

Tips for Transferring from a Community College

One of the most popular reasons students choose a community college is that they can eventually transfer credits they earn to a traditional four-year college. The practice is so common that community and four-year colleges essentially work together to make transferring relatively easy. But because policies vary by college and by state, you'll need to be proactive and learn as much about the transfer process as you can. Here are a few things to keep in mind to ensure things go as smoothly as possible.

1. **Plan ahead.** The sooner you start planning to transfer, the more likely you'll leave community college with as many credits as possible under your belt. Keep the transfer process in mind even as you choose a community college. Think about what four-year college you'd like to attend, and investigate which community colleges offer the most favorable transfer agreements. Once you're enrolled, map out a game plan in your first semester to make sure you earn the credits you need by the time you're ready to transfer.

2. **Learn about articulation policies.** Most community colleges have agreements with specific four-year colleges that clearly outline which credits will transfer. Some agreements even guarantee admission as long as you meet requirements for coursework and GPA. Your community college likely has articulation agreements with in-state public colleges, and might also have agreements with out-of-state and private colleges. Some states make the transfer process a bit easier by establishing an articulation policy for the state's entire higher education network. These policies set the general education classes that cover the first two years of college. Students can take these courses at any community college in the state and know the credits will be accepted at any in-state public college.

3. **Consider a transfer program.** Many community colleges offer two-year associate's degree programs that, depending on transfer policies, count as your first two years of college and prepare you to enter a four-year college as a junior. Usually these programs include both general prerequisites as well as electives that will apply toward your future major.

4. **Use your academic advisor.** Meet with your academic advisor early on and let them know what your goals are. Many community colleges actually have designated transfer advisors who are experts on the entire process. If they know which four-year college you plan to transfer to and when, they can help keep you on track as far as earning the appropriate credits and meeting important deadlines for transfer applications.

5. **Keep your grades up.** Just because you're transferring from a community college doesn't mean applying to a four-year school will be any less competitive. You'll still need a good academic track record to get in. And in some cases, you'll need to earn a minimum grade in a community college course in order for the credit to transfer.