

## 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](http://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](http://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	<a href="http://www.usma.edu">www.usma.edu</a>
Navy	U.S. Naval Academy	<a href="http://www.usna.edu">www.usna.edu</a>
Merchant Marines	U.S. Merchant Marines	<a href="http://www.usmma.edu">www.usmma.edu</a>
Coast Guard	U.S. Coast Guard Academy	<a href="http://www.cga.edu">www.cga.edu</a>
Directory	Assoc of Military Colleges and Schools	<a href="http://www.amcsus.org">www.amcsus.org</a>



### 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 high school counselor for more information.