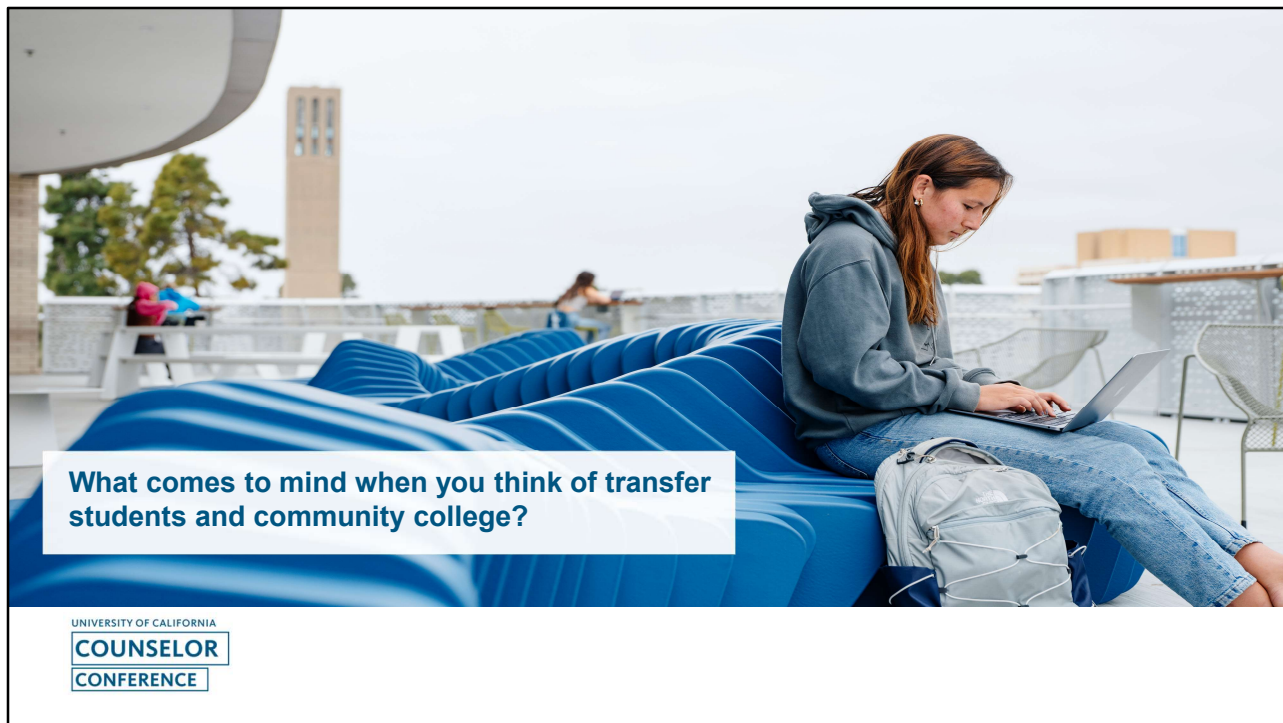

Making it clear: Transfer pathway basics

September 2025

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What comes to mind when you think of transfer students and community college?

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Overview

- Definition of a transfer student
- Dispelling the “stigma” of transferring
- Benefits of transferring
- Transfer requirements
- UC support and resources
- Best practices: Creating a transfer-going culture

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Who is a transfer student

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Who is a transfer student?

A student who has enrolled in a fall, winter or spring term at a college or university after high school graduation.



- A student who enrolls in a “regular” term after high school must apply as a transfer student.
 - Note: The UC definition of a transfer student is a student who has enrolled in college or university coursework in a regular session (fall, winter or spring) after high school graduation. However, the campuses have made an exception to this definition for high school students who graduate mid-year. These students **are** permitted to enroll in college coursework in the spring term and retain their first-year application status. This exception only applies to students who intend to enroll at UC the following fall. They won’t be held to transfer admission requirements.
- This means that students who take a gap year but decide to enroll at a college/university in the meantime must apply as transfer applicants.
- Students cannot pick and choose which college coursework to include - all college coursework must be reported, and students cannot elect to omit their college coursework and “start over” as first-years.
- A transfer student’s transferable college coursework completed while they were in high school (e.g., dual enrollment) will be counted toward the total transfer unit count and transfer GPA calculation.

Who is a CCC transfer student?

Sam graduated from high school in June and plans to take a year in order to work and save money. Sam took community college courses the summer immediately after high school graduation and enrolled at his CCC part-time during the fall. Is Sam a transfer student?

- **YES!**



- While we welcome transfer students from institutions around state, country and the world, we give priority consideration to CCC students applying for admission to UC as juniors.
- CCCs are the only institutions that UCs have articulation agreements with, so the transfer system is set up with CCCs in mind. After all, students transferring from 4-year institutions do already technically have an option to earn a bachelor's degree at their current institutions, whereas CCC students must transfer.
- CCC TR students may have previously attended a non-CCC (out-of-state, international, CA private or even UC or CSU), but at least 30 semester units must be completed at a CCC and the last school of attendance should be a CCC.
- Some UC campuses may or may not consider applicants who are below junior standing or who are in senior standing.

Who is a CCC transfer student?

Alex has taken a few dual enrollment classes while in high school and will graduate with 30 units of UC-transferable credit. Is Alex a transfer student?

- No
- Student is still in high school
- Has not enrolled in a regular term following HS graduation



- This means that students who attend a college or university **summer** term immediately after high school graduation are still considered first-year applicants.
- Students who complete college/university courses while in high school (e.g. dual enrollment) are also still considered first-year applicants, regardless of the number of credits earned - even regardless of whether an associate's degree was earned!
- These students may want to apply as transfers as they believe it means a shorter time to graduation. But these students get the best of both worlds - all transferable credit will be posted which means they may have advanced standing and shorter time to graduation, but they will also still be able to attend first-year orientation and be eligible for first-year housing.
- **Exception:** High school students who graduate mid-year and take college coursework in the winter/spring term are still able to apply as first-year applicants. This is an exception granted by the campuses to the definition of a first-year applicant.

Who is a CCC transfer student?

Lisa graduated from her high school in January and enrolled in her local community college for the spring term. She then decided to pursue work opportunities during the summer. Is Lisa considered a first year or transfer applicant?

- First-year
- Although she enrolled in what is considered a regular term (fall, winter, spring), being a mid-year graduate makes her an exception to the definition of a transfer student.

Note: It is expected that a student in this scenario would have already applied to UC in the fall of their senior year as a first-year applicant. They will not lose that first-year admission status by taking CCC coursework in the spring term immediately following high school graduation, as long as they plan to enroll at UC that following fall.

A note on dual enrollment...

Students who participate in dual enrollment programs should keep the following in mind if they choose to pursue the UC transfer path:

- Course credit and grades earned through dual enrollment are included on their college transcript. Students cannot disregard this credit when applying for transfer admission.
- Grades earned in UC-transferable dual enrollment courses will be calculated in their GPA for admission purposes.
- Transferable courses completed in high school cannot be repeated in college.
- Limitations on maximum enrollment terms and cumulative units may impact continued enrollment and eligibility for financial aid.



Increasingly, high school students are taking college courses to earn college credit before they graduate from high school either through participation in a formal dual enrollment program (e.g., Early/Middle College, CCAP) or individual, self-enrollment. While dual enrollment offers many benefits including the potential to help students get a jump start on college, earn their degrees faster and save money, there are important implications that students and their families and counselors need to know should they decide to pursue transfer admission to any UC campus.

- Course credit and grades earned will be included on their college transcript. Students cannot disregard this credit and “start over.” Students **must** report dual enrollment coursework in the UC transfer application.
- The grades earned in those courses are calculated in the GPA for first-year and transfer admission.
- Transferable courses completed in high school cannot be repeated in college, and transferable credits earned will be applied toward total units for degree completion.
- Dual enrollment students should be aware of limitations on maximum enrollment terms and cumulative units towards degree completion, as well as potential impacts on eligibility for financial aid.

Dispelling the “stigma” of transferring

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Addressing misconceptions about community college and transferring

"Community college is not REAL college"

- The California Community Colleges are junior colleges
- Coursework and instruction at the community college is the same level as 4-year colleges

"Only students that don't get into 4-year schools go to community college"

- Community college is the FIRST choice for many students
- Students choose community college for various reasons, including its affordability, accessibility, and flexibility

"Students can't get into top universities if they go to community college first"

- Transfers DO get into top universities
- UC prioritizes CCC students in the transfer admission process

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The “stigma” of transferring and how to dispel it

How to dispel the stigma surrounding transferring from community college?

- Inform students and their families of the benefits of transferring
- Bring awareness to support programs available to transfers
- Validate students who express an interest in the community college to transfer pathway
- Celebrate students’ decision to attend community college

Benefits of transferring

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Benefits of choosing the transfer pathway

Academics

- Major and career exploration
- Smaller class sizes
- Transfer support programs
- Dedicated course progression pathway options (CalGETC/IGETC)

Affordability

- Lower tuition or free tuition costs
- Minimal housing costs
- Special support programs offering textbook assistance

Flexibility

- Student-life balance and responsibility management
- Ability to stay local
- Softer transition

Support at the community college

Transfer and
career
centers

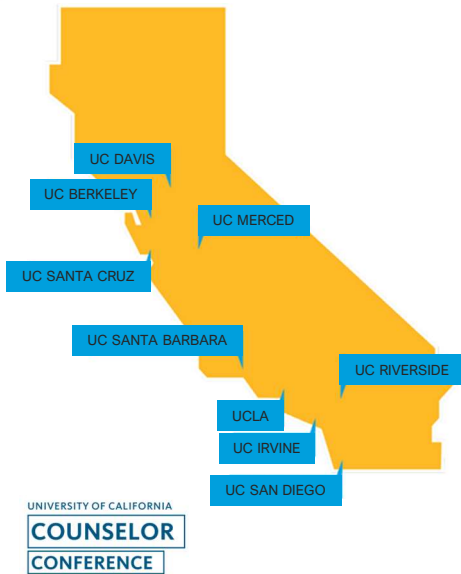
Diverse
support
programs

Tutoring and
learning
centers

Basic needs
and services

Health and
mental health
services

Commitment from UC



- UC prioritizes CCC students in the transfer admission process.
- Nearly **1 in 3 UC** students start at a CCC before graduating from a UC campus.
- **91%** of UC transfer students come from a CCC
- **Over 75%** of transfer applicants from CCC get into UC.



<https://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/sites/default/files/2024-10/uc-transfer-onesheet-2024-Oct-fin.pdf>

UC transfer requirements overview

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Streamlined transfer requirements across UC

Junior-level transfer admission requirements:

- Complete a minimum of 60 semester/90 quarter units of UC-transferable coursework
- Earn at least a 2.4 overall GPA for California residents
 - 2.8 GPA for non-residents
- Complete the UC 7-course pattern
- Complete major preparation requirements (if applicable)*

**Research the campus of interest for more information*



- UC 7-Course Pattern
 - Two transferable courses in English composition;
 - One transferable course in mathematical concepts and quantitative reasoning;
 - Four transferable college courses chosen from at least two of the following subject areas:
 - arts and humanities
 - social and behavioral sciences
 - physical and biological sciences
- If they've completed IGETC, Cal-GETC or campus-specific general education requirements, they may have already satisfied the 7-course pattern

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/preparing-to-transfer/basic-requirements.html>

Minimum requirements vs. selection

Major Preparation

- Certain majors may have required or recommended coursework
- Consider taking courses from other CCCs or online UC-transferable courses if the home CCC doesn't offer a major preparation course
- Take full course sequences at one CCC

GPA

- Meet or exceed the minimum transfer GPA
- For selective majors, a strong GPA is especially important

IGETC/Cal-GETC

- Not required for admission; may be recommended for certain campuses/majors



Just as with first-year admission, meeting the minimum transfer requirements alone is generally not enough to be a competitive applicant for selection.

Competitive students will not only have all required major preparation completed but will also have as many recommended major preparation courses completed as possible. Major preparation coursework may be required by each campus for your intended major. Major preparation is important not only for admission, but to ensure that you are prepared for a successful transition into that major once at UC.

You can view UC's Transfer Pathways for a roadmap to some of the more popular majors. However, it is important that you check with the campuses you are interested in applying to in order to learn which majors are selective at the transfer level and what courses are recommended/required for admission to your intended major. Many majors are highly selective, with average GPAs for admitted transfer students above a 3.0. In these cases, the GPA (overall and in the major) become important factors in selection.

Finally, IGETC (or, beginning fall 2025, Cal-GETC) is not an admission requirement and transfer students can instead choose to complete their lower-division general education requirements at the UC campus they attend. However, for students who don't yet know at which campus they would like to enroll, for majors that do not have extensive major preparation requirements, or for students who are jointly considering CSU and UC, pursuing IGETC/Cal-GETC may be helpful. However, some majors at some campuses may encourage students to complete IGETC/Cal-GETC certification prior to UC enrollment. .

Students should stay in regular contact with UC campus admission representatives for current information on selective majors, and how students can best prepare to be competitive candidates.

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-transfer/how-applications-are-reviewed.html>

UC programs and support for community college transfers

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Transfer programs and resources

Academic resources

- UC Transfer Admission Planner (UC TAP)
- ASSIST.org

UC transfer programs

- Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)
- UC Transfer Pathways and Pathways +
- Transfer Preparation programs



Transfer Admission Planner

The Transfer Admission Planner (UC TAP) is an online tool that can help prospective UC transfer students track and plan their coursework.

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/transfer-planning-tools/uc-transfer-admission-planner.html>

Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)

Nothing feels better than getting a guaranteed place at UC. Which is exactly what TAG offers, at any one of six UC campuses.

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/uc-transfer-programs/transfer-admission-guarantee-tag.html>

Transfer Pathways

Know your major but want to keep your campus options open? Then a UC Transfer Pathway could be the route for students. Transfer Pathways give students a roadmap to prepare for their major and graduate on time from any UC campus.

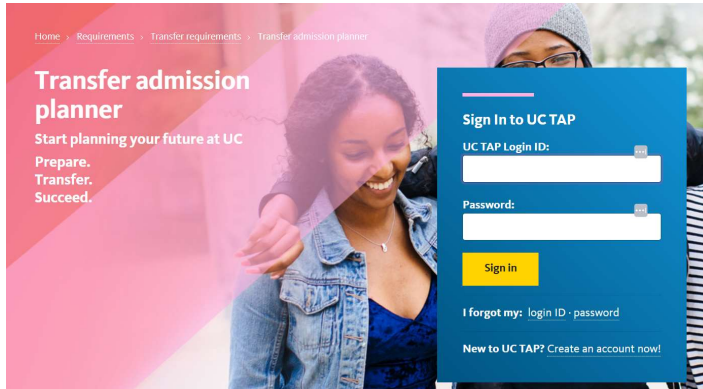
<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/uc-transfer-programs/transfer-pathways/>

Pathways +

Pathways+ combines the preparation of UC's Transfer Pathways majors with the admission guarantee of TAG.

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/uc-transfer-programs/pathways-plus.html>

UC Transfer Admission Planner (UC TAP)

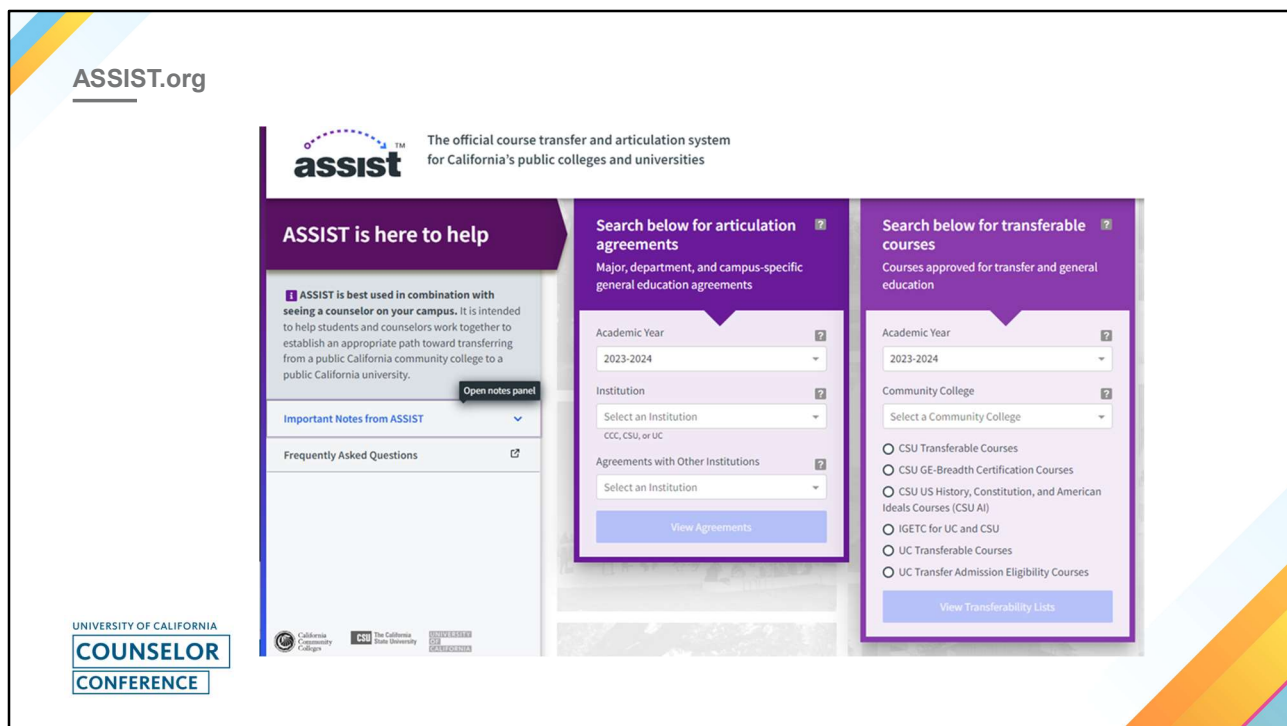


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Benefits of UC TAP

- Tracks progress towards meeting UC transfer admission requirements
- Students can import their courses to the UC application
- Allows UC and community college staff to communicate important information to prospective transfers
- Apply for Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/transfer-planning-tools/uc-transfer-admission-planner.html>



ASSIST is intended to help students and counselors work together to establish an appropriate path toward transferring from a public California community college to a California university.

<https://assist.org/>

Transfer Admission Guarantee (TAG)

Guaranteed admission to 1 UC campus!

Student may only apply for TAG at 1 of the 6 participating campuses. Requirements vary by campus and major.

TAG application filing period:

September 1–30: fall term

May 1–31: winter/spring term

**Note: not all campuses participate in TAG for winter/spring*

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<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/admission-requirements/transfer-requirements/uc-transfer-programs/transfer-admission-guarantee-tag.html>

Transfer Pathways and Pathways+

Transfer Pathways

- Available for students who know which major they plan to pursue but want to keep their UC campus options open.
- Provides students with a roadmap of courses to take while at community college to prepare for their major and on-time graduation from any UC.

Pathways+

- Combines major preparation and timely degree completion of the Transfer Pathway with the security of a transfer guarantee.



Transfer support from UC

Transfer Prep programing

1:1 Advising

Applicant support

Transfer workshops
and events

Summer residential
programs

Peer mentorship

Partnership

Puente Project

MESA

Umoja

Programs and resources after transfer

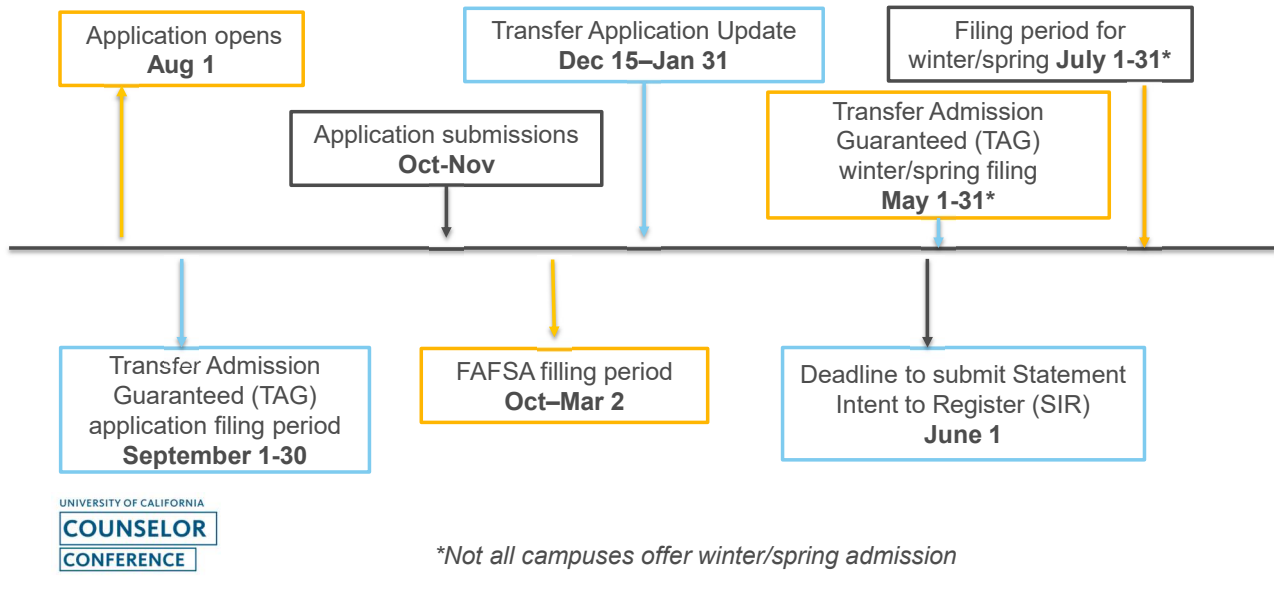
Transfer orientations

Transfer-specific
Housing

Peer mentorship
programs

Transition success
programs and centers

Transfer admission timeline



Best practices: Creating a transfer-going culture

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Best practices: Creating a transfer-going culture

How to establish a positive transfer going culture in high school

Integrate community colleges into discussions about higher education.

Arrange for representatives from community colleges to speak with students about the opportunities available on their campuses.

Involve prospective community college students in campus festivities.

Host workshops that cover transfer admission requirements and the transfer process.

Engage parents in discussions about the transfer pathway.

Encourage high school students to enroll in dual enrollment courses.



Integrate community colleges into discussions about higher education: Provide individualized counseling sessions where counselors discuss community college options with students based on their academic performance, career goals, and financial considerations. This ensures that students receive tailored advice that considers their unique situations.

Host workshops that cover transfer admission requirements and the transfer process: Organize sessions specifically focused on community colleges, admissions criteria, transfer options, and career outcomes.

Arrange for representatives from community colleges to speak with students about the opportunities available on their campuses: Arranging for representatives from community colleges to speak with high school students about the opportunities available on their campuses can significantly enhance students understanding and consideration of transfer options.

Engage parents in discussions about the transfer pathway: Engaging parents in discussions about the transfer pathway is crucial as they play a significant role in supporting their children's educational decisions. Highlight the benefits of the transfer pathway, such as cost savings, academic flexibility, and potential career opportunities. Address common misconceptions or concerns parents may have about transferring from a community college to a four-year institution.

Involve prospective community college students in campus festivities: Celebrating students who choose to attend a community college over a university is an important way for high school counselors to recognize and validate diverse educational pathways. Include prospective community college students in "admit day/decision day" or similar end of the year celebrations

Encourage high school students to enroll in dual enrollment courses: Encouraging high school students to enroll in dual enrollment courses is a great strategy to promote community college and prepare students for their future educational endeavors. Students should be aware that course credit and grades earned will be included on their college transcript and will be calculated into the UC GPA and courses with grades of C or better cannot be repeated in college. They should also be aware of limitations on maximum enrollment terms and cumulative units towards degree completion, as well as potential impacts on eligibility for financial aid.

Best practices: Using transfer-inclusive language



Affirming choices and paths

- "Community colleges offer excellent opportunities for growth and academic success."
- "It's great that you're considering community college. Many students find it to be great option for their academic endeavors."

Highlighting benefits and opportunities

- "Community colleges offer flexible scheduling and a variety of programs to meet diverse needs."
- "Community college provides a strong foundation for your academic and career goals."

Empowering language

- "You can build a strong academic foundation at a community college and transfer to a university if that aligns with your plans."

Additional notes: Stay away from saying "four years" when referring to higher education. For example, "the next few years in college are going to be so exciting" vs. "The next four years are going to be so exciting"

UC's Transfer Hub

Transfer Hub

Includes key transfer information and campus links for transfer students to assist in their planning.



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You can transfer.

Whether you're a high school student looking at colleges, a current community college student exploring your next steps or a working adult building your career, earning a degree from UC is within your reach.



UC gives California community college students first priority over other transfer applicants.

Start with a plan.

These are the 3 things you need to do to get started on your transfer path:

1. Decide what and where you want to study.

You'll have two important choices to make when you're preparing to transfer: what you want to study (think: major) and where you want to study (think: campus). Don't have a major or campus in mind yet? Browse through course catalogs, read course descriptions, visit a campus and find what sparks your interests.

2. Use the tools and resources available.

Figuring out what classes you need to take and when you need to take them can feel overwhelming, but there are lots of resources, from counselors to websites, to help you make sure you're on target to meet your transfer goals.

Transfer resources

3. Follow your progress.

From preparing for your major to taking OI classes to meeting college eligibility requirements—monitoring your progress can help you stay on the transfer track.

Track progress

<https://transfer.universityofcalifornia.edu/>

UC's Transfer Hub is a great resource to share with your high school students who might be interested in the UC transfer route. It provides information and access to both systemwide and campus-specific transfer-related information.

Questions?

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Thank you

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