

I need more education or training:  
**How Do I Know** which school is right for me?

You have a goal in mind for your future. You've determined you need additional education or training to reach that goal, but how do you know which school and what kind of program is right for you?



## Welcome!

Choosing a career is one of the most important decisions you will ever make. Getting the information you need before making the best choice for you is just as important. And while continuing your education is always a wonderful endeavor, be certain that you don't take on any more debt than you can reasonably pay back once you land that first job!

This series of brochures is intended to provide you with information and resources each step along the way. From finding the career and school that fits you, to starting your job search, it's my hope you will find these brochures a guide to help you realize your dreams. Make certain to also get a copy of the *Student Bill of Rights*, which lists your rights as a student in California.

On behalf of the California Department of Consumer Affairs, I wish you success in the next step of your education and in attaining your goals.

  
CARRIE LOPEZ, DIRECTOR  
Department of Consumer Affairs



## PRIVATE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

For more information, contact the California Department of Consumer Affairs' Consumer Information Center:

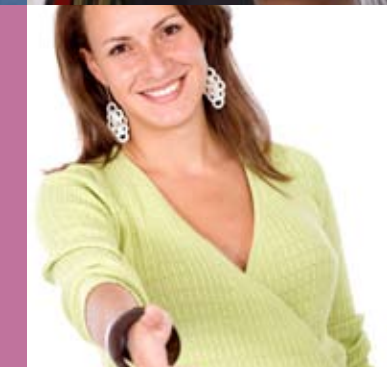
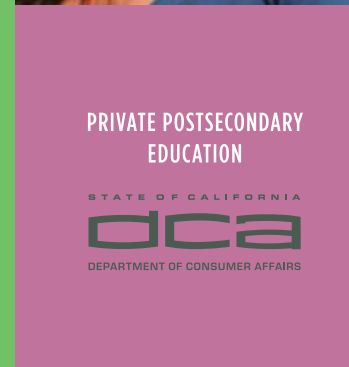
1625 North Market Blvd.  
Suite N-112  
Sacramento, CA 95834

(800) 952-5210  
(916) 322-1700 (TDD only)

[www.bppve.ca.gov](http://www.bppve.ca.gov)



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There are so many choices. Public or private? Degree or certificate? Full-time or part-time? Distance learning or traditional classroom? While there may be many different types of schools or training programs that will get you to your goal, choosing the right program for you may take some thought and research.

### **Here are some important factors to consider.**

**Location** – You may be interested in schools all over the country or you may be committed to staying where you are. Consider your situation and decide where you can and want to attend school. Answer the following questions to help you decide: Where will I live? What are the costs? Can I afford to move? How will I get to school on a daily basis? Are there opportunities for jobs and internships in the community where I move? Remember to find out about the availability of quality, affordable daycare if that is a consideration for you. Finally, will you have the support you need to succeed in school if you move away?

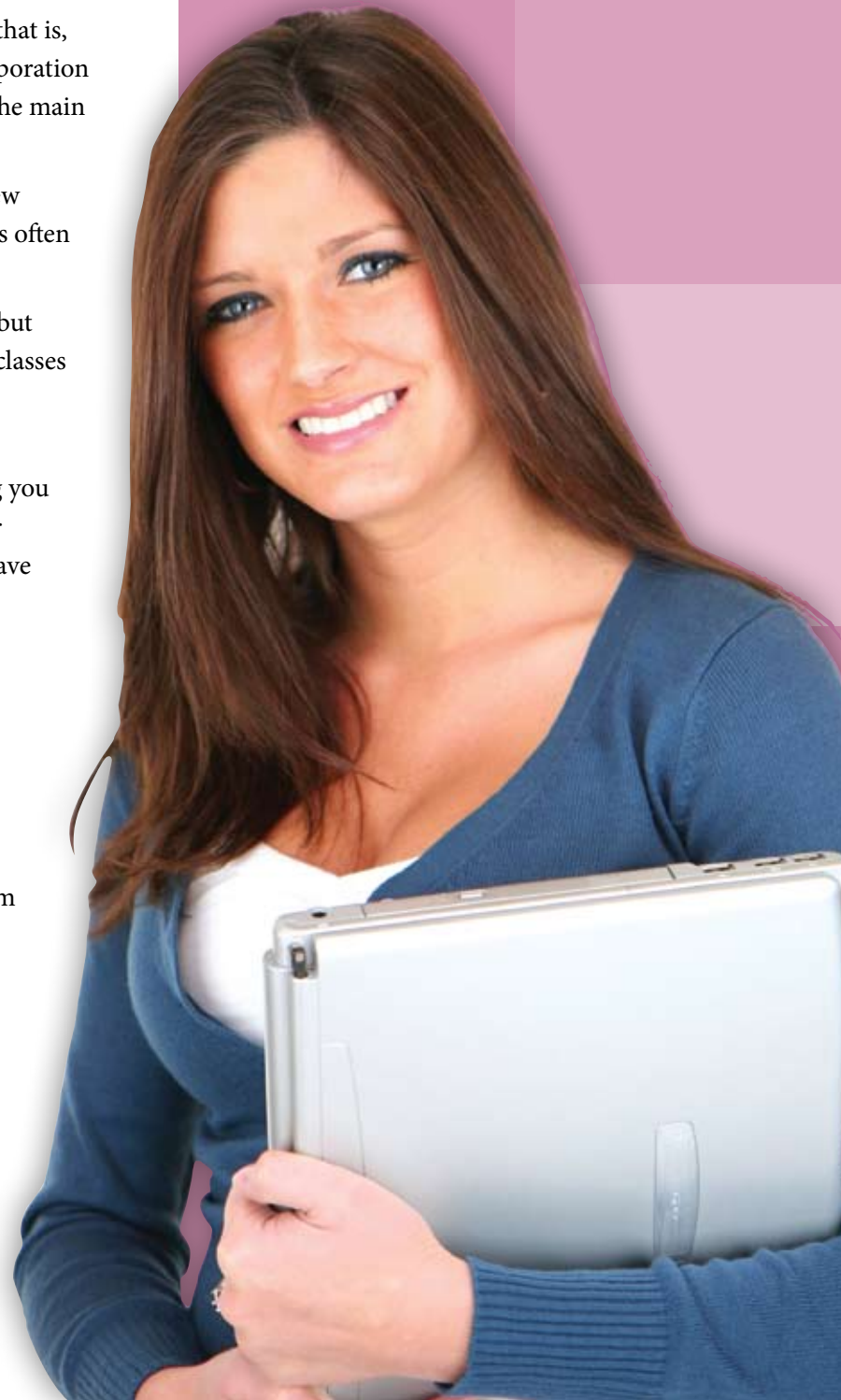
**Full-Time or Part-Time** – Many postsecondary schools – any school after high school – do not support part time study. If you have obligations that keep you from attending school full time you want to ask if the school supports part time study early in your conversation.

**Public vs. Private** – Many students don't realize that some postsecondary schools are public

and subsidized by the state of California, while some postsecondary schools are private; that is, owned by an individual, partnership, corporation or limited liability partnership. Some of the main differences between the two are:

- Private schools will generally have a few focused programs while public schools often offer a wide variety of programs.
- Private schools will cost more money but may offer smaller, more personalized classes than public schools.
- Private schools generally offer shorter, more condensed terms, often allowing you to complete your program in a shorter period of time, while public schools have traditional semesters or quarters.

**Distance vs. Classroom** – Distance education is the broad term for any instruction that does not take place in a traditional face-to-face, classroom setting. Some people succeed at distance education while some people know that they learn better in a traditional classroom setting. If you are considering distance learning and have not thought about what it takes to learn, you might want to visit the website [www.petersons.com/dlwizard/code/default.asp](http://www.petersons.com/dlwizard/code/default.asp) or <http://www.adprima.com/dears.htm> and take the distance learning assessment quiz. These are just a few of the many online assessments that may help you make a decision.



### **Watch out for Diploma Mills**

*Webster's Dictionary* defines “diploma mill” as “an institution of higher education operating without supervision of a state or professional agency and granting diplomas which are either fraudulent or, because of the lack of proper standards, worthless. Such organizations are unaccredited, but they often claim accreditation by non-recognized or unapproved organizations set up for the purposes of providing a veneer of authenticity.” The Internet is filled with diploma mill Web sites.

In researching distance-learning institutions, watch out for diploma mills that have no intention of providing instruction. They simply sell documents. Any time you don't have to read, submit work assignments related to your reading, take exams or other tests of your knowledge yet still receive credits, it is a clue that the school is probably a diploma mill. While it may be tempting to get a diploma for little or no effort, they are not accepted by many companies and are actually outlawed in some states. Instead of having the training you need to begin your career, you'll have a worthless piece of paper.

If your career goal requires you to have a license or certification, call the licensing or certifying entity and ask if they have a list of schools that they recommend. If the licensing or certifying entity doesn't make recommendations, ask if schools must be approved prior to their graduates being eligible for licensure or certification. If so, ask for a list of approved schools in your area or in the area where you want to study.