

# Are You Ready for College?

*Your Guide to Career and College Planning*

Community College ↗

University →

Technology Center ↖

Private School ↑





# Within Reach ... Within You

No matter your circumstances or economic situation, whether you're the first one in your family to go to college or the 10th, if you have the determination and drive, you can attend a university, college or technical school and be well on your way to a great career. Yes, you!

UCanGo2, an initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, is your resource for information about planning, preparing and paying for college. You'll find tons of valuable information that can get you started down the road to college at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org). Visit us at [Facebook/UCanGo2](#) for scholarship and college planning updates.

Don't know where to start? You're not alone! Read this booklet to get some good ideas about how to begin your journey. We're always here to help, so if you have questions or need more information, give us a call at 405.234.4239 or 866.443.7420 (toll free). Good luck!






# Why Go to College?

Picture your life 10 years from now. Where do you live? What are your hobbies? Now, to afford this lifestyle, how much money do you think you'll need each month? Will you need higher education to reach your goals? Remember - it pays to start planning for your future now.


Look at the chart below to see how education after high school can increase your earning power. For example, in Oklahoma, the average beginning hourly wage for a certified electrician is \$21.04; it's \$13.43 an hour if you don't go to school and choose to get on-the-job training as an electrician's apprentice.

With moderate on-the-job training, you could be a(n)...	Hourly Wage	With a technical school certification or an associate, bachelor's or higher degree, you could be a(n)...	Hourly Wage
Electrician's Apprentice	\$13.43	Electrician	\$21.04
Nursing Assistant	\$10.23	Registered Nurse	\$26.91
Set/Exhibit Designer	\$10.79	Art Director	\$35.18
Fast Food Cook	\$8.58	Chef/Head Cook	\$14.81
Receptionist/Information Clerk	\$11.84	Administrative Services Manager	\$31.86
Veterinary Assistant	\$12.46	Veterinarian	\$34.59
Psychiatric Aide	\$10.05	Psychologist	\$38.48
Security Guard	\$13.13	Police Supervisor/Detective	\$32.77

Source: Oklahoma Bureau of Labor Statistics



Have a career in mind? If not, check out the Career Interests Quiz at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org). While this quiz may not determine your exact career path, it will give you some options to consider. See if any of your interests match up with the fastest growing occupations in Oklahoma.



*"I saved a lot of money by taking general education courses at my local community college, then transferring to a four-year university to work on my major."*

# Oklahoma's Fastest Growing Occupations

## Occupations requiring a bachelor's degree or higher:

Occupation	Average Hourly Salary	Average Annual Salary
Meeting, Convention and Event Planners	\$18.64	\$38,800
Market Research Analysts and Marketing Specialists	\$23.51	\$48,900
Interpreters and Translators	\$10.40	\$21,600
Health Educators	\$21.54	\$44,800
Training and Development Specialists	\$26.33	\$54,800
Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers	\$14.87	\$30,900
Special Education, Preschool, Kindergarten and Elementary School Teachers	\$20.32	\$42,256
Preschool and Childcare Center/Program Education Administrators	\$15.96	\$33,200
Financial Examiners	\$32.33	\$67,200
Geoscientists (Excluding Hydrologists and Geographers)	\$74.70	\$155,400

## Occupations requiring post-secondary training or an associate degree:

Occupation	Average Hourly Salary	Average Annual Salary
Veterinary Technologists and Technicians	\$11.77	\$24,500
Diagnostic Medical Sonographers	\$29.31	\$61,000
Respiratory Therapists	\$23.20	\$48,300
Physical Therapist Assistants	\$23.93	\$49,800
Cardiovascular Technologists and Technicians	\$17.69	\$36,800
Occupational Therapy Assistants	\$23.59	\$49,100
Radiologic Technologists and Technicians	\$22.92	\$47,669
Registered Nurses	\$26.51	\$55,149
Medical Equipment Repairers	\$16.17	\$33,600
Preschool Teachers (Excluding Special Education)	\$11.15	\$23,200

Source: Oklahoma Employment Security Commission



# Understanding School Types

To find the school that's right for you, it's important to understand the different types of schools available in Oklahoma and what they have to offer.

## Four-Year Universities

- Offer undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees
- Include Oklahoma's research and regional universities and public liberal arts university
- Examples: Oklahoma State University and Cameron University

## Community Colleges

- Take about two years to complete a degree program
- Are usually less expensive than some other types of colleges
- Examples: Western Oklahoma State College and Northeastern Oklahoma A&M College

## Technical Branches

- Emphasize education and training in technical fields
- Oklahoma State University Institute of Technology and Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City are Oklahoma's technical branches

## Technology Centers

- Prepare you for a specialized career or trade
- Offer several certifications, some online
- Examples: Eastern Oklahoma County Technology Center and Autry Technology Center

## Proprietary Schools

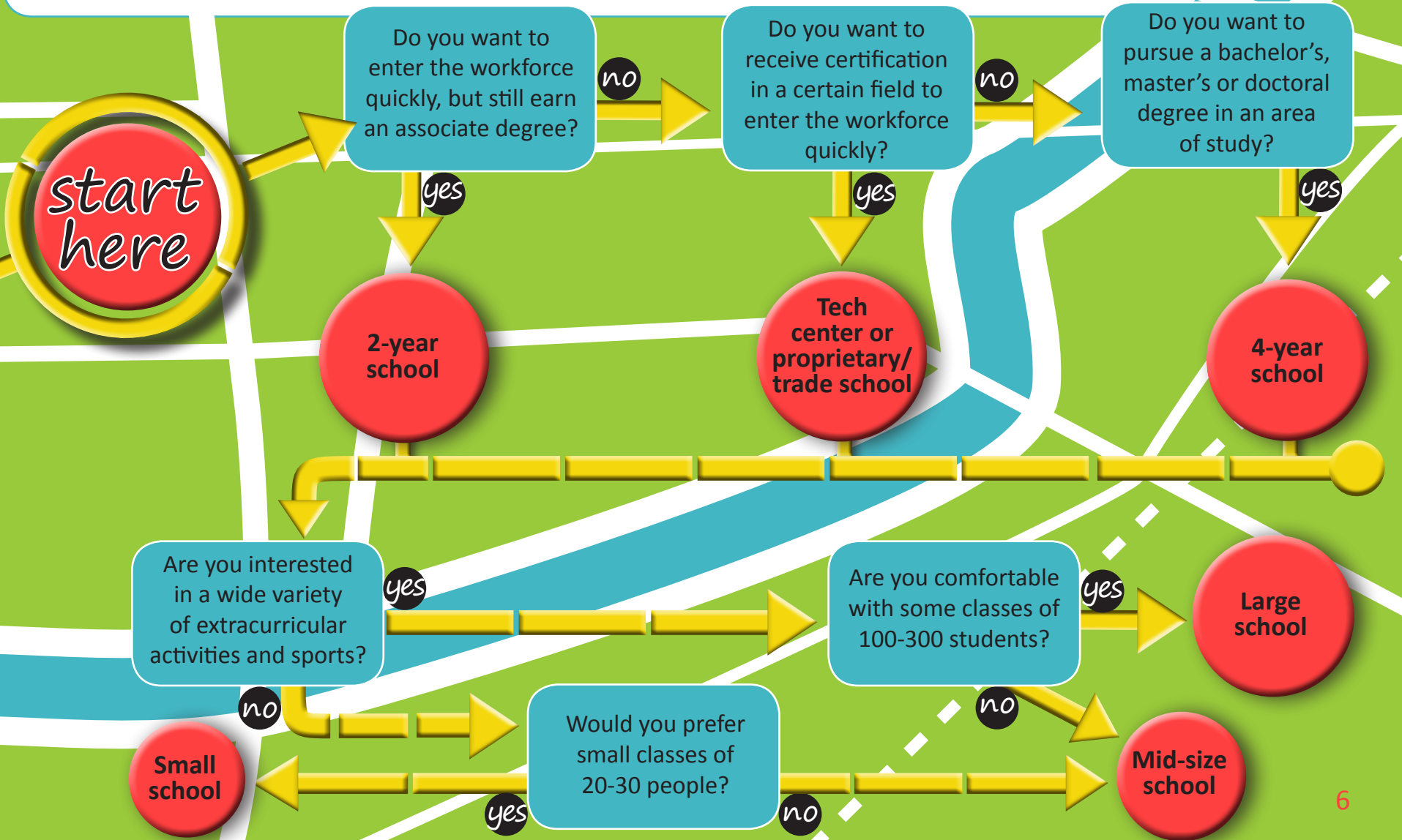
- Privately-owned or out-of-state colleges and universities that aren't supported by state funds
- Prepare students for direct entry into an occupation or profession
- Examples: Vatterott College and Woodward Beauty College

## Private Schools

- Privately-owned accredited colleges and universities that aren't supported by state funds
- Offer associate, bachelor's and/or graduate degrees
- Examples: Oklahoma Christian University and Bacone College

# Picking a College Type

Choosing the right school can be a difficult task. Use this tool to help you decide what type of school is right for you. Read each question and think about your interests and priorities. Answer 'yes' or 'no' and follow the corresponding arrows to reveal the type of school that may best meet your needs. For more detailed information about selecting the right school for you, check out [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org) and [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org).



# Checklists

## Campus Visit Checklist

Undecided about which college to attend? Schedule some college visits to the schools you might be interested in attending. These visits can help you make a more educated decision. While on your campus visits, talk to as many people as you can and don't pass up a chance to ask questions. Use this checklist as a guide to make the most of your campus visits.

- Visit the school's website to learn how to set up a campus tour. Tours are usually scheduled throughout the day, so your family may want to plan the day around the tour.
- Schedule interviews with campus officials in admission, academic advising, housing and in your field of study. Ask about the number of classes you should take each semester, meal plans and parking.
- Pick up a school newspaper to get an idea of the campus culture. Drop in at the Student Life office to ask about student organizations.
- Grab any financial aid or application forms you may need. Ask about the school's FAFSA deadline.
- If possible, sit in on a class that interests you. Talk to coaches or sponsors of activities that interest you.
- Scan bulletin boards to see what activities are available. This is also a good way to get a feel for job opportunities in the area.
- Eat in the cafeteria or around campus to check out the dining options available to you.
- Visit the dorms if you plan to live on campus. Ask about dorm security practices and for a list of what you can and can't bring with you to the dorm.
- Talk with current students about campus life and ask questions.
- Ask someone in the health clinic about their hours and what services they provide.
- Visit the college bookstore to price new and used books.
- Stop by the library and ask about their checkout procedures.
- Do you need child care? Ask about campus services in the area.



# Senior Checklist

## Fall

- **Stay on track.** Continue to explore opportunities to earn college credit while in high school. Review courses with your counselor to make sure you're meeting high school graduation and entrance requirements for the school(s) that interest you. Remember to add your current classes to your "Tracking My Classes and Achievements" form, which is available at [UCanGo2.org/resources](https://ucango2.org/resources). Use this information for college and scholarship applications.
- **Keep saving.** Continue to plug money into your Oklahoma 529 College Savings Plan ([OK4Saving.org](https://ok4saving.org)) or other savings account. It's best to keep savings in your parent's name.
- **Sign up.** Register for the fall ACT and/or SAT tests. You can find helpful links with test dates and more info at [UCanGo2.org/students](https://ucango2.org/students).
- **Learn more.** Attend college fairs, college planning sessions and financial aid information programs for answers to your questions. If you haven't already, visit schools that are a good match to your abilities and career interests. After you've done your research, narrow down three to five schools to which you'd like to apply.
- **Go for free money.** Search and apply for grants and scholarships. [UCanGo2.org](https://ucango2.org) offers a scholarship search tool that allows you to explore scholarships by deadline or category. Check with local civic organizations or employers for additional scholarship sources and talk with your counselor about potential options. Be sure to pay close attention to scholarship deadlines.
- **Fill it out and send it in.** Check with the financial aid offices at schools you're applying to for specific information about scholarships, costs and required financial aid forms.

## Spring

- **Talk taxes.** Make sure you and your parent(s) complete your income tax forms as soon as possible so you're ready to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).
- **Get a PIN and submit the FAFSA.** Request a federal Personal Identification Number (PIN) at [PIN.ed.gov](https://pin.ed.gov); you'll use it throughout the federal aid process, including for completion of the FAFSA and signing online loan applications. Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after Jan. 1. Apply online at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov) each year you need aid.
- **Look for the SAR.** Review the information provided on your Student Aid Report (SAR) for accuracy. It will be sent to you after you file the FAFSA.
- **Take the test.** You've studied hard, so take the exams for any Advanced Placement (AP) and other honors-level subjects.
- **Ask for it.** Request that your high school send your final transcript to your selected school(s).
- **Sign and send.** Watch your mailbox or email for FAFSA results and/or award letters, and check your award status with your school. Promptly accept your financial award letter, if required. You don't have to accept all loan funds offered to you; borrow only what you need to pay for school!

## Summer

- **Decisions, decisions.** If you've been accepted to multiple schools, make your choice and notify the school you plan to attend as soon as possible. You may be required to pay a nonrefundable deposit to secure your spot.
- **Pay attention to the MPN.** Complete the Master Promissory Note (MPN) to accept any necessary federal loan(s) you've been offered. If you have questions, contact the financial aid office at your selected school.

# Junior Checklist

## Fall

- **Take it to the next level.** Enroll in AP and other honors-level classes or, if possible, sign up for concurrent enrollment courses.
- **Add it to your calendar.** Find out when the ACT, SAT, Advanced Placement (AP) or other honors-level exams are offered. Contact the school(s) you plan to attend and ask which test they prefer. You can find helpful links for ACT and SAT test dates in the student section at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org).
- **Pare it down.** Narrow your list of schools based on research you've already completed. Your list will probably include three to five schools.
- **Get aid.** Financial aid, that is. Start researching your grant, scholarship and student loan options at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org).
- **See for yourself.** Attend a college fair event in your area. These events offer students and parents a chance to talk with school representatives. Visit [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org) for a list of college fairs in Oklahoma.

## Spring

- **Start the process.** You and your parent(s) may want to visit potential colleges during summer vacation so you don't miss school. However, some high schools consider a campus visit an excused absence. Check with your counselor. When scheduling your visit, keep in mind that many campuses close for spring break.
- **Repeat testing.** Register for the spring ACT and SAT tests. You may want to take the exam again over the summer and fall of your senior year to boost your score.
- **Select special classes.** If you're interested in taking AP or honors-level exam(s), sign up now. These classes are worth checking out because some offer college credit, which could save you time and money in the long run.
- **Let it add up.** Continue to contribute to your 529 College Savings Plan ([OK4Saving.org](http://OK4Saving.org)) or another savings plan. Continue researching financial aid options.
- **Keep tabs.** Add the classes you plan to take during your senior year to your "Tracking My Classes and Achievements" form (available at [UCanGo2.org/resources](http://UCanGo2.org/resources)). Print a copy for use in your senior year. Continue to add new report cards, test scores, honors or awards to your "My Future" file, and make sure you are on track with meeting Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) requirements, available at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org).

## Summer

- **Recruit some ambassadors.** Ask teachers or other community members to write letters of recommendation for college admission.
- **Be courteous.** If you go on interviews or visits, don't forget to send thank you notes to those who helped you.
- **Do it again.** You may want to take the ACT and/or SAT test more than one time to boost your score.
- **Practice and evaluate.** Complete online admission applications by filling out rough drafts without submitting them. Focus on the essay portions of these applications and decide how you'd like to present yourself. Don't forget to mention your activities outside of school.
- **Apply early.** If you have a clear "first choice" school, decide if you're going to apply for *early decision* or *early action*. Be aware! If you're accepted for *early decision*, you may be committing yourself to attend that school.
- **Decide what you like.** Explore careers by taking a summer job or internship in your field of interest. Remember to set some money aside from your paycheck to pay future expenses!

# Sophomore Checklist

- **Keep it up.** Study hard to keep your grades up and keep talking to your guidance counselor, teachers and family about your plans after high school.
- **Save money.** Sign up for a college savings account from Oklahoma's 529 College Savings Plan ([OK4Saving.org](http://OK4Saving.org)) or continue to add money to an existing account. It's generally best to keep savings in your parent's name.
- **Last chance.** Don't miss out on Oklahoma's Promise! If you didn't apply in the 8th or 9th grade, visit [okpromise.org](http://okpromise.org) for more info.
- **Know what you need.** Review what courses you'll need to take to satisfy the requirements of the school you're interested in attending. Download the Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) requirements at [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org) and investigate Advanced Placement (AP), honors-level courses and concurrent enrollment options to know what's available. You may be able to enroll in college as a junior or senior if you meet certain requirements. Talk to your counselor and visit [OKhighered.org](http://OKhighered.org) to learn more.
- **File it away.** Keep updating your "My Future" file.
- **Be active.** Continue participating in extracurricular activities and volunteer work, and consider getting involved in academic enrichment programs, summer workshops and camps with a specialty focus such as music, arts and science. Many admission officers look for students who actively participate in their school and community. Add your freshman and sophomore classes, honors and awards to your "Tracking My Classes and Achievements" form (available at [UCanGo2.org/resources](http://UCanGo2.org/resources)).
- **PLAN.** Take the PLAN test ([ACTStudent.org/plan](http://ACTStudent.org/plan)) to help you prepare for the ACT, which you can take during your junior year. Ask your school counselor for more information.
- **Hit the books.** Study for standardized tests like the ACT and SAT. Visit [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org) for helpful resources.
- **Jot it down.** Sketch out the pros and cons of each school you're researching. Be sure to evaluate degree programs, location, cost, etc. Need help? Find a Campus Visit Checklist at [UCanGo2.org/resources](http://UCanGo2.org/resources) or on Page 7 of this booklet which will provide a list of ideas to help you set up a successful college tour.

# Freshman Checklist

- **Study hard.** Build good study habits to keep your grades in tip-top shape.
- **Save money.** Sign up for a college savings account from Oklahoma's 529 College Savings Plan ([OK4Saving.org](http://OK4Saving.org)) or continue to add money to an existing account. It's generally best to keep savings in your parents' name.
- **Apply for Oklahoma's Promise.** If you didn't apply during 8th grade, visit [okpromise.org](http://okpromise.org) for program requirements and to sign up for this scholarship program.
- **Take the right classes.** To be college-bound, your class schedule should contain at least four college-preparatory classes per year, including:
  - 4 units of English
  - 3 units of history/citizenship skills
  - 3 units of math (at or above Algebra I)
  - 2 units of foreign language or computer science
  - 3 units of laboratory science
  - 8 units of electives, specifications applyThese courses are defined by the Achieving Classroom Excellence (ACE) requirements, available for you to download at [UCanGo2.org/resources](http://UCanGo2.org/resources). Discuss your future plans with your guidance counselor.
- **Track it.** Investigate college entrance requirements at [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org), print the "Tracking My Classes and Achievements" form at [UCanGo2.org/resources](http://UCanGo2.org/resources) and add the courses you take each year to your tracking form so you won't miss out on a required class. Also, track your awards and honors for scholarship and college applications in your senior year.
- **File it away.** Create a "My Future" file and include copies of report cards, skill assessment quizzes and results.
- **Think about it.** Start thinking about the university, college or technology center you'd like to attend and plan a campus tour. On Page 7 of this booklet, you'll find a Campus Visit Checklist with ideas to help you set up a successful college tour.
- **Take it to the next level.** Investigate AP and other honors-level courses to know what's available and if you're eligible to enroll.



an initiative of the Oklahoma College Assistance Program,  
an operating division of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education



Check out the  
Resources page at  
[UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org) for tons  
of college planning tools.  
  
'Like' UCanGo2 on Facebook  
for college planning tips,  
articles and scholarship  
information.

[UCanGo2](http://UCanGo2.org) | [UCanGo2.org](http://UCanGo2.org)

[Oklahoma College Assistance Program](http://Oklahoma College Assistance Program) | [OCAP.org](http://OCAP.org)

[Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education](http://Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education) | [OKcollegestart.org](http://OKcollegestart.org)

[Oklahoma Money Matters](http://Oklahoma Money Matters) | [OklahomaMoneyMatters.org](http://OklahomaMoneyMatters.org)

[Federal Student Aid](http://Federal Student Aid) | [StudentAid.gov](http://StudentAid.gov)

[Ready Set Repay](http://Ready Set Repay) | [www.readysetrepay.org](http://www.readysetrepay.org)

[Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](http://Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)) | [FAFSA.gov](http://FAFSA.gov)

[FAFSA4caster](http://FAFSA4caster) | [FAFSA4caster.ed.gov](http://FAFSA4caster.ed.gov)

[FastWeb Free Scholarship Search](http://FastWeb Free Scholarship Search) | [FastWeb.com](http://FastWeb.com)

[Oklahoma's Promise](http://Oklahoma's Promise) | [okpromise.org](http://okpromise.org)

[ACT Information](http://ACT Information) | [ACTstudent.org](http://ACTstudent.org)

[Mapping Your Future](http://Mapping Your Future) | [MappingYourFuture.org](http://MappingYourFuture.org)

[SAT Information](http://SAT Information) | [SAT.CollegeBoard.org](http://SAT.CollegeBoard.org)

[Oklahoma College Savings Plan](http://Oklahoma College Savings Plan) | [OK4Saving.org](http://OK4Saving.org)

[Oklahoma GEAR UP](http://Oklahoma GEAR UP) | [okhighered.org/gearup](http://okhighered.org/gearup)

405.234.4239 or 866.443.7420 (toll free)

P.O. Box 3000 | Oklahoma City, OK | 73101-3000

UCanGo2 

AYRC – 08/13

The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, in compliance with Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 11246 as amended, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and other federal laws and regulations, do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, handicap or status as a veteran in any of its policies, practices or procedures. This includes, but is not limited to, admissions, employment, financial aid and educational services. This publication, printed by Southwestern Stationers, is issued by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, as authorized by 70 O.S. 2001, Section 3206. 10,000 copies have been printed at a cost of approximately \$2,592. Copies have been deposited with the Publications Clearinghouse of the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. This publication was produced in August 2013.

