

Benefits of going to a Private College

When deciding on the perfect college or university, one big decision is whether to go to a private college or attend a public university. While most private colleges have more prestige and are more recognized, you may be better off going to a public college if you have a budget for your tuition. There are, of course, many pros and cons to weigh when making this life changing decision, so it is best to sit down and evaluate your options before committing to a school.

PROS

- **Prestige:** Most private colleges are nationally recognized for academic excellence, simply by the mention of their name. For example, when you think of Duke University or the University of Notre Dame, you think of an excellent school with renowned degree programs. The academic standards at private colleges are higher, therefore making admission more competitive.
- **Smaller class sizes:** Anyone who attends a public university can attest to sitting in a class with 200 or more students at a time, where the professor identifies you by your student id number, and not your name. However at a private college, the student to professor ratio is (usually) a lot smaller, giving you a chance for more individualized time with your professors.
- **Experienced Professors:** Since private colleges and universities are known for their highly competitive learning environment, you can be sure that the professors teaching the classes are knowledgeable and experienced. There are very few adjunct professors and teaching assistants. Rest assured, if you are attending a private college, you are receiving a top-notch education, as these institutions pay top dollar for the top professors.

CONS

- **Cost:** The biggest disadvantage of attending a private university is the cost. The cost of tuition at a private university can run you two to three times the cost of a public university. Just check out this list of most expensive colleges; just about all are private. Tuition at many private colleges are approaching \$40,000 per year. Keep in mind that federal student loans and grants only cover so much, so unless you have scholarships to fill in the gap, you will still be left with a pretty big tuition bill each semester. If you have a really good GPA and excellent SAT/ACT scores, you may be able to score scholarship money as well as grants and loans to help cover the cost of tuition.
- **Credits may not transfer:** If you attended a community college first or other public college, you should be aware that your credits for classes already completed may not transfer into a private university. Most private universities prefer that you complete their English 101 class opposed to the one at the local community college. Public universities usually have transfer agreements in place with other colleges, where all of your credits will transfer with ease to a public university. If you have your heart set on transferring to a private university, you may be able to get your completed credits transferred in as free electives.

Private colleges can be appealing to many students, however it is extremely important that you weigh the advantages and disadvantages before applying to the college of your choice. Since the tuition is usually extremely high at private schools, it is better if you apply already armed with a very high GPA, so that you will be eligible for scholarships, grants and other funding to assist with the tuition bill. Although the tuition can scare some students away, you have to remember that you get what you pay for at a private school, which is a top rated education at a highly respected school.