

Healthcare Careers

Guide to Colleges and Careers in Healthcare in the Twin Cities Metro Area



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
of Minnesota

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1694 Como Avenue - St. Paul, MN 55108

(651) 647-0191 – Fax (651) 647-9268

Website: www.iimn.org

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Note:

- This guide is **not** designed for individuals who are interested in advanced degrees in medicine. It does not include positions such as dentist or pediatrician, which require extensive schooling. Instead, this guide is written for those interested in healthcare positions involving 2-4 years of full-time college.
- This guide was updated in June 2015. All information comes from public websites of Twin Cities area colleges and universities, the “Positively Minnesota” Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development website, the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics website, iSeek.org, and personal interviews with healthcare professionals.

How do I find the right career?

Although most people think of nursing when they consider a medical career, the medical field has a wide range of opportunities.

Some professionals are caregivers and work directly with patients, while others focus more on lab work or on clerical tasks such as medical records. Some have a wide variety of duties, while others focus on a narrow skill area. Some work in hospitals, while others work in clinics, in long-term care, or in private homes.

This guide will help you to:

- Explore employment options and find a good fit, both personally and professionally.
- Get started on the college education & training you will need.

Important! In this guide, the estimated time needed to complete each academic program is based on the assumptions that:

- (1) You are ready to take General Education (college-level) classes.
- (2) You are a full-time student.
- (3) You have a high school degree or equivalent.

If even ONE of these assumptions is not true for you, the program will take longer than estimated in this guide.

Skills You May Need

- **Computer and technical** skills to use office, lab, and medical equipment
- **Detail orientation** to keep accurate records, notice inconsistencies in data, and observe changes in symptoms
- **Organizational** skills to manage multiple tasks at once
- **Interpersonal** skills to ensure sensitivity and respect toward patients and staff
- **Physical stamina** to stand for long periods of time and lift equipment and/or patients
- **Problem-solving** skills to prioritize tasks, analyze situations/data, and find the best solutions
- **Speaking and listening** skills to make sure that patients and staff understand each other
- **Teamwork** skills to cooperate with all co-workers, regardless of position
- **Confidentiality** is a priority when dealing with patients, families, and co-workers.

Medical Careers in Caregiving

Many medical careers involve caregiving, which means working directly with patients. Before deciding on a career in caregiving, make sure this is the right path for you.

You will be working directly with patients.

Can you communicate clearly in speaking and writing?

Are you comfortable working with people who may be injured, sick, or impaired?

In some cases, you will have to do a lot of problem-solving on your own.

Can you stay calm and prioritize under pressure?

Can you let go of stress at the end of the work day?

Some caregiving careers also have schedules that can change regularly.

Can you work evenings, weekends, and/or holidays?

Can you adjust to a changing schedule?

Community Health Worker (CHW)

Similar jobs: Public Health Educator, Clinical Instructor, Health Promotion Specialist

Community Health Workers teach people how to eat well, exercise, and practice other healthy behaviors. They create informational materials and give presentations.

Main Duties:

- Plan effective health education programs
- Make presentations and talk with clients
- Confer with managers, health specialists, or civic groups
- Coordinate health education services
- Serve as a resource for health education
- Evaluate the effectiveness of health education programs

Notes: Must be interested in people and able to teach and motivate them

Work Sites: community healthcare clinics, community centers, hospitals, and/or insurance companies

Salary for CHW:

MN Average: \$14-\$19/hour

Salary for Public Health Educator:

US Average: \$18.31/hour

MN Average: \$20.18 /hour

Top MN Earners: \$28.22 /hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 21%

In MN: 13%

Pathway & Education:

CHW

2-4 semesters



Public Health Educator

8 or more semesters

GUIDE to COLLEGES and CAREERS in HEALTHCARE

Dental Assistant

Similar jobs: Orthodontic Assistant, Periodontics Assistant

Dental Assistants work under the direction of dentists to perform a wide variety of tasks ranging from clerical work to patient preparation and care.

Main Duties:

- Assist dentists at chair-side as they examine and treat patients
- Prepare patients for exams and procedures
- Take and process dental x-rays
- Make casts of teeth and mouth or temporary crowns from impressions of patients' teeth
- Perform fluoride treatments and polishing
- Instruct patients on post-operative and oral health care
- Schedule appointments with patients
- Clean and polish removable dental appliances
- Do NOT clean teeth

Notes: Must be comfortable working very close to patient's face and mouth

Work Sites: private dental offices

Salary:

US Average: \$17.26/hour
MN Average: \$20.78/hour
Top MN Earners: \$27.10/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 25%
In MN: 5%

Dental Hygienist

Dental Hygienists clean teeth, examine teeth for diseases and perform other preventative care measures.

Main Duties:

- Clean patients' teeth using dental instruments
- Examine gums and under chin for signs of disease
- Update charts to track patients' oral health
- Prepare mouth for surgery or other procedures
- Make models of teeth
- Perform final surface work on fillings

Notes: Must be comfortable working very close to patient's face and mouth

Work Sites: private dental offices

Salary:

US Average: \$34.74/hour
MN Average: \$34.10/hour
Top MN Earners: \$42.07/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 33%
In MN: 12%

Pathway & Education

Dental Assistant
4-5 semesters



Dental Hygienist
5-6 semesters

Emergency Medical Technician (EMT)

Similar jobs: First Responder, Flight Paramedic, Paramedic

EMTs respond to emergency situations to help people who are injured or suddenly sick.

Main Duties:

- Administer first aid to patients who are badly injured, bleeding or in pain
- Operate equipment for the heart and lungs
- Observe, record, and report patients' condition
- Comfort and reassure patients and their families
- Drive and maintain ambulances
- Communicate with other emergency personnel

Pathway & Education:

EMT-Basic
1 semester



EMT- Intermediate
2-3 additional semesters



Paramedic
4-6 additional semesters

Notes: Must have a driver's license, be in good physical condition, and work well under pressure

Work Sites: hospitals or fire stations, though they usually travel to emergencies anywhere in the area

Salary:

US Average: \$16.97/hour
MN Average: \$18.04/hour
Top MN Earners: \$29.18/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2012-2022

In the US: 23%
In MN: 15%

LABORATORY WORK

Medical Lab Technician

Similar jobs: Clinical Lab Technician, Lab Assistant, Non-Registered Technician, Phlebotomist

Medical Lab Technicians perform tests and procedures ordered by physicians.

Main Duties:

- Test samples of biological materials, cut and stain tissue specimens, and look for abnormalities or disease
- Evaluate test results
- Perform tests to determine blood type
- Prepare vaccines and serums
- Set up and maintain lab equipment
- Draw blood

Notes: Must be comfortable working with human body fluids and tissues

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics, or medical laboratories

Salary:

US Average: \$19.58/hour
MN Average: \$21.53/hour
Top MN Earners: \$28.10/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 22%
In MN: 23%

Pathway & Education:

Medical Lab Technician
5-6 semesters



Medical Lab Technologist
8 semesters

LABORATORY WORK

Phlebotomy Technician

Similar jobs: Phlebotomist, Patient Care Technician

Phlebotomy Technicians draw blood and collect other specimens for donation or laboratory tests. They work under the supervision of Medical Lab Technicians or Technologists.

Main Duties:

- Collect blood from finger sticks or with a needle from veins or arteries
- Assemble equipment such as needles, gauze, vials, alcohol and tourniquets
- Verify patient information, label specimen vials and submit specimens for further processing or testing

Notes: Must be comfortable working with human body fluids and tissues

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices and clinics, medical laboratories, blood and plasma donation centers

Salary:

US Average: \$15.22/hour
MN Average: \$16.68/hour
Top MN Earners: \$21.39/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 27%
In MN: 23%

Medical Assistant

Similar jobs: Clinical Assistant,
Medical Office Assistant, Optometric Tech

Medical assistants perform a variety of medical and administrative tasks for physicians and other health practitioners.

Main Duties:

- Interview patients and take vital signs
- Collect blood and tissue samples for laboratory tests
- Give injections and medication
- Clean and sterilize instruments
- Operate x-ray, EKG, and other equipment for medical testing
- Complete insurance forms and maintain medical records
- Check inventory and order medical supplies and materials

Work Sites: doctors' offices/clinics and offices of health care providers such as chiropractors and optometrists

Salary:

US Average: \$14.91/hour
MN Average: \$16.00/hour
Top MN Earners: \$21.16/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 29%
In MN: 19%

Pathway & Education:

Phlebotomy Technician
1-2 semesters



Medical Lab Technician
5-6 semesters

Education:

Medical Assistant

5-6 semesters

NURSING

Nursing Assistant

Similar job: Certified/Trained Medication Aide

Nursing Assistants provide basic, everyday care for patients in hospitals and long-term care.

Main Duties:

- Do personal care such as bathing and dressing
- Prepare food trays and serve meals
- Check temperature, blood pressure, pulse, and respiration
- Give medication as directed by supervisor
- Keep records of food intake, liquid output, and vital signs
- Clean rooms and change beds

Notes: Must be able to lift heavy weight frequently

Work Sites: nursing homes, hospitals, or residential care homes

Salary:

US Average: \$12.61/hour
MN Average: \$13.30/hour
Top MN Earners: \$17.58/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:
In the US: 21%
In MN: 9%

Education:

Nursing Assistant
3-11 weeks

NURSING

Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)

Similar jobs: Office Nurse, Private Duty Nurse, Charge Nurse, Licensed Vocational Nurse

LPNs provide basic medical care under the guidance of registered nurses and doctors.

Main Duties:

- Vary greatly depending on work setting
- Take vital signs and assist in personal cares
- Collect blood and tissue samples for routine laboratory tests
- Feed patients and record food and liquid intake and output
- Work with doctors, nurses, and other medical staff to oversee patient progress
- May supervise nursing assistants, schedule appointments, keep records, and perform other clerical tasks

Notes: May qualify for some certified medical assistant jobs. LPN is not a “stepping stone” toward RN. It is a separate track.

Work Sites: nursing/personal care agencies, doctors’ offices, home health care agencies, or temporary worker agencies

Salary:

US Average: \$20.39/hour
MN Average: \$19.98/hour
Top MN Earners: \$25.65/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:
In the US: 23%
In MN: 19%

Education:

Licensed Practical Nurse (diploma)
2-3 semesters

NURSING

Registered Nurse (RN)

Similar jobs: Charge Nurse, Staff Nurse, Clinical Nurse

RNs provide and supervise basic medical care. They educate, advise, and provide emotional support for patients and families.

Main Duties:

- Vary greatly depending on work setting because care is so specialized. For example, neonatal nurses deliver infants, while surgical nurses prepare patients for surgery and assist surgeons.
- Maintain accurate reports, records, and charts
- Supervise licensed practical nurses and aides
- Write and manage care plans for patients
- Give patients treatments, medications, and injections
- Assess patients' condition and watch for danger signs

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices, nursing homes and other personal care facilities, or with home health care services; also in insurance companies, schools, or public/community health.

Salary:

US Average: \$32.21/hour

MN Average: \$34.32/hour

Top MN Earners: \$46.17/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 19%

In MN: 17%

If you are planning a nursing career . . .

Which is best: LPN, RN, or BSN?

LPN program

- Shorter
- Qualifies nurses for work in long-term care & clinics
- Students can work as LPNs while getting their RN qualification and get clinical experience.
- Employers may help to pay for RN training.
- Getting an LPN diploma does not shorten the route to an RN qualification.

RN program

- Longer than LPN program
- Qualifies nurses for work in hospitals and in a wider variety of settings than LPN
- No LPN qualification is needed to apply
- Much higher salary and more responsibility than LPN

BSN program

- Several semesters beyond RN training (such as a dual enrollment program) or a combined RN/BSN program at a 4-year college
- Qualifies nurses to work in acute care, such as hospital emergency rooms and intensive care
- Increasingly required for RNs who want to get or keep positions in hospitals

Pathway & Education:

Registered Nurse (AAS)
4-6 semesters



Registered Nurse (BSN)

4 semesters (with prior RN degree) or 8+ semesters (without prior RN degree)

If you are planning a nursing career . . .

Are there LPN/RN/BSN partnerships?

Many colleges have special arrangements with other colleges to help students study off-site or to advance more smoothly from one nursing degree to the next.

Host sites

Some colleges offer their own LPN or RN programs at campuses of other “host” colleges that may be closer to your home or workplace.

Dual Enrollment: RN + BSN

Some MnSCU colleges have agreements with 4-year colleges to allow students to apply to RN and BSN programs in a single application. If students are accepted in the RN program, they are automatically accepted in the BSN program. When students complete RN training at a 2-year college, they take the licensure exam and can begin working as RNs when they pass. They can begin the BSN at a 4-year college later if they choose to.

RN programs

- MCTC
- Anoka Ramsey Community College
- Century College
- Inver Hills Comm. College
- Normandale Comm. College
- North Hennepin Community College



BSN programs

- Augsburg College
- Metro State University
- Concordia University

Occupational Therapist Assistant

Similar job: Behavior Specialist

OTAs work with patients who have physical, cognitive or emotional disabilities. They implement the therapies and exercises prescribed by occupational therapists.

Main Duties:

- Give tests and observe patients to measure their abilities and progress, then record outcomes
- Teach self-care and work-related skills to people with disabilities
- Monitor patients' activities to make sure they are performed correctly
- Teach patients and their families about basic living skills at home
- Adapt equipment and surroundings to meet patients' needs
- Maintain patient records and prepare reports

Notes: Must be comfortable working with individuals who have disabilities

Work Sites: occupational therapists' offices, nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, or hospitals

Salary:

US Average: \$26.77/hour

MN Average: \$21.59/hour

Top US Earners: \$28.50/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 41%

In MN: 20%

Education:

Occupational Therapist Assistant

4 semesters

Pharmacy Technician

Similar job: Pharmaceutical Care Associate

Pharmacy Technicians fill prescription medications under the direction of a pharmacist.

Main Duties:

- Transfer medications from vials to syringes
- Work under direct supervision of a licensed pharmacist
- Answer telephones and respond to patient questions
- Fill bottles with prescribed medications
- Monitor machines that fill prescriptions
- Count, measure, or mix medications
- Price and file prescriptions that have been filled
- Maintain patient profiles on computer

Work Sites: pharmacies, drug stores, and hospitals

Salary:

US Average: \$15.48/hour
MN Average: \$15.00/hour
Top MN Earners: \$21.50/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:
In the US: 20%
In MN: 14%

Education:

Pharmacy Technician
2-4 semesters

Physical Therapist Assistant

Similar job: Physical Therapy Technician

PTAs assist physical therapists who work with patients recovering from injury, illness, and surgery to regain movement and manage pain.

Main Duties:

- Instruct and assist patients with exercise to improve movement
- Provide treatments such as massage or heat/cold packs
- Record and report responses to treatment to physical therapist
- Fit patients for braces and other supportive devices
- Assist patients with dressing, therapy, and use of supportive devices
- Perform clerical tasks, such as answering the phone, ordering supplies, or filling out forms
- Evaluate patients to determine effects of treatments

Notes: Must be comfortable touching patients

Work Sites: physical therapy clinics, hospitals, nursing/personal care facilities, or doctors' offices and clinics

Salary:

US Average: \$25.85 /hour
MN Average: \$22.60/hour
Top MN Earners: \$28.79/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:
In the US: 41%
In MN: 24%

Education:

Physical Therapy Assistant
4-5 semesters

Radiographer

Similar jobs: Radiologic Technologist/Technician

Radiographers work with patients to take body images that are used to diagnose disease and detect injury.

Main Duties:

- Prepare patients for x-ray and other imaging processes
- Prepare and maintain imaging equipment
- Follow doctor's orders carefully when imaging patient's body
- Operate computerized imaging equipment
- Use shields to protect patients and themselves from harmful rays
- Maintain confidential and accurate patient records

Notes: Must be comfortable touching patients and sensitive to their needs

Work Sites: hospitals and sometimes clinics

Salary:

US Average: \$27.61/hour
MN Average: \$29.18/hour
Top Earners: \$38.02/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 21%
In MN: 21%

Education:

Radiographer

6 semesters

Radiation Therapist

Similar jobs: Computed Tomography Simulation Therapist

Radiation Therapists administer radiation treatment to cancer patients as directed by a physician.

Main Duties:

- Take x-rays to determine where tumors are located
- Calculate amount of radiation delivered at each session
- Help doctors develop radiation treatment plans
- Educate patients and families about radiation treatment
- Connect doctors with supportive care personnel
- Watch for unusual reactions to treatment and report to doctors

Work Sites: hospitals or cancer treatment centers

Salary:

US Average: \$39.76/hour
MN Average: \$36.96/hour
Top MN Earners: \$50.79/hour

Anticipated Job Growth

2012-2022:
In the US: 24%
In MN: 19%

Education:

**Radiation
Therapist**

6-7 semesters

Respiratory Therapist

Similar job: Respiratory Care Practitioner

Respiratory Therapists help patients who are having trouble breathing, either chronically, as in the case of asthma, or in acute emergencies, such as a heart attack.

Main Duties:

- Set up and operate devices for patient treatment to restore lung expansion, ventilation, and oxygenation
- Perform emergency care such as artificial respiration quickly and calmly
- Monitor patients' responses to treatment and assess their condition
- Perform chest physiotherapy to remove mucus from lungs
- Run tests such as electrocardiograms to assess lung function
- Evaluate patients' lung capacity

Notes: Must be able to remain calm under pressure

Work Sites: hospitals, home health agencies and nursing care facilities

Salary:

US Average: \$28.16/hour
MN Average: \$30.14/hour
Top MN Earners: \$36.56/hour

Anticipated Job Growth

2012-2022:
In the US: 19%
In MN: 18%

Pathway & Education:

Respiratory Therapist (AAS)
4-6 semesters



Respiratory Care (Diploma)
6 additional semesters

Surgical Technologist

Similar jobs: Endoscopic Technologist, Operating Room Technician

Surgical Technologists assist doctors and nurses before, during and after surgeries.

Main Duties:

- Count sponges, needles, and instruments before and after surgery
- Pass instruments and other supplies to surgeons and assistants
- Help surgical team scrub and dress for surgery
- Prepare patients for surgery
- Work with lab specimens
- Observe patient vital signs
- Monitor operating room conditions
- Monitor patient and surgical team needs

Education:

Surgical Technologist
4-8 semesters

Notes: Must have good manual dexterity and work well under pressure

Work Sites: hospitals and dental offices

Salary:

US Average: \$21.61/hour
MN Average: \$24.48/hour
Top MN Earners: \$29.71/hour

Anticipated Job Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 30%
In MN: 19%

Medical Careers in Clerical Areas

Some medical careers do not involve direct contact with patients. Instead, they deal more with administration, labs, and/or with medical records.

Before deciding on a career in a technological branch of the medical field, make sure it is the right path for you:

You may work with a limited number of people.

Are you comfortable working with a small group of staff members?

Do you enjoy working independently?

In many cases, you will work with lab equipment and computers.

Are you comfortable sitting at a computer or machine for most of your work day?



Health Information Technician

Similar jobs: File Clerk, Medical Records Analyst/Coordinator, Office Manager, Coder

Health Information Technicians manage patient records and health information on electronic databases and on paper.

Main Duties:

- Gather and organize information for patient medical records
- Process patient admission and discharge forms
- Communicate effectively with doctors and healthcare workers
- Use standard coding systems for diagnoses and procedures
- Prepare medical records for release to authorized parties
- Assemble and analyze patient data to help improve patient care and control costs

Notes: Must enjoy doing clerical tasks and working with numbers and information

Work Sites: hospitals/clinics, doctors' offices, nursing homes, or outpatient care centers

Salary:

US Average: \$18.34/hour

MN Average: \$20.07/hour

Top MN Earners: \$27.04/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:

In the US: 22%

In MN: 17%

Education:

**Health
Information
Technician**

3-4 semesters

Health Unit Coordinator

Similar jobs: Communications Clerk, Ward Clerk/Secretary, Admissions Clerk

Health Unit Coordinators organize activity on the unit and create a hospitable environment.

Main Duties:

- Set priorities and organize the workload on a nursing unit
- Coordinate unit activity
- Help monitor patients and personnel
- Transcribe physicians' orders
- Answer telephone and intercom
- Operate nursing unit equipment
- Order daily diets
- Order and maintain supplies
- Direct visitors

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices or clinics

Salary:

US Average: \$15/hour
MN Average: \$15/hour
Top Earners: \$16/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:
In the US: 17.1%
In MN: 21.2%

Education:

**Health Unit
Coordinator**
2 semesters

Medical Transcriptionist

Similar jobs: Documentation Specialist, Medical Language Specialist

Medical Transcriptionists convert healthcare professionals' voice recordings into written reports using medical terminology and abbreviations.

Main Duties:

- Listen to physicians' taped recordings of medical reports, using a dictation machine
- Transcribe dictation for a variety of medical reports
- Decide which information should be put in or taken out of reports
- Edit transcribed reports for spelling, grammar, and clarity
- Take dictation using shorthand or a stenotype machine
- Perform data entry and other light office duties
- May answer inquiries about specific medical cases

Notes: Must have good typing, computer, and language skills

Work Sites: hospitals, doctors' offices, or medical transcription offices

Salary:

US Average: \$17.08/hour
MN Average: \$17.73/hour
Top MN Earners: \$22.55/hour

Anticipated Job

Growth 2012-2022:
In the US: 8%
In MN: 9.6%

Education:

**Medical
Transcriptionist**
2 semesters

Choosing a College

Step 1. Find out your English placement level.

Before you can register for classes, you must show that your reading and writing skills are good enough.

- Take an Accuplacer test at a MnSCU college.
- It may be free or cost from \$5 - \$20. You have to apply at the college first, but you do NOT have to register for classes just because you apply and take the test.
- If you are placed in ESOL or developmental classes, don't forget that there are less expensive alternatives: you can find FREE classes at a local Adult Basic Education center.

Check the Minnesota Literacy Council hotline at <http://mnliteracy.org/hotline> or 1-800-222-1990.

In order to get into General Education classes, you must (1) have a high school diploma, GED, or Adult Diploma and (2) get a high enough score on the placement test. If your test score is not high enough, you will have to take ESOL and/or Developmental classes. Without a H.S. diploma, GED, or Adult Diploma, students usually cannot get financial aid. Most technical classes require previous completion of General Education classes.

Class Placement

Route 1

Adult Basic Education centers offer FREE ESL classes. They cover the same material as the ESOL college classes.

Some Adult Basic Education centers offer FREE college prep classes. They cover the same material as Developmental (reading & writing) classes at colleges.

Route 2

ESOL Classes = English for Speakers of Other Languages. Help non-native speakers reach the level of English needed for college. Do not earn college credit. Are expensive.

Developmental Classes = level between ESOL and General Education. Students continue to improve skills needed for college (writing, reading, and math). Do not earn college credit. Are expensive.

General Education (Gen Ed) = traditional college-level classes such as biology, composition, and nutrition. Earn college credit towards a specific program.

Technical Classes = College-level, credited classes that are required for a program (such as LPN) and taught by that department. Students must usually complete Gen Ed requirements before beginning these classes.

Choosing a College

Step 2. Evaluate your time.

Travelling, attending classes, and doing homework take time.

- **Will you have time to study? Do you plan to work at the same time? Will you need to reduce your work hours? Many students find it easier to work second shift while in college and/or work fewer hours.**
- **Who will take care of your family while you are studying?**
- **Where is there a quiet place that you can study?**

Remember:

For every hour you spend in class, you will need to study at least 2-3 more hours outside of class. That means that for a 4-credit class (4 hours in class per week), you will spend 8-12+ hours per week studying outside of class. Keep this in mind when you decide how many credits to take.



Step 3. Look at your personal finances.

Can you afford college?

- **Make a list of monthly costs (food, rent, phone, utilities, transport, medical, etc.) Then add the costs of tuition, books, supplies, and parking.**
- **Calculate your income.**
- **Get information about financial aid from the college Financial Aid Office, and submit a **FAFSA** = Free Application for Federal Student Aid.**



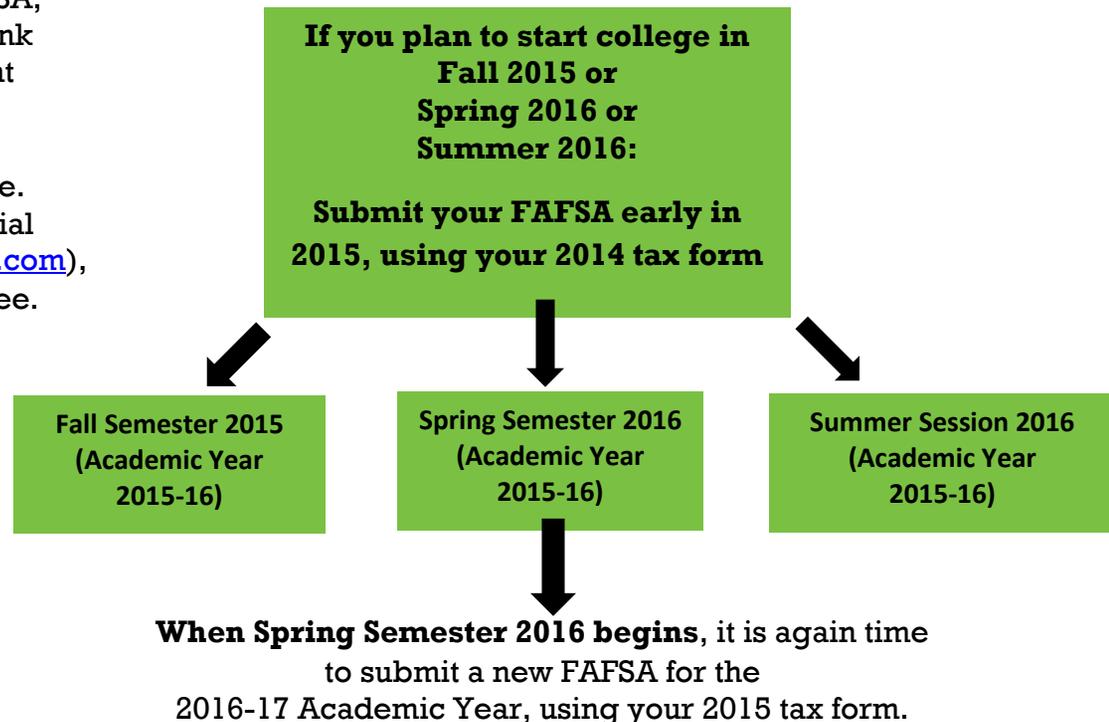
Choosing a College

Applying for student financial aid

Fill out and submit a FAFSA to find out how much and what kind of financial aid you qualify for. It is best to submit a FAFSA *before* the academic year you plan to start college. An academic year begins in fall and continues through the spring and summer. Whether you plan to begin college in Fall 2015 or in Spring 2016, for example, it is still the academic year 2015-16, and you can submit your FAFSA as early as January 1, 2015.

GOOD ADVICE:

- Do not wait until a month before you start college to submit a FAFSA. This will cause a lot of stress. Instead, submit a FAFSA far in advance. Later, if you change your mind about starting college, there is no harm done. You must submit a new FAFSA for every academic year that you plan to attend college.
- Before you begin to fill out the FAFSA, collect your income tax returns, bank statements, and any other important financial information.
- Most students fill out a FAFSA online. Go to www.fafsa.gov, the free official website. **DO NOT** go to www.fafsa.com, a business website that charges a fee.



Choosing a College

Step 4. Consider the differences between the three types of colleges/universities.

There are three very different kinds of post-high school education in the Twin Cities area:

- **Public non-profit institutions** (for example, Saint Paul College) are funded by the state government and cost less for students who are residents of that state. Community/technical colleges cost much less than the University of Minnesota although both are public and non-profit. Many students prefer to attend community/technical colleges because they get a good education at a lower cost.
- **Private non-profit institutions** (for example, St. Catherine's University) are often affiliated with a religious organization whose beliefs influence the college's educational vision. They usually cost much more than public non-profit institutions.
- **Private, for-profit colleges and universities should be AVOIDED.** In 2012, U.S. Senator Harkin (D-Iowa) released the results of a two-year investigation of for-profit higher education. The study found that these schools have poor graduation rates and high rates of students who default on loans because they cannot pay. Many for-profit schools also use questionable recruiting tactics to attract low-income students. Students often pay high fees for degrees that may not be recognized by employers. These students use up their student aid and must still pay back their loans. For-profit institutions may accept students that other colleges will not accept because their standards are often lower. In addition, many MnSCU colleges will not accept transfer credits from these schools. Some employers will not hire people with qualifications from these colleges.

Be extremely careful if you are considering a for-profit college.

Choosing a College

Step 5. Find out which colleges offer the program you want. Then compare their programs.

Not every degree is the same even if it has the same name.

A nursing degree at one college, for example, may be designed differently than a nursing degree at another college.

- **Go to the college website (or the Admissions Office) to get information sheets about the programs that interest you. Look for requirements for General Education classes, program classes, and total number of credits.**
- **Compare this information from different colleges.**
- **Compare cost per credit.**
- **Find out whether the colleges offer full-time, part-time, or evening programs.**
- **Contact an instructor from each program to get any other information you may need. Ask the instructor for names of students you can talk to about the program.**

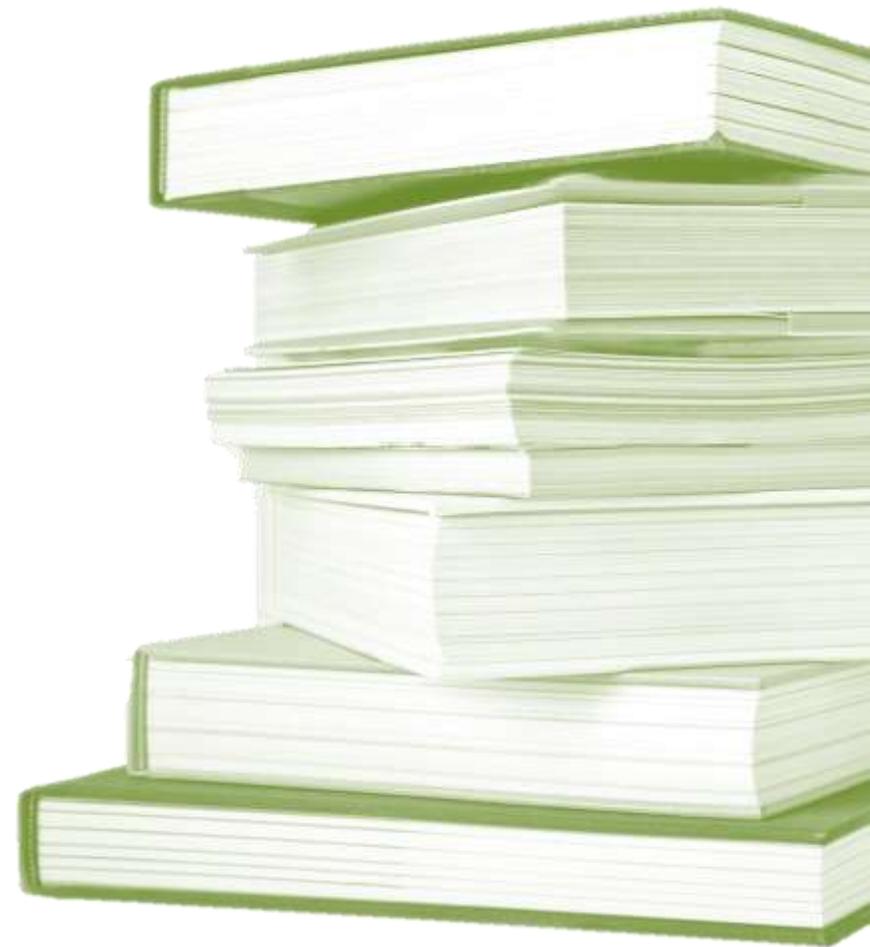
Visit the campus and program office to see how you feel.

- **Is the college close to your home or work place?**
- **Can you get there easily by bus or car?**
- **Would you feel comfortable studying there?**
- **Do current students enjoy the program?**
- **Are instructors and advisors helpful?**

Talk with the Admissions Office, academic advisor, or instructor who teaches in your area of interest.

Prepare questions such as these:

- **How long will the program take to complete as a full-time student? Part-time student?**
- **Are the classes you need offered at the convenient times for you (days, evenings, or weekends)?**
- **Are some classes only offered once a year?**
- **Are there extra costs for the program?**



Metro Area Colleges & their Healthcare Programs

All metro MnSCU (Minnesota State Colleges & Universities) institutions are listed below with many of the programs they offer. There is also information about the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and one private non-profit university to provide examples of higher education outside of MnSCU.

Because there are so many healthcare-related programs at metro colleges, not all of them are listed in this table. You will find others on pages 22-28. Keep in mind that colleges change their program offerings regularly.

	Caregiving Careers	Clinical Laboratory Sciences BS	Community Health	Dental Assistant Certificate	Dental Assistant Diploma	Dental Assistant AAS	Dental Hygiene AAS or AS	Dental Hygiene BS	Emergency Medical Services	Medical Assistant	Medical Lab Technician	Nursing Asst / Home Health Aid	Nursing LPN AAS	Nursing LPN Diploma	Nursing RN associate's degree	Nursing BSN	Occupational Therapy Assistant	Occupational Science	Pharmacy Technician	Pharmacist Masters/PhD	Phlebotomy	Physical Therapist Assistant	Physical Therapy BS/PhD	Radiologic Technologies	Respiratory Therapist	Surgical Technology	Clerical Careers	Health Information Technology	Health Unit Coordinator	Medical Transcriptionist Certificate
MnSCU																														
Anoka Ramsey			•						•						•			•				•								
Anoka Technical								•	•			•		•			•								•			•		
Century					•	•	•		•	•		•		•										•						
Dakota County					•	•				•		•		•																
Hennepin Tech					•	•			•	•		•	•	•					•										•	
Inver Hills								•							•															
MCTC			•	•	•							•			•				•											
Metro State								•								•														
Normandale			•				•					•			•															
North Hennepin											•				•															
Saint Paul											•	•		•					•		•				•			•	•	•
Private																														
St. Catherine Univ			•												•	•	•	•			•		•	•	•			•		
Public																														
University of MN		•						•							•				•			•	•	•						

Metro Area Colleges

Anoka-Ramsey Community College

in the Northeast metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Clinical Research Professional (certificate)
- ✓ Integrative Health & Healing (AAS & certificate)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online (or by mail) - \$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$166.67
- ✓ Online Courses per credit = \$208.14
- ✓ Nursing Courses per credit = \$202.73

Placement Test:

- ✓ All students registering for 8+ credits must complete Accuplacer
- ✓ Testing is done on a walk-in basis (no appointments)

Admissions Office

Phone: 763-433-1300

Email: admissions@anokaramsey.edu

Anoka-Ramsey Community College
300 Spirit River Dr. S., Cambridge, MN 55008
11200 Mississippi Blvd NW, Coon Rapids, MN 55433
<http://www.anokaramsey.edu/>

Anoka Technical College

in the Northwest metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Sterile Processing (certificate)
- ✓ Health Technology (certificate)

Admission Process:

1. Must choose a program if enrolling for 9+ credits
2. Apply - \$20 non-refundable fee
3. Complete immunization form
4. Take placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$185.55
- ✓ Online Courses per credit = \$195.31
- ✓ License Practical Nurse program per credit = \$207.10
- ✓ Surgical Technologist program per credit = \$227.90

Placement Test:

- ✓ All degree-seeking students must complete Accuplacer
- ✓ Testing is done on a walk-in basis (no appointments)

Admissions Office

Suite 117

Phone: 763-576-4850

Email: admissions@anokatech.edu

Anoka Technical College
1355 West Highway 10, Anoka, MN 55303
<http://www.anokatech.edu/>

Century College

in the Northeast metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Radiologic Technology (AAS)
- ✓ Orthotic & Prosthetic Clinical Applications (dip)
- ✓ Orthotic Technology (AAS & diploma)
- ✓ Pedorthic Technology (certificate)
- ✓ Prosthetic Technology (AAS & diploma)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online - \$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$179.11
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$203.51
- ✓ Dental Assisting tuition per credit = \$203.16
- ✓ Dental Hygiene tuition per credit
- ✓ Orthotic/Prosthetic tuition per credit
- ✓ Nursing tuition per credit = \$213.36

Placement Test:

- ✓ All students must complete Accuplacer
- ✓ Testing is done on a walk-in basis (no appointments)

Admissions and Outreach Office

Phone: 651-773-1700

Email: admission@century.edu

Century College

3300 Century Avenue North, White Bear Lake, Minnesota
55110

<http://www.century.edu/>

Dakota County Technical College

in the Southeast metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Patient Care Technician (AAS)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online
\$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take placement test
3. Complete immunization form

Tuition and Fees ((2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$185.55
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$195.31
- ✓ Nursing tuition per credit = \$206.35
- ✓ Surgical Tech per credit = \$227.15

Placement Test:

- ✓ All students must complete Accuplacer
- ✓ Testing is done on a walk-in basis (no appointments)

Admissions and Outreach Office

Phone: 651-773-1700

Email: admission@dctc.edu

Dakota County Technical College

1300 145th Street E., Rosemount, MN 55068

<http://www.dctc.edu/>

Hennepin Technical College

in the West metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Medical Administrative Assistant (AAS & diploma)
- ✓ Medical Coding Specialist (diploma)
- ✓ Medical Receptionist (certificate)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online - \$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$171.41
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$184.51
- ✓ Emergency Medical Technician per credit = \$215.41
- ✓ Health Clinicals per credit = \$211.41

Placement Test:

- ✓ Most students must complete the Accuplacer after acceptance
- ✓ Tests must be scheduled through the Admissions desk

Admissions Office

Brooklyn Park Phone: 763-488-2579

Eden Prairie Phone: 952-995-1450

Hennepin Technical College

9000 Brooklyn Boulevard, Brooklyn Park, MN 55455

13100 College View Drive, Eden Prairie, MN 55347

<http://www.hennepintech.edu/>

Inver Hills Community College

in the Southeast metro area

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online - \$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$175.73
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$185.73
- ✓ Nursing Courses per credit = \$204.73
- ✓ Paramedics (EMS) per credit = \$203.73

Placement Test:

- ✓ Most students must complete the Accuplacer after acceptance
- ✓ No appointment is needed to take the test at the Assessment Center.
Call 651-450-3687 for current test times

Admissions Office

College Center

Phone: 651-450-3902

Email: admissions@inverhills.edu

Inver Hills Community College

2500 East 80th Street, Inver Grove Heights, MN 55076

<http://www.inverhills.edu/>

Metropolitan State University

near downtown St. Paul

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online
\$20 non-refundable application fee
2. Students are admitted based on:
 - ACT or SAT composite score AND/OR
 - High School Rank AND/OR
 - GED transcript AND/OR
 - GPA from previous institutions
3. Send transcripts from previous schools/institutions to Metro State
4. Apply for financial aid

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$221.40
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$292.06
- ✓ Nursing Courses per credit = \$286.25
- ✓ Dental Hygiene per credit = \$286.25

Placement Test:

- ✓ After acceptance, students must contact the Placement Assessment Office to take the placement test.
Call 651-450-3687 or email
placement.assessment@metrostate.edu

Admissions Office

Phone: 651-793-1302

Metropolitan State University
700 East Seventh Street, Saint Paul, MN 55106
<http://www.metrostate.edu>

Minneapolis Community & Technical College

near downtown Minneapolis

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Polysomnographic (sleep) Technology (AAS)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online
\$20 non-refundable application fee
2. Take the placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$178.31
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$202.66
- ✓ Nursing Courses per credit = \$211.41

Placement Test:

- ✓ Most students must complete the Accuplacer after acceptance
- ✓ Testing is on a walk-in basis (no appointments)

Admissions Office

Phone: 651-659-6200

Minneapolis Community & Technical College
1501 Hennepin Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55403
<http://www.minneapolis.edu/>

Normandale Community College

in the Southwest metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Dietetic Technology (AAS)
- ✓ Healthcare Systems Technology (AAS)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online
\$20 non-refundable application fee
2. Take the placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$190.30
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$201.30
- ✓ Health Sciences per credit = \$222.60

Placement Test:

- ✓ Most students must complete the Accuplacer after acceptance
- ✓ Testing must be scheduled online or through the Admissions Office

Admissions Office

Phone: 952-358-8201

Normandale Community College
9700 France Avenue South, Bloomington, MN 55431
<http://www.normandale.edu>

North Hennepin Community College

in the Northwest metro area

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Polysomnographic (sleep) Technology (AAS)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online (or by mail)
\$20 non-refundable application fee
2. Take the placement test

Medical Lab Technology & Nursing Applications

- ✓ Students should submit two separate applications if interested in both programs

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ General per credit = \$181.59
- ✓ Online Courses per credit = \$191.27
- ✓ Nursing Courses per credit = \$206.29

Placement Test:

- ✓ All admitted students must complete the Accuplacer
- ✓ Tests should be scheduled through the Testing Center
Phone: 763-424-0928

Admissions and Outreach Office

Educational Services Building

Phone: 763-424-0702

Email: admission@nhcc.edu

North Hennepin Community College
7411 85th Avenue North, Brooklyn Park, MN 55445
<http://www.nhcc.edu/>

Saint Paul College

near downtown St. Paul

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Anesthesia Aide / Anesthesia Operating Tech
- ✓ Healthcare Informatics (AAS)
- ✓ Nursing Station Tech (certificate)
- ✓ Medical Office Professional (AAS & certificate)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online - \$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take the placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ On Campus per credit = \$182.60 - \$282.60
- ✓ Online Courses tuition per credit = \$202.60

Placement Test:

- ✓ Most students must complete the Accuplacer after acceptance
- ✓ Testing is on a walk-in basis (no appointment).

St. Catherine University

private non-profit
Saint Paul

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Ophthalmic Technician (AAS)
- ✓ Coding Specialist (certificate)

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online - \$20 non-refundable fee
2. Take placement test

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ Tuition rate per credit = \$1,120
 - \$35,840/year for 32 credits full-time
- ✓ Fees:
 - Student activity per semester = \$140
 - New student fee (one time) = \$100
 - Additional fees may apply for different courses

Placement Test:

- ✓ Some students may be required to take St. Catherine's English placement test to determine their English level.

Note: St. Catherine University is one of many private non-profit colleges in the metro area. It is included here to show the cost of private college education.

Admissions Office

Phone: 651-846-1555

Saint Paul College
235 Marshall Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55102
<http://www.saintpaul.edu>

Admissions Office

Phone: 651-690-8850
Email: admissions@stkate.edu

St. Catherine University
2004 Randolph Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55105
<http://www.stkate.edu>

University of Minnesota

in Minneapolis/St. Paul

Additional healthcare programs:

- ✓ Many health science tracks

Admission Process:

1. Apply Online
\$55 non-refundable application fee
2. Apply for Financial Aid

Tuition and Fees (2015 - 2016):

- ✓ MN Resident Tuition rate per credit = \$463.84
\$6,030 for 13 credits or more per semester
- ✓ Non-MN Resident Tuition rate per credit = \$742.69
\$9,655.00 for 13 credits or more per semester
- ✓ Fees: vary depending on course load and program

Placement Test:

- ✓ Some students may be required to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) to assess their English level.

Note: The University of Minnesota is not a community college even though it is public, non-profit, and funded by Minnesota taxpayers. There are many branches throughout the state. It is included here to show the difference in cost between MnSCU schools and the University of Minnesota.

Note:

This guide was researched and published in 2015. Information about college tuition, predicted job outlook, and average salary changes each year. Students should contact colleges for updated information.

To update information about your institution, contact the International Institute of Minnesota at info@iimn.org or (651) 647-0191 extension 0.

Admissions Office

Phone: 651-625-2008

University of Minnesota
231 Pillsbury Drive S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455
<http://www.umn.edu>

Misconception or Reality?

Everyone has ideas about what college will be like. Which are misconceptions and which are reality?

Misconception: “If a college says that it will take two years to complete a degree, I will be done in two years.”

Reality:

To finish a degree within the time period stated by the college, you must:

1. Have already completed all the General Education classes required for the program
2. Be a full-time student AND
3. Pass all your classes with an A, B, or C.

Many students do not meet all these requirements, so they do not finish their degree within the estimated time. It may take them one or two or three semesters more, especially if they are working part-time and/or have families. It is better to take fewer credits, have time to study, and do well in those classes.

Misconception: “I can take the Accuplacer whenever I have time.”

Reality:

Any student can apply to a college and take the Accuplacer, but the Accuplacer is a high-stakes test. This means that the results really matter in terms of money and time.

Make sure you have had a good night's sleep, have eaten, are alert, and have plenty of time on the day you take the test. You don't want feel tired from work or rushed because you have an appointment. You can take the Accuplacer only twice a year, so you want the best results you can get.



Misconception: “If you withdraw from a class because you aren't doing well, it's not a problem.”

Reality:

Withdrawing from a class that you are failing is a good idea. But if you withdraw from too many classes, you will LOSE your financial aid.

You may also be required to pay the college back out of your own pocket for classes paid for with financial aid grants. Make sure you have time to attend and study for ALL classes before you register.

Misconception or Reality?

Misconception: “If programs at different colleges have the same name, they will have the same requirements.”

Reality:

Different colleges may offer the same – or similar – programs but have different requirements. You should research the program of your choice at several different colleges and compare them carefully. Check with the Transfer Office if you plan to take some classes at one college and do your program at another college. You want to make sure that those credits will transfer.

Similarly, Developmental Classes in reading and writing at one college may or may not transfer directly to another college.

Misconception: “If a class was easy for my friend, it will be easy for me!”

Reality:

Everyone has different strengths, learns differently, handles pressure differently, and has his/her own family/work commitments. What is easy for one person may not be easy for another – and vice versa. Classes also vary from teacher to teacher. You should not take a class because your friend did well in it. You should take a class because you are ready for it, because it is required for your program, and/or because the instructor is good.

Misconception: “As long as I take required classes, it doesn’t matter when I take them.”

Reality:

You need to take classes in a certain order for many degree programs. If you take them out of order, you may not understand the material or may have to delay your application to the training program.

Also, there are some classes you do not want to take at the same time. For example, taking several science classes during your first semester may be more than you can handle, and your grades may suffer.

Finally, summer classes are more intensive than fall and spring classes. They cover the same material but move twice as fast. Before registering for classes, always talk with an academic advisor or instructor for advice.

Misconception: “If you want to go to college, just take the test and register for classes.”

Reality:

Planning for college and completing a college program is a long-term project. Do your planning step-by-step. Put financial aid in place, make sure you have the day-to-day support of your family, research training programs, compare colleges, and modify your work schedule far in advance. This way, your chances of success are much better!



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE
of Minnesota

1694 Como Avenue- St. Paul, MN 55108

(651) 647-0191 – Fax (651) 647-9268

Website: www.iimn.org