

Transfer Students: Academic Strategies

Students transferring from a community college to a four-year university sometimes experience “transfer shock” at the new institution. (This may also occur in a student transferring from one university to another.) The most obvious sign of this shock is a dip in academic performance, typically a drop of half a letter grade or more during the first and/or second semester after transfer. Most transfer students typically recover from this transfer shock, but some do not. Transfer students show a higher rate of being put on academic probation and dropping out than so called traditional (native) students.

The following are academic strategies transfer student can utilize to achieve a successful transition:

1. **Understand academic policies** – Each institution has a unique set of academic policies, rules, and guidelines. Familiarize yourself with polices and expectations of the university, the department, and the class.
2. **Attend university-sponsored workshops** – Transfer students who attend orientation workshops receive knowledge that helps ease their adjustment. Consult campus resources for a listing of workshops.
3. **Utilize campus resources** – If you talk with your professors, you will be able to clarify their expectations. If you know their expectations, you will be able to establish goals so that you can meet them. Also utilize counselors, your advisor, the University Learning Center, and other campus resources.
4. **Develop academic confidence** –Academically confident students typically earn good grades. Students who are not academically confident sometimes spend too much time mired in ineffective study habits. Over preparing for a class is caused by a lack of academic confidence, and it may cause stress and lead to lower achievement. There is a fine line here. If your life seems out of balance, if you seem to be preparing endlessly without getting anywhere, or if your habits become unhealthy (not getting adequate sleep), then you may be over preparing.
5. **Join clubs and organizations that interest you** – Adjusting socially is important because your social life affects your academic life and vice versa. If a club or organization interests you, join it. Colleagues in these organizations could prove to be positive academic influences.
6. **Try to maintain balance** – Retain a balance between studying, hobbies, exercise, and social outlets. If you are leaving bad study habits behind, then by all means, leave them behind, but replace them with healthy study habits.

This resource was adapted from the following resources:

- (1) Laanan, F. “Studying transfer students: Part II: Dimensions of transfer students’ adjustment.” *Community College Journal of Research and Practice*. 31 (2007): 37–59.
- (2) Laanan, F. “Transfer student adjustment.” *New Directions for Community Colleges*. 114 (2001): 5-14.