



Choosing a College

There are thousands of colleges out there, each with its own unique offerings. Start looking early at different types of schools that could potentially be a good fit for your interests and needs.

As you begin to narrow down your schools and learn more about their individual requirements, categorize them as 'reach,' 'competitive,' or 'back up' schools. A reach school is one that has challenging entrance requirements for you. A competitive school is one that you feel believe you can get into but there is going to be a lot of competition so you're going to have to give it your all. A back up school is one that you feel confident you will get into if you apply. Having a variety of schools when you apply will give you the most options when finally choosing a school to attend

Make note of special offerings and key differences like sports, activities, majors, student-teacher ratio, and financial support.

State

- 4-year school managed through the state university system
- Not determined by the name (i.e. Penn State is not a state school)
- *Slippery Rock, CalU, Bloomsberg*

Public

- Government funded, generally lower tuition than private schools
- *Penn State, Indiana University*

Private

- Mainly funded through tuition. Often private donations lead to abundant scholarship opportunities
- *Carnegie Mellon University, Carlow University*

Universities

- Larger 4-year schools made up of smaller colleges, offers a wide variety of programs
- *University of Pittsburgh, Temple University*

Liberal Arts

- 4-year colleges, often private, offers programs centered on liberal arts (literature, history, mathematics, languages, life sciences)
- *Haverford College, Gettysburg College*

Rural

- Schools located outside of a city
- *Penn State Erie, Keystone College*

City

- **Schools located within a city**
 - *University of Pittsburgh, Point Park University, Chatham University*

Community

- **2-year school, prepares students to transfer to 4-year or graduate schools with an associate's degree**
- **Certificates for specific career paths**
 - *CCAC, Butler County CC, Community College of Philadelphia*

HBCU (Historically Black Colleges or Universities)

- **Focus on educating African-American students through specific programs, services, and activities**
 - *Howard University, Cheyney University, Lincoln University, Jacksonville State University*

HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions)

- **Institutions participating in federal programs to assist first generation low-income hispanic students**
 - *Bronx Community College (NY), William Patterson University (NJ)*

Ivy League

- **8 prestigious universities noted for high academic standards**
 - *University of Pennsylvania, Yale, Harvard, Brown, Dartmouth, Columbia, Princeton, Cornell*

Vocational

- **Offers specialized training in specific industries or careers (i.e. culinary, dental hygiene, fire fighting, mechanic, piloting)**
 - *All-State Career School; Keystone Tech*

Fine Arts

- **4-year with specialized focus on the arts (i.e. photography, fashion, theater, music)**
 - *Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts, Pennsylvania College of Art & Design*

Single-Sex

- **Private 4-year school, exclusively for men or women**
 - *Male: Morehouse College, Hampden-Sydney College, Wabash College*
 - *Female: Bryn Mawr, Wellesley College*

Religious Schools

- **Private universities connected to a specific faith**
 - *La Roche College, Messiah College, Notre Dame*

Online Schools

- **Programs conducted entirely online**
 - *Ashford University, Walden University*