

OhioMeansJobs K-12

Guide to Higher Education



This quick guide addresses these guiding questions:

1. What education and training is required for my career goal?
2. How do I choose the right major or program?
3. What options do I consider when choosing a school?
4. How will I pay for my education and training beyond high school?
5. Where can I get more information to help me along the way?

1. What education and training is required for my career goal?

Most people are aware that if you want to be a doctor, you will have to go to college. But what kind of education and training do you need to become a video game designer, marketing analyst, or a computer support specialist? Will you need a one-year certificate, two-year associate degree, four-year bachelor's degree, or a professional degree?

Once you know the requirements for your future career, you can research and choose which level of education best matches your career goal and personal situation. Generally, educational programs beyond high school are organized in the following ways:

- Non-Credit Programs are workshops, seminars, or courses that improve skills for professional development, but do not offer credit toward an academic degree.
- Certificates are documents granted by career centers and colleges after completion of study for specific occupations. Certificates usually require a full-time, six-month to one-year program of required courses or their part-time equivalent. Some certificates can be counted toward a higher degree, but this is not always the case.
- Associate Degrees are granted by colleges after students satisfactorily complete two-year, full-time programs of required college-level courses or their part-time equivalent.
- Bachelor's Degrees are granted by universities or colleges after students have satisfactorily completed four-year, full-time programs of required courses or their part-time equivalent.
- Advanced Degrees – Master's, doctorate, or professional degrees (such as law or medicine) – are earned after bachelor's degrees, taking at least an additional two years for full-time students to complete.

2. How do I choose the right major or program?

Choosing a major within a program is the first step toward initiating your career. The major should really connect back to the industry in which you want to get a job. Be mindful that not every major is created equally – there are jobs that require a license or certificate and may include more courses or an additional degree (e.g., psychologist, teacher and accountant). A major is a specific area of study that involves a series

of courses related to that field. By concentrating on one area, you can gain specialized knowledge and skills required for related occupations.

Why does your major matter? Watch the video "Success in the New Economy" to get an overview on why education and training decisions are important to your future:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bauDp4NdPK8>.

3. What options do I consider when choosing a school?

In general, you can divide educational and training institutions beyond high school into three categories:

- Less-than-2-year institution offers programs less than 2 years and includes occupational and vocational schools. In Ohio, the Ohio Technical Centers provide labor market-driven post-secondary workforce education and training in 91 career-technical districts throughout the state.
- 2-year institution offers at least a 2-year program of college-level studies that either leads to an associate degree or coursework that can be credited toward a baccalaureate degree.
- 4-year institution offers at least a 4-year program of college-level studies leading principally toward a baccalaureate degree. A "university" is a 4-year institution which typically comprises one or more graduate professional schools.

Two-year colleges are most often chosen when an associate degree is the minimum educational requirement for an occupation, when you want a nearby location, or when you want a lower cost of education. Four-year institutions are often chosen for their academic specializations, higher degree levels and prestige associated with them.

You can also choose between public or private institutions.

- In Ohio, the state university system supports 14 public universities (and 27 regional branch campuses), 25 community colleges, and over 70 adult workforce education and training centers statewide.
- The Ohio Department of Higher Education has also authorized 76 not-for-profit colleges and universities, and 13 for-profit colleges and universities.

4. How will I pay for my education and training beyond high school?

You can find a variety of ways to finance the cost of your education. In addition to any support from family or earning money with a part-time or full-time job, you can explore:

- Financial aid through grants and student loans
- Scholarships, assistantships, and fellowships
- Tuition waivers or discounts from individual schools
- Benefits for veterans and their children
- Employer aid (tuition payment or reimbursement)

Resources are available to help you find ways to fund your education. You can learn about available funds such as Federal Pell Grants, Federal Stafford Loans, Federal Perkins Loans, Federal Work Study, and PLUS Loans. The following links provide a good starting point for obtaining this information:

- “Federal Financial Aid,” OhioHigherEd, <https://www.ohiohighered.org/students/pay-for-college/federal-financial-aid>
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), U.S. Department of Education, <https://fafsa.ed.gov>, <https://www.studentaid.ed.gov/resources>
- “Prepare for College,” FederalStudentAid, U.S. Department of Education, <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college>
- U.S. Armed Forces Benefits, Federal Tuition Assistance Program, and other education benefits such as college credit for military experience, ROTC stipends, and Financial Aid for Veterans, <https://www.ohiohighered.org/veterans/financial-aid>

5. Where can I get more information?

- College Navigator, Institute of Education Sciences/National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- “Glossary,” U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/glossary/>
- National Center for Education Statistics, <http://nces.ed.gov>
- OhioHigherEd (University System of Ohio), <http://www.ohiohighered.org/>
- Popular College Majors, Peterson’s, <http://www.petersons.com/college-search/popular-college-majors.aspx>
- “Prepare for College,” OhioHigherEd (University System of Ohio), www.ohiohighered.org/students/prepare-for-college
- “Types of Schools,” FederalStudentAid, U.S. Department of Education, <https://studentaid.ed.gov/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools/types>
- “Success in the New Economy”, <http://vimeo.com/67277269>