

Resources for First-Generation Students

Being a first-generation student is a tremendous accomplishment, but one that often comes with a unique set of challenges. As a first-generation student, you may struggle to feel that the resources and opportunities at Harvard were meant for you. We want to remind you that you do belong here, and to encourage you to take advantage of all the resources Harvard has to offer. While you may be the first in your family, you are not alone. Our office is here to support you at every step of your professional journey. Our advisers are equipped to work with students at each level of their career development from brainstorming summer and post-graduate options to resume building and evaluating job offers. Many of our advisers identify as first-generation themselves and are familiar with the challenges that first-generation students may face. Additionally, OCS hosts a variety of events throughout the year specifically geared toward first-generation students. Examples of some of our past events include: First Gen Graduate School Panel: Managing Graduate School and Finances, Career Life Stories: First-Generation Perspectives, First Gen Belonging at Harvard and Beyond Conference, and many more. We encourage you to stop by Drop-ins (Monday – Friday, 1:00 – 4:00pm) to meet with one of our advisers. It's never too late or too early to start thinking about your next steps.

Below is an overview of possible career-related challenges first-generation students may face, and how our office can help. We recognize that the first-generation experience is a diverse one, and that students' experiences may vary.

- ***First-generation students may benefit from additional support and information as they get started on their professional journeys.***
 - As a first-generation student, you may be wondering where to begin. No matter where you are on your professional path, our advisers can help you explore your interests and skills, set career goals, and prepare you for your next steps. Come to drop-ins or make an appointment to ask questions, learn about our services, and have your resume and cover letter reviewed.
 - Our website is also a great place to get started. Take a look at our online resources for [sample resume and cover letter templates](#), [interviewing tips](#), [networking advice](#), and more. [Crimson Careers](#) and the [Student Employment Office](#) are two helpful starting points for beginning your internship and job search.

- ***First-generation students may not be aware of potential career paths outside of traditional fields, such as law and medicine.***
 - [The way we think about careers and approach the job search](#) has changed dramatically. The shifting work landscape requires a flexible and entrepreneurial approach. It is possible that your eventual job has not even been invented yet! We encourage you to look through our [Career Pathways pages](#) to explore different fields that might interest you.
 - As a first-generation student you may also have practical factors to consider as you weigh career options, such as salary and family obligations. OCS can work with you to find creative ways to combine your passions and practical considerations as you look for meaningful professional experiences. Whether that is through identifying fellowship opportunities or applying to jobs or graduate school, we are happy to brainstorm with you.

- ***First generation students may feel financially constrained when considering internships and study abroad opportunities.***
 - OCS offers a variety of summer planning and funding resources. In addition to OCS funding, there are multiple offices and departments on campus, such as the Center for Public Interest Careers (CPIC), the Institute of Politics (IOP), the Office of Undergraduate Research and Fellowships (URAF), and other Harvard Centers such as the David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies (DRCLAS), Center for European Studies (CES), and the Harvard China Fund that provide funding for study abroad opportunities and for internships, both domestic and international.

- ***First-generation students may experience additional challenges as they transition from college to career.***
 - The transition from college to career can be a challenging process for many students, particularly for first-generation students who may not have a secure safety net. As a [Harvard alum](#), you have full access to OCS services for up to five years after graduation. First-generation students may also experience a resurgence of feelings of doubt and anxiety similar to the way they felt when they first began college. These feelings are common when undergoing a life transition. Remind yourself that you've already done it before by being a first-generation student. Our advisers can be a resource to you and help to advise you as you prepare for post-graduate life.

Internships

- [Future Global Leaders Fellowship](#)
- **Harvard First Generation Program, Student Coordinator** (through the Harvard College Office of Admissions and Financial Aid)

Resources@Harvard

- [Harvard First Generation Program \(HFGP\)](#)
 - Program offered through the Admissions office; also offers workshops on financial literacy and preparing for post-grad life
- [First Generation Student Union \(FGSU\)](#)
 - Student group
- [Harvard First Generation Alumni Network \(HFGA\)](#)
 - Shared Interest Group through the Harvard Alumni Association
- [Bureau of Study Counsel \(BSC\)](#)
 - The BSC offers helpful [handouts for first-generation students](#)
- [Harvard Office of Career Services \(OCS\)](#)
 - For help with summer, post-graduate, and graduate/professional school planning

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