Types of Schools

The schools available to you are as varied as your interests. This will help you decide what type of school fits you best. In general, schools can be divided into two major categories: Vocational Training/Technical Schools and Colleges/Universities.

Vocational Training/Technical Schools

Vocational/Technical schools are privately owned and operated schools that offer a wide variety of training options in areas such as cosmetology, mechanical repair, court reporting, paralegal services, travel services, secretarial, and medical assistance. Vocational courses are short, lasting from five to 12 months. However, some training programs (such as court reporting) can take up to two to three years to complete. The main appeal of these schools are their concentrated curriculum, job-training focus, and short course length.

Examples: Apollo College, DeVry, Itt Technical Institute, Pioneer Pacific, Western Business & Culinary Institute

Colleges and Universities

Two-year community/junior colleges provide the opportunity to get your feet wet before jumping in to the four-year college arena. Community colleges generally offer two-year studies with an associates degree conferred upon completion. The courses are designed to transfer to four-year colleges, should you decide to pursue your higher education. Also, like vocational schools, community colleges often offer specialized job training in certain areas. These studies are designed to prepare you for the work force as soon as you complete your training.

Examples: Blue Mountain CC, Chemeketa CC, Lane CC, Mt. Hood CC, Portland CC, Salem Bible College

Four-year colleges and universities offer bachelor’s degrees and a much wider variety of studies and curriculum to choose from. Many also offer graduate studies (studies after a bachelor’s degree is completed) with opportunities to earn a master’s degree, doctorate, or professional degree (such as a medical doctor). The curriculum is much broader than a two-year school and is designed to accommodate a variety of interests (unless you are going to a college that specializes in a certain area of study, such as music).

Public colleges and universities are funded by the states they are located in and are generally less expensive than private colleges. However, the cheapest rates go to residents of the state in which the college is located. Out-of-staters usually pay much higher fees. Class size often reflects institutional size.

Examples: Eastern Oregon Univ., Oregon State University, Portland State University, University of Oregon

Private colleges, on the other hand, are funded through endowments, tuition, and donations. They usually cost a lot more, but don’t rule them out! Private colleges can often offer enough financial aid to make them financially feasible for your budget. These colleges can range in size from the very small to the very large. Classes tend to be smaller than in many of the public schools.

Examples: Concordia Univ., George Fox Univ., Lewis & Clark College, Linfield College, University of Portland