

Choosing the Right College

Confused about college? Here's your outline of college and education options

Four-Year Colleges and Universities

- Generally, students are enrolled for four years and graduate with a Bachelor's degree.
- Four-year colleges offer a wider variety of academic courses and give students time and opportunities to explore their interests.
- Many larger universities attract the top professors and offer modern facilities and a wealth of academic resources.
- Students acquire and develop skills needed to succeed in the workplace.

Community, Junior Colleges or Two-Year Colleges

- Associate's degrees can be attained in two years while non-degree certificates in specific areas can take less than two years.
- Credits earned can sometimes be transferred to a four-year college so be sure to verify if the credits will transfer if you are interested in doing so.
- Tuition at community colleges is typically less expensive compared to four-year colleges.
- Course schedules are flexible, with day and evening classes offered for working students.
- Community college courses are also available to high school students to get a head start on college and to adult students to further professional development.
- For more information, visit the American Association of Community Colleges at: www.aacc.nche.edu.

Online Schools

Opportunities to study online grow each year. Before signing up, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is it an accredited institution with your program of interest? Demonstrating that your degree is from an accredited institution is important when you're looking for a job or applying to another school.
- What is the graduation rate of the institution?
- What financial aid is available? Ask the school and check out Fastweb for scholarships: www.fastweb.com
- Do they use full-time faculty?
- What are students doing after graduation? Look for a college that has alumni in established careers.
- How is the program structured? Find out how much interaction there is between student and teacher.
- Is the program run through a traditional college or university? Additional financial aid may be available through the college directly.

Vocational, Technical and Career Schools

- Students enroll in courses for one or two years to learn the skills needed for a specific career.
- Vocational and technical colleges offer certificate or degree programs a four-year college may not.
- Do your research before enrolling by calling the school and asking for proof of accreditation and job placement.

Armed Forces Service Academies

- Qualifications for admission are very competitive. They include rigorous physical and academic requirements.
- Students receive a full scholarship upon admission.
- Service time is required upon graduation from the academy (most branches require at least five years of active service).

List of U.S. Military Branch Academies:

Army	U.S. Military Academy	www.usma.edu
Navy	U.S. Naval Academy	www.usna.edu
Merchant Marines	U.S. Merchant Marines	www.usmma.edu
Coast Guard	U.S. Coast Guard Academy	www.cga.edu
Directory	Assoc of Military Colleges and Schools	www.amcsus.org



Interim Programs

- Explore your interests in a program that takes place in the interim between the end of high school and the start of college.
- Focus on what you want to do in college.
- Develop independence while working on your own.
- Build your resume before you get to college.
- Create a network base of varied contacts.
- Check out www.interimprograms.com and ask your high school counselor for more information.