

Q: Is it better to go to college right after graduation or to get a job?

A: Many students find it easier to go straight into college after graduation because it can be easier to adjust to the campus academic schedule. It is also easier to settle into math and writing prerequisites (basic required courses) while HS coursework is still fresh in your mind.

Q: How do you decide what college to go to?

A: Ideally you will pick the best colleges that offer what you would like to study. Some students also look at where they want to live, considering campus/class sizes, location, school size, and even virtual learning. You might also consider the extracurricular activities on campus and in the community. Check the requirements of each school as you begin HS, so you can be sure what steps will prepare best you. It is always good to include one or two competitive campuses as well as some with easier requirements. HS counselors, and ACPE Success Center Staff can help you think this through.

Q: What happens if you can't pay for your tuition?

A: While applying for college, students should also be applying for financial aid. The year BEFORE you go to college, students should complete the FAFSA, beginning in October. This will help students qualify for Federal and State grants and scholarships. Students should also begin applying for scholarships their junior year (and there are even a few available for MS students. Looking at scholarships early can help students be prepared.

Most campus financial aid offices will allow you to create a payment plan so you pay monthly instead of all at once. Some students work campus jobs known as work study, or jobs in the community while they take classes. Others take out loans. Once Federal loans dollars are exhausted, the next lowest cost option is through your state lender at the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education (ACPE). ACPE's Success Center staff will help you find funding sources to pay your tuition. <https://acpe.alaska.gov>

Q: What GPA do you need to get into college?

A: Each college has their own GPA requirements, so you should explore in advance the requirements for each school you wish to apply to. Some colleges have additional academic and extracurricular requirements too. In order to submit a competitive application, you should work hard, always strive to improve, and plan early to meet their requirements!

Q: How early can you start college?

A: Dual credit is available for HS students and many start taking dual credit courses their junior year, earning credit for HS and college at the same time. Because the college course fees are usually paid for by the school district, it can help save students on college costs while getting ahead.

Q: Do you get any breaks during college?

A: When in college, you make your own schedule and choose when to take classes. Classes are typically available from early morning through evening. Many students use time between classes to study and eat. Your Academic Advisor can help you select a schedule that best meets your needs.

Q: What kind of basics do they teach in college?

A: Basic college courses are something each student must do before they can begin taking the fun classes that count toward different majors. Examples are: writing, math, science, social science, and humanities. There are also prerequisites required before you can take other fun classes, so students should always work with their Academic Advisor each semester/quarter to figure out the best classes to take.

Q: In your opinion what is the best major

A: The best major is the one you enjoy pursuing and the one that will lead you to the career you want! Working with an Academic Advisor and completing the assessments in AKCIS can help you narrow this down. The great thing is you can always continue learning, and later you can decide to learn something new!

Q: What is AKCIS and how can it help me?

A: The Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) is a free resource to help students identify career pathways based on interest assessments. AKCIS has a wonderful college and scholarship search engine. Students can create a free portfolio, save searches and assessment results, take notes, type in academic and extracurricular achievements and print out a resume from anywhere they can access the internet. <https://akcis.org>

Q: How do you apply for scholarships? What are some of the major criteria necessary in order to apply and be eligible?

A: ACPE and AKCIS are great scholarship resources. You will want to make a calendar with all the deadlines for scholarships (and schools) you plan to apply for. You will want to make sure to meet all the requirements for each scholarship you pursue and work hard at writing good essays that address the points required for each.

Q: What colleges support Alaska Native students with financial costs?

A: Many colleges offer free tuition to Alaska Native and Native American students: Ilisagvik (Utqiagvik, AK), Fort Lewis (Durango, CO), Haskell (Lawrence, KS), SIPI – Southwest Indian Polytechnic Institute (Albuquerque, NM), Dartmouth (Native American Community Program), University of California schools. Alaska Pacific University in Anchorage is an Alaska Native Serving institution that offers excellent scholarship packages to Alaska Native students.

Q: Do you have to have a certain GPA to join the military?

A: Although the Army requires a minimum HS GPA of 2.5, the Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps do not have a HS GPA requirement. Each branch does have minimum score requirements for the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test and these vary from 31 to 36 depending on the branch. Each branch also requires a HS diploma or GED, and ROTC programs require a 2.0 college GPA.

Q: Is it better to be an apprentice than go to college, or go to college and then become an apprentice?

A: Apprenticeships are a great way to earn money while you learn! Students usually take a few classes and the rest of their learning is all on the job, while they make money. Some students choose to learn hands-on trades through a vocational/trade school or even a University, however a college degree is not required to complete an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships can lead to very high paying careers in very specific trades, whereas a college degree may afford additional flexibility.

Q: Do Alaska schools have resources for Alaska Native students?

A: Alaska's universities (University of Alaska campuses, Alaska Pacific University, and Iisagvik College) offer different programs and resources designed to help Alaska Native students build community and increase comfort on campus. While Alaska Pacific University (Anchorage) and Iisagvik College (Utqiagvik) provide a smaller campus environment that is often a nice transition from small communities, there are many different resources specific to each campus, and here are some examples:

- Native Student Union
- Alaska Native Language Center
- Rural Student Services (resources vary among campuses)
- Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development
- Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN)

Q: What are International Studies? Could you also talk more about studying abroad?

A: International Studies looks at global and regional issues, and the impacts that economics, culture, education, politics have on the world. There are many subfields within this major. Studying abroad is a wonderful way to get a feel for global cultures, test out or learn a world language, all while gaining college credit. We have a great Campus Event Video on this topic.

Q: How do you stay motivated during school?

A: Motivation requires a goal - to achieve the best grades, to pass your prerequisite classes, to graduate with a degree that will help you get the job you want, or retain your scholarship with good grades. Finding balance, through a fun class, studying with friends, and your professor's office hours can help you stay motivated and succeed. Saving fun activities until after you write a paper, pass a test, or finish studying can also be motivating!

Q: Is it difficult to have a full time job and be in college, career training, or the military?

A: Working full time can make it harder to earn top grades, because there is only so much time available for work and study each day. Work Study is a great way to earn money and have flexibility when you need extra study time before exams. Working in your field of study can make it easier to have a good job when you graduate, but there is a tradeoff with study time. Most important is to create a schedule and stick to it.

Q: How do you get experience in a job you are not familiar with?

A: Internships give you an opportunity to learn, figure out what you do or don't like about a job, and also help you build relationships with potential employers. Some internships provide a stipend (pay) and others do not. Some non-paying internships might be called externships, but not everyone uses that terminology.

Q: Do roommates need to be the same gender?

A: This varies at different colleges. Some colleges have entire buildings that are gender specific, while others have coed buildings by floor or by room, and some have gender-inclusive options. Other options include small community atmospheres for rural Alaskans, International students, or those studying certain subjects. Housing on campus could include apartment-style options, double, single and super-single rooms. Many, but not all on-campus housing options are pet, alcohol, and/or smoke-free environments and most colleges have first-year experience halls.