

**2019**

# PREP **PLUS**

Important information for parents and families of new Northwestern students





## Welcome to the Northwestern family!

The Office of New Student and Family Programs (NSFP) is here to support you through all stages of your student's Northwestern experience—from pre-arrival preparations, to move-in day and orientation (called Wildcat Welcome), through the first year and beyond. This guide offers a glance at some of the ways we do this.

At NSFP we believe that partnering with parents and families helps us achieve our most important goal: *ensuring that every new student feels supported and knows where to turn for help and guidance.* You play a vital role in your student's development and success, and a big part of NSFP's mission is to help facilitate your role.

We begin by providing information and sharing advice in this guide's "prep talk" section and in two webinars over the summer. In the fall, NSFP coordinates Wildcat Welcome for new students, Parent and Family Orientation, and Family Weekend.

Accompanying this guide is your student's copy of *Purple Prep*—an indispensable booklet that features a comprehensive summer checklist and tells students exactly what they need to do before they arrive for Wildcat Welcome. The *Purple Prep* checklist, along with a list of important dates, is included at the back of this guide in case you would like to help your student stay on track. Each month from May through September, students also receive *March to the Arch*, an e-newsletter packed with reminders, updates, and supplemental information.

With this guide and *Purple Prep*, we kick off our communication with you and the Class of 2023. We strongly encourage you to join our Parent & Family Email List to receive NSFP news and keep in touch with us. We invite you to participate in our summer webinars and to follow us on social media. Please spend time on our website to learn more about our programs and the diverse offerings of the Division of Student Affairs. And you are always welcome to email [family@northwestern.edu](mailto:family@northwestern.edu) or call **847-467-3988** (8:30 a.m.-5 p.m. weekdays) to reach our office directly.

We look forward to welcoming the Class of 2023 and to working with you to make 2019–20 a year of learning, growth, and accomplishment!



## Be in the know from the get-go

- Bookmark NSFP’s website and take advantage of its resources for Northwestern families: [northwestern.edu/orientation](http://northwestern.edu/orientation).
- Join NSFP’s email list by going to the website, finding the drop-down menu under “Families,” choosing “Family Communication,” and following the prompts to subscribe.
- Read *March to the Arch* and other NSFP emails sent via the Parent & Family Email List.
- Take a look at *Purple Prep* with your student.
- Reach NSFP at [family@northwestern.edu](mailto:family@northwestern.edu) or by calling **847-467-3988** during office hours (8:30 a.m.–5 p.m. weekdays).
- Follow “Wildcat Welcome” and “Northwestern University Parents & Families” on Facebook and other social media.
- Apply to join the Parent and Family Advisory Council. See the NSFP website for details.

## What to expect and plan for

### OVER THE SUMMER

#### **March to the Arch newsletters**

On every first Tuesday from May through September, NSFP’s *March to the Arch* newsletter will be sent to your student’s Northwestern email address, providing supplemental information and highlighting *Purple Prep* deadlines. If you join the Parent & Family Email List, you will receive a link to the *March to the Arch* newsletter a few days after your student receives it so that you can stay informed and give reminders as needed.

#### **Webinars**

NSFP invites you to participate in two webinars for parents and families of new Wildcats, each starting on a Sunday at 4 p.m. CDT. Login instructions will be sent via the Parent & Family Email List.

- **June 9: “Introduction to NSFP’s Resources and Services”** highlights our office’s programs and how they tie in with other ways the University supports the success of new students.
- **August 4: “Parent-to-Parent Pointers”** gives you a chance to hear from parents and families of current students.



## THIS FALL

### Move-in day

#### Monday, September 16

Upon arrival, students go directly to their student residence to check in, get their Northwestern ID card, and receive move-in help from Wildcat Welcome peer advisers and other volunteers.

### Parent and Family Orientation

#### Monday–Tuesday, September 16–17

While students start settling in and Wildcat Welcome gets under way, family members get to learn more about Northwestern's programs and resources, hear from President Morton "Morty" Schapiro and other administrators and staff, and meet other first-year and transfer students' families. Parent and Family Orientation (PFO) begins at 4 p.m. on Monday (move-in day) and ends at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The schedule will be on the NSFP website in late July. We ask you to register for PFO on the website by August 30.

### Wildcat Welcome

#### September 16–23

All new students are required to participate in Wildcat Welcome, the orientation program coordinated by NSFP, starting on move-in day and continuing through September 23, the day before classes begin. All eight days of Wildcat Welcome are packed with a variety of community-building activities, academic advising, fall course registration, and dozens of events—from one-on-one sessions with academic advisers to the Class of 2023 photo shoot—that focus new students on getting to know Northwestern and one another.

On Tuesday and Wednesday of Wildcat Welcome, students meet with their school-based academic advisers to prepare for course registration on Thursday. Highlights of the week's orientation activities and events include Purple Pride!, a celebration of Northwestern traditions; the President's Convocation; True Northwestern Dialogues, a workshop series on topics important to new students; and Wildcat Welcome Night at Six Flags Great America. After eight full days, students are ready for classes to begin on September 24.

### March through the Arch

#### Tuesday, September 17

The March through the Arch, Wildcat Welcome's signature event, begins at 10 a.m. on Tuesday. Families, Northwestern staff and community members, and returning students cheer as peer advisers lead the Class of 2023 and new transfer students through the iconic Weber Arch. The morning concludes with "Kiss 'n' Bye," a pause for joyful (and sometimes tearful) farewells between students and families.

Families may leave whenever they wish, but departures tend to occur at the end of move-in day, after "Kiss 'n' Bye," or when Parent and Family Orientation ends.



## Family Weekend November 8–10

Reserve three purple-proud days this fall to join your student for Northwestern's Family Weekend! Starting June 1, please register at [bit.ly/nufamilyweekend2019](https://bit.ly/nufamilyweekend2019). Register before midnight (CDT) on June 23 to get a promo code for buying tickets to Saturday's football game against Purdue. Friday's full day of programming will include the "Conversation with President Schapiro" event at 4:30 p.m. The weekend's other activities—student performances, faculty lectures, and much more—will wrap up by noon on Sunday. The full Family Weekend schedule will be available on the NSFP website in late August; making hotel reservations before then is advised. We look forward to seeing you!

## “Prep talk”: Preparing for a big change

### TRANSITION THEORY

As explained by respected transition specialist Nancy K. Schlossberg, transition theory is one way to understand your student’s transition to college; having that understanding can help you negotiate and be supportive throughout the experience. Here are some key points to know:

- Students in transition are affected by three sets of variables:
  - individual perceptions of the transition
  - the environments both before and after the transition
  - their own personal characteristics
- Transitions can be categorized by type, context, and impact. Although each student’s transition is unique, for most students the transition to college is high impact, or very significant.
- A student’s ability to cope with adjustment is determined by the four S’s of transition:
  - situation
  - self
  - support
  - strategies
- Every student experiences transition differently. For some, academic pressures may prove the biggest obstacle; for others, homesickness and changes in the social environment cause more anxiety; still others may have completely different experiences. While there are patterns, there is no single or correct way to navigate transition.
- You can provide support simply by listening, offering encouragement, and reminding your student that it is normal for change to feel difficult. Experiencing the ups and downs of the transition to college is not only acceptable, it is also necessary and normal. Try to be patient and remind your student to do the same.

### COMMON PHASES DURING TRANSITION

The transition experience for most college students has observable phases, beginning months before they arrive on campus. Your student may either go through the most common ones successively, at predictable times, or show signs of some but not others. By knowing to expect these phases, parents and families can better respond to their signs—with empathy, encouragement, straightforward talk, or a combination of all three.

#### 1. Early-summer anticipation

Following high school graduation, many students start the summer feeling pride in their past achievements and anticipating what’s next. They may experience a letdown, but those feelings give way to optimism and excitement—and maybe a little impatience—as they look forward to Northwestern.

#### 2. Midsummer anxiety

When students realize that in just a few weeks they will be leaving their comfort zone—their home, family, and friends—to enter an all-new world, feelings of sadness and insecurity may emerge.

#### 3. Early-fall panic

Orientation has ended, classes have begun, and students may suddenly feel overwhelmed. For some, the adjustment to roommates, a heavy workload, and an unfamiliar social environment can feel like too much to handle all at once.

#### 4. The “honeymoon”

Students may focus on all the upsides of Northwestern—the new friends, the freedom, the intellectual thrill—and seek every opportunity to prove they are where they belong both academically and socially.

#### 5. The honeymoon’s over!

Uh-oh. Where did the time go? Where’s all this hard work coming from? Especially for overextended students, the honeymoon ends with such questions, which can cause anxiety, self-doubt, regret, and homesickness.





## 6. The grass is always greener . . .

The novelty of being at Northwestern has worn off, and the stress and hard work seem never-ending. Some students may fantasize that transferring to a different university would solve everything.

## 7. “You can’t go home again”

Home for break, students may be shocked to discover that the daily routines of family life have gone on without them. It can feel alienating, as if their absence had no effect or their relationship to “home” shifted without their permission.

## 8. Coping

Sometime during winter quarter, many students feel they finally have it figured out: they can get work done, use the library without fear, have a social life—and stay on top of their laundry! They prove to themselves that they have what it takes to be at Northwestern.

## 9. Realization

By winter or early spring quarter, students often make a realization: consistent academic success at Northwestern takes an enormous amount of hard work.

## 10. Putting it together

By the end of the first year, students start to see Northwestern as a total experience. They know that hard work and achievement must be priorities, but downtime and enjoying life are essential for balance.

## TYPICAL STUDENT WORRIES

It can be tough for first-year students to talk about their anxieties, even those that are normal and affect most of their peers. Some students feel pressure to say that “everything’s great,” even when it’s not. It helps when family members can anticipate and respond to student worries—like those noted here—with openness and empathy.

- Academic achievement: Will I excel at Northwestern? What if I can’t measure up to expectations? Will my professors be sympathetic if I’m struggling? Can I get help without jeopardizing my GPA?
- Separation fears: Can I survive on my own? How will I make new friends? What was I thinking when I chose a school this far from home?
- Figuring out the system: Will navigating the financial aid process be a hassle? How do grades work at Northwestern? Can I delay picking a major?
- Relating to strangers: Will I feel awkward around others whose race, class, or values differ from mine? How will I react to people who don’t share my religious or political beliefs? How much difference can I deal with?
- Social acceptance: How will I fit in? How should I act around other students and my professors? If I don’t feel like deciding things for myself, do I just follow the crowd?
- Reasons for being in college: Why am I at Northwestern? Is it because I want to be, or is it because others—parents, relatives, friends, former teachers—expect me to be?
- Identity questions: Who am I? How can I “just be me” when being who I really am could disappoint, put off, or even shock friends and family? Which is worse—losing their esteem or my own self-respect?

## WHEN THINGS DON'T GO AS PLANNED

If your student returns home for break and the expected academic success was not achieved in fall quarter, you may hear complaints and explanations like these:

“So many demands, so little time.”

“I found out the hard way that I need more structure.”

“Relationship stress.”

“I realized I’m in the wrong major and lost motivation.”

“Northwestern just isn’t a good fit for me.”

First-year students are more likely to view their fall-quarter performance as mediocre when they compare it with their high school record. Such comparisons overlook a simple reality: college-level work and the grading system are more rigorous than any high school’s. It is unrealistic to think that a near-perfect GPA in high school guarantees similar success at Northwestern. In fact, at the college level, success looks and feels different; its meaning expands to include much more than grades alone can measure.

If fall quarter is disappointing academically, remember that the new calendar year brings the start of a new quarter, with fresh chances to turn things around. By taking time during winter break to identify a few helpful steps—such as consulting an academic adviser, getting peer tutoring, or taking one less course—and by committing to turning plans into actions, your student can increase the likelihood of a successful winter quarter.

The signs that a student is struggling academically or socially can be difficult to discern, especially from a distance. To support your student, it’s important to show interest—which is something quite different from being demanding. Instead of insisting that your student owes you information, say “I’d like to know what’s going on.” Showing interest affirms that you care, but also that you trust your student to make responsible adult decisions.



## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Allow your student to figure out how to fit in.** There is a surprisingly wide range of what is normal or okay.
- **Remember that this is a time of transition.** Students often change their minds, and that’s okay. A change of major—even three or more times—is not uncommon.
- **Your student might fail at something.** Poor performance in a course or rejection by a student group isn’t the end of the world, despite how it feels; it’s just a piece of the Northwestern experience. Help your student see it as an opportunity to learn, grow, and build resilience.
- **Try to have regular communication, but don’t force it.** Don’t be concerned if your student isn’t always responsive. One way to show interest without seeming critical or meddling is to ask about what’s happening on campus in general. Have conversations without ulterior motives—these talks may reveal areas of concern more effectively than asking probing questions.
- **Expect some tough times.** Learning to cope with new people, responsibilities, and ideas may cause your student confusion and discomfort. These are normal growing pains.
- **Remember that parental and family support can have a powerful impact.** This is especially true when you send positive, reinforcing messages:
  - “You have what it takes to be responsible.”
  - “You know how to take care of yourself.”
  - “No one knows your strengths and limits as well as you do.”
  - “We trust you to get help when you need it.”



# 2019–20 Planning calendar

## MAY 2019

- 1 Housing deposit due

## JUNE

- 1 Online housing contract due  
1 Deadline to enroll in optional 9PAY plan  
1 Registration for Parent and Family Orientation and Family Weekend opens  
9 NSFP webinar

## JULY

- 1 Admission Health Record due  
1 Student health insurance (NU-SHIP) enrollment confirmation/waiver period opens

## AUGUST

- 1 Final high school transcript due  
4 NSFP webinar  
30 Deadline to register for Parent and Family Orientation

## SEPTEMBER

- 1 Fall tuition and fees due  
10–13 International Student Orientation  
16 Move-in day; Wildcat Welcome begins  
16–17 Parent and Family Orientation  
24 Fall classes begin

## OCTOBER

- 1 Deadline to confirm/waive NU-SHIP enrollment

## NOVEMBER

- 8–10 Family Weekend  
28–29 Thanksgiving break

## DECEMBER

- 9–14 Finals week, followed by winter break

## JANUARY 2020

- 1 Winter tuition and fees due  
6 Winter classes begin  
20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no classes)

## MARCH

- 16–21 Finals week, followed by spring break  
31 Spring classes begin

## APRIL

- 1 Spring tuition and fees due  
9 Passover begins at sundown  
12 Easter

## MAY

- 25 Memorial Day (no classes)

## JUNE

- 1 Deadline to enroll in optional 9PAY plan for 2020–21  
8–13 Finals week, followed by summer break  
22 Summer Session classes begin



## Your student's *Purple Prep* summer checklist

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TO DO	DUE DATE
<b>IMMEDIATELY</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Activate your NetID and Northwestern email account and start checking email daily.	
<input type="checkbox"/> If you missed the 5/1 housing deposit deadline, contact Residential Services at <b>847-467-4663</b> or <b>housing@northwestern.edu</b> .	
<input type="checkbox"/> Read through <i>Purple Prep</i> and start prioritizing your summer tasks. Pay special attention to requirements set by your school.	
<b>IN MAY</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> If participating in optional summer academic programs, apply by their deadlines.	5/15–5/31
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign and submit your housing contract.	6/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for 9PAY installment plan for tuition, fees, and room and board (optional).	6/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Register for a Pre-Orientation Program (optional).	6/11
<b>IN JUNE</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mail immunization and Admission Health Record forms. Bring copies with you this fall.	7/1
<input type="checkbox"/> If you wish to change your major or school, email a request to the dean of undergraduate admission at <b>lmt@northwestern.edu</b> .	7/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Wildcat Welcome Information Form (available 6/4).	7/7
<input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, request to have your International Baccalaureate (IB) transcript sent to Northwestern.	7/15
<input type="checkbox"/> Take any required online exams or assessments (available 6/1).	7/31

### STAYING ON TRACK WITH TASKS

Northwestern does not bombard students with email or text reminders over the summer. Instead, students can stay on top of their tasks by

- using *Purple Prep*'s all-in-one summer checklist and the academic checklist unique to each school
- using [bit.ly/pp-checklist](https://bit.ly/pp-checklist) to manage the checklist on any device
- reading the *March to the Arch* e-newsletter that arrives the first Tuesday of each month, providing need-to-know updates and supplemental information

### PLEASE NOTE

Most tasks on the checklist require access to email and the internet. If your student's online access might be seriously limited for long stretches this summer—due to travels or other circumstances—your student should email NSFP at [firstyear@northwestern.edu](mailto:firstyear@northwestern.edu) by June 1.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TO DO	DUE DATE
<b>IN JULY</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Have your final high school transcript sent to Northwestern.	8/1
<input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, request to have your Advanced Placement (AP) exam results sent to Northwestern. Bring copies with you this fall.	8/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Upload a photo for your Northwestern student ID.	8/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Upload your I-20/DS-2019 request on CAESAR prior to obtaining a student visa from a US embassy or consulate (international students only).	8/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Add parent/guardian access to your student account on CAESAR (optional).	8/8
<input type="checkbox"/> Verify billing preferences and address on CAESAR.	8/8
<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm or waive NU-SHIP (student health insurance) enrollment on CAESAR (available 7/1).	10/1
<input type="checkbox"/> If appropriate, begin registering for AccessibleNU accommodations and services for fall.	11/1
<b>IN AUGUST</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> If applicable, complete financial aid applications and track aid-related to-do's on CAESAR.	8/31
<input type="checkbox"/> Pay fall tuition and fees (bill available 8/10).	9/1
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the online campus safety requirement.	9/7
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the True Northwestern Dialogues requirement: Sexual Assault Prevention for Undergraduates (available 8/5).	9/7
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the True Northwestern Dialogues requirement: AlcoholEdu for College (available 8/5).	9/7
<input type="checkbox"/> Request your move-in day unloading permit (permits available mid-August).	9/11
<input type="checkbox"/> Read the One Book One Northwestern selection, <i>Hidden Figures</i> by Margot Lee Shetterly (free e-book sent to all incoming students in late July).	9/16
<b>IN SEPTEMBER</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule any shipments to campus to arrive on 9/16 or later.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrive on campus for International Student Orientation (international students only).	9/10–9/13
<input type="checkbox"/> Install Northwestern-provided antivirus software on your computer.	9/16
<input type="checkbox"/> Arrive on campus, move in, and participate in all eight days of Wildcat Welcome.	9/16–9/23



**New Student and Family Programs**

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Northwestern