

Adapting to University Life

One of the main factors that form a successful and happy university experience is the ability to adapt to university environment. A complete adaptation to university life also requires academic, psychological and social adaptation. **Academic adaptation** means learning how to fulfil the duties and responsibilities as necessitated by your role as a University student. **Psychological adaptation** comprises various aspects required from students during their freshman-year, such as the ability to act individually/independently, to take initiative and to cope with stress. **Social adaptation** means one's ability to acquire new behaviours and develop a sense of belonging that would help him/her to adapt to new educational environments.

From a psychological point of view, any type of change, good or bad, leads to stress. Starting university can be a major life change. Transition from high school to university marks a moment in one's life. This is the period where students develop the ability to act individually and independently. During this transition process, students immerse themselves in new experiences such as leaving home to attend university, moving away from home to study, and living in a university accommodation, which all require the skills for independent living. Another important aspect of this transition is the fact that students living away from home will have to learn how to make their own decisions in terms of academic responsibilities and career development.

Transition to adult life is a process where one can have difficulty adjusting to change. However, challenges and difficulties students may face can vary from person to person. While some are very good at adapting to changes in their circumstances, some people can find it more difficult to adjust to new surroundings. So, it's quite normal to face challenges and problems in adapting to life at university, especially during this period of transition. If the student still experiences academic, social and psychological adjustment issues; s/he fails to fulfil his/her academic responsibilities; s/he is unwilling to attend classes; s/he frequently feels unhappy, anxious or worried despite the fact that s/he has been attending university for at least a few months, then s/he may be going through a hard time in terms of adapting to university life.

Tips for Adapting to University Study:

- Change might seem scary and intimidating at first – but don't worry; give yourself time to adjust to new surroundings.
- Reach out to others in your university. You may find that you are not the only one who is struggling to adapt to new circumstances. Your friends may also be eager to share with you experiences of their own difficulty adjusting to university life during their freshman-year. Talking to others can make you feel more relaxed and help you to cope with your new life.
- Try to identify the issues hindering your smooth adjustment.
- Develop various methods to deal with these issues.
- Give yourself time to test these methods and see the results.

Despite all your efforts, if you still think you have trouble adapting to life at university in terms of experiencing academic, psychological and/or social adjustment problems, you can always contact IKBU Counselling and Psychological Services.

Specialist Clinical Psychologist Gizem Bodur