

Tips on Selecting a Private Career School

Are you looking for a career school? Take a look at these helpful tips.



Talk with others in the field.

Talk with people who are working in the field you are considering. Make sure you really understand what people in that profession do on a daily basis. Ask them how they got trained. Ask them if they would recommend going to a career school, a community college or get on-the-job training.

Visit the school.

If you are considering a career school, try visiting more than one, if possible. Check out the differences. Visit classes. How does it feel at the school? Is the atmosphere pleasant? Do the students appear happy about what they are doing? Do the teachers seem to be organized, professional and knowledgeable? Do they make the classes interesting? Ask questions. Are the instructors qualified to teach? Are the instructors keeping current in their profession? What information does the school have about the placement of its graduates into jobs? Does the school offer placement services to help you get a job when you finish the program? Are there tutors or counselors available to help you if you have problems? Does the school allow you to repeat a program if necessary?

Determine total cost.

Try to talk with students who are enrolled in the school. If you can find a student who is no longer in the school (either completed or dropped out), try to talk to that person to get an opinion about the school.

Talk with employers.

Talk with employers at companies where you might want to work when you are finished. Ask them if they have hired any graduates of the school you are considering. If they have, ask them if the employees were well prepared. If they have not, ask them if the training you are considering would help you get a job in their company.

Prepare to enroll.

If you have done all of your background check and want to enroll in a school, talk with the admissions representative at the school. Ask for a copy of the catalog, the school calendar, the student handbook and any other material that might help you know more about the school. Also read through the enrollment agreement with the school representative. Make sure you understand what it means. **The enrollment agreement is a contract between you and the school.** You must understand what you will be asked to sign.

Make sure you understand.

Take the school information home and read it again. Make sure you understand all costs. Read the information about student rights and responsibilities. Read what the policies are on attendance, satisfactory progress, requirements for graduation or completion. Read the school's policy on filing a grievance if you are dissatisfied with the program. You may want to talk with someone you respect and ask that person if there are any questions about the school policies and procedures that you should ask the school to explain.

Verify requirements.

Review the admission requirements for the program. Make sure you meet them. If you do not meet the admission requirements it might be very hard for you to be successful in the school's program.

Verify loans.

If you will be borrowing money to enroll in the school, check carefully to make sure that the potential earnings are enough to repay the loan and also provide for your living expenses. If you need to know more about the potential earnings in this career, contact the [Oregon Employment Department](#) or call (503) 947-1204 or (800) 237-3710 ext. 1204.

Analyze the agreement.

Carefully analyze the agreement you sign for any money you might borrow to go to school. If the school or any lender offers a loan program, check the interest rates to see if you can get the same amount of money somewhere else at a lower interest rate. Consider the number of months and years you are committing yourself to make these payments. Even if you don't finish the program, you will be required to repay the money you borrow (with small monthly payments, this can extend for several months or years after you leave the school).

Don't rush.

Take your time. Don't let yourself be rushed into making a decision. If you sign an enrollment agreement you have 5 days (before classes begin) to change your mind and get all your money back. After 5 days (and before classes begin) you will have to forfeit the enrollment fee if you change your mind.