

# Choosing a college



**Students who are considering the option of attending a college should first have an idea of a career pathway and the postsecondary training needed to obtain that career. Once this is determined, the next important step is to choose the college or training program that is right for you.**

## Research and visit

A variety of colleges and training options are available, so you will want to research college websites and visit campuses to select the one that meets your educational and personal needs.

## Things to consider

When researching your selection, keep in mind the level of education your career goal requires, such as a certificate, associate’s degree, bachelor’s degree or master’s degree, and then match this to a reputable program that awards the certification you will need for your chosen career.

There are also short-term training options available such as workshops and noncredit-based courses for technical skills required in jobs such as welders, forklift operators and boilermakers. To narrow your search of choices, decide what you are looking for in a school and determine whether you prefer a small college, large university or online option.

Other considerations include distance from home, size of the community, availability of dormitories or other housing options, and ease of transportation.

## OPTION 1

### Public community and technical colleges

- Offer specific career and technical programs and also offer courses that fulfill the first two years of a four-year degree or “generals.”
- Considered “Open Enrollment”—Admission requirements are minimal such as having a high school diploma or GED.
- Students can earn certificates and associate’s degrees.
- Offer many services including advising and counseling, tutoring and disability services.
- All are regionally accredited.
- May have matriculation agreements so students can begin a course of study and complete the degree at a four-year institution.
- May have articulation agreements for students to receive college credit for training received during high school.
- Are usually the most affordable option.
- Usually do not have dormitories.

**OPTION 2**

**Public colleges and universities**

- Students are usually required to complete general education requirements that include science and math and sometimes a foreign language.
- Usually have more stringent admissions requirements than community and technical colleges.
- Grant associate's, bachelor's and master's degrees and higher.
- Offer services including advising, tutoring and disability services as well as more extensive services including health clinics, exercise facilities, counseling and career placement offices.
- All are regionally accredited.
- Tend to be more expensive than community and technical colleges.
- Public colleges are the most affordable universities.
- Usually provide dormitories and food service.

**OPTION 3**

**Private colleges and universities**

- Students are sometimes required to complete general education requirements that include science and math and sometimes a foreign language.
- Some may have more stringent admissions requirements than community and technical colleges.
- Grant certificates, bachelor's and master's degrees and higher, depending on the college.
- Some offer specialized training and certificates in various careers.
- Services such as advising, tutoring, and disability services are usually available. Some may also offer more extensive services including health clinics, exercise facilities, counseling and career placement offices.
- Some may not be regionally accredited, so credits may not transfer.
- Are more expensive than public colleges and universities.
- Includes for-profit and not-for-profit private institutions.
- Dorms and food service are usually available at not-for-profit institutions; dorms usually not available at for-profit colleges.



Explore Minnesota State community, technical colleges and universities at [www.minnstate.edu](http://www.minnstate.edu).

Explore University of Minnesota campuses at [twin-cities.umn.edu](http://twin-cities.umn.edu)