

CNS Transfer Tips

Suggestions for Successful Transfer into the College of Natural Sciences at the University of Texas at Austin

PLAN BEFORE YOU TRANSFER

Anticipate your credit transferability by using the Automated Transfer Equivalency (ATE) system, a searchable transfer credit database for more than 320,000 courses across Texas. Remember that UT requires at least 60 hours of degree coursework be taken in residence; there is no reason to transfer more than 60 hours. Also, review CNS degree checklists before coming to UT Austin, keeping in mind that it can be difficult to change majors after you transfer.

PICK A MAJOR BASED ON MORE THAN ONE CAREER PROSPECT

It becomes increasingly difficult to change majors as you progress through your coursework, so consider multiple career options within a given major before transferring. For example, a biology major might decide in their final year on campus that she no longer plans to go to medical school. If she has no other career interests in the biological sciences, she might feel stuck or lost. Confirm there are multiple job options of interest to you in your chosen major. After you enroll at UT Austin, take advantage of career exploration resources, such as the Vick Center for Strategic Advising and Career Counseling and CNS's Career Services office.

DO THE MATH (and the science!)

Complete calculus, or as much math as possible, before you enroll in CNS. At a minimum, if calculus is required in your CNS degree, take both I and II prior to transferring. Also, take at least one sequence of science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, etc.) before you apply to transfer.

FINISH COURSE SEQUENCES

Complete any course sequence at the same institution. For example, take Biology I and Biology II before you transfer. Do not take Biology I, then transfer and begin the second course in the sequence at a different institution. It is also recommended to take both Government/Political Science core-required courses at the same institution.

ATTEND ORIENTATION

Even though you have already attended college, do not skip UT-Austin's orientation. You will learn much that is required by and unique to CNS. Orientation will also offer opportunities to meet with advisors and current students. Have a list of questions ready!

UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

As soon as you move, establish a UT email account, and check it at least twice daily. Faculty and advisors rely on email. Be certain to update your mailing address in MyUT so you also receive important university notifications by mail.

CONNECT TO THE TRANSFER COMMUNITY

Get connected on campus through one of the great communities available for transfer students, such as Texas Transfers Program (TxT), Transfer Interest Groups (TriGs), transfer signature courses, or UTransition. Ask your advisor how to join.

FIND YOUR ACADEMIC or EXTRACURRICULAR COMMUNITY

Join an organization, club, society, team, or activity of academic or extracurricular interest to you in your first semester in CNS. Building community outside of the classroom is an important part of integrating into your new campus, and there is no shortage to choose from in a college the size of CNS. Explore CNS student life to find one (or five!) communities to join.

TALK TO YOUR TEACHERS

Successful CNS students regularly attend office hours. Office hours are an opportunity for students to receive personalized academic help, and to get to know faculty and allow them to get to know you. Almost without exception, the faculty whom students get to know outside the classroom write the best recommendation letters, and you will very likely need at least one in the future. The sooner you build the habit of getting to know faculty, the more comfortable and confident you will feel in reaching out. Start making this effort immediately. Get to know your course instructors.

HELP ADVISORS HELP YOU

Advisors ensure you are on track to meet your academic goals. Whether you have questions about which courses to take, or you need confirmation of a plan you already have in place, check in with your advisors early and often. Consult your advisors about future goals, such as studying abroad or applying to graduate or professional schools. Advisors will help you be prepared. Also, be mindful of requirements unique to UT-Austin, such as flags and catalog eligibility.

KEEP TRACK OF DEADLINES

Read all of your syllabi during the first day of class and note important dates (homework due dates, quizzes, exams, etc.). Add these dates to a paper or electronic calendar, and refer to it often. Hold time on your calendar for preparation leading up to big assignment deadlines. Simple as it may sound, also hold time in your schedule to get sufficient sleep each night. Many students neglect sleep to prepare for exams, and they pay for the decision in academic performance. Numerous studies show that lack of sleep diminishes memory, critical thinking, and mental agility. Avoid last-minute cram sessions that eat into your sleep time.

USE AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Even if you feel confident in your CNS coursework, take advantage of academic support services available to you in CNS. Such support services include PCL STEM Study groups, discussion sections, office hours, the Sanger Learning Center, the University Writing Center, departmental tutoring, and more.

MAKE FAILURE YOUR FRIEND

Failure is an inevitable part of the scientific method, a piece of feedback alerting you that something needs to change. Observe your habits, and make adjustments accordingly. Feedback is essential to growth; learn how to welcome it, respond to it, and move forward with resilience.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

Failure is an inevitable part of everyone's academic journey. There might be times when you feel overwhelmed in your CNS studies, and there are many resources to help you navigate whatever challenge you are facing. Do not be afraid to ask a professor, an advisor, or a staff member for help.