THE EDUCATION FUND
FOR EXCELLENCE IN MIAMI-DADE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

SmartPath to College

College 101

Defining the Many Types of Colleges and Universities

Public and Private Colleges

- **Public colleges** are funded by local and state governments and usually offer lower tuition rates than private colleges, especially for students who are residents of the state where a college is located. (*i.e.: Florida International University*)
- **Private colleges** rely mainly on tuition, fees and private sources of funding. Private donations can sometimes provide generous financial aid packages for students. (*i.e.: Nova Southeastern University*)

Four-Year and Two-Year Colleges

- **Four-year colleges** offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These include universities and liberal arts colleges.
- **Two-year colleges** offer programs that last up to two years that lead to a certificate or an associate degree. These include community colleges, vocational-technical colleges and career colleges.

For-Profit Colleges

- These are businesses that offer a variety of degree programs which typically prepare students for a specific career. They tend to have higher costs, which could mean graduating with more debt. Credits earned may not transfer to other colleges, so be sure to check with the admission office at each college. (*i.e.: University of Phoenix*)

Liberal Arts Colleges

- These colleges offer a broad base of courses in the liberal arts, which includes areas such as literature, history, languages, mathematics and life sciences. Most are private and offer four-year programs that lead to a bachelor's degree. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study. (*i.e.: Flagler College*)

Universities

- Universities often are larger and offer more majors and degree options—bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees—than colleges. Most universities contain several smaller colleges, such as colleges of liberal arts, engineering or health sciences. These colleges can prepare you for a variety of careers or for graduate study. (i.e.*: University of Florida*)

Community Colleges

- Community colleges offer two-year associate degrees that prepare you to transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. They also offer other associate degrees and certificates that focus on preparing you for a certain career. Community colleges are often an affordable option with relatively low tuition. (*i.e.: Broward College*)

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Vocational-Technical and Career Colleges

- Vocational-technical and career colleges offer specialized training in a particular industry or career. Possible programs of study include the culinary arts, firefighting, dental hygiene and medical-records technology. These colleges usually offer certificates or associate degrees. (*i.e.: Florida Career College*)

Colleges with a Special Focus

Some colleges focus on a specific interest or student population. These include:

Arts Colleges

- Art colleges and conservatories focus on the arts. In addition to regular course work, these colleges provide training in areas such as photography, music, theater or fashion design. Most of these colleges offer associate or bachelor's degrees in the fine arts or a specialized field. (*i.e.: Florida State University College of Visual Arts, Theatre and Dance*)

Specialized-Mission Colleges

- Historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) focus on educating African American students. Hispanic-serving institutions (HSIs) are colleges where at least 25 percent of the full-time undergraduate students are Hispanic. HBCUs and HSIs may offer programs, services and activities targeted to the underrepresented students they serve. (*i.e.: FIU, St. Thomas University, Florida Memorial University*)

Religiously Affiliated Colleges

- Some private colleges are connected to a religious faith. The connection may be historic only, or it may affect day-to-day student life. (*i.e.: Barry University*)

Single-Sex Colleges

- All four-year public colleges, and most private colleges, are coed. But there are some private colleges that are specifically for men or for women.

Need additional support/resources?

Browse major and career profiles here:
https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/majors-careers

Source: The College Board, Big Future, Types of Colleges