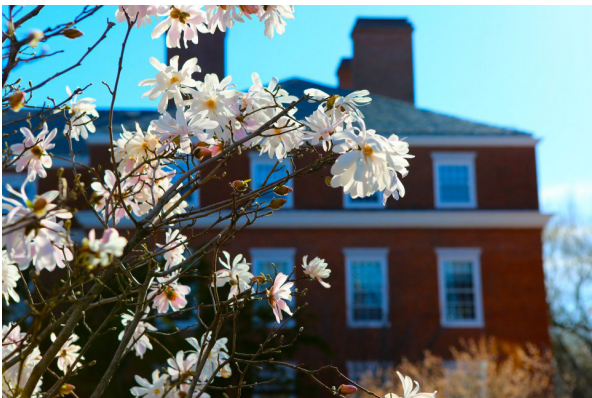


INTERNATIONAL STUDENT HANDBOOK



(Almost) Everything You Need To Know

Office of Student Affairs
(OSA)



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International Student Handbook

In an effort to ensure the most successful and productive experience for new international students, a dedicated and thoughtful group of 2017 HGSE international student alumni committed themselves to providing resources and information to incoming students. Working in conjunction with the HGSE Office of Student Affairs, this Handbook is meant to be a guide and provide many helpful tips on a variety of topics related to graduate studies – academic, personal, and professional development.

We acknowledge and thank the International Student Committee consisting of Isabelle Byusa, IEP '17, Sharon Lee, IEP '17, Shradha Narayanan, TIE '17, Snigdha Gupta, MBE '17 and Tannishtha Sanyal, TIE '17 for their valuable contributions.

The Role of the Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is responsible for orientation, commencement, student organizations, community-wide programming (outings in New England, pub nights, Celebration of Cultures, Talent Show, etc.), equity and inclusion programming, access and disability services, international student support and programming, student advocacy, personal and individual student support. OSA is the first point of contact for students with any questions.

Our goal from before Orientation through Commencement is for students to be aware of and take advantage of the many programs, events, and services we provide to support students in their personal, academic and professional lives. We hope to get to know you!

At the center of our work is students, and providing an environment where students can thrive, succeed and feel a sense of community. We believe that your experience outside of the classroom is just as important as your experience inside the classroom, and the two are interconnected and integral to your learning.

Another primary responsibility we have is student advocacy. Life happens often at the worst possible times. We are here to help and support you. If you have a medical or health issue, or need a referral to one of the many professional resources on campus, a housing issue, problems with your health insurance, navigating Harvard bureaucracy, we are here to help. OSA is your first point of contact for any issue, question, or concern.



Mission Statement

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) encourages and supports student success by providing a variety of support services, programs, and activities to enhance and complement students' academic and co-curricular experience.

Our mission is:

- To provide a comprehensive network of services and opportunities for students to engage and cultivate community, and to develop and grow as education leaders and professionals.
- To support the full engagement and well-being of all students, with a focus on advocacy, social justice, equity and inclusion in our diverse community.
- To provide resources and supports to guide students in meeting the many demands of their professional, personal, and academic life.



International Student Support & Programming



An integral part of the work of OSA is providing programs, services and support specific to the needs of our international students. Throughout the year, we offer a variety of social, educational, and professional development services and activities to allow international students to make the most of their HGSE experience. Examples of programming include the Global Connection Series, weekly International Student socials, and outings in the Boston/Cambridge area.



Kevin Boehm, Associate Director of Student Affairs, and Longy Han, International Student Programming Coordinator, oversee all international programming from OSA. Longy serves as the primary point of contact for international students. She can be reached at longy_han@gse.harvard.edu. If you have ideas or suggestions about programs, we welcome your thoughts and feedback.

Classes & Courses

Course Preview



HGSE provides a wide array of courses that you can choose from. Through a fun exercise of sitting in 'preview' sessions done by faculty members, students can experience what a class may feel like

and what content the faculty will be covering. These sessions take place as part of the course selection process and allow students to sample classes before deciding to enroll.

Tips to stay organized during Course Previews:

1. Watch out for class timings and days while making your choice of classes. Some classes may overlap!
2. Maintain a timetable/calendar and block out the classes you're keen on taking.
3. Take into account the number of hours that you would have to commit towards the class each week. This information is available on the course site/evaluations. If not, feel free to ask the Teaching Fellows (TF), faculty member or students who have taken the course in earlier years.
4. Attend classes you are confused about before deciding the final list of classes.
5. Speak to alumni from your cohort or the class. They could share experiences that would provide valuable feedback for consideration.
6. Speak to the faculty member. Most faculty members are very friendly and appreciate your questions or an email with your queries as this also shows your commitment to better understanding the contents of the class before signing up.
7. Read the course evaluations. HGSE does a great job at documenting feedback from the previous cohorts. This feedback could help you better understand the nature of the class.

Types of classes you find at HGSE

Many international students may be accustomed to a teacher-centered classroom with traditional exams. This is not the norm at HGSE, and listed below are examples of the types of formats of classes you may experience. Though there are some large lecture based classes, in almost all cases, students are encouraged to participate and learn from each other.

1. **Case Study Centered:** These classes are centered around theme/educational sector-policy, research, K-12, leadership, specific case studies and require interaction between the students and the professor. In these classes you will see a lot of participation and dynamic conversations.
2. **Didactic Learning:** These classes are guided by the faculty member and centered around the lecture and information transfer.
3. **Project Based Learning:** These classes focus on students working on projects either through part or all of the semester, and where students are making active connections between their project work and theories presented in class. In these courses and others, students are required to work in groups and teams.
4. **Live Consultations:** Classes at HGSE also see students consulting with real time projects run by organizations in the Boston area. These classes are a great opportunity to add to your portfolio by giving you concrete skills and your professor's mentorship.
5. **Seminar Style:** A few classes at HGSE are led in a seminar style, with a small class size and intimate conversations between the students and the faculty member. These classes are a great way of deepening one's understanding in a subject areas and forming close connections with student peers.

There are many other formats of classes at HGSE and it is helpful to know what to expect. Course content should be the primary consideration in selecting courses, but many students appreciate having a balance of large and small classes and teaching formats. You can find this information on the course preview site, but if you cannot find it, feel free to learn more about this from the faculty member or the Teaching Fellows in the class.

Cross-registration

Cross-registration is a great opportunity to get to know faculty members and students from other schools at Harvard, MIT, and The Fletcher School at Tufts. While many students find this to be beneficial, many students only enroll in courses at HGSE.



1. The logistics can prove trickier as the start and end dates are different for different schools and you will need to account for travel times, so start planning early. For example, spring term MIT courses cannot count towards graduating from Harvard because their spring term is longer. Also MIT is 2 Train (T)-stops away from Harvard, so you will need to keep 30 mins of transition time at least both to and from HGSE.
2. Not all schools have a formal “course preview” week. However, it is perfectly acceptable, to just attend the first day of class. HBS for example, does not permit cross-registrants until one (1) week of classes are over - but you do not have to wait to know you are in, to attend. When in doubt, err on the side of showing up!
3. Finally, there is always a lot happening at HGSE, across the other schools at Harvard, and in the Boston/Cambridge area. It is impossible to do it all. Remember to think about your admissions essay from time to time to remind you of your purpose for coming to HGSE, and let that serve as your guide.

Academic Support



The Office for Master’s Studies works closely with Office of Student Affairs to monitor academic progress and support student success more generally at HGSE. The Office is comprised of eight Program Administrators (each program has a designated person), an Assistant Director, Mary Kiesling, and Associate Dean, Marc Johnson.

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) is considered the first point of contact for any support services for students, both academic and personal, and for any questions related to student life. The staff in OSA can provide referrals to the appropriate resources at HGSE and across Harvard, depending on the individual student’s need. We encourage students to seek support as early as possible in the semester to ensure academic success. Listed below are some key academic resources:

1. **Bureau of Study Counsel (BSC)** www.bsc.harvard.edu Provides personal and academic support on an individual basis. Students work one-on-one with a counselor in a private setting on such topics as time management, stress, organization, etc. OSA can make referrals to the Bureau based on a student’s need, or students can call the Bureau to make an appointment on their own. Note: The Bureau offers a number of valuable workshops during the academic year, including a Writing Workshop early in the fall semester, which is fee-based. You can check their website at www.bsc.harvard.edu for their workshop offerings. **Most of the programs and services at the Bureau are free of charge to students.
2. **Peer Tutoring Program at the Bureau:** Students can work with Peer tutors individually on a variety of subjects, including English language (fee based).
3. **HGSE Writing Services** – Academic Services provides writing services to students by advanced doctoral students who serve as Teaching Fellows. Take advantage of the writing services to give you recommendations on how to strengthen your writing. Appointments can be set via the library website.

Mentorship and Support from Faculty Members

One of the biggest resources for students are the dynamic group of faculty both at HGSE and across Harvard University. Given that there are many faculty members and the academic year is 9 months, you should connect with professors who align with your interests.



1. Every new student is assigned a Faculty Academic Advisor. We encourage you to use your Faculty Academic Advisor as thought partners to help you make your course choices. Do not worry if your faculty advisor is not the perfect match. Program Administrators, administrators, and other faculty and staff are very knowledgeable and are happy to help students talk things through!
2. Use the Faculty Directory (<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/faculty-directory>) to learn more about Professors and their work.
3. Speak to alumni who have taken classes / worked with the faculty member to better understand their work and experience and analyze whether it might fit with your aspirations and goals. Facebook groups are a great way to connect with alums, or ask your Program Administrator to direct you to a few alums.
4. Student-Alumni Meeting Initiative (SAMI) pairs current students and HGSE alumni for personal and professional development, as well as career and network building. Applications to be part of the initiative must be submitted by Friday, September 8, 2017. More details can be found on this webpage - <https://www.gse.harvard.edu/alumni/get-involved/sami>
5. Send the faculty member an email introducing yourself, and requesting time in their office hours or asking questions about ideas on which you would like their input. Most faculty members on campus are very friendly and willing to give their time to engage with students. But, remember - students must take the initiative to reach out to faculty!

Office Hours



Faculty members have periods of time available for students to meet with them individually, either regarding course work or to speak with them about their academic interests. One or two questions are generally sufficient to guide a 20 minute conversation. Be prepared for the office hour: you will be expected to guide the conversation.

Teaching Fellows (TFs) also have office hours available. You should meet with them regarding course related queries.

*Important: Seek office hours early in the semester TF's are generally easier to schedule appointments with, but it is encouraged to meet with faculty members in person. Be prepared to share what questions you have with the faculty assistant as this is often the "password" to getting an office hour appointment with a faculty member.

Career Development



In the U.S., the job search differs in many ways from other countries. It is important to be as mindful of your career, as your academic studies. There are ways to combine both academic success with searching and applying to positions. You will be starting to apply for positions as early as September depending on your sector of interest. Below are key steps you can take to be successful.

1. Complete the Career Success Workshop

- Have an understanding of the different sectors and the role(s) within education that you would like to see yourself in at the end of your year at HGSE.
- If you do not have the chance to participate, you can learn about the sectors and roles on the Career Resource Center. ([link](#))

2. Search for at least 4 organizations every month, and examine the positions they have open. Study their job descriptions and identify the skills that you may lack or need to develop.

- Take corresponding courses
- Attend workshops that may help you build those skills
- Utilize a variety of databases including LinkedIn.com, Guidestar.org (free through Harvard Library) and Indeed.com

3. Make sure you have a combination of group and independent projects as your coursework. It is helpful as many organizations may want to see individual and group work.

4. Update your Resume

- Each sector has different requirements for resumes. Some may require a one-page resume, while others will have lengthy two-page, plus resumes.
- Get feedback on your resume from the CSO staff or Alumni at Resumania (there is one each semester). Resumania is an event on campus where alumni offer advice on resumes.
- Update your Resume with coursework – do not just write the name of the courses you are taking. Go beyond that. Write at least one line to describe the key take-away from that course OR market your project/paper.
- If you are going to a career or internship expo, carry your resume!

5. Complete your LinkedIn Profile

- Complete your LinkedIn Profile (if you don't have one, make one!)
- Add a Summary Statement
- Add the courses you are taking at HGSE
- Market the projects from your coursework!
- Make sure you add the people you meet at networking events/conferences/expos!
- Tip sheets are available on the Career Resource Center.

6. Complete your profile on Hired and keep looking at their postings.

7. Make use of the Coaching sessions with CSO staff

- Even though they are short 20 min slots, you will find that they are incredibly helpful.
- If you do not have anything specific to ask, schedule one to understand if you are marketing yourself well in your resume and cover letter, or interactions (both in person and over emails).
- Remember to reach out to CSO when negotiating your compensation package with an employer!

8. Keep an eye out for networking events such as the LearnLaunch Conference to make professional networks and market yourself.

9. Attend relevant conferences and sign up for their newsletter for updates.

- Sign up for Student Research Conference at HGSE - it is free for students. Put in a conference proposal. Why do it? It is a great way to practice your presentation skills + make connections + get feedback on your work!
- Sign up for the Alumni of Color Conference, and consider a proposal.

10. Check out these following resources for a successful job-search:

- Videos on understanding types of interviews, preparing for them and following up after one by Valerie Sutton on Lynda.com.
- Additional, very helpful material on Vault Guide which you can log into using your Harvard email.

11. Participate in the Spring EdConnect events Career Treks!

- CSO organizes a career trek during the Spring Break. In the past the treks were to DC and New York. This is a great opportunity to visit organizations and get a feel for them. (Organizations love to have us! AND if you actually visit them, it shows them that you are committed and actually interested in their organization).
- HIVE Study Trek which occurs during Spring break is organized by the Harvard Innovation and Ventures in Education organization – an organization at HGSE that is dedicated to educational entrepreneurship. In the past, HGSE students have visited a number of Silicon Valley startups and industry giants like Google & Facebook and had a chance to interact with senior leadership in education. Fantastic opportunity for networking!

12. Last, but not least, explore and take advantage of the Harvard Innovation Lab

- Yes, it is open to all Harvard Students! Just remember to take your ID!
- It is a great place to work on an idea, or come up with one, and find team mates.
- Utilize the office hours to bounce your ideas with the Entrepreneurs in Residence and get some solid feedback on your idea.

Getting Involved at HGSE: Co-Curricular Life

1. On campus

- There are a lot of events that happen on the Harvard-wide campus every day but thankfully there is an easy way to track them! Visit Harvard Gazette's event calendar or download the Harvard University Mobile App which includes events that are happening around the campus and dining options, shuttle tracker, news, among others.
- Wednesday Language Tables - Every Wednesday, students convene around a variety of languages over in Harvard Yard. Missing home, or missing your language, this is a great opportunity to meet others who speak your native language.

2. Cambridge

- Kayaking on Charles River – a unique way to get a different perspective of all that Cambridge and Boston have to offer. There are a number of different companies along the banks of the Charles who will rent out kayaks for an hourly or daily rate.
- Harvard Campus Tour - The Official Harvard tour departs from the Harvard Information Center, in the Smith Campus Center. The tour is student-led and comprises an outdoor walk (please dress appropriately) through Harvard Yard, providing a history of the university, general information, and a unique view on the student's individual experience. The tour is around one hour long, and completely free of charge (<http://www.harvard.edu/on-campus/visit-harvard/tours>).
- Harvard Museums - The Harvard Art Museums bring to light the intrinsic power of art and promote critical looking and thinking for students, faculty, and the public. Free to HUID holders (<http://www.harvard.edu/on-campus/museums>).
- Mt. Auburn Cemetery - There are many

ways to experience Mount Auburn. It is a wonderful place to walk, to push a stroller, to look for wildlife, or to enjoy a bit of tranquility. (<http://mountauburn.org/>).

- MIT tour.
- Walden Pond - Walden Pond is a lake in Concord, Massachusetts. A famous example of a kettle hole, it was formed by retreating glaciers 10,000–12,000 years ago, an a popular spot among literary greats Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau.

3. Boston

- The Freedom Trail - a 2.5-mile, red-lined route in downtown Boston that leads you to 16 historically significant sites. Discover many of the sites that were important in the American Revolution. Easy to access using the MBTA subway Red Line (<http://www.thefreedomtrail.org/>)



- Museum of Fine Arts - the MFA is one of the most comprehensive art museums in the world; the collection

encompasses nearly 500,000 works of art. Visiting the MFA is free with your Harvard ID. (<http://www.mfa.org/>)

- Fenway Park - Fenway Park is a baseball park located in Boston, at 4 Yawkey Way near Kenmore Square. Since 1912, it has been the home for the Boston Red Sox, the city's American League baseball team. The stadium is the oldest stadium in Major League Baseball.
- Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum – Free admission with your Harvard ID (<http://www.gardnermuseum.org/home/>)
- Museum of Science - The Museum's mission is to play a leading role in transforming the nation's relationship with science and technology. Located a short T ride away, a great place to expand your scientific curiosity. (<https://mos.org/>)

- Boston Public Library – In addition to the wonderful libraries in local communities and at Harvard, you can also get a library card for the Boston Public Library network of libraries.
- New England Aquarium - The New England Aquarium is a global leader in ocean exploration and marine conservation. With more than 1.3 million visitors a year, the Aquarium is one of the premier visitor attractions in Boston and a major public education resource for the region (<http://www.neaq.org/>).
- Samuel Adams Brewery – Located off of the MBTA Orange Line, this is a well-known brewery with a long history that lures locals & visitors with tours, tastings & a gift shop (<https://www.samueladams.com/brewery-and-craft/brewery-tours>).
- Apple picking in the Fall – There are a great number of apple orchards within driving distance. The best time for picking is late September through early November.

Transportation

1. Riding a Bicycle

- Like any other city, there can be busy and congested traffic in the morning and evening in Cambridge and Boston with commuters going to and returning from work. One of the fastest and healthiest ways to travel is by riding a bike. Many Cambridge streets have easily identified bike lanes. To obtain a bike, you could always check out different Facebook housing or market groups and reach out to somebody selling their bike.
- The cities of Cambridge and Boston offer Hubway, a program where you can purchase a membership, and rent their bikes at any time for an hour or longer. Their bike racks are located at multiple locations in Cambridge and Boston. Bikes can be returned to any of the 140+ stations across the network including the 12 supported by Harvard. Harvard affiliates are eligible for a discounted Hubway Annual Membership for only \$70! For more information, see the Commuter Choice website (<http://www.transportation.harvard.edu/commuterchoice/bike/hubway-bike-share-program>)

2. Harvard Shuttle Service

- There are free shuttle services for Harvard students that offer 10 different routes and connect the Harvard campuses in Cambridge and Longwood (the Medical School area). However, they have different service hours and days, so make sure you check them before using them. The list of shuttles with their routes and schedules are available [here](#).
- To utilize the Harvard shuttles, you do not need to show a Harvard ID. For the free M1, you will need to show you Harvard ID and you can bring one guest free of charge.

3. Harvard Evening Van Service

- When getting around campus during the night, there is a free shuttle that runs from 7:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m. everyday. This is a great service that helps students and faculty members get around campus safely during the night. You can request the van using two options: 1) by downloading and using the Rider App or 2) by calling them. For more information, visit their website.

Transportation (Continued)

- How long does it take for the van to come? It usually depends on where the van is when you request it. There are usually two vans operating, and they pick you up as quickly as in 5 minutes or sometimes it can take 30 minutes.
- What area does the van cover? The van can go as far as Porter Square on the north, Central Square on the east, Harvard iLab on the south, and Fayerweather St. on the west. See here for a map.

4. Public transportation (MBTA)

- The MBTA (Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) provides great public transportation in the Greater Boston area and that includes the bus, commuter rail, and subway (simply called the “T”). The transportation card is called a Charlie Card. The best way to get around is to ask for a Charlie card at a subway station.
- The Office of Student Affairs offers a discounted MBTA pass program, available for both the fall and spring semesters. The pass must be purchased for the entire semester, so be sure that you will be using public transportation on a daily/consistent basis to make it makes financial sense. If you are using public transportation less frequently, just be sure to pick up a CharlieCard (see below for more information)

Cost

- One-time ticket (paying without the Charlie card): \$2.75
- Paying with the Charlie card: \$2.25
- Even if you do not anticipate using the public transportation frequently, you should definitely get a Charlie card because it is cheaper than paying with cash and it includes a free transfer to a local bus with a 2-hour limit.
- Monthly pass: \$84.50

- For a complete list of maps, costs, and services, visit the MBTA website.

5. Ridesharing: Uber and Lyft

- These apps are very common transportation methods for students and locals in Boston. The services are generally reliable and there is no shortage of cars in the Cambridge and Boston area. Tip: Download both apps and compare both prices before requesting a car. Oftentimes you will be surprised at the difference in cost of these two apps.

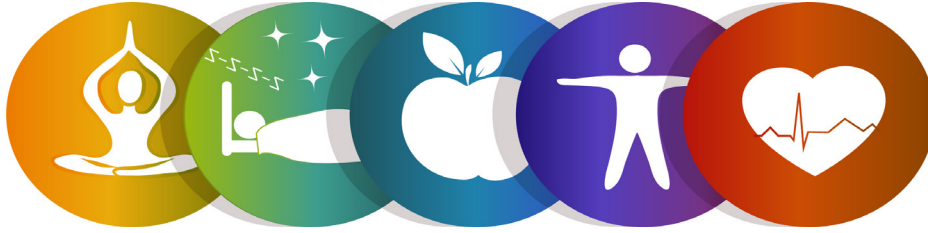
6. Taxis

- Taxis are always an option in Cambridge/ Boston, but they can be more expensive than Uber and Lyft. Taxis are populated all around the city of Cambridge.

7. Renting your own car

- You might want to rent a car for a weekend getaway, but the public transportation in the Boston area is so well done that there is usually a way to get to a place without renting a car. Plus, driving in and out of Boston causes a headache because of its narrow roads, crazy drivers, and costly parking spots.
- Students often rent cars for a day/weekend through Zipcar, which has cars available in different parking lots and you can rent it out for a few hours or days (Make sure to get your foreign driver’s license approved in advance because it takes time) or more traditional car rental services such as Budget, Enterprise, and Avis. Check out their ratings and customer reviews before renting from them.

University Resources: Mental Health, Emotional, Physical, Spiritual Well-being



1. Counseling and Mental Health Services (CAHMS):

- Counseling and Mental Health Services is a part of University Health Services (HUHS), which is provided for all students. You can reach out for concerns such as anxiety, depression, stress, or grief. Do not be afraid or ashamed to reach out for help! It is actually a sign of strength to ask for help!
- In contacting CAHMS for an appointment, you will be asked to do a 20-minute phone consultation to match you with the most appropriate clinician. They may even be able to match you with a clinician who speaks your native language, and we know how comforting that is!
- Location: Smith Campus Center, 4th Floor (617) 495-2042 <https://huhs.harvard.edu/services/counseling-and-mental-health>

2. Harvard University Health Services (HUHS)

- The Harvard University Health Services provides a full range of medical services from primary care to counseling, and referrals for special services. For a full list of services, visit huhs.harvard.edu.
- If you elect to have the HUHS Student Insurance plan, make sure you know what is included in your health insurance and take advantage of the free check-ups and physical exams that your insurance covers. The full plan of services for the Student Insurance can be found at www.huhs.harvard.edu

- There is 24/7 – 365 days a year Urgent Care that is a part of HUHS.

3. Physical Health: Gym membership

- Signing up for the Harvard University gym membership means you receive access to pools, indoor tracks, gyms, and athletic centers. The even greater news is that as an international student, you are probably enrolled in the Harvard University student health insurance, which gives reimbursements for your gym membership fee. In order to get reimbursed, contact the health insurance and submit several paper forms for you to receive up to a \$150 refund on your gym membership fee. You must submit one form for the fall and one for the spring to get the full amount.
- Make sure you take full advantage of the programs offered at the gym. They have classes such as barre, zumba, yoga, hip hop and others and you can take as many classes as often as you want without any extra cost!

How to Enrich Your Social Life at HGSE: 10 Suggestions



1. Be Open-Minded when considering the cultures of other individuals.

Remember that relationships are a two-way street. You cannot expect people to reach out to you without reaching out to them first, even if this is not the case in your culture. During your time at HGSE, make the effort to understand the culture of the other people around you, and where they are coming from.

2. Get involved in a student organization.

Why join a student organization? You might be interested in joining an organization because you would like to contribute your professional experiences, build a skill set that you are lacking and can add to your resume, or contribute to a cause. Most importantly, however, it enriches your relationship with colleagues because you develop friendships with people who are as passionate as you, which is the beauty of the HGSE student body. There is vast array of topics and causes of organizations that might interest you. For a complete list of currently recognized organizations, see here. You also have the option of starting a new student organization of any kind!

3. Remember: You Can't Know Everything.

As an international student at HGSE, you might constantly find yourself wondering what to say when it comes to talking about issues related to the U.S. such as politics, education policy, historical events, or customs.

Remember that it's okay to ask your American colleagues for clarification or explanation. It might also enrich the conversation if you share

about similar political/historical/social issues that your country faces or has faced with your American colleagues.

4. Be Open to Ideas, Learning, and Being Challenged.

That's how you will learn! It is okay to disagree with faculty members and colleagues. It is not a good idea to disagree for the sake of disagreeing, but rather with the intent to understand their position and find value in their argument.

5. Accept Invitations and Make the Effort to Show Up.

As you will soon find out, there are always lots of events, activities, gatherings and happening throughout the year, both on and off campus. Regardless of whether you're a person who prefers a quiet night with a cup of tea and a good book in hand or an outgoing person who likes to hike mountains and play sports, be brave and say yes to invitations even when they seem like they are a bit outside your comfort zone. More often than not, you'll be surprised at how you end up having meaningful conversations. You will be glad you went.

6. Balance your Priorities and Time.

That said (see #5), don't forget to keep a healthy balance between your priorities and strive to pursue the goals you had in mind before coming to HGSE. Don't feel pressured to do what others are doing or be afraid of missing out. What matters is that you stay happy, fulfilled, and healthy throughout your time in school.

7. Venture out of your comfort zone.

When you are in a new environment, it is tempting to stick close to people who are from your country or region. While there's nothing wrong with enjoying that food you've been craving since you landed with people from your country or speaking in your own native language to people who understand your language, make the effort to venture out of your comfort zone. One year in a foreign country is a great opportunity to meet people from other cultures and learn their culture, games, songs, and food, while also sharing the amazing culture you have brought with yourself.

8. Ask for Help.

Despite having excelled as a student and professional in your country, you may find yourself intimidated and less confident in a new environment. Coupled with language and cultural barriers, academic pressure and job search, everything might feel overwhelming and stressful. Breathe deeply and remember that there are a lot of student services ready to support you. So many resources are available to you--don't be afraid to use them.

9. Remember that Everyone Comes from a Different Place and Culture.

Sometimes, as international students who come from many different countries, we tend to see non-international students simply as Americans and we forget that even American colleagues have very different backgrounds. Many of them are coming from different US states and are also navigating a new environment away from home. The diversity of the HGSE population is immense and each of their stories makes the fabric of the HGSE student body colorful. Before placing people into boxes, try to listen to each individual story and share yours as well.

10. Keep in mind that You are Harvard and You belong here.

There is much to learn from Harvard, and equally as much for you to contribute. Sharing your experiences and questions in class, in team projects, as a speaker at an event and so much more, truly enrich every students' experience at Harvard.