



Transition

T E N N E S S E E

FACT SHEET

Path: I Want to Continue
My Education

Course: How Do I Explore My Options
for Continuing My Education

Lesson: Preparing to Continue My
Education

Choosing to continue your education after high school is a big decision that involves a lot of research and planning. Below are some things to consider when preparing for postsecondary education.

What Do I Need to Know about Admissions and Applications?

When applying to a college or training program, there are many parts to the application that can influence if you get accepted into the school.

- **Admission requirements:** the skills and documents required in order to be accepted into a college
 - Each program has different requirements. It is important to research the requirements of the program you are interested in so that you can prepare for the application process.
- **Application:** a form a person applying to college fills out so that the admissions office can learn about the person
 - **Acceptance:** when a person meets the admission requirements of a college and is approved to attend the school
 - **Waitlist:** a list of applicants who may be admitted to the college if space becomes available
 - **Denial/Rejection:** when a person did not meet the admission requirements of a college and is not accepted to the program

Some examples of potential admissions requirements are:

- Courses taken in high school
- High school diploma, transcript, and grades
 - Grade Point Average (GPA): a number representing the average of all the grades you earned during high school
- Standardized test scores (SAT/ACT)
- Personal statements or essays
- Letters of recommendation
- Extracurricular activities

The diploma option you receive in high school can affect what postsecondary education programs you can be accepted to, so it is important to research the diploma requirements before you apply to a program.

Examples of possible outcomes based on high school diploma track and postsecondary education:

- Carina wants to get a career as a computer programmer. She finds that the educational requirement for this job is a 4-year college degree in computer science. In order to apply to a university, she will need a Regular High School Diploma.
- Owen is hoping to have a career at an auto shop. He learns that he will need to attend a College of Applied Technology to get a certificate. This certificate program accepts any type of high school diploma.



What Do I Need to Know about Supports in College?

When you enroll in college, you become responsible for asking for the accommodations and supports you need. Examples of this include:

- Communicating with professors
- Managing time and schedule
- Requesting any necessary accommodations
 - Testing room and extra time on exams
 - Note-taker or access to printed notes
 - Priority registration

All colleges have some form of a Disability Services Office, although it may be named differently. This office could also be commonly referred to as:

- Access Services
- Student Access Center
- Disability Support
- Student Accessibility Services

It is important to locate this office before applying to the college in order to learn more about the services they offer and how students qualify for support from this college.

In most cases, to receive accommodations, you must disclose your disability and provide the appropriate paperwork to the college's Disability Services Office.

- Tell the office about your disability and how it impacts your success
- Provide current documentation of disability
- This is the responsibility of the student and a big part of being a self-advocate
- For more information, check out our lesson on [Disability Disclosure in College](#)

Many colleges also offer free supports to help their students succeed. Some examples of those resources are:

- Academic tutoring
- Career planning and advising
- Counseling and health centers
- Campus life and student involvement support

What Do I Need to Know about Academics and Outcomes?

When preparing to continue your education, it is important to think about the type of degree, certification, or career diploma you will need so that you can choose a college or training program that will lead you towards your career goals.

Examples:

- Susan knows that she wants to be an electrician and to get a job in the field she will need specific certifications. She looks at all of the college and training options and sees that almost all of them have some type of building and electrical degree. She knows that she won't need a bachelor's degree to be an electrician, so she decides to go to a College of Applied Technology.



- Warren wants to be an accountant and he knows that a bachelor's degree is a requirement for this job. He did some research and found that a bachelor's degree is required for the job he wants. He decides to go to a 4-year college so that he can get the degree he needs to be an accountant.

For more information, check out our [Fact Sheet on Types of Postsecondary Education](#).

Costs and Financial Aid

Going to college can be very expensive, so it is important to research how much a program costs before applying to it.

The average cost per year of a...

- Public university is about \$20,000
- Private university is about \$45,000
- Community college is about \$4,000
- College of Applied Technology ranges from \$3,500-\$14,500 depending on the program

Some of the expenses to consider when planning on going to college:

- Tuition
- Housing
- Transportation
- Meal Plan
- Books and Supplies
- Student Services Fees

What Do I Need to Know about Paying for College?

The first step to funding your education is to start planning early. Talk to your high school counselor and college financial aid offices about the cost of attendance and how to apply for financial aid, grants, loans, and scholarships.

Financial aid is money to help you pay for postsecondary education programs. Many students planning to attend college or a training program use financial aid to help pay for college.

- Loan: money given to you that you have to pay back
 - Tamara applied for a loan to help her pay for her first year of college. Once she graduates, she will make monthly payments to pay back the loan.
- Scholarship or Grant: money given to you that you don't have to pay back as long as you meet certain requirements
 - Dimitri was awarded a scholarship from the college he is going to in the fall. The scholarship covers \$5,000 of tuition per year. This scholarship is given to people who volunteer in their community. He does not have to pay it back as long as he meets the volunteer hour requirements.
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): an application for government funded grants and loans that are awarded based on each person's financial situation
 - Charlie filled out the FAFSA for the 2021-2022 school year. She received a financial aid package that included a \$10,000 loan and a \$5,000 grant. Charlie will need to start paying back the loan when she graduates but does not need to pay back the grant.