



Committed *to Students*

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A SURVIVAL GUIDE FOR
YOUR FIRST WEEK

FOR STUDENTS
NEW TO UTPA

Answers to Your Most Pressing Questions!

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Any tips for before the first week?

1. Check your BroncMail regularly. Some professors email before classes start with information about the class or textbook. If a class has to be cancelled before the semester, you will be contacted by email so you can adjust your schedule.
2. If you want less expensive textbook choices, buy your books a week or two before the semester starts. You can find less expensive books online or through the University Bookstore before classes start. The Bookstore website lists textbooks for your classes (www.utpabookstore.com). You can also email your professors and ask what books you should buy if the class isn't listed on the bookstore website yet.
3. Buy a parking permit and take a look at the parking map. Make sure you have ideas about where to legally park. If you plan to come to campus after about 9:00 a.m. in the first week, assume you're going to have to park pretty far away and allow plenty of time (30 to 40 minutes) to park and get to your first class.
4. Come to Bronc Round Up! It's a great introduction to campus and to university life.
5. Check your schedule periodically after you register and before classes start. If a class was cancelled and you missed the email notification, this gives you a chance to add another class.

I'm lost... how can I find my class?

Check out the map on the UTPA app! You can find your current location with the GPS feature if you're lost on campus. If you don't have the app, try the UTPA campus map at www.utpa.edu/maps. If you click on each building on the online map, it will show you a photo of it so you can recognize the building on campus. Our UTPA community is also friendly and helpful. Go ahead and ask if you get lost and people will be happy to help.

I found my class, but it's not there! It's the room on my schedule and the right time, but not the right class!!!

Your class was probably moved to a different room sometime during the last month or two of scheduling. Check your schedule online and double-check the time and room number. If you still can't find your class, you can call the department that offers the class and ask (such as calling the Department of Chemistry for a Chemistry class) or you can call your advisor for help (665-7120 for the University Academic Advising Center). The University Operator (665-2011) can transfer you to any department that you need to reach by phone. **To avoid this, always check your schedule online a day or two before classes start.**

What does TR mean on my schedule?

TR = Tuesdays and Thursdays.
Go to class on both days!

I'm in the wrong class. How can I get into the right class?

First, check your current schedule online to make sure you are in the classes you think you are! If you still want to make a change, you can add or drop classes in Assist during the first four days of the semester. If the class you want to add is full, you can talk to the professor to see if there is any possibility of adding now that the semester has already started. After the first four days, it is usually too late to add a class. Occasionally students may add later with instructor permission if there are special circumstances. You can drop a class yourself until a few weeks before the end of the semester.

I have an online class but I've never taken one before. What do I do?

Visit the Center for Online Learning, Teaching, and Technology (COLTT) to get started on the right foot. They are here to help you succeed in your classes. They can help you figure out how to get set up in your class, problem-solve any technical issues you are having, orient you to Blackboard if you aren't familiar with it, etc. Start now! Online classes start with plenty of work in the first week just like other classes. If you put off logging in to the class, you will start the semester behind. You can find COLTT online at www.utpa.edu/coltt or on campus at EDCC 2.202 (phone: 665-2979).

I'm scared that I don't know anyone on campus and I won't be able to make friends.

In the first week of class there are A LOT of other students who feel the same way you do and would like to meet you! An easy way to meet new people in the first week is to introduce yourself to people you sit by in class and chat about something casual and non-threatening (“What classes are you taking? Have you heard anything about this professor?...”). A great way to meet people with similar interests as the semester goes on is to join a student organization or club. Take a look at www.utpa.edu/bronclink for campus events and organizations to join.

Where do I park? How long does it take to park and get to class?

Make sure to buy a parking permit before the first day of the semester if you plan to park on campus. You can buy it online in Assist. Students who live on campus park in resident parking. For students who live off campus, freshmen students (with 0-29 credit hours completed) have a less expensive permit for parking that is a little farther away. They park in **Zone 1** student parking, such as up by the baseball stadium. Sophomore students (30 credit hours completed or more) have a slightly more expensive permit and park a little closer in **Zone 2** student parking. You can see the lots that you can park in on the campus map (www.utpa.edu/maps; on the left side of the screen go to Categories, then Parking Categories, and it will mark parking lots you can use with your permit). Keep in mind that there are shuttles that can bring you closer to campus in case you park farther away.

Parking and traffic is always busiest in the first week of class, with very busy times during class breaks. Parking lots are usually most full between 10:00 and 2:00. If you want to be sure to be on time for class, **arrive 30-40 minutes before your first class**. Avoid circling a lot looking for a spot that is closer. It actually usually takes less time to just park farther away in the first spot you find and walk the extra distance.

I got a parking ticket. Where do I pay it?

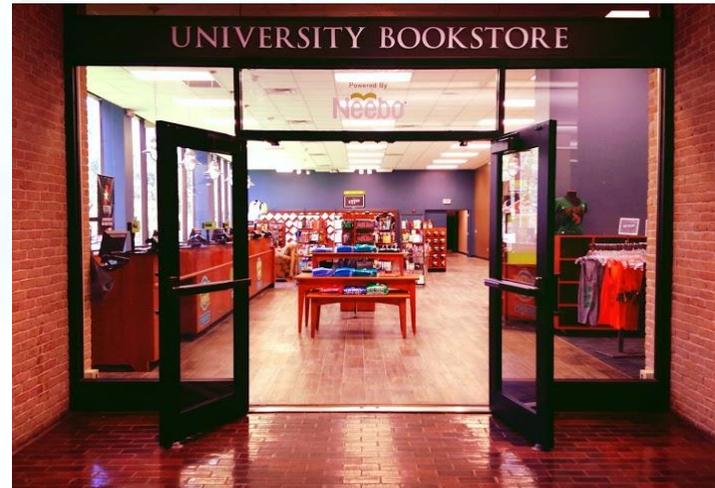
You can pay your parking ticket at the Parking Services Office in the Academic Support Facilities Complex (AFSC) behind Unity Hall. Be sure to pay within 10 days or you will be charged a late fee.

Where can I find the campus shuttle schedule?

The Shuttle provides FREE transportation around campus to UTPA students. You can find the shuttle route and schedule here ([open Shuttle Route Map](#)).

Where can I buy materials I need for class?

You can purchase books, materials and supplies at the UTPA bookstore located inside the University Library building on the first floor. Pick up a UTPA shirt while you're there!



How do I know what textbooks to buy?

The University Bookstore website (www.utpabookstore.com) lists the books that have been selected for your classes. Make sure you check the right section of the course because different sections will sometimes adopt different books. For example, PSY 1310.05 (= section 5) might adopt a different psychology textbook than PSY 1310.06 (= section 6) because those sections are taught by different people who approach the course differently. Make a note of the ISBN number of the book if you plan to buy it from a source other than the bookstore to make sure you get the exact right book. The ISBN number is a unique number assigned to each edition of a book. On a hard copy, it's usually found on the back near the bar code and is 9 or 13 digits long.

Where can I find textbooks that won't bankrupt me?

Comparison shop! Consider buying a hard copy textbook, renting a textbook (you have to return it after a certain time or pay a higher price), or buying an electronic book. If you buy a hard copy, you can sell it back to the bookstore at the end of the semester for a reduced price if you choose not to keep it. Look at the University Bookstore pricing, large online book retailers like Amazon or Barnes and Noble, ebook vendors like www.chegg.com or www.coursesmart.com, and individual sellers such as on eBay. Notice that university textbooks are often available with a variety of bindings, such as hard cover, soft cover, or looseleaf (loose papers, you put it in your own binder). The pricing on the different bindings may be \$30-\$50 different. If you look in advance, you could save as much as \$100 per book by buying a used, soft cover book! Sometimes faculty will also put textbooks on reserve at the library where you can check them out for free for an hour or two on a regular basis. You can find out about materials placed on reserve at the library 3rd floor circulation desk or by visiting www.utpa.edu/library.

I have to go to the Registrar's Office in the Student Services Building and pay a fee at Payments and Collections. When is a good time to go to avoid long lines?

Come early! The offices on the first floor of the Students Services Building, such as Payments and Collections, open at 8:00. Lines are typically longest between 10:30 and 1:30 on days that students have deadlines. 12:00-1:00 is a particularly busy time. If you come early, or better yet come days prior to your deadline, you shouldn't have any issue with waiting.

Also, double check if you really need to go in. Check out the Student Services tab and the UTPA Services tab on Assist (get there through my.utpa.edu). There are lots of things you can do from home without having to stand in line, such as pay fees.

I have to work during the day but I need to go to Student Financial Services (or other important offices) during the first week. What do I do?

Offices that serve important student needs at the beginning of the semester have specially extended hours. Typically in the first few days of the semester, these offices are open from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Offices with extended hours include, for example: Admissions and New Student Services, BronCard, Center for Online Learning, Teaching, and Technology (COLTT), Disabilities Service Office, Office of the Registrar, Parking Services, Payments and Collections, Student Financial Services, Student Health Services, Testing Services, and the University Academic Advising Center.

Where is the Visual Arts Building located? I can't find it on the map.

The UTPA Visual Arts Building (sometimes called the Art Annex) is located on 2412 S. Closner Blvd., about 3 miles from the main campus. The Art Department and art classes are held there. Valley Metro runs to the Visual Arts Building every 30 minutes. Visit www.lrgvdc.org/valleymetro and see Route 14-UTPA Annex. Students ride free with Bronc ID!



My professors keep talking about office hours. What are they talking about?

Office hours are times that professors keep available for students in their classes to come and visit them in their individual offices (not the classroom). Think about them like walk-in times. Professors have a lot of commitments, such as research lab time and meetings, so they may not be in their offices at other times if you just stop by. If you have a conflict during their office hours and need to come at another time, simply ask to make an appointment. Professors really do welcome your questions and visits! Take advantage of office hours!

I can't find anyone to answer my question and I really need to know the answer!

The UTPA community is here to support you! If you have specific questions, you can always call the office in question, such as Student Financial Services for financial aid questions (665-2501). If you don't know the phone number of the office, call the UTPA Campus Operator at 665-2011 or 866-441-8872. A lot of common student questions have answers posted on Ask Rio at www.utpa.edu/rio. Offices that are particularly focused on supporting your success are the University College (665-7919), the University Academic Advising Center (665-7120), the Office of the Dean of Students (665-2260), and the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs (665-2147). If you have a question that you need answered and you can't find anyone to help you, you can call any one of those offices. We are here to help!