

How Do I Transfer From a California Community College to an Out-of-State University?

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Public universities accept out-of-state students because they can charge higher tuition. Transferring to an out-of-state university provides California students a chance to branch out to complete their degree. Public out-of-state universities charge higher tuitions to non-residents, so consider looking for a participating institution of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE). WICHE offers the Western Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE). If accepted, California residents only pay 1.5 times the in-state tuition rate in 14 neighboring states. States that participate with California include Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

Instructions

Things You May Need

- Transcripts (high school and community college)
- College aptitude test scores (such as SAT or ACT)—may be waived if you have college credits
- Letters of recommendation
- FAFSA application
- Financial information (tax returns)

1. Prior to Transfer Application

1) Apply for FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Even if you go through your entire four-year program in California, take advantage of federal funding. As you prepare to transfer out of state, seek out scholarship sources either tied to your prospective university or generic scholarships you qualify for based on stated qualifications such as major or affiliations with particular organizations.

2) Visit campuses out of state you think you may wish to attend that offer programs for the BA or BS program you intend to major in. This not only narrows down the applications you will submit but creates a clear goal for your academic progress. Select a minimum of three colleges you intend to apply to and rank them according to your preference.

3) Ask admissions counselors at these universities or colleges on policies for transfer students. Find out what could make your application competitive aside from your college GPA--they may look at extracurricular activities, high school GPA, SAT and ACT scores and community participation. Find out about foundation courses they require freshmen and sophomore students to take.

4) Take courses you know will transfer to the out-of-state university for your BA degree program. In case you cannot finish your associate's degree at a California community college, this reduces the chance they will reject credits in your transfer application. If you decide to stay in-state, California State University Mentor recommends selecting courses that fill CSU requirements.

5) Get to know your professors--you will need them to write recommendation letters for your transfer application. Visit them during office hours or introduce yourself after class and strike up a conversation. Study hard and participate regularly in the classes of professors you plan to ask for a recommendation down the line, so they can form an early impression of your academic ability.

2. Applying to Transfer Out of State

1) Fill out the applications for the universities or colleges you select by their deadline. If they have a rolling deadline, the earlier you apply the sooner you will find out their decision regarding your application.

2) Submit all related documentation immediately. This includes transcripts (from college and high school), letters of recommendation and often financial information such as tax returns or proof of income if you applied for financial aid. Send these documents as securely as possible. If you send it through the U.S. Postal Service add a signature confirmation--this records the signature of the person who received the package, for extra security.

3) Apply for FAFSA for the upcoming school year or revise your current year's application for midyear transfers (starting in the spring semester). Send the FAFSA report to the schools where you submitted applications.

4) Wait until you receive the decisions from all the universities and colleges you applied to. Some colleges and universities notify applicants of their acceptance and scholarships/funding they receive in the same letter--other colleges may do it a couple weeks after the initial acceptance offer. Unless you receive a dream offer from your first-choice university, give the other universities a chance to tempt you into attending.

Tips & Warnings

- California applicants who apply to WICHE WUE schools need to check the WUE rate box on the application or contact the participating university for instructions.
 - Consider WUE schools and institutions before other states--WUE agreements for reduced tuition saved the average Californian over \$7,600 in tuition for the 2009-2010 school year. Remember to apply early with WUE to increase the chances you receive its tuition reduction scholarships.
 - Look into application fee waivers--depending on your family's financial situation, the college you apply to may waive the entire fee.
 - Try to apply for the fall semester--some colleges and universities offer better funding opportunities as well as support programs for transfer students at the beginning of the current academic year.
 - Do not transfer too often. Transfer students often lose credits when they bounce all over the place. Whichever college or university issues your degree will require you to complete 60 credit hours at its institution. Students who transfer repeatedly will often not graduate in four years.
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References

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- American River Current: THE 'OUT-OF-STATE' STATE OF MIND; Jessica Scharff & Kelsey Wehrels; May 7, 2010.
 - Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: California
 - Santa Rosa Junior College: Guide to Out of State Transfer

Resources

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- CSU Mentor: Tips for Transfer
 - FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid
 - College Board: Find the Right Colleges for You
 - Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education: Students and Parents
 - U.S Department of Education, College Navigator, search by state and major
<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
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