

Your College Search – “The Good Fit”

Once you begin to narrow your choices of possible career goals you can begin to think about how to reach that goal. Which colleges offer the academic program(s) that will lead to your goal? Can your family afford that college? Can you start at a college close to home and transfer later? These are questions that all potential college students need to address. The following chart explains different types of postsecondary institutions and their academic options:

Types of Postsecondary Educational Institutions	
College	An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a 2-year or 4-year program.
University	An academic organization which grants <i>undergraduate</i> and <i>graduate</i> degrees in a variety of fields. It is composed of a number of 'schools' or 'colleges' each of which encompasses a general field of study.
Liberal Arts College	Four-year institution which emphasizes program of broad undergraduate education. Pre-professional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.
Junior College	Two-year institution of higher learning which provides vocational training and academic curricula (terminal and transfer). <i>Terminal Course</i> : Academic program is complete in itself. A student who completes it may not apply to a 4-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements. <i>Transfer Course</i> : Academic program is designed to lead into a 4-year course at another college or university.
Community College	Two-year public institution offering similar programs as junior colleges
Engineering or Technological College	Independent professional schools which provide 4-year training programs in the fields of engineering and physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.
Technical School	A 2-year institution that offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering and physical sciences. These schools may also offer 1-year certificates in certain crafts and clerical skills.
Nursing School	There are two kinds of nursing schools. At schools affiliated with 4-year colleges, students receive both a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) Degree and an R.N. and have the possibility of entering the field of nursing administration. At a community college, students receive an Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.) Degree and an R.N.
Military Schools	Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. These institutions (West Point, Annapolis, the Air Force Academy) require recommendation and appointment by members of Congress. Private and state supported military institutes, however, operate on a college application basis. They all offer degree programs in engineering and technology with concentrations in various aspects of military science.
Business School	Business schools fall into two categories. At some colleges it is possible to specialize in business administration or in a 2-year secretarial course in conjunction with liberal arts courses and earn an Associate in Applied Science Degree (A.A.S.). Other institutions offer predominantly business or secretarial courses and may or may not be regionally accredited.

Students with disabilities have other issues to consider in addition to those mentioned earlier. Not all postsecondary institutions provide exactly the same programs and services for students with disabilities. It is important to know that the college you choose can offer the kinds of programs and support services that you need. The following is a list of questions to help you identify colleges that can meet your specific needs. Not all of them will apply to you, but those that do will help you begin a dialogue with the college's Disability Support staff and will help you generate other questions that you do need to ask.