



SJU **UPPER YEAR** **HANDBOOK**

created
by senior students,
for senior students.

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Introduction

Congratulations!

You should be so excited and proud of yourself for making it through your first year. Although goodbyes are hard, there are lots of great things to come. While it may be 'goodbye' from living in residence, you are a part of the SJU community, and are always welcome to remain involved and engaged!

This book is intended to be a resource for you, compiled by students who've been where you are now and where you are headed. We get it, this time is all at once nerve-wracking, new, and exciting; and we want to offer you the best advice we can from the experiences we've had.

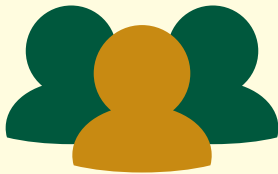
So, read on about tips from how to thrive in student housing to how to care for yourself, remember to appreciate the good, and treat this new chapter in life like an adventure!

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People & Places



Housing

Resources

- Parents as well as students who have experienced student housing before (like your don)
- Waterloo Off Campus Housing [website](#)
- Facebook UW Housing groups

Top Tips

Touring Places to Live

- Have an honest conversation with your future roomies about rent budget and expectations BEFORE touring
- Take into account where the homes are in relation to campus and your class buildings, both walking and busing distance
- Don't settle for a place that you don't want to live just because someone in your group wants to
- Aim for furnished places, as it's easier to move in and out
- Talking to the current tenants on the tour is a great resource
- Make sure there is A/C and adequate heating
- Ask permission to take photos during the tours to refer to later
- Have a trusted adult look over the lease for any red flags

Moving into & Living in Student Housing

- Make a list of supplies that you'll need and share with your roommates so you don't end up with three of everything
- Know the closest bus routes and where important places are in relation to your home
- Hold your landlord accountable for things they outlined in the lease (e.g. they should give you 24 hours notice before visiting the house, etc.)



What we wish we'd known:
**If a place sounds too good to be true,
it usually is. Be aware and trust
your gut if it doesn't feel right.**

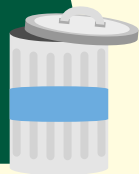
Housing

- Know how to use a fire extinguisher in case of emergency
- If your place has a driveway, create a shovelling schedule; sometimes the landlord offers to do it
- Really think about it before you get a house pet, and know the rules of what pets you are allowed to have at your place

Subletting

- Spring term is the hardest to find a sublet, so prepare yourself and start looking early
- Negotiate the rent with the person you are subletting to, and be willing to have some flexibility
- Talk to your landlord to know the terms, rules, and expectations for subletting your room
- Ask your landlord to provide you with a sublet lease to hold the person you rent to accountable
- Avoid Kijiji when looking for a sublet, aim to look on trusted sources such as UW Housing Facebook groups and asking people you know

What we wish we'd known:
Different areas have different garbage pickup schedules. Make sure you know the day for your area and have it ready!



Roommates

Resources

- Conflict management tools and strategies
- Money splitting apps (e.g. [Splitwise](#)) for paying people back
- Group chats help to stay connected with roommates

Top Tips

Living Together

- It is important to build community in your house, some easy ways are to make food together or pick a show to watch together each week
- Your roommates don't have to be your best friends, but a healthy relationship with your housemates is key
- It is good to have some similar interests, as it's better to know your roommates at least a little bit rather than not at all

Responsibilities

- Talk about and write down the chores that need to be done such as garbage collection, then write a chart to keep people accountable
- Doing chores together makes them more fun, and they get done quicker!

Conflicts

- Respect is key: for others' spaces, for shared space, (especially in terms of noise)
- Don't be afraid to call people out (in a respectful way), there is value in healthy conflict!
- Be patient and learn to let things go, but if something is really bothering you, be willing to bring it up respectfully



What we wish we'd known:
Having an open and honest
conversation is always better than
bottling things up.

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Money Management



Budgeting

Resources

- Apps such as [Mint](#) and other budgeting tools
- Personal money-tracking document or spreadsheet
- Savings account

Top Tips

Saving Money

- Have a general idea of what you absolutely need to buy when living off campus
- Keep in mind the grocery store you shop at as some are more expensive than others (e.g. Walmart vs. Sobeys)
- Don't spend all your money on your co-op term, save some from each paycheck
- Opt out of student health and dental plans, or use them!

Making Money

- Scholarships and grants are your friend! SJU offers application-based Upper Year Scholarships each term
- Getting a part time job on or near campus is great, many places are very accommodating to students' schedules

Budgeting Money

- Create a list of your expenses, both recurring (such as rent, bills, food) and things you pay for every now and then
- Based on this, set an amount for how much you can spend on each category each month (e.g. \$50 for Entertainment)
- Allocate some extra money for emergencies and/or unexpected expenses
- It's all about making smart choices about what you spend your hard earned money on!

What we wish we'd known:
Getting a clear idea of your budget and setting expectations for yourself can help you stay accountable AND save some cash!



Student Discounts

Resources

- Current students often share discounts they find on Reddit and other online forums
- Student Price Card (SPC) is \$10 per year and gets you discounts at lots of retailers and restaurants
- Points and loyalty cards (e.g. PC Optimum, Air Miles, etc.) give you discounts and rewards on your purchases

Top Tips

Scoring the Deals

- Bring your student card with you when you shop, so you're prepared in case a student discount is offered or advertised
- Do a bit of research and try to plan your shopping around where you can get a student discount

Discounts

- Here are some places that offer student discounts! (Be sure to check with your specific location, as some only offer discounts on certain days of the week)
- ValuMart: 10% off with student card
- Sobeys: 10% off with student card
- Bulk Barn: 10% off with student card
- Apple: varying discounts on tech with proof of education
- Spotify/Apple Music: premium subscription for \$5 per month
- Adidas Canada: 15-30% off online with student email address
- ...and more!



What we wish we'd known:
Discounts make a difference, no matter how small; you're still saving some money!

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Taking Care of Yourself



Food

Resources

- Digital flyers such as Flipp and Reebee to find deals
- SJU Farmer's Basket program (a selection of fresh produce for \$14-\$16/month)
- Pinterest for finding cheap and easy recipe ideas

Top Tips

Grocery Shopping

- Split groceries with friends or choose to shop with them
- Have a list of what you need to shop for so you buy things you don't need, junk food is also expensive!
- Buy meat and bread when they are on sale and freeze for later
- Check expiry dates before you buy

Meal Ideas

- Make good choices on a daily basis, but allow yourself to treat yourself every now and then
- Eating out at restaurants or ordering food with roomies can be a good treat or celebratory reward
- See the next page for a few good meal ideas found on Pinterest!

Meal Prep

- Buy a cookbook or do some online recipe hunting to compile a list of good recipes beforehand to keep some meal ideas in mind
- Preparing your lunch the night before or prepping meals for the week saves you a lot of time
- Know how long you will be on campus and bring enough food and snacks to sustain yourself

What we wish we'd known:
It's all about making healthy and cost-effective choices with your food, especially in regards to fruits and veggies!



Food

Quick & Easy Meal Ideas

Upgraded Oatmeal

Key Ingredients: quick-cook oats, water, toppings of your choice (like nut butter, fruit, chocolate chips, seeds...)



Microwaved Omlette in a Mug

Key Ingredients: eggs, milk, toppings of your choice (like cheese, peppers, onions, ham, bacon...)

Quinoa Salad (meal prep compatible!)

Key Ingredients: quinoa (cooked), mix-ins of your choice (feta cheese, olives, chicken, cherry tomatoes, beans...)



Broccoli Bowtie Pasta

Key Ingredients: bowtie pasta noodles (cooked), broccoli (cooked), parmesan, butter, a pinch of pepper

Burrito Bowl (meal prep compatible!)

Key Ingredients: rice (cooked), black beans, salsa, shredded cheese, green onions, cumin, garlic powder, salt



Self Care

Resources

- On/off campus mental health resources (Counselling services, MATES, Here2Talk helpline, SJU Wellness Coordinator, apps)
- Planners, calendars, and to-do lists of your choice (e.g. MeisterTask, Waterloo Calendar, Passion Planner)
- On/off campus gyms and fitness classes of your choice

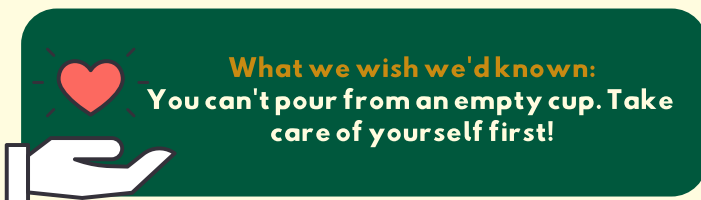
Top Tips

Balance

- Plan and prepare yourself for school and life ahead of time as much as possible, a visible to do list on your desk helps!
- Set a limit on hours worked per week, make sure your employer respects this
- Say yes to things because you WANT to do them, not because you HAVE to
- Give yourself time to decompress at the end or beginning of the day and when you need it, this is important to put you in the right mindset for work and life
- Pick up an old hobby or start a new one to fill the gaps in your free time with something you enjoy doing

Mental Health

- Try not to stretch yourself too thin, only take on what you can handle
- If you have to cancel on friends, they'll understand, be open and honest
- Take mental breaks when you need them, give yourself the time you need and deserve
- There is always someone out there to listen - you are not alone!



Self Care

Physical Health

- Find something active that you enjoy doing each day, such as opting to walk to campus instead of taking the bus
- Many gyms and fitness clubs off-campus offer tryout passes for free or discounted prices to test them out before you commit
- UW's on campus gyms (CIF and PAC) offer a shoe tag program; for around \$50 a term (first week of each term is free) you have full access to group fitness classes each day of the week
- Off-campus gyms are a great option as well, such as Hustl+Flow (spin, boxing, and yoga classes), Modo Yoga (hot yoga classes, \$5 charity classes on Fridays), Movati Athletic, Goodlife Fitness, Fit4Less, etc.!

What we wish we'd known:
**Learn how you want to best use the free
time you're gifted with wisely!**



Academics

Resources

- PALS (Peer Academic Leaders) in SH 1012 at St. Jerome's
- Your faculty academic advisor, professors, or TAs
- Joe Varamo, Advising Specialist, SH 1017
- Course Information at www.sju.ca/your-courses
- SJU Library in SJ1

Top Tips

Academics

- If you are struggling with a class, put your professor or TA's office hours in your schedule, making it a point to go get help when you need it
- 80% of learning happens outside of the classroom, use your free time wisely!
- Planners and calendars are your friend, use them to track what you have done and what you still have left to do, checking off a completed item is a great feeling!

Study Habits

- Break up your work as much as possible, allocate your time to each task based on its priority
- Take breaks when you can, such as working for 30 minutes and taking a break for 10
- Plan ahead as much as possible, so you're prepared for tasks both in the present and future
- If you're feeling overwhelmed, talking it out and being gentle with yourself is so important



What we wish we'd known:

Yes, school is important, but don't forget about everything else, too! Enjoy things outside of schoolwork and you'll have a better mindset for getting things done.

Staying Involved

Resources

- Senior students in the SJU community, such as current student leaders or alumni
- St. Jerome's social media and website
- Scholarships: [sju.ca/scholarships](https://www.sju.ca/scholarships)
- Farmers Basket Monthly Registration

Top Tips

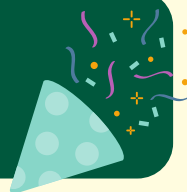
Programming

- Participating in Relay for life each year is a great way to contribute to a good cause and reconnect with your SJU friends
- Purchasing a monthly Farmer's Basket helps out your local community and your grocery shopping
- St. Jerome's opens applications for Upper Year scholarships each term for students who demonstrate financial need, involvement, and academic achievement
- Living in residence as an upper year student is a wonderful way to stay connected

Leadership Opportunities

- These positions require you to be an upper year student, details can be found on the SJU website:
- CEO (Chief Experience Officer)
- SAT (Student Activities Team)
- SCMT (Student Campus Ministry Team)
- PAL (Peer Academic Leader)
- FLA (Frost Leader Advisor)
- AAC (Assistant Activities Coordinator)
- Residence Don

What we wish we'd known:
Staying involved with the SJU
community keeps you connected to
people, and is so rewarding!



Authors' Note

This book would not have been made possible without the extremely valuable experiences shared by current and past upper year students within the St. Jerome's community. We want to thank these students and the ones who have gone before them for making the SJU community what it is today.

And to you the reader: thank you, too! You have made your own unique impact on this community, and we hope that the tips in this handbook help you to continue to do so and thrive in all that you will accomplish.



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