

LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

TRANSFER GUIDEBOOK

*A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR NAVIGATING THE
TRANSFER PROCESS TO 4-YEAR SCHOOLS*

2022-2023

PRESENTED BY THE
HONORS STUDENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

“

*So many of our dreams at
first seem impossible, then
they seem improbable, and
then, when we summon the
will, they soon become
inevitable.*

”

Christopher Reeve

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Introduction

The transfer process may seem like a long and daunting task but, if you manage your time well and stay organized, it will become less stressful and your efforts will very likely be rewarded. Selecting which college to transfer to is one of the biggest decisions you will make. Many Honors students and HSAC members have gone through this process and have been successful with the outcomes. We have compiled this guidebook to help you stay organized and guide you through the transfer process so that you can achieve your academic goals.

If you are planning to transfer to a 4-year school, take some time to thoroughly read this transfer guide. Not everything may apply to you or be interesting; however, this is a product of HSAC (Honors Student Advisory Committee) alumni's experience through the transfer process. Our members have transferred to prestigious schools such as: Amherst, Brown, Cornell, Columbia, Georgetown, Stanford, and Wellesley—among dozens of others. Take advantage of their experience and generosity in sharing their advice. We wish you the best of luck for a successful transfer process!

Since admission officers do not have a chance to meet every applicant, your transfer application should reflect these key things:

- How do you think?
- How do you face adversity?
- What are your aspirations/interests?
- What can you contribute to their school?
- What kind of person are you in an academic setting?
- How will you benefit from attending their institution?

Things you will need:

- Google Calendar/A physical calendar (Mark down deadlines. Time management is essential)
- Google Drive/USB storage (Store useful information and documents)
- Journal/Word Document (Getting thoughts down ahead of time can spark ideas for essays)
- Multiple folders for documents (Stay organized; you will need various official documents when applying for financial aid)
- Mailing labels for your recommendation writers and stamps (You might have to do some mailing, although most applications are managed through the Common App platform)

Transfer Timeline

This timeline is intended for students who are planning to transfer into another school for the fall semester. This process should start in June of the previous year, and end in March of the anticipated transfer year. You won't regret giving yourself ample time to work on your applications.

June - Start generating your college lists, especially focusing on four-year institutions with programs aimed at recruiting top community college or nontraditional students (e.g. Georgetown's Preferred Nomination Program, Smith College, Mount Holyoke College).

July - Start contacting schools for their admissions guidelines, college catalog, financial aid information, all deadlines for housing, financial aid, and so on. Get on their mailing lists. Prepare any tests require, such as the SAT/ACT, or TOEFL for international students. Attend a college transfer fair, and visit the Transfer Services Office (B-215) for many useful resources, such as college catalogs or help with your personal essay.

August - Create a transfer applicant account on commonapp.org and check to see which colleges on your list have an independent, online application system. Focus on the schools where you plan to apply; contacting their admissions office or Transfer Services with your questions. Get in touch with the department of prospective major to see if there are specific departmental admission requirements. Begin working on your general Common App personal statement with an English professor, and an advisor who can offer help as you write your statement.

September - Get your application materials together, and stay aware of the application deadlines for the transfer school(s) to which you are applying. Create a Word document with all the colleges and their deadlines arranged in order. Make sure to revise your Common App personal statement.

October - Start researching financial aid and scholarship opportunities, especially transfer scholarships, and begin to apply. (Refer to our Scholarship Guidebook, available at laguardiahonors.com). Also, revise your personal statement again.

November - Check what supplemental essays are required by each school. Save each essay topic in a blank Word document, including the school in the header. Many are repetitive prompts, so you can recycle your essays and tailor them to each institution.

December - Put together your recommendation packets and submit your requests to professors, advisors, employers, etc. Begin writing your supplemental essay.

Getting Organized

Set aside time in your schedule to organize your transfer process. It can be an hour or two each day depending on your availability. It's very easy to get caught up in other responsibilities, **so managing your time for the transfer process is your commitment to getting things done. Remember: This is an investment for your future!**

- Keep any business cards or contacts that you have from schools that you are applying to, so that if you have questions it'll be easier to find someone to ask.
- There are other students just like you who are transferring to the same schools, so keep in contact with them and share information.
- Speak with your professors at LaGuardia as well. We have a diverse teaching staff who have come from the CUNY & SUNY schools, as well as private colleges and universities. They can give you insight on their experience and help you to decide what path may be the best for you.
- Use a calendar or planner to keep track of all the deadlines for applications and documents that you have to submit. Set up reminders on your phone, or any electronic device that you have, as you go through the process.
- Create a checklist using Excel, or on paper, to keep track of the requirements you will need to complete per college. Also, make sure to prioritize the college requirements by which ones need to get done first.



Increasing Your Chances



Choosing Courses

When registering for classes, you may wonder what courses you should be taking here at LaGuardia to best prepare you for 4-year institutions. You'll want to ensure that not only will your prospective schools accept as many credits as possible, so that you can save time and money, but also that you maximize your educational experience at LaGuardia.

The first step is to check both the curriculum of your prospective major and the general requirements of your institution. Check the transfer admissions section of the school's website for specific information. If you can't find a list of generally required courses, you should then focus on the curriculum of the program or department that you want to enter. Following this curriculum when selecting your courses should ensure that more of your courses will transfer. However, don't restrict yourself to these courses; admissions officers like to see academic flexibility and curiosity. Do not hesitate to call the institution's admission office directly if you have any specific questions.

One of the most important things to consider when choosing a school you're accepted to will be how many credits they will accept from LaGuardia. Before accepting your offer of admission, make sure to ask for a preliminary credit evaluation. This will mean all the difference when it comes down to deciding which schools are worth your time, energy, and money. Admissions officers also want to know that you are prepared to handle the rigor of their courses.

There are two ways these officers determine this: The first is in the level of courses you decide to take at LaGuardia. They will look to see how many 200-level courses you completed. Try to avoid taking an abundance of 100-level courses. Use your electives as an opportunity to fill your transcript with higher-level courses.

Another way of beefing up your transcript apart from maintaining a strong GPA if you are applying to highly selective institutions is by enrolling in honors courses. Every honors course you complete will be specified as honors on your transcript. This shows your effort to push yourself and strive for the highest of quality in your academics. Importantly, honors courses aim to prepare students for the type of academic expectations most senior colleges expect of their students, while also providing various research opportunities.

You can further improve your transcript by earning an Honors Concentration Certificate. To do this you must complete at least 7 honors courses with a C+ or higher according to the Honors curriculum of your major. This might sound like a challenge, but don't let it intimidate you! It's very possible if you start early and it's a great way to surround yourself with like-minded students who take transfer and learning as seriously as you do.

Visit <https://www.laguardiahonors.com> to see the list of Honors courses offered at LaGuardia during Fall 2022.

Program of Study: Conservation Biology

Advisor:

Entered Fall 2021 as a Transfer

Printed: March 26, 2021

TRANSFER COLLEGE INFORMATION

Transfer College	Credit Transferred
1 Fiorello LaGuardia Cmty Coll	60
Total Advanced Standing Credits 60	

Admission Officer: Viskupic, Eric Steven

Date:

This date indicates that all Admissions requirements have been satisfied.

REQUIRED COURSES

EARNED COURSES

CORE COURSE REQUIREMENTS (total 68 credit hours for freshman entrants, 67 for transfer students)

	Offered	Credits	ID	Credits	Transfer College	Semester	Grade	Type
EWP190 Writing and the Environment	F	3	ENG101	3	1			
EWP290 Research Writing and Humanities	S	3	ENG102	3	1			
EFB101 General Bio I: Organismal Bio & Ecol	F	3	SCB202	3	1			
EFB102 General Biology I Laboratory	F	1	SCB202L	1	1			
EFB103 General Bio II: Cell Biology & Genetics	S	3	SCB201	3	1			
EFB104 General Biology II Laboratory	S	1	SCB201L	1	1			
EFB120 Global Environment	F,S	3	SCG250	3	1			
PHY101 Major Concepts of Physics I [1]	F	4		0				
EFB202 Ecol Monitoring & Bio Assessment	CLBS	3		0				
EFB210 Diversity of Life I	F	3		0				
EFB211 Diversity of Life II	S	3		0				
EFB307 Principles of Genetics	F	3		0				
EFB308 Principles of Genetic Laboratory	F	1		0				
EFB311 Principles of Evolution	S	3		0				
EFB320 General Ecology	F	4	SCB265	4	1			
EFB413 Introduction to Conservation Biology	S	3		0				
EFB414 Senior Synthesis in Conservation Bio	S	3		0				
EFB419 Problem Solving Con Biol	S	3		0				
One of the following () choices:		3						
• EFB420 Internship in EFB	F,S			0				
• EFB498 Research Problems in EFB	F,S			0				
FCH150 General Chemistry Lec I	F	3	SCC201	3	1			
FCH151 General Chemistry Lab I	F	1	SCC201L	1	1			
FCH152 General Chemistry Lec II	S	3	SCC202	3	1			
FCH153 General Chemistry Lab II	S	1	SCC202L	1	1			
APM105 Survey of Calculus I	F,S	4	MAT201	4	1			IP
APM391 Introduction to Probability and Statistics	F,S	3		0				
Total Hours				33				

Sample Transfer Credit Report from SUNY ESF

Accomplishments & Achievements

One of the things that colleges want to know about a prospective student is: What significant prizes, awards, research, or contests has the student competed for or won? So it is important to keep a list of accomplishments with you. Be sure to note any awards, honors, competition prizes, or merit scholarships you received; you can also mention such forms of recognition as being on the Dean's List, completing the Honors Track or Concentration, receiving an HSAC Pin of Honor, or having Phi Theta Kappa or any other honor society membership. This is an opportunity to sell yourself to your prospective school. Don't be shy! Put down everything you envision as an achievement, then let the admissions committee decide if it is important. There will also be a section in the Common Application for you to reflect on your accomplishments and achievements. Your list will also come in handy when you are preparing your Letter of Recommendation package (more on this later).



Extracurricular Activities

Colleges want to know how you're spending your time outside of the classroom. They look for students who not only excel academically, but who take on leadership responsibilities and can manage their time effectively. Typically, when people think of extracurricular activities, they imagine a student who's involved in various clubs, organizations, research or is doing some kind of volunteer work. Although these kinds of activities are highly recommended and can only strengthen your application, we would like to expand your idea of what an extracurricular activity could entail.

Think of extracurricular activities as your life outside the classroom. Taking care of family or working long hours can be used to your benefit. If this is you, talk about how this experience has shaped you: Dancing, running a marathon, meditating, and things like drawing or cooking count as extracurricular activities. There is no "right" answer here, and admissions committees are not looking for anything specific. Your life outside the classroom should paint a picture of who you are and what's important to you. Colleges look for quality over quantity. Simply having titles or positions in multiple groups is not necessarily a good thing, especially if you have nothing to show for the titles.

It is far more compelling to be deeply involved and active in fewer meaningful endeavors that truly reflect your passions and commitments. In short, first establish what you are already doing that counts as an extracurricular activity and write in your journal about how it has shaped you and your experiences. However, don't forget to brainstorm how you can do more! Take the initiative to create or get involved with an existing community, club or organization that will reinforce your goals and aspirations. For example, if you're interested in a career in medicine or health care, start volunteering at a hospital or seek out faculty to do research with.

Generating Your College List



Columbia University

A great way to start building your list is to speak with your professors as well as with HSAC members. They can both lend valuable insights on schools they have been to, researched, or share a perspective from someone they know who has gone to a 4-year school. You can also visit the Transfer Services office for further help. Simply talking about your choices and decision-making process can help relieve the stress of choosing from so many options. Ultimately, you will spend a good amount of time researching schools, and developing a precise understanding of what to expect from your college experience is crucial.

There are many factors to consider when choosing an institution to transfer to. These include, but are not limited to, the academic quality, how competitive the acceptance rate is, campus life, impressions after visiting, and the financial accessibility. HSAC organizes transfer events, such as the Summer Transfer Workshop and the Alumni Panel, where LaGuardia graduates return to campus to speak about their transfer experiences and offer insight on how to best tackle the relevant issues. Our alumni have moved on to many different private and public institutions such as Columbia, Georgetown, Mount Holyoke, Baruch, and Smith College and other prestigious universities. These events are a great learning experience, so keep an eye out for the dates of these events on the honors website, laguardiahonors.com, or by following our email broadcasts.

Academic Quality

A quick way to determine the quality of a school's academics is to research the various ranking systems available, such as U.S. News, Forbes: America's Top Colleges, and Unigo. These sites have gathered and compiled ample amounts of material. One popular review site is Niche, which offers the most comprehensive data available on U.S. schools and colleges. They are constantly updating information to produce new rankings and insights, have over 100 million reviews and poll responses, along with clear statistics and comparable grades to help you find the right school.

While the information provided by such ranking systems gives you a brief overview of the caliber of a school, it is important to dive deeper into your research and not follow ranking lists blindly. With every school you choose to apply to, it's important that the institution offers a strong program that aligns with your major. Visiting the school's website for extensive information regarding your major is essential to gaining a better understanding of a school's academics beyond ranking systems.



Acceptance Rate

When creating a list of schools, it is important to consider your chances. Create a diverse list of schools, ranging from what are commonly known as *reach*, *target*, and *safety schools*. Academic credentials hold a fair amount of weight in raising your likelihood of admission to 4-year schools and should not be overlooked when placing your schools in the above categories.

Defining what would be considered a reach, target or safety school depends on you. A reach school is considered one in which your academic credentials fall just below, or even within, the school's range for the average freshman. A highly selective school, such as Stanford or Harvard, would also fall under the reach category. This is not necessarily based on grades, but due to their exceptionally competitive acceptance rate. Bear in mind that even if your academic credentials fall below or within the reach school's GPA average, the potential for acceptance is still a slim possibility. Target schools are your middle ground, and are those where your academic credentials fall safely within the school's range for the average freshman. There are no guarantees, but it is not unreasonable to be accepted to several of your target schools. Lastly, if your academic credentials soar above the school's range for the average acceptance, you may categorize this school as a safety school. You can be fairly certain that you will be accepted to your safety schools. It would be wise to apply to a few schools from each category; many applicants apply to three reach schools, three target schools and two safety schools, but this is not required.

Affordability

It is important to consider the cost of the schools you want to attend, as well as the amount of aid the schools are willing to offer you. Federal/state grants, institutional scholarships, external or private scholarships, and loans can all help fund your education. Finding schools that are willing to finance your education is vital to making your list. Public schools such as the City University of New York (CUNY) and State University of New York (SUNY) are typically cheaper than private schools, but this is not always the case. In fact, if you are a New York resident, you may qualify for the Excelsior scholarship depending on your family's financial situation. This scholarship, along with other combined grants like New York State's Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), allows qualifying students to attend CUNY and SUNY colleges tuition-free. Keep in mind that this covers only tuition and that you would have to look for other means to sustain your housing and meal expenses.

Most SUNY schools offer nothing other than loans in their aid packages, whereas most private colleges offer institutional awards to help fund your education, which easily makes them more affordable for low-income students. One way to find out if an institution is generous with their institutional award is by checking their endowment. The higher the endowment, the more a school is willing to cover—especially if you're in dire financial need. Another thing you can look for is the level of education you can acquire for the lowest cost. Some schools often join programs in which you can pursue higher degrees in less time. For example, John Jay offers a BA/MA program for exceptional students. This program offers students the opportunity to acquire their Bachelor's and Master's degrees together while only paying undergraduate tuition.



Campus Life

Researching a school's social offerings is key to finding a proper fit. Are there any clubs on campus that are of interest to you? Do you prefer a smaller, more intimate classroom setting to an overcrowded lecture hall? What about the school's philosophy? The size of the school, the demographics, dorms, climate, and even the social scene will all have an impact not only on your learning experience, but how you interact with others and, ultimately, how you will perform at your new school. As you research probable schools, remember that this is an environment in which you will call home, study, and meet new people for the next two or more years. Ensuring that you feel supported, safe, and academically challenged will only further your success.



Stony Brook University (SUNY)

Visiting Colleges

As you start narrowing your college choices, make an effort to visit the schools that you are considering. Reading about a school can make it seem like a dream, but you will never know how you feel until you actually visit and interact with people on campus. The NYU Community College Transfer Program (CCTOP) and Columbia University's School of General Studies are examples of local schools that regularly host orientations for prospective transfer applicants, and they are only a subway ride away. Other nearby colleges such as Sarah Lawrence College, Bard College, Smith College, Amherst College, Georgetown, Brown University's RUE program, and Mount Holyoke College offer orientations and interviews for transfer applicants. Make sure to attend the transfer fair that is held once every semester at LaGuardia, where you can meet representatives and admission officers from four-year CUNY, SUNY, and private colleges to discuss admission requirements, financial aid, and scholarship opportunities. HSAC also organizes college visits to universities in the Baltimore/D.C. and Boston regions.

Take advantage of these opportunities to check out the campuses, talk to admissions officers, meet current students and faculty, and even get a chance to be interviewed by the admissions office. Take the initiative to plan visits on your own, or with some peers during open houses organized by the admissions offices (check the websites of your prospective schools for details). Nothing beats experiencing a campus in person to get a feel of whether a college is a good fit for you. If you aren't able to visit the campus in person, you may still be able to get a virtual, and sometimes interactive, tour of the campus on the college's websites. Ensuring that you feel supported, safe, and challenged academically will only further your success.

Schools for Nontraditional Students

What is a nontraditional student?

The term *nontraditional student* refers to a student who did not follow the conventional route of attending college right after graduating high school. Nontraditional students are usually older than the average college student, are financially independent, and have taken gap year(s) during their academic journeys. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, these students are typically over the age of 24. As older adults, many nontraditional students have jobs and/or family obligations, which can be challenging to balance along with attending college. Therefore, it's important to ensure that wherever you go, you'll be given ample help and flexibility as a nontraditional student.

Are there colleges that accept nontraditional students?

Yes! When considering what schools you want to apply to, research the available resources and programs geared toward nontraditional students at each school of interest. Fortunately, many four-year colleges and universities in the United States have specific programs dedicated to the admission and support of nontraditional students, including:

- The Ada Comstock Scholar Program at **Smith College**
- The Frances Perkins Program at **Mount Holyoke College**
- The School of General Studies at **Columbia University**
- The Resumed Undergraduate Education (RUE) Program at **Brown University**
- Division of Continuing and Professional Studies (CAPS) at **Baruch College**
- The McBride Scholars Program at **Bryn Mawr College**

SMITH
COLLEGE

MOUNT HOLYOKE

 COLUMBIA | GS
School of General Studies



BROWN

Baruch COLLEGE

BRYN MAWR
COLLEGE

For in-depth knowledge on navigating the college journey as a nontraditional student, take a look at [**A Different Road To College: A Guide For Transitioning Non-Traditional Students**](#) by Alise Lamoreaux, available for free online!

Academic Documentation

Planning Ahead

Deciding when exactly you intend to transfer from LaGuardia to a four-year institution is important. Some schools will only allow students to transfer in at the beginning of the Fall Semester, while others also accept transfers for the Spring. All schools have very precise application timelines and deadlines that you will need to follow, and will require plenty of time to gather documents and complete your applications.

Generally, you should begin the transfer process one year ahead of your graduation date. For example: if you plan to transfer after spending four semesters at LaGuardia, then you should begin researching schools you're interested in applying to by the time you're completing your second semester and start working on your Common App, including your personal essay and supplemental essays, before the end of your third semester. This is also probably a good time to begin the financial aid application process. You should be planning your campus visits and asking for letters of recommendation by the middle of your third semester. A typical mistake that students make is overlooking the amount of paperwork involved in the transfer process. Both the Common App, and institutions that have individual applications, will require you to supply multiple documents, some of which you must request weeks or months ahead of time.

You will find most of the information you need on the colleges/universities' websites. Each school will have information for transfer applicants under the Admissions tab on their site. While applying for transfer within CUNY is fairly simple and straightforward, applying to private colleges and universities is a considerably more rigorous and demanding process.



You can always reach out to any of the schools you are applying to directly by calling or emailing their admissions or financial aid offices. The admissions office of a school you are applying to will be able to answer specific questions you may have, but will probably not be equipped to walk you through the process. For that kind of support, reach out to your professors at LaGuardia, who are experts at navigating academic bureaucracies. Below is an overview of the most common documents you will need to submit in order to complete your transfer application.

Application fee waiver

Fee waivers can be requested from the Transfer Services office (B-215). There is no application fee for current CUNY students transferring to another CUNY school, and one application covers up to four CUNY schools. For students graduating with an Associate of Arts or Associate of Science degree, and are applying to transfer the following semester, the fee will be waived for a SUNY application, which covers up to four SUNY schools. For private school fee waivers, you need to pick up a form at the Transfer Services office (B-215) and fill it out. After filling out the forms, return them to the Transfer Services office. You will need to wait 1 week to pick up a letter requesting that your application fee be waived, which you then need to mail to the school yourself. For public schools other than CUNYs and SUNYs, it is the same process as private schools. However, some public institutions won't accept LaGuardia's fee waiver and will ask you to provide more information (i.e. tax returns or a written explanation letter). If you are behind on your deadlines, it never hurts to ask Transfer Services if they can have your fee waiver a little sooner, but keep in mind that there might be more students just like you in the same position.



Mid-term Report

Most four-year institutions require a Mid-Term Report that can be found on the Common Application website or on the college website, if the college is not affiliated with the Common Application system. If you are applying for fall admission, you will have to give the forms to your spring professors, who will write a few comments regarding where you stand in the course, as well as the grade that you currently have. Once you get the forms back, it is your responsibility to make copies of the form and to send it to the schools to which you are applying.



College Report

In order to obtain the College Report, first print out the form from the Common Application. Each College Report is specific to the applicant, and includes your Common App ID. Next, bring it to the Transfer Services office to have it filled out. Just like the Mid-term Report, you should take it upon yourself to make copies of this form and send it to the schools to which you are applying.

Transferable Credits

Many community colleges have “Articulation Agreements” with four-year schools. Articulation agreements ensure that upon the completion of an Associate’s degree, the General Education requirements will be satisfied at the partner four-year school. For example, LaGuardia & Cornell University’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) have an articulation agreement. Once you have earned your associate’s degree at LaGuardia, your credits are transferable to CALS, as long as the credits are earned with the grade specified in the agreement. If your schools of preference don’t have articulation agreements with LaGuardia, then you should explore the schools’ websites or contact admission officers about which credits will transfer. Some of LaGuardia’s articulation agreements can be found in the Useful Links Section.

Getting Everything Together

Ordering College Transcripts

Transcripts can be ordered online, in-person, or by mail. In-person can be the best option because postal mail can add additional time to the wait, and there is an added \$2 service fee for online processing. However, doing it online through CUNYFirst is quick and secure.

- When ordering in person, first you must go to the Bursar's Office (C-110) to pay for each transcript (\$7 cash). There is no fee for transcripts sent to CUNY schools. After the payment is made, bring your receipt and identification and proceed to the Enrollment Services Center (C-107). Fill out a transcript form with your name, and the name and address of the recipient school(s). Official transcripts will be mailed out shortly after.

- For online ordering, click the link found under the "Advisement / Transcript" section on CUNYfirst.

**Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, only online transcript orders (PDF) are available.*

High School Transcript

The process of obtaining high school transcripts varies depending on the high school you attended. Some schools may charge for the transcripts and/or require you to submit a form while others may allow you to pick up the transcript for free. The only way to be sure is to call your high school. You will have to send one OFFICIAL transcript — in a SEALED envelope— to each school you apply to.

High School Outside of the U.S.

You must submit your official high school transcripts, along with the official/notarized English translations of your transcripts. These must be the original records sent directly from those high schools to the 4-year institutions; you can not be the middleman in the process. Some universities give your high school the option to submit your transcripts via email.

General Education Diploma (GED)

If you have a GED, you will be required to submit an official copy along with your transcript to each school you apply to. If you received your GED from the New York State, you can order these items by googling: GED Attachment H. Print out Attachment H. (Note: You will need 1 form for each school.) Fill out each of the forms with the address of the college(s) you are applying to. The cost for each copy is \$10.00 and MUST be paid with a certified check or money order payable to the New York State Education Department. Exact instructions (along with mailing address) will be found on the bottom of Attachment H, but you can also find all of this information by checking the Useful Links Section.

SAT/ACT scores

Do you need to submit the standardized test scores? It really depends on the school you're applying to. Some schools don't require SAT/ACT scores for any transfer students, some only ask for standardized test results from students who haven't completed a minimum number of credits, and some require test scores for all applicants. In general, the further away from high school you are, the less schools rely on them. Very selective schools, such as Stanford or Duke tend to care more about test scores. Since the policies vary, you'll need to find out whether the schools you're applying to require you to submit SAT/ACT scores. Start by checking the transfer section of their website.

Keep in mind that taking this exam shouldn't be seen as a burden, rather an opportunity. It can prove to be a beneficial experience that refines your test-taking abilities—especially if you've never taken it

Official English Test Scores

Four-year institutions want to make sure their students are able to understand rapid, idiomatic English, and can express themselves clearly through speech and writing. If your native language, or the primary language spoken in your home is not English, you are required to submit an official English test score, determined after taking a proficiency exam, including TOEFL, IELTS, Duolingo, Cambridge exam, and PTE.

3 Major English Tests:



- Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a standardized test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers wishing to enroll in English-speaking universities. TOEFL is one of the two major English-language tests in the world, the other being the IELTS.

- Test fee: Around \$200.
- Test duration: Around 4 hours.



- International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is the high stakes English test required from non-US. citizens to qualify for international studies, immigration, and/or work. There are two types of the IELTS test: IELTS Academic and IELTS General Training. You must take the Academic test in order to submit your score to a college on top of your transfer application.

- Test fee: Around \$250.
- Test duration: Around 4 hours.



- Duolingo English Test is a newly-introduced online English test, used by leading institutions around the world. You can take the test on your computer, finish it in under 1 hour, and get your results in less than 2 days.

- Test fee: \$50.
- Test duration: Around 1 hour.

*Be mindful of the rules, such as staring at the screen throughout the test, and not using a pen. If you violate the rules, your account might be blocked and you will not be able to take the test again.

Personal Statement

The following information has been adapted from the University of Maryland National Scholarships Office website, as well as from the Cornell and Willamette websites.

A personal statement is your introduction to a selection committee. It is an autobiographical essay of who you are as a potential transfer-student, but more importantly, as a person. It must provide reasonable details about your intellectual journey, drive, and what you hope to accomplish with your education. Furthermore, the personal statement is an analytical element of your application and is often considered to be the hardest component to write. Again, starting early and jotting down notes in your journal can help facilitate the essay writing process.

Strategies for Writing the Personal Statement

The personal statement gives you the chance to be unique, which means there is no specific style to write it. It provides you with the opportunity to demonstrate your character and present your future goals. It requires you to engage in a deep, personal reflection. That can be liberating and it can also be aggravating. Everyone has a story to tell, but we are not all natural storytellers. If you are like most people, your life might lack inherent drama, or it might be drowning in it. This is a time when serious self-reflection, conversation with friends, family and mentors, and creativity can come in handy.

A personal statement should indicate your priorities and judgment, while also demonstrating your critical thinking abilities. It is a declaration of who you are becoming and must show (not tell) your journey in a concise manner. How you think matters just as much as what you think. When you write an essay for class, you dissect scholarly publications, journal articles, and statistics; you arrange, collate, and analyze. You construct an argument with objective, verifiable data. On the other hand, the personal statement comes from inside you, passionate, gutsy, and full of risks. Its composition is organic, a natural growth dictated by an obscure, internal logic. You do not make it up; instead, you listen. Bottom-line: You get real. This means that you have to do some serious soul-searching, and allow yourself to be pushed beyond your comfort zone.

When writing your personal statement ask yourself: Who am I? Who do I want to be? Moreover, what kinds of contributions do I hope to make in the world? Think about the plan of action you are creating right now to achieve your goals. Writing your personal essay will require you to dig deep and ask yourself where you have been. Where are you right now? What have you learned? How have you grown? Also, where are you heading? The reader must be invited to get to know you personally. Bridge the assumed distance of strangers. Make your reader welcome.

Most importantly, the personal statement must display your intellectual growth and how it has informed your academic and professional interests. Finally, it is crucial to make a connection with the reader without sounding as though you are pleading for acceptance. The hardest part is often the first step; so get outside of your head and get drafting. Set in motion the wheels towards an authentic, concrete, and real assessment of who you are and what goals you have set to be successful on your journey of higher education!

Chasing a Dream

By [REDACTED] | Word count: 1539

From a young age, I have been fascinated by nature and wildlife. I grew up watching more wildlife documentaries than cartoons, so when my parents asked about my career choice, it was not a surprise when I answered that I wanted to be a biologist. From all the documentaries I watched, the *Planet Earth* series had the most significant impact on me. It was in this documentary where I first noticed the term “climate change” and learned this issue was impacting all ecosystems. I remember my 10-year-old-self wondering if there would still be enough nature left to explore and learn about by the time I became a biologist. I felt responsible and began thinking about what I could do while I worked on becoming a biologist.

In 2013 my home country’s president, Rafael Correa, scratched the Yasuni-ITT Initiative: an international program to keep the Yasuni National Park from being drilled for oil. In a quick decision, Correa chose to prioritize developing the country’s economy at the expense of preserving the Ecuadorian Amazon, an area where indigenous communities live. At that moment I became fully aware of how certain communities, usually minorities, are disproportionately affected by the consequences of the global climate crisis and ecosystem destruction fueled by the desire for economic gain. I grew more conscientious about environmental issues and eventually learned about the injustice indigenous communities around the world face when protecting their rights to their ancestral territory, and the connection their struggle has with protecting these areas from contamination, deforestation, and loss of biodiversity. As a child, I wanted to study to satisfy my curiosity. Now, I want to learn to help protect the environment and the

Sample personal statement



Personal Brainstorming Exercise

At the start of your transfer essay writing process, free-write based on questions such as:

What is your passion? What is the hardest decision you've had to make? What draws you to your field of study? What are the top three things on your list of priorities, and why are they in that order? What is one goal you must reach to consider yourself successful in your career? What virtues do you live by?

For this exercise, you will answer these questions. Then, free-write a response to the one that appeals to you the most. Your answers to these questions can be used to inform the content of your personal essay. Do not expect to produce the final version after the second or third draft. Understand that this is a long process and this is just the beginning. You may end up not using any of the words you draft, but if you answered truthfully, then you may have learned something about yourself that you can now use as a basis for your essay. If you wait until you have something that is “perfect,” you will never begin! Just write!

Tips:

- Be sure to answer the prompt and address the question given to you.

Always have the prompt in front of you (or at the top of the document you are writing), to refer to as you write along. There is nothing worse than beginning your essay without addressing the prompt or question given to you - this will only imply that you do not know how to follow directions.



- Avoid clichés and familiar metaphors.

The purpose of the personal statement is to distinguish yourself from other applicants.

- Aim to meet the maximum word requirement

This is your opportunity to shine, so use it wisely and efficiently. Make sure to avoid sharing irrelevant information as well.

- Reread, edit, rewrite. Then repeat.

Make it a priority to seek out your advisors, mentors, and professors for feedback when writing your statement because they can, and will, be invaluable resources through the editing and revision processes.

- DO NOT MAKE ANY GRAMMATICAL ERRORS!

Your personal statement must be polished. Do not depend on Microsoft Word or any other digital tool to help you with grammar, sentence structure, transitions, etc. Employ as many human beings as possible to help you edit your essays.

Supplemental Essay

The Personal Statement is often supplemented with additional essays, which are all specific depending on the institution. Some schools have 2-3 (sometimes more) supplemental essays, and some have none, but you should be prepared to write essays beyond your personal statement. When writing these, it is important to keep your Personal Statement in mind—make sure that what you write adds to your personal story, and remains cohesive. Think of all your essays as fragments; they should all connect like pieces of a puzzle to create a picture of who you are. Don't write about wanting to be a Biochemical Engineer in your personal statement, then switch it up to Fine Arts in a supplemental—stay consistent.

All supplemental essays will be accompanied by various prompts. They can range from “Why this institution?” to “What do you care about?” The “why us” essays are where you can discuss information that is particular to each college to which you are applying. For instance, you can write about the college's programs/departments that fit your academic interests, the program's/departments' curriculum, the college's academic and student services, and any other unique features (institutes, internship, and mentoring opportunities, etc.). Your discussion of each college must reflect thorough research of that college's programs, curriculum, and services. Make reference to the specific university or college you are applying to and explain why you feel their program suits your goals best. Most supplemental essays are creative in nature, such as Stanford's “letter to your roommate” prompt. Use these as an opportunity to show a different, less academic side of yourself or simply focus on an explored theme in your personal statement and expand.



Questions to think about:

Explain some specific goals you hope to achieve at the new university. What is the specific major you hope to undertake? Do you want to work with a prominent professor in that department? Is there a class you find very interesting that you want to take? Focus on the future.

Mention how you have benefitted from your old university, in terms of education and growth. Then talk about how you can also grow in the college you apply to, using their resources and opportunities. You can also talk about how you can benefit the institution through your contribution as a student. Talk about specific academic features of the college that you are excited to take part in. Are you interested in a particular program or professor? A specific facility?

Letters of Recommendation



Starting the Recommendation Letter Process

Recommendation letters are a key component of your application, especially if you are pursuing admission into highly selective institutions or are applying for a competitive national scholarship. The following tips for transferring have been gathered from faculty and advisors who are familiar with scholarships, admissions, and writing recommendation letters. **Recommendations illustrate who you are and what kind of student you are to admission officers.** These letters help admissions committees determine what impact you've made in your life, and if you're capable of continuing this trend at their school.

The best letter of recommendation highlights your striking characteristics as a student, inside and outside of the classroom. Before asking anyone to write a letter of recommendation, consider this advice on what a letter of recommendation should contain and how to go about requesting one in a respectful and timely manner. Schools often ask for **two or three recommendation letters from people who know you well, and preferably people who have taught you.** It is best to have three recommenders in mind when going through the transfer process. They should be professors who can describe your academic skills, accomplishments, and personality.

Recommendations Through The Common Application

Most recommendation requests are done through the Common App. Before you can invite and click “Assign Recommenders,” you must complete the Federal Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA) questions. We recommend you authorize your schools and colleges to release and share records. Also, whether you’re using the Common App or not, **we highly recommend you waive your right to access your recommendations and any other documents being sent.** Doing so demonstrates the confidence and trust that you have in your recommenders to write honest assessments.

Institutions pay close attention to how you respond to this question. Then, click on the “Invite Recommenders” link to proceed to invite an academic evaluator to complete the Academic Evaluator form. You will need your professor’s title, name, and email address in order for them to submit this form. Finally, after inviting your recommender, you must now assign them to each college that you want their evaluation form sent to. After receiving the invitation email, your recommender will have the option to submit your letter either online or through the mail. If a college you’re applying to doesn’t use the Common App, simply follow the instructions provided by that particular college. Also, don’t forget to let your professor know that the school follows a different procedure for applications, before sending them a request to submit their recommendation.



Who Should I Request Recommendations From?

This is the critical question; you must take the time to reflect on this very carefully. **FOCUS ON QUALITY!** Perhaps you might have a professor in whose class you have earned an A, but how well does the professor know you?

You want a professor to write a detailed recommendation about your qualities as a student and a professional. They should be able to provide details and anecdotes to support their claims. This professor does not have to be in your major, nor the hardest or most popular instructor on campus. What matters most is that you have built a solid relationship with this instructor, one that will make for an outstanding letter of recommendation.

Obtaining the Best Letters of Recommendations

Initial Steps:

Before you contact a professor, list reasons why you are asking for a recommendation from them, and why they should be able to provide you with a strong one. If you cannot come up with a list of reasons (besides the fact that you took their class), then you probably should not ask this person for a recommendation.

Get to know your professors. If possible, take more than one class with the same professor, or keep in touch with them over the course of your time at the college. Schedule an appointment to meet with your professors. Visit them during office hours. Some teachers write many recommendation letters each year. Even if they know you well, it's a good idea to take some time to speak with them. Make it easy for them to give positive, detailed letter about your achievements and your potential by refreshing their memory. Talk to them about your class participation, mention any challenges you overcame, and give them the information they need to provide specific examples of your work.

Treat your classes like a job: Show up on time, submit work on time, and use appropriate language and behavior.



THEN, To Request a Letter of Recommendation

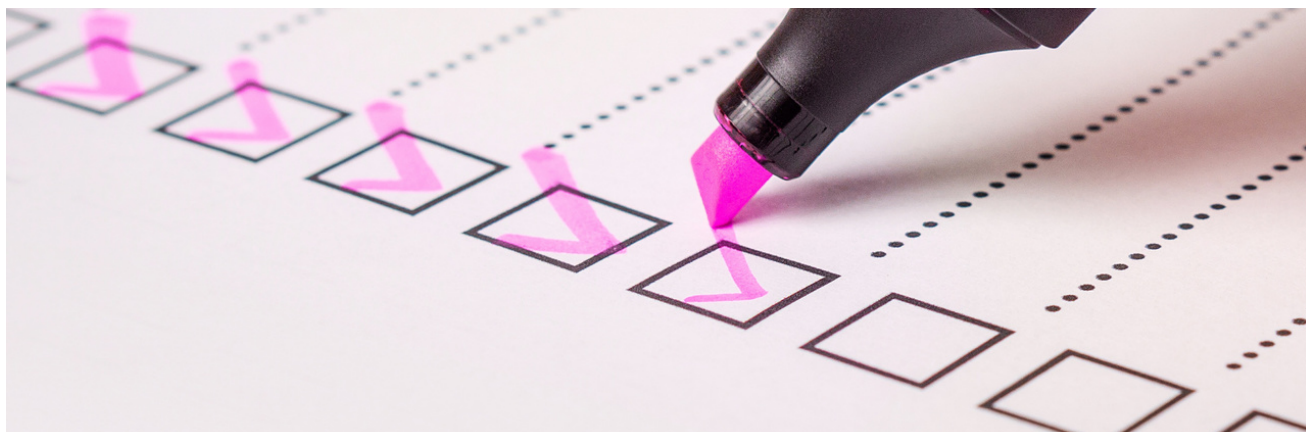
Make sure that your professor is WILLING to write you a recommendation. For example, ask: "Would you be willing to write me a positive recommendation?"

Make sure that your professor can speak about your work and potential in your intended major or profession.

Once you've identified the best people to write your recommendations, you must take the appropriate steps necessary to request your letters. Remember to be mindful of the professor's time and schedule.

Now, what's next after requesting your recommendations?

Give Your Recommenders:



1. Time

Give your professors enough time. You may need to ask a few months ahead of time. After you ask them, you may need to give them gentle reminders, but don't be pesky.

2. A List of Institutions

Have a list of the schools which you are applying to, organized by their due dates. If necessary, provide your recommenders with mailing labels (with the address of each transfer college pre-printed on them).

Note: Common Application recommendation letters are submitted online. Recommenders will only submit one letter for all your transfer colleges that are using this platform.

3. A List of Goals

Include a short list of academic and career goals, and any other information that you would like the professor to add in the letter.

4. Unofficial Transcripts

Unofficial transcripts from LaGuardia and any other college you may have attended, highlighting the classes you took with the professor from whom you are seeking a recommendation.

5. Examples of Work

Submit one or more essays/projects that you produced in that professor's class/es. Remind them of specific work or projects you're proud of.

6. The Option of a Follow Up

Ask for permission to follow up. Ask your professor, "How long do you think you will need? May I follow up with you in two weeks?" Make note of the deadline and remember to follow up. Be sure to remain in contact with your professor regarding the submission of your letters, but remain considerate and courteous. Do not harass your professors about the completion of their recommendation. If you follow the timeline correctly, then checking in with the professor two weeks before the due date should suffice.

7. Application Essay/Entire Application

Check with your recommender. You may want to submit a strong draft of your essay even if it is not your final draft (you can tell the professor that you are working on revisions).

8. A Thank You!

You've gotten a step closer to completing your transfer application. A helpful tip is to show gratitude to your professors who wrote your letter of recommendation by sending them a handwritten thank-you note. This little gesture goes a long way! It demonstrates that you truly value your professor's time and commitment to you. Notify them about the outcomes of your transfer applications, especially since you may need another recommendation for a future program or scholarship. Don't forget to let your professors know where you're going, and tell them how much you appreciate their support.

Financial Aid:

Grants, Loans, Scholarships

Financial Literacy

Figuring out how to finance your education could be one of the most daunting tasks in your transfer process, but don't get discouraged! There are several steps you can take to prepare yourself. You must first understand that financial aid stands for a combination of financial assistance that will cover the cost of tuition, room and board, and other expenses. This umbrella of aid includes both "free money" (money you will not have to repay) and loans (which you must repay). When we refer to "free money" or money that does not need to be paid back, we are referring to scholarships and grants. This type of aid can be awarded by several institutions, including the federal and/or state government, the school that you decide to attend, and/or private scholarships, which are independent of both governments and schools. It is highly encouraged to use the financial aid calculators on the websites of the schools you intend to apply to. Every institution has its own criteria in determining financial aid packages for each student.



FAFSA/TAP

Students can apply for financial aid from the government through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which you should be familiar with. The FAFSA now allows students to begin applying as early as October 1. This form allows the government to estimate the amount of financial assistance you will need for the upcoming academic year based on your parents' income if you are dependent, or your own income if you are independent. Another form of financial assistance, available for eligible New York residents attending in-state schools, is the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP). Students can submit their TAP application only after their FAFSA has been completed.

CSS PROFILE

The College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile is an online profile required by many private universities. However, not all schools use the CSS profile, so be aware of this as you start the financial aid process. **This profile is used to determine the amount of aid given to students directly from the university's scholarship/grants funds.** You can find a link to this application in the Useful Links section.

GRANTS

There are several kinds of grants: **Federal, State, and Private.** In order to receive grants, you must submit the MANDATORY applications before their deadlines, so familiarize yourself with those dates. It should be noted that financial aid works on a first-come, first served basis, which means that those who apply early can receive more assistance, so apply early.

STUDENT LOANS

Loans are a useful, and at times necessary, option when financing your education. Although they are considered to be the least desirable type of financial aid, students often need to consider loans. There are two main types of loans you will encounter when planning your financial aid. **The first is the subsidized loan, which does not accumulate interest. The second type is the unsubsidized loan, which begins to collect interest from the moment the loan is taken out.** Keeping updated records of your loans and important dates can prevent future headaches. It is vital to remember that loans are a form of investment. They allow you to invest in your education, and in most cases, help increase your lifetime earning potential.

THE FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTER

The following is an example of a financial aid award letter, covering one academic year. Remember that each school's award will vary depending on their financial aid policies, budget, and your demonstrated financial need, among other factors (e.g., availability of institutional funds for transfer students in a given year). Familiarize yourself with the content.

Note: This particular student demonstrated high financial need.



Stanford Financial Aid

Cost of Attendance:

The budget includes the actual cost of tuition and certain fees, and a standard amount for housing and meals. Allowances for the typical costs of books and supplies, personal expenses, and transportation to and from campus are estimates of your actual expenses and included for the purpose of determining the full cost of attendance and eligibility for aid.

non-estimated,
required fees

Tuition	\$48,987
Room and Board	\$15,112
Campus Health Service Fee	\$630
New Student Fees	\$775
Personal Expenses	\$2,925
Books and Supplies	\$1,455
Transportation	\$1,098

Total Expenses \$70,982

Scholarships and Grants:

This is gift aid that does not have to be paid back. Aid from Stanford is awarded based on our calculation of your need. If information is still required, these awards are estimates and may change. Details regarding quarterly amounts can be found at [redacted]

institutional scholarship

Stanford Resources	
Stanford Fund Scholarship	\$58,280
Federal/State Resources	
Pell Grant	\$5,920
SEOG Grant	\$2,000
Outside Resources	
Total Grants and Scholarships	\$66,200

Net Cost to you:

Net Cost is Cost of Attendance minus Scholarships and Grants. Additional resources listed below may be available to help you with the Net Cost.

Total Net Cost \$4,782

total cost including estimated expenses

Parent Contribution:

Calculated amount based on information provided on your financial aid application and a standard formula.

Parent Contribution \$0

Student Responsibility:

You are expected to contribute through summer earnings and assets as well as earnings during the academic year. For information about applying for jobs on campus see [redacted]. You may also meet your student responsibility through outside scholarships and/or student loans.

Student Contribution \$2,282
Federal Work-Study Eligibility \$2,500

Loan Programs:

Student or Parent loans may be available to help finance your Net Cost. You may be eligible for additional loans; see details about loan eligibility and processing instructions at [redacted]. Your total student indebtedness at Stanford: \$0 (excluding loans not yet accepted)

Once you've submitted all of your financial aid materials and received an offer of admission from a school, you will receive a financial aid award letter from their Financial Aid office. This letter is a breakdown of the total cost of attendance, your Expected Family Contribution (EFC), and the various sources of funding that will go towards your educational expenses. It's important to understand what the various sections of the award letter mean, so that you are aware of the full costs. While most award letters follow the general format like the example below, some schools may not include charges like tuition insurance fees or transportation costs in the letter. To avoid meager financial aid packages or incurring hidden charges, **be sure to follow up and confirm any questions and concerns with each school's financial aid office when you receive your letter.**

You must first understand that financial aid stands for a combination of financial assistance that will cover the cost of tuition, room and board, and other expenses. This umbrella of aid includes both “free money” (money you will not have to repay), and loans (which you must repay). When we refer to “free money”, or money that does not need to be paid back, we are referring to scholarships and grants.

SCHOLARSHIPS

EXTERNAL/PRIVATE SCHOLARSHIPS

External or private scholarships are one of the most popular options to pay for a 4-year school in which the money that is offered does not have to be repaid. They are summarized as “free money” offered by outside sources. CUNY itself offers more than 1,000 scholarships, awards, and special program opportunities. You can find many scholarships outside of the CUNY system; there are several non-profit organizations, corporations and universities in the United States and internationally which provide different types of scholarships.

INSTITUTIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships refer to both institutionally awarded grants as well as outside scholarships. Depending on an institution's endowment (along with your income level), each private institution is willing to make a commitment to your education. They will award you “free money” determined by your financial need, which is calculated through the FAFSA/CSS. You can utilize the financial aid calculator on your school's website to determine how much you will actually have to pay.

Note: If you are of high need, most financial aid packages will include some form of work-study.

OTHER SCHOLARSHIP CATEGORIES

Need-based Scholarships

Need-based scholarships consider different factors such as income level, cost of living, or the number of children enrolled in school in your household. These types of scholarships are independent of merit scholarships, but you may qualify for both depending on the program.

Merit Scholarships

In order to qualify for a merit scholarship, you must demonstrate excellence in a specific area. Usually defined by your GPA, but some recognize different types of skills and talents.

Athletic Scholarships

Athletic scholarships are given to top athletes who can be part of an athletic team while focusing on their studies. These types of scholarships are usually full-ride scholarships. If you are interested in these type of scholarships, you should visit www.athleticscholarships.net



Some Major Scholarships

Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship

This national scholarship makes it possible for the nation's top community college students to complete their bachelor's degrees by transferring to a selective four-year college or university. The Foundation awards renewable scholarships of up to \$40,000 to approximately 55 students selected annually. Applications open in mid-August; JKC workshops at LaGuardia are offered in early fall.

Campus Contact: Dr. Karlyn Koh (kkoh@lagcc.cuny.edu)



The 2017 JKC Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship winners from LaGuardia, pictured L-R:
Jonathan Morales, Konstandinos Gobakis, Miguel Castillo.

Kaplan Educational Foundation Scholarship

The Kaplan Educational Foundation seeks to eliminate barriers to higher education for overlooked and underserved community college students and develop them as world leaders and advocates for their communities. This scholarship program supports students with a comprehensive array of financial and academic support, transfer admissions, advising, and leadership development.

Campus Contact: Jose Plasencia (jplasencia@lagcc.cuny.edu)

Goldwater Scholarship

The Goldwater Scholarship is open to college sophomores or juniors pursuing STEM majors. Awards can range up to \$7,500 each year. Interested students must be nominated by the Goldwater campus representative on their campus. Nominations are accepted until the last Friday in January.

Campus Contact: Dr. Howard Motoike (hmotoike@lagcc.cuny.edu)

Check out our Useful Links section (p. 37) for outside scholarship resources! Strive to STAY IN THE LOOP with scholarship news. The college and its various departments and programs may mail/email information about scholarships to students.

*Be sure to check out HSAC's 2020-2021 Scholarship Guidebook, available on our website:
laguardiahonors.com*

THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

Getting Started

For most scholarships, the essay is the make-or-break factor. Submitting your application gets you into the contest, but the essay will be the deciding factor. **Much like the transfer process, a quality scholarship essay takes both time and effort.** You will not have that perfect essay after your first attempt. Many students do not realize that in order to distinguish yourself, **you want to hook the reader into wanting to read more.** When starting to write, make sure to create a sense of movement in your essay, which entices the reader to continue.

Leave a parting thought that makes a strong last impression so the scholarship committee will remember you. **Start as early as possible!** You will have to write a lot of drafts before coming up with your final product so the earlier you start, **the more time you give yourself to improve your essays and therefore increase your chances.** You should keep copies of all the documents required for the scholarships you apply to, as you may need the same document for other applications.

Extracurriculars for Scholarship Applications

Many scholarship selection committees want to know what else you do besides attending college. Whether you are a member of a club or an organization on campus, volunteer in your community, juggle jobs, or spend time with something you feel passionate about, know that these are responsibilities and activities that should be highlighted. **Keep a record of dates of your activities, the role you played in them, and any supporting documents you may have, such as letters/certificates of support or appreciation, thank you letters, or any publication of the event you participated in.** If you have been involved with an organization for a period of time, and have a point person who knows you well--such as a supervisor or a volunteer coordinator--you may also consider asking this person to write a letter of recommendation on your behalf. If you have a Curriculum Vitae or resume, you can keep building it by adding new achievements and activities; if you encounter a scholarship application that calls for one. This log will make it a breeze to write about in your essay. **Note:** If your time simply does not allow for extracurricular activities (for example: you have serious family obligations, or work two jobs while attending classes, etc.), do not feel that you have no shot at scholarships. As long as you can show that you are committed and dedicated to the priorities in your life, instead of constantly lazing out on the couch, you are on the right track. **Remember, we are all unique, and scholarship/grant committees are interested in who you are as an individual.** Do not try to cater to what you think they want to hear; instead, be proud and celebrate who you are!

Scholarships will usually request some or all of the following:

High school transcript • Standardized test scores • One or more personal essays • One or more letters of recommendation • Financial aid forms, such as the FAFSA or CSS • Parents' financial information, incl. tax returns

SCHOLARSHIP MYTHS

MYTH #1

You need straight A's to win money for college.

Reality: Most students mistakenly assume that grades are the primary determinant to becoming a scholarship winner. Aside from academic and prestigious/national scholarships, you have the opportunity to receive a variety of scholarships out there that reward specific criteria, specific backgrounds, skills, or talents (e.g. based on ethnicity, volunteer work, veteran status, linguistic breadth, artistic ability; there's even a scholarship for being left-handed!). Do not let the lack of a perfect transcript dissuade you from the chance to apply for and win scholarships.

MYTH #2

In order to win a scholarship, you need to get involved in as many extracurricular activities as possible.

Reality: Students often swamp themselves with an overflow of extracurricular activities in order to look attractive to college admission officers and scholarship committees. Scholarship competitions are about quality, not quantity. Scholarship judges are looking for students who have made quality contributions and not an average Joe who simply joins multiple clubs and extracurricular activities.

MYTH #3

I should only apply to the big name scholarships.

Reality: It does not hurt to apply to these scholarships if you qualify, but you want to diversify your options and increase your chances of winning scholarship money by applying to the smaller scholarships. There are many scholarships out there that students do not know about or simply don't look for. So get out there and apply. Even if you have not been successful in the past, get right back up and take another swing at the scholarship process.

MYTH #4

Scholarship applications are too long and time consuming.

Reality: Most scholarships require you to submit an essay along with recommendation letters. This might seem lengthy at first, but the rewards are always worth it. Additionally, there are always shorter scholarships available, such as the LaGuardia Foundation Scholarship. Do not be hesitant about completing scholarship applications. Writing an essay about yourself will better prepare you for a 4-year school.

MYTH #5

I'm too old for scholarships.

Reality: Although the majority of scholarships are targeted at high school and undergraduate students, there are still many programs available for non-traditional students. Whether you are returning for another degree or simply starting your college journey a little late in life, there are still opportunities for scholarships.

MYTH #6

Scholarships reduce the amount of financial aid received.

Reality: When receiving any type of scholarships, you must report them to the college you'll be applying to. Receiving one or more scholarships may change the amount of need-based financial aid you receive. However, receiving the scholarship in the first place will reduce the amount of federal aid you will require. Often, winning a scholarship will have little effect on your total financial aid package.

THE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION PROCESS

STRATEGY #1

Browse CUNY for Scholarships

CUNY Scholarships:

<https://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/scholarships/>

CUNY Prestigious Scholarships:

<http://https://www2.cuny.edu/financial-aid/scholarships/prestigious-scholarships/>

LaGuardia Foundation Scholarship:

<https://www.laguardia.edu/Scholarships/>

Browse the HSAC Scholarship Book:

<https://www.laguardiahonors.com/scholarship-book>

STRATEGY #2

Use Other Colleges' Resources

Pick 15-20 top schools and type each name along with the word “scholarships” on Google. You will find a wealth of scholarships! Browse through them and save the ones that pertain to your interests. At some point, many of the same big scholarships will reappear. Please note: Many colleges have other invaluable resources like sample Rhodes, Truman, and Marshall Scholarship-winning essays, along with other tips.

Be on the lookout for those.

STRATEGY #3

Consider & Be Specific

- Career aspirations or the field you want to study. Look for professional organizations in that field.
- The region of the country/world where you'd like to study.
- The region of the country/world you're from, including high school, city, county, state, etc. Include your ethnicity or your country/region/state of origin.
- Your age, especially if you are a nontraditional student.

- Any physical challenges that you or your parents may have.
- Veteran status of yourself or parents.
- Sports or artistic talent.
- An organization you would like to work for in the future. For example, Goldman Sachs Scholarship for Excellence.

STRATEGY #4

Be Proactive

Visit the Transfer Services and Financial Aid offices, and ask them what scholarships are available to students like you. Do not ignore mail from the college, your LaGuardia email, or other college department/program electronic lists (e.g. the Honors Program and HSAC e-lists). Institutions send out/email scholarship information to students this way. Tap into various social media platforms at your college because scholarship information is often posted there, for example: Facebook.com/LaGuardiaHonors .



STRATEGY #5

Subscribe to Scholarship Search Engines

Subscribe to some of the scholarship sites, such as CollegeGreenlight.com, to get personalized and ad-free notifications of upcoming scholarships that fit your profile. Be sure to fill out all the information to the best of your ability. The information you provide will help match you with more scholarships. You can also visit our website at laguardiahonors.com and fill out profiles on the scholarship sites listed in the “Useful Links” section.

SAMPLE TRANSFER CHECKLIST

Finalize Your College List

- _ Make sure you understand all the requirements of transferring. (Required courses, required tests, supplements, high school & college transcripts)
- _ Create mailing labels & get stamps for offline applications.
- _ Request fee waivers at Transfer Services (B-215).
- _ Mail fee waiver requests to your schools.

Grades

- _ Send official high school transcripts.
- _ Send official college transcripts.

Letters of Recommendation

- _ Refer to the "Letters of Recommendations" section under "Transfer Resources" of our honors website: laguardiahonors.com
- _ (Contact each school and find out the maximum number of letters they will accept.)
- _ Build rapport with professors while in their course.
- _ Request recommendation letters.
- _ Send thank you letters to your recommenders. (Be sincere!)

Essays

Common App essay #1: Personal essay

- _ First draft _ Second draft _ Third draft _ Final draft

Common App essay #2: Short answer (if required)

- _ First draft _ Second draft _ Third draft _ Final draft

Supplement for School A:

- _ First draft _ Second draft _ Third draft _ Final draft

Supplement for School B:

- _ First draft _ Second draft _ Third draft _ Final draft

Supplement for School C:

- _ First draft _ Second draft _ Third draft _ Final draft

Supplement for School D:

- _ First draft _ Second draft _ Third draft _ Final draft

Testing

(SAT, ACT, TOEFL)

- _ Send in test scores (if required)

Financial Aid

- _ Refer to the "Scholarship Tips" section under "Transfer & Scholarships" section of our honors website.
- _ FASFA profile
- _ CSS profile (College Board)
- _ Supplemental financial aid forms (if applicable)
- _ Search for external scholarships.
- _ Contact the schools for additional scholarships.

Choosing a School to Attend

- _ Preliminary Transfer Credit Evaluation
- _ Refer to their profile on www.CollegeGreenlight.com
- _ College List Complete



USEFUL LINKS

Finalizing College List Planning Print-Outs

<https://www.laguardiahonors.com/useful-documents>

LaGuardia CC Articulation Agreements

<https://www.laguardia.edu/Admissions/Articulation-Agreements/>

General Education Diploma & Transcript

<http://www.acces.nysed.gov/hse/duplicate-diplomas-andor-transcripts>

TOEFL Center Test Dates

<https://www.ets.org/toefl>
https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register/centers_dates

FAFSA

<https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>

CSS Profile

<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

TAP (New York State Only)

<https://www.tap.hesc.ny.gov/totw/home.do>

College Research Platforms

1. www.niche.com
2. www.unigo.com
3. www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org
4. www.usnews.com
5. www.nces.ed.gov
6. www.cappex.com

Scholarship Search Engines

1. collegegreenlight.com
2. myscholly.com
3. collegefish.org
4. collegeprowler.com/account/scholarships.aspx
5. lnesc.org
6. scholarships.com

Stonewall Community Foundation

For LGBTQ students, including undocumented LGBTQ students
<https://www.stonewallfoundation.org/scholarships/>

Point Foundation: The National LGBTQ Youth Scholarship Fund

<https://pointfoundation.org/point-apply/community-college/>

United Negro College Fund

Open to Black/African-American students -
<https://scholarships.uncf.org/>

Students without legal residency status and other students, especially Latino students, should explore this annual scholarship guide published by the
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)
<https://www.maldef.org/resources/scholarship-resources/>

Hispanic Scholarship Fund

<https://www.hsf.net/>

Udall Foundation Scholarship

For Native American students interested in tribal policy, health issues, and students who are dedicated to environmental conservation -
<https://udall.gov/OurPrograms/Scholarship/Scholarship.aspx>
Campus Contact: Dr. Amit Aggarwal
aaggarwal@lagcc.cuny.edu

Other Scholarships Open to Non-U.S. Residents

1. Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute:
www.chci.org
2. Hispanic Scholarship Fund:
www.hsf.net
3. Latin American Professional Women's Education:
www.lawanc.org
4. American Institute of Chemical Engineers:
<https://www.aiche.org/community/awards/minority-affairs-committees-minority-scholarship-awards-college-students>

HSAC experience



Honors Student Advisory Committee is a student collective of the Honors Program at LaGuardia

Honors Student Advisory Committee (HSAC) is the student arm of the LaGuardia Honors Program. Established in the fall of 2010, HSAC is comprised of LaGuardia's Honors Students who are committed to creating a community of talented, ambitious and highly-motivated individuals who seek intellectual challenge and the opportunity to serve our communities. We have grown to be an active and visible force on campus, spearheading the Peer Transfer Initiative, developing an established and vibrant Honors Alumni Advisory Committee. Additionally, we work with our Honors professors to promote student research opportunities. Students also participate in the annual conventions of the National Collegiate Honors Council (NCHC) and

the Northeast Regional Honors Council (NRHC) as panel moderators, research paper presenters and participants. HSAC is located in Honors House (M-201B), which is a space for our community of talented and motivated LaGuardia students. We invite you to visit us and join in the work of building a community of motivated peers and successful alumni. Members of HSAC support each other in navigating academic life, preparing for transfer and scholarship applications, and learning to use education to serve others. If you would like to be involved in HSAC, contact us using the form at the bottom of the page to tell us a little bit about yourself and how you would like to help!

Samantha Brown

SMITH COLLEGE



Transferring as a Nontraditional Student

In the fall of 2020, I will proudly be attending Smith College on a full scholarship, a prospect I could not have dreamed of. I am overjoyed to share some insights into the process that brought me here.

Transferring from a community college to a four-year institution will keep you busy. On top of exams, papers, activities, work, and the constant strain of living in New York City, you are writing personal statements, coordinating with advisors and the registrar to send transcripts, filling out endless forms on the Common Application or Coalition for College, and applying for scholarships. Take heart, because the work, if you do it, pays off.

There are many opportunities for nontraditional students, especially for nontraditional women. With the guidance of Dr. Koh and HSAC, I applied to three colleges with programs geared toward nontraditional students: Georgetown University, Wellesley College, and Smith College. I was also educated on and encouraged to apply for scholarships, like the Finch Foundation Scholarship, which is specifically for nontraditional women in the tri-state area who are transferring from community to a four-year college.

One of, if not the most important aspects of your applications is the personal statement, or statements for some schools. I cannot stress this enough. Make it personal, do not shy away from presenting your academic and personal strengths and struggles. Draw connections between your life's experience, education, and the world at large, and have as many people re-read and proof your essay as you can.

Logistically, give yourself a lot of time. Applications are multi-step process that needs to be done in stages, much like a huge research project or paper. Though emotionally draining at times, especially when being tasked to write about overcoming trauma, you will find support amongst your classmates and professors. Utilize them all.



The Road to Self-trust and Triumph

My time for the last two years at LaGuardia was a battle with myself. I devoted most of my time to studies and extracurricular activities with the goal of success in mind; tiredness and a lack of sleep was normal to me as I worked to keep up my academics along with 2 part-time jobs. Initially, I was uncertain about how all my hard work would turn out, which pushed me to try harder. In my last semester, all my efforts and endurance paid off with admission to Columbia and NYU.

As I approached my last semester, I thought of transferring to CUNY, like many other students at LaGuardia. It took guts for me to even apply to Ivy League schools, where I had never imagined I would get in. It was all thanks to my achievements in extracurricular activities as well as my GPA that I was able to have the courage to apply to these private schools.

My work in HSAC turned out to be great elements for my resume and essay, in which I was able to show my leadership qualities as well as my commitment to campus service. Without all these opportunities – publications, workshops, and a trip to a national conference – I would not have been able to meet the 1,500-2,000 word count for my essay. In addition, the resources HSAC offered, such as the Transfer Guidebook, personal experiences from our alumni, and essay tutoring by Jonathan Chavez were all very helpful in my transfer process. In the Transfer Guidebook, I was able to learn about specific elements in the transfer process that I did not have a chance to hear about during transfer fair, get inside information from HSAC alumni, and to receive one-on-one essay editing from our alumnus who went through the same transfer process.

If you're applying to Columbia School of General Studies, which is an undergraduate program for nontraditional students, I would have to say that the most important element in the application is personal essay. You may feel your GPA is not good enough or you're not prepared to apply. But do not underestimate the power of your story. Your life experiences, especially if you took a gap year, can be a strong element in the application. Trust yourself and seize the opportunity. I wish you good luck in your transition to a 4-year school with the help of HSAC.

Grace Cho

AMHERST COLLEGE



The Transfer Process: A Reflective & Rewarding Journey

“Go to class, go home, go to class, go home,” I thought to myself as I walked up Thomson Ave to get to my first class at LaGuardia. After difficulties in high school, I felt unsure about my direction in life, so I figured I’d attend LaGuardia to start my college path and receive my undergraduate’s degree at any four-year school that would take me. As luck would have it, my First Year Seminar professor strongly encouraged us to make the most of our time here, and pushed us to take advantage of the valuable resources at our school.

In the following semester, I decided to challenge myself and enroll in the ENG 102 honors course taught by the Honors Program director, Dr. Koh. Although I initially felt nervous about the higher expectations of an honors class, I found myself deeply enjoying and discussing ideas and texts within this environment. The structure of an honors course, with a smaller class size and a dedicated professor, allowed us all to really engage in our conversations. I’ve loved books since my childhood, and my interest in this course turned me towards an English degree. After learning new concepts and managing my quality of work, I realized that I was capable of pushing myself further. Before the semester’s end, I researched available opportunities for LaGuardia students and came across the Exploring Transfer summer program (ET) at Vassar College, so I applied and was accepted into the program.

While at ET last summer, I met students from all over the country, as the program is for community college students who are interested in transferring to a four-year liberal arts college. In classes taught by Vassar and community college faculty, we learned so much, from applying mathematical models in the study of migration to exploring identities throughout genres including transgender literature. Most of these ideas were new to me, and I saw the extensive possibilities in learning, especially within a liberal arts setting that focuses on a variety of subjects. My time at Vassar motivated me to apply for transfer to similarly selective, liberal arts schools that could provide the well-rounded experience I desire for my undergraduate education.

Transfer applications have many different components, which varies from school to school. I was fortunate to have the resources and help needed to navigate this process. HSAC lit the match for me, as I turned to past Transfer Guidebooks to get started with picking my colleges, and learned about successful HSAC alumni’s transfers, like LJ Williams ‘19. In choosing the schools I wished to apply to, I was forced to consider my goals, my desires, my dislikes, and much more. Since I participated in LaGuardia’s President’s Society program, their staff connected me to a supportive “Pushy Mom” mentor, who helped me get organized with each school’s requirements.

Despite all of this help, writing my essays was still the hardest part of the application. Answering these questions required a level of self-reflection that felt difficult to transcribe in an academic context. However, after countless comments, revisions, and readers, including HSAC alumni Jonathan Chavez '10, I finally developed a written account that truly represented me. With all of my documents, recommendations, and essays in, all there was left to do was to wait.

While the transfer process itself was long and demanding, it has allowed me to better understand myself, and the path that has led me up to this point. Years of determination finally paid off, as I've received offers from New York University, Amherst College, and Sarah Lawrence College. Now, I'm looking forward to completing my bachelor's degree in English, and I also plan on pursuing graduate studies. I hope to work as an educator, so that I can motivate and empower other students in the same way that the people in my life have.

I'd like to leave you with a list of important things to keep in mind during your transfer journey. Although I knew all of this advice before I started the transfer process, I wish that this was drilled into my head while I was wading through applications. Remember, it doesn't matter where you go, what matters is what you make of it. Please take my words to heart, and I wish you the best of luck in your transfer goals!

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1. **Make a list of the components you desire in your transfer school before you research the schools you want to apply to.** As you start looking into the choices, new aspects that you didn't consider may come up, and this list may grow.
 2. **Know your limits and don't overburden yourself.** It might seem like a good idea to apply to as many schools as possible to increase your chances of acceptance. However, think about the time you have left for each deadline, and your other responsibilities besides the application. If you're starting your applications later, applying to a select number of schools can give you more time and energy to focus on the quality of each application.
 3. **Write your essays ASAP.** This advice is repeated to every student transferring each year, yet it cannot be emphasized enough. Even if your first drafts are terrible, starting early gives you the space to fix and improve your work. Nobody's first attempt at writing is going to be marvelous, so don't be afraid of writing a bad essay, just write.
 4. **Read, reread, and re-reread your essays.** When you think you're finally done writing, take a break, and come back to read it. Read it aloud. Listen to yourself reading it. Have people you trust read it. This is the way to catch mistakes, edit your writing, and most importantly, make sure that your story really captures who you are. Relax. Transferring is a stressful journey, and taking the time to relax throughout the process will help you get through your applications.

Talha Islam

CORNELL UNIVERSITY



Being a "In and out" Student

Welcome everyone! Thank you very much for landing on this page and reading a little bit about my journey. I am Talha Islam. My major at LaGuardia Community College was Business Administration. Honestly, my experiences at LaGuardia really changed my life forever. I enrolled at LaGuardia during Spring 2021. Upon my arrival at LaGuardia, I was hoping to be one of those "in and out" students and transfer to Baruch College. But however, who knew that I would end up meeting my fate on the path that I was wanting to avoid?

One night I was really reflecting on my present and realized I may be limiting myself and not fully exploring my potential and the support that I can receive at LaGuardia. Hence, I set up an appointment with the Transfer Service to discuss about some of my options and what they gave me that day was the key to open the doors to several opportunities. They told me to be involved with HSAC and therefore, I decided to attend their Transfer Workshop. Ever since then, I have been part of the strong arm of Honors Program, HSAC. It was because of HSAC, I heard about the most prestigious Jack Kent Cooke Scholarship, which I had the honor to become a semi-finalist. I was also able to know about the Honors Program and its vitality when applying to four-year colleges.

During my time at LaGuardia, I took many honors courses that were way beyond comfort zone. I decided to challenge myself and develop my intellectual curiosity by conducting fascinating researches assigned by my professors! While taking these courses, I met several like-minded peers who were genuinely there to support me and answer my questions! My opportunity for campus involvement was limited since I was working three jobs at the time. However, on campus, I was also a President's Society Ambassador, and a Student Success Mentor. In addition, I earned my Associates in 3 semesters, so you can imagine how my sleep schedule or social life have been.

The transfer application process was overwhelming and rewarding at the same time. Although I wrote several essays multiple times, each and every time I was having a better understanding about myself and my true passion. I am also extremely against procrastination so I asked my professors about my recommendation letters months ago. Yes, I had countless sleepless nights working on my essays but it was worth the sacrifice and hard work!

I am currently attending Cornell University where I am majoring in Applied Economics with a double concentration in Marketing and Entrepreneurship. My dear friends, success is simple. It is just not easy. I was honored and privileged to be surrounded by my HSAC peers who I knew were there to have my back and encourage me! When I first enrolled, I thought I became part of LaGuardia, but in fact, LaGuardia is now part of me.

LAGUARDIA HONORS PROGRAM



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