Accreditation Matters!

When considering where to go and what to study at college, the college and program accreditation can affect your career and future opportunities.

In many professions—from nursing to engineering—state laws and employer preferences may require you to obtain your degree from an accredited program.

Accreditors verify that an academic program offers a quality education, so that you are prepared for your career. There are two kinds of accreditation:

- **institutional accreditation** means the college or university meets broad organizational quality standards, and
- **specialized or professional (aka programmatic) accreditation** means an academic program at the college or university meets quality educational standards for that profession.

*Institutional accreditation alone will often not be adequate to ensure that you can get a job - as programmatic accreditation may be required.*

**Know before you go**

Questions you should ask the college:

- **Is the program accredited? If so, by which accreditor?** *(Make sure the college specifies whether it has institutional or programmatic accreditation, or both—you can then go to the accreditors’ websites to verify this information.)*
- **If the program is not accredited, will I be able to work in this or any other state after I graduate?** *(You should check the individual state requirements for where you want to work in the profession you are considering.)*
- **Is there an exam or certification required to work in this field? If so, does graduating from your program mean I can take that exam or be eligible for certification?**
- **How important is programmatic accreditation to the employers in this field?**
- **Does your programmatic or institutional accreditation make me eligible for federal student aid?**

Visit aspa-usa.org for more information and links to accreditors for the professions and disciplines listed on the right.