

# TRANSFERRING TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE





Dear Student,

Congratulations on making the decision to further your education and take on a new challenge! If you've decided to transfer to a four-year college (or are seriously considering it), you are embarking on an adventure that is sure to benefit your future.

Transferring from a two-year college to a four-year college means new surroundings, new classmates, new responsibilities, and new requirements. It's exciting—and perhaps a little stressful. But it's nothing you can't handle if you've gotten this far.

This booklet will explain how articulation works and show you what to consider when looking for a four-year college. It will also give you helpful tips on how you can prepare to make a successful transfer. This is an exciting time for you, so turn the page and let's get started!

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# REASONS TO TRANSFER

Transferring from a two-year college to a four-year college is a major decision, and it can, at times, feel overwhelming. Knowing the ways in which attending a four-year college can benefit your future may reduce some of the stress, and help you look forward to the transition.

**HERE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS WHY CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION AT A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE IS A SMART MOVE.**

## **1) MORE MAJORS AND CLASS OFFERINGS**

If you know what you want to study, you can expect a greater number and variety of course offerings at a four-year college, as well as the opportunity to pursue a minor in another area of interest.

If you're still undecided about exactly which career or career field you would like to pursue, transferring to a four-year college can open up a world of possibilities. Four-year colleges have a wide variety of courses and majors to explore, and they have advisors to help undecided students choose an area of study.

## **2) MORE DEGREE OPTIONS**

Community colleges usually offer limited degree programs, with an associate degree being the most common. Four-year colleges offer a number of degrees, including bachelor's, master's, doctorate, as well as many specialized degrees.



### 3) INCREASED ECONOMIC POTENTIAL

Earning a bachelor's degree can benefit your earning potential in many ways. Here are just a few.

**More job opportunities.** It is estimated that in 2020, nearly two-thirds of the available jobs required at least a bachelor's degree.

**Greater income.** Four-year college graduates earn an average of \$20,000 more per year than graduates of two-year colleges.

**Networking opportunities.** From membership in student organizations to volunteer work and internships, attending a four-year college provides opportunities to grow your professional network.

### 4) MORE SERVICES

Four-year colleges offer many valuable services, including learning centers, career services, tutoring, financial aid counselors, recreation centers, health services, and more. The best part is that most of these services are included in your tuition, which means that you don't have to pay extra for them.

### 5) MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT

Four-year colleges have clubs and organizations for just about every sport, hobby, academic pursuit, and career interest you can think of. Getting involved in campus and/or community activities makes it easy to meet new people, make connections in your career field, and develop skills that will help you succeed in both your career and personal life.

# CHOOSING A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE

Attending a four-year college requires a significant investment of both time and money. It is, therefore, important that you consider all of your college options.

Here are some factors to consider.



## MAJORS OFFERED

If you know what you would like to study, the first step is finding colleges that offer your intended major. While most four-year colleges offer popular majors, such as business and nursing, not every college has every major.

## LOCATION

Would you like to attend a college in your home state, or do you want to move to another state or region? Do you prefer the hustle and bustle of a large city, the convenience of a suburb, or the peace and quiet of a more natural setting?

## SIZE

Larger colleges offer lots of majors, programs, and activities. Smaller colleges typically have smaller class sizes and a more personal feel.

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Are you looking for a specific program or activity? Study abroad? Music program? Specific sport? Is there anything else important to you in a college? Campus diversity? Religious affiliation?

## **COST**

The good news is that you have already significantly lowered your college costs by beginning your education at a two-year college! However, attending a four-year college, even for just two years, can still be expensive. Here are a few things to keep in mind:

- ▶ Public colleges usually cost less than private colleges, but private colleges often offer more financial aid.
- ▶ Going to a public college in your home state generally costs less than attending a public college in another state.
- ▶ When considering costs, factor in tuition, fees, room and board, books, transportation, and other living expenses.
- ▶ If you're looking for ways to cut college costs, living at home and commuting to a local college can save you a great deal of money.
- ▶ Scholarships are available for transfer students too! Check the university's website for scholarship opportunities.

## **DO AN ONLINE SEARCH**

Once you have figured out what you're looking for in a college, visit [bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org) or [collegescorecard.ed.gov](http://collegescorecard.ed.gov) and do an online search for the colleges that meet your criteria. For more specific information, visit individual college websites.

## **APPLYING TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE**

Some colleges admit most applicants until spaces are filled. Other colleges are more selective, especially when it comes to transfer students. Look for colleges that accept transfer students with academic records (grades, GPA) similar to yours.

Remember, applying as a transfer student is different than applying as a first-year student. Some colleges require that you apply directly through their website; others accept a version of the Common App.

# UNDERSTANDING ARTICULATION

If you are thinking of transferring from a two-year college to a four-year college, you need to understand *articulation*.

*Articulation refers to the courses offered at your college that a four-year college will accept.* The four-year college agrees to accept these courses because it has determined that the content is sufficiently similar to courses that it offers. Articulation agreements primarily focus on general education requirements.

Never assume that a course will “articulate” simply because the course title or content is similar to one offered at a four-year school. A course only articulates if the four-year college officially approves it.



## TALK TO A TRANSFER COUNSELOR

When talking to a transfer counselor at a four-year college, check to make sure that the courses you’ve taken, and are currently taking, will transfer. Also make sure that they will count toward the courses and credits you need for your four-year degree (if you know what it will be).

If possible, also talk to an academic advisor in your intended academic department. If you’re not yet sure what you intend to major in, you can speak to an advisor who specializes in working with undecided students.



## ARTICULATION AGREEMENTS

**An articulation agreement is a formal contract guaranteeing that courses taken at one college will transfer to another.**

Articulation from a two-year college to a four-year public university within the same state is typically a rather straightforward process. This is because there are articulation agreements between the schools. These agreements have different names in different states. Some examples are 2 Plus 2 Programs, comprehensive articulation agreements, and transfer articulation agreements.

Many states have partnerships between their two-year and four-year public colleges that guarantee admission and course transfer. In these states, students are guaranteed admission to at least one, but not necessarily all, of the state's public four-year colleges.

Articulation is less clear-cut if you're planning to transfer to a college in a different state, or to a private college. Check to see if your two-year college has an articulation agreement with the schools you are considering. Some will not, so you will need to meet with a transfer counselor at the four-year college to carefully determine which courses will transfer, and which will count toward your intended major. These meetings are best conducted in person, but they can be done remotely if necessary.



# TRANSFERRING COURSE CREDIT

Transferring course credit is often not as simple and straightforward as students might think. Four-year colleges have their own rules and requirements, and students are often surprised to learn that one or more of their courses will not transfer.

*Be sure to meet with an academic advisor early to discuss course selections, and to develop a plan for transferring.*

## MARIA: A CAUTIONARY TALE

Maria completed an Associate in Arts (AA) degree at City Community College with the intention of transferring into the teacher education program at a state university. Included in her coursework were two semesters of World History, an online course, and a course taken pass/fail.

Upon transferring to the state university, Maria learned that the College of Education requires two semesters of American History. So even though the two World History courses met the university's general education requirements, they did not meet the education department's major requirements.

To make matters worse, she also learned that the state university does not accept online courses or pass/fail courses.

These oversights meant that Maria had to spend an additional semester at the state university. They also cost her thousands of dollars.





Use the table on this page to help you keep track of whether the four-year colleges you want to apply to have an articulation agreement with your current college.

Keep in mind that, even if a college you are interested in applying to does not have an articulation agreement with your current college, you don't have to take it off your list. Work with a transfer counselor or academic advisor. You might find that most, if not all, of your credits will still transfer.

FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE	ARTICULATION AGREEMENT? Y/N

*Learn the requirements of any four-year college you are considering **BEFORE** you apply for transfer.*

# PREPARING TO TRANSFER

Even if it's not quite time to apply, there are things you can do to prepare for a smooth transfer—and to help ensure your success at your new school.

## GET READY FOR A NEW CHALLENGE

- ▶ **Get the best grades possible now.** Work hard in your classes and finish the time at your two-year college strong.
- ▶ **Strengthen your skills.** Do you need to improve your writing skills, computer skills, organization, or time-management skills? If so, this is the time to work on improving them.
- ▶ **Maintain accurate records.** Create an academic file, and in this file, keep a hard copy of all transcripts and course descriptions from your current college, along with contact information for your professors and instructors (just in case you need to contact them regarding courses they taught).
- ▶ **Be smart with money.** Your spending, budgeting, and borrowing during your college years could impact your future for years to come. Practice responsible money management, and try to complete your education with as little debt as possible.

## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SERVICES

If you need financial assistance, talk to a financial aid counselor at your current college, or at the four-year college you plan to attend. If you are undecided about a major, visit career services and ask for assistance.



## BUILD A GROWTH MINDSET

A growth mindset means you believe that with effort, you can develop and improve your skills and abilities. Having a growth mindset will help you tackle any challenge you encounter. Here are a few ways to work on building a growth mindset.

- ▶ Challenge yourself at your current college by taking courses that are demanding and rigorous. These will help prepare you for the courses you will be taking once you transfer.
- ▶ If something doesn't turn out the way you want, instead of getting frustrated or giving up, think about how you can do it differently next time.
- ▶ Know the power of the word **yet**. Try putting this word at the end of negative statements. For example, "I don't understand it...yet." "I don't know how to do that...yet."

## MANAGE STRESS

Transferring and attending a new college can be stressful. Here are some tips on how to reduce the stress in your life now, and in the future.

- ▶ **Confront your stressors.** Make a list of the things that are stressing you out and determine how each can be dealt with. Having a plan will help you feel more empowered and less overwhelmed.
- ▶ **Relax/meditate.** Close your eyes, imagine a relaxing scene, and breathe deeply. Breathe in, count to four, exhale. Repeat. You might also try a guided meditation app like Meditation Studio or Calm.
- ▶ **Take time for yourself.** Do something that has made you feel calm and relaxed in the past. Listen to music, go for a walk, play with a pet, or spend time in nature.
- ▶ **Get support.** Confide in others when you're feeling stressed. Whether it's a friend, family member, spiritual leader, or counselor, it's much healthier to share your concerns than it is to go it alone.
- ▶ **If it's beyond your control, let it go.** If you are stressed over things you can't change, let those worries go completely.

# MAKING A SMOOTH TRANSFER



Once it's time to transfer, it's normal to feel a little lost as you prepare for and adjust to life on a new campus. As the new kids on the block, transfer students face unique challenges.

The following tips and information will help ensure that you make a smooth, successful transfer to your new college.

## **PARTICIPATE IN TRANSFER PROGRAMS**

Take full advantage of the services and resources specifically designed for transfer students, including Transfer Orientation programs, "University 101" courses, and residence hall communities for transfer students.

## **UNDERSTAND REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

Make sure that you understand the registration procedures well in advance of registration. Meet with your academic advisor ahead of time and talk to current students. They can help you understand the ins and outs of the course registration process.

## **FIGURE OUT THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

Whether your new school uses Blackboard, Moodle, Collaborate, or another learning management system (LMS), its proper use is critical to your academic success. Carefully review the LMS's many features, mobile tools, and third-party apps. If you find the system confusing, reach out to a professor or teaching assistant.

## **GET TO KNOW THE CAMPUS**

Take the time to thoroughly familiarize yourself with your new surroundings. Take a walking tour of the campus and stroll through as many buildings as possible. You may run across a study area, computer lab, theater, gallery, café, workout facility, or other amenity that you may not have known about.

When you are out and about on campus, strike up conversations, ask for directions and advice, and generally make yourself at home. This is as much your school as anyone else's.

## **GET ACQUAINTED WITH YOUR PROFESSORS**

Most professors enjoy sharing their wisdom and knowledge with motivated students. They can provide academic guidance, share valuable career information, and serve as references should you choose to apply to graduate school.

If you're struggling in a class, talk to your professor. If you are enjoying a class and value the knowledge you are gaining, let your professor know that too!

## **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

There will be a direct correlation between how willing you are to make the most of everything your new college has to offer and how well you adjust. Your goal should be to take advantage of the campus experience by fully engaging in as many activities as possible. Familiarize yourself with everything your college has to offer!

## **FINAL WORDS**

College is a period of self-discovery, and a time for taking charge of your life. During these years, look for opportunities to expand your horizons, take on new challenges, and develop new friendships. Enjoy the journey!

# **TRANSFERRING TO A FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE**

Transfer information and tips for  
two-year college students