

STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE ENROLLMENT

COVID 19 Impact Tips Edition: As of March 2021

In 2020, the spread of the Covid 19 virus caused our country to enact a concept called social distancing – staying clear from each other to potentially stop the spread of the virus. This resulted in schools and colleges closing and staff not working in their offices but from home. Among other things, this is significantly changing the college enrollment steps. While the enrollment steps, listed below, existed prior to 2020, there are now new or updated tasks required. Many of the updates are changing daily as colleges determine how to handle matters under these new circumstances. To learn what you need to do, check the college’s website and read your email DAILY. While calling campus offices is still an option, understand that most offices will likely have limited staff covering telephones and returning messages may be delayed. Email is likely the better way to communicate at this time. For more updates on what to do following the impact of Covid 19 on college enrollment, visit the [EduDreamer website](https://www.edudreamer.com) (Edudreamer.com). Follow the steps in this check list below to successfully enroll in college for the Fall of 2021 – pay attention to the Covid 19 Impact tips below each step.

Enroll: Notify the College That You Will Attend

Does the College know you’re coming? Did you pay your freshman deposit that holds your place in the freshman class? Log into your web-based portal and read your messages to learn next steps or notify the admissions office of your plans. **(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Deadlines for paying the freshmen deposit vary and many have likely changed. Any dates you learned about prior to March 2020 have likely been updated. Be sure to check the college’s websites and check your email DAILY)**

Read ALL your mail regularly!!

Colleges will notify you of important steps and procedures either by email, through messages in your portal or sometimes by paper mail. Instructions, deadlines and other critical information is usually shared and it’s critical that you read and follow all requirements. **(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Read Your Email DAILY)**

Take the Placement Exam: Schedule a date and time for the Placement Exam

The placement exam is usually required in order for you to register for the appropriate classes. Colleges need to better understand the level of study in which you will be successful and for which level you will need additional support. The placement exam score will allow faculty and staff to better help you to be a successful college student. Schedule the exam now if you haven’t already. **(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Right now, due to Social Distancing, large numbers of students will not be able to sit together in a room to take placement exams as before. To learn how colleges will handle Placement Exams, read your emails and check your messages on your college portal/dashboard for incoming students or the college website)**

Attend Freshmen Orientation: Sessions are held to get to know the campus

Colleges tend to require incoming freshman to participate in one of the Orientation sessions offered throughout the summer. Orientation sessions typically include more detailed tours of the campus, information sessions, meetings with advisors, selecting courses, introductions to current students, faculty and staff. Sign up now if you haven’t already. **(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Right now due to “Social Distancing”, large numbers of students will not be able to gather together to participate in freshman orientations as before. To learn how colleges will handle freshman orientation, read your emails and check your messages on your college portal, dashboard for incoming students or the college website)**

□ Know the Cost of Attendance and Your Budget:

Review your bill and your financial aid to determine if the bill is covered or if there is a balance owed. College is not free, and it is the responsibility of the student and their family to ensure that the bill is paid on time. The office of financial aid and the billing office (sometimes called the bursars office) will provide you with the appropriate documentation and can help, but they are not responsible if your bill is paid late or your financial aid is not confirmed. Students must follow instructions and requirements. You may have been awarded a full scholarship or have significant financial aid, but you will still need to ensure, not only that you understand the budget and the bill, but that the funds are available (either from financial aid, scholarships or your own savings) to pay the bill on time.

(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Right now due to “Social Distancing”, many colleges offices have limited staff and changed hours of operation. Many families who were once working are now unemployed. This has caused colleges to change payment due dates and they are trying to accommodate as much as possible. Read your emails and check your messages on your college portal, dashboard for incoming students or the college website)

□ Determine if You Need More Money to Pay for College?

If your bill is higher than the amount of money you have been awarded or that you have available, you may need to do some additional research to get more money. Consider these strategies:

- Request more financial aid – You can contact the financial aid office to ask for more financial aid. Be prepared to provide additional documentation that was not provided originally to the financial aid office.
- Sign up for a Payment Plan – program. Visit the college’s website or talk with the financial aid office to learn more about the available payment plans. Some plans allow you to pay each month.
- Consider applying for more scholarship money. Scholarships can take time to complete the application process as well as hear back with a decision. You may need to have a plan for how you will pay the bill while waiting to hear about scholarships to which you have applied.
- Determine if you want to borrow the money and apply for a student loan (that you will have to pay back after graduating or leaving school). Visit <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/loans> to learn more about student and parent loans.

(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Many families who did not previously need significant financial help will now be requesting assistance to pay for college. Learn timelines and deadlines and strive to meet them since competition for funds awarded on a first-come-first served basis will be a challenge for all.

If your family’s financial circumstances have changed in any way, write a brief statement describing how your circumstances have changed and the potential impact it is having on the student attending college. Be sure to include the student’s contact information and student ID if applicable. Be prepared to email or mail that statement to college financial aid offices, state higher education offices or scholarship organizations to update them about your changed circumstances. With many limited and changed staff and hours for college offices, you will likely need to allow more time for processing. Be patient. Read your emails and check your messages on your college portal, dashboard for incoming students or the college website)

□ **Submit Health and Immunization Records**

All colleges will want you to submit a record or some kind that proves that you have had the necessary immunizations and health requirements. This is particularly important if you intend to live on campus. Respond to this request by the deadline to prevent late fees and or hindering or delaying your enrollment. For help and questions about health records, talk to your high school nurse, school health clinic if available, family doctor, or local health clinic. **(Covid 19 Impact Tip: The issue of having health coverage and providing health records was already a critical one prior to the onset of the Covid 19 virus. Now more than ever it will be extremely important for students to provide timely information and accurate health records. Since it will likely take more time, start now to acquire all the necessary health records. Campuses have always had the goal of creating a safe and comfortable campus environment for everyone. Read your emails and check your messages on your college portal/ dashboard for incoming students or the college website)**

□ **Learn If You Qualify for Grants or Scholarships From the State In Which You Live**

States also offer scholarships and grants to help pay for college expenses. For more information and to learn if you are eligible, speak with your high school counselor or visit this site to find the higher education office for your state: <https://www.edudreamer.com/higher-ed-by-state> **(Covid 19 Impact Tip: Right now due to “Social Distancing”, many state offices have limited staff and changed hours of operation and processing may take more time than usual. Back in 2020, State Higher Education offices changed or extended due dates for applications and submitting documentation. Read your emails and visit the state’s higher education website for updates for procedures of 2021)**