

**MAKE  
YOUR  
CREDITS  
COUNT**



**COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
TRANSFER GUIDE**



**NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY**

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## Introduction

If you've decided to get your education from a community college you've made a great decision. The reasons for attending a community college are as varied as the students in attendance. The first year or two of higher education is often a time to develop good study habits and will give a student breathing room in determining a future career path.<sup>1</sup>

Many students see a community college education as an end goal in preparing to embark on a career. In fact, the average growth rate of all jobs by 2020 is just 14 percent, while high-growth jobs requiring an associate's degree will grow by an average of 35 percent. And let's face it—associate's degrees have the shortest payback period. Lower tuition rates coupled with high median earnings on the job means these graduates pay off their tuition in just two years, on average.<sup>2</sup>

Community college is also an excellent way to prepare for further education, like a bachelor's or master's degree. Research shows that community colleges have prepared

more students to earn a higher degree at a four-year college than any other source. Completion rates for earning that degree are greater for those who first attended a two-year college. According to the National Student Clearinghouse, more than 60 percent of the students who transfer from a two-year college will receive a four-year degree.<sup>3</sup>

If you are like most community college students, you plan to transfer to a four-year college. Since many community college students have a full class load and a family to look after—often while working full time<sup>4</sup>—a complicated transfer process can be frustrating. Fortunately, the transfer process has improved over the years, resulting in fewer students taking too many courses—or the wrong courses—to meet requirements. By planning ahead and following the steps outlined in this guide, you can make the most of your community college credits and transfer to a four year school without wasting time or money.

**In many cases, transfer students earn an average of 80 semester units when only 60 semester units are required.<sup>5</sup>**





## The Facts About Transferring

In September 2010, the governor of California signed the Student Transfer Achievement Reform Act (SB1440) into law. This act required state community colleges and California State Universities (CSU) to develop special associate degree programs for students who intend to transfer to four-year institutions. AA-T and AS-T degrees (Associate of Arts-Transfer and Associate of Science-Transfer) were designed to make transfers easier by aligning coursework between community colleges and universities. These programs fulfill basic requirements and guarantee that all credits earned in these programs will transfer to CSU schools.

Transfer programs are available for associate's degrees in business administration, early childhood education, journalism, political science, communication studies, psychology, philosophy, sociology, computer science, English and math, with more in development. By enrolling in one of these programs, students only take classes whose credits are transferable, saving them time and money.

When reading this guide, keep in mind that every case is unique, so discuss your goals with your advisor at your community college. Your advisor will help you determine which credits will transfer and which courses are best for you to complete to reach your educational goals. Learn more about the AA-T and AS-T degree from the [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#) website.

No matter what degree you decide to pursue, note that a critical requirement for admission to the California State University system is completion of classes known as the Golden Four. The Golden Four includes specific, transferrable classes in math, English composition, critical thinking and oral communication.

Many universities outside of the CSU system, including National University, have adopted this standard as well, so it is important for you to complete these Golden Four courses while in community college, no matter where you decide to transfer. Ask your college advisor how you can complete them as soon as possible; if you are weak in either math or English, you may need to take pre-requisites to these courses first.

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### The Golden Four

- **Oral Communication** typically comprises a basic public speaking course; ask if other communication courses will be accepted.
- **Written Communication** is a composition course that emphasizes reading and essay writing as tools for effective communication.
- **Critical Thinking** teaches students to make reasoned conclusions using a process of logic and to persuasively argue for that conclusion.
- **Mathematics** taught at a level above intermediate algebra.

## What is an Articulation Agreement?

Outside of the state system, many colleges have articulation agreements, or negotiated terms with community colleges. These agreements:

- Clarify which courses will transfer with a passing grade or higher (depending on the terms of that particular college).
- Guarantee your credits will transfer if you have earned an associate's degree, satisfying all freshmen and sophomore year general education requirements at the four-year university.
- Specify the community colleges that universities have agreements with on the university websites.

Transfer degrees and articulation agreements were designed to help reduce confusion about transferrable classes. However, private universities each have their own transfer policies, and the state system is still developing their transfer degree programs. With all of this confusion, the best way to prepare is to create a plan.

## ■ A Note for Military Students

When researching colleges, look for one that shows its commitment to military students by being a member of the Yellow Ribbon Program or the Servicemembers Opportunity Colleges (SOC). SOC was created to provide access to education to those in the service. Servicemembers often have a tough time completing their college degrees simply because they may change residence

or deploy at any time. The SOC works with a variety of colleges and the Department of Defense (DoD) to expand and improve education opportunities for servicemembers around the world.

## Military students should look for a college that includes:

- Flexibility in case of a move or deployment
- Dedicated military advisors and a military support program
- A process for getting credit for military education and experience
- A school that provides military scholarships to active duty servicemembers, veterans and their dependents





## Take the First Step

Start planning your transfer at community college right away. Most community colleges not only have a library of university catalogs, but also have counselors to assist you. Community colleges often host at least one annual Transfer Fair event, typically in the fall and sometimes spring. Representatives from various universities come to these fairs to answer questions about their transfer policy. Some university representatives visit community colleges on a more regular basis. Find out from your school's counseling office when these representatives visit your campus.

**The best chance for earning a degree is to attend a four-year school within a year of leaving a two-year institution.<sup>2</sup>**

Next, visit the schools you are interested in attending. Universities offer a wealth of resources to help you make your decision. You should attend an open house and watch webinars or student videos when available. Colleges provide all of these planning tools for free.

**Complete any required classes** as early as possible. Ask about the Golden Four transferrable classes in math, English composition, critical thinking and oral communication, and complete these as soon as possible, particularly if you need to take pre-requisites first.

**Find out which courses will transfer** to the schools you are considering. The more credits that are accepted, the more time and money you save in not having to repeat courses. If significant time has passed from when you completed a class, you will need to confirm that the course is still relevant and valid for transferring.

**The more credits that are accepted, the more time and money you save.**

**Ask the university about accreditation.** Colleges with regional accreditation will more readily accept credits from those that hold the same or similar accreditation, like the [Council of Higher Education Accreditation](#) (CHEA). In California, it is the Western Association of Schools and Colleges Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC-WASC).

**Order your college transcripts early and take them to all meetings with college advisors.**

**The minimum grade point average (GPA)** accepted for transfer is 2.0. Some universities or majors in high demand will require a higher GPA. This can vary from year to year, depending on the pool of applicants for any given academic year. A GPA of 3.0 is generally considered competitive. However, some high-demand programs may require an even higher GPA. Be sure to find out the policy of your prospective university.

**Review scholarship and financial options for transfer students.** Sometimes transfer students are eligible for fewer scholarship opportunities than students who enroll directly from high school. On the other hand, many schools now offer scholarships specifically for transfer students, and some offer scholarships specifically for community college transfer students. Be sure to ask your prospective schools about their scholarship opportunities and financial aid policies for your situation. National University is approved to accept federal financial aid and GI benefits, and offers grants and scholarships to transfer students who qualify.

**You will need to indicate a major when you apply to a university.** It is smart to choose a major early and find out which classes you need to be admitted to that program. Completing certain classes for your major before transferring may be required. Changing a major after you are accepted is completely dependent on the rules of your prospective university, so do not assume this will be easy. Changing your major could be discouraged once you arrive at the university.

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## References

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# A Roadmap from Community College to Your Four-year Degree

Below is a plan for transferring from a community college to a university.

## First Semester

- ❑ Get familiar with your community college transfer center
- ❑ Meet with a counselor at your community college as soon as possible, even if you have not chosen a major. Together, you will create an educational plan to ensure you transfer efficiently so you won't waste valuable time and financial aid
- ❑ Take the required English and math classes right away
- ❑ Find out what financial aid you qualify for by filling out the [FAFSA online form](#)
- ❑ Develop a list of four-year colleges you are interested in by looking at majors offered, locations, class size and other relevant interests
- ❑ Research the transfer requirements for schools of interest; if they are not in the CSU system, find out what their articulation agreements are at [Assist.org](#) for public schools and [AICCU](#) for private schools
- ❑ If you have a target school in mind, draw on the resources it offers, like counseling services, orientation meetings, or a learning center. It will be much easier for you if you use the resources provided than try to figure things out on your own

## Second Semester

- ❑ Check out potential college websites to get familiar with what the school offers and be prepared to ask questions
- ❑ Attend as many college fairs or local open houses as you can
- ❑ Meet with your counselor to confirm that you are still on the educational track that you need to be on
- ❑ Review any guides and webinars provided by the colleges you are interested in to ensure you are registering for the correct and required courses because programs can change from year-to-year
- ❑ Find out the admission application deadlines and submit your application on time; this can be six months to a year in advance of your anticipated transfer date
- ❑ You need to fill out a new FAFSA application each school year. So submit a FAFSA application even before you know what school you would like to attend so that you can get an idea of what you are eligible for. You can learn about ways to pay for school in this guide, [How to Finance Your College Education](#)
- ❑ Research and apply for any scholarships well in advance of transferring



### Third Semester

- ❑ Early in your third semester, visit potential schools, book a tour, or attend an open house. This will give you the opportunity to meet department heads in the field you are pursuing, chat with current and former students, and discuss your educational plan with an admissions advisor
- ❑ Contact admission advisors at your top colleges. One of the most fruitful conversations you will have is that with an admissions advisor. These professionals will help you evaluate what credits will transfer and line you up with financial aid options based on the results of your FAFSA application. They will help develop a class schedule and estimate the cost to attend the school. Their services are free, and they will help determine when you will be ready to attend the school

### Fourth Semester

- ❑ Update your financial aid with the name of the school you have chosen
- ❑ Contact the financial aid department to make sure all required documentation has been provided
- ❑ Check that your new school has your final transcripts

Draw on resources, like counseling services, orientation meetings, or the learning center, at your new school. It will be much easier for you if you use the resources provided to get started on the right path

### What to discuss with an admissions advisor

Use this handy checklist of topics to discuss with university admissions advisors.

- ❑ How many of my courses will transfer
- ❑ Course planning
- ❑ Class schedules
- ❑ Deadlines for applying
- ❑ The number of transfer students they accept
- ❑ Scholarship information for transfer students
- ❑ Financial aid options or transferring aid
- ❑ Start date

Knowing these facts about any school you are considering will help you compare schools efficiently.





A photograph of a modern university building facade. The building features a light-colored, textured stone or concrete surface with horizontal bands of darker material. A large, arched entrance is visible in the foreground. The words "NATIONAL UNIVERSITY" are carved into the stone above the arch. The sky is visible in the upper right corner.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**National University has flexible transfer options and year-round enrollment.**



## About National University

National University has articulation agreements with more than 110 California community colleges. It is regionally accredited to make transferring from accredited, in-state or out-of-state schools easier.

National University is approved for student financial aid by the Department of Education and is part of the Cal Grant program for current and transfer students.

### Scholarships are available for transferring students, including:

- **Transfer to Triumph Scholarship:** for students that have completed at least 30 semester units at a California community college (specific criteria apply).
- **Promising Scholar Award:** for students enrolling in National University directly from a California community college (specific criteria apply).
- **Presidential Tuition Scholarship:** pays up to \$2,500 to undergraduate transfer students with special circumstances (specific criteria apply).

### National University is a fully accredited, nonprofit, private university that offers:

- A flexible one-course-per-month format
- Scholarships, grants and financial aid to those who qualify
- 28 campuses plus online programs

We know that enrolling in a university is a big decision, and we want to provide you with support from the day you start classes through graduation. For questions regarding transferring to National University, call **855-355-6288** to speak with an advisor.

### Helpful links:

- [National University Articulation Agreements](#)
- [National University Open houses](#)
- [National University Financial Aid Webinar](#)
- [California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office](#)
- [ASSIST Online Student-Transfer Information](#)
- [American Association of State Colleges and Universities](#)
- [FAFSA Online Form](#)
- [State Transfer Programs by Community College](#)
- [Council of Higher Education Accreditation](#)
- [How to Finance Your College Education](#)
- [Scholarship Search Tool](#)
- [National University Official Website: NU.EDU](#)

**Thinking of transferring  
to National University?  
Call 855-355-6288  
or visit [nu.edu/transfer](https://nu.edu/transfer)**