



## POSTSECONDARY FUNDAMENTALS

Academic Institutional Types, College Settings, Special Admissions Programs,  
and Support Services Offered by Colleges

### I. Academic Institutional Types

#### Art Schools and Conservatories

Art schools

Educational institutions with a primary focus on the visual arts, especially illustration, painting, sculpture, and graphic design. These are distinguished from larger institutions which offer majors or degrees in the visual arts, but only as one part of a broad-based range of programs.

Conservatories

Institutions dedicated to training students in the performing arts, typically in music, acting, or dance. Students are judged on their artistic skill and talent for admission, and much less on their academic credentials.

#### Community Colleges

Educational institutions that provide entry-level college education. Community colleges are generally characterized by open admissions policies (anyone can attend) and a wide range of offerings, including two-year degrees, transferable degrees, vocational training, certificate courses, and community and continuing education.

#### Liberal Arts Colleges

Liberal arts colleges offer a broad base of courses in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences. Most are private institutions, and focus mainly on undergraduate students. Classes tend to be small and personal attention is available.

#### Technical Colleges & Universities

Educational institutions that specialize in technical fields, such as engineering, or the physical sciences and mathematics.

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### II. College Settings

#### Single Sex Colleges

Colleges (primarily undergraduate, bachelor's degree-granting institution) whose students are either exclusively female or exclusively male.

#### Religiously Affiliated Colleges & Universities

Educational institutions administered by members of a particular religious group and often organized and run in alignment with their religious principles.

#### Public Colleges & Universities

Not-for-profit institutions primarily supported by public (government) funding.

#### Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs)

Colleges and universities founded with the mission of educating black men and women. They range from highly competitive universities offering undergraduate and graduate programs to noncompetitive two-year colleges with open admissions.

#### Private Colleges & Universities

Not-for-profit institutions primarily supported by private funding.

#### Proprietary Colleges & Universities

Institutions operated by private, for-profit businesses.



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### III. Admissions Programs

#### New York State Opportunity Programs

Admissions and academic support programs established by the state of New York and offered in many colleges. They enable motivated students who are not normally admissible to the particular college and are low-income (meeting set financial guidelines) to attend the college. To meet the specific need of its students, the program primarily provides testing, counseling, tutoring, academic advisement and financial assistance.

Independent/Private Colleges in NYS	The Higher Education Opportunity Program (HEOP)
SUNY colleges	The Education Opportunity Program (EOP)
CUNY Senior Colleges	Search for Education, Elevation and Knowledge Program (SEEK)
CUNY Community Colleges	College Discovery (CD)

#### SAT Optional

Colleges and universities that do not use standardized tests in making admissions decisions. The college may require additional supplements such as a graded paper or SAT subject test scores. FairTest estimates that nearly 850 four-year SAT optional colleges. Like colleges which require standardized tests, SAT optional colleges range in how competitive their admissions processes are.

#### Early Decision

Admissions process offered by some colleges in which a student applies by an early deadline (usually in November), is given a decision early (usually in December) and agrees to attend the college if accepted. It is a binding agreement.

#### Early Action

Admissions process offered by some colleges in which a student applies by an early deadline, is given a decision early, and, if accepted, the student has until May 1st to decide whether or not to attend.

#### NCAA Athletic Recruitment

Process that dictates whether and how a student can be admitted to a college to play for a school's athletic team. Student must complete "Clearinghouse" process to be eligible.

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### IV. Pathways

#### Vocational/Trade Programs

Programs offered by schools, colleges, agencies, unions and employers that focus on skill training for a specific career or job.

#### Certificate Programs

Degree programs designed to teach a specific job skill and determine readiness of students to perform the specific job. Fields of study include website development, appliance maintenance/repair, and cosmetology. Most commonly offered at two-year institutions.

#### Gap Year

Time in between high school and college matriculation, often meant to be dedicated to some sort of self-development in an organized program or experience.



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### **Service Year**

Time in between high school and college matriculation dedicated to community service.

### **Military**

The Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, National Guard and Coast Guard.

### **Civil Service**

Employment in government agencies, often requiring examination in order to apply.

### **Apprenticeship**

Combines vocational training with on-the job experience. Apprenticeships are usually a debt-free option since the employer/sponsor pays the student's tuition as they are working.

### **College-Based Career Programs**

Career-focused programs that are sponsored by public or private colleges, often leading to an AAS or Certificate.

## **V. Degrees and Credentials**

### **Associate of Arts (AA) or Associate of Science (AS)**

Degrees awarded after the completion of two years or 60 credits of study. Community colleges or four year universities offer these. After earning this, a student may transfer to a four year college to complete a bachelor's degree.

### **Associate of Applied Science (AAS)**

Degree awarded on completion of technological or vocational programs of study. This degree is terminal and does not easily transfer into bachelor's degree programs.

### **Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS)**

Degrees awarded after a student completes an undergraduate program of study that is usually four years and 120 credits.

### **Certificate**

A document granted by an institution after a course of study has been completed.

### **License**

A document issued by the government or other constituted authority, giving permission to practice.