

Transfer Students: Frequently Asked Questions

Applying to a four-year school after completing two years at a community college? Transferring from one four-year school to another? Whatever your situation, here are the answers to some frequently asked questions about college transfers.

Is it important to make a plan before leaping into a transfer program

Make your transfer intentional which means you need to map out a plan based on information about yourself, your current college, and the one you want to attend. By putting in the time on the front end, you can ensure a happy and successful switch.

Does every college and university accept transfer students?

Most four-year institutions accept transfer students, but some do so more enthusiastically than others. You'll want to check the catalogs of several colleges for their transfer requirements before you make your final choice.

Do students who go directly from high school to a four-year college do better academically than transfer students from community colleges?

On the contrary: some institutions report that transfers from two-year schools who graduate from a four-year school do better than those who started as freshmen. It's really up to the individual student and the effort he or she puts in.

Why is it so important that my two-year college be accredited?

Four-year colleges and universities accept transfer credit only from schools formally recognized by a regional, national, or professional educational agency.

After enrolling at a four-year school, may I still make up necessary courses at a community college?

Transfer requirements vary by school. Some institutions restrict credit after transfer to their own facilities. Others will allow you to take a limited number of transfer courses after matriculation, depending on the subject matter. A few provide opportunities for taking classes on more than one campus.

How far in advance do I need to apply for a transfer program?

Some schools process transfer applications as they are received all year long. With other schools, you must apply during the priority filing period, which can be up to a year before you wish to enter.

Why might a course be approved for transfer credit by one four-year school but not by another?

The beauty of postsecondary education in the United States lies in its variety. Entrance policies and graduation requirements are designed to reflect and serve each institution's mission. Because institutional policies vary so widely, schools may interpret the subject matter of a course from quite different points of view. Given that the granting of transfer credit indicates that a course is viewed as being, in effect, parallel to one offered by the receiving institution, it is easy to see how this might be the case at one university and not another.

Which is more important for transfer, my GPA or my course completion pattern?

Some schools believe that your past grades indicate academic potential and overshadow prior preparation for

a specific degree program. Others require completion of certain introductory courses or a certain number of college credits before transfer to prepare you for upper-division work in your major. In any case, appropriate course selection will cut down the time to graduation and increase your chances of making a successful transfer.

What are important elements to consider in a transfer school?

Extensively research the possibilities before making the move to transfer. Meet some students, talk to the admission office, and try to learn as much as you can about the school. Keep transfer requirements in mind to make sure you don't miss anything you need to take care of.

Also, consider the impact on your academics. You'll likely need to transfer credit from one school to another. Depending on if your credits are accepted or not and what the academic requirements are at your new school, it may take longer to get your degree.