

Take Charge of Your Transfer Success

Preparing for transfer and working toward your bachelor's degree starts on Day 1 of your community college journey. Research shows it's important to:



Make and follow your education plan



Know what college costs and get financial support



Balance your school and personal responsibilities



Find your campus community

Successful transfer students and community college experts suggest steps you can take to make it "through the gate" to university. Keep reading for a checklist of some "to dos" to get you started at each stage of your community college journey, from finding your transfer path (0-15 units), to updating your educational plans (15-30 units), to applying for transfer (30-45 units), to completing all requirements (45-60+ units)



Go through the gate to university!

Complete all requirements (45-60)

Apply for transfer (30-45)

Update your education plan (15-30)

Find your transfer path (0-15)



Find Your Transfer Path (0-15 Units)

Follow your ed plan

- Meet with a counselor to create an education (ed) plan based on the career or major you're interested in
- If you're unsure about what you want to study, ask the counselor how to explore careers and related programs while earning units that count toward transfer
- Enroll in a college success and/or career exploration class
- Learn what the average salaries are for students graduating from different programs at community colleges using [Salary Surfer](#)
- Visit [ASSIST.org](#) to see what courses will transfer within your major; find info about both major-specific and general education (GE) requirements — including the CSU [Golden 4](#) and UC's [IGETC](#)
- Use social platforms like Discord, Reddit, and Facebook to source transfer info and ideas
- Find your transfer center on campus, introduce yourself to the staff, and attend a transfer information session

Know what college costs and get financial support

- Visit your campus Financial Aid office and share that you have a transfer goal; ask what you need to know about getting financial support for both your community college and university education
- Complete a [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) to secure financial aid EVEN IF YOU DON'T THINK YOU QUALIFY; if you are undocumented, complete the [California Dream Act Application](#)
- Check out how much it costs to go to a [California Community College](#) (CCC), [California State University](#) (CSU), [University of California](#) (UC), and [other colleges/universities](#)
- Check out the [California Student Aid Commission's Student Expense Budget](#) to see the total cost students can expect to spend on higher ed in CA
- Remember expenses beyond tuition such as books, food, housing, transportation, and childcare

Balance your school and personal responsibilities

- Keep in mind that students are expected to spend 2 hours of study time for every 1 hour in class
- Think about when and how many classes to take based on your home and work responsibilities; check out night, weekend, online, and hybrid options
- Every college hires students . . . find out about on-campus jobs and/or work study options
- Need books? Ask your professors about open education resources (OER) or ask your peers about links to free online books; also connect with the EOPS and CalWORKS to see if you are eligible for book vouchers and other resources

Find your campus community

- Find your “trusted people” on campus who are invested in your transfer success - an instructor, transfer or general counselor, success coach, advisor, student support specialist, or peer mentor
- Join a transfer-oriented learning community such as Puente or Umoja
- Get involved in a student club to build community with other students



Update Your Education Plan (15-30 Units)

Follow your ed plan

- Choose a major; keep in mind which popular programs might be hard to access and if there are less “impacted” options that still meet your needs and interests
- Meet with your counselor/academic advisor to develop a comprehensive 2-year ed plan that fully maps out all courses required to transfer
- Check with a faculty member in your program area for advice on course requirements needed for your major
- Attend your college’s annual transfer fair to learn about different university options and resources to help you decide which university might be the best fit for you and your interests
- Prioritize completing transfer-level math and English
- Look at [UC Transfer Admission Guarantee](#) and [CSU Associate Degree for Transfer](#) options to see what is needed to “guarantee” a spot at a specific university
- Verify which major requirements (e.g., Calculus for Engineering) you need to complete and make sure you’re taking those classes
- Find ways to “try out” your major through internships, visit a career center or counselor to get information about classes with projects or other hands-on opportunities, job shadows, mentorships, etc.

Know what college costs and get financial support


- Ask a Financial Aid staff member about financial aid restrictions and how to make sure you qualify for federal and state student aid after you transfer
- Interested in what specific university costs? Use this [Net Price Calculator](#) to see what you will have to pay after deducting aid, grants, and loans from the cost
- Learn about different types of financial assistance (including Pell and loans) available for colleges and universities at [Federal Student Aid](#)
- [Use this template](#) to create a financial aid plan and simplify and compare information about costs and financial aid for different colleges and universities

Balance your school and personal responsibilities

- When identifying potential universities, think about location: If you move, how comfortable are you with the distance from home? If you stay home, how will you handle transportation and traffic to and from the university?
- Consider universities with online or hybrid course options; regional or extension centers close to home; and campus supports for working and/or caregiving students
- Bring your family to a transfer information session . . . it’s important that they understand your commitment and how they can best support you!

Find your campus community

- Continue participating in clubs, extracurricular activities, and events that provide transfer information
- Regularly connect with your “trusted people” on campus about their own higher ed journey - including mistakes they made, lessons they learned, and advice they’d give you about your transfer journey
- Connect with faculty in your program and ask about major-specific advice, including additional opportunities on-campus and in the community to explore your program and prepare for upper-division coursework
- Find out if your college has counselors or academic advisors who specialize in certain majors and connect with them about transfer destinations and other requirements



Apply for Transfer (30-45 Units)

Follow your ed plan

- Meet with your counselor/academic advisor to update your comprehensive ed plan
- Keep taking the courses mapped out on your ed plan for transfer in your major for your universities of choice
- Pay attention to your GPA and make sure you're meeting the eligibility requirements at your desired transfer destinations
- Attend transfer planning workshop(s)
- Ask a counselor/academic advisor about transfer application resources on campus and updates on deadlines and events
- When university reps visit your community college campus, ask:
 - How competitive is my major to get into at your school?
 - Am I on track to complete the requirements to transfer to this university?
 - What do you do to welcome transfer students and help them find community?
 - What extracurriculars do you offer?
 - What student supports are available?
- Meet with a counselor/academic advisor to discuss:
 - Which universities you will apply to
 - The specific steps you need to take for each application, requirements you need to meet, essays you must complete
 - All the application deadlines and other milestones that need to be met
 - Whether you've completed or are on track to complete the Golden 4 and/or IGETC requirements
- Submit your applications on time

Know what college costs and get financial support

- Update your [financial plan](#)
- Explore different types of financial support available through the [CSU](#) and [UC](#) systems as well as at private or out-of-state universities
- Ask your Financial Aid office about workshops to help you fill out the [FAFSA](#) or California Dream Act Application and other financial assistance
- Complete and submit the [FAFSA](#) or [California Dream Act Application](#) and any university-specific financial aid forms by the March deadline
- Apply for the [Cal Grant Transfer Entitlement Award](#)
- Ask university reps:
 - Whom do I contact on your campus about financing my education after transfer?
 - How can I reduce the cost of attendance given my financial needs?
 - What financial aid opportunities are unique to your campus and/or available for my specific major and demographic?

Balance your school and personal responsibilities

- For your universities of choice, find out if they provide resources to help you balance personal responsibilities such as caregiving, transportation, and employment
- If you need help juggling school, work, and family, talk to your trusted people on campus about what to do and where to go for extra support; most schools also know that most schools offer free resources and mental health services through the health center

Find your campus community

- Maintain and continue to build your on-campus connections with other students, faculty, counselors/academic advisors, and college staff
- Ask your trusted people to review and give feedback on the essays you must complete for each application



Complete All Requirements (45-60+ Units)

Follow your ed plan

- Complete all courses mapped out on your ed plan for transfer in your major for your universities of choice
- Continue paying attention to your GPA; if you are not doing well in a class, meet with your instructor or counselor/academic advisor right away
- Meet with your counselor/academic advisor to make sure you've completed all requirements
- Walk through acceptance and/or denial letters with your counselor/academic advisor
- Determine the specific steps you need to take when you accept admission to a university and make a plan for meeting all deadlines and submitting all forms and information required for admission and enrollment
- Ask university representatives whom to contact with questions or concerns in the period between accepting and enrolling

Balance your school and personal responsibilities

- Consider which universities best meet your needs and unique life circumstances (e.g., transportation, financial supports, child care)

Know what college costs and get financial support

- Update your financial plan
- Ask your counselor/academic advisor to walk through your financial aid award letters so you can understand what they mean and what to do next
- Ask university reps:
 - What on- and off-campus resources are available to help students with food, housing, childcare, technology, transportation, mental health, and healthcare
 - What on-campus employment opportunities exist that can help you meet your basic needs and support you in enrolling full-time

Find your campus community

- Ask university reps how to connect with alumni from your community college who transferred and get tips for how to make a successful transition
- Inquire about and sign up for orientation, summer bridge program and/or special opportunities and events at your university designed to support and connect transfer students

What to Do No Matter Where You Are in Your Transfer Journey...

Stay connected and informed:

- Log into your campus email and check it regularly
- Follow your community college and universities of interest on social media (FaceBook, Instagram, etc.)
- Regularly check ASSIST.org for up-to-date information on which courses transfer to which universities

If you get off the path, it's never too late to get back on!

Have 60+ units but unsure of your transfer plans?

Left your college before completing your transfer requirements?

You've worked hard! Set up an appointment with a counselor/academic advisor for a graduation check. Ask them to help you determine what GE and major requirements you still need to complete and when you will be ready to apply to university. Establish a plan for getting back on the path toward your bachelor's degree!

Get help:

Many people encounter challenges during their educational journeys. Help is available! If you're struggling in school or off campus:

- Look for a student welcome center or service hub -- a physical location on campus or a virtual spot on your college's online learning platform or website
- Email your instructors and go to their office hours for one-on-one assistance
- Visit the tutoring center and/or form a study group
- Ask your student body association for direction if you have a grievance or a problem you don't know how to solve (e.g., discrimination in class, problems accessing courses, issues with the learning environment)
- Talk to your counselor/academic advisor or other support staff about how to address family or work issues that are making school hard
- Go to the campus health center for wellness services and mental health support
- Ask your "trusted people" about on- and off-campus resources to help with food, housing, childcare, technology, transportation, clothing, and/or emergency funds if you cannot pay your bills

As part of the RP Group's [Through the Gate](#) transfer initiative, this resource was developed in partnership with the [Student Senate for California Community Colleges](#) and transfer center directors across the state

Inspired and informed by Canvas shells created by Scott Cooper, Transfer Counselor, College of the Desert, and Mariana Moreno, Transfer Center Coordinator, Crafton Hills College

Research made possible by generous support from College Futures Foundation

