

be prepared

for whatever path you choose

Prep work

You do not need to decide on a career now. In fact, it is better not to make a decision at this point because your interests are changing. Do think about what you want to do after high school so you can plan your high school coursework before 9th grade registration. Don't wait until you are a junior or senior and then discover you don't have enough semesters left for the classes needed for a technical school or college program.

If there is a career area you like, learn about the specifics of the career and level of education or training recommended. Plan your high school coursework accordingly.

If the careers require postsecondary education, plan ahead. Your graduation goals should include the completion of all the prerequisite classes for the level of post-high school education needed for your chosen career field.

If the career area that interests you does not require postsecondary education, check out other training options. Take high school courses that will allow you to explore careers of interest and to gain the skills you will need.

Aim high

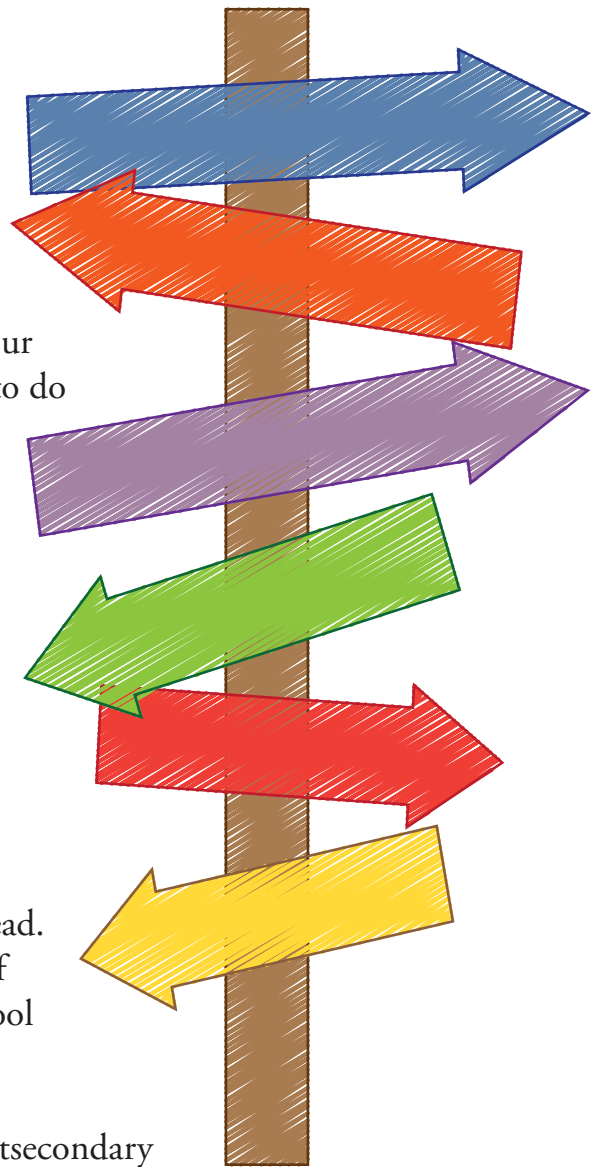
If you have no idea what career field you want to pursue, your best bet is to "aim high." Keep your options open by planning your high school coursework with the highest level of postsecondary education in mind. That way, when you choose a career to pursue, the doors to whatever educational institution you need to attend are not closed to you.

For careers requiring postsecondary education

Check into requirements

Refer often to South Dakota's high school graduation requirements as well as the

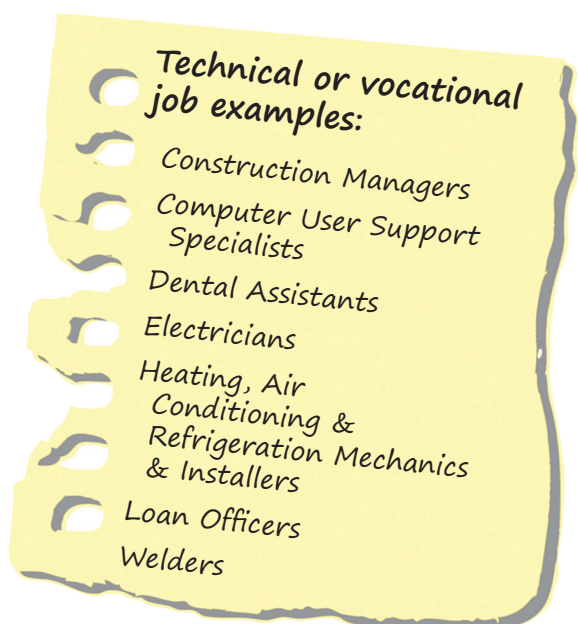
admission requirements South Dakota's public universities (see pages 43 and 45).



Universities, colleges and technical colleges sometimes recommend specific high school courses for certain programs they offer. So as soon as you have specific careers or schools in mind, check into those details. Page 45 lists the postsecondary options in South Dakota.

Technical or vocational training

Several postsecondary colleges in South Dakota offer technical or vocational training.



The state's four technical colleges offer formal short-term programs (lasting a few months) to associate degree programs (most about two years). Other opportunities for formal education at less than the bachelor's degree level include private colleges, hospital-based programs and tribal-operated community colleges. Need more options? Many of the state's colleges and universities offer associate degree programs.

In all cases, programs are generally technical in nature and focus on a specific career field. The institutions work with businesses to teach

the skills needed in today's workplaces. The programs include some general education as well, to prepare well-rounded individuals ready for employment. The programs are hands-on, immediately giving you a chance to get a feel for the work involved.

College & university

Depending on how many years after high school you want to invest in your career preparation, the choices are almost limitless for those with a college degree. Private colleges and public universities provide the well-rounded education employers look for when hiring.

Earning a bachelor's degree involves a minimum of four years. If you're willing to invest even more time for a master's degree (usually another year or two), additional careers would be open to you. Additional careers (such as a pharmacist, lawyer or physical therapist) are open to those who want to continue their education and get a doctorate or professional degree.



For careers NOT requiring postsecondary education

Straight to employment

Some people decide 13 years in school is enough, so they start working immediately after high school graduation. Workers in these positions receive on-the-job training, which can vary in length from a few hours to a few years. Some of the more skilled (and higher paying) careers involve as much as three years of on-the-job training. Those who enter the job market right away should be aware that many of these jobs are not ones that people tend to be satisfied with over time. Many workers eventually move to other careers for better working conditions, wages, benefits, etc. These workers find the experience they have gained in these careers is a real plus in getting other jobs!



occupation. Apprentices learn the latest skills and technologies employers need. They learn tasks in a structured way as experienced workers guide and supervise them.



Because participants are learning at work sites, they are also earning a wage. As skills increase, so does the paycheck.

For more information on Registered Apprenticeship opportunities, contact your nearest South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation job service office or visit the Start Today SD website at StartTodaySD.com.

Apprenticeship

If you are a hands-on learner, another option for career training is a Registered Apprenticeship. Apprenticeship combines training at a job with classroom studies. The focus is on the skills necessary for the



Military

The U.S. Armed Forces provide training and work experience in a wide range of career fields. Career opportunities are divided between enlisted personnel and officers. Most enlisted personnel need at least a high school diploma or GED®. Enlisted personnel carry out basic operations of the military in areas such as combat, health care, engineering and construction. Officers must have a bachelor's or more advanced degree. They supervise and manage military activities.



Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC) programs in each of the branches of the military offer additional opportunities for training and experience. Those who qualify

are eligible for financial assistance to attend college, in return for agreeing to serve in the military after graduation.

Specific career opportunities in the armed forces vary by military branch. Each of the armed forces listed at the left has an active and a reserve component.

For more information on career opportunities in the armed forces, visit the website www.todaysmilitary.com. "Today's Military" is an educational and informational website designed to help people better understand the U.S. military and the opportunities it represents for America's young people.

Job Corps

Another option for preparing for a career is the Job Corps program. Job Corps is a free, residential education and training program for economically challenged youth ages 16 to 24. Job Corps' mission is to teach young adults the skills they need to become employable and independent, and place them in meaningful careers or higher education. The Boxelder Job Corps Center at Nemo, South Dakota, offers training in trades including, but not limited to, carpentry, culinary arts, office administration and welding. For more information, call 1.800.733.JOBS.

