



# **Steps to Enrolling in College!**

A complete guide to starting  
your educational  
journey as a first-time or  
returning student.

A FREE GUIDE PROVIDED BY  
SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY TECH

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This free guide can help you get started on your educational journey! This guide provides some tips to understanding college terms, how to plan for college, and most of all what you need to know about paying for college. There is also information included about the admissions process and the various types of documentation that is required.

## UNDERSTANDING COLLEGE TERMS

Colleges have a language all their own and it is often confusing to new students and parents. Below are some terms commonly used by colleges.

**ACADEMIC YEAR:** An academic year refers to the year from August of one year to July of the next year. (Example: August 2024-July 2025)

**SEMESTER:** A semester refers to the times of year that courses are offered. For SAU Tech, there are fall, spring, and summer semesters. The two semesters offered in the summer are short (four weeks) as opposed to fall and spring which are 16 weeks long. At the beginning of a semester is when you can enter college and register to take classes. Some colleges, like SAU Tech, offer 7 or 8 week semesters during the regular 16 week semesters. This allows students to take more classes in a shorter time frame.

**CREDIT HOUR:** A college degree is earned by completing credit hours. Each class is worth a certain number of credit hours. For example, most classes are worth three credit hours. At SAU Tech, you can find the number of credit hours in a class by looking at the fourth digit of the course number (Example: ENGL 1113 is worth three credit hours.) The classes offered are found in the college's class schedule at [www.sautech.edu](http://www.sautech.edu) in the quicklinks dropdown.

**FULL-TIME STUDENT:** A full-time student is defined by the number of credit hours the student is taking in a semester. As a general rule, taking 12 hours of credit classes usually means a student is full-time. Some scholarships will require students to take 15 hours of credit classes to be full-time.

**PART-TIME STUDENT:** A part-time student is anyone taking less than a full-time load of classes (less than 12 hours).

**DEGREE-SEEKING:** Degree-seeking means that the student has declared a major and are seeking to earn some type of degree (Technical Certificate, Associates, Bachelors, etc.) Some types of financial aid require that the student be degree-seeking.

**FINANCIAL AID:** Financial aid is a term that is used frequently by colleges to talk about everything from scholarships to loans. It is a general term that refers to how a student is getting help to pay for college.

**PELL GRANTS:** A Federal Pell Grant is money that is awarded based on the student's income or financial need. The application is free and available online. Pell funds do not have to be repaid.

**SCHOLARSHIPS:** Scholarship usually refers to aid given based on academic performance or some other characteristic of the student. This money is usually a gift and is not expected to be repaid but the student may be required to keep a certain grade point average to receive the scholarship.

**LOANS:** A loan refers to money that is borrowed and must be repaid after the student completes college or if they drop out.

**TUITION:** Tuition refers to the cost per credit hour. For example, if tuition is \$80 per credit hour, and a class is three credit hours, then tuition for the class would cost \$240.

**FEES:** Fees are charges that are billed per credit hour. The amount may vary depending on the class the student is taking.

These are probably not all the college terms you will ever hear, but the most important ones are listed. The next step in getting started in college is thinking about what you career you plan to pursue.

## #1 PLANNING FOR COLLEGE

What are your plans? Have you decided what degree you want to pursue? Or what career? If not, that's okay. Many people start college undecided about their career path or they may change their mind a few times about what career they want after they have been in college for a while. This is normal. However, if you start college and take program specific classes, then you may lose credit hours when you change majors. If you are receiving Federal Pell funds, you will have to choose a major or degree program when you begin taking classes. This is a requirement to receive the funding.

Have you thought about what hours of the day you will be able to attend classes? Or do you need to attend online? If you work or have other responsibilities, evening classes or online classes can be a good choice.

It's a good idea to take some time to sit down and make some educational goals. Think about how many credit hours you can manage in a semester and decide how long you want to take to finish your degree. It can be helpful to take a career interest inventory if you are having a hard time deciding on a career path. Arkansas provides an excellent tool for free. You can access it at <https://arkansas.kuder.com/landing-page>. This tool can help you get information about career areas you might be interested in and can help you start a career path. SAU Tech also offers planning for college. You can talk to one of our advisors anytime by calling 870-574-4558.

## #2 PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Paying for college is the big worry and concern that often keeps people from really going after their educational dreams. It doesn't have to be that way! There are so many options to help you pay for college, and most colleges have a financial aid office that can help. SAU Tech's Financial Aid office will help you apply for a Federal Pell grant, Arkansas Scholarships, SAU Tech & SAU Tech Foundation Scholarships along with other scholarships and forms of aid.

Loans are a last resort because they must be paid back, but when there are no other options, low-interest loans are a way to pay for college. Many colleges, like SAU Tech, also have payment plans that allow you to make monthly payments on your college expenses. The "Paying for College" step is before "Applying for Admissions" in this guide because it is important to know that you can pay for college before you go through the admissions process.

### #3 APPLYING FOR ADMISSIONS

Applying for admissions at most colleges can feel a bit overwhelming. It doesn't have to be hard, but it does involve paperwork and organizing information. Most colleges require a high school diploma or GED, transcripts from other colleges you attended (sent by the college itself), immunization records, etc. Each college's website will have a list of what you need to provide them in order to process your admissions paperwork.

You will need to actually apply for admissions through the college's website or on a paper application if it is available. At SAU Tech there is **no** fee for applying and you can do it online at Other universities and colleges may charge an admissions fee; the fee may be anywhere from \$10 to over \$100 and usually is non-refundable. After applying, the admissions office will send an acceptance letter that will contain important information such as your student ID, your student email address, etc. This letter should be kept in a safe place as you will need this information throughout your time in college.

SAU Tech's Admissions Office is always eager to help you! Call 870-574-4558 or email them at [admisofc@sautech.edu](mailto:admisofc@sautech.edu). Until your admissions file is complete, you cannot be fully admitted which means you cannot register for classes. So, it is very important to gather the information ahead of time and then contact the admissions office at the college you are attending to make sure they have received all the documents.

Below is a checklist of information needed to attend SAU Tech:

- Complete the Application for Admission on our website at <https://www.sautech.edu>.**
- Send a copy of your immunization records showing proof of two measles, mumps and rubella shots. If you were born before January 1, 1957, you are exempt from having to provide shot records at this time. If you do not have access to your immunization records, you can restart the cycle at your local health department.**
- Send an official high school transcript showing final date of graduation and GPA OR a copy of GED scores.**
- Send placement scores taken within the last five years. We will accept ACT, SAT, and Accuplacer scores. If you have never taken a college placement exam, you can usually take it at a local college like SAU Tech.**
- Send official college transcripts from all previously attended colleges.**
- If you went to multiple colleges, we will need all of your transcripts, even if your courses were transferred to the college you attended last.**

You can fax GED scores, immunization records and placement scores to 870-574-4558. You can mail official sealed college and high school transcripts to:

SAU Tech – Admissions  
PO Box 3499  
Camden, AR 71711

**NOTE:**Remember, all college and high school transcripts must be sent to us in sealed envelopes. It is perfectly acceptable to have the colleges and high schools send the records to you and then for you to send them to us, but be aware that if you open the envelopes for any reason, they will be considered unofficial and you will need to request new copies.

## **ARE YOU READY TO GET STARTED?**

Beginning college is an exciting decision. Between the commitment of time and money and the fear of wondering “Will I be able to do it?”, it can be easy to give up before we even get started. Don’t. Don’t give up. You will never regret getting an education. Our world will require more people to have more education and skills in the future in order to have a career that pays a livable wage. People with college degrees, at least an associate degree, make more money over a lifetime than their less educated co-workers.

Research from 2011 shows that in Alabama\* high school graduates earned an average of \$25,696 while college graduates earned an average of \$45,631 a year. There is no doubt that training and education will improve your earnings and chances for a career promotion in the future.

Get started today. Call SAU Tech to get assistance with your financial aid, admissions, and more! SAU Tech also offers campus housing, NJCAA athletics, cheerleading, scholars program, scholarships, online degrees, and more! Call us today!

**SAU Tech offers up to 30 hours of college credit for your work or military experience!**

**Call us TODAY! 870-574-4558!**

## **RESOURCES**

<https://www.sautech.edu>

### **PAYING FOR COLLEGE**

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college>

<https://studentaid.gov>

<https://sams.adhe.edu/>

### **BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE STUDENT**

<https://www.educationcorner.com/habits-of-successful-students/>

<http://ideas.time.com/2013/03/13/secrets-of-the-most-successful-college-students/>

\* The data on comparison of wages of educated workers to high school graduates was not available for Arkansas.