

Frequently Asked Questions

I have never attended college, how do I get started?

Making the decision to start is the first step! From here you will need to complete an application for admissions either at El Centro in the advising office or on-line. If you have attended college before please submit transcripts from previous colleges. If this is your first time in college you will need to meet with an advisor to discuss your options and take an assessment test, study materials will be given to you. An advisor will discuss with you when registration begins, classes begin, and what courses you will be eligible to take.

Where can I go to learn more about the college and different services offered?

Our website is an excellent tool for learning more about the resources at the college, academic advisors are also knowledgeable about student services, and you can gain a wealth of knowledge in the Human Development course taken during your first semester. Advisors are also available to answer any questions you may have about the college.

Why are new students required to take the Human Development course?

The Human Development course is designed specifically for students new to college. This course will provide you with information about services specific to El Centro, educational and career planning, and other inside tips you may want to know to navigate the college environment. With this course we hope to prepare you to be a more informed, independent college student.

How long do classes last?

Classes will typically last three hours per week. You will meet one day for three hours, two days for 1.5 hours, or three days for one hour. Also, most classes will last an entire semester (3-4 months in the fall and spring and 1-2 months in the winter and summer), but we do offer some flex courses that will vary in length. Check the course schedule for details.

Do I need to set-up an appointment to see an advisor?

El Centro advisors serve our students on a walk-in basis. If a student needs to address specific concerns or issues he/she may contact an advisor directly to schedule an appointment.

What is the Texas Success Initiative?

The Texas Success Initiative (TSI) is a state-legislated program designed to improve student success in college. TSI requires that you be assessed in reading, writing, and math prior to taking college level courses. If you are not exempt you will be required to take the Accuplacer.

What is the Accuplacer?

The Accuplacer is an assessment that will test your reading, writing, and math skills. This score will help us to place you in appropriate level courses, either college level or developmental. The assessment is untimed, but you should allow yourself up to three hours to test. Once you complete the test an advisor can work with you to interpret your scores.

When can I take the Accuplacer?

The accuplacer should be taken before you register for classes. The initial test is free. If you choose to retest you can do so once a semester, it will cost \$10.00 per section.

Can I register online?

Only students who have met Texas Success Initiatives and are in good academic standing will be able to register online. Even if you are able to register online you will need to meet specific course prerequisites to register for a course.

If I am eligible to register online can I still see an advisor?

Yes, advisors are always here to answer questions and help you with your educational planning. However, we will refer you to the econnect room to register or drop classes.

How do I register for classes?

If your advising report indicates that you are eligible to register online, you may do so through eConnect. Students not able to register online must come to the advising office and register with an advisor. Before you register browse through the course booklet to see what classes will be available for the upcoming semester!

Do I need official transcripts from all the colleges/universities I attended before I can register for classes?

Students are required to show their transcript to an advisor before registering for courses. If you do not provide an official copy of your transcript at the time of registration, you may use your unofficial transcript, viewed online by the advisor, to register for courses. However, it is your responsibility to submit to the college an official copy of your transcript as soon as possible. If you fail to do so you may have a block placed on you or be dropped from courses.

How many courses should I take?

This is a personal decision and can be discussed with your advisor. Generally speaking, if you are working full time you may want to take 1 or 2 classes at a time. Students with no other obligations may wish to go full time, taking four or five classes.

Should I take a course online?

Online courses are designed for those students who are unable to make it to campus because of a conflicting schedule. These courses require just as much work, if not more, than a course where you go to the campus. Online courses require that you be very organized and self-disciplined. You will receive your course outline and be expected to follow it as is. Of course, the faculty member will be available for you to ask questions.

Do I have to be a full time student to receive financial aid?

No, to receive financial aid you will need to enroll in at least 6 credit hours, typically two classes.

When will I need to pay for my classes?

The payment due date will appear on your fee receipt after you have registered. If your receipt shows a balance you must pay in full or make arrangements to do a set up plan by that date. If you believe you are receiving financial aid and a balance appears you will want to check with financial aid. If payment is not made by the due date you will be dropped from the course.

How does the payment plan work?

Students who would like to pay in installments can use the payment plan. You will be required to pay at least half of your total tuition by the date specified on your registration bill, and the remaining balance will be split in half for you to make two payments during the semester. The payment plan is only valid for fall and spring semesters.

When do I need to apply for financial aid?

You can apply for financial aid beginning on January 1st. It is important to remember that financial aid applications take some time to be processed by the financial aid office. Completing the form early will ensure that you have done all that you need to do prior to receive funds if you are eligible. For more information please visit the financial aid website.

http://www.elcentrocollege.edu/Student_Services/FinancialAid/

Can an academic advisor help me complete my financial aid form?

Academic advisors are not trained in financial aid procedures. We will refer you to the financial aid office to ensure that your questions are answered correctly.

Who is able to help me with transfer information?

An advisor can help you with information about transferring to another college, but you may also want to work with El Centro's College Transition Center, currently located in room A140. The Transition Center can provide you with information about scholarships, course equivalencies, and transfer requirements.

What is a formal withdraw from classes?

A formal withdraw requires that you drop your class either online through econnect or in the advising office with an advisor. Completing a formal withdraw allows you to receive a grade of "W" for the course rather than a failing a grade. Please keep in mind that students who began college on or after Fall 2007 fall under the 6 drop rule. Under this Texas legislation a student cannot drop more than 6 courses during their college career.

Will all of my courses transfer to another institution?

We cannot guarantee that all courses will transfer to another institution. However, if you plan on transferring you should take college level courses, not WECM, workforce education, courses. It is more likely that college level courses will transfer. Please access the Transfer Guide website to check requirements for specific institutions. It would also be a good idea to work with a counselor at El Centro as well as the college you wish to transfer to.

<http://www.dcccd.edu/Employees/Departments/EA/TS/UTG/default.htm>

Where can I go for econnect questions?

An employee in the eConnect room, A150, will be able to assist you with questions concerning eConnect.