

## Choosing the Right College

Confused about college? Here are some options you may want to consider.

### 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 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 or Junior Colleges

- Associate's degrees or certificates in specific areas can be attained in two years.
- Credits earned can usually be transferred to a four-year college.
- 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](http://www.aacc.nche.edu).

### 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](http://www.usma.edu)
- *Navy*: U.S. Naval Academy  
[www.usna.edu](http://www.usna.edu)
- *Air Force*: U.S. Air Force Academy  
[www.usafa.edu](http://www.usafa.edu)
- *Merchant Marines*: U.S. Merchant Marine Academy  
[www.usmma.edu](http://www.usmma.edu)
- *Coast Guard*: U.S. Coast Guard Academy  
[www.cga.edu](http://www.cga.edu)
- Association of Military Colleges and Schools  
[www.amcsus.org](http://www.amcsus.org)

### Vocational, Technical and Career Schools

- Students enroll in courses for one or two years to learn the skills needed for a specific career.
- On average, tuition at vocational schools is less expensive than four-year schools, though many vocational schools are not eligible for federal aid.
- 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.

### Online Schools

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

- Is it an accredited institution? Demonstrating that your degree is from an accredited institution is important when you're looking for a job or applying to another school.
- What financial aid is available? Ask the school and check out FastWeb for scholarships: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com).
- Is there full-time faculty?
- What are students doing after graduation? Look for a college that has advanced students into 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 aid may be available through the college directly.

### 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](http://www.interimprograms.com) and ask your counselor for more information.

**Free search of over  
600,000 scholarships and  
over 4,000 colleges  
[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)**