

- University life will be a brand new experience for you. Try to leave all past accomplishments and frustrations behind. This new experience may help you identify your various skills, your strengths and potentials.
- Living with a roommate is a new experience and can sometimes result in a few misunderstandings, or, conflicts may arise. Negotiation, in itself, is not an easy task. Due to conflicting values of judgement, it becomes more complex when people from different cultural backgrounds negotiate preferred sleep, relaxation and study times, personal space, and personal property. The key to managing roommate relationships and resolving conflicts is to be willing to communicate and compromise in order to address each other's differing needs. To prevent a mismatch of expectations, express your personal likes and dislikes openly and calmly, and listen to your roommate's thoughts and concerns respectfully. For more information please refer to "Relationships with Roommates" brochure.
- Academic adjustment, which constitutes a crucial part in the process, can also be challenging. University life demands a higher level of self-discipline and self-organisation to manage the time well enough to complete the required coursework, including reading assignments and examinations, as well as tutorials and the work to be completed outside the classroom. To facilitate academic adjustment, you can try forming a study group with your friends and consult to your instructors for assistance. Achieving a balance between your social and academic life may facilitate the transition.

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Prepared by : Dr. Z. Eda Sun Selışık
SDCC : 661 (2185)-(2187)-(2188)



MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Northern Cyprus Campus

ADJUSTMENT TO UNIVERSITY LIFE

Student Development
and
Counseling Center

In each stage of their life cycles individuals pass through transitional periods which involve a wide spectrum of changes. Change, which might be accompanied with somewhat stimulating adventure, both intellectually and socially, is not always easy to cope with, and transitions can be rough. In this sense, starting university, as a period of transition, is a time of great change.

Challenges that face the transition to university are as follows:

- **Increased freedom and responsibility:** Making your own decisions and living away from home can feel wonderful. However, this personal freedom brings new responsibilities and handling those responsibilities, which you are not familiar with, can be a challenge. (e.g. making a decision of when and how to study, have fun, and sleep; managing the personal budget, cleaning issues and doing shopping; managing the time efficiently to deal with all this work).
- **Adjusting to a new social life and establishing friendships with people different from yourself or with those who are from other cultures:** Building and maintaining these new relationships can be enjoyable. However, it can bring challenges such as coping with individual differences and resolving conflicts.
- **Changes in your relationships with family and friends:** You might have concerns related to the risk of alienation with people you left behind and you may have difficulty to re-adjust to the rules of home when you return.

Because transitional periods are deemed as stressful and tough, the responses to the transition to university bear a striking resemblance to the natural reaction known as the stress response.

Signs of Stress While Adjusting to University

<u>Physical:</u>	Exhaustion/fatigue, headache, gastroenterological problems.
<u>Psychological:</u>	Loneliness, depression, desperation, feelings of helplessness, periodic highs and lows, quick temper, discomfort, anxiety, intense homesickness.
<u>Behavioral:</u>	Changes in your appetite, insomnia, hypersomnia, procrastination, difficulties in making decisions, concentration problems, increased use of alcohol, having difficulty getting along with roommates.

Tips for Adjustment to University

- Familiarize yourself with the campus, its facilities, and the surrounding area. The more you make use of the support that is available on and around campus, the more you feel part of the campus life.
- Join a student association (<http://hcc.metu.edu.tr/student-associations>) which appeals to you and attend its activities. Even a student association does not one hundred percent appeal to you, participating in social circles may help you socialize and build friendships.
- Make an extra effort to take care of yourself. Develop a schedule allowing enough time to rest, do sport and exercise, and eat healthy meals.
- Customize your room by placing decorative items anywhere in your part of the room. This might help to make your dorm room a home.
- Establish a -structured but flexible- routine which coincides with your body's natural rhythm. A good routine helps you be more productive. As you try to stick to it every day, you will feel that you have more control over your life and the new environment.
- Looking back actually may hinder moving forward. While keeping in good contact with people (such as family members, friends, girlfriends/boyfriends) you have left behind, try to build new friendships beginning from the very first days of university life (e.g. hanging out with roommates, visiting people you have met during the orientation program, etc.)
- Make an effort to keep in good contact with an adult on campus (e.g. professor, administrative personnel). This might help you develop a better connection to the campus.
- When you feel sad, talk to someone. If you have not yet made friends in your new environment, then try an instructor who you feel close to, or your academic advisor. Do not hesitate to contact us if you need professional counselling.
- Give yourself time to adjust. Do you feel lonely, desperate and anxious? You are not alone! Remember that more than half of the students in your class are going through the same experience. You may leave behind the most challenging times during the initial weeks of the first semester.