

# Choose A College

This guide will help you decide which of the more than 300 inclusive post-secondary education (IPSE) programs nationwide is best for you. It includes questions at the end of each feature to ask college staff. Be sure to take notes while you are talking with them.



## REMINDER:

This guide **only discusses IPSE programs**. It doesn't discuss typical college or university programs. Often those require students to go through a general admissions process, pass an entrance exam, or graduate after all class credit requirements are met.

## Step 1: Discover Careers

In high school, explore jobs and careers that interest you. Use the to [Missouri Connections online program](#) create a list of jobs and careers based on your interests and talents.

## Step 2: Identify Potential Programs

Once you know what jobs you are interested in, explore college programs. Visit the [Think College Website](#) to learn about inclusive college programs and what they have to offer.

## Step 3: Explore Program Features

Every inclusive college program offers different supports and services. Learn about what each program has to offer to find a program that matches your interests and needs.

# What to Look for When Choosing a College

## Program Features and Questions

### #1 INCLUSION

One feature that will impact all of the other features is: Inclusion. Inclusion simply means there are a lot of chances for students, with and without disabilities, to learn and spend time together on campus. It is important to understand who will be in your classes, who you will live with, and what campus programs you can participate in. As you explore programs, ask lots of questions about who you will be learning, working, and living with.

#### ? Questions to ask:

- Who will be in classes with me?
- Who will live in the residence halls with me?
- Will I participate in the same graduation ceremony as other university students?
- Does your program have peer mentors? What do the peer mentors do?
- What campus resources do I have access to?

### #2 ACADEMIC COURSES

A large part of college is taking courses. Programs may offer courses that are only for students in the inclusive college program or courses that are available to all college students. It is important to understand what types of courses you will be able to take and what supports are available to you.

#### ? Questions to ask:

- What types of courses are required for the program? How many courses would I take per semester?
- What academic accommodations are available?
- What campus resources will I have access to?
- What academic supports does the program provide?
- What happens if I am struggling in my courses?

### #3 CAREER PREPARATION COURSES

Career preparation takes place in many ways. You will take classes that help you learn more about what's expected of you in the workplace. Besides developing a person-centered plan, you may learn how to research the local job market, write several kinds of resumes, and practice effective workplace communication.



#### Questions to ask:

- What vocational classes will I take to prepare for a job/career?
- What will I learn about in the vocational classes?
- Will I receive a grade for the career preparation classes?
- Are the vocational classes connected to internships?

### #4 INTERNSHIPS

Internships, paid or unpaid, are an important part of going to college. They help students learn about different types of jobs, professions, and industries. For someone who has never had a job before, internships can be the first step toward employment.



#### Questions to ask:

- How many internships do students have during the program?
- Are paid internships available?
- What types of internships are available?
- How much time do students spend at internships?
- What supports are available during internships?
- Is job coaching available for internships?
- How do students get matched to internships?

## #5 GRADUATION CERTIFICATES & VOCATIONAL CREDENTIALS

When you finish college, it should mean something to you and the community. A graduation certificate represents your hard work in mastering this knowledge and experience. Some colleges also offer vocational programs in partnerships with area businesses, which trains students for jobs in particular industries.

### ? Questions to ask:

- What type of certificates or degrees do students receive?
- Who issues the certificate or degree? Does it come from the university or the inclusive college program?
- What does graduation look like for students in the inclusive college program?

## #6 FINANCIAL AID

College can be expensive. It is important to learn about the different ways you can pay for college.

### ? Questions to ask:

- Is the program a CTP?
- Are there opportunities for work study?
- Are students able to work during the program?
- What program scholarships are available?
- How do students in the program typically pay for college?

## #7 CAMPUS LIFE

College is so much more than just courses and working. College students may live on campus, join campus organizations, or attend social events.



### Questions to ask:

- What student organizations and clubs can I join?
- What social events can I attend?
- Where can students in the inclusive college program live?
- Do students live in residence halls with other university students?
- What supports are available in the residence halls? Are there residential advisors?
- Can students live off campus, in apartments, sorority or fraternity houses?

## #8 POST-COLLEGE OUTCOMES & SUPPORTS

It is important to understand what graduates of the inclusive college program are doing and what types of supports are available after you graduate. After graduation, you may need additional support to find and maintain a job, live independently, or continue your education. Many inclusive college programs have partnership with other agencies that can provide you with additional support after you graduate.

### In Missouri, those agencies include:

- [Vocational Rehabilitation Services](#) – state agency providing career counseling, employment services, and educational funding
- [Department of Mental Health](#) – Developmental Disabilities – state agency providing a variety of services, ranging from mental health services to employment assistance to residential services
- [Missouri SB 40 County Agencies](#) – county agencies serving people with developmental and intellectual disabilities



### Questions to ask:

- What do alumni of your program do for work, education, and independent living?
- What other agencies do you work with?
- How does the program support alumni?
- How will the program connect me with post-program supports?