

What is a Postsecondary Program?

It can be helpful to think of the word postsecondary in two parts—"post" meaning "after" and "secondary" meaning "high school" (or its equivalent). A postsecondary program is an educational program for students who have earned their high school diploma or equivalent (TASC) and are looking for education/training beyond that level, often to prepare them for a career. These programs are offered by a range of schools/institutions/organizations, including two-year colleges (students may know them as community colleges), four-year colleges and universities, as well as trade schools, vocational schools, institutes of technology, the military, and nonprofit organizations. For example, a student may pursue a bachelor's degree at a college (a four-year program of study) or an associate's degree at a community college (usually a two-year program of study). Community colleges also offer certificate programs, which are usually completed in less than one year if attended full time. In addition, the continuing education and workforce development division/center/department of community colleges offer courses to prepare for careers.

But postsecondary programs aren't only at academic institutions like two- and four-year colleges. Postsecondary programs can be job training programs (also referred to as vocational, job skills, or workforce development programs) at nonprofit organizations. They offer training for a wide range of careers. For example, some non-profit organizations offer training to become an administrative assistant. Others may offer training to become a residential construction worker.

Programs can range from a few weeks to many years long. Those who complete a postsecondary program should receive a credential such as a certificate of completion, degree, professional certification, and/or a license. Examples of postsecondary programs *include*:

- A certificate program in Surgical Technology at a community college or through the military (a certificate of completion is awarded upon completion)
- A bus driving training program at a non-profit organization
- An associate's degree program in Paralegal Studies at a community college
- A bachelor's degree program in Computer Science
- An apprenticeship program to become an electrician
- A master's degree program in Higher Education Administration
- A doctoral degree (PhD) program in Counseling