

EDU GUIDE

Making the most of your UNDERGRADLIFE

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When you start your undergrad, people will tell you that the next few years will be the most important ones of your life. As you step into university, you're expected to make the most out of it – academically, socially, and otherwise.

However, while everyone has much to suggest, no one really tells you how to achieve it. For starters, you must plan your academics.

Public universities in Bangladesh follow a fixed-credit system with a pre-decided curriculum. For private universities, you'll have to sit for course advising sessions to pick required courses.

How many courses you take each semester is up to you. Don't burden yourself with too many courses unless you can handle the pressure.

Another key aspect is making friends and memories. Meeting new people and bonding with them can be daunting. You might even consider not making friends at all, but that will only do more harm than good.

"Chilling at *tongs*, occasional group lunches, and going to the movies was common for me and my university friends, but I've come to understand that we also felt a sense of responsibility to one another," says Afia Fahmida Rahman, currently working as a software engineer. "This sense of wanting for our friends usually comes from what we want for ourselves individually – good grades, growth, emotional support."

If making friends at university feels challenging, you can always join a club. The club you join should align with your interests as it serves a bigger purpose as well.

"Being part of a university club not only helped me make friends, but it also allowed me to realise my strengths and weaknesses and develop certain soft skills," explains Abdullah, a recent graduate from Brac



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University.

During your undergrad, it's also important that you build a good rapport with your professors.

"By maintaining a good rapport with your professor, you will be able to ask for recommendation letters, and also allow your professor to give you better feedback on yourself," explains Afia.

Many students try to start earning when they're in their undergrads, mostly through part-time jobs or tuition. You might consider doing so yourself but know that this comes at a cost.

"I had to spend nine hours a week on tuition, which took a lot of my time and energy," says Sakib Al Mahmud, a recent graduate of Dhaka University. "On the days I had tuition I would be tired by the time I got home, so I avoided studying on those days."

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This goes to show that if you're committing to something separate from your university life, there must always be a trade-off – whether it be missing a hangout for tuition or ditching a wedding for exams.

Having said all that, it's unlikely that you'll spend your entire undergrad life without making mistakes. Whatever mistake you make is the result of a decision you take, and it will only haunt you if you regret that decision. However, regrets will only hold you down, which is why it's best that you accept what happened and move on. Only then will you be able to feel that you have made the most of your undergrad life.

A BASIC CHECKLIST

for your first-year as an undergrad student

REGISTER FOR COURSES



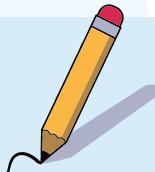
If you're struggling with registration or can't find seats in your desired course or section, talk to your department coordinator or administrator.

JOIN A CLUB OR FORUM



Join a club or forum that matches your ambitions. This experience should also help you develop your skills, and positively impact your future endeavours too.

INNOVATE YOURSELF WITH ECAs



Invest time in activities and roles that will help you improve your personal skills as well as boost your CV.

KNOW YOUR CAMPUS

Know where classrooms, department and admin offices, and other facilities are located, also places around the campus where you can go for meals or hang out with your friends.

SOCIALISE

Make friends and acquaintances. Socialise outside your primary circle as well, like with club members and through different workshops or seminars.



How to build good rapport WITH YOUR PROFESSORS

- » Find a professor whose line of work matches your interests
- » Go through their work or research and find interesting talking points to discuss
- » See if you can work with them on any of their papers or research project
- » Set up weekly meetings that are convenient for both of you
- » Always maintain communication and update them about the progress you're making