

# Empowering First-Year Student Success at BYU

## Key conversations to have with students to help them flourish.

We identified three essential conversation topics for student success based on survey and focus group data from first-year students and their peer mentors.

### 1 Coach students as they learn to manage their time.

Time management is a challenge faced by most students. Mentors report advising on this issue weekly. First-year students, both high school graduates and returned missionaries, are managing many demands with minimal built-in structure, often for the first time. To ease the transition to university-level academics, social interactions, and newfound independence, actively share time management strategies and direct students to BYU's dedicated resources. (see below)

*"[The most challenging part was] balancing all of my classes and work and just getting into a routine and schedule that worked for me."*

~ First-Year Student

*"Yes, school is what you're here for, but you also have the social, relationships, and work. It's all hard to figure out."*

~ First-Year Student

### 2 Support students as they adjust to the expectations and workload of college courses.

Many first-year students are surprised by the demands of college coursework. They want help choosing classes and guidance on how to use TAs, professors, and tutors to succeed in class. First-year mentors said they most often help students with study skills, grades, course content, and choosing a major. Talk with them about academic challenges and link them to academic resources and advisement. (see below)

*"I think it was just harder for me to juggle my studying and learning how to correctly study. I took classes that I am not as used to being as hard, and the tests were tough for me."*

~ First-Year Student

*"[First-year students] just get overwhelmed because they didn't receive help with choosing their classes their first semester, and their schedule is too packed to prioritize using available resources."*

~ First-Year Mentor

### 3 Convey your confidence that they can succeed at BYU.

Many students, even those who performed well in their first semester, can feel insecure about how they compare to others at BYU academically. Some struggle to believe they will graduate from BYU. We have a crucial role in communicating to all students that they are valued members of the BYU community and can succeed here.

*"It was hard because I am not as smart as other people at BYU. So, I felt out of place, or like I did not belong."*

~ First-Year Student

*"Coming here can be really stressful because you're going up against people where everyone is at a top level academically where in high school not everyone was at that level... That's a big part of why it is hard for people to get adjusted here at BYU."*

~ First-Year Student

## Relevant BYU Student Resources

### Learn Anywhere

Contains handouts and video resources on time management, study skills, test-taking skills, and other student success topics: [learnanywhere.byu.edu](https://learnanywhere.byu.edu)

### BYU student development courses

including academic skills, time management and well-being: <https://sds.byu.edu/student-development-classes>