

ENGINEER YOUR CAREER

STEP 4: EXPLORE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



WHAT IS POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION?

Postsecondary education is education obtained after secondary school (aka high school) at a variety of institutions including colleges, universities, and vocational schools. Postsecondary education typically leads to a degree or certification in a particular area of study and can improve your career opportunities and earning potential.

TYPES OF POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS



COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Also called junior college or technical college. Community colleges are typically publicly-funded schools. Students can study programs that take one to two years to complete and lead to certificates, diplomas, or an associate degree. After graduating from a community college, students may start working, find an apprenticeship program, or transfer to four-year college or university to complete a bachelor's degree.



TECHNICAL/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

These schools prepare students to work in jobs that require a specialized skill or craft. Programs will vary in length from one to a few years depending on the occupation, and graduates will obtain a certification in their chosen field. Technical schools typically have close relationships with employers and support students in their career development.

TYPES OF POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS (CONT.)



COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

These are schools that offer programs of study that lead to a bachelor's degree. Some may also offer master's and doctoral degrees. These schools may be publicly or privately funded, which can greatly affect the cost to attend. They can also vary greatly in size, some with most students living on campus, others with large commuting student bodies, and some with significant online programs.



APPRENTICESHIP

These are training programs that combine on-the-job training and educational study. Students are matched with an employer and are typically paid throughout the program. The length of apprenticeships vary, but apprentices who complete their studies will gain a license to practice in their chosen field.



REFLECT

Think about what you have heard or already know about postsecondary institutions. Reflect on your answers the questions below or discuss them with a trusted adult:

- Which type(s) of institutions are available in my local area?
- Do I have a preference for one type of institution over another? Why?
- What else do I want to know about each type of institution?
- Who could I talk to learn more about each option?



In the chart on **page 7** you can gather information to compare and contrast postsecondary institutions.

FACTORS INFLUENCING POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION CHOICES

Many factors can impact your choice to enroll in a postsecondary program. As you learn about and consider programs, think about some of the factors below – which ones are most important to you?



IDENTIFY YOUR INFLUENCING FACTORS

Review the table below and circle the top five factors that are important to you as you consider institutions. You can also write in additional areas you would like to consider.

Availability of major or program of interest	Cost of tuition	Look and feel of campus
Academic reputation	Financial aid / scholarships / bursary awards	Size of student population
Proximity to home	Diversity of student population	Extracurricular activities
Cost of application	Friend or family member attended	Sports teams/athletics
Other: -----	Other: -----	Other: -----

FUND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION



Paying for postsecondary education can seem like a daunting task for a young person and their family. There are many costs to consider such as tuition, application fees, study materials, transportation, and room and board.

Financial aid is available that can make paying for these expenses more affordable. Review the resources listed below and consult with a local school counselor or financial aid advisor to learn more.

COMMON FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

SCHOLARSHIPS

Money given by organizations or individuals to support education. They are usually awarded based on academic or other achievements.

- May have specific conditions for eligibility
- Can be very competitive
- Does not need to be repaid
- Typically a one-time award and not renewable

LOANS

Money loaned by a public or private organization for education. Can be borrowed by the learner and/or their family.

- Specific criteria, set by the lender, must be met to qualify for a loan
- Must be repaid, with interest
- Fixed timeline for distribution and repayment

GRANTS

Money given by an organization, state or government to support education.

- Need-based or project-based aid
- Can be very competitive
- Does not need to be repaid if money is spent on eligible expenses
- May be a one-time payment or recurring based on criteria



LEARN ABOUT FINANCIAL AID OPTIONS

Use the resources below to research the costs of postsecondary education and to find scholarship opportunities. Next, lookup scholarships using the resources on **page 6**, and list any awards that you may be eligible for now or in the future.

Federal Student Aid

studentaid.gov/h/understand-aid

Big Future Pay for College

bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college

FIND AND COMPARE INSTITUTIONS



Comparing and contrasting different types of postsecondary institutions will help you determine which school or program is the best fit for you.

‘Best fit’ is how well a program meets your academic, social, financial, and other needs. Consider all of these areas when applying to and selecting a program.



FIND POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Use the sites listed below to gather information about various academic and training programs. You can also visit the websites of specific institutions you are interested in attending to see if they offer virtual or in-person tours to learn more.

College Scorecard

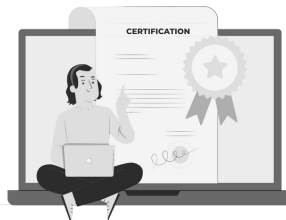
collegescorecard.ed.gov



Search for and compare public and private U.S. community colleges, colleges, and universities by location, cost, and program.

Apprenticeship Job Finder

apprenticeship.gov



Search for registered apprenticeship programs and job opportunities by career field and location.

Global Universities

topuniversities.com



Search for colleges and universities around the world by location, degree, and program of study.



COMPARE POSTSECONDARY INSTITUTIONS

Choose 3-5 institutions you are considering and fill in the chart on the **page 7**.

Use the last column to add any additional information that you think will help with your decision making.

STEP 4: EXPLORE EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS



As you gather information from the steps above, fill in the charts on pages 6 and 7.

If you need more space, print additional copies of these pages or create your own digital table in Excel or Google Sheets. Be sure to discuss your findings and questions with a family member, school counselor, or other trusted adult.

SCHOLARSHIP TRACKER

Look up scholarships that you may qualify for and track them in the chart below. Reach out to your school counselor to learn about awards from local community organizations.

Scholarships.com
scholarships.com/financial-aid/college-scholarships/scholarship-directory



**CareerOneStop
Scholarship Finder**
careeronestop.org/Toolkit/Training/find-scholarships.aspx



Scholarship Name	Amount	Renewable	Eligibility/Application Requirements	Due Date	Contact Information
		☐ yes ☐ no			
		☐ yes ☐ no			
		☐ yes ☐ no			
		☐ yes ☐ no			
		☐ yes ☐ no			

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POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION COMPARISON CHART

Institution Name	Location	Size # of students	Academic Program of Interest	Required Tests and Scores	Cost per Year Note if rates change year-to-year	Financial Aid Options	Application Deadline	Notes

