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What Nontraditional Students Need to Know About Going Back to School

CollegeSurfing.com Arms Prospective Students with Assessment Tools to Start Their School Search

Staten Island, NY, October 1, 2007 - Adults interested in pursuing a return to school need not think they're too late. The traditional back-to-school rush may be over, however, many adult-focused education programs have rolling admissions deadlines, multiple starting points throughout the year, and an overall flexibility to fit into one's busy schedule.

According to The CollegeBound Network's Editorial Director Gina LaGuardia, when considering the abundance of educational opportunities available, it is in the best interest of potential students to review various aspects of the courses in which they choose to enroll. Here is a list of the top five questions that require carefully researched answers:

1. What career path do I wish to pursue?

"Course of study is the very essence of a student's education, for it will lead to their future job," says LaGuardia. Once students discover where their interests lie, they can begin researching programs in related fields of study.

For example, if a student likes the visual arts, he or she should explore associated programs of study and pinpoint one or two that most interest them. Among some of today's hottest visual arts courses: animation, art and design, broadcasting, commercial art, computer design, fashion design, game art and development, and graphic art and design. "Understanding the various aspects of a field—and where your career education may lead you—is of tremendous value."

2. Does the school I'm interested in offer career-training opportunities?

Once a student has a good handle on the occupational field he or she would like to pursue, it's time to research fieldwork and internship opportunities, advises LaGuardia. This is vital to a student's education so they can get the proper experience necessary for the real world—especially since many in-demand fields require some form of hands-on training and experience.

3. Are there any prerequisites?

In most cases, certification and diploma programs don't require any specific curriculum prior to enrollment, however, undergraduate and graduate studies like chiropractic, nutrition science, engineering and other career fields may. Some of these prerequisites include test preparation like the ACT and SAT, or industry-specific coursework. "Inquire with a school's admissions office for the full details on what's expected of you," says LaGuardia.

4. When is the application deadline?

Most schools have strict deadlines; however, many admit students on a rolling basis or even have an open admissions policy. It is very important to keep track of any deadlines, to keep all admission paperwork organized, and to follow up if you don't hear back in a reasonable amount of time.

5. What is the tuition cost, and is financial aid available?

There are many different options, including loans, grants, and scholarships available to help even nontraditional students finance their education, says LaGuardia. Though the federal government is the best place to start one's quest for financial aid, adults should also inquire with their school, their state government, private scholarship programs, or an organization connected with your field of interest. "You may even find that your current employer offers a tuition reimbursement program, which can significantly defray from your out-of-pocket tuition costs," says LaGuardia.

"When it comes to achieving the certificate, diploma, or degree necessary for personal success, it's never too late." For more information on these, and other valuable tips to ease one's return to school, log onto CollegeBound.net.

About The CollegeBound Network

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