

Types of Colleges

Public colleges are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located.

Private colleges rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students.

For-profit colleges function more like businesses and offer a variety of degree programs which typically prepare students for a specific career. They tend to have higher costs, which could mean graduating with more debt. Credits earned may not transfer to other colleges, so be sure to check with the admission office at each college.

Four-year colleges offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges, and are what many people think of as “traditional” colleges.

Two-year colleges offer programs that last up to two years that lead to a certificate or an associate degree. These include community colleges, vocational-technical colleges and career colleges.

Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition.

Technical and career colleges offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees.

Liberal arts colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which includes areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study.

Art colleges and conservatories focus on the arts. In addition to regular course work, these colleges provide training in areas such as photography, music, theater or fashion design. Most of these colleges offer associate or bachelor's degrees in the fine arts or a specialized field

Specialized-mission colleges such as historically **black colleges and universities (HBCUs)** focus on educating African American students. **Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs)** are colleges where at least 25 percent of the full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic. HBCUs and HSIs may offer programs, services and activities targeted to the underrepresented students they serve.

Source: *The College Board* - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/find-colleges/college-101/types-of-colleges-the-basics>

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