

Division of Interdisciplinary Studies
at the Center for Worker Education



The City College
of New York

SPRING 2025 NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION GUIDE

Congratulations on your admission to the City College of New York, and welcome to the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies at CWE! Use this guide as a “To Do” checklist and ensure you’re on track for the Spring semester.

1. GETTING STARTED: ENROLLING IN CLASSES AND PAYING TUITION

Am I enrolled in classes?

- I met with my academic advisor and they issued **class permissions** for the classes I want to enroll in
- I have a copy of my **B.A. or B.S. Advising Worksheet**
- I know the liberal arts **concentration** I selected
- I have an idea of the **degree requirement** each of my classes is satisfying (Each class you enroll in should fall into one of the following categories: Pathways courses; Required Major Courses; Foundational Courses; Elective courses)
- I **used my class permissions** and located my classes on Schedule Builder
- I **enrolled** in my classes
- All my classes appear on “My Schedule” in CUNYfirst
- If I need more time to enroll, I notified my advisor and requested a class permission expiration date extension

Did I pay my tuition?

- I know which form(s) of payment I will be using to pay my Spring 2025 tuition
 - Pell Grant (part-time and full-time tuition)
 - TAP (full-time tuition only; 12+ credits)
 - Student loans
 - Cash, check, credit card
 - My College Payment Plan
 - Third party payments (e.g. employer tuition vouchers)

Do I understand the academic rules for receiving student financial aid?

- Student loans are also a form of financial aid
- TAP (Tuition Assistance Program) is a New York State student aid program that requires students to enroll in 12 or more credits every semester to be eligible

- Pell Grant is a federal student aid program, and recipients can enroll on either a part-time or full-time basis to be eligible
- If you applied for the Pell Grant and are selected for **verification**, you must contact the Financial Aid Office at the City College main campus (212-656-6656; Wille Administration Building, Room 104)
- Financial Aid is first **estimated**, therefore
 - **You must actually attend classes** to be eligible for financial aid
 - The financial aid awards posted on your CUNYfirst Financial Aid page are **anticipated**—that money is not yet “real”
 - **You must earn satisfactory grades** because you have entered into an agreement, and you must maintain a C average (**2.0 GPA**)

How do I get a City College photo ID card?

- ID Cards can be created in person from information sent to us via email. Emailed requests will be printed and are usually ready for pick up the next business day.
- The Photo ID Office is located in **North Academic Center 1/206** at the City College main campus, Convent Avenue and 138th Street. Call 212-650-5902 to confirm office hours.
- **YOU ARE REQUIRED TO USE YOUR CITY COLLEGE PHOTO ID CARD TO ENTER 25 BROADWAY. THIS IS A BUILDING RULE, AND THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- The **barcode** on your ID card allows you to remotely access library resources that you will need to complete research assignments for your courses.

2. WHEN CLASSES BEGIN

Did I receive and review the syllabus for each class I enrolled in?

- Each course syllabus should contain the following elements:
 - Learning outcomes: an overview of what you will learn and what you should be able to do when you finish the class
 - The required reading and writing assignments
 - Due dates for assignments and consequences for late submission
 - How your learning will be evaluated (e.g. quizzes, reading responses, presentations, research papers, case studies, final exams)
 - Your professor's grading criteria and scale
 - Contact information for your professor (Email address, telephone number)
 - Your professor's office hours

Have I designed my schedule to accommodate my academic workload?

- Do your best to avoid distractions

- Find the quietest place you can to do your schoolwork
- Silence your phone and avoid checking it or scrolling while you work
- Schedule short breaks to stay refreshed
- Allocate time for assigned readings
 - **Plan to read in small but consistent blocks of time**
 - **Print out your articles so you can write notes in the margins**
 - Prime your thinking by asking “What do I already know about this subject?”
 - Preview the text by looking at how it is organized: what are the headings and subheadings? The organization of a text provides clues about what is important to the author
 - Start by reading the first and last sentences of each paragraph
 - Use a dictionary to look up the definitions of words you don't understand
 - In the margins, write down questions, anything that surprises you about the reading, things that you disagree with or disturb you
- Allocate time for your writing assignments
 - Writing can help us figure out what we understand about a subject
 - Writing can have many different purposes. Here are just a few examples:
 - **Summarizing:** Presenting the main points or essence of another text in a condensed form
 - **Arguing/Persuading:** Expressing a viewpoint on an issue or topic in an effort to convince others that your viewpoint is correct
 - **Narrating:** Telling a story or giving an account of events
 - **Evaluating:** Examining something in order to determine its value or worth based on a set of criteria.
 - **Analyzing:** Breaking a topic down into its component parts in order to examine the relationships between the parts.
 - **Responding:** Writing that is in a direct dialogue with another text.
 - **Examining/Investigating:** Systematically questioning a topic to discover or uncover facts that are not widely known or accepted, in a way that strives to be as neutral and objective as possible.
 - **Observing:** Helping the reader see and understand a person, place, object, image or event that you have directly watched or experienced through detailed sensory descriptions.¹
 - Your instructor is interested in YOUR ideas, so avoid using AI to respond to writing assignments. In addition, you will be penalized for plagiarizing—taking ideas and language that isn't yours.

What should I do if I need academic assistance?

- Get help EARLY in the semester
- How to understand your assignments→

- **Step One:** Re-read the syllabus and any handouts given by your professor. It can be helpful to list the steps required on paper so you can see how the assignment is composed of several steps or parts.
- **Step Two:** If you still need clarification after you read your syllabus and handouts, meet with your professor during their office hours or another mutually convenient time
- Help with writing assignments→
 - **Step One:** Make an appointment to meet with a CWE Writing Consultant. Bring a draft of your assignment and your professor's directions or writing prompts.
 - **Step Two:** Revise your work using the Writing Consultant's recommendations
- Help with research assignments→
 - **Step One:** Bring your research assignment guidelines to the CWE Library (Room 7-28) and ask the librarian for guidance on how to search **academic sources** (e.g. databases of scholarly journals). One of your first **information literacy tasks** is to **learn the difference between scholarly and popular sources**.

What should I do if I feel lost or "in over my head"?

- Step One: Keep in mind (1) many students need time to adjust during their first semester at a new college, and (2) **you are not alone**.
- Step Two: **Schedule an appointment with your academic advisor**. He or she will often give you a fresh perspective and encouragement. If you feel lost in a course, you should also **meet with your professor** so you can figure out how you are **really** doing in the course.
- Step Three: **Make an appointment with the CWE Social Worker, Ms. Monica Ortiz-Suloway**. CWE offers this free, confidential service to support our students. Counseling may be appropriate if you are experiencing ongoing stress, anxiety, depression, adjustment issues, or other concerns that affect your well-being. **You can schedule an appointment by sending a text to (845) 519-0028 or emailing mortizsuloway@ccny.cuny.edu**.
- Step Four: **If you have fallen too far behind with your assignments or missed too many classes, meet with your academic advisor to discuss official withdrawal** from a course. An unofficial withdrawal (W/U grade) or a failing grade (F) will negatively impact your grade point average, but a W grade carries no academic penalty. **TUESDAY, APRIL 1 IS THE LAST DAY TO WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE WITH A "W" GRADE.**

How can I get help with technology?

- CWE IT Coordinator, Mr. Robert Hernandez and his team can help you with

- Setting up your Citymail account
- Brightspace
- CUNYfirst

Contact Robert at robert@ccny.cuny.edu or 212-925-6625 ext. 262

Are there computers available for students to use?

- Computer Lab, Room 7-54
- Library, Room 7-28

I am a student with a disability. Is there a Disabilities Services office at CWE?

- Students who attend CWE and are interested in receiving academic accommodations should contact the City College AccessAbility Center/Student Disability Services Office via:
 - Telephone: 212-650-5913
 - TTY/TTD: 212-650-6910
 - Email: disabilityservices@ccny.cuny.edu
 - Visit the AAC/SDS website to learn how to register and to access the Intake Form: **ccny.cuny.edu/accessibility/register**
 - Deborah Edwards-Anderson is the CWE AAC.SDS Liaison at CWE. Email her at edwa@ccny.cuny.edu

What kind of student services are available to me at CWE?

- Scholarships & Awards:
Every Fall semester, CWE publishes a list of scholarships and awards that students may apply for.

3. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY IN THE COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT

What's the best way to approach my professor if I need to talk to her/him?

Professors in the Division of Interdisciplinary Studies (CWE) are committed to supporting their students. Your professor's office hours are an ideal time to stop by with your questions about the class. If you can't meet during office hours, approach your professor during your class break to talk or email them to schedule a conversation at another time. **Reserving your time is always a good practice to ensure you get what you need.**

How should I contact my academic advisor?

Advisors are usually available Monday through Friday. You can schedule an appointment with your advisor by logging on to CCNY Navigate or by emailing the Front Desk (cwefrontdesk@ccny.cuny.edu). You can also check with the Front Desk to ask if your advisor is available for a walk-in appointment.

Can I contact my professors and academic advisor by email?

Yes. Most professors and advisors prefer email because it provides an automatic paper trail for your communication. **For security reasons, the College requires you to use Citymail for correspondence with your professors, advisor, and other CWE staff.** You can usually expect a response to your email within 48 hours. If you don't get a response in this time frame, resend your email, call your professor, or stop by his or her office during office hours.

The college environment is more formal than "everyday life," and your communication style is expected to shift accordingly. This is especially so with email correspondence.

While you might address a friend or family member with "Hey," you should **never** do so with your professor or any college staff member. Use **Dear, Hello, or Hi** as your salutation. Use titles (e.g. Dean, Professor, Dr., Ms., Mr.) until you are signaled to use first names.

Always sign your emails, and don't use the abbreviations or emoticons you would use in a text. Your emails are a form of business correspondence and you should try your best to write with thoughtfulness and emotional restraint.

Finally, accept that email works well for some tasks and less well for others. Email doesn't convey the non-verbal cues that help us to understand each other better. There are some conversations that simply work best in a face-to-face environment.

How do I make appointments with an advisor or with a Writing Consultant?

Email the Front Desk and include the following information:

- In the subject line, write **Request for advising appointment** or **Request for appointment with Writing Consultant**
- Your first and last name
- Your EMPLID
- Your Citymail address
- Your best-reach phone number
- Your preferred dates and times (not guaranteed, but will be considered)

Please approach the Front Desk staff with patience and kindness, especially during times right before classes start. The Front Desk staff is trained and committed to assisting you, but each of them can only assist one person at a time.

What should I do if I have questions about a grade?

Your first step will always be to communicate with the professor who graded you. Whenever possible, arrange to have an in-person conversation. Approach your conversation with an open mind and a cool emotional state. Prepare for your conversation by reviewing (1) the course expectations as outlined on your syllabus,

(2) the assignments you submitted and the grades you received for them, (3) any grading rubrics given by the professor, and (4) your attendance in the course. Regard your meeting with your professor as a learning opportunity—you may receive valuable feedback that will help you develop as a learner and scholar.

If you are not satisfied with your professor's explanation for your grade, your next step will be to schedule a meeting with the IAS Department Chair, Professor Carlos Aguasaco (caguasaco@ccny.cuny.edu). Prepare for this meeting with the same review process you used before meeting with your professor. Be prepared to give a clear, well-reasoned explanation of why you disagree with the grade you earned and bring evidence that supports your point of view.

If you are not satisfied with the outcome of your meeting with the Department Chair, only then would you schedule a meeting with Dean Juan Mercado. You can schedule your meeting with the Dean by contacting his assistant, Lenard Estacio (lestacio@ccny.cuny.edu) or (212) 925-6625, x247)

¹ "Invention: Starting the Writing Process," Purdue OWL, https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/the_writing_process/invention_starting_the_writing_process.html

We hope this Student Guide answers most of your questions. Please send your feedback and additional questions to Deborah Edwards-Anderson, New Student Orientation Coordinator (edwa@ccny.cuny.edu). We wish you a rewarding first semester!

Notes and Questions: