

LIFE AFTER HIGH SCHOOL KNOW YOUR

From on-the-job training that whisks you into the workforce to decade-long doctoral degree plans, we break down each level of higher education and reveal just how long each one will take.

FASTEST

EARNED DURING HS

High School Diploma/GED

Straight into the workforce. Get paid right away. Job options limited.

EARNED DURING HS

Work-based Learning

Hands-on experiences completed in high school. This experience boosts resumes and can be a shortcut for students pursuing specific careers.

START IMMEDIATELY AFTER HS

Get hired to learn as you work! Move straight into the workforce. Get paid right away. Job options are limited but growing as Texas races to keep up with workforce demands.

QUICK

SAVES UP TO 2 YEARS OF HIGHER ED

Early College High School

Provides programs for high school students to enroll in college courses early and earn up to 60 credit hours by the time they graduate high school. Generally a separate campus from the high school. Shortens time spent at two-year community college and four-year university. Can leave high school with an associate degree.

TAKES 2-4 YEARS AFTER HS

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

Career-specific programs of study for students to learn and train during high school. Students earn credentials and take part in internships with local businesses. The goal is to get students career-ready while earning their high school diploma. Two-year and four-year degrees are usually still needed at the end of a CTE program, but the real-world experience and exposure gained during a CTE program inevitably fast tracks students into stable, high-paying jobs.

AVERAGE

TAKES 4 YEARS AFTER HS

Transfer Degree

Complete the first two years of a four-year bachelor's degree program at a community college to save money on tuition. Transfer credits earned at the two-year school to the desired four-year college and finish the degree plan.

TAKES 4 YEARS AFTER HS

Bachelor's Degree

Typically completed in four years and often dubbed the traditional route. Can take longer than four years if a student is part-time. The average annual tuition at a four-year public school in DFW is \$6,784 for in-state students.

Source: collegetuitioncompare.com, 2023

TAKES 4+ YEARS AFTER HS

Journeyman

After completing an apprenticeship or learning on-the-job, experienced professionals can continue to hone their craft with more skills and qualifications to advance into journeyman roles. Typically applies to electricians, plumbers, masons, carpenters, pipefitters, welders and other similar job titles. A specialized license is usually required.