

College Breakdown for Adult Learners.

The decision to get your degree is admirable at any age. With many aspects to the college application process, allow this guide to be the breakdown you've been looking for.



Apply for College.

Life is busy. When weighing your options, be sure to find a [top college that accommodates working adults](#). There are a wide variety of items required for college applications, so it helps to have them ready to go before applying.

Review the application requirements and deadlines.

Gather information. Items may include:

Social Security Number

Visa or permanent resident information

Income information

State driver's license or identification card

Dates of high school attendance*

Dates of college attendance (if you've taken college-level classes before)

The program and degree you're interested in

Get your items (resume, personal statement, essays, etc.) reviewed by a trusted source.

Fill out the application to the best of your ability.

Submit application.

*Some schools may also ask you for the CEEB code for your high school. To get the CEEB code, visit the College Board website. If you did not attend high school in the U.S. you will not need a code.

FAFSA.

To get any financial aid from the federal government, you must fill out the FAFSA form. The form is free to fill out and is the most important step in receiving aid. For an extensive overview of FAFSA, check out this [in-depth guide](#).

Deadlines:

- Federal: June 30
- State: Varies (usually shortly after October 1)

Begin FAFSA

- Create your FSA ID
- Determine if you're eligible [here](#)

Have these documents ready:

- Drivers license
- Social security number
- Recent W-2 forms
- Current bank statements
- Investment records
- Untaxed income records

Research and apply for scholarships.

To apply for most [adult learner scholarships](#), you must submit a personal essay, recommendation letters, and academic information. Adult students usually don't need to submit high school transcripts or standardized test scores.

After researching scholarships, narrow your list down to scholarships that you have the best chance at winning.

Review the application requirements and deadlines, then get these items ready to go:

Grades/transcripts

Resume

Essay

Letters of recommendation

College information

Income information



Placement tests.

Most adults going to college for the first time are not expected to provide SAT or ACT scores. Instead, colleges may expect you to take a placement test after your acceptance. The placement test determines how prepared you are to do college-level work.

Different placement tests to familiarize yourself with:

ACCUPLACER (CPT)

A computer test that evaluates skills in reading, writing, and mathematics.

ASSET

A paper-and-pencil test that tests your basic skills in writing, reading, and numerical reasoning, as well as advanced tests in algebra and geometry.

COMPASS

A computer test that aims to assess your reading and writing skills, math, essay writing, and English as a Second Language (ESL).

Transfer and work experience credits.

As a final thought, you'll likely ask yourself if your credits or work experience will transfer when you apply to college. The answer varies, so research is key.

Different exams to familiarize yourself with:

College Level Exam Program (CLEP)

Nearly 3000 colleges and universities recognize the CLEP and award credits equivalent to work experience based on your CLEP performance. CLEP exams cover intro-level college course material in 33 subjects. A passing score on just one CLEP exam can save you 100+ hours of class time and coursework and up to \$1,200 in tuition.*

DSST Standardized Subject Tests

Previously offered to only military veterans and service members, DSST tests are now available to the public. These tests help cut down on time and money by allowing you to test your knowledge on a subject without needing to take the college course.

Earning your degree requires resources and tools to help you along the way. For additional information on what it's like to return to college, check out our [resource center](#) on Best Colleges.