



## Guide to Choosing the Right Christian Program

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Choosing the best online Christian program requires making an informed decision. While it's important to confirm that a school's beliefs and principles align with your faith, you also need to make sure it offers the program that interests you most and can prepare you for success in achieving your professional aspirations. This typically means that the school's curriculum is academically rigorous, students can enjoy access to resources like libraries and tutoring services, and the school provides ample opportunities for internships and help with job placement.

Moreover, you should have the chance to develop relationships with faculty members who can serve as mentors throughout your studies. You also need to think carefully about the different kinds of Christian schools, such as Bible colleges and seminaries, and how much they cost. The following information can serve as your guide as you begin to plan the next steps in fulfilling your academic goals at a Christian institution.

# Types of Online Christian Schools

## Types of Online Christian Schools: Introduction

You can choose from among several different kinds of Christian schools when determining the right online Christian program for you. Given the array of available options, think carefully about the type of school that appeals to you, the types of degrees they offer, and what kinds of financial aid they provide.



# Types of Online Christian Schools

## Bible Colleges

The focus of Bible colleges is preparing students for vocational ministry. Although some offer other programs, a biblical focus is a centerpiece of all curricula. Because of this, Bible colleges require coursework in the Bible and theology classes that generally total at least 21-30 credits. In addition, these institutions promote Christian outreach and discipleship. They typically require that both students and faculty abide by Christian beliefs and conduct themselves in accordance with a Christian lifestyle. You may find this kind of school to be a good fit if you subscribe to these ideals.

While these schools once focused primarily on preparing students for ministry-oriented careers, today they enable graduates to enter a range of professions while maintaining the Bible at the core of their curricula. Bible colleges offer degrees in a variety of disciplines like education, music, and social work in addition to programs in areas like children and family ministry.

Most Bible colleges primarily offer bachelor's degrees, with some exceptions. If you are seeking a master's or doctoral degree, you are more likely to find those at a Christian university. These schools not only allow you to earn the type of degree you desire in your area of interest, but also allow you to wed your academic goals and faith-based principles to ensure a fulfilling and enjoyable learning experience.

# Types of Online Christian Schools

## Christian Colleges

Compared to Bible colleges, Christian colleges offer a wider range of degrees and reduced core Bible requirements. At these schools, students and faculty may pray with one another and work together toward spiritual growth and educational achievement. Like secular colleges, these institutions offer degrees in a variety of disciplines and engage students in activities like clubs, sports, and campus government so they enjoy a well-rounded learning experience. Through their offerings, these schools focus on encouraging Christian formation. They typically require that students regularly attend worship services and may also feature other events to strengthen spiritual life.

You can choose to pursue undergraduate or graduate studies at Christian colleges. Schools may offer coursework similar to what you would find at Bible colleges, such as classes in Old and New Testament doctrine and Bible history. **Although many Christian colleges offer programs that prepare students for vocational ministry, these programs are typically one option among many.** Expect these colleges and universities to prepare you for success in a variety of fields by fostering your professional and personal development in a Christ-focused setting.

# Types of Online Christian Schools

## Seminaries

Seminaries are typically graduate schools, with a few exceptions. You may opt to enroll in a seminary if you plan to enter a leadership role in the ministry, such as a pastor or missionary. You might also intend to pursue other careers that reflect your faith, for example as a counselor or church planter. Seminaries cater to learners who want to deepen their understanding of the Bible in preparation for an occupation that fulfills their calling by God. The curricula these institutions offer typically emphasize theology, spiritual development, and the tools necessary for serving in church ministry roles.

While seminaries prepare students for ministry vocations, this does not mean graduates necessarily work in a church. In fact, a seminary degree can prepare you to lead a nonprofit, teach classes, or write for a national audience. Seminaries provide great career flexibility and a wide variety of job options for their graduates.

Additionally, churches are increasingly establishing their own church-based ministry programs that offer both undergraduate and graduate degrees. If you consider this option, make certain the program is accredited; frequently, accreditation agencies do not recognize church-based ministry programs. Accreditation verifies the high standards and intellectual rigor of an institution's academic offerings.

# Accreditation for Online Christian Colleges

## Why is accreditation important?

You should strongly consider accredited schools when choosing the right online Christian program for your spiritual and academic development. In addition to validating the high standards an institution meets regarding its curricula, accreditation serves as a sign of excellence to employers and other institutions of higher education, and affords a better ability to transfer credits if necessary. Moreover, accreditation requires a robust assessment of a school's resources, faculty, and student outcomes. **Regional accreditation** is the most relevant and respected.

Both the [U.S. Department of Education](#) (ED) and [Council for Higher Education Accreditation](#) maintain lists of agencies that accredit colleges and universities. The ED also recognizes the Distance Education Accrediting Commission, an agency that specializes in the accreditation of online programs. The [Association of Theological Schools](#) (ATS) is the primary accrediting body for seminaries.

In addition, some non-government organizations offer accreditation specifically to Christian programs. For example, the [Association for Biblical Higher Education](#) recognizes some 200 schools throughout North America for their quality and credibility in biblically grounded higher education. Similarly, the [Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools](#) recognizes institutions whose missions align with a Christian purpose and the [Association of Independent Christian Colleges & Seminaries](#) accredits colleges committed to academic excellence and moral integrity.



# Degree Offerings

## How do I find the best degree for me?

Consider online degree offerings in addition to traditional, campus-based programs when searching for the right Christian program for you. Distance education permits significant flexibility for learners, especially if you want to continue working and/or need to fulfill family obligations while earning your degree. Pursuing your degree online affords you convenience without sacrificing access to the same faculty, curricula, and resources you have access to in an on-campus program. Check to see if an online program you're considering is fully online or includes any in-person requirements so that you know what to expect.

Other factors should also play a role in your program decision. For instance, examine what types of programs the school offers to determine if you can earn an undergraduate degree, graduate degree, or both, depending on your educational goals. Also, ensure that the school offers courses that explore the topics that most interest you. If you previously earned college credits and want to apply them to the program you select, then make certain your school accepts transfer credits and look into their transfer requirements. Conversely, find out if you can transfer any credits you earn at that school to another institution if you should later decide to do so.

# Financial Aid for Christian Students

## FAFSA

If you need help covering the costs of earning your degree, your first step is to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). As the largest provider of financial aid in the country, the ED administers and processes these applications to help students develop a plan to pay for school. Aid may include any combination of grants, loans, and work-study programs. Each year, the ED supports learners in colleges through more than \$120 billion in financial assistance. Completing a FAFSA allows you to determine your eligibility for this aid, which can prove important when deciding what school to attend.

# Financial Aid for Christian Students

## Scholarships

As a Christian student planning for college, you should be aware of the many funding opportunities available to you. Countless churches, companies, and nonprofit organizations offer scholarships based on your background and career goals, and a well-written application can win you thousands of dollars toward your education.

All that opportunity can feel a little overwhelming. To familiarize you with excellent scholarship opportunities (and prepare you for success) Point University has compiled comprehensive Scholarship Guides, including:

- Christian Scholarships Guide
- Military Scholarships Guide
- African American Scholarships Guide
- Single Parents Scholarship Guide
- Scholarship Guide for Hispanic and Latino Students
- ... And more (See the [Point External Scholarships Page](#))

Those considering a career in ministry should also explore our [Career Guide for Bible and Ministry Students](#).

# Work-Study Programs

## About work-study programs

The U.S. government funds work-study programs that allow you to earn income by working in a part-time position while enrolled in school. Completing your FAFSA determines your eligibility for these programs, and qualified undergraduate and graduate students may apply. Jobs may be either on or off campus, with the latter often available through a nonprofit organization or public agency.

In most instances, work-study programs encourage you to fill positions that either build your civic education or relate to your program of study. For example, you might work at a local nonprofit that provides services to immigrants and refugees. You might also serve as a research assistant for faculty members who require help with special projects.



# Transfer Students

## About being a transfer student

You may wish to transfer credits you previously earned in college to an online Christian program. Check with the school you plan to attend to learn if they accept transfer credits and discover any corresponding requirements or limitations, such as a maximum number of transferable credits or a minimum grade requirement. If you hold an associate degree from a Bible college, find out if transferring those credits will allow you to enroll in a four-year program with advanced standing that will enable you to graduate sooner.

If you plan to transfer from a secular school, think about the specific requirements a Christian program mandates for enrollment. These can include an essay that describes your faith and commitment to Christian ideals.

**1. Should I attend a Bible college, Christian college, or a seminary?**

You should attend the type of school that most directly aligns with your interests. A Bible college generally prepares learners for ministry-related careers, while a Christian college offers a variety of degree programs, yet roots its mission and curricula in biblical principles. A seminary, meanwhile, typically equips you to become a minister or to serve in a ministry-related occupation.

**2. What are the advantages of earning my Christian degree online?**

Earning your degree online provides convenience and flexibility, since most schools permit you to attend class whenever it works best for your schedule. In addition, you can continue working and living where you currently reside, which allows you to both earn an income and save yourself the expense of campus housing. You can also more easily balance academic, professional, and personal demands when working toward an online degree.

**3. Why should I attend a Christian college online?**

You should consider attending a Christian college online if you want greater flexibility when it comes to where, when, and how you attend class or if the program that interests you most is located outside of your desired state of residency. Remember that distance learners generally have access to the same faculty and resources as on-campus students.

**4. Do you have to be a Christian to attend a Christian College?**

It's best if you possess the same faith and commitment to biblical principles as the Christian college you choose. Not only do admissions applications generally require you write a statement about your beliefs, but schools may also expect you to regularly attend worship services and your courses will incorporate Bible teachings.

**5. Are online Christian colleges more expensive than public universities?**

Christian colleges are generally private institutions, which means you do not receive an in-state discount on tuition. In addition, private schools typically cost more than public universities, regardless of state residency. However, you can still apply for scholarships both through and outside of your school, and you can also complete your FAFSA to discover your eligibility for federal aid.

## Point University: A Respected Christian Institution

Point University is an accredited, private, Christian university that offers a wide range of 100% online programs, including:

- Associate Programs
- Bachelor's Programs
- Master's Programs
- Certificates

Find the online program that works with your career goals and your busy lifestyle at [online.point.edu](https://online.point.edu), or give us a call at **844-671-5839**.