

What is college?

It's important to consider your long-term future when deciding what to do after high school. When it comes to college, a number of options are available. The type of educational program and school you choose will determine the types of jobs for which you will be qualified. Continuing your education beyond high school is more important today than ever before. By 2020, an estimated 66 percent of jobs in Missouri will require some form of higher education. Right now, about 51 percent of Missourians have a college degree or professional certificate. This means in order to meet our future workforce needs, more people need to earn a certificate or two- or four-year degree. So when determining the "best fit" for you beyond high school, it's important to do your research, consider your interests and know your options.

Certificate

Vocational technical schools and career schools offer certificate or licensing programs that often can be completed in a matter of months. These programs usually focus on a specialized skill or trade and allow graduates to become qualified for a job in that specialized area. Some community colleges also offer shortened programs that result in a certificate rather than an associate degree. Examples include: cosmetology, dental assisting, broadcast promotions and therapeutic massage.

Associate Degree

Students who complete a two-year course of study will receive an associate degree. Community colleges and some technical schools provide this type of education. Some technical fields and careers require an associate degree, as do some professional and business careers. Many students earn

an associate degree before eventually transferring to a four-year college or university to earn a bachelor's degree. Examples include: Medical administrative staff, carpentry and building construction technology, automotive maintenance technology and court reporting.

Bachelor's Degree (and beyond)

Bachelor's degrees are awarded to students who complete a four-year course of study at a college or university. The classes a student takes during this period focus on a student's chosen career field, as well as general education subject areas. A bachelor's degree is required for many jobs, and for continuing education towards a master's and doctorate degrees. Examples include: nursing, biochemistry, communications, education, animal science and psychology.