

the 411

Your Guide to Ontario's Private Career Colleges

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the LOWDOWN

What are private career colleges?

Private career colleges are post secondary institutions that offer specific, hands-on career training. There are over 600 private career colleges in Ontario registered by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Students who attend career colleges can earn a diploma or certificate in an average of 12 months. Career colleges prepare students for entry into a variety of in-demand fields, like health care, business, information technology, law, culinary arts, social services, the trades, esthetics and more.

What makes them different?

Career colleges offer fast-track programs and flexible scheduling. It's not just about September or January – many career colleges offer start dates as often as once per month. Career colleges have small class sizes with lower instructor-to-student ratios. The learning environment is structured, small and friendly and the focus is on hands-on learning. Many career college programs prepare students to enter apprenticeships or take exams to obtain industry certifications in a variety of fields.

How do I choose a career college?

- 1.** First of all, ensure the career college is registered with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities by visiting www.ontario.ca/pcc.
- 2.** Verify the college is a member of the Ontario Association of Career Colleges by visiting www.oacc.ca or calling 519-752-2124.
- 3.** When you've decided career education is an avenue you want to explore, set up a time to tour a campus. View the equipment and the facility, and speak to instructors, students and graduates of the program. Ask for references from employers so you can determine if the program is recognized.
- 4.** Shop around – compare different campuses and decide what is best for you.

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Debunking the Myth

Aren't private colleges more expensive? The short answer is no.

Career colleges offer accelerated, fast-track programs that often allow students to earn a diploma or certificate in 12 months or less. Thus, career college grads return to the work force sooner. That important fact must be taken into consideration when comparing costs between a career college program and one at a community college. For example, an esthetician program costs \$8,488 in tuition for a two-year program at Niagara College, one of Ontario's 24 community colleges. At a career college, students can earn a diploma in the esthetics field in less time – making a major difference in the cost due to lower living expenses. For example, esthetics programs

at career colleges in Toronto fall into the \$7,000 to \$8,000 range. Those programs take much less time than their counterparts at community college - from 39 to 48 weeks respectively. It's more of the same when comparing culinary arts programs. A culinary management program takes about 34 weeks to complete at a career college and falls into the \$15,500 range. At a community college, a culinary management program spans four semesters over two years. With an extra year of living expenses tacked on to the \$7,830 program at George Brown College in Toronto, the program's cost soars past the career college offering. When it comes to business administration programs, the difference is still apparent.

At Algonquin College in Ottawa, a diploma in business administration takes three years (six semesters) to complete. The tuition is \$6,609.64. Business administration programs at career colleges take about 34 weeks to complete - and the tuition falls in the \$8,900 to \$11,500 range. The savings is clear when taking living expenses into account. With a career college diploma, a graduate is out working (and earning money) in less than a year.



Fast Facts

#1 More than 38,000 students graduate from career colleges each year

#2 Private career colleges have been training Ontarians for over 140 years. They actually predate community colleges by about 100 years.

#3 Career colleges offer a wide variety (hundreds!) of programs in everything from welding to travel and tourism to video game design.

#4 Career colleges have a strong graduation rate. The 2009 Survey of Canadian Career College Students found that 98 per cent of the 4,065 participants graduated.

#5 Career college graduates find work in their field. The same survey indicated that six to nine months after graduation, 79 per cent of private career college grads reported they were working full time (60 per cent) or part time (19 per cent.)

