

Should You Go To Community College First?

When you start applying to college, you may be wondering whether starting at a community college and transferring to a four-year university can be a good option for you. Community colleges can provide a great educational foundation for students who don't want to enroll in a four-year school. There are many reasons why you should consider attending a community college first, and in considering these factors, you will be able to discern whether or not it is right for you.

Your Grades Are Too Low

If your grades are too low to be accepted to a four-year university, starting at a community college can help you get the bumps you need to transfer in. The university will take these grades into account and see your progress, which lets you apply and hopefully be accepted after your first year or two. If you decide this is the route you want to take, meeting with an advisor throughout your community college experience is crucial. The transfer requirements for universities are constantly changing, and your advisor can help you stay in the know about what courses you need to take to be considered. Planning early can be your key to success.

Location, Location, Location

If you know where you want to go to a university but don't get accepted on your first try, attending a community college nearby can be a great way to open doors. In addition to being surrounded by the culture, sports, and students you desire, you will be able to foster a closer relationship with the university by enrolling in an affiliated institution. Many schools, like the Florida public universities, have programs with community colleges in the state that allow students to transfer in more easily after they complete two years and the required classes.

Financial Restraints

Let's face it: college is very expensive. You may find yourself in a position where you know you don't have the money to pay for all four years at a university and wondering if there are cheaper ways to achieve a higher education. Community college is indeed cheaper than four-year universities, but they still can cost as much as \$10,000 a year. If you are looking into this option to save money, be aware that it is more difficult to get financial aid at a community college than a four-year university—community colleges have limited resources because they are state funded. In this case, community college is still a good option for you if the careers you are interested in only require an associates degree. Many high-demand occupations hire candidates who have gone only to community college, and exploring your potential career choices before going to college can help you understand whether or not an associates degree will be sufficient.