****

***How to***

**APPLY AND REGISTER AT A CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

***and***

**APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID**

All California Community colleges follow the same GENERAL STEPS for admission and class registration. They are:

1. Apply online using the website of the community college of your choice.
2. Set up your accounts including a user ID and password.
3. Attend college orientation or do it online.
4. Determine your math and English placements.
5. Apply for financial aid.
6. Meet with a college counselor to obtain a beginning academic plan.
7. Register for classes.

***FOLLOW ALL OF THESE STEPS RIGHT AWAY***! THE SOONER THAT YOU COMPLETE THESE STEPS THE BETTER CHANCE YOU WILL HAVE OF GETTING THE CLASSES THAT YOU WANT.

1. ***HOW TO* apply online and set up your student accounts**
   1. Go to the website of the community college that you wish to attend.
   2. On the home page you will find a link for new students or future students.
   3. Locate the link to “Apply” for admission to the college.
   4. You will next be asked to create a “Open CCC” account with the California Community Colleges.
   5. You will then return to the community college website.
   6. Provide the information requested to set up your college ID and password.
   7. You will be given an email account in your name to use at the community college.
   8. Be sure that you take the steps necessary to forward to your *personal* email inbox those emails sent to your *college* email account. *This is CRITICAL because your instructors and/or the college will send important emails to you ONLY through your college email account*.
2. ***HOW TO* attend College Orientation.**
   1. Attending college orientation is required in order to register for classes.
   2. Follow the steps indicated on the college website for new or future students.
   3. Most community colleges permit you to do this online. You may also make an appointment to attend orientation in person at your college campus.
3. ***HOW TO* determine your math and English placements**
   1. Students are now eligible to be placed into English and math courses based on high school coursework, high school grades, and high school GPA.
   2. You will self-report this information online as part of the application process.
   3. Students who do not meet the criteria above will be referred to the counseling office for English and math placement.
   4. You will be told how to make an appointment. Just follow the instructions.
   5. *Most community colleges have links on their websites where you can find practice tests for the math and English assessment tests*. Just enter the term “assessment test” in the search box on the website.
4. ***HOW TO* apply for financial aid**
   1. You should apply for financial aid EVEN IF YOU THINK THAT YOU MAY NOT QUALIFY.
   2. You can apply online.
   3. **FREE FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION WORKSHOPS** are available to help students and parents complete FAFSA or California Dream Act Applications. For more information, go to Cashforcollege.org or click <https://www.lacashforcollege.org/fafsaworkshops>
   4. ***If you are a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident (Green Card) you only need to complete ONE application*** in order to qualify for financial aid at a California Community College. **It is a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).**
      1. If your FAFSA application is approved, ***even for only a small amount***, you will be eligible for the following benefits:
         1. A California Promise Grant (Formerly BOG) that will pay for your tuition.
         2. Up to $6,195 in Pell Grant money that does not need to be paid back.
         3. If you are a former Foster Youth, eligibility for a Chafee Grant of up to $5,000 per year.
         4. Additional money from Cal Grant programs (See a counselor at the financial aid office of your college).
   5. ***If you are an undocumented student*** **you will need to fill out a California Dream Act Application** (AB540) in order to receive a Board of Governors Grant and other forms of financial aid.
      1. Go to: <https://dream.csac.ca.gov/application/NewUserAccess.aspx>.
   6. **HOW TO FILL OUT YOUR FAFSA**
      1. **Read print out the attached FAFSA on the Web Worksheet. Using the worksheet, gather the information that you will need to complete the online application**. Do not worry if you do not have all of the information. The online application has easy to use help links for every question on the application.
      2. View this walk thru tutorial. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1GmaBMD-oY>
      3. Go to our website, [www.ascendinglightsigraduate.org](http://www.ascendinglightsigraduate.org). Click on Financial Aid. Then click on the link for Federal PELL (FAFSA) Grants. ***READ THE IMPORTANT TIPS SECTION!!!***  <http://www.ascendinglightsigraduate.org/page-33>
      4. ***NOW*** Go to <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> to begin your online FAFSA application.
         1. Click on the FSA ID link on the top of the page. Apply for a FSA ID for yourself and your parents (if you are living with them). DO THIS BEFORE YOU BEGIN COMPLETING THE APPLICATION!
         2. Once you have your FSA ID, click on the START A NEW FAFSA link. Provide the information requested.
         3. You can save your work at any time and return to the application using the log-in information that you created while filling out the FAFSA.
         4. Do not forget to read the important tips section for filling out a FAFSA on our Ascending Lights iGraduate website.
         5. When you have completed the application the FAFSA website will tell you the amount of financial aid for which you have qualified. It is call a Student Aid Report (SAR).
         6. You may receive an email from the community college telling you to bring to them documents required to verify your qualification for financial aid. In most cases, your financial aid will be approved without need for verification if you and your parents were able to upload income tax information from the previous year using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool.
         7. Using your community college ID and password, you can log on to your student account and check your financial aid status.
5. ***HOW TO* meet with a college counselor to obtain a beginning academic plan.**
   1. You will be given instructions on how to attend a counseling session once you have completed your math and English placement results.
   2. You must attend the counseling session in order to register for classes.
   3. Your counselor will give you a beginning academic plan and recommend some classes for you to take.
   4. You will be given a date and time after which you can register for classes.
   5. Contact your Ascending Lights College Resource Mentor, or iGraduate Mentor, to make arrangements for the plan given you by the college to be converted into an *iGraduate Road Map to Success*, comprehensive academic plan.
6. ***HOW TO* Register for Classes**
   1. Important: Contact your Ascending Lights College Resource Mentor, or iGraduate Mentor, ***before*** you attempt to register for any classes. Using your *Road Map to Success*, they can help you to take appropriate steps, or choose alternate courses, if the classes that you want are closed. This will also help you to avoid taking unnecessary classes that might delay your graduation.
   2. On the college website find the class schedule for the semester for which you will be registering.
      1. Using a calendar, select open courses that will fit into the times that you have available to attend classes.
      2. Check out the rating of the possible professors using Rate My Professors.com <http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/>
      3. Make a list of possible classes, times, days, and section numbers that will fit your schedule.
      4. Be sure to list of possible alternate classes if the ones you want are closed.
   3. On or after your assigned registration date and time, go to the college website. Find the link to Login to your student account. There you will find links to register for classes and to pay your fees.
      1. Enter the section number of the classes you wish to add.
      2. When you are done, print out your class schedule.
      3. Pay your fees by credit card or pay in person at the Admissions and Records Office.
      4. **Important: Some colleges give you only a few days to pay your fees once you have enrolled. If your fees are not paid within that time, you will be dropped from your classes.**
      5. If you have questions or need help contact your Ascending Lights College Resource Mentor or iGraduate Mentor.
   4. Do not be discouraged if you do not get all of the classes that you want. *Be sure to enroll in something*, even if it is only a one (1) unit course. If you do this you will have a much higher registration priority the next semester.
   5. On the first day of class, plan to arrive no less than one (1) hour early to the campus. Parking is always difficult on the first days of a semester. You may be dropped from a class if you show up late!
7. **OBTAINING ADDITIONAL HELP** 
   1. **Ascending Lights College Resource Mentors** 
      1. Ascending Lights College Resource Mentors are current or former recipients of Ascending Lights scholarships.
      2. They have all successfully completed the steps listed above and can give you answers to simple questions if you have them.
      3. They have all been trained to be mentors for community college students at one of our training events.
      4. The Ascending Lights College Resource Mentors at your church are:
   2. **Ascending Lights iGraduate Mentors**
      1. These individuals or ministers from your organization or church, in addition to Ascending Lights College Resource Mentors, who have been trained to be mentors for community college students at one of our training events.
      2. The Ascending Lights iGraduate Mentors at your organization or church are: