

# Apprenticeship or Technical School: What's Right for You?

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An apprenticeship or technical school can both offer a path to an exciting new career. If you've realized that your interests are drawing you towards a hands-on technical career – one that's growing around the country and can't be outsourced – congratulations! You're about to start on a journey to a rewarding future where going to work won't feel like "work," one where you'll know you're making a difference every day. The question now is, how do I get hands-on training to overcome the skills gap and make it happen?

With a technical career, your options for training and building skills are more focused: a student pursuing these careers is likely to attend technical school or trade school, or seek an apprenticeship, rather than attend a 4-year college. In-depth training will involve more hands-on work offered through very specific programs.

Take a look at the pros and cons of each to decide which is best for you:

## **PROS:**

### **Technical School**

- A technical school provides the same hands-on training that you would experience in an apprenticeship, but you also receive an education on

the science behind the trade as well. You will become a more well-rounded professional.

- Training often includes developing “soft skills” like communication inside and outside of the workplace, writing skills, time management strategies, even time spent learning how to create and stick to a budget.
- Career Services specialists at these schools are available to help connect you with job opportunities, coach you through creating your resume, and conduct mock interviews so you’ll know what to expect when you get that call from an employer.
- Instructors are skilled at guiding students to understand the profession and the skills that go into it. At Lincoln Tech, for example, the instructors have years of industry experience as well as years of experience teaching in the classroom. With added bonuses like ASE-certified instructors, Certified Master HVACR educators, and ASE Master accredited programs\*, you know that you will get a quality education.
- With specialized training programs, you have an opportunity to get close to big companies such as Audi; this would be more difficult to attain through an apprenticeship.
- Flexible schedules can allow you to work part-time so you can earn while you learn.

## **Apprenticeship**

- You’ll dive right into hands-on learning and training, with a lot of real-world application and experiential learning right off the bat.
- You get paid to learn. While it will be a low salary, you will still have an income. Wages typically float somewhere around the state minimum. But if you have worked well with the mentor, there is always the possibility that you may receive a job offer at the end of the training, which may mean a better wage.

## **CONS:**

### **Technical School**

- It's a larger financial commitment. Going to a technical school requires that you pay tuition, whereas an apprenticeship offers the small wage mentioned above. To offset that investment, of course, many schools offer financial aid and a wide range of scholarship opportunities to qualifying students.
- If you learn best by being thrown in the fire, a technical school may lack the customer-facing interaction common to apprenticeships.

### **Apprenticeship**

- Your experience relies heavily on the person you are learning from. While this could end up landing in the "pro" column, it is still uncertain. A good mechanic, after all, sometimes struggles to be a good teacher. Teaching is a very difficult skill to master.
- Finding the opportunity itself may prove difficult, and the competition is high for apprenticeships. Be prepared to put a lot of work into selling yourself to your potential mentor and be sure to polish your résumé.
- At an apprenticeship you will build your skills from the bottom up. Starting with the basics means that some tasks may feel redundant or mindless, but you will need to put in your time at the bottom of the totem pole.

If you decide a technical school is the route that would best serve you and your future, learn more about hands-on training programs available where you live. You may find one that fits perfectly with your goals and helps you to make the final decision in your process of finding the ideal place to further your specialized education.

\*Instructor credentials & program accreditations vary by campus.