

Transferring From a Two - to a Four-year College

I Select the Right College for You: Know Yourself and Trust your Instincts

Narrow down the field. Research the options using the following criteria as your guide.

- Location...Urban or Suburban; Near or Far
- Program of Study
- Public or Private
- Religious Affiliation or Secular
- Cost
- Services
- Culture
 - Suggested web sites
 - www.collegeboard.org
 - www.petersons.com
 - www.collegenet.com
 - www.princetonreview.com
 - www.mycollegeguide.org
 - www.collegelink.com
 - www.ed.gov/pubs
 - www.usnews.com
 - Suggested Publications
 - Peterson's Guide to Four Year Colleges, Thompson Publications
 - The Princeton Review: Complete Book of Colleges, Random House Publications

Visit colleges

- Attend an information session
- Take a guided tour
- Roam on your own
- Library
- Cafeteria
- Student lounge areas
- Speak with students and staff at random
- Eavesdrop on conversations
- Attend a class or two (if available)
- Keep a log of your visit: What did you learn?
- Observations
- Impressions
- Don't forget to assess the "culture"; tune into how you feel (gut reaction)

SEND THANK YOU NOTES after any one-on-one meetings.

- Keep them simple. Don't use this as a vehicle to beg for admission!

Compare your data... Make your selections... Get started with applications

- Choose three or four colleges
- Get all the information you need to apply

II Keys to Success in a Competitive Application Process

Follow directions

- Each college makes its own rules; keep the rules straight
- Read all directions carefully
- Seek clarification as needed AFTER YOU READ THE DIRECTIONS
- Make up a chart (calendar format) for each school with requirements and deadlines

Present yourself as a professional

- Dress neatly and appropriately at every contact point even if it is only an informational event. T-shirts, sweats, jeans...flip-flops. etc. are never appropriate
- Be respectful and polite in all you speak and write
- Always arrive 10-15 minutes early for an interview
- Always call if you will not be able to attend or are running late

- Always be prepared with an academic vitae (copies of transcripts) and resume in hand
- Express your ideas clearly and use *proper grammar* in speaking and in writing
- Type rather than write by hand especially if your handwriting is difficult to read
- Explain lapses in education or previous unsuccessful attempts at college BUT don't make excuses
- Select people that know you well as a student (teachers; academic advisors) to write your letters of recommendation; recommendations from co-workers, classmates, clergy, etc, do not substitute although one of these maybe appropriate if it addresses your volunteer/ community service activities; avoid family members or family friends

Get started early... Think transfer from the start...Don't drag your heels

- Meet with a transfer counselor at your two year school (at the latest by the end of your first semester there).
- Be proactive in researching the policies and procedures of schools to which you want to apply.
- Be aware that a college may change their policies during your time in the two year school and you will have to live with the changes. Generally, you will be governed by the policy in place once you matriculate as long as you maintain enrollment...be sure this is in their policy statement.
- Submit all documents before the deadline...the early bird may not always get the worm but it has a better chance of getting there before all the worms are gone!
- Be prepared to provide 'official' documentation.
 - Transcript(s) must be sent directly from the college(s) you attended to the college to which you are applying in a sealed envelope stamped across the seal.
 - Recommendations must be in a sealed envelope with the recommender's signature written over the sealed flap. These are the only "official" documents
- Some colleges may require additional information
 - Copy of catalogue course descriptions or the catalog itself

Grades are the most important factor in successful transfer

- Solid grades (B or better) in challenging courses relevant to your chosen major
- Full-time course of study for several successive semesters generally carries more weight than part-time; full-time is generally 12 credits or more per semester

III Transferring Credits. There is a limit

Common reasons why a course does not transfer

- Course does not fit into the transfer college's framework or is not in your major.
- You are changing your major (and it cannot be given elective credit).
- College does not offer this or a similar course.
- Course at community college (specifically) is offered at 4yr at a higher level.

No one 'universal' policy governs transfer of credit

- Transfer is usually quite individualized. Each college has the freedom to make its own rules. Know the rules. Don't expect to make your own rules no matter how logical they may be.
- Colleges require you to take a certain number of credits at their school.
- This is called the "residency requirement".
- Not all courses may transfer.
- Transition directly into the 3rd year may not happen, even with an earned Associate Degree
- Repeat of courses taken at the 2 year school may be required.
- A course you thought would transfer as a required course may only be given elective credit; therefore, another course must be taken to fulfill the college's requirement.
 - *Example:* student has taken two semesters of English but the transfer college does not see that all the objectives required by their department are fulfilled. This requires that you take another English course...even if some of the content in the new course is redundant.
 - Know if the original decision is final or if there is a petition policy in place when a student disagrees with the course transfer decision. **If you think you did not get all the credit you deserve**, contact Admissions or the Office of the Registrar. If the transfer college has a petition process, adequate evidence will be needed to prove transferability. Collect and save syllabi, text, handouts, papers, projects, etc as you take courses in your 2 year college.

Accept the college's final decision and move forward

IV Paying for Your Education

Maximize financial aid, particularly federal, state, and institutional grants and scholarships:

- Maintain a 3.0 or higher GPA;
- Plan for a fall, rather than a spring, transfer;
- Include public colleges in the list of schools to which you apply;
- Include public colleges, especially those with linked programs such as Mass Transfer, in the list of schools to which you apply;
- Complete ALL financial aid forms (including verification forms) before the schools' deadlines, or, before the Mass Grant deadline, whichever is earlier;
- Respond to ALL communications from your school or from the US Department of Education sent via USPS, e-mail, the school's internal mail system, or text. Failure to respond can result in a significant loss of aid. If you think a communication may be a scam, contact the valid organization directly rather than replying electronically;
- If thinking about taking a break before transferring to the 4-year college, be sure you understand and plan for the effect of this break on your student loans' (if any) repayment schedules. Students no longer enrolled in college enter a one-time 6-month "grace period" before loan repayment is required to begin. Students enrolled at least half-time in college are entitled to an "in school deferment" of repayment of their loans.

V. Adjusting to Your New Academic Community

Know what support services are available

- Such as academic support; disability services;
- Student health and personal counseling services;
- Housing and transportation
- Read the college catalog; student handbook
- Attend all orientation programs for new students
- Visit the Office of the Dean of Students
- Look for brochures, posted information etc.

Meet with the people who provide these services

- Locate the offices and introduce yourself before you need to use them
- It is easier to approach a familiar face in a time of need.

Be a participant

- Check out the student activities and clubs on campus
- Get involved in at least one on-campus organization
- Learning and growing are not limited to the classroom
- Don't let your age dissuade you the "kids" will welcome you