degrees help

EDUCATION SUCCESS KIT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 SECTION 1: DETERMINE YOUR PATH

Why Choose Higher Education?
Time Commitment
School Options
Study Formats
Levels of Study
Common Fields of Study

13 SECTION 2: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

How To Navigate Admissions
Paying For Your Education

18 SECTION 3: YOU'RE IN! WHAT'S NEXT?

Tips For A Successful Education Experience





SECTION 1

DETERMINE YOUR PATH

WHY CHOOSE HIGHER EDUCATION?

Students may choose to pursue higher education for the opportunity to receive higher pay. 58% of students reported an improved career outcome as one of their motivations for postsecondary education.

Full-time workers aged 25 with

A high school degree: $875/week

A bachelor's degree: $1,547/week

An advanced degree: $3,101-$4618/week

Aside from higher pay, students may also choose to pursue higher education to change careers or to gain more knowledge and experience in other areas of interest. Ultimately, higher education can be a strong foundation for achieving personal and professional goals, regardless of your motivations.



https://learn.org/articles/What_is_the_Importance_of_Higher_Education.html



TIME COMMITMENT

FULL-TIME ENROLLMENT

Generally, a full-time student has enrolled in at least 12 credits or approximately four classes per semester. At most institutions, when a full-time student takes enough credits to go over the tuition cost cap, they typically won't have to pay for each class anymore because the cap will include the extra classes. Even though full-time students pay more upfront, they save more money over time.

Full-time students spend more time in class and may be able to complete school faster. In addition, full-time students are eligible for more scholarships and financial aid programs.

PART-TIME ENROLLMENT

A part-time student typically enrolls in less than 12 credit hours. Part-time students pay per credit, which can be a national average of $390 per credit hour.

Part-time students enjoy a flexible schedule at school and for their other responsibilities. Essentially, part-time students can work more hours throughout their studies, allowing them to potentially pay off their tuition without taking out any large loans.

The number of credits to qualify as a full-time or part-time student may differ across different schools. Make sure to check each school's policies on enrollment status and tuiton implications.

https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/full-time-vs-part-time-student/

SCHOOL OPTIONS

UNIVERSITY

University is a public or private four-year institution that offers undergraduate and graduate programs to receive a bachelor's degree, master's degree, or advanced degree. Universities are focused on research, and thus, students may learn from highly qualified researchers in their field.

Going to a university often means being part of a community with people from different backgrounds, having a variety of programs to choose from, learning from highly-qualified professors, and living on campus if that's something you want to do.

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Attending community college is a way to get a quality education for two years instead of four, which can be beneficial if you need to balance work, family, or other responsibilities. There are a variety of educational programs, such as an associate's degree, trade degree, vocational certificate, or transferable credits toward a future bachelor's degree.

If you attend a community college, you will reap the benefits of affordable education, more flexible schedules, a possibly convenient location, and the ability to get a head start on your bachelor's degree.



SCHOOL OPTIONS

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE

A liberal arts college is a four-year institution that does not focus on specialization and emphasizes a diverse education across humanities, art, and math. Their courses highlight transferable skills so you can find positions across different industries.

If you choose a liberal arts college, you will enjoy smaller classes, intimate campuses, and possibly stronger religious affiliations due to the absence of public funding.

VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Vocational school, or trade school, focuses on trade-specific training that runs for two or fewer years. There are little to no general education courses in the curriculum as the schools prioritize hands-on training for your specialty.

If you choose to go to trade school, you can expect to benefit from lower costs, a quicker graduation timeline, small class sizes, focused learning on your selected subject, and fewer admission requirements.



https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/difference-between-college-and-university/

STUDY FORMATS

ONLINE, IN-PERSON, OR HYBRID LEARNING

You can choose to study completely online, in person, or a mix of both. Each mode of learning has its own benefits and drawbacks, and the decision depends on your goals and needs.

With **in-person learning**, you will have more opportunities to network, and have a more immersive learning experience because you will have fewer distractions and more hands-on projects.

With **online learning**, you'll have more flexibility with your schedule, learn at your own pace, and pay less than you would for in-person schooling. You will have to make sure you have a stable internet connection.

With **hybrid learning**, you will have a blend of in-person and online learning experiences. Hybrid learning allows you to have easy access to your material and learn it on your own time while getting an in-person discussion with your peers. However, if you realize you strongly dislike either online or in-person learning formats, you will have to adapt your learning accordingly, and that may be something you don't want to do.



LEVELS OF STUDY



ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE

An associate's degree is a two-year degree usually offered at technical colleges, career, colleges, community colleges, and some four-year universities.

You can choose to take an Associate in Science (AS) or Associate in Arts (AS). An AS requires you to take more specialized classes in your subject of interest while an AA is a broader degree consisting of different subjects.

Getting an associate's degree is a cost-efficient, time-efficient, and competitive approach to showing employers your dedication to career development. Also, if you plan to pursue a bachelor's degree later, your credits can easily transfer.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

A bachelor's degree is a four or five-year program in a specific area of study. These degrees are offered by public universities, private universities, liberal arts colleges, career colleges, and online schools.

Depending on what your university offers, you can choose to take a bachelor of science (BS), bachelor of arts (BA), bachelor of fine arts (BFA), or a bachelor of architecture (BArch).

Pursuing a bachelor's degree can increase your job opportunities, provide you with valuable networking connections, and a higher earning potential.



LEVELS OF STUDY

MASTER'S DEGREE

Otherwise called graduate degrees, these are typically two-year, advanced degrees students can pursue after getting their bachelor's. A master's degree is more specialized and deepens your knowledge of your selected study. You may enroll in a graduate program that is different from your bachelor's degree, but it is important to keep in mind that you may need to take more classes to compensate.

You can choose to pursue a master of arts (MA), master of science (MS), master of fine arts (MFA), and master of business administration (MBA).

Graduate degrees holders may earn higher paid positions than an associate's or bachelor's.

ADVANCED DEGREES

Obtaining a doctoral or professional degree from a university is the highest level of education one can achieve, resulting in the coveted title of "doctor" in their field and potentially higher earnings. These programs are offered at universities.

A doctoral degree, or Ph.D., is research-centered and typically involves 3-6 years of schooling. Careers with this degree include university professors, scientific researchers, consultants, and more.

A professional degree is centered around applied knowledge involving 1-5 years of schooling. People with these degrees are typically lawyers, doctors, or dentists. Some examples of professional degrees include a JD, MD, and others.

LEVELS OF STUDY

CERTIFICATE PROGRAM

A certificate program is a specialized course of study that helps you build skills for your job. Earning a certificate can take several months to complete and are typically cheaper than degree programs.

They can be taken at beginner or advanced levels to suit someone who is looking to make a career change or someone who is looking to move up.

Certificates can give you a competitive edge in the job market and the opportunity to increase your earnings because of the additional expertise learned.

LICENSURE PROGRAM

Licensure programs prepare students with the necessary skills and knowledge required by state and federal regulations, enabling them to lawfully practice their chosen profession. Some colleges offer certifications alongside their degree programs.

Gaining a license is necessary to work legally in jobs such as salon-related services, teaching, pharmacy, and others. You can check your state's list of licensed professions to see what jobs need a license.

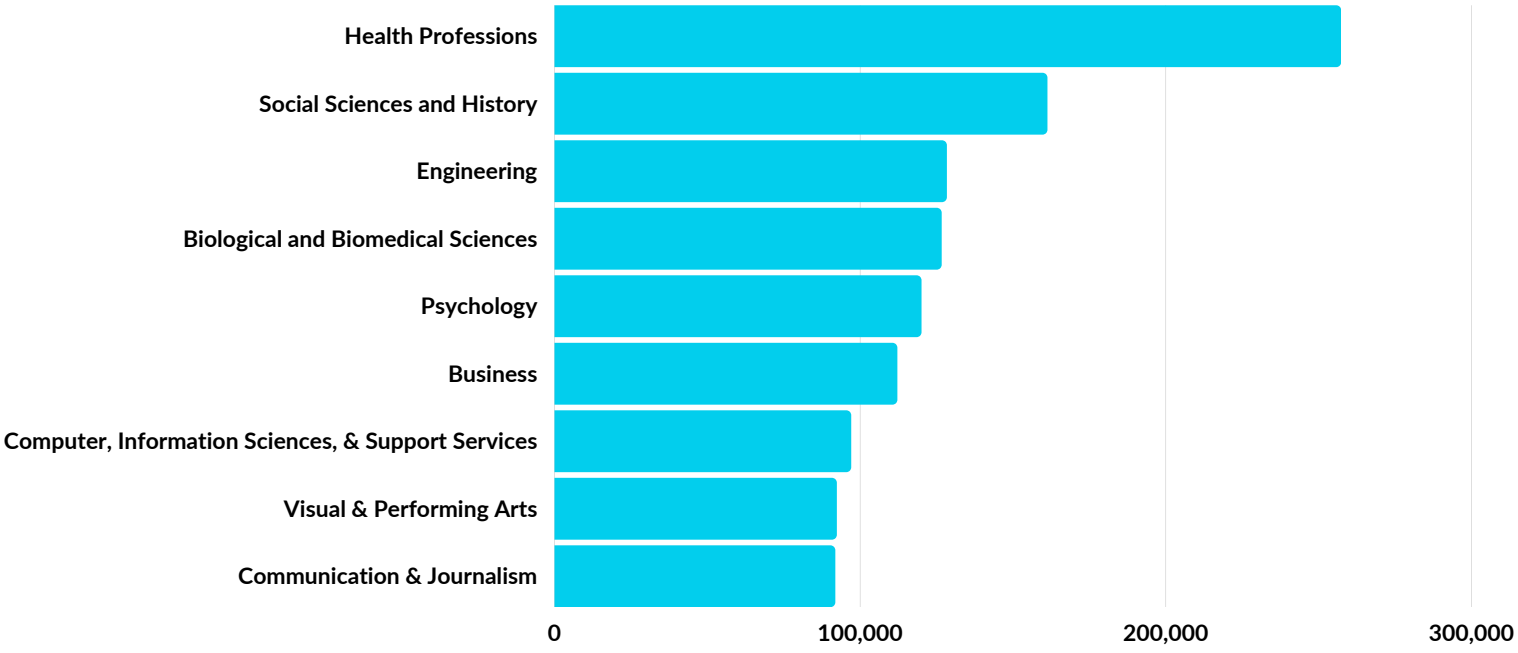
https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/4-benefits-of-earning-a-certification-in-your-field-of/346287

COMMON FIELDS OF STUDY

ONLINE, IN-PERSON, OR HYBRID LEARNING

With higher education, the possibilities are endless. There are majors and programs for subjects you may already know about as well as ones you have not been exposed to yet.

The most popular college majors can be described to fall under three categories: liberal arts and sciences, general studies, and humanities. Other common college programs include criminal justice, anthropology, political science, education, and trades.



 https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/college-major-quiz



SECTION 2

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

HOW TO NAVIGATE ADMISSIONS

STEP 1: RESEARCH YOUR PROGRAM

Decide what program and field of study you want to pursue. Choosing what you want to study and dedicate to a career can be intimidating and force you to dig deep inside yourself.

Ask yourself what you can envision yourself doing and if it aligns with your career goals. From there, research potential programs and consider the program's location, cost, faculty, and opportunities.

STEP 2: GATHER THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS AND APPLY

When you have selected the program you want to take, find the application for the program on their website or through Common App, fill it out with your information, and attach the necessary documents. If you need clarification on your program's requirements, reach out to your institution's admissions office. Submit your application before the deadline.

STEP 3: WAIT FOR YOUR ACCEPTANCE LETTERS

Once you've submitted everything, you will have to wait for the institution's decision. You will receive your answer usually by email or mail.

STEP 4: CHOOSE A COLLEGE AND PUT YOUR DEPOSIT DOWN

If you have several acceptances, review each program and the deadlines to choose the one that is best for you and your goals. Once you have selected a program, put down your deposit to secure your spot before the deadline. Follow the directions on your acceptance letter and on any other materials your program sends you.

PAYING FOR YOUR EDUCATION

FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid, or FAFSA, is used to figure out how much government student aid, like grants, loans, and work-study programs, a student is eligible for. The form asks about the student's finances and is used by both the federal government and schools to figure out how much financial help the student needs. To get the most help possible, it's important to fill out your FAFSA as soon as possible.

STEP 1: CREATE AN ACCOUNT

Go to studentaid.gov to create a FAFSA account. You can start your application online or print it out to mail once you've completed the forms.

STEP 2: GATHER DOCUMENTS AS NEEDED

You will need your social security number, your alien registration number if you are an eligible noncitizen, and federal income tax returns, W-2s, and other financial records. You can use the IRS retrieval tool to securely gather your tax returns if needed. You will be signing your FAFSA forms using an FSA ID, or legal digital signature, which uses your social security number. If you are a dependent, your parent will also need to create their own FSA ID to sign off on certain financial documents.

STEP 3: FILL OUT THE FAFSA FORM ONLINE BEFORE THE DEADLINE

Answer all of the questions on the form. Questions will include your personal information, financial information, and legal parents' information if you are a dependent student. If you need clarification on anything on your FAFSA, contact your institution's financial aid office or FAFSA help center agents to help you.

https://studentaid.gov/h/understand-aid/how-aid-works

PAYING FOR YOUR EDUCATION

FAFSA

STEP 4: MAKE SURE YOUR FORM IS PROCESSED

At the end of your FAFSA application, once you hit submit, you should see a confirmation page. If you submitted it with an email address, then you will also receive a confirmation via email. You can check your FAFSA's processing status through your Student Aid Report on fafsa.gov or by contacting the Federal Student Aid Information Center. Online forms will be processed more quickly than if you print them out.

STEP 5: DECIDE WHICH AID OFFER YOU WILL TAKE

After receiving your aid offers, it is crucial to understand the conditions. Some offers might require you to repay a loan, earn money via work-study, or obtain a grant that offers you free money. Evaluate which alternatives are suitable for you, and then notify your school that you accept their aid offer as instructed in your offer letter.



PAYING FOR YOUR EDUCATION

FORMS OF FINANCIAL AID

Loans: Loans are borrowed money that you have to pay back with interest. This money is for you to attend school.

Work study: Under a federal program, work-study jobs allow you to earn money to cover your educational expenses by working part-time at your school.

Grants: Grants are a form of financial aid that gives you free money for school. Recipients of grants won't have the repay anything. Pell, military service, and the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) are a few grants the federal government offers.

Scholarships: Scholarships are given by nonprofit or private organizations to help you pay for your education. This is another form of free money that you will not have to pay back. The criteria to receive a scholarship may be based on merit, talent, area of study, background, or activities you've done.

TIPS WHEN APPLYING

- Fill out your application early. FAFSA usually opens on October 1st annually, and awards are given on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- Avoid common errors such as listing any wrong information, leaving blank fields, or forgetting to list any relevant information. Errors can delay the process.



https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types



SECTION 3

YOU'RE IN! WHAT'S NEXT?

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

SHOW UP PREPARED TO EVERY CLASS

Make sure to go over the information from the previous lessons and do any readings or homework that you were given. Also, bring everything you need, like your textbooks, notes, and writing tools. The items you need for each class should be listed on your syllabus. Being ready for class not only helps you take part in discussions and activities, but also shows your teacher and classmates that you respect them.

LEARN TO MANAGE YOUR TIME

Adding classes to your schedule can be a balancing act. From school work, social outings, and jobs, you may have a lot of responsibilities to make time for. Learn how much time you need to dedicate to each activity and its deadlines. It helps to create a physical or virtual schedule to keep track of your assignments and appointments. Make sure you are also giving yourself time to decompress after, too. Putting time into your well-being is important, whether that means spending time on your hobbies or going out to eat for dinner.

CONNECT WITH CAREER SERVICES

Your institution's career services can help prepare you for the job-hunting process. From resume reviews to mock interviews, career services can assist you with any aspect of your career. Career services also helps you explore career pathways, introduce you to internships or jobs, and provide you with networking opportunities. Either find your career services office in person or contact them online to set up an appointment to learn more about what they can do for you.



TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL EDUCATION EXPERIENCE

TALK TO YOUR INSTRUCTORS AND PEERS

Going to college is a new opportunity to network and make friends. Getting to know new people can be fun if you want to hang out with them in your downtime or establish a meaningful connection for your career in the long run. You can also connect with your instructors to learn more about their areas of expertise or establish a positive and respectful relationship with them. Talking to your professors beyond class topics may help you down the road when you need a letter of recommendation or career advice.

ASK FOR HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

One of the most important parts of going to school is being able to understand what you are being taught. It's important to let your teacher know if you're having trouble with a concept or task. You can raise your hand in class, make an appointment, or meet with them during office hours. Additionally, reaching out to your classmates can also be helpful if you missed any notes or would like to study with others.

