How does the Gateway to College Program work?

The Gateway to College program helps students who have dropped out of high school or who may not graduate on time earn high school credit while earning college credits. Many of our students will go on to finish a college degree or certificate or even transfer to a four year college!

Gateway to College does not serve students who are doing well in high school and want to make an early transition to college. Gateway to College works exclusively with students who have not experienced success in a traditional high school. They are either no longer attending or significantly behind in credits and are unable to graduate with their peers.

Once you have been admitted, you will be enrolled in a Gateway to College learning community at El Paso Community College.

When eligible, students will earn both high school and college credits.

Students spend 3-4 hours a day outside of class working on homework.

Students must continue to earn a 2.0 GPA and follow the student code of conduct to remain eligible.

All courses are selected based upon a high school completion plan and educational goals. The Program provides guidance and assistance with this process.

Throughout the course of this program, students will be considered enrolled at both El Paso Community College and their high school.
What can I expect to achieve by enrolling in the Gateway to College Program?

Students are given the opportunity to earn their high school diploma and El Paso Community College credit toward an Associate’s degree or certificate.

The program is not a fast track program for students wanting to graduate, nor is it a program for students who are excelling in school. A Gateway to College student is one who needs a year or more of high school credits to graduate. Gateway to College is designed to give a second chance to those students who are off track and in jeopardy of not graduating on time as well as those students who have dropped out high school.

How long would it take me to earn my high school diploma?

Most students are in Gateway to College for 2-3 years. The exact length of time to earn a diploma varies by a student’s course load and credit needs. Students remain in Gateway to College until they earn a diploma or turn 21, whichever comes first. We encourage graduates of the program to continue their college studies to meet their academic goals.

Who are Gateway to College Students?

Gateway to College if for students who are:

- 16 to 20 years old
- Behind in high school credits (for age and grade)
- Students who live in the following school district: El Paso Independent School District.
- Reading at an 8th grade level or higher (English Proficiency)
- Able to complete their high school diploma by age 21
- Willing to make a long term commitment (two or more years) to work hard to complete high school and progress towards a college degree
- Students who are willing to accept responsibility for their own success
- Students who demonstrate the kind of motivation, attitude, skills, and commitment it takes to be successful in a college environment
What types of students are NOT well-suited to Gateway?

- Are doing well in high school and just want a different learning environment and/or to make an early transition to college.
- Earned a high school certificate but didn’t pass one or more selection of the TAKS.
- Completed a GED certificate and decided they really want a high school diploma.
- Want to complete their high school diploma as quickly as possible so they can enter the military, start a job, etc.
- Are not willing to put the time and effort into college-level and meeting course requirements

What is expected of me?

- Students are expected to attend 100% of classes.
- Students are expected to come to class on time, be prepared with class materials, and possess a positive attitude and mind set and to complete all class and homework assignments.
- Students are expected to spend about 3 hours a day working on their homework (outside of class time). We strongly encourage students who have jobs to consider the time demands of the program.
- Students are expected to earn grades of “C” or higher in all classes.
- Students are expected to maintain contact with their Students Resource Specialist as directed.
- Students are expected to utilize the resources El Paso Community College provides for the students, such as, the Academic Resource Center, Writing Center, Math Center, tutors, etc.
- Students are expected to adhere to El Paso Community College and their school districts policies and procedures.

What is the cost of the program?

Gateway to College is a scholarship program. Tuition and books are covered by the Gateway to College program.
What kind of support will help me be successful?

Students who are accepted into the Gateway to College program are immediately assigned a Resource Specialist. Resource Specialist provides support and access to help all students in the program be successful. Resource Specialists provide the following:

- Transcript and academic advise
- Assistance with completing enrollment and registration paperwork for El Paso Community College.
- Information and referral for resources through Gateway to College, El Paso Community College, local school districts and the community (i.e. tutoring, counseling, student activities, health services etc.)
- Personal counseling and guidance, assistance with problem solving, time management, stress management so students can stay in school and be successful.

If I have been an Individual Education Plan (IEP) at my high school, will I still receive the same services and support at El Paso Community College?

Students who have an Individual Education Plan are eligible to apply to Gateway and will receive equal consideration. We will coordinate with your school district to facilitate this process. Some students with an IEP may be eligible for support through El Paso Community College’s Office for Students with Disabilities.

Can I be considered for the Gateway to College Program if I am still enrolled in high school?

Yes, if you are currently attending high school, please consider staying in school until you know that you have been accepted into the Gateway program. Once you have been accepted into the Gateway Program, you will be given instructions on how to proceed.

How do I apply?

There is a 4 step application process. The first step is to attend a mandatory Information Session. Applications are available on our website [http://dnn.epcc.edu/collegerediness](http://dnn.epcc.edu/collegerediness), and will also be distributed at Information Session.

How do students apply?

- Complete the Gateway to College application, provide the required documentation, and attend the required information and evaluation sessions. Be sure to call the Gateway to College information line at (915) 831-4700 to reserve a seat.
- Accepted applicants will received an admission letter followed by an information packet.
• Admission is not guaranteed; acceptance to the program is based upon test scores, credits, age and residency.

Is this option right for me?

Material is covered at a much faster pace than in high school. If you have the maturity to accept the challenges of the college environment then Gateway to College may be a good choice for you.

To succeed in the program, you’ll need to be in class about 20 hours a week and do three to four hours of homework per day. You are expected to attend every class. Because the program requires a strong commitment, it’s best if you work fewer than 25 hours a week.

The program takes time – most of our students achieve their high school diploma in two to three years, but remember you will be earning college credits too!

What is the college school year?

Gateway to College follows the academic calendar of the El Paso Community College which is different than the local school district calendar. Please see the attached Calendar.

How many students are accepted into the program each semester?

We accept 50 students into the program each semester.

When are classes?

Your typical college day will be 9:00 am to 2:50 pm. Outside of class time, you’ll be required to spend at least 3 – 4 hours each day on studying and homework.

Why do school districts support Gateway to College?

The El Paso School District want all their students to graduate and have bright, promising futures. However, despite the district schools’ best efforts, and many excellent programs, sometimes as traditional high school or even an alternative school setting just isn’t the right “fit” for a student. That’s where Gateway to College comes in.

Our partner district recognizes and appreciates the difference that Gateway can make in the lives of students. For Gateway students, learning in an adult environment, the flexibility of a college schedule and the chance to earn college credits while completing high school make the program the right “fit.”

What happens when a Gateway student graduates?

Once the student has completed requirements for the high school diploma, and all the proper paperwork has been submitted and processed, he/she is awarded the high school diploma during the graduation ceremony, the principal or superintendent from the student’s sponsoring high school actually awards the diploma. The president of El Paso Community College and other dignitaries also
participate in the ceremony and personally congratulate each graduate. If the graduate is simultaneously receiving a postsecondary credential, he/she marches twice – once with the Gateway graduates and again with other El Paso Community College students who are receiving the same postsecondary credential.

If a Gateway graduate needs additional credit to complete his/her postsecondary credential or transfer goal, his/her resource specialist will work to ensure a smooth transition into a “regular” college student status. Among the most important services is making sure the student receives all the available financial aid that he/she qualifies for as a high school graduate. Even through the student has transitioned in a “regular” college student status, his/her resource specialists still serves as a coach and mentor. Our Gateway grads are always part of the “Gateway family!”

**Are Gateway to College students “regular” college students?**

Yes. Gateway to College students attend classes at El Paso Community College taught by college faculty. All classes are offered on the El Paso Community College campus and meet college course standards. Curriculum is not modified for younger students, and students who do not meet expectations cannot continue in the program. Gateway students have full access to all College facilities, services and activities (except intercollegiate athletics)