

# TYPES OF INSTITUTIONS



## PUBLIC COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Public colleges and universities are owned and funded by state governments or local municipalities. These institutions typically offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs across various disciplines. While students are still subject to tuition, the tuition tends to be lower than other types of institutions, especially for students who are residents of the respective state. Because these schools are public and serve a large pool of students, total enrollment and class sizes tend to be larger as compared to other types of institutions. Public colleges and universities tend to operate as 4-year institutions, meaning the average time to earn a degree is 4 years. These institutions of higher learning may receive state funding to support research initiatives.

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## PRIVATE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Private colleges and universities are educational institutions that are independently owned and operated, often by nonprofit organizations or religious affiliates. These institutions rely on tuition fees, donations, and endowments for funding, rather than government support. Private colleges and universities may offer specialized programs, smaller class sizes, and more personalized attention compared to their public counterparts. They often have higher tuition rates, but financial aid and scholarships are commonly available to students.

Many public and private colleges and universities have branches of “schools” that are tailored to specialized fields of study (e.g. business school, science & engineering school, arts school, education and human development school, etc.) Oftentimes, these universities require you to declare a major in their application, which grants you admission into a “school” or department where the major is offered, so it is important to consider what you want to study prior to applying.

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## COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Community colleges, also known as junior colleges or two-year colleges, offer associate degrees (and in some cases, 4-year degrees), vocational certificates, and transfer programs to prepare students for further education or entry-level careers. These institutions provide accessible and affordable higher education opportunities to a diverse student population, including recent high school graduates, working adults, and individuals seeking to upgrade their skills. Community colleges often offer flexible scheduling, online courses, and support services to accommodate students' needs.

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## VOCATIONAL/TRADE

Vocational and trade schools focus on providing practical, hands-on training in specific trades or professions, such as mechanical, plumbing, automotive technology, cosmetology, healthcare, culinary arts, and construction. These institutions offer certificate, diploma, or associate degree programs designed to equip students with the skills and knowledge needed for immediate employment in their chosen field. Vocational and trade schools often collaborate with industry partners to ensure their programs are relevant and aligned with workforce demands.

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## SCHOOLS WITH A SPECIALIZED FOCUS

- Arts Schools: These institutions offer programs in disciplines such as theater, dance, music, visual arts, design, fashion, and film production. They provide intensive training and creative opportunities for aspiring artists, performers, and designers.
- Religious Institutions: Colleges and universities affiliated with religious denominations integrate faith-based values and teachings into their academic programs. These institutions often offer a supportive community environment and opportunities for spiritual growth.

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