



Family Guide to Academic Support at Ball State University

Learning Center staff members connect with parents and guardians during the summer new freshman orientation program, but many are still not aware or need a reminder of the many academic assistance programs on Ball State's campus. We have created this guide for parents and guardians of Ball State students.

This guide will give some helpful suggestions regarding how to begin a conversation about academics with your son or daughter as well as the benefits of the available academic assistance programs. Although we realize that college students need and want to have the freedom to make their own decisions and experiences, parents and guardians can provide support and help to guide the students to campus resources just as effectively as Ball State staff members.

Talking with Your Student about Academics

What are your student's educational and career goals? If your student wants an A in the course, how does your student approach that goal?

Students may not know their future grades or occupation, but parents can help them begin working towards creating small achievements, like completing all homework and extra credit on time. Encourage your student to dream big and prepare small. After successfully accomplishing many small achievements, an overall goal can be met:

1. Begin by asking your student about their achievements as classes begin:
What do you want to achieve this semester?
What led you to success in previous semesters (or high school)?
2. Then, throughout the semester, remember to ask your student about their successes and challenges:
Are you doing well on homework and exams?
What classes are you finding to be challenging?
Do you need any help meeting any of your goals?
3. Finally, remember to ask your student if they've considered meeting with other students in a study group or considered getting a tutor. If they don't have a study group, refer them to the Learning Center to inquire about tutoring programs. Supplemental Instruction (SI) may also be available for the course. Remember to ask them about the other students in the study group:
How often does your group meet?
What will the study group be working on this week?
A lot of students use the Learning Center, have you tried getting a tutor there?

Remember, **ALWAYS** congratulate your student for their successes and provide constant encouragement.

Learning Center Services for Academic Support

<https://www.bsu.edu/academics/collegesanddepartments/universitycollege/learningcenter>

For specific information about Ball State's FREE tutoring program and a list of classes in which tutors are available, the Supplemental Instruction program and a listing of course section for this semester, and online video workshops, visit our website.

Learning Center Student Usage and Successes

Each year, the Ball State University Learning Center has contact with over 4,000 students and sees over a third of all freshmen through its programs. The services provided are very popular and there is no negative stigma in getting help at the Learning Center. Research of past usage shows that students who utilize the Learning Center services (tutoring and SI programs) typically get higher grades and have higher retention rates than students who do not use the services. The philosophy of the Learning Center is to meet the student where they are academically and try to help them take that next step forward.



Activities Students Can Do to Help Themselves

Talking with Instructors/Office Hours – All instructors at Ball State are required to have set office hours in which students can come in to discuss class material and ask questions. These office hours are typically listed on the syllabus for the course that is given to students at the beginning of the semester. It is **HIGHLY** recommended that students utilize these hours and communicate with their instructors when questions or concerns arise. The instructors are the ultimate experts for the class and should be the first contact when students start to struggle with a class. As parents, it may be useful to pose these questions:

“Have you talked to your instructors?”

“Have you gone in to see your instructor during his/her office hours?”

Form Study Groups – When students study together in groups, they often will learn material better. Students should be encouraged to talk with their peers in classes and to seek help from each other when needed. Many students living in Living Learning Communities on campus might have peers living in their hall and taking the same classes. Parents can encourage their students to reach out to others in their class or in their halls to connect with peers as well as possibly gain help with their classes.

Time Management – Often, college students claim they are the most time-stressed people in the world. Most of the time, they have more time on their hands than ever, but they lack the proper management of that time. Students can request a study skills tutor at the Learning Center to help with this problem. Visit our website for time management tips.

Healthy Lifestyle – Students need to feel good physically, emotionally, and mentally in order to perform their best in the classroom. Students should be reminded to get proper nutrition, exercise, and sleep to be the best they can be. Below are links to the different campus centers that can assist in the student’s wellness:

Health Center <http://cms.bsu.edu/CampusLife/HealthCenter.aspx/>

Counseling Center <http://cms.bsu.edu/CampusLife/CounselingCenter.aspx/>

Recreation Center <http://www.bsu.edu/recreation/>



Useful Campus Resources

Academic Advising - Academic Advisors are professional staff members at Ball State who can assist and guide students in their course selections and registration, major/minor selection, and degree completion.

Parents should encourage students to contact their academic advisor when situations arise because the advisor can guide the students to possible solutions to their situation. Below is a link for more information about Academic Advising: <http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/advising>

Disability Services Office – If a student has a physical or learning disability, the DSD office can help with resources for the student and possible academic accommodations for the student. Below is a link for more information about the DSD office:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/disability-services>

Other Tutoring Services at Ball State University

Writing Center (Robert Bell Building) – Students can get online or one-on-one support for writing assignments with this free tutoring resource. Below is a link for more information about the Writing Center:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/writingcenter>

Residence Hall Tutoring and Support-The Department of Housing and Residence Life at Ball State also offers many resources to students. Students can select to live in Living Learning Communities that are often based on academic majors and other themes (Link for information about Living Learning Communities: <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/housing/lcommunities>). Many of the residence halls have an Academic Peer Mentor who can help students with academic issues and guide students to appropriate campus resources (Here is a link for a description of Academic Peer Mentors: <https://www.bsu.edu/campuslife/housing/get-involved/employment/academic-peer-mentor>)

Departmental Tutoring – Many departments at Ball State will offer tutoring for students within the departments (Ex. Accounting, Physics, and Journalism). Students can always contact a department's main office to inquire whether any tutoring or academic assistance is offered within that department.

A Parent/Guardian's Role

While you've learned more about the value and availability of academic resources at Ball State, it may still be a challenge to accurately explain the benefits of these programs. Keep at it! Because a parent/guardian's role in their son or daughter's education is as important as the roles of professors, academic advisors, and educational mentors, your student will need you to regularly help them work through their challenges. If you find that you need help communicating the benefits of these programs to your student, we'll be happy to help.

Ball State University Learning Center
North Quad 350
Muncie, IN 47306
(765) 285 – 1006