



# What is the difference between college and university in Canada?

*Colleges and universities are part of the post-secondary education system in Ontario. Colleges generally offer programs of study that can be applied towards a career. Some colleges offer courses that lead to certification in specific areas. Universities focus on academic and professional programs. Colleges and universities offer undergraduate degrees and many offer graduate programs.*

## Colleges

There are 24 colleges of applied arts and technology, including 2 French language colleges in Ontario. They offer full-time and part-time diploma and certificate programs. For example, some colleges offer courses that lead to certification in nursing and accounting. Although program lengths vary, a certificate program is generally 1 year or less and a diploma program can be 2 or 3 years. Many colleges also offer bachelor degrees in applied areas of study.

Colleges also offer courses for pre-trades and apprenticeship training, language training and skills upgrading. The Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (1) approves programs and develops policy directions for Ontario's colleges. For more information, call ServiceOntario:

Toll-free: 1-800-267-8097

Toronto: 416-326-1234

## Universities

There are 19 publicly-funded universities in Ontario, including several French language and bilingual universities, the Royal Military College and the Ontario College of Art and Design. All universities offer undergraduate (bachelor) degrees and most offer graduate (master's and doctoral) degrees.

Undergraduate degrees usually take 3 years to complete. A fourth or “honours” year is usually needed if you want admission into a graduate program. Master’s and doctoral degrees take extra years to complete, depending on the program of study.

Many universities also offer professional programs, such as Medicine, Dentistry and Law. In some cases, students begin these programs after two or three years of undergraduate study.

Universities in Ontario are independent. Although they receive funding from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, each university regulates its own programs, admissions and faculty.

Universities cannot grant a degree in Ontario unless the Government of Ontario has given it this specific right. There are private educational institutions in Ontario that have been given partial degree-granting authority. These schools are denominational, which means they are religious-based. For more information about the degree-granting ability of a private institution, contact the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities:

Telephone: 416-325-2653

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## Reference:

[Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities](#)