. Remember the key is to challenge yourself, not break yourself.
 - iii. Spiritual: Spiritual self care is very personal and varies across people. It involves getting in touch with your values or what matters to you in a way that allows you to cope and foster a calm mind.
 - iv. Emotional: This is acknowledging and validating your emotions, and this helps you understand yourself and what triggers you to feel a certain way. Labeling emotions as "good" or "bad" is not helpful, and can be harmful to our health.
 - v. Physical: It is difficult to feel stress when you're engaging with an activity that physically challenges or relaxes the body. This can be through regular exercise and or yoga and any other relaxing physical activities.
 - vi. Social: This method of self-care is connecting and socializing with others. Interacting with others who respect, support, and care for you can be rewarding and invigorating to your health and well-being. Many of these methods are multifaceted and cannot be combined to one type of self care.
- c. Pressure

-
- i. All Ivy League institutions are high stress environments, but there's a particular insidiousness to the way Brown is labelled the campus with the happiest students, especially for first-generation students. A majority of the students that come to Brown are familiar with the hustle and bustle of a prestigious institution in higher education because their parents have had a similar experience. While it is definitely still jarring to face that yourself, it can be overwhelming for first-generation students.
 - 1. ^Yes!! If Brown feels difficult academically/socially/ etc, it's because IT IS. But, there are people to help you through it.
 - ii. While, for the most part, we are so happy as Brown students because we get to do what we enjoy, there is still a culture of overachievement. There is still a culture where students continue to push themselves to do another extracurricular, pull another all-nighter, or take on another leadership position. Most of the people you will meet here will have had more professional experience, gone to more prestigious summer programs, and studied at more places than you are used to. While this is often because of advantages conferred via socioeconomic status, it leads to either feeling like you don't belong at an institution like this, or like you have to catch up and take on more than you can handle.
 - 1. This is doubly stressful due to the fact that, as a first-generation student without the experiences that other students have had, it is often intimidating to join a new extracurricular or talk in an upper level class where it seems like others are more knowledgeable.
 - iii. Please know that not every student here does everything and that you don't need to "catch up" to others to be worthy of this school. You haven't had it as easy as others, but that doesn't mean that you deserve the opportunities that you will get here any less, or that you are any less qualified to take advantage of them.
- d. Positionality
- i. Many students here will not have to worry about purchasing textbooks or balancing a job, schoolwork, and extracurriculars. If you have to work while you are on campus, know that what you are doing is difficult. If you have to drop an extracurricular to keep your job, don't feel bad. It is not your fault that you need a source of income while in college. There are ways to work around having a job that keeps you from adding to your résumé.
- e. Time Management
- i. Everyone has different methods for tracking and managing their time. Some people have a planner/agenda, some use Google Calendar, some don't write anything down, and some use a combination of methods. Find what works best for *you*!
 - 1. Try different methods out, possibly before you get to Brown
 - ii. Don't forget to take care of yourself. Many students want to do it all -- work, school, and extracurriculars, and though it's important to make time for these activities, it's also important to make time for self-care: meaning

time to sleep, eat healthy, exercise, and socialize, as well as time for whatever makes us happy .

- iii. Sometimes we sacrifice our health for the sake of something larger than ourselves. However, we should aim to minimize these sacrifices as much as possible to ensure that we can function optimally.
- iv. Eating healthy -- It's possible! There are healthy options at the dining halls and eateries, including vegetarian and vegan options.
- v. Exercise -- Your physical well-being is critical to upkeep when it comes to performing well both in and out of the academic setting. Studies show that exercise combats depression and releases antioxidants that protect against harmful carcinogens. There are [four gym facilities](#) scattered around campus which all students have access to:
 - 1. Nelson Fitness Center, Brown's main gym
 - a. Located near Pembroke
 - b. Shuttle stops right across the street, runs past closing
 - c. Free entry with Brown I.D.
 - d. Feeling unmotivated?
 - i. Find a workout buddy!
 - ii. Try out free at-home workout videos on Youtube
 - iii. [Group fitness classes - \\$75 fee per semester](#)
 - 2. Bigelow Gym: More commonly referred to as the Keeney Gym (located in the Keeney Quadrangle)
 - 3. Bear's Lair: Located in Graduate Center E
 - 4. Emery Gym: Located in the Emery dormitory, next to the V-Dub
- vi. Socialize: It's equally important to maintain your emotional well-being. A great way to do so is by joining a club/group pertaining to something you care about. This allows you to meet, interact with, and befriend your like-minded peers.
- vii. Lastly, find something that makes you happy or an activity that calms the mind.
- viii. Leave-taking
 - 1. It is completely acceptable to leave for a semester, to take a break from classes, do something you always wanted to but never had the time to, or otherwise.
 - 2. If you're considering taking a leave, we encourage you to stop by the Curricular Resource Center (CRC) to speak with a peer advisor who has prior experience in and knowledge about leave-taking.
 - 3. For more information, see <https://www.brown.edu/academics/college/degree/policies/leaves-absence>.

2. Extracurricular organizations

- a. Brown has its activities fair at the beginning of the year where all of the existing clubs and organizations on campus show up and you can sign up for them! A list of all active organizations can be found [here](#).
 - i. The Student Activities Office (SAO) exists solely to help support the many organizations that exist at Brown ([link](#)).
- b. Just sign up for as many as you want if you don't know what you're doing. The only downside is you'll be bogged down by all the spam email from each organization, but you can always unsubscribe from them.
- c. If you don't know what you want to join and just signed up for everything like the most of us do, just attend their interest meetings and see if you're a fit.
- d. Don't feel bad if you have to give up an extracurricular due to time constraints. This is part of the growing up process where you have to learn how to prioritize.
- e. You can also be a huge part of Brown and its organizations even if you're a freshman or an underclassmen. Brown loves having those who are interested sign up for the Class Board or signing up to be a part of a club's E-Board. Don't be afraid to take part for fear that you're inexperienced or may not belong. You do belong, and organizations enjoy having fresh blood in their ranks.
- f. It's better to be committed to one club that you love than to spread yourself thin in clubs you're only in as resume padding. If you're the President of the Investors Club, that looks a lot more impressive than just being a member of 10 different clubs where you've been given no real responsibilities or do not truly participate in.
- g. And if you don't want to participate in anything, then don't! Do what makes you happy. Though extracurricular organizations are a great way to make friends who may have similar interests and to reach out to the community in RI, if for some reason or another you're unable or reluctant to participate, don't feel pressured.

3. Classism

- a. Resources
 - i. [FLIP Library](#) - The FLIP Lending Library is a space in the Rock containing over 500 free textbooks for students who identify as First-Generation and/or Low-Income to use.
 - ii. [Brown University Class Confessions](#) - "Founded on March 22, 2015, Brown University Class Confessions aims to highlight the unique experiences, problems, and insight of people from different socioeconomic backgrounds at Brown University through "class confessions", anonymous anecdotes that tell of personal experiences with issues on socioeconomic class."
 - iii. [Brown University Social Classmates](#) - "Social Classmates (\$C) is a student organization working to raise awareness, foster dialogue and take action on issues pertaining to social class."
 - iv. [1vyG](#) - "1vyG is an organization that seeks to strengthen and empower the first-generation network by convening communities made of both students and administrators, connecting students to pre-existing resources,

recognizing gaps within these resources, and advocating for change. By challenging and inspiring each other, we aim to help students step into their power and create a more equitable educational system.”

4. Transition to Brown

- a. Being away from home for the first time
 - i. For many of us, coming to Brown will be the first time in our lives that we are away from home for an extended period of time.
 - ii. For me, attending Brown means traveling thousands of miles away from home and everything that I have grown to know and love throughout my life. From my family and friends. From my mom’s cooking. From my community. I have experienced a rollercoaster of emotions during my time here. I have felt liberated, challenged, strong, frustrated, defeated, excited, lonely, successful, anxious, self-reliant. And all I can say now as a third year at Brown is that it’s *okay* to feel *any* of these ways. Know that you are not alone, neither in your times of joy nor in your times of trouble. Somebody cares, and somebody currently is or has been in your shoes. We want to help.
 - iii. It can be overwhelming, but it’s worth it. Leaving home and traveling far is a sacrifice I have made for the sake of my and my family’s future.
 - iv. Be open to meeting others. You might just meet your best friend or find a community within Brown that makes you feel welcome and transports you back home. For first-years, especially, try your best to become friends with people in your unit. These are people that you will live with or live near for eight months. They’re people you’ll be grabbing lunch and dinner with over the course of your freshman year and whom you might be living with as an upperclassmen.
- b. Academic challenges at Brown
 - i. Differences between high school and college -- academic rigor, pace
- c. Navigating family and Brown
 - i. It’s perfectly acceptable to call home every day, rarely, or any variant in between. Do what works best for you.
 - ii. It helps to have a conversation with your loved ones before leaving to Brown or at the beginning of your first semester about communication. It can be difficult shifting from seeing loved ones daily/frequently to seldom/never, so calling home or video chatting are helpful during your college transition. However, sometimes you will find that you won’t have the time to call as often as you or your loved ones would like. If this is the case, consider setting limits. Explain to your loved ones that sometimes you won’t be able to communicate with them as frequently because you might be studying for an upcoming exam, busy with extracurriculars, or hanging out with friends. These are all components of your college experience, and they are valid in every way. You might have to explain to them a few times why you’re calling or texting less, but your loved ones will ultimately understand and support your decisions.

1. In addition, if you are an international student, you may have to explain to your family that due to differences in time zones they may not be able to call you at any time and vice versa. Again, work out what is convenient for all parties involved.
2. If you are an international student, ask upperclassmen who are also international students how they call home so you can find a cheap plan. If you don't find it immediately, keep looking and eventually you will find something that suits you.

5. Dealing with culture shock at an Ivy

- a. You are reasonably "adjusted" why would you be culture shocked? Well whether it's because you come from another country and culture or that you are from a lower income household, you may be disoriented for a while.
 - i. **What is culture shock exactly?** Culture shock is the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country, a move between social environments, or simply travel to another type of life (Wikipedia).
- b. **How do you deal with it?** Realize you are probably going to experience culture shock so that when you do, you know what is happening to you (and hopefully not panic as much). You are not alone! The experience will be different and last for varying lengths of time for each person. So what do you do when you realize you are experiencing culture shock? Seek help. Here is how:
 - i. Talk to your RPL (Residential Peer Leader) -they are trained to help you deal with a lot that happens in college and this is one of the things they are trained to help you through.
 - ii. Make an appointment with CAPS- if you are starting to experience mental distress or it interferes with your social or academic well being, make an appointment with CAPS (it's free) and talk to a professional counselor.
 - iii. Laugh about it with your friends- one thing that helped me was I had friends who were also confused by the same things I was and it really helped to share and realize I wasn't alone! Sometimes your friends could even explain a cultural aspect you may not understand.
 - iv. Talk to the deans about any challenges you might be facing academically or otherwise. If you are an international student Dean Delaloe is a great resource and she has office hours so you can speak with her of any challenges. Dean Mandel is also a great resource for advice especially on how to navigate the open curriculum.

6. Fighting back student debt (i.e. getting a job)

- a. Listing of all student employment opportunities:
https://studentemployment.brown.edu/JobX_FindAJob.aspx
- b. If you are looking for a low-intensive, yet decently high-paying job, be on the lookout for Brown department office jobs that tend to open up during the summer--a few months before school begins. These department office jobs

typically only hire up to 2-3 people. Apply to as many as you can because not all jobs will offer you a position, much less contact you even if you are not hired.

- c. If you have never worked while taking on a full course load, consider waiting for a while to give yourself time to get your bearings at Brown. It may also be a good idea to know what activities you are interested in and their meeting times. All this, of course, will depend on your financial situation. F1 students have a work limit of 20 hours a week. Since some jobs have a minimum number of hours/shifts everyone has to take, be aware of how this relates to the number of hours your visa allows you to work.
- d. Be on the lookout for opportunities listed in Morning Mail in addition to the employment website. Sometimes employers will send something out through Morning Mail.
- e. Some listings, such as pet sitting, allow enough leeway for you to do HW.
- f. Participating in research experiments is also a way to earn money.

Resources

1. Healthcare

- a. [Insurance plans](#)
 - i. To be enrolled as a Brown Student, you have to have health insurance of some kind. You are automatically enrolled in Brown's Health Insurance plan unless you get the fee waived through proof of other insurance coverage
 - ii. If you have insurance, Brown's Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP) can be waived. Be aware of the deadline given to complete this.
 - iii. Sidney Frank Scholars can get a scholarship (University Health Scholarship) for Brown's Health Insurance plan, applicable for all 4 years. If you are not automatically granted the scholarship, you can email the liaison.
- b. Health Services ([link](#))
 - i. Relatively quick and painless if you have insurance. Make sure you have insurance.
 - ii. Make an appointment by calling 401-863-3953
 - iii. 24/7 Nursing Advice: 401-863-1330
 - iv. Emergency services are also available:
 - 1. Emergency Medical Services: 401-863-4111
 - 2. Confidential Sexual Assault Line: 401-863-6000
- c. CAPS - Counseling and Psychological Services ([link](#))
 - i. Appointments can be made by calling 401-863-3476
 - ii. Every Brown student has **seven** free CAPS sessions per academic year
 - iii. Confidential crisis support
 - iv. ZenCare ([link](#))
 - 1. "Find great therapists recommended by your peers"
 - 2. Helpful for figuring out if a therapist will take your insurance, including Brown's insurance
 - v. RI Behavioral Therapy for Young Adults Program ([link](#))
 - 1. "The Young Adult Behavioral Health Program (YABH) at Rhode Island Hospital helps 18 to 26 year olds living with psychiatric illness live more productive lives by providing affordable and comprehensive mental health treatment."
 - vi. Dean Margaret Chang and Dean Gail Cohee are good resources for anything related to mental health
- d. SEAS - Student and Employee Accessibility Services ([link](#))
 - i. Office hours are available to speak to staff
 - ii. Students seeking academic accommodations should call 401-863-9588 or email SEAS@brown.edu

2. First-Gen Community

- a. First Generation College Student Initiative ([link](#))

- i. “Collaboration of the Division of Campus Life & Student Services, the Office of the Dean of the College, and the student organization First Generation College Students at Brown.”
- b. First-Gens@Brown Student Group
 - i. Student run organization that provides a community and resources for students that identify as first generation.
 - 1. Mentoring, events, panels
 - 2. Make sure to join the First-Gens@Brown Facebook [group](#) for advice, support, events, etc.
- c. FLIP Lending Library -- The Rock
 - i. You can help! Book drives begin near the end of every semester
 - ii. Textbooks are available to first-gens and other students to offset costs. Check out the list of books [here](#)
 - iii. Available textbooks are located in the shelves of the Sorensen Family Reading Room (1st floor). For instructions on checking out and returning, go [here](#)
- d. First-Gen Specific Open Hours
 - i. Check out open hours [here](#)
 - ii. Provided specifically for first-gens to consult with people that have had experiences navigating college as first-gens

3. The Brown University Library ([link](#))

- a. Josiah Catalog (items within Brown) ([link](#))
 - i. Course Reserve ([link](#))
 - ii. Professors are able to reserve digital copies of textbooks, book excerpts, journal articles, newspaper articles, videos, and more for their courses; you can view these through Brown’s Online Course Reserve Access ([OCRA](#)).
 - iii. BorrowDirect (items outside of Brown) ([link](#))
 - iv. This is an interlibrary borrowing service offered by the libraries of Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, and Yale.
 - v. If there’s a book you can’t find at Brown, you can search all of the libraries listed above!
 - vi. It may take anything from a few days to a couple of weeks for your books to come in after your order. You should order the books as soon as you think you are going to take a certain class -- ideally before the start of the semester. However, be aware that you will probably not receive large textbooks via BorrowDirect despite multiple reordering attempts. (For example, the textbook for BIOL0200 arrived, while the textbook for PHYS0030 never did.)
 - vii. For any books that you borrow through whatever service it may be, (i.e., BorrowDirect, ILLiad, etc), you may be “charged” for books if you keep them after their return date or forget to renew them. If you receive any charges, disregard any monetary fines charged to your account. As long

as you return the books as soon as possible, such as after finals, these monetary “charges” will automatically go away after you return the books. You should also disregard the automated email reminders from the library as well.

b. Personal Librarian

- i. Everyone gets their own personal librarian who is on hand to help you fully utilize the library’s resources including the online resources.
- ii. Your personal librarian is there to help answer your questions and give you tips on how to use the library, where to find a rare manuscript or how to find a particular piece of music. Brown has a subject librarian assigned to every department, program, and center in the University.
- iii. There are four libraries: The Rockefeller (Rock), Science Library (SciLi), Orwig and the John Hay Library (Hay)
- iv. Each has its own specialty. The Rock - Humanities and Social Sciences; SciLi - Life Sciences, Physical Sciences, and Math; Orwig - Music and John Hay - Rare books, manuscripts and archives.
- v. Brown has over four million print and electronic books and journals as well as a range of services. You can access over 90,000 journals, 1,000,000 ebooks and 300 databases through the [library](http://library.brown.edu/).<http://library.brown.edu/>
- vi. The library has a [guide](#) to help you get started doing college-level research.
- vii. New York Times: The library pays for campus subscriptions to the New York Times. To get your pass, go [here](#)
- viii. At the Rockefeller Library, you can rent laptops, chargers, headphones, etc. while you are at the library with your Brown ID. The loan is for three hours, with one renewal.

c. Databases

- i. You can access many journal articles for free by logging in with your Brown account.

4. Center for Careers and Life After Brown (CareerLAB)

a. Project 2019

- i. Year long program of workshops for first-years to get first-years acquainted with the resources CareerLAB offers
- ii. First-years can access more info in CareerLAB newsletters/website

b. Open hours at CareerLAB

- i. Peer advising - Monday thru Friday 1:30 - 3:30, no appt needed
 1. Wednesdays until 5:30
 2. Primarily crafting resumes, but all questions welcome (e.g cover letters, navigating JIB and BrownConnect, etc)
 3. Open hours at the BCSC
- ii. Peer advising: Days and hours may vary from semester to semester so be on the lookout for them. Schedule is usually posted on the

CareerLAB's emails/Brown facebook groups, otherwise, feel free to call Careerlab at 401-863-3326

- c. Open hours at the BCSC
 - i. Works the same way as open hours at Careerlab but is held in a safe space for students of color.
- d. Writing a Resume
 - i. Limit to one page
 - ii. Font should be between size 12 and size 10
 - 1. 10 might be too small, but keep in mind that fonts will vary according to how much spacing you need.
 - 2. No smaller than ½ inch margins
 - iii. Fine to have high school experience as a freshman, especially for freshmen. You'll gradually accumulate experiences that will gradually replace your high school experience.
 - iv. Common sections include: "Campus Involvement" or "Campus Engagement" section. Sections can change according to what you apply to and what you want to emphasize.
 - v. "Skill and Interests" section: languages you speak, computer skills, etc.
 - 1. Interests should not be related to what you're applying for -- it should be fun and of your personal enjoyment. It also serves as an icebreaker (e.g. Cooking, mountain climbing, biking, ice cream sundaes)
 - vi. Wording and formatting are both significant
 - vii. The CareerLAB has [a guide on resume writing](#), and also has [lots of sample resumes](#) for you to look at!
 - viii. There is also [a course on Lynda about resume writing](#) that may help you as well.
- e. Writing a Cover Letter
 - i. Limit to one page
 - ii. Font should be between size 12 and 10 and margins should be a ½ inch
 - iii. Letter should consist of 3-4 paragraphs
 - 1. State the specific position, how you learned about it and why you're interested
 - 2. Indicate the skills that qualify you and how they will benefit the company/program/etc. Describe academic experiences where you built your skills and experiences where you've applied them
 - 3. Reiterate your interest, indicate that you're available for a personal interview and provide a form of contact (email/phone/etc)
 - a. Always state that you look forward to hearing from them
 - iv. The CareerLAB has [a guide on cover letter writing](#), and also has [lots of sample cover letters](#) for you to look at!
- f. Mock interviews
 - i. Interviewing gets easier with practice. Mock Interviews, while seemingly intimidating, can be a great way to get your nervousness out before the real deal and will push you to clearly articulate your motivations for a

given internship or job. Mock interviews can be done in a multitude of ways

1. Online, recording your own answers:
<https://brownalumni.interviewstream.com/Account/Login?ReturnUrl=%2f>
2. In the mirror
3. With friends (give them a list of questions)
4. At the CareerLAB
5. With faculty members
6. If for graduate school or a job, be sure to also conduct mock interviews with people in your chosen profession
- ii. Mock interviews can be helpful when it comes to job interviews, grad school interviews, and more-- depending on what you're interested in, the nature of the interview will vary. Be sure to prepare accordingly.
- iii. There is also [a Lynda course on how to ace the interview!](#)
- g. BrownConnect ([link](#))
 - i. Internship and research opportunity database
 - ii. Alumni network, access to ~50,000 alumni
 1. Students are able to connect with alumni
 2. You can narrow down your search significantly, e.g. by *first-gen networking interest* (currently 200+ alums), career/industry, extracurriculars at Brown, etc.
 - iii. Combines funding provided at Brown
- h. Brown Student Job and Internship Board (JIB)
 - i. Fill out profile regardless of whether you use or not because it filters into Brown Connect
 1. Your suggested results are influenced by your profile
 - ii. Upload a picture (only yourself, presentable) and make sure your e-mail is correct
 - iii. Only career counselors can see your picture
 - iv. First-Gen CareerCon
 1. Will be implemented in the future
 2. Accomplished First-Gen alums will come in to speak with current First-Gens about their life experiences and career journeys
 - v. Scheduling a Counseling Appt
 1. JIB is used for scheduling a counseling appt
 2. 30 minute appointments to figure out what you want to do with your life
 3. This is the only place you can access to make an appointment
- i. Other Databases
 - i. Explore Career Fields - get a better idea of job opportunities that may interest you, resources for that particular industry, related events
 - ii. Going Global - finding internships in different countries
 1. Costs of living
 2. Visa Process

-
- 3. Tips on etiquette and manners
 - iii. Vault - free access to information on professions, industries and employers
 - 1. You can search for jobs and internships
 - 2. Access to sample resumes and cover letters
 - 3. Create your account using your Brown credentials [here](#)
 - iv. Glassdoor Students - find information on different companies
 - 1. Similar to Yelp or Tripadvisor, but for jobs
 - 2. Compare salaries
 - 3. Employee reviews
 - 4. Can also be helpful for working for major non-profits
 - j. Social Media
 - i. LinkedIn - like a professional Facebook
 - 1. Create an account
 - 2. Add your experiences
 - 3. Select Brown as your current education
 - a. Access to all Brown current students and alums
 - 4. More Brown alums on LinkedIn than on BrownConnect
 - 5. Easy to make an account
 - 6. Low maintenance
 - 7. Join the [First-Gen Current Students and Alumni LinkedIn Group!](#)
 - a. Created by Mya Roberson
 - b. A space for students to interact with alums
 - c. Everyone in the group is First-Gen
 - 8. Some Brown professors and faculty accept invites on LinkedIn
 - ii. Companies are using Twitter and Facebook
 - 1. Twitter more than Facebook
 - 2. Some companies post job applications on Twitter
 - 3. Helpful to get a professional Twitter to follow companies
 - 4. Equipment and technology (IT Service Center, Bookstore, MultiMedia Labs)
 - 5. Follow the BrownConnect [Twitter](#) for frequent updates.
 - 6. Follow the [CareerLAB](#) Twitter pages!
 - a. STEM: [@CareerLABSTEM](#)
 - b. Business: [@CareerLABBiz](#)
 - c. CareerLAB Media and Communications: [@CareerLABComm](#)
 - d. Careers in the Common Good (CCG): [@CareerLABCCG](#)
 - i. Encompass public service, e.g. education and government work
 - k. Health Careers Advising
 - i. Includes pre-dental, pre-vet, pre-med
 - ii. Provides peer/ non-peer health career advising.
 - iii. Be aware that you must attend an information session before meeting with George Vassilev or Karen Whittet.

- iv. Make sure to complete your Health Careers Portfolio every year.
- v. Pre-professional advising room in the 3rd floor of JWW
 - 1. Pre-health, pre-law, pre-business

5. Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life ([link](#))

- a. Confidential
- b. Can be a resource for emergency funding and mental health assistance

6. Fellowships and Research ([link](#))

- a. “A fellowship is a funded opportunity or award. The word “fellowship” is generally interchangeable with the words “scholarship” or “grant”. Fellowships can range from two to five year awards in support of a degree to independent study projects for a two-week period in the summer. Fellowships are available for all kinds of students in support of a variety of goals and interests. Go to the link listed above and click “Find a Fellowship” to locate the fellowships that are right for you.”

7. Equipment and technology

- a. [IT Service Center](#) - located in the CIT building
 - i. This is where you can rent out Laptops—both PC and Macs, video cameras—record in HD and mp4, projectors and screens, microphones, laser pointers, dongles, voice recorders, and miscellaneous equipments for free! Just bring your student ID with you to the CIT Lobby and you can use all these things for free!
 - 1. The Sci-li and the Rock also lend students Macbook chargers for three hours at a time. Good if you forget your charger or want to avoid damaging your charger by carrying it with you unprotected.
 - 2. You can borrow [i-clickers](#) from the Friedman Center in the basement of the SciLi for one full semester. They are generally used to answer multiple choice questions during lectures as a way to show that you were there and to obtain participation points.
 - ii. They also troubleshoot any software problems you may be having that pertain to an application or Brown. If you need a password reset or an email alias, this is where you can go. If you need help installing something, this is where you go.
- b. Bookstore
 - i. The second floor of the bookstore is where you go for all of your hardware issues. They can repair your laptops, but if you own an Apple product, I recommend just heading to the mall and going to the Apple Store since that is what the technicians at the bookstore will have you do anyway.
 - ii. You can also purchase new technology here.
- c. Computer Labs (hours—[link](#))
 - i. Computer Labs are computers that are connected to the Brown network that have all of the free Brown softwares installed on them.
 - ii. You can print out items here in color and in B&W, and double sided.

- iii. You can also scan items here if necessary.
- iv. There are a bunch of computer labs throughout campus and you can look on the CIS website to find out where they are.
- v. [PawPrints](#) account: We have \$30 added automatically to our accounts each semester for printing purposes, for most people this is more than enough for printing throughout the semester, there's really no need to buy/bring your own printer.
- d. MultiMedia Labs
 - i. The Multimedia labs are slightly different than the Computer Labs in that they are more focused on media software, such as Final Cut Pro or Photoshop.
 - ii. You can also find out where they are located on the CIS website ([link](#)).
- e. Free Software
 - i. Before you buy software, check software.brown.edu to see if is available for free. For example: Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Cloud.
 - ii. If it's not, and you want to check if the software has a student discount, email software_services@brown.edu.
- f. Learning to Use Technology
 - i. The PASS program provides student-led training on popular software like Photoshop and Excel. Look out for Morning Mail and tableslips a few weeks into the beginning of each semester.
 - ii. Brown purchased Lynda.com for all students. It has videos on business, creative, and technical topics. Popular topics include programming, resume writing, data analysis, business etiquette. Log in at brown.edu/lynda.

8. Financial assistance

- a. Office of Financial Aid ([link](#))
- b. Bursar's Office ([link](#))
 - i. "The Bursar's Office manages the billing and collection of student accounts, provides customer service, and offers financial guidance to students and parents/guardians."
- c. UTRA ([link](#))
 - i. Include summer and semester awards
 - ii. "Students participating in an UTRA are awarded a fellowship for study or research by working closely with a faculty member. The work can be based on a student's initiative, particular question, or specialized ability. The UTRA program is coordinated by the Office of the Dean of the College."
- d. Brown LINK Award ([link](#))
 - i. "Monetary awards for career exploration in a wide variety of fields"
- e. SEW Award (see link above)
 - i. "Summer Earnings Waiver (for aided students receiving University Scholarship): waiver of the summer earnings expectation."

- ii. The Summer Earnings Waiver provides additional scholarship to replace the Standard Contribution (SC) from Summer Earnings Expectation. The portion of the SC waived will not exceed the standard summer earnings expectation for the student's grade level and is subject to annual review.
- f. Campus Life Emergency Need Fund
 - i. A pool of money (managed by the Office of Campus Life) is reserved for student “emergencies”, which students can apply for on [the UFunds portal](#).
 - ii. Emergencies include not only expenses such as medications, surgeries, food, clothing, and travel, they also include things like travelling to interviews and clothing for interviews. Basically, if you're trying to advance your career, but can't because of whatever financial situation you may be in, this fund can help cover these expenses.
 - i. Anything greater than \$500 can be taxed
- g. Loans ([link](#))

9. Community Spaces

- a. Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC) ([link](#))
 - i. BCSC provides a place and space for students of color at Brown University to explore their identity, develop their leadership skills, and build a sense of community in a welcoming and supportive environment.
 - ii. Student Initiatives
 - iii. The BCSC has five Heritage Series which coordinates programs and lectures pertaining to race and ethnicity. They are composed of the Black Heritage, Latino Heritage, Asian/Asian American Heritage, Native American, and Multiracial Heritage Series.
 - iv. Peer Open Hours at the BCSC (CareerLab)
 - 1. Peer advising- Days and hours may vary from semester to semester so be on the lookout for them. Schedule is usually posted on careerlab's emails/Brown facebook groups, otherwise, feel free to call Careerlab at 401-863-3326.
 - 2. Works the same way as open hours at Careerlab but is held in a safe space for students of color.
- b. Sarah Doyle Women's Center (SDWC) ([link](#))
 - i. The Sarah Doyle Women's Center offers students a safe space to study and spend time in.
 - ii. It is located near the Ratty, which is good for students on this side of campus
- c. LGBTQ+ Resource Center ([link](#))
 - i. Located on the third floor of Faunce House
 - ii. “The LGBTQ Center, established at Brown in 2004, provides a comprehensive range of education/training, cultural, social and educational programming, support services and advocacy services to the entire Brown Community. The Center works to create and maintain an open, safe, and inclusive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual,

transgender, queer and questioning students, faculty, and staff, their families and friends, and the campus community at large.”

- d. Swearer Center for Public Service ([link](#))
 - i. Located at 25 George Street
 - ii. “The Swearer Center works to connect the capacities of Brown University with those of the larger community in order to address inequalities in our society and our communities; create, share, and apply knowledge for the public good; and educate and prepare students for lives of effective action.”
 - iii. The Center revolves around “commitment to social justice, exploring intersections of scholarship, focus on purpose, and community as essential partners”.

10. Brown Transportation Services

- a. Daytime / Evening Shuttle
 - i. The Daytime shuttle services the center of Brown's campus and the medical school/hospitals downtown. It comes around every 10 minutes at various locations around campus ([link to map of route](#)).
 - 1. This is the best way to get to and from the hospitals and the medical school (if volunteering, doing research, etc).
 - 2. Upon getting on the BUS, show the driver your Brown ID. At each stops, the drivers are required to stop and pause momentarily. Therefore, there is no need to tell them your stop upon getting on.
 - 3. If you are uncertain where to get off, don't be afraid to go up and ask for help. They are more than happy to tell you which stops you should get off at so that you are closest to your destination.
 - ii. The Evening shuttle services the entirety of campus and is particularly helpful in the winter months/late at night after studying ([link to map of route](#)).
 - 1. It works the same way as the Daytime shuttle: just show your Brown ID to the driver and get off where you need to!
 - iii. This link shows the GPS location of the moving shuttles ([link](#))
- b. OnCall Shuttle ([link](#))
 - i. This shuttle serves as a point-to-point transportation service. It has a much larger coverage area, and is very helpful for students who live off-campus and do not feel safe walking home at night ([link to map of area](#)).
 - ii. OnCall is available from either [5PM or 7PM to 3AM](#), depending on the time of year.
 - iii. You can be picked up anywhere from Wickenden St. in the south, to the Providence Place mall and the train station in the west, all the way to the border of Pawtucket in the north!
 - iv. To request an OnCall shuttle, call 401-863-1778, tell them your Brown ID, and where your pickup and dropoff locations will be. They will text / call you when the shuttle gets close.

- c. SEAS Shuttle ([link](#))
 - i. Any student with a physical or mobility disability may request this shuttle. It transports students between places strictly on-campus, but this shuttle is tailored toward each person's specific needs.
- d. RISD Rides ([link](#))
 - i. As a Brown student, we get free access to the RISD Rides shuttle! There are two routes that the shuttle runs in the evening, from 7:00 PM to midnight.
 - ii. Route 1: [link](#)
 - iii. Route 2: [link](#)
 - iv. Just show the driver your Brown ID, and you're good to go!

11. Emergency Contacts

- a. Brown Emergency Medical Services (EMS): [401-863-4111](#)
 - i. Brown's version of 911 for medical emergencies; available 24/7
 - ii. If there is a medical emergency on campus, you must call this phone number; 911 does not cover Brown's campus, and the people there will have to transfer your call to Brown EMS anyway
 - 1. Brown EMS will reach you faster than 911 because it is located on campus
- b. Brown Department of Public Safety (DPS)
 - i. Brown's version of 911 for police; available 24/7
 - ii. Emergency line: 401-863-4111
 - iii. Non-emergency line: 401-863-3322
- c. Dean of the Day: 401-863-3145 (during business hours)/ Administrator on Call: 401-863-3322 (after business hours)
 - i. Connects students with confidential medical, counseling, and legal resources
- d. Brown Health Services
 - i. 24/7 nursing advice hotline: [401-863-3953](#)
 - ii. Located in Andrews House (intersection of Brown and Charlesfield St.)
 - iii. Phone number to schedule confidential medical care, testing, and treatment: 401-863-3953
 - 1. Includes emergency contraceptive pills and treatments for sexually transmitted infections
- e. Sexual Assault Crisis Hotline: [401-863-6000](#)
 - i. Available 24/7
 - ii. Confidential crisis support
 - iii. Available to accompany a victim to the hospital

12. Helpful Links and Files

- a. Brown website portal: <https://www.brown.edu/gateway/current-students>
- b. Map of Brown University:
http://brown.edu/Facilities/Facilities_Management/maps/

-
- c. Brown University Google Hangout On Air for First-Generation College Students (a [Youtube](#) video, about ~1hr long)
 - d. Brown First-Gen [page](#)
 - e. [First-Gens@Brown Facebook group](#)
 - f. Directory of all people affiliated with Brown: directory.brown.edu.

How to find opportunities over the Summer

1. How to find an internship/summer opportunity

- a. When to apply (How soon is too soon to start applying? Too late?)
 - i. It's never too soon to start applying for internships, as there are always application opportunities. The internship application process in general is similar to the college application process, where there is a January deadline, February notification, and Summer start time. A lot of applications require letters of recommendation, so once you've compiled a list of internships you're interested in applying to, reach out to potential recommenders as soon as possible.
- b. How to look for an internship
 - i. BrownConnect is a great resource just to see what is available for you. It lets you use upload your resume and send that same application to everyone. The companies on Brown Connect are looking to hire you since they have partnered with Brown to be listed in the website.
 - ii. The Career Fair happens twice a year - once at the beginning of each semester. They occur pretty early on in the semester so do be on the lookout for them. Definitely go to these just to get a taste of what companies are available and looking. Be prepared with resumes to hand out, and dress nicely, as if for an interview - because you never know, it very well could be one.
 - iii. Even if you're a Freshman, **you can still get an internship**. Don't be afraid of going to the career fairs or applying simply because you're young.
 - iv. If you're not getting any luck in the internship department, look towards professors to ask if they know of anything. This can be research that they're working on over the summer, a lab of a friend of theirs, or a company they used to work and still have some leverage at.
- c. How to finance
 - i. If you're going to a different city for a summer internship, it can be hard to finance. Find out if housing or a stipend for housing is provided before deciding whether or not to accept the internship, as it may actually cost you to take it.
 - ii. Brown also has a multitude of scholarships to finance your summer activities if, for example, you're doing free volunteer work to help make up for the cost of living. Furthermore, they have funds to help you make ends meet if you are not able to with the money that is given to you.
 - iii. It is, of course, easiest to work in the city where you're from so that housing is provided, but this isn't always possible if there are no jobs that you like in your location. At this point, if you can afford it, go for it. If you can't, and Brown has no scholarships to offer you, then you will need to figure out what is more important to you: the experience or the money, and if your family can take on the economic burden.

- iv. An UTRA award gives you money for housing as well as a structured internship or volunteer opportunity, while a LINK Award gives you funding for whatever you may need, perhaps \$1000 for housing. Almost everyone is guaranteed a LINK award if you apply on time. IProv is a summer internship through the Swearer Center that provides funding separate from the LINK Award. You can apply for a Link for additional funding. Any resource or scholarship you can apply to, definitely apply. There are also tons of fellowships ([link](#)) that provide summer funding for things like research, internships, and housing.
- d. BrownConnect
 - i. [BrownConnect](#) is a great resource just to see what is available for you. It lets you use upload your resume and send that same application to everyone. The companies on Brown Connect are looking to hire you since they have partnered with Brown to be listed in the website.

2. Letters of recommendation

- a. Start early!
 - i. Early in the semester, think about what your interests are and about who your professors are.
 - ii. Attend office hours for those professors you feel you can connect with most.
- b. Who to ask
 - i. Ask professors you've gotten good grades in or spoken to.
 - 1. So go to office hours!
 - ii. Ask a TA that has worked closely with you throughout a class.
 - iii. Ask your bosses from work studies or previous jobs from high school or other summer internships.
 - iv. Sometimes it may even ask for a student recommendation. In that case, choose someone you know will have great things to say and has worked with you in an academic or professional setting.
- c. How to ask for one
 - i. Never spoken to a professor? Who cares. Hit them up, email them, and ask if you can meet to discuss things. If you're too embarrassed to ask for a letter of recommendation right away, then meet with them a couple more times before asking for one. But don't worry, the professor doesn't mind, since they get asked by a million other students all the time to write a recommendation.
 - ii. Just send the person you want to know an email with why you're reaching out and what job you're applying to. Most people will gladly do it unless they're crunched for time. And even if they are, just move on to the next person.
 - iii. Give your recommender(s) sufficient time to write the letter -- at least 2 weeks, preferably 4 weeks (remind them both after 2 weeks and 1 week prior to your due date). Tell them that the letter is due 3 days before it's

actually due. Provide them with information about you that you want them to highlight in their letter. Mention this to them.

3. Interview Etiquette

- a. Use the Internet.
 - i. If you know who's interviewing you, google search them.
 - ii. If they're on LinkedIn, perhaps try to find a 2nd level connection who can answer your questions. It depends on the personality type of that person on how responsive they are. Some people will want to give you a lot of information, while others won't.
 - iii. Friend your interviewer on LinkedIn after your interview if you feel comfortable. This cements who you are in their heads.
- b. Prepare a short narrative.
 - i. Probably the most important aspect of interviewing is your narrative, which should describe where you're from, why you're applying for this opportunity, and what motivates you. It's basically your life story in 2 to 3 minutes. Your narrative is something you should always be thinking of during your time at Brown and beyond. It not only helps you understand what it is that you're seeking but it helps employers understand whether or not you're a right fit for the position in question.
 - ii. Your narrative should be malleable so that you can adjust it according to the position you're applying for.
 - iii. The BEST thing you can do is PRACTICE your narrative. You're going to be asked questions like "Tell me about yourself" and "Walk me through your resume." You want to be prepared to answer these.
- c. Do your research.
 - i. Research the position/role, the company, qualifications for the job. The interview process looks different depending on the career field.
 - ii. In finance, for instance, you have your 1st round interview, 2nd round, super day (3-7pm, back to back interviews). It may be daunting, but be persistent.
- d. Ask questions that you genuinely want to know.
 - i. Come into your interview with a number of these job-specific questions prepared. Example questions include:
 - 1. What was your trajectory in life?
 - 2. How did you get from point A to point B?
 - 3. Do you love your job? Do you hate your job? Would you recommend this job to other people?
- e. Have confidence in yourself.
 - i. Don't doubt yourself. You're first-gen, you're at Brown, you're awesome. Don't underestimate yourself, and don't be intimidated. Again, take advantage of all of your resources, from the First-Gen community to professors and advisors to the CareerLab.
- f. Send a "thank you" note.

- i. After an interview, always send a thank you note. A physical card with a short message like “Thank you for the interview. I really hope you consider me” is best.

4. What happens if I can’t get any internships?

- a. What to do if you don’t end up w/ an internship over the summer?
 - i. It depends on what your interests are, so go back to your grassroots. Make sure you’re applying to enough internships and that you have backups, like volunteering. There are lots of different opportunities both at Brown and also at home, depending on the size of your city. On campus, for example, you can work at reslife and take a class or two during the summer.
 - ii. There will be rejections, so be prepared. Rejection is something nobody really likes to talk about, but it’s important to recognize that rejection is a possibility. It will happen, and it will suck. Remember that plans sometimes fail. Try to be resilient to the best of your ability and use the resources at your disposal, like friends and CAPS.
 - iii. If you don’t land your dream internship this summer, try again next summer. If your plans fall through, start studying for future classes or build your hobbies. You can expand your knowledge by taking community college classes or pick up a skill that you will need later in life. Having an internship doesn’t define you! There are other opportunities out there, like giving back to your community and mentorship.
 - iv. Brown has cool resources like Rosetta Stone for language learning, Adobe, and Linda. There are tutorials on Linda, for which you can get a certificate that you can add to your resume.
- b. Research Opportunities
 - i. If you couldn’t get an internship in industry, look towards universities. There is the REU Program across the country that is a research experience for Undergraduates (hence REU) that provides you a decent stipend and housing in order for you to get a taste of what research is like.
 - ii. Ask professors at Brown if they plan on doing anything over the summer and ask if you can help out. Don’t be afraid to shoot them an email. Best way is to look at their CV/Resume and see what research they’re doing and bring that up.
- c. Summer Programs
 - i. Conduct online research on programs that may be aligned with your particular interests
- d. Retail World
 - i. If money is what is important to you, there is nothing wrong with just working at a cafe, the movie theater, or department store for the summer. You need the cash, and it is a form of experience. It’s a marketable skill of having learned how to deal with people, shitty jobs, and hard labor.
- e. Volunteer

-
- i. Offer your voluntary service to a local university around the area, talk to professors, look for connections. Even if you're not being paid, you're gaining experience.
 - ii. Consider [LINK / SEW awards](#) for funding these opportunities.
 - f. Your Own Project
 - i. You can always research your own thing or create your own project if you're in the STEM field. You can start blogging or writing for an indie online newsletter. Showing that you have self motivation is just as important as showing future employers/institutions that you have experience. It's always impressive to see someone take their summer and spend it productively, even if it wasn't for somebody else.
 - g. Kick back and do nothing
 - i. And just in case we haven't driven our message home, we'll say it again:
 - ii. You'll never have these long summers again. There's nothing wrong with enjoying it. If you know your field is hard to get internships for, then don't stress out that you haven't found one yet. You can get one junior year when the Brown Career Fair is searching YOU out.
 - iii. Enjoy your summer, go traveling, do nothing, especially when you're just starting university. Take the time to find what it is you're passionate about so that you can later find the opportunities you want to pursue more passionately.

Miscellaneous Tips

1. Mitigating the costs of traveling

a. *The Rhode Island Public Transit Authority (RIPTA)*

- i. RIPTA manages a bus fleet that runs routes all throughout Providence and the entirety of Rhode Island. Their bus routes can be found on their [website](#), and you can plan routes effectively using [Google Maps](#).
 - ii. Their bus routes are named using single-digit or double-digit numbers, so if someone says to “take the 1” or the “92”, it refers to the RIPTA bus route.
 1. You might also hear about the “R-Line”, another bus route that connects Providence to the neighboring city of Pawtucket.
 - iii. Kennedy Plaza is the hub for all bus routes, and is located in downtown Providence. It is within walking distance, but you can also take any bus going westbound (into the tunnel) at the Thayer Street Tunnel to get there.
- b. To T. F. Green Airport: take RIPTA Bus 1 south or Bus 20 south
- c. To Boston (and back)
- i. Take the Commuter Rail from the Providence downtown Amtrak station
 - ii. \$10.50 one way, \$21 round-trip

2. General Advice (from Internship Panel)

- a. Remember that it's okay to feel homesick and it's okay to cry. It can only get better. Also keep in mind that your mental health and well-being may well be more important than your resume.
- b. Treat yo'self and practice self care. Ask yourself, 'What did I treat myself to this week?' Or plan ahead and ask yourself, 'What will I do to treat myself this week? Today even?' Always take time for yourself and make sure what you do is making you happy.
- c. Networking can pay for meals and save you, so use BrownConnect. You can meet up with Brown alumni over dinner, for example.
- d. Make space, take space. There is a validity to voicing your opinions, but there's also a validity to being present and absorbing what's voiced. Make sure you're checking in with people, like your supervisors and colleagues, and letting them know that you're being present in a different way. Make time to check in with your boss at the end of a meeting and reflect with them.
- e. Be proactive. People really like it when you take the extra step forward and make an extra effort.
- f. In those mundane moments when you forget the bigger picture, remind yourself: it's not that you don't like it, it's that you forgot that you like it. You do what you want to do, so make sure that you want to do it.
- g. Remember that what you like may change. That's okay. You are not static. Do not box yourself in.

Conclusion

Still not sure where to start or how to get around Brown? That's perfectly fine. We didn't know how, either. Especially after reading this entire book, we don't blame you: this is a lot of information to take in and utilize¹. Don't feel pressured to put all or any of the tips and tricks in this book into action; they're only meant to guide you. How you effectively utilize them is your choice, but we're all here to help, regardless. This is Brown University for a reason. We are one of the most supportive college campuses in the world. You can reach out to anyone on campus, and we will be glad to discuss the challenges we face. We're all here for you. That's what makes Brown, Brown.

If you have any questions / comments / concerns / suggestions about this guidebook or about anything else, or just want to talk to us about your experiences or what you're going through, please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us (see the Credits and Acknowledgements section), or you can email the first gens group at firstgen@brown.edu. We wish you the best of luck in your undergraduate career!

Best,
First-Gens@Brown

¹ In fact, we're not done! This guidebook is a living, breathing document: as more first-gens enter Brown, the content in this book will continue to expand, filled with institutional knowledge that is being passed down from generation to generation. **Want to contribute your knowledge? Send us an email at firstgen@brown.edu!**

Credits and Acknowledgements

Founded in the spring of 2015, the First-Generation College Students at Brown University group aims to support all students who self-identify as first-generation and/or low-income. By hosting population-specific programming, providing academic support and mentoring, and increasing awareness and conversations around these identities, we aim to build a community of successful students regardless of our backgrounds.

The following is a list of students who have worked on the guidebook. Feel free to reach out to any of them!

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