



THE SMART CONSUMER SCHOOL CHECKLIST

- Research!** Remember there are low- and no-cost training programs available for certification. Make sure you're getting a good deal on your education.
- Use the [Net Price Calculator](#) to make sure you're not taking out too much debt for how much alums of any given school typically make after graduation.
- Ask if the school is licensed or accredited in Maryland. Make sure the answer is **yes**.
- Check to see if the certification the school offers is the one you need for the job you want.
- Compare the cost of the program with similar programs at other schools at the [College Affordability and Transparency Center](#):
<https://collegecost.ed.gov/catc/Default.aspx>
- Ask for the school's tuition cancellation policy in writing – The policy should describe how you can get a refund if you need to cancel or withdraw.
- Compare different schools side-by-side at the [College Navigator](#) website:
<https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- Ask to speak with a current student and ask them what they think of the school.
- Ask about their career counseling and placement services. What does the school offer? Ask a current student about any career or student advising they've received and if they were satisfied.
- Ask what students in your prospective program typically earn after graduation.
- Ask for the graduation rates for the school as a whole and the program in which you're interested. If only a small percentage (less than 50%) graduate, that could be a major problem.
- Ask for the typical amount of student loans students take on at the school. Is it an excessively high amount? Are you willing to owe that much for this degree?
- Use www.knowb4youenroll.com to learn more and download tip sheets to avoid predatory schools.