

Transferring to Otis

So you want to attend Otis College of Art and Design as a transfer student. How do you spend your time in community college wisely? What classes do you take? How do you apply? Here are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about transferring to Otis.

Tell me about the Otis Foundation Program (Freshman Year)

Otis College of Art and Design offers a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree program, which begins with Foundation Year. During Foundation, four studio art classes: drawing and composition; form and space (3-D design); life drawing; color and design (2-D design) help students build the art, design and creative skills and vocabulary that are the “foundation” for their subsequent studies and future work. Foundation students also begin the Liberal Arts and Sciences component of their education at Otis. Liberal Studies classes such as English, art history, and social sciences teach students to think critically, use language consciously, respect cultural diversity, and value history. Students leave Foundation Year well prepared to begin work in their major department.

I want to enter Otis as a sophomore.

If you plan to do your “foundation” work at a community college and enter Otis as a sophomore, you must transfer at least 18 semester units of studio art. While these can be any kind of studio classes (painting, photography, graphic design, sculpture, etc.) you should emphasize drawing, figure drawing and design classes (2-D and 3-D) to match Otis’ Foundation curriculum. Your admissions portfolio must demonstrate that you have the same level of art and design skills achieved by students during Foundation Year.

At community college you should also take general education classes such as English composition, critical thinking, and art history to avoid being behind in Liberal Studies. Refer to the Transfer Credit Guide (other side) to see which classes will transfer into your intended major.

What about the admissions portfolio?

A portfolio for the sophomore level consists of 10-20 pieces of artwork. It includes life drawing of the nude model, solid observational drawing, 2-D and 3-D design. It also includes personal work that expresses your interests and creativity. It does not have to include work from the major you wish to study. For example, if you wish to study fashion design or digital media your portfolio does not have to include fashion design or digital work. If you plan to major in photography, speak with an Admissions Counselor about your portfolio.

What form should the portfolio take?

The College prefers a portfolio of slides, but original artwork is accepted. Artwork in electronic or other media is accepted. Check with the Admissions Office for details.

I want to enter Otis as a junior.

We accept junior transfers in selected majors. Be aware that junior level transfer requires a great deal of preparation and skill. Fine Arts, Digital Media, Interactive Product Design, Communication Arts and Architecture/Landscape/Interiors do accept students at the junior level. Fashion Design and Toy Design do not accept students at the junior level. Speak to an Admissions Counselor about specific requirements for transferring as a junior.

What about taking General Education classes at community college?

Taking General Education courses at community college can ease your course load each semester at Otis. These courses may transfer, regardless of your level of acceptance. If you intend to transfer as a sophomore, the following courses are general requirements for all students and will allow you to begin your sophomore year having completed the required freshman courses:

- English Composition*
- Critical Thinking/Composition
- 1 Social Science
- Art History – Cave Paintings to Early Renaissance OR High Renaissance to mid-19th century
- Art History – Modern (19th century – 1945)

Additional General Education coursework may transfer, depending on what you wish to study at Otis. Refer to the Transfer Credit Guide (other side) to see which courses transfer into your major.

*Subject to successfully passing the Otis English Placement Test (EPT) or alternative demonstration of English proficiency. See an Admissions Counselor for details.

I have an Associates Degree (AA), can I transfer to Otis as a junior?

The Associates Degree curriculum at community colleges is primarily designed to prepare students for the CSU/UC systems. Some of the classes would transfer to Otis. But Otis has its own specific required classes, which means that transferring to Otis requires careful planning. To maximize your time at community college, be sure you understand Otis’ requirements and take the classes that match those requirements.

I’m confused about the admissions portfolio.

An Admissions Counselor would be glad to look at your work and suggest ways to strengthen your portfolio. Make an appointment to meet with a Counselor. Bring a copy of your transcripts and we can also discuss transferring units from the college you are now attending.