

# The Transfer Guide

Let's just be honest...this semester has been a rough one. We have spoken to many of our alumni students and discussed how exhausting and confusing virtual school is. There's a million little things that can AND do go wrong on a daily basis. After a while those little things turn into a huge issue where it leaves you feeling burnt out and defeated. So we first want to start out this blog by saying that we are so proud of you for not giving up. We have seen each of you struggle and fight your way through this season. There WILL be a payoff for your hard work and dedication.

We have heard from several of you who are considering transferring colleges either next semester or next fall. Whether it is due to COVID-19 complications or you are moving on from a two-year to a four-year university to continue your post-secondary education, it can be scary, exciting, and at times an overwhelming process. This decision is made by tons of students every year. In fact, 37.2% of college students end up transferring to another college within 6 years of starting at their original institution.

There are quite a few moving parts that go into transferring college, so here is a step by step guide.

## **Step 1: Analyze Your Main Reason for Wanting to Transfer**

Most students transfer due to three things: social, geographic and academic. The social variable could include disliking your roommates, having trouble making friends, disliking your professors, etc. Before you take the leap, we encourage you to think about how the environment at a new school will impact these variables. Bear in mind that if your primary reason for transferring colleges is a social factor, many of these factors exist on other campuses as well.

Many students who graduate from high school use community college as a stepping stone toward earning a bachelor's degree. In other words, transferring was the plan all along. So now it is time to step into a four-year university to earn that degree.

In all the chaos of COVID-19, students are having to rethink and readjust their academic plans. The virus has impacted the financial situations of many students, meaning that paying higher tuition fees or attending a private institution may no longer be feasible. Some of you may have to work full or part-time jobs until your situation improves. Or may no longer feel safe in your college area or you may choose to stay closer to home to be near family. Many of you have been forced to take college

courses remotely due to campus closures- and a handful of you would not call your experience positive.

Another reason students often consider transferring colleges is poor academic performance. The thinking behind this is that a new environment, with new classes and professors, will lead to better grades- but this isn't always the case. Other students who choose their original school based on their desired major have now changed their mind and end up transferring to another institution that offers a better program for their new major choice.

### **Step 2: Maintain a GPA at or Above the Average Transfer GPA of your Target College**

Your current college GPA will greatly impact your decision on where to transfer to. You should be focused on raising this as much as possible. A low GPA could cost you getting accepted to your new target school and losing financial aid money.

### **Step 3: Transferring College After One Year**

If you are in this situation due to COVID-19 issues, your high school GPA is going to be a factor in your transfer. You will need to make sure you send your high school transcript in along with your current college transcript so that they can align you with classes that you have not yet taken.

### **Step 4: Application Requirements for Transfer Students and your Specific Program**

Application requirements for transfer students vary. Schools require different minimum GPAs, minimum and maximum completed credits, and prerequisite courses. Once you've made a list of colleges you're interested in transferring to, visit their websites to read up on transfer requirements. You'll also need to meet specific requirements for the program you're transferring to. Typically, this means that there are several prerequisite courses you must complete. If you apply to be a business major but haven't taken any business classes, it's going to be hard to convince them that you are a genuine applicant. If you are unsure of what you want to major in, don't freak out. Tons of students enroll as undeclared majors. However, if you know what you want to study and you line up your course selections and application correctly, you will have a much better shot of acceptance. It's best to start planning for a transfer well in advance. This gives you time to do your research, complete requirements needed, and put together an impressive application.

## **Step 5: Be Aware of the Risks of Transferring**

### ***Will your college credits transfer?***

The most important risk is making sure that you don't lose your existing college credits that you have earned. The most likely scenario is that some, but not all, of your college credits will transfer. Additionally, many universities have minimum grade requirements for a course to count for transfer credit. You may also need to take an extra class at your new school in order to satisfy their graduation requirements.

### ***Will you like the college you transfer to?***

If you are enrolled at a college you know exactly how important the people and community are. The best advice that we can give you is to go take a tour of the college. Talk to someone you know who attends there about the classes, dorm life, and community. This will give you real insight to see if this school has what you are missing.

## **Step 6: Write an Amazing Essay**

If the college offers for you to write a personal essay, do it. This could change the trajectory of your college experience. The most important thing to keep in mind about writing your essay is that you keep it short and specific. Think about your reason for transferring. *What do you want to accomplish? How can university help you accomplish these goals?* It's important that this new target school be able to fulfill your biggest wants and needs. If any college can satisfy your requirements, then why should they select you? Your problem and solution should be as specific to the institution as possible. As a rule of thumb in this situation, you should not be able to interchange the target university's name in your essay with any other institution. If your application essay works regardless of the institution, you should consider adding more detail and purpose.

## **Step 7: Have a Long Conversation with Financial Aid**

Finances will, no doubt, play a huge role in your ability to transfer. Make sure you've spoken with financial aid at the school you hope to attend to get a clear picture of what you will receive. Also complete any forms that they may require you to fill out as soon as possible; and as always, ***fill out the FAFSA every year.***

Before making the decision to transfer, do your research. Tour the campus and talk with students and advisors within your major departments. If you're considering transferring because you don't think your current school is the right fit for you or

you're feeling socially isolated, try consulting on-campus counselors- they should be able to help you make an informed decision. If academics is influencing your decision to transfer, you might first consider getting assistance from your professors, looking for study groups to join, and/or hire a tutor. Those still set on transferring who have a GPA below 3.0 or even 2.5 may have trouble getting financial aid.

Many students don't start and end at the same school, and that's okay and often allows students to excel when they find their fit. However, take the time to make sure it's the right decision. If you decide transferring is right for you, put in the work to do your research and strengthen your application, so you can feel confident in your new post-secondary education journey.