

Career Colleges

For some students, the path to a successful career is not by attending traditional four-year colleges and universities. Some students are eager to embark on a specific career, and instead may prefer to attend what is known as a career college.

What is a Career College?

A career college is a school that will train you for a specific trade or job. Examples include dental assistants, court reporters, nursing assistants, cosmetology, truck driving, bookkeeper, etc.

How long are you in School?

Depending on your trade of study, you will be in career college anywhere from nine months to two years. Some schools offer accelerated programs where you can complete the training in less time.

How are Career Colleges Different?

Career colleges are different as they are more hands on. Instead of taking many different courses and learning many different subjects, you are learning your trade skill hands-on during your schooling. At the end of your program, you receive a certificate that proves your completion of the course. Depending on your trade you may have to further your accreditation by getting licensed, generally by taking an exam.

Why a Career College?

Some students choose a career college for many reasons.

- Eager to get into the workforce: They may not have time to complete the traditional four years of schooling however they can complete a program at a career college in less than half the time. They can then enter the workforce ready to start their newfound career.
- Prefer hands on experience: Career colleges generally give you hands-on training rather than by the book learning. Those attending the dental assisting programs may work on actual patients. Cosmetologists in training work on actual clients as well. This is done to help students learn better as most people learn by doing. Of course this is all done under the supervision of the instructor.

CONS

As with anything, there are pros as well as cons.

- Career colleges issue certificates rather than degrees. These can be of less value in the workforce should you decide not to pursue your intended trade.
- Cost: the federal financial aid program does not cover some of these programs; therefore you may have to pay the tuition out of pocket or by a private loan.
- What if you change your mind? For example, if you complete a program in cosmetology and realize a few years down the line that styling other people's hair is not for you. Then you may have to start over with another trade program or go back to college for some type of degree. A certificate from a career college is focused on specific skills.

Of course before you sign up for any program, just make sure that the program is something you may enjoy, especially in the long run. A good thing about career colleges is that some of them assist with job placement upon completion of the course, so finding a job is not too hard.

