



# From Surviving to Thriving

**1** Live in residence. First- or second-year students live in Totem Park or Place Vanier. Their facilities, staff, programs, and services make it easy for new students to:

- meet new people, make new friends
- feel a part of UBC's community
- live in a study-oriented atmosphere
- have access to the internet via ResNet, a connection is provided in your room
- find help when facing academic and personal challenges
- try new activities
- learn lots of new stuff, have tons of fun
- and get the shopping, cooking and cleaning done for you!

**2** Go to all your classes. Even those early 8 am ones! (Yet another good reason to live in rez!) You've paid plenty for your classes, so get your money's worth.

**3** Talk to your profs! Ask questions—in class, after class, and during office hours! Trust me, they remember the students who talk to them, who are interested in learning, and who invest the extra effort.

**4** It's good to have a part-time job while at school, but manage your time carefully to stay on top of school and work and still have time for fun and friends. Many students work 10–12 hours a week. Try to get a job on campus. The benefits are many: minimal commute; meeting more students, staff, faculty; becoming more familiar with, and feeling a part of, UBC.

**5** Advocate for yourself. If you need something, ask for it! Be sure to start with the right person—that's the person nearest you. If they can't help, ask them who could help you, and make an appointment with that person. If you have a legitimate complaint, have a solution to propose also.

**6** Think twice (and then again) about whether you really should live with your best friend. Living together is difficult. Look at the divorce rate! There are always exceptions, but many times friends-first

relationships don't survive the adjustment to being roommates; while roommates-first relationships may turn into friendship. You'll both need your friendship during the tough times of your first year at university. Another suggestion is to live near each other, so you can easily hang out often. The bonus is that with two of you living with other roommates in the same residence, you'll meet twice as many people.

**7** You may wonder, given the challenges of sharing a small space, if roommates can be friends? Well, not all roommates end up as friends, but that's not the expectation. Go in with the perspective that you need to live compatibly with your roommate, you don't need to be good friends.

On the other hand, some roommates end up great friends for years. Draw up a living arrangement contract with your roommate that outlines your agreements about housekeeping standards, schedules, and costs; using/borrowing each other's things; guests, payment deadlines for shared costs such as the phone. It's a lot easier to talk about it before you get upset. If you live in residence, ask your rez advisor for the roommate brochure that can help you and your roommate(s) discuss your expectations for your roommate(s), and check out [www.housing.ubc.ca/rez\\_guide/roommate.htm](http://www.housing.ubc.ca/rez_guide/roommate.htm).

**8** Join something. Get involved! Be it a club, group, association or team. Volunteer. The short-term gains are clear: you'll meet people who share a common interest, make new friends, and feel a part of UBC. In the longer term, you'll feel good knowing that you are helping others, are part of a bigger purpose. You will also learn skills that may benefit entry into a professional program, or explore career options before you make a costly commitment.

There are endless opportunities for involvement in residence and on campus. During Clubs Days in mid-September, many UBC clubs set up tables in the Student Union Building (SUB) so you can

check them out. For info about Intramural Sports, drop by the Student Recreation Centre (SRC). For volunteer opportunities, see the Volunteer Board on the SUB's main floor. Getting involved with life outside the classroom will help you succeed in it!

**9** Hunt for what's out there for you! Check brochure racks in campus buildings, take and read the brochures left there. Check bulletin boards for upcoming events, opportunities, information. Become knowledgeable about campus resources. Your fees pay for them, so it's smart to know what and where they are so you can use them.

For an overview of campus resources, see [www.students.ubc.ca/success](http://www.students.ubc.ca/success). Ask your Residence Advisor, Residence Coordinator (RC) or Residence Life Manager (RLM). Participate in Imagine UBC, the first-day orientation for first-year UBC students. You'll meet other students in your faculty, learn about what's here for you at UBC (from returning students who've volunteered to make sure your first day and year at UBC is great), and have a ton of fun!

**10** Get a day-timer and use it! Your daily routines and tasks may have been determined for you by someone else before university, but now you're the person who will decide how you will use your 168 hours each week. As soon as you get them, write assignment, test, paper deadlines into your day-timer, so you can plan your time accordingly. Write in your work schedule, some social time, and don't forget to set aside some personal time. Finding a good balance between school, work, and your personal and social life is important. Now that's a challenge you'll continue to negotiate the rest of your life.

*Thanks* for your help!  
Susan Grindrod, AVP, Housing and Ancillary Services at University of Western Ontario; Janet Teasdale, UBC's Senior Director Student Development; Catherine and Ron Dougan in their book *College Smarts: The Survival and Success Guide for Canadian Students*.

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