



## What Can I Do to Help My Child from a Distance?

Of course, you are still a parent to your almost-adult, and he or she does still need your support and guidance during the university years. Here are some ways you can express your caring and enhance your child's experience at BU.

### **1. Stay in touch!**

Even though your child is experimenting with independent choices, he or she still needs to know that you're there and are available to talk over both normal events and difficult issues. Make arrangements to write or call your child on a regular basis.

### **2. Allow space for your child to set the agenda for some of your conversations.**

If he or she needs help or support, the subject is more likely to come up if you aren't inquiring pointedly about what time he or she came in last night!

### **3. Be realistic with your university student about financial matters.**

Most students come to school with a fairly detailed plan about how tuition, fees, books, and room and board will be paid for, and what the family's expectations are about spending money. Being specific at the outset may help avoid misunderstandings later.

### **4. Be realistic as well about academic achievement and grades.**

Brandon University attracts bright students from all over the world, and not every freshman who excelled academically in high school will be an all-A student here. Developing or refining the capacity to work independently and consistently and to demonstrate mastery can be more important than grades, as long as the student meets the basic academic requirements set out by the University. Again, these are choices that each individual student makes, though certainly it is appropriate to help your child set his or her own long-term goals.

**5. If your child does experience difficulties at BU, encourage him or her to take advantage of the wealth of resources available for students.**

For academic issues, talking with the professor is often a good first step, but academic advising, learning skills, the Writing and Math Centres and tutorial help are also available. The Student Services Office can assist with a variety of concerns. If your son or daughter could benefit from counselling, personal counsellors are located on campus. BU can feel like a big place, but you can help your child by reminding him or her of the many resources available on the campus.

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We hope these ideas and suggestions will be helpful to you in dealing with some of the difficulties parents experience when their child goes to university. The freshman year at BU is a tremendously exciting time, both for students and their families, and we hope and trust that you and your child will have a rewarding year!

## What Else Can I Do?

First year university is a time of great change and growth for a student. It is normal for parents and students to feel excited and nervous. Below is a list of strategies that may help:

1. Be a good listener
2. Show interest in their studies and their personal growth
3. Have an open mind. Your child is learning to be independent
4. Be encouraging
5. Don't set unrealistic expectations. Remember, your dream for them may not be their dream
6. Don't push
7. Stay in touch. Agree to weekly times for calls home
8. Make the most of visits home. Do things together
9. Send care packages. You may not get a thank you every time but mail will be appreciated
10. Keep the lines of communication open
11. Encourage them to get involved, make new friends and develop new interests

When should you get involved?

1. When tearful calls home outnumber the others
2. Weight loss
3. Frequent illness
4. Excessive fatigue
5. Changes in behaviour or appearance
6. Talk of hopelessness, lack of purpose

What if they make the wrong choice?

It sometimes happens, which isn't surprising when you consider the range of course options available at universities and colleges. There are ways out of a wrong course and into a right one, and counsellors can help students with this. The sooner students come to see a counsellor about this problem the more chance there is of finding a good solution.

