

What's the Difference Between...

A **proprietary school** is a *privately owned, profit making institution*. Proprietary schools focus on a specific job or job function and are often referred to as vocational schools. Some offer degrees, but most offer career training and/or certificate programs. Credits earned generally do not transfer to a degree-granting college. Blue Heron Academy of Healing Arts and Sciences, Career Quest Learning Centers, and Ross Medical are all examples of proprietary schools.

Career colleges, technical schools and trade schools all *train people in a specific career*. The credentialing offered can vary from certificates to graduate work. Time spent in course work also varies from twelve months to several years. Career colleges put an emphasis on practical skills and real-world experience. The University of Lincoln Tech and some programs at Davenport University are examples of career colleges. Technical and trade schools tend to be very hands-on training options.

The things to think about are:

1. Am I getting the credentialing I need?
2. Is this the best value for me?
3. Do I understand the timeframes (not only for registering, but also for earning the degree/certificate/credentialing)?
4. Is this a reputable school/training center?
5. Does this school help with job placement?
6. Is there any financial aid available?

You should be approaching your postsecondary training at a career college, technical school or trade school the same way you would a traditional four-year school. Identify your values and needs. Then research and visit schools. Decide which school will be the best fit for you. All of this should be happening during your junior year of high school so that you'll be ready to apply at the beginning of your senior year. As you finalize your choice, consider the following:

1. What is the deadline for applying? (Our suggestion is that you enroll/apply as soon as possible your senior year, even if the deadline is later)
2. Are there any other forms (financial?) that this school needs?
3. Does my guidance counselor need to send my transcript or test scores?
4. How is financial aid handled? Are there deadlines?
5. Do I need to find my own housing? When should I be doing that?
6. When should I purchase my books and materials for class?
7. When do classes start?

The Michigan Postsecondary Handbook is an excellent reference for locating schools and training programs in Michigan. The link to the Handbook is included in the "Links" portion of the guidance page.