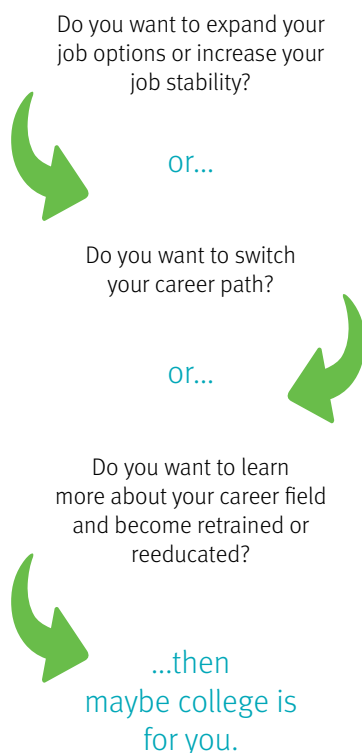


College for Adults and Returning Students

In this document, the term “college” refers to all education beyond high school, including technical certifications and degrees.



Nontraditional students have more options than ever for returning to school. Below are answers to common questions about college for students over the age of 24. These answers can help you plan which steps to take to achieve your education goals.

Q: Am I Too Old for College?

No! There is no maximum age requirement for admissions.

Q: Will College Be Beneficial for Someone My Age?

Absolutely! The need to retrain and reeducate at various points in life is necessary. The average age of college students has been increasing as more adults retrain for second and third careers.

Q: Should I Go to College?

The answer to this question lies first in your motivation. Are you hoping to change careers, move into a higher paying job, widen your job prospects or update your skills? If so, going to college can help you achieve any of these goals. Rarely do people fail to complete a college degree because the classes were too hard. The majority of adults who failed to complete a college degree attributed their decision to having difficulty balancing work, school and life.

College will require a serious investment of your time and money. Before making your final decision, evaluate the impact going to school will have on your life, family and personal finances. It may be worth it to make certain sacrifices now for the sake of better employment

opportunities later. Keep in mind the support and resources you will need, as well as the drive to do what it takes to complete your college education.

Q: Are There Flexible or Online Course Options to Help Me Manage All of My Responsibilities?

Yes. Flexible or online courses can significantly help manage your responsibilities while pursuing your education. These courses may require self-paced learning. They provide location independence, 24/7 access and online support resources. You can choose courses that fit your schedule or learning style, whether you prefer shorter, intensive courses or longer courses. By taking advantage of these flexible learning options, you can better manage your time and responsibilities while still achieving your educational goals.

Q: What Academic Support Services Are Available?

Most colleges offer a variety of academic support services to help students succeed. Common services

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include tutoring, academic advising, career counseling, writing assistance, writing center workshops, disability services, counseling, study skills workshops and technical assistance. These services are designed to enhance your academic experience and provide the support you need to succeed.

Q: Will I Fit in with Younger Students?

It's completely natural to wonder about fitting in as a nontraditional student. Many colleges and universities have diverse student populations, including a mix of ages, backgrounds and experiences. Colleges often foster a supportive culture, encouraging collaboration and mutual respect among students. Your life experience can be a valuable asset, offering unique insights and perspectives that can benefit classroom discussion and group work. Remember, many nontraditional students find that they fit in well and even thrive in college environments.

Q: Do I Have the Technical Skills Needed to Be a College Student?

Absolutely! Colleges understand that students come from a wide range of backgrounds and may have varying levels of technical proficiency. Most institutions offer comprehensive support to help students build the skills they need. Support services include orientation programs, help desk technicians, workshops and tutorials, peer support and user-friendly platforms.

Q: Can I Transfer Credits from Previous College Courses?

It depends. Request your official transcripts from all previously attended institutions. Review the transfer policies at the institution you plan to attend. Meet with an advisor to help you understand which credits are transferable and how they apply

to your new program. Complete any necessary transfer applications or forms required by your institution. The new institution will evaluate your transcripts to determine which credits can be transferred. This process may take some time, so be patient. Once the evaluation is complete, review the transfer credit report.

Q: Can I Afford College?

A college education can be affordable with proper planning and research. Below are steps to take to make college more affordable.

1. Shop for an affordable college with the program(s) you desire. Be a smart consumer—look for the best deal for your dollar. Make a list of “must haves” in order of their importance to you. Compare programs at different schools. If the quality and reputation are comparable, choose the school that charges lower tuition.
2. Apply for financial aid. Undergraduate students of all ages can apply for financial aid, including scholarships, grants, work-study and loans. Of these, only loans have to be repaid. Financial aid can help pay tuition and books, as well as some of your living expenses while you attend college. Be aware that financial aid is different at different levels of education. If you are thinking of pursuing graduate studies later on, loans might be your only option for federal financial aid. In these cases, you may need to look elsewhere for scholarships and grants.
3. Explore options for earning income. The course load you plan to take will impact the kind of job you can have while you go to school. Some employers offer college tuition reimbursement and/or scholarships for employees who study in a field related to their job. Look for every opportunity to obtain free money for college.

4. Cut back on unnecessary expenses. Talk to family and friends about ways they can help you lower your living costs while you are in college. This could include assistance with anything from child care, transportation, housing or even meal preparation while you are in school.

Q: How Do I Apply for Federal Financial Aid?

You must complete and file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) every year you attend college. This will determine the amount of federal, state, local and institutional aid you qualify to receive. There is no cost to submit a FAFSA. Completing a FAFSA does not obligate you to enroll at a particular college or accept any money. You can find and complete the FAFSA online at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. Be sure to read the FAFSA carefully—special circumstances could impact your eligibility for aid, such as a recent separation or divorce, or a loss of job or income. For help completing the FAFSA, contact one of ECMC's The College Place advisors.

Also, The College Place is here to help you with free college-planning resources and personal advice. Visit our website at www.ecmc.org/TCP.

Q: Where Can I Get More Information?

Contact your school of choice with specific questions about admissions, financial aid and the degree programs available. Try to meet with an academic advisor or tour the campus to get a feel for what it's like to be there as an adult. Additional information regarding federal financial aid is available online at <https://studentaid.gov>.

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