

Rams Return 2021 Student Success Guide

At long last we, your faculty and staff, are pleased to welcome you to campus since going remote in the middle of Spring 2020. We are excited to welcome back all members of our learning community to campus, and our return to in-person learning and engagement.

Above all, we are dedicated to your success. Everyone experienced this past year in different ways with various challenges. We strive to support an inclusive, diverse, and collegial community, and are actively working for a safe and smooth return to campus for everyone's safety and well-being.

Our campus experience was changed due to external conditions and the move to remote learning, and we believe it is important to remind you of the best practices for your success as we return to in-person learning. To be sure you develop to the best of your ability, both academically and socially.

We are happy to return to campus as a community. If you have concerns or questions about our transition back, please don't hesitate to contact helpful resources, such as, the [Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#), [D2L Services](#), your professor, the Chair of your department, your Dean, or Student [Ombudsperson](#).

Best of luck,

WCU Faculty and Staff

To Ensure SUCCESS at the start of classes:

- Acquire [Student IDs](#) and [parking passes](#) as soon as possible.
- Go to the [SSI Bookstore](#) and get all books and materials, ideally before the first class.
- Check the [D2L pages](#) for all of your courses
- Read your syllabi thoroughly; a syllabus is like a contract between you and your faculty member and defines how you will succeed in their class.

[How to Ensure SUCCESS early in the semester](#)

[How to Ensure CONTINUED SUCCESS as we approach the midterm](#)

[Academic Integrity Refresher](#)

How to Ensure SUCCESS in the first weeks of class

QUALITY OF LIFE

- If you are feeling stressed, please don't hesitate to visit the [Counseling Center](#). Many are still recovering from the experience of being quarantined; don't hesitate to seek help if you experience anxiety or are suffering from depression, etc.
- The [Office of Services for Students with Disabilities](#) (OSSD) may be helpful if you want to inquire about an official accommodation. By getting a letter from OSSD, it allows faculty to work with you to set up for your success in the course.
- Take care of your body by getting enough rest, exercising, eating well and staying hydrated! If you are feeling ill or need assistance, visit the [Student Health Services website](#). If you need help with food or other basics, please visit our [Resource Pantry](#).
- Be sure to follow the latest guidelines for health and public safety, including masking and distancing.
- To explore these and many other student support services, please visit the [Student Life website](#).

ACADEMICS

- Connect with your advisor(s)!
- **ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICIES**
 - o Faculty discuss their own attendance policies for each class in the syllabus – there is no single, university attendance policy.
 - o Students are encouraged to speak directly to faculty concerning absences due to illness. For extended absences of three days or more, students should contact Student Assistance, phone: 610-436-0165. Also, see the [Undergraduate Excused Absence Policy](#) for which university-sanctioned events may result in an excused absence.
 - o Students taking classes with published meeting times (in person or online) will not be excused for commitments made in conflict with those meeting times, including work or other commitments. While this occurred at times during the remote phase of the Pandemic, students are expected to adhere to their courses' attendance policies.
 - o WCU students are expected uphold civil discourse and respect for diversity. See the university's Civility and Anti-Racism statements (PLACEHOLDER). WCU's is committed to diversity; see the Identity Groups area of the [Student Life](#) website for more information.
- Don't hesitate to reach out to your professor, using their contact information on the syllabus. Ask questions and address issues before they become problems.
- WCU Email is our official electronic form of communication. When emailing a faculty member:
 - o Be polite and respectful and identify your course section.
 - o Be succinct and clearly articulate your question(s) or concern(s)
 - o Remember faculty can't always respond immediately; please be patient!
- Take advantage of your professor's **OFFICE HOURS**.
 - o Office hours are a golden opportunity to connect with your professor and work through problems or explore various aspects of the course. They are for your benefit.
 - o Office hours are listed on each course syllabus. Faculty provide a minimum of five hours over three days; these hours are for all their courses.
 - o Verify whether the office hours are in-person or virtual (i.e. via Zoom).
 - o Come prepared – know what questions you have or topics to discuss, so they may best help you.
 - o Leave enough time!
 - o If you can't meet with your professor during their posted hours or require more help, you can find a tutor via the [Learning and Assistance and Resource Center](#) (LARC). Visit the [Writing Center](#) if you need help with writing assignments.

How to ENSURE *CONTINUED SUCCESS* as we approach the midterm

QUALITY OF LIFE

- If you are feeling stressed, please don't hesitate to visit the [Counseling Center](#). Many are still recovering from the experience of being quarantined; don't hesitate to seek help if you experience anxiety, depression, etc.
- The [Office of Services for Students with Disabilities](#) (OSSD) may be helpful if you have a learning issue that can be addressed with an official accommodation. By getting a letter from OSSD, it allows faculty to work with you to set up your success in the course.
- Take care of your body by getting enough rest, exercising, eating well and staying hydrated! If you are feeling ill or need assistance, visit the [Student Health Services website](#). If you need help with food or other basics, please visit our [Resource Pantry](#).
- Be sure to follow the latest guidelines for health and public safety, including masking and distancing.
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ACADEMICS

- Check email between classes for communications from your professors and advisor(s).
- **Deadlines will not normally be extended** as they often were during remote learning. Stay organized, using your calendar and reminders to know when all papers, assignments, and exams/evaluations are scheduled.
- Do not hesitate to visit your professor's office hours or contact them via email for clarification. In pre-requisite courses, it was difficult to cover enough content while remote and there may be some review or extra work required to maintain success.
- If you need help with your classes or academic issues, you can find a tutor via the [Learning and Assistance and Resource Center](#) (LARC). Visit the [Writing Center](#) if you need help with writing assignments.

ADVISING/SCHEDULING

- Scheduling for the next term occurs before mid-semester. Make an appointment with your advisor about scheduling your classes. Be sure to respond to your advisor's emails and schedule your appointment to get the classes you want for the next semester.
- Come to advising meetings prepared by reviewed your major curriculum guides, your degree progress report, and drafted a sample schedule and/or course options. See the [Academic Advising page](#) for more information.

LIBRARY

- Our [University Libraries](#) provide help with research techniques and reference librarians with specialties in various fields who can help you to find resources. They also provide excellent online reserves and databases that your faculty will be using. Please make the libraries – in person and online – a part of your daily life at WCU!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY REFRESHER

Intellectual Honesty and Transparency

- The goal of research and scholarship is to contribute to our communal search for knowledge and wisdom. We cite our sources for two main reasons:
 - o **To give credit where credit is due**
 - o **To help others find our sources as they do their own work**
- Whenever you take information from a source, you should cite it, so you can help others access that same information, and honor the original work.
 - o **Not sure how to properly cite?** First, ask your professor if they have a preferred style. (Here is a quick link for basics: <https://library.wcupa.edu/citing/>)

Know the parameters of your assignment!

- Some instructors may explicitly ask you not to consult outside sources, or ask you not to work with other students, while other instructors encourage both of these things.
 - o If instructed to work on your own, do so. There's a reason why the instructor directed you this way. Don't rob yourself of the learning opportunity.

Are your sources legit?

- Not everything put out there is credible; a Google search can mislead you. Check with your instructor or librarian if your source isn't clearly from experts in the field.

Common mistakes:

- **Resubmitting a paper you wrote for another class?** Unless you inform the instructor and they allow it, this is a violation. You are being asked to learn more, not just regurgitate something you already did for a new audience.
- **Paraphrasing from another source without citing?** If the basic ideas or structure of the writing are being used as a template, you need to cite, or it is a violation, even if it is not word for word.
- **Trying to hide that you got your information from some source so that it looks original?** A clear violation.

Remember, having done research is a good thing!! Show off and cite your sources!

If you make a mistake, there is a process for violations:

- Your instructor will file a report and set a penalty.
- You can accept, or appeal if you believe it is inaccurate or unfair.
- Full info on [academic integrity and the violation process](#)