



FIRST

GENERATION

Student Guidebook

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University of Missouri-Columbia



Welcome **Tiger**,

Identifying as a “First-Generation student” can mean a lot of different things to you. You may have felt overwhelmed with the application process, and now are feeling anxious about leaving your family back at home, learning the jargon that comes with college, navigating resources, choosing a major, moving in with a roommate, figuring out your financial aid, and much more. This guidebook is meant as a simple tool for First-generation students to navigate this large institution and all its resources and give you tips/tricks on how to be a successful Mizzou Tiger. Reach out anytime with questions or concerns. Let’s kick off a great first semester!

Enthusiastically,
Selena Meints
First-Generation Initiatives Coordinator



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What is a First-Generation Student?

Mizzou defines a first-generation college student as one whose parents do not have a bachelor's degree from a college or university. This also includes students (before age 18) who have not lived with or received support from a parent who has received a bachelor's degree. One third of U.S. college students is considered first generation. **At MU, nearly 25 percent** of new (first-time college and transfer) students identify as first generation.

You may be asking, do I “qualify” as being a First-Generation student?

I had a sibling, cousin, grandparent, aunt/uncle attend college-**Yes you are still a first-gen.**

I did not receive support from a parent who has a four-year degree-**Yes you are still a first-gen.**

I was in the foster system but my biological parents have a four-year degree but they do not support me-**Yes you are still a first-gen.**

My parents attended community college or only got a 2-year degree-**Yes you are still a first-gen.**

My parents are immigrants who got their degree in a foreign country-**Yes you could still be considered a first-gen.**

The legal definition can be vague but that is why if you feel you did not receive support from a family member who attended college or lack the critical resources and tools that a continuing generation student possesses you can certainly consider yourself a first-gen.

We welcome you!

What is Jargon?

Jargon= special words or expressions that are used by a particular profession or group and are difficult for others to understand.

Let's go over some definitions of words or abbreviations you may see/hear on campus:

Common Terms at MU (All are important to know but we underlined the most important):

- **Academic Year**- freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior.
- **Academic Advisor**- This person will review course requirements and help select appropriate courses based on your field of study.
- **Add/Drop Period**- During the first week of classes, you will still have to opportunity to add and drop courses freely, allowing you the opportunity to read the syllabus and explore different interests before your schedule is finalized.
- **Adjunct faculty/professor**- Adjunct professors work as independent contractors who teach a limited number of classes, as opposed to full-time faculty.
- **Commencement**- A formal graduation ceremony that celebrates recent graduates of the institution with their family and friends.
- **Course catalog**- A college publication that describes academic programs, their majors, and minors, and required courses and their contents.
- **Course load**- This refers to the total amount of courses a student is taking per term.
- **Credit Hour**- A credit hour is an amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement that is an institutionally-established equivalency.
- **Degree**- A qualification awarded to students upon successful completion of a course of study in higher education, usually at a college or university.
- **Department**- Academic division specializing in an area of study like Nursing, English, Engineering or Biology.
- **Department Dean**- The head of a college or university department.
- **Electives**- Classes students choose to fulfill a general education requirement or just because they're interested a topic outside of their major's core courses.
- **Expected Family Contribution (EFC)**- EFC is the amount your family is expected to pay for tuition and fees, calculated by FAFSA and other financial institutions.
- **Faculty Member vs. Staff Member**- The main difference between faculty and staff is that the word faculty essentially means the members of the academic staff comprising of teachers, lecturers, or professors in an educational institution while the word staff means all the members of the university.

- **Final exam-** Test taken at the end of a course that usually includes subject matter from the entire course.
- **Full-Time enrollment-** To be a full-time student eligible for certain scholarships, programs, and activities, you must be enrolled in 12 or more credits per semester. Students taking less than 12 credits a semester are considered part-time students.
- **General education courses-** Curriculum that creates the foundation of an undergraduate degree. It generally includes lower-level courses in English, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Social Sciences. These classes are required for all majors.
- **Grade point average (GPA)-** Represents the average of a student's final grades in all their courses.
- **Midterm-** An exam typically in the middle of the semester. Professors may schedule a midterm worth a significant portion of the grade. Certain courses may have more than one midterm.
- **Minor-** A secondary focus meant to add to the value to the student's major. A minor consists of the lower-level courses required for a major in the same discipline.
- **Major-** a group of courses required by a college or university to receive a degree or certificate in a specialized area.
- **Office Hours-** The days and times that college faculty set aside to meet with students enrolled in their classes. Traditionally these take place in the instructor's office (not in the classroom).
- **Orientation-** Time at the beginning of a school year that serves as a training period for new students. Typically includes activities or courses intended to help students get to know the institution and how to use available resources.
- **Plagiarism-** Taking credit for someone else's work as your own including copying words, sentence structure or ideas. Plagiarism has very grave consequences in higher education.
- **Prerequisites-** Prerequisites are academic requirements that must be fulfilled before enrollment in certain courses.
- **Probation-** Academic probation means a student has fallen from good standing status and is at risk of being dismissed from the university.
- **Registration Schedule-** This schedule indicates what time you can begin registering for courses. The schedule is contingent on your number of earned credits.
- **Resident Assistant-** Resident Assistants are peer leaders who not only supervise the floor they live on but also provide social and academic guidance for students living on-campus in the residential colleges.
- **Syllabus-** A document (which some students and faculty see as the binding agreement for a course) provided at the beginning of a term that outlines the key elements of a course, including things such as learning objectives, assigned readings, major assignments, test and quiz information, and other requirements or expectations of the course.

- **Tenure-** Employment track for professors that essentially guarantees a permanent position at the institution (barring termination for cause or financial insolvency).
- **Transcript-** Official record of courses taken and grades earned at a given institution.
- **Transfer credits-** Course credits carried over from one institution to another.
- **Tutor-** A more experienced student or teacher who offers one-on-one academic help usually in a specific subject.
- **Undecided or undeclared-** A student enrolled in courses but has not yet declared a major.
- **Withdraw (from a course):** - After a specified date each semester, dropping a class will result in a “W”, which stands for withdrawal notation on your transcript. While this means the class will not affect your GPA, it is still important to consider that this is visible on your transcript when applying to postgraduate program.
- **Work-study program-** Work-study programs help college students with financial need get part-time jobs to help pay for day-to-day expenses and tuition payments. Work-study jobs are federally- or state-funded.

What you need to know about Paying for School

Do you have questions about paying for your college degree? You may be confused by some terms you heard from the Financial Aid office and that is totally okay! This is a quick summary of terms you should know. Please visit <https://admissions.missouri.edu/financial-aid/> for more information.

- Financial Aid: is money to help pay for college or career school. Grants, work-study, loans, and scholarships help make college or career school affordable.
- FASFA: Stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This is a document that prospective students complete to determine eligibility for federal loans and grants. You must fill this out each year!
- Federal grants vs. state grants: Grants are need-based forms of financial aid that do not need to be repaid. Federal grants are awarded through the FASFA.
- Net price: Calculated by taking the “sticker price” for tuition, room and board and other fees, and subtracting any scholarships and grants the student is receiving.
- Room and board: Term for charges stemming from on-campus food services and housing.
- Scholarship: An award given by a college, university, or outside institution to help a student pay for tuition or day-to-day expenses. Criteria varies depending on individual scholarships.
- Stafford loan: A direct federal loan with fixed interest rates.
- Subsidized vs. unsubsidized loan: If a student receives a subsidized loan, the U.S Department of Education pays all interest accrued during school, the 6-month grace period and deferment. Students with unsubsidized loans must pay interest either while in school or have the accrued interest added to the principal loan balance.
- Tuition: The core price for college classes. Tuition may be listed as a flat rate for a range of credits, usually 12-18, or priced per credit.
- Make sure to visit the Financial Aid office with any questions regarding your bill, how much you owe, what your financial aid package entails, how payment plans work, etc. It is vital to understand the logistics of your financial situation and affording your college degree without going into thousands of dollars in debt. If you need more one-on-one financial coaching, visit The Office of Financial Success. <https://financialsuccess.missouri.edu/>

Dates and Deadlines

Regular 16 Week Session

January 8-12	Regular Registration for Spring 2024
January 16	Classwork Begins
January 23	Last Day to register, add or change sections
February 12	Census Day
February 19	Last day to drop course without a grade
February 19	Graduation Application priority deadline for May 2024
March 4-22	Early Registration for Fall 2024 by appointment
March 23-31	Spring Break Begins close of day, March 23
April 1	FAFSA deadline
April 1	Classwork Resumes-8.am
April 12	Last day to change divisions for Spring 2024
April 29	Last day to withdraw from a course
April 29	Last day to withdraw from the Term(University)
May 2	Spring Semester classwork ends
May 3	Reading Day
May 3	Graduation Application final deadline for May 2024
May 6	Final Examinations begin
May 6-10	Final Examination Week
May 10	Spring Semester ends at close of day
May 10-12	Commencement Weekend
May 14	Grades are due in myZou by 5.p.m.

Campus Resources

Career Center

Serves all MU students with their career exploration and development needs. Offers daily appointments and drop-in services to help you:

- Explore majors and career paths
- Write resumes, CVs, and cover letters •
- Search for jobs and internships
- Prepare for interviews, and much more!

We meet with students in person, or online via Zoom. Our services are provided by Career Specialists, MU students with in-depth training who provide one-on-one advising. Our friendly and resourceful staff make talking about major and career questions an easy and comfortable process.

201 Student Success Center

(573) 882-6801 or chat with a Career Specialist on the website

<https://career.missouri.edu>

Center for Academic Success & Excellence

The Center for Academic Success & Excellence provides an array of services designed to promote student success throughout their time at the University of Missouri. These services are designed to work with all students and can be tailored to meet their specific needs.

110 Student Success Center Phone:

(573) 882-9208

<https://case.missouri.edu>

Office Hours: 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday – Friday Walk-In

Hours: 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM Monday – Friday

MU Counseling Center

Call at any time or come to our office during normal business hours for crisis support for any reason.

Strickland Hall 4th Floor

(573) 882-6601

<http://counseling.missouri.edu>

Discovery Center

The Discovery Center is a campus-wide student resource located in the MU Student Success Center. We provide academic direction and support undergraduate students who are exploring multiple academic pathways, in collaboration with the Career Center, Learning Center, Transfer Center, MU Connect, and the Center for Academic Success and Excellence (CASE). Our mission is to facilitate MU students' exploration of and engagement within the university.

M110 Student Success Center

(573) 884-9700

<https://discoverycenter.missouri.edu/>

Ellis Library

A one stop shop for all of your academic resources; books, research articles, journals, etc.

1020 Lowry St.

(573) 882-3362

<https://library.missouri.edu/>

Financial Aid Office

A one stop shop for all of your academic financial needs; learn how to fill out the FAFSA, what grants/loans you have in your award package, etc.

MU Office of Student Financial Aid 11

Jesse Hall

Phone: (573) 882-7506

MizzouSFA@missouri.edu

8:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday – Friday

Learning Center

Provides instruction that deepens and enriches students' understanding of the classes in which they enroll, through peer and professional tutoring and academic coaching. All services are offered at no cost to students.

100 Student Success Center Phone:

(573) 882-2493

learningcenter.missouri.edu/

McNair Scholars Program

Prepares MU students who meet federal income guidelines whose parents have not completed an undergraduate degree and/or students from groups underrepresented in graduate education. The purpose of the program is to provide enriching experiences that prepare eligible students for doctoral study.

Students who are in their freshman and sophomore years are considered recruits and participate in the Discover Program. They learn about the opportunities associated with having a doctoral education, what research and scholarly activity entails, and what they should do as underclassmen to prepare to become McNair Scholars.

10 Arts & Science Building Columbia,
MO 65211
Phone: (573) 882-1962

Office of Financial Success

Our primary mission is to improve the financial well-being of the campus community with one-on-one consultations, group workshops and online services. The Office for Financial Success is a VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) tax preparation site. Undergraduate and graduate students can schedule an appointment for free tax preparation from tax-certified OFS peer financial coaches.

162 Stanley Hall
Phone: (573) 882-2173
<https://ofsmizzou.org/>

Registrar

Resources pertaining to registration, adding/dropping courses, grades, transcripts, degree programs and academic policies.

125 Jesse Hall
(573) 882-7881
<https://registrar.missouri.edu/>

Transfer Center

A space where the transfer student community comes together at all stages of the transfer process. The Transfer Center provides admissions coordinators to navigate your transition to Mizzou, advisors to guide you in your academics, and programming to keep you engaged in the Mizzou community. The Transfer Center also oversees the advisement and registration of students involved in the MizzouMACC program.

Located on the mezzanine level of the Student Success Center, the Transfer Center is open Monday through Friday, from 8am to 5pm.

M110 Student Success Center
(573) 884-9700
<https://transfercenter.missouri.edu>

TRiO/Student Support Services Program

A federal grant program designed to help promising students from underrepresented groups meet the academic, financial, and social demands of a college education. Designed to help students achieve academic success, MU's TRiO Program offers a wide range of services in six main categories: academic, financial, social, professional/career, leadership development, and cultural competency. These services are designed to help students make a successful transition from high school to college, form bonds with the campus community, and improve their academic performance and prospects for graduation and beyond. 100 Student Success Center

(573) 882-2493

<https://trio.missouri.edu/>

Tiger Pantry

A place to receive groceries/non-perishables for students in need.

Main location: 299 Hitt Street (Hitt Street Parking Structure, enter off of Elm Street)

Phone: (573) 882-3780

tigerpantry@missouri.edu

Open Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday 4:30-6:30 PM and Sunday 11:00 AM -2:00 PM (Open Sunday only during academic breaks)

Writing Center

Supports anyone with a pawprint (including faculty, postdocs, and distanced-students) completely free of charge throughout their time at Mizzou via in-person appointments at the Columbia campus, Zoom appointments, and asynchronous responses through the Online Writery.

100 Student Success Center

Phone: (573) 884-8725 or (573) 882-6853

writingcenter.missouri.edu

For more resources and support on campus and in Columbia, please follow this link to learn more

<https://learningcenter.missouri.edu/resources-for-all-mizzou-students/>

Get Involved!

We have many ways to get involved on campus! We have a few specific programs/clubs/communities for First-Generation College students:

Want to join a club with like-minded individuals who share the same identity? Consider joining FGT!

First-Gen Tigers Student ORG

This student-run organization focuses on building a community of first-generation students who can come together to host events and do life with on campus. Join them on MU Engage: https://engage.missouri.edu/FGT/club_signup

Want to live with other peers similar to you? Join a FIG! A FIG is a Freshman Interest Group (10-15 students who live near each other and enroll in a few general education classes together).

Trail Blazers: First-Generation College Students

Are you the first in your family to attend college? If so, Trail Blazers offers a FIG designed especially for you! This FIG is led by first-generation college students and will provide you with help, guidance, resources, and insight into navigating the sometimes-daunting maze of higher education all while earning core credits toward your degree.

<https://housing.missouri.edu/academic-success-programs>

In the Trulaske College of Business? You can apply to be part of their Heartland Scholars Academy!

Heartland Scholars Academy

This program equips first-generation, rural students with the tools and skills needed to achieve academic success at Mizzou and provides them with exposure to the business world through a variety of activities over four years. incoming first-year students must be accepted into Mizzou, designating business as their major, and have a minimum 3.25 high school GPA. Applications are open annually beginning in August, with priority given to applicants who apply before December 1st. Applications received after that date will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

<https://business.missouri.edu/heartland>

Interested in being involved in large community that offers many resources? Consider applying for TRIO!

TRIO/Student Support Services Program

TRIO is a federal grant program designed to help promising students from underrepresented groups meet the academic, financial, and social demands of a college education. TRIO serves students who are first-generation, Pell-eligible, or who have a documented disability.

<https://trio.missouri.edu/>

Are you thinking about taking the Pre-Med track? Consider applying for the J/PAWS Program!

Junior/Pathways to Success Undergraduate Pre-Med Pathway Program

The Junior Pathways to Success Program (J-PAWS) is a partnership between the University of Missouri School of Medicine and the MedOpp Advising Office. The program's objective is to assist first generation, socioeconomically disadvantaged and historically underrepresented in medicine undergraduate Mizzou students on their path to a career in medicine.

<https://medicine.missouri.edu/offices-programs/admissions/pathways-to-success-paws-pre-admission-program/j-paws>

Have you wondered about life after college? Have you considered attending graduate school? Freshman and sophomores are encouraged to apply for the Discover Program!

Discover Program

The Discover Program examines graduate education opportunities, explains the benefits of pursuing an advanced degree and teaches about how to find paid summer research opportunities.

<https://mcnair.missouri.edu/discover-program/>

If you are a rising Junior/Senior interested in pursuing graduate education, consider applying to the prestigious McNair program!

McNair Scholars Program

The McNair Scholars Program prepares MU students who meet federal income guidelines whose parents have not completed an undergraduate degree and/or students from groups underrepresented in graduate education. The program provides an enriching experience that prepares students for doctoral study.

<https://mcnair.missouri.edu/about/>

Joining a club/org/Greek Life or any other activity on campus is key for your well-being on campus.

Studies have found that social integration, such as attending intramural sports and school clubs specifically within the first year, helped to reduce dropout rates for First-Generation students.

Celebrating First-Generation Students at Mizzou

In 2021, Mizzou celebrated its inaugural First Gen Day, a national celebration honoring the signing of the Higher Education Act (HEA) of 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. In addition to creating federal grants and loan programs to help students finance their education, the legislation made key investments in institutions of higher education. Much like other notable legislation, HEA was intended to help level the playing field for marginalized and low-income Americans across the country attend college.

At Mizzou, First Gen Day, Nov. 8th has been celebrated with a week of festivities honoring our students who are the first in their families to pursue a college degree.

We went big this year with over 20+ events. Some events we hosted this year included:

- First-Gen Career Connections Networking Event
- TRIO Trivia Tuesday
- Photo of all First-Gen Students
- First-Gen Alumni Career Panel
- First-Gen Research Mixer & Mocktails
- First-Gen Financial Empowerment Lunch & Learn

For more information regarding any First-Generation Student Initiatives at Mizzou please visit our website: <https://firstgeneration.missouri.edu/>

Make an appointment on MU Connect: <https://mizzou.starfishsolutions.com/starfish-ops/dl/instructor/serviceCatalog.html?bookmark=connection/3977652/schedule>

Make sure to check out our MU Engage page as well: https://engage.missouri.edu/FirstGenerationStudentInitiatives/club_signup