



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How do I know if I am eligible for the Commonwealth Commitment program?

You are eligible to participate if you:

- 1) plan to enter a Massachusetts Community College between fall 2016 and fall 2017
- 2) attend college full-time, and
- 3) maintain a cumulative GPA of at least 3.0.

2. When can I apply?

You should let your advisor know during your first semester that you intend to apply for the program. Please note that you must declare your interest in entering the program before earning 15 credits at a community college.

3. Is the Commonwealth Commitment only available to Massachusetts residents?

Yes.

4. What if I don't know what I want to major in yet? Can I still apply?

Yes, but the Commonwealth Commitment program works best for students who have a pretty good idea what they want to study. The "Commitment" of a financial discount is made to students who plan to pursue one of the 24 majors that are part of the new MassTransfer Pathways programs or one of the special programs designated by the Massachusetts College of Art and Design or the Massachusetts Maritime Academy. Commonwealth Commitment students need to remain on track to graduate from a state university or UMass campus within 4-4.5 years. So, it's best to identify your major when you enter the program.

5. What if I change my major?

In most cases, changing your major will mean that you will need to take additional required courses. That could make it difficult or impossible for you to graduate in the maximum time permitted for Commonwealth Commitment students, which is 4.5 years. That said, many students change majors for very good reasons. It may be the right move for you, and you may find additional scholarships or other aid to offset the loss of the Commonwealth Commitment discount. For example, MassTransfer students who maintain a 3.0 GPA earn a 100% tuition waiver at a state university, or a 100% tuition credit at UMass. Visit www.mass.edu/masstransfer to explore the benefits.

6. How and when will I receive the Commonwealth Commitment discount?

At the end of every semester you complete, assuming you maintain a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, you will receive a 10% rebate in the form of a check, or may opt to receive those funds in the form of a voucher for use at your campus bookstore.

7. How much money will I save?

Students who complete the Commonwealth Commitment program will realize an average savings of \$5,090 depending on the institutions you choose to attend. Additionally, your tuition and fees will not increase as you progress through the program, even if these costs rise for other students. This could translate into additional savings.

8. Does the Commonwealth Commitment cover the costs of textbooks?

Not directly, but you may decide to use some of the savings you realize through participating in the program to pay for textbooks or other expenses.

9. I have to work to pay for school. Can I do the Commonwealth Commitment program as a part-time student?

No. Students must enroll in a full-time course of study, taking 15 courses per semester (or 12 credits during fall and spring semesters, and additional credits during winter and summer terms). Many students do manage to attend full-time and also work a number of hours outside of school, although it is very hard to go to school full-time and also work full-time. The program isn't for everyone. The state has launched the Commonwealth Commitment because research shows that full-time students save money on the overall cost of their education, and also tend to have better academic outcomes than students who go part-time.

10. Do I have the option of moving into on-campus housing when I transfer to a state university or UMass campus?

Yes—but at an additional cost. Room and board are not covered under the terms of the Commonwealth Commitment program.

11. Why aren't nursing and engineering programs included?

These high-demand programs are expensive for universities to run, and it is impossible to discount such programs at this time.

12. I have been accepted to UMass and several of the state universities but wonder if I should now plan to attend a community college first and then transfer in for my last two years. Won't I save a lot of money?

You might—but then again, you might not. UMass campuses and state universities have increased scholarship support to students. Check all your financial options and get advice from the college of your choice before selecting a two-year or four-year college pathway.

13. Why do Massachusetts College of Art & Design and Massachusetts Maritime Academy require that students transfer after only 1.5 years at a community college?

As “special-mission” institutions, the MassArt and Mass Maritime’s academic programs require an earlier transfer by students in order to complete a full course of study. You will complete the final semester of your associate’s degree at MassArt or MMA; those credits will “reverse transfer” back to your community college and you will earn both an associate’s degree and a bachelor’s degree.

Also, if you attend Mass Maritime, you will also be required to live on campus—and, for some majors, complete a semester at sea—in order to graduate.

14. Are all Massachusetts colleges and universities taking part in the Commonwealth Commitment?

All PUBLIC campuses are. These include the four undergraduate campuses of the University of Massachusetts, nine state universities, and 15 community colleges. Private colleges and universities are not signatories to the Commonwealth Commitment agreement.

For more information, visit
www.mass.edu/MAComCom