



## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE STARTING POST-SECONDARY

**1 Terminology 101**  
**Degrees** are four-year programs, **diplomas** are two-year programs, **certificates** are courses or programs that are one year or less. **Credits** are associated with courses. A course typically awards three credits. **Exit requirements** refer to courses, number of credits or a grade point average needed to graduate from the program. **Convocation** is the graduation ceremony upon your program completion.

**2 The right school for you**  
There are differences between universities, colleges, and technical schools. Universities offer all levels from doctorates to certificates, but most don't offer trades programs. Colleges on the other hand offer some degrees, many diplomas and certificates, trades and vocational programs, and upgrading options. Technical schools offer two-year programs focused on employment-preparation skills for trained labour.

**3 Options, decisions, where to start?**  
It can be intimidating to discover which school or program is the right fit for your goals. A good place to start is by visiting [www.educationplanner.ca](http://www.educationplanner.ca). You can search by careers (i.e. dental hygiene, architect, culinary etc.) and a list of B.C. schools offering training in those fields will be generated.

**4 Academic college courses transfer to equivalent university courses**  
You can benefit from smaller class sizes and affordable tuition by starting a degree at a college for two years and transferring to a Canadian university for years three and four. Visit [www.bctransferguide.ca](http://www.bctransferguide.ca) to confirm that your chosen university for transfer matches up with Okanagan College courses you plan to take, or have taken. Students need 24 credits (meaning eight courses) to be considered a transfer student by a university.

**5 Becoming an apprentice**  
There are two ways to enter a trades program. **Pre-apprenticeship/foundation programs** are for those who have little or no prior knowledge of a specific trade. These programs are generally six months long and provide a solid foundation for the student to start working in the trade. After the in-class component, students need to complete about 1500 work hours (depending on the trade) to receive their certificate. **Apprenticeship programs** lead to a Red Seal designation, where you can be a journeyman. Programs are usually four years long, and require the student to have an employer in conjunction with their schooling; the student completes some class time followed by applied work with the employer throughout the four years. Okanagan College is the second largest Trades training institution in B.C.

**6 Other options of study**  
Continuing Studies offers a wide variety of employment based programs and general interest courses. All programs are one year or less, allowing students to get out into the work force. Certificate programs range from audio engineering and music production to nursing unit assistant; there is something for everyone. General interest courses in photography, word processing, time management and more!





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### In high school? Get a head start!

Dual credit programs are an opportunity for high school students to start college programs while still in high school. These programs range from trades foundation programs and office admin programs to individual academic courses. Students receive credit towards their high school diploma, the programs are usually paid for by the school district and it's a way to get ahead on post-secondary education and training. To apply for dual credit programs, students need to speak with their career counsellor in their school district.

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### It's not too late to upgrade your high school courses

Realize you need a pre-requisite or a higher grade for your dream program and career? Colleges and technical schools offer high school upgrading courses through the Adult Basic Education department. You can also start with some college courses to meet university pre-requisites for transfer programs.

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### Applying to a program is not the same as registering

Applying is the act of going online, choosing a program, and providing information to be considered for admission. At Okanagan College, applications open on the first business day of November, and the fee is \$30. Registering happens after you have been accepted to a program and is the process of selecting courses. Registration opens in June for September program start dates. Whether you need time to upgrade, are taking a semester to travel, or need a little time to decide, Okanagan College offers September or January start dates for Arts, Science, and Business programs. You can also take courses full-time, part-time, or by distance to find a schedule that fits with your life commitments.

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### I've applied, now what?

After applying, students will hear from Okanagan College admissions within 10 business days to confirm receipt of your application (note: this is not confirmation of acceptance). If you are accepted into a program, an offer of admission will be sent to you outlining deposit details and documents required including transcripts and anything additional as per your specific program. After this information is submitted, students will receive their time stamp, indicating when they can register for classes. Note: only Arts, Science, Business and Engineering Technology students will receive a time stamp, as all other programs are block registered.

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### Financing your education with student loans

Student loans are available through the government, not your chosen institution, by applying online. Applications open on June 1 every year. Students taking three or more courses per semester can apply for full-time student loans. Those taking fewer courses can apply for part-time student loans. Visit [www.studentaidebc.ca](http://www.studentaidebc.ca) for details.

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### Bursaries and awards at your fingertips

Okanagan College gives out more than \$1 million worth of financial aid and awards annually to students. Take the time to research what funding you might be eligible for and apply for the many awards, including entrance awards, and bursaries available to you at [www.okanagan.bc.ca/financialaid](http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/financialaid). **Bursaries** are awarded based on demonstrated financial need, special criteria and are not tied to your grades. **Scholarships** are based on academic achievements. **Awards** are distributed based on evaluation of your combined grades and community involvement. The College also offers an Emergency Funding Program for students who encounter unexpected circumstances that may pose a barrier to their educational pursuit.

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### We're here to help you!

Pursuing post-secondary education is about more than just your studies: you join a community and resources are available to support you along the way. Jump Start sessions in June and August help you navigate through the to-dos of getting started at College: from tips to building your own course schedule to getting on course waitlists, you'll get the answers you need for a strong start. Okanagan College students have access to free tutoring in the Learning Centre, counselling services, library resources, and on-campus fitness facilities. First Nations and Metis students have access to Aboriginal mentors and support with the Aboriginal Services department.

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### Give it a try first

Most institutions offer campus tours to help you get oriented and gain a feel for what life as a student might be like. Here at Okanagan College, you can book a campus tour, or why not try being a student for a day to see what a class is like? Contact Blake Edwards at [bedwards@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:bedwards@okanagan.bc.ca) to make arrangements at the Kelowna campus. Education Advisors are also available to help you map a path to your career goals and find the right program to apply to. Contact Student Services at 250-762-5445 ext. 4119 to set up an appointment.

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### It all starts at OC

OC offers more than 130 programs and more than 1,750 courses for students to choose from. Students at OC get the advantage of small class sizes, affordable tuition, and applied learning opportunities. Visit [www.okanagan.bc.ca/becomeastudent](http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/becomeastudent) or contact a Recruiter ([chooseoc@okanagan.bc.ca](mailto:chooseoc@okanagan.bc.ca)) to find out what program is the right fit for you!

