

International Parents & Families

2020-2021 Calendar



Photo by Keegan Houser

Berkeley International Office

Congratulations to you and your student for reaching this important milestone! Now that you are part of the UC Berkeley family, Berkeley International Office (BIO) would like to take this opportunity to welcome you and offer a basic overview of your student's first year experience.

This calendar includes suggestions on how to offer support while your adult student learns even more about independence, responsibility, challenges, and successes. We understand that every family and student relationship is different. However, we hope that you will find these tips useful, and that you will refer to the calendar for important dates.



Photo by Elena Zhukova

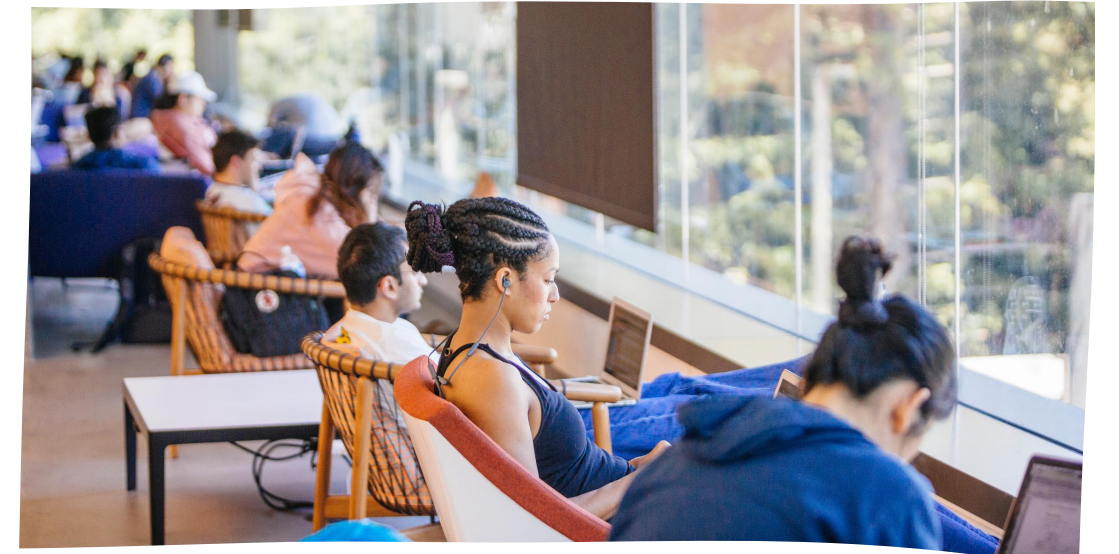


Photo by Elena Zhukova



Photo by Brittany Hosea-Small

A Special Note for Fall 2020

While much of this calendar includes information and advice for students who will be arriving on the UC Berkeley campus in fall, we realize that your student may not be arriving until a future semester and may be starting their studies remotely from your home country. The information on the following pages should assist you in understanding the adjustment period your student will go through when they eventually arrive on campus in the future as well as how you can best support them at that time. Additionally, even students who will not be in the U.S. will be experiencing some cultural and academic adjustment as they get used to taking UC Berkeley classes and interacting with their instructors and their classmates from the U.S. and all over the world. We hope the following pages will help you understand what to expect as they go through this adjustment process.

Letting Go

College is a time of change and transition for both you and your student. Your student may deal with these changes through mood swings and ambivalence. Being prepared for these changes can sometimes ease the process; the sudden shift from being involved in your student's plans to not being a part of their everyday lives may be jarring and cause a feeling of loss or helplessness. It can be both a liberating and unwelcome change.

Tips to help you cope with the loss of control as your student leaves for college:

- You will always have a parent-child relationship, but try to build an adult one as well. Keep in touch through phone calls, emails, video calls, letters, and care packages (most students are excited to receive mail). Let the student have some control in these interactions to allow them a sense of independence.
- Congratulate yourself in helping them get so far. Recognize that the foundation you have set for your student over the years will accompany and support them through their college life and later years.
- Reassure your student that you believe in their abilities, and that they will be fine on their own in college. Allow your student to make their own mistakes. Take pride in their confidence and successes. Help them view so-called "failures" as opportunities to learn and to increase resilience.
- Don't draw out goodbyes; remember that you will see them again before long!
- Focus on the things you enjoyed doing before your student began college. Some parents fill their schedule with new commitments solely to occupy themselves. It's probably best to do things you wanted to but may not have had time for earlier. Focus on yourself or other family for a while.
- Try not to feel guilty if you adjust to your student being in college before or after other parents do. Everyone is different and takes their own time, and this in no way reflects on the quality of love you have for your student. Finding your own healthy life balance will help you from being overly emotional. If you are miserable every time you talk to your student, he or she may feel guilty or sad and, in some cases, may avoid talking to you.

Letting Go (cont.)

More tips to help you cope with the loss of control as your student leaves for college:

- Limit any other major changes in your life for a while until you can feel stable and adjusted.
- If you have other children at home, try to avoid using the college student to set an example because this may make them feel devalued.
- Students sometimes seem to be different after some time in college. Try not to judge the quality of these changes—however permanent or impermanent. Let your student enjoy the widening of their world view and altering of thoughts since that is an essential part of the college experience.
- Talk to other parents to validate your feelings and get emotional support.

Ideas for getting the most out of your conversations and communications:

- Make a list of items you want to discuss when your student calls. You can cover any important topics and then move on to light-hearted topics without feeling worried that you forgot something.
- Begin your calls with positive news. Share news about yourself and life at home, but don't drag on—give your student a chance to tell you about their life as well.
- Let your student determine the length of your talk. He or she may need to study or go to class. Alternatively, schedule a time to speak in advance.
- Don't ask a question you don't feel ready to hear the answer to. If you respond in a judgmental fashion when your student confides in you, it could limit the information they share in the future.

June 2020

Acknowledge emotions

Recognize that this is a time of mixed feelings for everyone. There may be excitement, joy, waves of nostalgia, a sense of loss. It may be helpful to talk to other parents and families. Recognize your student's own conflicting emotions: ups and downs, declaring independence and then asking for your support. Homesickness and being overtired from the demands of UC Berkeley are common throughout the college experience.

Decide how to stay connected

Talk to your student about how they plan to keep in touch. You want to show support and love without infringing on newfound freedom. Ask your student how they envision your parental support and role during college. Send emails, letters, and care packages. Refer back to the Letting Go page for more ideas.

Stay informed

To stay current on news, check out UC Berkeley's website and read [the Daily Californian](#), the on-campus newspaper.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	Review the Housing page for Parents or Guardians of Students and Cal Parents' Calendars & Events.			

July 2020

Make a financial plan

Berkeley can be expensive. Discuss expectations with your student and set a tentative budget. Be clear about who will pay for what. (For example, family may offer to pay for supplies and books, while student may be responsible for extra expenses like snacks or movies.) Discuss responsible use of credit/debit cards and start thinking about how to open a U.S. bank account. See our [Money & Banking resources](#).

Academic goals and expectations

Many first-year & transfer students don't do as well as they expected in the first semester. Many change their field of study. Berkeley is a tough university; the average GPA is 3.3, and students often receive their first-ever failing grade. Be wary of unreasonable expectations. Ask what your student hopes to accomplish this year. Grades are not the only indication of success. It is important for students to take responsibility for their education and pursue opportunities outside the classroom.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Encourage your student to review Golden Bear Prep and complete all the quizzes as soon as possible.			1 Make a financial plan together	2	3	4 Academic & Administrative Holiday
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

August 2020

Nervousness about making new friends

Encourage your student to get involved in an activity or organization that interests them. Berkeley International Office's orientation and social events are a great way to make connections!

Anxiety about major/career path

The College of Letters and Science advises that the first year may be used for exploring majors and fulfilling university requirements. It is not unusual for students to be uncertain of their major at this point. Students may also contact academic advisers and the Career Center for additional guidance.

Roommate conflicts

Propose that your student discusses responsibilities and house rules with roommate(s). Students living in dorms may reach out to their Resident Advisers (RA) for advice.

Adapting to U.S. culture

Encourage your student to be open to trying new things. Berkeley International Office can be a great resource.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Check out the 2020 Student Calendar for other important dates throughout the academic year. Encourage your student to attend Berkeley International Office events and orientation.						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 BIO Undergrad & Parent/Family Orientations	19 BIO Graduate Orientation Early Move-In Day	20	21 Golden Bear Orientation (GBO) Fall 2020 semester fees due	22 GBO
23 GBO	24 GBO	25 GBO	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Homesickness

It is likely that your student misses you just as much as you miss them. Check in periodically (not too much), encourage them to stay independent and to seek Tang's Counseling & Psychological Services or Peer Counseling services if homesickness is affecting their daily lives. Suggest attending a Cal athletic event to get into the school spirit! Send them a care package or a card if possible.

Difficulty balancing social vs. academic life

Suggest the purchase of a planner and that the student assign time for both academics and extracurricular activities. Again, Tang's Counseling & Psychological Services is a great resource for students struggling with balancing their lives or with stress.

Tips for phone calls

Refer back to the Letting Go page.

September 2020

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 Academic & Administrative Holiday	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

More Cultural Adjustment

October is often a difficult month, as students begin to feel the difference in cultures. Parents Weekend can also make them feel lonely. These feelings are normal. Attending BIO's events can be helpful. Joining a multicultural club can also help your student feel connected to home and less culturally alienated.

Stress about midterm exams and projects

Remind your student about the [Student Learning Center](#) and encourage them to visit professors and instructors during office hours. This resource can be helpful not only for course performance but also in familiarity with professors (and for future support in letters of recommendation). Students should read the course grade breakdown to help prioritize and manage time.

See our [Academic Resources page](#) for more tips!

Spring registration is approaching

Propose that your student meet with academic advisers for more information about classes offered.

October 2020

The Career Center offers events throughout the semester. Some highlights for international students happen this month. See the [Career Events & Workshops calendar](#).

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Due to changing weather and close proximity to other students (in dorms or lectures), October is a month during which students are at risk of catching a cold or the flu. Advise your student to take care of their health and to take advantage of the Tang center's free flu shots .				1 Send a care package	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16 Parents Weekend at Homecoming	17 Parents Weekend at Homecoming
18 Parents Weekend at Homecoming	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

November 2020

Financial Stress

Encourage your student to look for on-campus jobs. This is a great time to discuss budgeting and to reflect on expenditure thus far to encourage responsible money habits. A great on-campus budgeting resource is Bears for Financial Success.

Academic Stress

Remind your student gently about studying proactively, but note that if they do poorly in one class this won't have a huge impact on their average GPA. Encourage visits to office hours and formation of study groups. Again, the Student Learning Center is a great resource!

Winter Break planning

Encourage your student to start planning their trip early or to plan events during the vacation if they are staying in Berkeley. They can also check out events/activities planned by Berkeley International Office.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1 Daylight Saving Time ends	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Academic & Administrative Holiday	12	13	14
15	16	17	18 Send a care package	19	20	21
22	23	24	25 Non-Instructional Day	26 Academic & Administrative Holiday	27 Academic & Administrative Holiday	28
29	30 Due to COVID-19, Instruction and final exams move online after Thanksgiving	The U.S. holiday season begins in November. Consider talking to your student about plans during the breaks and Academic & Administrative holidays that are coming up over the next three months in order to avoid feelings of restlessness and stress by structuring time.				

December 2020

Final exams & papers due

Send a care package to boost motivation to study for finals. Encourage your student to write down study time and deadlines in a planner, and to attend review sessions.

Anxiety about reconnecting with family and friends back home

Newfound freedom may make it hard for your student to readjust to being under supervision and they may forget to notify you when they go out or to return home on time. Discuss realistic expectations: family plans, curfews. Try to ensure your student doesn't feel like they are being too restricted or stifled by allowing them more independence than they would have had during high school years. Keep in mind that your student will want to reconnect with as many friends as possible, but this does not diminish how much they missed family.

Excitement about coming home

Remind student to focus on final exams and projects first.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Please note that faculty and staff are not on campus from December 24th to January 1st.		1 Send a care package Good luck studying for finals!	2	3	4 Formal classes end	5
6	7 Reading/Review/Recitation (RRR) Week begins	8	9	10	11 Last Day of Instruction	12
13	14 Final exams week begins	15	16	17	18	19 Winter Break begins
20	21	22	23	24 Academic & Administrative Holiday	25 Academic & Administrative Holiday	26
27	28	29	30	31 Academic & Administrative Holiday		

January 2021

Possible anxiety about returning to classes

Talk to your student about what worked and what did not work during the first semester. Help brainstorm possible improvements. Ask how you can help support them in their efforts.

Possible reluctance to return

Your student may realize they missed home and their friends and might feel reluctant to return. In this case, tell them to make plans with friends for when they arrive so they have something to look forward to. They can also make plans to join different student organizations or clubs if they want to expand either their non-academic life or their social circle. Discuss clubs or activities your student participated in during high school that they may want to continue at Cal. Joining beginner's classes at the Sports Facilities or [DeCals](#) (student-run classes) may also help take the edge off their semester workload.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
It is common for first years to not get into all the classes they had wanted or to be waitlisted for classes. For this reason it is advisable for your student to have a backup plan of classes. Be advised that large lectures sometimes admit the number of waitlisted students equivalent to 10% of class size. It is best to choose discussion sections that are relatively empty for these classes. The student can meet with an academic adviser for more information.					1 Academic & Administrative Holiday	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14 Residence Halls re-open	15 Spring 2020 semester fees due	16
17	18 Academic & Administrative Holiday	19 Spring semester instruction begins	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February 2021

Considering moving off campus next year?

Discuss the positives and negatives of living on and off campus. Some students feel that living on campus has great benefits, such as finding a community of support. It helps them feel connected to other students and to helpful staff. Others feel that living off campus will help them gain independence.

Other options include [Cooperative Living](#) and [sorority](#) or [fraternity](#) housing.

Encourage your student to seek information from Housing very early and remind student that this will be another big adjustment. Suggest revisiting the budget together.

Homesickness

Lunar New Year falls somewhere between January and February each year. As with any other celebrations back home, some students may become homesick. A phone or Skype call and a care package or letter can help.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3 Send a care package	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15 Academic & Administrative Holiday	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	With the still relatively cold weather, your student might find themselves suffering from winter blues. A care package and emotional support can help. Furthermore, this is another time where students may catch a cold or fall ill. Advise your student to continue or develop healthy habits.					

March 2021

What to do during Spring Break?

Suggest that your student look into university-affiliated trips. Remind them to plan early and travel with friends and prioritize safety during their trip. Booking trips early is best because prices become expensive around this time. Remind your student of deadlines after the break and encourage them to have a study plan.

Overwhelmed with midterms

Encourage your student to balance school work by scheduling in study time. Preparing early can allow more time for social breaks. March is also when club and group activities increase in their intensity. Advise your student to prioritize and not to take on more than they can handle. Be positive and motivational!

Daylight Saving Time

California will lose one hour. Adjust calling time accordingly.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 Daylight Saving Time begins	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22 Spring recess begins	23	24	25	26 Academic & Administrative Holiday	27
28 Spring recess ends	29	30	31			

April 2021

Uncertainty about major, fall course load, or career path

Most students decide on (a) tentative major(s) by sophomore year. The [Berkeley Academic Guide](#) is a useful tool. Suggest that your student consider shadowing someone in their ideal job. Encourage seeking out advice from advisers, counselors, or upperclassmen.

Summer plans

Discuss options and what is best for your student and family: take classes, study abroad, do an internship, or take a break?

Taxes

Remind students to visit the [Berkeley International Office tax webpages](#) for general guidelines about filing taxes, regardless of income.

Visa/work authorization

If your student plans to work off-campus during the summer, remind them to visit BIO for advising. Remind your student to consult the [BIO website](#) to plan ahead for international travel.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
On Cal Day, UC Berkeley opens its campus to the public to show what the university has to offer by displaying free lectures, tours, showcases, performances and more.				1 Finalize summer plans	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20 Send a care package	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30 Formal classes end	

May 2021

Getting ready for the summer

Finals week can be a very hectic time for students, so it is advisable to start packing early, especially if your student is departing right after their finals end. Your student should look for summer storage options for items they will not be able to take with them if they will not be staying in Berkeley.

Procrastination

Talk to your student about studying early and being prepared for the last few weeks of school. Remind your student that summer begins only after finals are over.

Preparing for returning home... or not

If your student is returning home for the summer break, brace yourselves for another possible cultural adjustment. Students may have different views or feelings about things and people that were once familiar and second-nature. Students often also change the way they act or look. Try to understand that this is just another transition for the family and the student.

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Be aware of Residence Hall Move-Out dates, available on the Housing webpage .						1
2	3 Reading/Review/ Recitation (RRR) Week begins	4	5	6	7 Last day of instruction	8
9	10 Final exams week begins	11	12	13	14	15 Summer break begins
16 Residence Hall Move-Out	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31 Academic & Administrative Holiday					



Common Terms

Academic and administrative holiday:

Weekdays when classrooms and campus offices are closed. While faculty and staff can sometimes be reached during student recess or break periods, they cannot be reached during academic and administrative holidays.

Care package:

A gift of treats to relatives or friends, especially of items not readily available to them. A care package can be small and hold sentimental value or contain treats to share with classmates and roommates. A good idea is to send care packages early in the year, around birthdays, special holidays, and right before final exams. These are reminders that say, “I’m thinking of you.”

FERPA: Under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA):

Under the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and provisions of state law regarding public records disclosure, your student’s privacy is protected. The university considers your student an adult, regardless of age or financial dependence. Generally, third parties (even parents, spouses, and family) do not have rights to access the student records. Learn more by visiting the [Berkeley Campus Policy Governing Disclosure of Information from Student Records](#).

Reading/Review/Recitation (RRR) Week:

The week following the end of formal class instruction and preceding the start of final exams. There is no instruction during this time. RRR Week is intended for students to have time to prepare for exams, work on final papers and projects, and participate in optional review sessions and meetings with instructors.

Berkeley International Office

internationaloffice.berkeley.edu

With special thanks to:

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