

# EDUCATION PATHS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

Navigating education after high school can be one of the most significant steps a student will take. But the many types of education and sea of scholarships and aid can make navigating what comes next confusing and overwhelming. This document is designed to offer those working with students a quick guide with key resources to show students what paths are available to them and how they can achieve these paths.

## Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)

TCAT programs allow students to receive postsecondary credentials, like industry certifications, workforce certificates, and technical diplomas. Most of these credentials can be completed in a year. By earning a technical diploma, students can qualify for high-growth jobs like medical/dental assistants, robotics technicians, business managers, automotive mechanics and IT specialists.

*Length:* 1-2 years

*Credential:* Technical diploma

## Associate Degree

Associate degrees typically take two years to complete if students go to school full-time. An associate degree can open the door to careers ranging from hotel managers and aviation mechanics to paralegals and surgical assistants.

*Length:* 2 years

*Credential:* Associate degree

## Bachelor's Degree

Bachelor's degrees generally take four years to complete if students are full-time. A bachelor's degree opens the door to various careers, ranging from social workers and architects to engineers and financial consultants.

*Length:* 4+ years

*Credential:* Bachelor's degree

## Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a great way to learn the skills required for specific occupations, like electricians, commercial loan officers, pharmacy support staff and data analysts. These apprenticeships typically come with a wage and allow students to earn an industry-recognized credential in tandem.

*Length:* 1-4 years on average

*Credential:* Industry-recognized credential

## The Military

By joining the military, students can pursue a wide range of careers — such as communications, health science, manufacturing and information technology. Many military programs will pay for college during or after service.

*Length:* Varies on the military branch – four to eight years on average

*Credential:* Depending on the program, typically includes the opportunity to receive industry-recognized certifications and college credit for military experience.

