

Types of Colleges

Which Type Suits You Best? What kind of college do you see yourself attending? Different types of colleges suit different types of people. Take a look at these descriptions to help you see where you fit.

Liberal Arts Colleges: Liberal arts colleges offer a broad base of courses in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Most are private and focus mainly on undergraduate students. Classes tend to be small and personal attention is available. Read more about a liberal arts education.

Universities : Generally, a university is bigger than a college and offers more majors and research facilities. Class size often reflects institutional size and some classes may be taught by graduate students.

Community or Junior Colleges : Community colleges offer a degree after the completion of two years of full-time study. They frequently offer technical programs that prepare you for immediate entry into the job market. Learn more about community colleges.

Upper-Division Schools : Upper-division schools offer the last two years of undergraduate study, usually in specialized programs leading to a bachelor's degree. You'd generally transfer to an upper-division college after completing an associate's degree or after finishing a second year of study at a four-year college.

Agricultural, Technical, and Specialized Colleges : Have you made a clear decision about what you want to do with your life? Specialized colleges emphasize preparation for specific careers. Examples include Art/music, Bible, Business, Health Science, Seminary/rabbinical, and Teaching.

Public vs. Private : On the one hand, public colleges are usually less expensive, particularly for in-state residents. They get most of their money from the state or local government. Check out your state's Guide to Residency. Private colleges rely on tuition, fees, endowments, and other private sources. On the other hand, private colleges are usually smaller and can offer more personalized attention (and some believe, more prestige).

Special Interests

- **Single-Sex:** All four-year public colleges and most private schools are co-ed. In terms of single-sex colleges, there are about 50 specifically for men and about 70 specifically for women. Some may enroll a few men or women.
- **Religiously Affiliated Colleges:** Some private colleges are affiliated with a religious faith. The affiliation may be historic only or it may affect day-to-day student life.
- **Historically Black Colleges:** Historically-black colleges find their origins in the time when African American students were systematically denied access to most other colleges and universities. These schools offer students a unique opportunity to experience an educational community in which they're part of the majority.
- **Hispanic-Serving Institutes:** There are about 135 institutions designated by the federal government as "Hispanic-Serving" At these schools, Hispanic students comprise at least 25 percent of the total full-time undergraduate enrollment.