

The primary reason to go to college, of course, is to acquire knowledge and prepare yourself for additional schooling or a future career. Only slightly less important, though, is the social aspect: the camaraderie with fellow students, interaction with professors, the chance to live on your own (or at least away from immediate family). The “full college experience” is the unique combination of social and academic interaction that comes with living on campus.

We consider it to be such an important part of the experience, all freshmen (with a few exceptions) are required to live in [Gilbert Hall](#) during their freshman year.

While this might seem like a tedious requirement at first, chances are good that you’re actually going to enjoy living on campus. Immersing yourself in the vibe of your home for the next four years is just the beginning! There are more than a few benefits to this living arrangement, including these:

1. All incoming freshmen are assigned to live at Gilbert Hall. Built in 2012, it’s the **newest, residence hall on campus**, complete with basic cable television service, a private bath in each room, WiFi, and community spaces for studying and lounging.
2. There’s a **full-size restaurant and retail convenience store** called GrillWorks right in the building. So you can literally grab a bite to eat or a beverage on your way out the door to class. That’s in addition to the traditional cafeteria and the Subway on campus. And inside the Julia Tutwiler Library, Starbucks! Serious fuel for students!
3. Gilbert Hall also features a **full-size laundry facility**, a particularly big perk if Mom and Dad live too far away to haul dirty laundry home every weekend. And while you’re responsible for making your own bed and keeping your bathroom clean, common areas will be taken care of for you thanks to Gilbert Hall’s helpful housekeeping staff.
4. You’ll be right in the **center of campus**, with your farthest class no more than 10 minutes away. Since freshmen have classes in almost every academic building, you’ll find it a convenient walk for all those intro level courses, from literature to physics.
5. You can **bring your car**. Unlike some other college and university campuses, there is only one restriction for freshman with cars: You can’t drive to class; that’s reserved for commuters. This means getting to class on time requires you to simply roll out of bed and walk, rather than driving in circles searching for an empty parking spot.
6. Campus housing is **typically safer** than off-campus alternatives, offering 24-hour campus security, well-lit parking and walking areas. You’re also likely to keep a similar schedule to those around you, so you’ll have fellow students around no matter when your classes happen to be.

7. Contrary to some misconceptions, living on campus **can actually be more affordable** than off-campus alternatives. Considering that campus housing includes room and board, power, water, and cable, the on-campus housing cost is quite reasonable. You won't even pay for WiFi. And you'll save on gas by not commuting from home or a local apartment.
8. Because on-campus living creates a greater sense of community and engagement, students who live on campus **earn higher grades** and are **more likely to graduate**. In fact, a [2010 study](#) showed students who live on campus were nearly twice as likely to make the Dean's List. Those stats also showed that students who lived on campus for two years were 25% more likely to graduate than the students who only lived on campus for their freshman year.
9. It's probably **healthier for you to live on campus**. After all, you'll be walking nearly everywhere you go. But because the UWA campus is a manageable size, you can get your steps in without feeling like you're running a marathon every day. And if you're looking for more exercise, there's a student gym right there in the student union and beautiful nature trails all around campus.
10. College is **just more fun** on campus. Living in an on-campus residence hall gives you a chance to really connect with the people in your classes, participate in after-hours study sessions, or grab a late-night pizza with new friends. You'll also be close by for student activities at night or on weekends.

Probably the best reason to live on campus your freshman year at UWA is the simplest: **It's required**. Of course, UWA does make housing exemptions when necessary, but if living on campus is an option for you, why not take the most convenient, most fun, most advantageous alternative and join us at Gilbert Hall? (Scholarship agreement mandates freshmen and sophomores live on campus.)

For the fall semester, priority is given to new freshmen who apply for housing by May 15. Freshmen can still apply for housing after May 15, but space may be limited. Remember, you have to be admitted to the University of West Alabama and must pay your \$200 [Enrollment Confirmation Fee](#) before you can apply for housing.

So pay your enrollment application fee [online](#) today, so you can get started on your housing application right away!