

# TOP 10

THINGS  
TO LOOK  
FOR IN A

# CAREER COLLEGE





**A** Career College is a wise choice for those who want a new career direction or to learn an exciting new skill and get into the workforce as quickly as possible.

Unlike traditional post-secondary education, a Career College can provide you with training for today's most popular jobs, and will get you into a higher paying job in less than half the time. It's a difficult decision, but at the same time, an easy decision when you have all the right information.

There are so many considerations, and we know you have so many questions: How much do I have to pay? Will I like it there? Will I be supported and, most of all, will I be able to find a job when I've graduated from the program?

Doing careful research is so important, and just by reading this, you are taking those first, all important steps. That's why we have compiled this list of *"Top 10 Things to Look for in a Career College"*. It's your first step to a fresh start.

# 1. Awesome Student Services

From the moment you visit your Career College you should feel welcome and accepted.

How you are received at the front desk, how you are guided through the enrollment process and how you are encouraged and regarded by everyone is very important.

Your Career College student experience is important and you should expect 100 per cent support along the way. There may be times that you find yourself struggling or having difficulty understanding the material. So, as you are considering your Career College choices, look into the

types of supports available to you as part of your tuition.

Look for a comprehensive Student Services department at your Career College and get information on what counselling services are available to you.

A healthy social life among students is equally as important. A good Career College will have social activities in place to help new students bond and support each other. Pot luck lunches, award programs and celebrations, lounge facilities and social outings help promote a sense of belonging among students and ultimately, future success.

*Questions you should ask are:*

- Will I receive help selecting my career program?
- Will I receive extra support and information on services such as tutoring or student loans?
- Will I receive help writing my resumé, finding a job and negotiating a salary when I graduate?
- Will I receive support AFTER graduation?

## 2. Convenient Location

What you learn at a Career College will impact the rest of your life. Where you learn it can impact your life on a daily basis.

Choosing a Career College that is conveniently located, easy to get to and helps you manage personal commitments such as a part-time job, children and other family members, will make it easier for you to stay on your chosen pathway to success.

Find a Career College that is close to home, close to your job if you are working part-time or even close to your family, and you will spend less time worrying and more time getting ahead.

Consider your primary means of transportation. If you rely on

public transit, you will want a Career College that is on a busy bus route, with buses that stop several times an hour, either in front of the door or no more than a block away, with easy connections and minimal need to transfer.

If you plan on driving to school, check that the Career College has ample parking, preferably with no monthly fee or at least at a discounted student rate.

**A CAREER COLLEGE WITHIN  
EASY DRIVING DISTANCE MEANS  
A SHORTER COMMUTE AND  
MORE PRODUCTIVE TIME IN THE  
CLASSROOM.**

You may be able to manage

your schedule so you can drive to school during non-peak driving hours.

As busy as you will be in your new course of study, you will need time for meals or to meet your new friends for coffee.

There should be numerous amenities in the area surrounding your Career College, such as grocery stores, shopping malls, hospitals and other health care facilities and recreation centres.

Taking time to smell the roses is good advice for any student who is studying hard. Look for parks and green spaces close to your Career College, so you can step outside and slowdown from busy school life.



### 3. Qualified, Caring Instructors

As a student, you should be taught by highly qualified instructors who are working in the industry and at the top of their game.

These are the people who are up to speed on the latest trends and technologies; successful people who will transfer their knowledge and expertise to help you be your best.

Choose a Career College with a long-standing practice of hiring the best available instructors. For example, who better to teach accounting, than a chartered accountant? Who best to teach legal studies, than a lawyer?

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER,  
BUT EMPATHY AND  
COMPASSION IS SOVEREIGN.  
THEY GO HAND IN HAND TO  
CREATE A STUDENT EAGER  
TO SUCCEED AND THRIVE IN  
THE CLASSROOM.**

Today's students are diverse in nature; they're learning new cultures and new languages in addition to new skills.

Instructors must respond to today's students in the classroom by introducing new strategies and new activities in an inclusive and sensitive manner. Knowledge transfer must take place in a non-judgmental environment.



At the same time, instructors should hold students accountable for assignments and classroom behaviours that foster good interpersonal skills; skills that future employers look for in an honest, dependable and professional employee.

When researching a Career

College, inquire as to how instructors are hired. Many colleges will undertake a "role playing" activity whereby new candidates are auditioned and screened for their ability to relate to diverse populations.

Take care in researching who is teaching and in turn, you will be taken care of, too.

## 4. Up-to-Date Technology

When we want information and we want it quickly. We are impatient when information doesn't load on our phone or iPad or other electronic devices fast enough. The same holds true when we are out in the working world. Employers want information and results fast.

Students that want a winning edge will choose a Career College that is up-to-date in both educational and career technology. To ensure that students are career-ready upon graduation is to ensure that they have been trained using the latest, available software programs being used in the industry of their choice today.

When researching a Career College, make sure the institu-



tion is using the most current software programs available and an updated curriculum for modern careers.

Accounting, legal studies and even point-of-sale (POS) software programs used in the retail sector should be the most current programs possible.

Computers and other wireless technologies are now standard

equipment in most industries and your Career College should be well equipped.

Access to the Internet, such as free Wi-Fi should be available to all students, with anytime access to computers, lap tops and areas in which to use them.

When visiting a potential Career College, take a look at the equipment used in your area

of study and make sure it's the same type of equipment and technology you will be using after graduation when you are working. You'll develop the knowledge and skills you require to succeed by using the same tools and techniques used in the fields.

Technology in the real world changes in the blink of an eye. Skills learned at your Career College, along with the administrative aspects of a career, are invaluable. The right environment and the proper tools, plus time and expert direction from skilled instructors, will ensure that you are on the job as quickly as possible, being a productive and valuable employee earning the best wage possible.

## 5. Career Preparation and Outcomes

If you are choosing a Career College with care, doing your research and asking questions, you are already paving the way to a successful career. A dedicated and caring counselor will help you during your course selection process which will set you up for success in your course of studies. What are your career goals and what are your dreams for the future? A thorough discussion of your career objectives will provide you with further confidence in your decision.

The next step is to ensure that your Career College supports you all the way, right up to the day you accept and sign an offer of employment. You want the maximum return on the money

you pay for a good education.

Depending on your course, your Career College will arrange a Practicum, also called job shadowing or unpaid on-the-job training. This generally takes place over two or three weeks or even a month, at a nearby place of business in your chosen industry. A good Career College is well connected in the business community and has contacts in every area of study that is offered. Where you spend your Practicum is key to successful completion of your studies.

As you prepare to graduate, a counselor will help prepare you for job interviews with employers that will ask you a million questions. A career counselor will provide insight as to what

those questions are, and the best way to answer them so that future employers will better understand the value you will bring to a new position. In addition, a Career College will coach you preparing a resumé, showcasing your experience and highlighting the interpersonal skills employers are looking for. They want employees that are professional, honest, dependable and accountable.

**WHEN CONSIDERING  
YOUR CAREER COLLEGE  
OPTIONS, FIND OUT WHAT THE  
EMPLOYMENT RATE OF THEIR  
GRADUATES ARE.**

You will want to choose a college that has an employment

rate of 90 to 95 per cent. This means, almost all students find work in their chosen field after completing their studies. The employment rate is a definitive sign that the quality of education in a supportive environment is excellent and worthy of your time and money.



## 6. Security



It is an unfortunate reality that emergency situations can strike at any time. The health safety of students, faculty and staff is a primary concern at your Career College. Safety initiatives, emergency preparedness and crisis planning should be front and centre.

It begins with background checks on staff and instructors. Checking the references and past history of employees is becoming standard practice in most industries and serves as a backup to information captured during the hiring process. There should be a high level of compliance to complete these checks.

Other students in specific programs, such as legal studies and health care programs may be subject to a background or reference check. These checks can be to ensure future employability of students after graduation, but is also a best practice to further ensure the safety of other students and staff at your Career College.

As part of a sound emergency plan, staff and faculty members with First Aid and CPR Training are identified.

Career Colleges may also offer free CPR training for those who would like to learn this skill, proven to save lives in the event of accident or illness.



# 7. Accreditation

One of prospective student's primary responsibilities is to fully research the feasibility of their chosen profession and program options.

It is important for students to gather information about post-secondary education and be aware of their rights and responsibilities to make an informed decision regarding the training required to help them achieve their career goals.

It is always wise to examine the accreditation of a prospective Career College. Accreditation is a distinction granted to institutions by the province which meet or exceed the stated criteria of education standards and quality.

To meet these standards, a prospective Career College should offer: A high-quality curriculum, high-standard campus facilities and educational resources, credit transfer options, financial aid and profes-

sional success.

All Canadian provinces and territories have their own regulatory bodies which grant licences and provide accreditation to private institutions, keeping them accountable.

It is up to each employer or post-secondary institution to decide whether to recognize programs offered by private institutions.

You should ask specific employers and post-secondary institutions if they recognize the Career College and its program(s) you are investigating.

Once you have successfully completed all program requirements and have paid all fees in full, the institution is required to provide you with credentials.

## ACCREDITATION,

- Assures consistency in institutional activities
- Provides public accountability
- Assesses and enhances the educational standards of an institution
- Promotes institutional development in terms of education quality and facilities

This is necessary if the profession you have chosen requires licensing, such as health care workers. In other words, license to apply your new knowledge and skills in a successful career with higher earnings.

## 8. Accessibility and Flexible Schedules

Deciding on an exciting new career and taking the first step towards it is exciting. You don't want anything to get in your way. Many traditional schools may not have immediate openings and even waiting lists.

**ONE OF THE ADVANTAGES OF A CAREER COLLEGE IS THERE ARE FEW, IF ANY, WAITING LISTS FOR PROGRAMS.**

With information at your fingertips any time of day or night, the Career

College website is often your first point of contact.

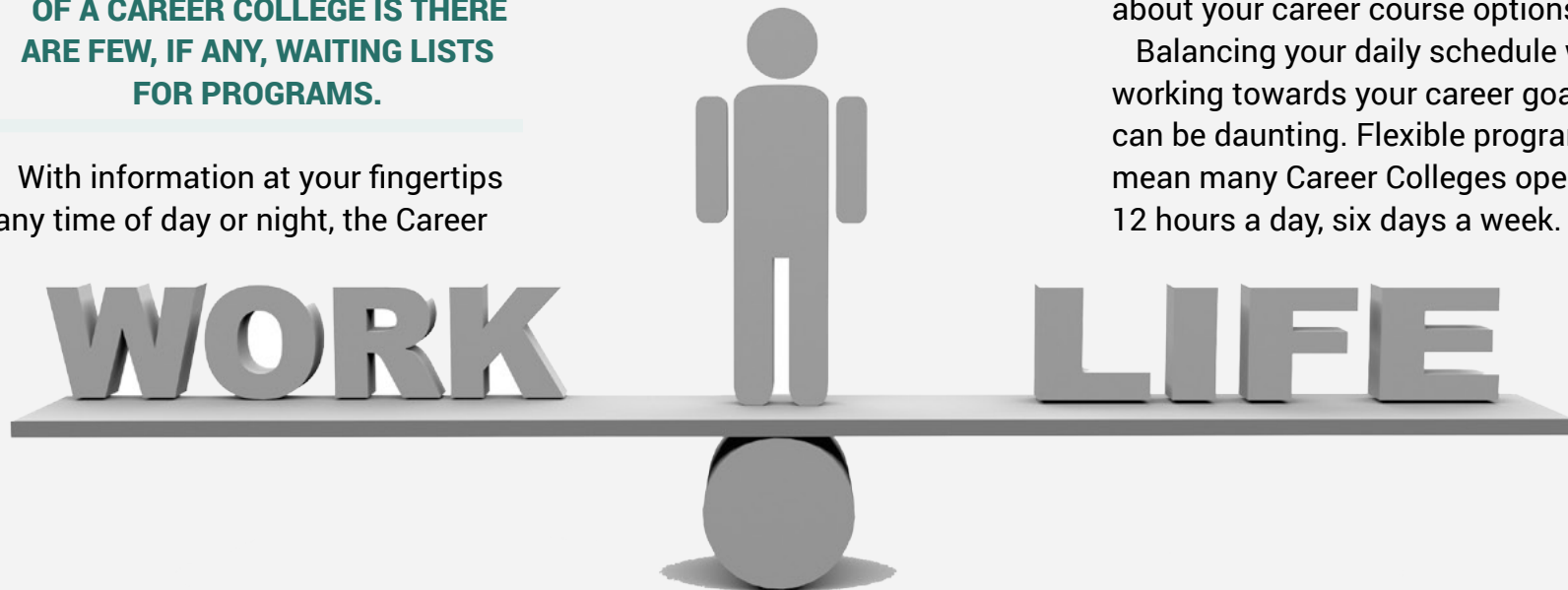
Course options, funding and admission procedures should be clearly listed with an easy to locate 'Contact Us' page and contact form for letting the Career College know you want

more information.

Often, prospective students are busy during the day with a job or family responsibilities.

Check the admission office hours at a Career College campus for evening appointments, to have a tour, talk to a counselor and learn more about your career course options.

Balancing your daily schedule while working towards your career goals can be daunting. Flexible programs mean many Career Colleges operate 12 hours a day, six days a week.



## 9. Honesty, Accuracy and Transparency

You are not only a student at your Career College, you are also a customer. Your financial investment in your education, and the time you spend away from friends, family and other obligations, is extremely important. Your faith in the processes in place at a prospective Career College should be deep and so should the willingness of the college to safeguard your education.

From the moment you begin your research to the time you pay your money and start your program, you should have all the information you require delivered honestly and openly by administration staff that only want the best for you. There

should be policies in place for student protection.

The value of a career program should not be over-stated. Over promising and under delivering is dangerous. Ask for statistics on post-graduation career prospects so that you can make an informed decision.

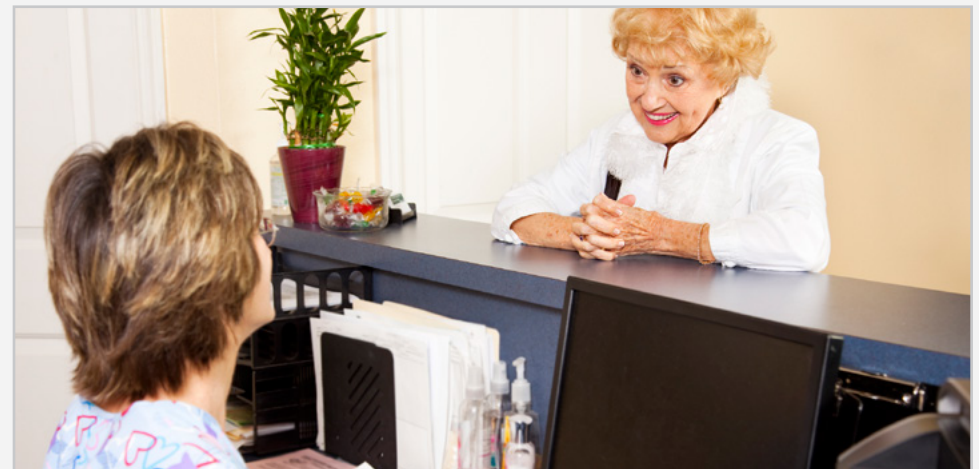
A good Career College is committed to serving you. Every aspect of your enrollment should be explained to you carefully and concisely, beginning with your financial obligations from beginning to end, including refund policies.

Program descriptions and expectations should be accurate and explained fully. Course work, assignment expectations

and grade benchmarks should be clearly stated. A clear and definitive picture of what careers are available post-graduation should be provided with data to back it up.

Your Career College should constantly monitor student progress and collect feedback

upon course completion to assure the ongoing effectiveness and continuous improvement of its programs and to ensure the success of students as they begin their chosen careers. The best people to hold Career Colleges to a higher standard are the students themselves.



# 10. Small Classroom Sizes

Some people learn by hearing information. Others need to read it and still others need to be shown with photos, diagrams or even by way of demonstration. Learning is not a one-size-fits-all experience.

Considering the accelerated nature of many courses offered by your Career College, you need to make sure you learn and retain information every day, and that is best achieved by a low ratio of students to teachers.

Unlike larger lecture halls in some post-secondary institutions, your Career College should offer hands on instruction in a smaller classroom and more intimate setting, where

instructors can truly understand the learning styles and the unique needs of each student.

With smaller classes come fewer interruptions and more meaningful conversations. Instructors have opportunity to adjust the curriculum to the needs of their students, providing opportunity to go deeper into the subject material.

It is far easier for students to pay attention when the classrooms are smaller. Student engagement is higher, and instructors are better able to identify students who may not fully understand the subject at hand,

**It's a fact that people learn better in smaller classrooms where the teacher can spend more time with the student.**

**An average student-to-teacher ratio should be 10 TO 1 OR LESS.**

giving them ample opportunity to help them catch up.

Feedback is essential to the learning process at your Career College. Students in a smaller classroom can expect a more thorough assessment of their participation in class, and of

their assignments.

In turn, students can better acquaint themselves with their classmates. Learning and sharing with a peer group will reinforce information provided by instructors and further support the learning process. Each student's contributions are important and should be acknowledged. The support of other students and understanding from peers acts as a safety net. Spending time with students, not only in the smaller classroom but a smaller campus at your Career College, with foster a sense of community so essential to the success of so many students.

# Final Thoughts

This information is meant to guide you through the process of choosing a Career College.

If you follow the advice provided here and do your due dili-

gence, chances are great that you will be successful in whatever you decide to do. The best judge of what is best for you, is you.

Arm yourself with information but

remember, the final decision is yours to make.

Good luck with your learning journey and here's to a brighter future.

# EDUCATION

## IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON

## WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

— NELSON MANDELA



COLLEGE

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