



FIRST

GENERATION

Student Guidebook

firstgeneration.missouri.edu



Hey Tiger,

Welcome to Mizzou!

This guidebook serves as a simple tool to help first-generation college students to navigate the large institution we call Mizzou. Regardless of where you come from, you will always belong to this ever-changing community of Mizzou Tigers. Let's kick off a great first semester!

Enthusiastically,
Selena Meints

First-Generation Initiatives Coordinator

Make an appointment: **mizzou.us/1stgenappointment**



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WHAT IS A FIRST-GENERATION STUDENT?

The University of Missouri 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 in three U.S. college students is considered first-generation, and one in four Mizzou students qualify.

Do I qualify as a First-Generation student?

I had a sibling, cousin, grandparent, aunt/uncle attend college, but *not* a parent.

Yes, you are first-generation.

I received zero support from a parent who has a four-year degree.

Yes, you are first-generation.

My parents attended community college or only received a two-year degree.

Yes, you are still first-generation.

My biological parents have a four-year degree, but I was in the foster system and received zero support from them.

Yes, you are first-generation.

My parents are immigrants who received their degree in a foreign country.

Yes, you could be considered first-generation.

The legal definition is vague, but if you feel you did not receive support from a family member who attended college or lack the critical resources that continuing students have, you can certainly consider yourself first-generation.

We welcome you!

Common terms used at colleges

Academic year:

freshman, sophomore, junior or senior (arranged in order of first, second, third and fourth year).

Academic advisor:

this person will review course requirements and help you select appropriate courses based on your field of study.

Add/drop period:

you will have a brief opportunity at the beginning of the semester to add or drop a course freely. This allows you to read the syllabus and explore different interests before your schedule is finalized.

Adjunct faculty/professor:

adjunct faculty work as independent contractors who teach a limited number of classes, as opposed to full-time faculty members.

Commencement:

a formal graduation ceremony that celebrates recent graduates of the institution with their family, friends and community.

Course catalog:

a college publication that lists all academic programs, majors, minors and required courses.

Course load:

the total number of courses a student is taking per semester.

Credit hour:

a credit hour is a way of measuring how much credit a student receives for attending a course. One credit represents approximately three hours of a student's time each week for one semester.

Dean:

the head of a college OR university department.

Degree:

a qualification awarded to students upon successful completion of a course of study in higher education, usually at a college or university.

Department:

an academic division that specializes in an area of study such as nursing, business, engineering or biology.

Electives:

classes students choose to fulfill a general education requirement or simply because they are interested in a topic outside of their major's core courses.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC):

the amount your family is expected to pay for tuition and fees, calculated by financial institutions such as FAFSA.

Faculty vs. staff members:

Faculty members include the academic staff such as teachers, lecturers and professors while staff include all other university employees.

FAFSA:

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 out this 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 FAFSA.

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.

Final exam:

an exam taken at the end of a course that usually includes subject matter from the entire course.

Full-time enrollment:

students who are enrolled in 12 or more credit hours per semester. Students taking less than 12 credit hours per semester are considered part time, and lose eligibility for certain scholarships, programs and activities.

General education courses:

Courses that creates the foundation of an undergraduate degree, generally including lower-level courses in English, mathematics, natural sciences and social sciences. General education classes vary but are required for all majors.

Grade point average (GPA):

the average of a student's final grades in all courses.

Major:

a group of courses required by a college or university to receive a degree or certificate in a specialized area.

Midterm:

an exam typically held in the middle of the semester and worth a significant portion of the course's final grade.

Minor:

a secondary focus meant to add to the value of a student's major. A minor consists of lower-level courses required for a major in the same discipline.

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 given.

Office hours:

days and times that faculty and instructors set aside to meet with students enrolled in their classes.

Orientation:

a brief training period for new students that seeks to help students get to know their institution and how to use available resources. Orientation at Mizzou is done during Summer Welcome, August Orientation or Winter Welcome.

Plagiarism:

imitating or taking credit for someone else's work and passing it off as your own, including copying words, sentence structure or ideas. Plagiarism has grave consequences in higher education.

Prerequisites:

academic requirements that must be fulfilled before enrollment in certain courses.

Probation:

occurs when a student has fallen from "good standing" status and is at risk of being dismissed from the university.

Registration schedule:

indicates when you can begin registering for courses and is based on number of earned credits.

Resident advisor:

student leaders who supervise the floor they live on and provide social and academic guidance to students living on-campus.

Room and board:

term for charges stemming from on-campus food services and housing.

Scholarships:

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.

Syllabus:

a document provided at the beginning of the semester that outlines the key elements of a course, such as learning objectives, major assignments, test information and requirements of the course.

Tenure:

an employment track for professors that essentially guarantees them a permanent position at a given institution.

Transcript:

the official record of courses taken and grades earned at a given institution.

Transfer credits:

course credits carried over from one institution to another.

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.

Tutor:

a more experienced student or teacher who offers one-on-one academic support, usually in a specific subject.

Undecided or undeclared:

a student enrolled in courses who has not yet declared a major. At Mizzou, these students are often called Exploring students and receive academic advising from the Discovery Center.

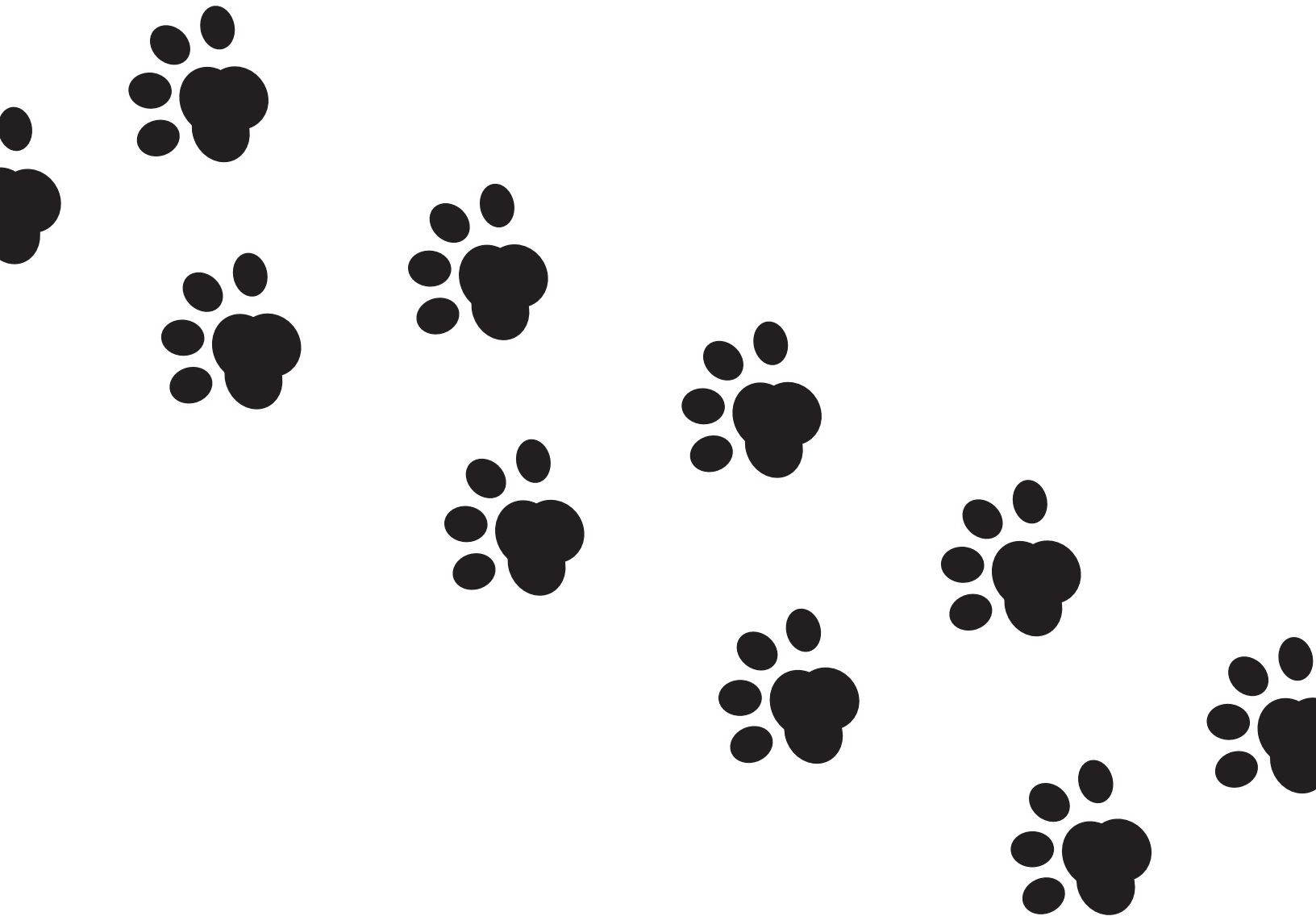
Withdraw (from a course):

dropping a class after a specified date in the semester will result in a “W” on your transcript. The class will not affect your GPA, but it will be visible on a transcript and considered when applying to graduate programs.

Work-study program:

programs that help college students with financial need earn part-time jobs to help pay for day-to-day expenses and tuition payments.

Work-Study jobs are federally or state funded.



Important Dates and Deadlines

Stay informed on important dates and deadlines with the academic calendar:
mizzou.us/calendar



Paying for School

Do you have questions about paying for college? Make sure to visit the Financial Aid Office and Office for Financial Success, and also check out this list of scholarships for first-gen students:
mizzou.us/1stgenscholarships



Campus Resources

Find resources on academics, campus life, health and wellness, safety and security, and more:
mizzou.us/resourceguide



Celebrate First-Gen

Colleges around the country participate in First-Generation College Celebration on Nov. 8 each year. Join Mizzou for a week of festivities honoring first generation college students, staff and faculty. Learn more:
mizzou.us/1stgenweek



Get Involved

Getting involved on campus is key for your well-being!

Studies have shown that social integration, such as participating in intramural sports, clubs, student organizations, or any other activity on campus, specifically within the first year, helped to reduce dropout rates for first-generation students.

Below are some involvement opportunities specific to first-gen students. Find more options at **getinvolved.missouri.edu**.

First-Gen Tigers Student Organization

Want to join a club with like-minded individuals who share the first-generation identity? Consider joining First-Gen Tigers!

This student-run organization focuses on building a community of first-generation students who come together to host events, support each other's sense of belonging, and provide resources to help navigate the college experience. Join on MU Engage:

engage.missouri.edu/FGT/club_signup

Trail Blazers: First-Generation College Students

Are you the first in your family to attend college? If so, Trail Blazers is a Freshman Interest Group 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. Learn more about FIGs:

figs.missouri.edu

Discover Program

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

mcnair.missouri.edu/discover-program

McNair Scholars Program

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

mcnair.missouri.edu/about

Heartland Scholars Academy

In the Trulaske College of Business? You can apply to be part of their 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 Dec. 1. Applications received after that date will be reviewed on a rolling basis.

business.missouri.edu/heartland

Junior Pathways to Success Program

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

mizzou.us/jpaws

TRiO Student Support Services

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

TRiO Student Support Services is a free program that helps students advance their academic, career and personal goals. If you are a first-generation college student, have low income, or a documented disability, apply for free to see if you're eligible.

trio.missouri.edu

Tri-Alpha National Honor Society

Interested in leadership opportunities, recognition for your personal accomplishments, and meeting other first-generation scholars?

Consider applying for Tri-Alpha!

Tri-Alpha is a national honor society for first-generation college students. The mission of the Tri-Alpha chapter at University of Missouri is to assist in the professional development of first-generation students who showcase exceptional academics and involvement on campus.

mizzou.us/1stgenhonors