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Other Educational Choices

Over 80% of all careers require education or training beyond a general high school education. You can prepare for your career by going to a two-year or four-year college, or you can choose one of the educational options listed below.



Specialty colleges

Specialty colleges have a very limited number of programs. Art colleges, nursing colleges, and business colleges are all examples of specialty colleges. The costs for these colleges and the lengths of their programs vary, depending on the program and the college.



Career and trade schools

These schools offer short-term training programs in a wide variety of career fields (auto body technology, welding, photography, dental assisting, etc.). While some programs last only a few weeks, others take up to two years to complete.

Although career and trade schools can be expensive, their costs vary, depending on the program. Credits from these schools generally cannot be transferred to another college.



Apprenticeships

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn their trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Apprenticeship programs are an excellent way to receive training in the skilled trades (electrician, plumber, carpenter, etc.). Apprenticeship programs are, however, often difficult to get into.



Military

The U.S. military offers free job training in over 2,000 job specialties (mechanic, computer technician, paramedic, etc.). Enlistees can also take college classes while they are in the military.



How Do You Decide Where to Go?

Deciding where to go to college is really about finding a college that's a good match for you.

Choosing a college is much easier if you know what you're looking for. Here are some things you should consider when you're choosing a college.

Location

Where do you want to go to college? Do you want to attend a college close to home, or would you rather go away to school? Do you want to be where it's warm, where there's snow, or by the ocean? Would you rather go to a college in a big city or a small town?

Most students go to a college in the state where they live. This is primarily because it usually costs less to go to a public college in your home state. For example, it costs a student living in Texas more to go to Ohio State University than it costs a student living in Ohio. Going to college in your home state also makes it easier to get home for holidays and vacations.

In order to save money, some students go to a college that's close enough for them to commute (drive back and forth). Students who live at home and commute can save a lot of money on living expenses.

College size

While some small colleges have just a few hundred students, large universities can have over 25,000 students. When you think about what size campus you'd like most, remember that larger colleges have more majors, more courses, and more activities to choose from. Smaller colleges are more personal, the classes usually have fewer students, and they're easier to get around.

Majors

All four-year colleges have a variety of majors. While most colleges have popular majors like business and education, no college is able to offer every major. If there's a specific subject that you want to study, you need to look for colleges that have that major. For example, if you want to study marine biology, you need to look for colleges that offer a major in marine biology.

Admissions requirements

Colleges have their own admission requirements. Some colleges accept all high school graduates; other colleges are more selective and harder to get into. Look for colleges that accept students with academic records similar to yours.

Special programs

If there's a specific program, activity, or sport that's important to you, then you need to find the colleges that offer that program or activity. Perhaps you want to go to a college that has an orchestra, or maybe you want to play college volleyball. Having something that you definitely want will help narrow your list of college choices.

Costs



Talk to your parents about how you're going to pay for college, and figure out if cost is something you need to take into consideration. *Remember, there are ways to make college affordable. Don't ever think that you can't go to college because you don't have the money! (See page 22.)*

Other criteria

Some students choose a college for other reasons. Maybe you want to go to an all girls or all boys college, a historically black college, or one with a particular religious denomination.

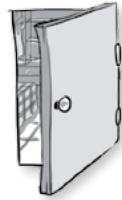


Living in a Dorm

If you go to a four-year college in a different city or town, you will probably be required to live in a residence hall or dorm during your freshman year.

Living in a dorm is a wonderful way to meet new people and make new friends. Freshman dorms can also be lots of fun. Everyone there is new, and everyone's excited about starting college. Many lifetime friendships have started in a freshman dorm.

Most freshman dorm rooms are designed for two students. Some dorms also have suites, which are usually big enough for four or more students. As a general rule, each student is provided with a single bed, a desk, and a chair. Students bring their own blankets, pillows, curtains, carpet, pictures, etc. Most dorms have community bathrooms, although some suites have their own bathroom.



Some dorms have both male and female students living in them (co-ed dorms), and some dorms are single sex. In co-ed dorms the boys and girls are usually separated. For example, they may have one floor for girls and one for boys.

Almost all dorms have an area for students to watch TV or socialize, along with quiet areas for students to study. Many dorms also have dining halls where students can eat their meals.

If you and a friend are going to the same college, you can request that you be roommates. Most students, however, just sign up for a dorm and they're assigned a roommate. Colleges try to put students together who have things in common, and roommates often end up being good friends.

"I was really nervous about meeting my roommate at the beginning of the year, but he's really cool, and we get along great."

Marcus Adkins, College Freshman



A Typical College Day

While every day is different, “Jennifer’s Wednesday Schedule” will give you an idea of what a typical college day might look like.

Jennifer - Wednesday Schedule



7:30 - 8:00 - Get up, shower, get dressed

8:00 - 8:45 - Eat breakfast in the dorm cafeteria

8:45 - 8:55 - Walk to Schaffer Hall for Economics 101

9:00 - 9:50 - CLASS - Economics 101

10:00 - 10:45 - Hang out at Student Center with Kate

10:45 - 10:55 - Walk to Rizer Hall for Psychology 125

11:00 - 11:50 - CLASS - Psychology 125

12:00 - 1:00 - Eat lunch at East Quad cafeteria

1:00 - 1:10 - Walk to Houck Library

1:10 - 3:45 - Do research for English paper

3:45 - 3:55 - Walk to Lindsay Hall for English 101

4:00 - 4:50 - CLASS - English 101

5:00 - 5:50 - Go to Rec Center - jog and work out

6:00 - 7:00 - Eat dinner in dorm cafeteria

7:00 - 9:45 - Go to study room - review class notes

for psychology, study for Biology quiz, and do

outline for English term paper

9:45 - 11:00 - Go to Tamara’s room and watch CSI

11:15 - Lights out



Student Activities

There's more to college than just taking classes. Being involved in student activities makes college a lot more fun.

Student organizations

Colleges offer a variety of student clubs and organizations. In fact, a large university may have hundreds of student groups and organizations (chess, paintball, zoology, photography, Frisbee, nature, history, etc.). Getting involved in a club or organization is a great way to meet other students with similar interests.

"I joined the bike club my sophomore year. I've made so many friends through this club - it's great." Whitney Jones, College Junior

Community service programs

On most college campuses, you'll find several community service programs (Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers and Sisters, etc.). Colleges encourage their students to become involved in community service activities and to make a difference by helping others.

Intramural and club sports



Many colleges have intramural and club teams for several different sports. These sports often include baseball, field hockey, golf, handball, rugby, soccer, and tennis.

Intramural programs are mostly for people who want to play a sport for fun. Club teams are more selective and competitive. They are for athletes who want to play a sport at a higher level.

"I played soccer in high school, so I was happy when I found out that my freshman dorm had an intramural team. Our games are fun, and a lot of the guys on my team are really good soccer players."

James Garfield, College Freshman

Cultural activities

Colleges and universities are centers for cultural activities. Concerts, theater performances, lectures, and art shows all provide students with wonderful opportunities to broaden their horizons and have new experiences.

Recreation / Sports centers

Many college campuses have recreation centers where students can swim, lift weights, run, and work out. These centers provide students with a place to go to relieve stress, keep in shape, and meet friends.

Sporting events

College sporting events are fun and exciting. They also give students an opportunity to get together and to show their school spirit. On many college campuses the weekend football and basketball games are a big part of campus life.

Fraternities and sororities (Greek life)

Many colleges have social groups called fraternities and sororities. (Guys join fraternities and girls join sororities.) Only a small percentage of college students join fraternities and sororities, but these groups are often very visible on campus.



All fraternities and sororities are identified by Greek letters. Sigma Chi (ΣΧ) and Phi Delta Theta (ΦΔΘ) are two examples of national fraternities. Most fraternities and sororities have a house on or close to the college campus. Fraternities and sororities use their houses for meetings, social activities, and as a place to hang out. Many members live in their fraternity or sorority house instead of living in a dorm or apartment.

For the students who “go Greek,” their fraternity or sorority often becomes their main social group during college.