



Public Career Education Programs Differ From Private Programs on Their Admission Requirements, Costs, Financial Aid Availability, and Student Outcomes

at a glance

In 2007-08, public and private institutions offered 669 different career education programs, serving over 385,000 students. Few of these programs (9%) were offered by both public and private institutions, although the two sectors offered training targeted at many of the same occupations. Public and private institutions had significant differences in the areas of the state they served, program admission and completion requirements, program and student costs, financial aid availability, and student outcomes.

Scope

As directed by the Florida Legislature, OPPAGA examined Florida's postsecondary career education programs. This report is the first in a series on Florida's career education programs and addresses six questions.

- Do public and private institutions follow the same standards in designing and delivering career education programs?
- Do public and private institutions offer the same types of career education programs?
- What are the admission and completion requirements for students attending public and private career education programs?

- How do the costs of career education programs compare between public and private institutions?
- What types of financial assistance are available to students attending public and private career education programs?
- How do student outcomes compare between public and private career education programs?

Background

Florida's postsecondary career education programs provide training opportunities for adults to prepare for jobs that will help them achieve economic self-sufficiency and advance in their careers. These programs are provided by both public and private institutions, including 44 technical centers operated by Florida's school districts, each of the 28 institutions in the Florida College System (formerly the Florida Community College System), and over 500 private schools licensed by the Commission for Independent Education. The programs include college credit degrees and certificates, vocational credit certificates and diplomas, apprenticeships, and continuing workforce education programs. As shown in Exhibit 1, these programs provided career training to over 385,000 students in 2007-08 (the most recent year for which data are available), with similar numbers of students served by public and private programs.

Exhibit 1

Public and Private Career Education Programs Served More Than 385,000 Students in 2007-08

Career Education Program Type	Program Description	2007-08 Enrollment		
		Florida Colleges	School Districts	Private Schools
Associate in Science Degree	A two-year technical degree that typically contains 15-18 credit hours of transferable general education	61,101	N/A	70,650
Associate in Applied Science Degree	A two-year technical degree indicating that a student has trained in a particular field and is prepared for employment	19,886	N/A	21,435 ¹
College Credit Certificate ²	A short-term career education program that is part of an associate in science or associate in applied sciences degree, consisting of the technical courses required for these degrees but not the general education courses	10,851	N/A	N/A
Applied Technology Diploma	Awarded for courses that are part of an associate in science or associate in applied sciences degree that leads to employment in a specific occupation; may provide either adult vocational certificate credit or college credit	2,482	1,041	N/A
Adult Vocational Certificate ³	Awarded for completing courses that train students in technical skills that enable them to attain and sustain employment and realize economic self-sufficiency	20,522	49,563	113,854
Apprenticeship	Highly structured vocational skill training in a given job through a combination of on-the-job training and classroom instruction	3,953	11,296	N/A
TOTAL		118,795	61,900	205,939

¹ Of the 21,435 private degrees, 6,129 were occupational associate degrees, which most closely resemble the associate in applied science degree.

² A college credit certificate is also known as a postsecondary vocational certificate.

³ Private schools award diplomas in place of vocational certificates.

Source: Division of Florida Colleges, *Glossary of Terms and Acronyms*, <http://www.fldoe.org/cc/glossary.asp>, Florida Department of Education, November 2009.

Public career education programs are primarily funded by state funds, which school districts and colleges receive through lump sum appropriations from the Florida Legislature. These programs are also authorized to charge tuition and fees to participating students. In Fiscal Year 2007-08, approximately 70% of the \$685 million school districts and colleges spent on career education programs was provided by the state. Private career education programs are primarily funded through tuition and fees charged to participating students.

To be successful, career education programs must train for occupations that have family-sustaining wages and current or emerging employment demands. It is thus important for the state and local institutions to analyze labor markets to identify promising employment sectors and occupations and to assess the effectiveness of career education programs in meeting these employment needs.

The state's targeted occupations lists identify occupations that are projected to have high employment demand and wages. Each year various entities contribute to developing statewide and regional targeted occupations lists, which identify high-demand and high-wage occupations. The state primarily uses these lists to direct federal workforce funding to training programs that prepare individuals for identified high-demand, high-wage jobs, while school districts and colleges use the lists to help determine their local program offerings.

The Legislature recently raised the possibility of using the targeted occupations lists to better target state career education resources by discontinuing direct funding of non-targeted training programs at public institutions, and instead providing financial assistance for students to attend those programs at private institutions.¹

¹ Chapter 2009-40, *Laws of Florida*.

To help assess the feasibility of this scenario, we examined five programs offered by both the public and private sector that train for occupations not on the targeted lists. A companion OPPAGA report will discuss the challenges of using the targeted occupations lists as the sole criteria for directing state funding for career education programs.

Methodology

We focused our examination of public and private career education programs on five programs offered by both sectors: cosmetology, massage therapy, patient care technician, phlebotomy, and nursing assistant. We selected these programs because they have relatively high student enrollments in both public and private institutions and train students for occupations that were not on the targeted occupations lists at the time of our study. We examined state data on enrollment, program completion, and job placement and analyzed student pass rates on state licensure examinations for these programs. We also conducted surveys to obtain information that is not maintained by the state by surveying students who recently completed these programs, individuals currently working in related occupations, and public and private institutions offering these programs.² See Appendix A for more information on our methodology.

Questions and Answers

Do public and private institutions follow the same standards in designing and delivering career education programs?

Public school districts and colleges must follow consistent standards when designing and delivering career education programs. Private programs have more flexibility in this area.

² We sent out surveys to approximately 16,200 recent program completers and individuals working in related occupations, which encompassed nine different groups of survey recipients for statistical reporting purposes. We based our findings on over 3,000 completed responses across the nine survey groups.

Public career education programs must follow uniform standards for curriculum development and program delivery. The Department of Education is required by law to ensure that the technical training delivered through public career programs produces uniform educational outcomes for students.³ As part of this requirement, the department establishes a Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) number for each unique public program.⁴ The department works with various stakeholders (including industry and business) to develop and publish standard curriculum frameworks for each program that has been assigned a CIP number. These curriculum frameworks must be updated every three years and include the technical and academic competencies that students must learn, standard program lengths, minimum basic skill levels for students, and required instructor certifications. School districts and colleges must follow these frameworks when developing and delivering their programs.

The department also works with training providers to identify the occupations that students will be prepared to work in after completing specific career education programs.⁵ In many instances, there is not a one-to-one relationship between a specific program and an occupation. Different or multiple programs may train students for the same occupational category, and some programs prepare students to work in more than one occupation. In addition, some occupations cover a wide range of different skill level jobs within one occupational category, which in turn may link to several different types of training programs.

³ Section 1004.92(2)(b)6, *F.S.*

⁴ Number assignments are based on the CIP schema published by the U.S. Department of Education, which provides a taxonomy for accurately tracking, assessing, and reporting fields of study and program completions activity.

⁵ The linking of training programs (CIPs) to occupations involves the use of the Standard Occupational Classifications system. This system is used by governmental agencies and the public sector to provide a framework to classify workers or jobs into occupational categories for collecting, calculating, analyzing, and reporting data about jobs and employment. All workers are classified into 1 of over 820 occupations according to their occupational definition. The Florida Department of Education develops a crosswalk of CIPs to Standard Occupational Classifications, which is the formal process for linking training programs with occupations.

Private programs have more flexibility in designing and delivering career education programs. The Commission for Independent Education is responsible for regulating the private institutions that provide career education programs in Florida. This responsibility includes consumer protection, degree and diploma program approval, program improvement, and licensure for such institutions. Independent postsecondary institutions may seek licensure through the annual licensure process, or through licensure by means of accreditation. The commission also serves as the central agency for collecting and distributing current information regarding private career education programs.

State Board of Education rule provides that private career education programs must conform to the standards and training practices generally accepted by the occupational or professional fields for which students are being prepared.⁶ However, private institutions are not required (by rule or law) to follow the state curriculum frameworks in designing and delivering their career education programs. Rather, when providing initial licensure or authorizing a new program, commission staff review each institution's programs and assign a CIP number (for reporting purposes) that most closely represents the program's instructional content.

Accreditation processes and standards also guide the design and delivery of career education programs. In addition to the state's role in program design and delivery, career education programs may also be guided by regional and national accreditation standards. Accreditation processes typically require institutions to go through an in-depth process of curriculum review, site visits by the accrediting agency, and other quality checks. In addition to serving as a potential indicator of quality, accreditation by a federally

approved agency is required if schools wish to receive federal Title IV student financial aid funds. Some accreditation agencies provide broad institutional accreditation, such as the Council on Occupational Education, while others provide more program-specific accreditation, like the Commission on Massage Therapy Accreditation.

Public school districts and colleges that offered the specific career education programs we examined were more likely to be accredited than private institutions. Nearly all (86%) of the public institutions were accredited by either the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (for degree-granting institutions) or the Council on Occupational Education. In contrast, 49% of the private institutions that offered these programs were accredited by federally approved agencies including the Council on Occupational Education, the National Accrediting Commission of Cosmetology Arts and Sciences, and the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges. The percentage of accredited institutions also varied by program, as shown in Exhibit 2. Non-accredited programs typically were offered at smaller public and private institutions that serve relatively few students statewide. See Appendix B for more information.

Exhibit 2 Public Institutions That Offered Specific Career Education Programs Were More Likely to Be Accredited Than Private Institutions

Program	Percentage of Institutions Accredited	
	Public	Private
Cosmetology	92%	63%
Massage Therapy	100%	67%
Patient Care Technician	89%	44%
Phlebotomy	95%	26%
Nursing Assistant	83%	13%

Source: OPPAGA Analysis.

⁶ Chapter 6E-2.004, *FAC*.

Do public and private institutions offer the same types of career education programs?

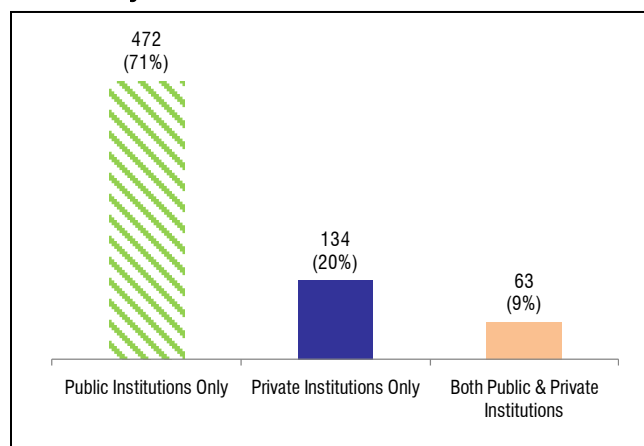
While public and private institutions generally do not offer the same career education programs, the two sectors offer many programs that train for the same occupations, which tend to be on the targeted occupations lists. However, public and private institutions often serve different areas of the state.

Only 9% of career education programs are offered by both public and private institutions. In 2007-08, public and private institutions offered 669 different career education programs (as designated by unique CIP numbers). As shown in Exhibit 3, only 63 (9%) of these programs were offered by both public and private institutions. Public institutions offered 472 programs that were not available at private institutions. However, some of this program variety in public institutions is due to the creation of multiple training levels (credentials) for the same program. For example, public institutions offer three different credentials (vocational certificate, applied technology diploma, and college credit certificate) for students who wish to train as emergency medical technicians, with each credential listed as a separate program with its own unique CIP number.

While there is little overlap in specific programs offered at public and private institutions, many of the public-only and private-only programs train for the same occupations. To determine the training overlap at the occupation level, we matched the 606 programs exclusive to one of the sectors with the occupations for which they trained students. Approximately 63% of these programs trained students for occupations for which training was offered in both sectors. For

example, the Automotive Service Technology program is only offered in the public sector and the Automotive Service Technician program is only offered in the private sector, but both programs prepare students to work in the 'Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics' occupation.

Exhibit 3 Only 9% of Career Education Programs Are Offered by Both Public and Private Institutions

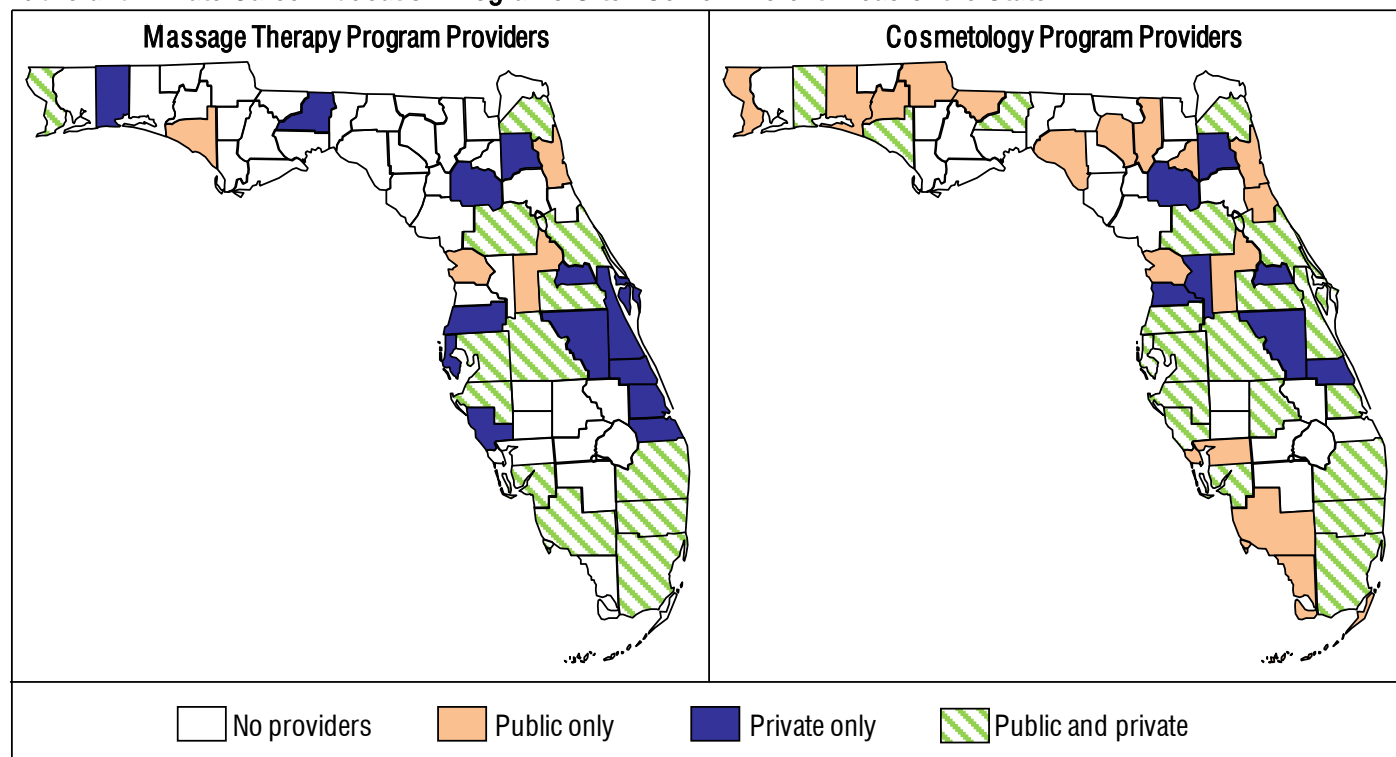


Source: OPPAGA Analysis.

Most public and private career education programs train for occupations that are on the targeted occupations lists. Both public and private institutions focus their career education programs on occupations that are included in the targeted occupations lists. The differences between public and private institutions were fairly minimal. The majority of public (64%) and private (53%) career education programs trained students for targeted occupations. Almost two-thirds (64%) of the programs exclusive to public institutions trained students for targeted occupations, compared to 48% of the programs exclusive to private institutions.

Exhibit 4

Public and Private Career Education Programs Often Serve Different Areas of the State



Source: OPPAGA Analysis.

Public and private career education programs often serve different areas of the state. To determine whether public and private institutions typically serve the same areas of the state, we examined the availability of cosmetology and massage therapy programs by sector and county in 2007-08. As shown in Exhibit 4, massage therapy programs were offered in 30 counties. In 4 of those counties, there were only public programs, while 13 counties had only private programs, and the remaining 13 counties had both public and private programs. Cosmetology programs were offered in 43 counties, with only public programs in 16 of those counties, only private programs in 7 counties, and both types of programs in 20 counties.

What are the admission and completion requirements for students attending public and private career education programs?

The public and private career education programs we examined had both general and occupation-related requirements for program admission and

completion. However, private programs were more likely to have minimum education requirements for admission, while public programs generally had more occupation-related requirements.

Career education programs have varying admission and completion requirements. The institutions that offered the five career education programs we examined had general admission and completion requirements for their students. General admission requirements included factors such as minimum age and education levels, while completion requirements included finishing the program's required instructional or clinical training hours. However, many programs had additional admission requirements that were related to the specific occupations students sought to work in after completing their training. For example, as state law requires certified nursing assistants to have background checks, many institutions required students considering these programs to undergo a background check prior to enrollment.

- Private career education programs are more likely to have minimum education requirements for admission. Nearly all (93%) of the private institutions that offered the programs we examined required students to have at least a high school diploma, GED, or passing score on an ability to benefit (basic skills) test for admission. In contrast, only 39% of the public programs had such requirements.
- More public than private health science programs require students to pass background checks for admission. Except for cosmetology, all of the programs we examined are designated as health science programs according to federally defined career clusters. Most (79%) of the public health science programs surveyed (massage therapy, patient care technician, phlebotomy, and nursing assistant) required students to undergo background checks for admission to the program. In contrast, only 20% of the private health science programs surveyed required background checks for admission. The main reason public and private institutions surveyed gave for requiring background checks was that it was required by the sites used for the clinical portion of their training programs (i.e., hospitals or nursing homes). Some institutions also noted that students must have a clean background check for state licensure in the occupations related to their training, so students who cannot pass the background check should not waste their time and money completing the program. Institutions (public or private) that do not require background checks generally said that they let students know during the admissions process about licensure requirements, but they do not require background checks because their clinical sites do not require them.
- More public than private health science programs require students to pass physical/health screenings for admission. Most (86%) of the public health science programs we surveyed required students to pass physical/health-related screenings for admission, primarily because it was required by their clinical sites. These requirements varied by program but included negative drug screenings, proof of immunizations, and documentation of a general physical exam. In contrast, only 25% of private health science programs surveyed had physical or health-related requirements for admission.
- Public programs require students to pass basic skills exams in order to complete the program; most private programs did not. Florida law requires public certificate and diploma programs longer than 450 contact hours to test all of their students without a postsecondary degree on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) at admission, and students who do not make a passing score initially must be able to pass the test by the end of their training program. For example, all students in public cosmetology programs (regardless of whether they have a high school credential or not) must demonstrate at least a ninth-grade level of reading and an eighth-grade level of math and language comprehension on the TABE to obtain their cosmetology certificates. Public institutions provide remediation or vocational preparatory instruction to assist students who do not initially pass basic skills exams. Since private programs are not subject to the same statutory requirements as public programs, very few require all students to pass a basic skills exam to complete the program.

- Public and private programs have similar instructional hour requirements for program completion. For the programs we examined, the number of instructional contact hours required for program completion did not vary greatly between public and private programs. We noted some minor differences for massage therapy training programs, where all public programs required 750 contact hours, but most (30 of 36) reporting private programs required fewer than 750 hours. However, all public and private programs exceeded the minimum 500-hour program length set by state licensing requirements.

How do the costs of career education programs compare between public and private institutions?

While students typically pay more to attend private career education programs, some public programs are more expensive when the state's contribution to the program is considered.

Students typically pay more to attend private career education programs. Students' costs for career education programs vary widely across public and private institutions. Students' costs

include tuition costs as well as program-specific expenses such as lab fees, supplies and materials, uniforms, and books. As shown in Exhibit 5, students' costs for cosmetology programs at public institutions ranged from \$2,515 to \$5,150, while private institutions' programs ranged from \$3,200 to \$22,021. Since tuition rates for public programs must be within limits established by the Legislature, these programs primarily vary in the amounts they charge students for expenses such as lab fees, supplies, and books. For example, the cost of supplies at one public cosmetology program is \$15, while the supplies cost at another public cosmetology program is \$1,650.

While students' costs vary widely across institutions, these costs were typically higher at private institutions. Average student costs for public programs were significantly less than similar private programs for all five programs we examined. For example, the average student cost for cosmetology programs at public institutions was approximately \$8,500 less than similar programs at private institutions.

Exhibit 5 Students Typically Pay More to Attend Private Career Education Programs

Program	Public Programs ¹		Private Programs ²	
	Range of Cost to Student ³	Average Cost to Student ⁴	Range of Cost to Student	Average Cost to Student ⁴
Cosmetology	\$2,515 - \$5,150	\$3,661	\$3,200 - \$22,021	\$12,170
Massage Therapy	\$2,453 - \$3,239	\$2,803	\$2,500 - \$20,872	\$11,017
Patient Care Technician	\$1,524 - \$2,490	\$1,692	\$1,500 - \$14,150	\$9,484
Phlebotomy	\$445 - \$1,061	\$772	\$500 - \$11,400	\$1,262
Nursing Assistant	\$276 - \$1,218	\$791	\$300 - \$5,600	\$939

¹ Public program cost data is from 2009-10.

² Private program cost data is the most recent available data, as of October 2009.

³ These costs include both tuition and other costs to students, such as lab fees, books, and supplies.

⁴ Average costs are weighted by 2007-08 student enrollment numbers.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of public institution cost survey and Commission for Independent Education data.

Some public programs are more expensive when the state's contribution is considered. Students' costs represent a relatively small percentage of total program costs at public institutions. While the costs of private programs are paid for by students, state appropriations fund approximately 70% of program costs at public institutions, with students and other local sources making up the difference. Thus, the state's contribution to public programs must be considered to provide a reasonable comparison of total program costs between the two sectors.

Exhibit 6

Some Public Programs Are More Expensive When the State's Contribution Is Considered

Program	Public Programs			Private Program Cost
	Standard Contact Hours	Average Cost Per Contact Hour	Average Total Program Cost	
Cosmetology	1200	\$7.87	\$9,444	\$12,170
Massage Therapy	750	\$7.92	\$5,940	\$11,017
Patient Care Technician	600	\$12.05	\$7,230	\$9,484
Phlebotomy	165	\$12.72	\$2,099	\$1,262
Nursing Assistant	120	\$8.21	\$985	\$939

Source: OPPAGA Analysis.

When state contributions are considered, some public career education programs cost more than similar private programs.⁷ Specifically, as shown in Exhibit 6, two programs we examined (phlebotomy and nursing assistant) had higher average total costs at public institutions than

⁷ State-level expenditure data currently collected for districts and colleges does not account for costs of specific career education programs. We surveyed districts and colleges to obtain 2007-08 expenditure data for specific programs we examined. We determined the average cost per contact for each program by summing the total expenditures reported through our survey and dividing those expenditures by the total contact hours reported for the program. We then multiplied these average costs figures by the standard contact hours for the programs to determine the total cost for one student in the public sector.

private institutions. For example, the average total cost of the phlebotomy program in the public sector was approximately \$800 more than the average cost in the private sector. However, for the other three programs we examined (cosmetology, massage therapy, and patient care technician), the public program cost was significantly less than the private program.

What types of financial assistance are available to students attending public and private career education programs?

In general, students in career education programs have access to the same types of federal and state financial aid as students in postsecondary academic programs in Florida. As shown in Exhibit 7, this includes both loans and gift aid (scholarships and grants) that are awarded based on merit, or financial need. However, career education students face some limitations on aid availability based on the length of the program and type of institution they attend. As a result, students in public career education programs generally have more access to financial aid than students in private programs.

Students in short-term training programs have limited financial aid options in both sectors. Most major types of financial aid (state and federal) are not available to students in programs under a minimum number of contact hours in length. These minimum hour requirements range from 180 hours for the Bright Futures Scholarship program to 600 hours for the federal Pell Grant program. These restrictions have a significant effect on career education students in Florida since 27% of students in 2007-08 were enrolled in programs that required fewer than 600 contact hours. Students in two of the five programs we examined (nursing assistant and phlebotomy) were not eligible for any major types of federal or state financial aid because these programs (in both public and private schools) were shorter than 180 contact hours.

Exhibit 7

Students in Career Education Programs Have Access to Multiple Types of Financial Aid

Financial Aid Program		Need- or Merit- Based	Institution Availability	Program Availability	Minimum Program Length
Federal Aid	Pell Grant	Need	Accredited public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	600 hours
	Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant	Need	Accredited public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	600 hours
	Perkins Loan	Need	Accredited public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	600 hours
	Federal Loan Programs—Subsidized	Need	Accredited public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	300 hours
	Federal Loan Programs—Unsubsidized	Neither	Accredited public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	300 hours
	Federal Work-study Program	Need	Accredited public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	600 hours
State Aid	Florida Public Student Assistance Grant	Need	Public	Associate or bachelor's degree programs only	N/A
	Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant Program	Need	Public	Certificate/diploma programs only	450 hours
	Florida Private Student Assistance Grant	Need	Private non-profit institutions that meet certain criteria ¹	Associate or bachelor's degree programs only	N/A
	Florida Postsecondary Student Assistance Grant	Need	Private for-profit institutions that meet certain criteria ²	Associate or bachelor's degree programs only	N/A
	Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program	Merit	All public and private institutions that meet certain criteria ³	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	180 hours
	Florida Work Experience Program	Need	Public institutions and SACS-accredited private colleges	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	450 hours
	Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship Program	Merit	Public and private	Certificate/diploma and degree programs	1 year

¹ Institutions must be private, non-profit, four-year schools, SACS accredited, chartered as domestic, and eligible for federal Title IV funds.

² Private, degree-granting colleges and universities not eligible for the Florida Private Student Assistance Grant are eligible for this aid program.

³ Private institutions must either be accredited or meet one of several criteria indicating institutional stability and quality.

Source: OPPAGA Analysis.

Students attending private and non-accredited institutions have fewer financial aid options. Students in public and private career education programs generally have access to the same types of financial aid, with one major exception. The state offers a need-based grant (the Florida Public Postsecondary Career Education Student Assistance Grant) for students in certificate and diploma programs at public institutions. However, there is no comparable grant available to students attending these programs at private institutions. The state does offer a need-based grant (the Florida Student Assistance Grant) to students who are enrolled in associate or bachelor's degree programs at private institutions.

Financial aid availability for students is also affected by the accreditation status of the

institution where they are receiving their training. Schools must be accredited by a federally approved agency for their students to be eligible to receive federal financial aid. This eligibility requirement has a greater effect on students in private programs, as a higher percentage of public institutions (86%) that offer the five programs we examined were accredited, compared to only 49% of the private institutions that offered these programs. Accreditation status also affects the availability of state financial aid. For example, students attending any public institution may qualify for the Bright Futures Scholarship program, while students attending private schools are not eligible unless their institution is accredited or meets other requirements regarding the institution's quality.

How do student outcomes compare between public and private career education programs?

Performance comparisons between the public and private career education programs we examined showed mixed results. While the private programs were more effective in producing program graduates, the public programs had significantly higher licensure passage rates. Students from both sectors made similar wages upon entering the workforce.

Private career education programs were generally more effective in producing program graduates. In order for career education students to realize the benefits (i.e., finding employment and/or improved wages) of enrolling in training programs, they must first complete all program requirements and obtain their associated credentials. Thus, a key measure of program performance is the degree to which students complete the program's training requirements (completion rates).

While public institutions submit student-level data that can be used to calculate completion rates, the Commission for Independent Education does not require private institutions to submit data on the progress of individual students. Rather, private institutions report aggregate data on the total number of students enrolled in and graduating from each program in a given year. To assess program completion differences between public and private institutions, we compared programs based on the ratio of total program graduates in a year to the total number of students enrolled (graduates per 100 students enrolled). This provided comparable information on the effectiveness of a program in producing graduates relative to the population of students being served.

As shown in Exhibit 8, four of the five programs we examined had higher completion rates in private institutions than in public institutions. For example, private patient care technician programs produced 48 graduates per 100 students enrolled in 2007-08, whereas public programs only produced 16 graduates per 100 students enrolled.

Exhibit 8

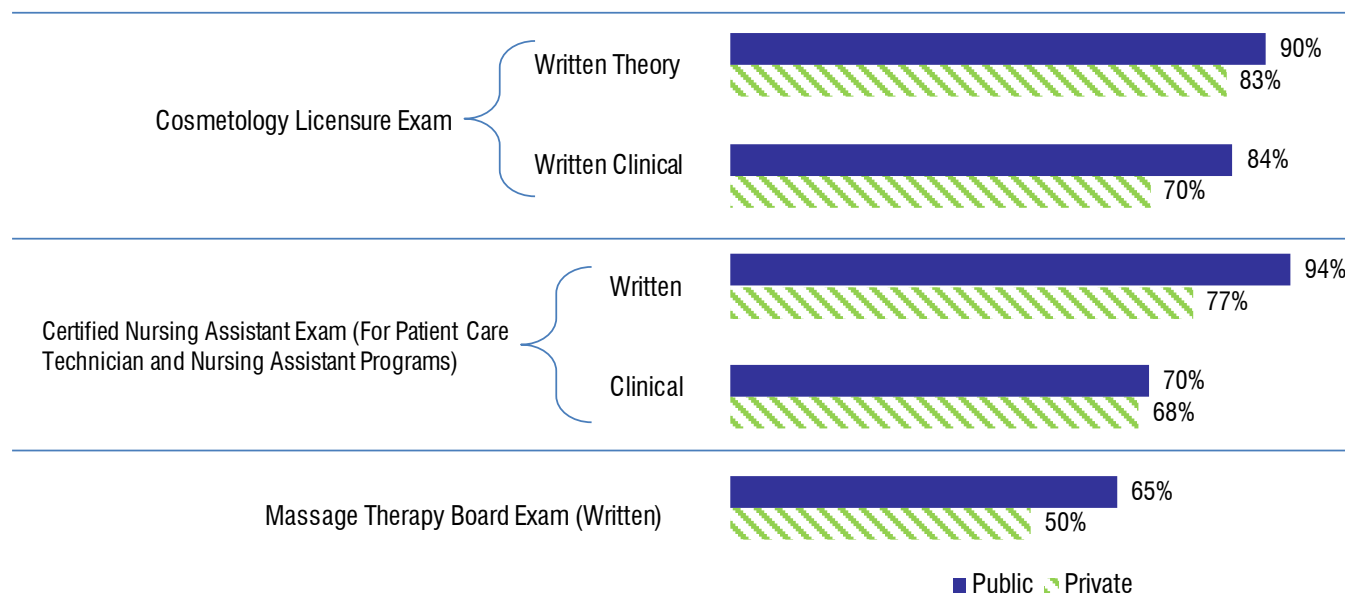
Private Programs Generally Had Higher Ratios of Program Graduates to Students Enrolled in 2007-08

Program	Public Institutions			Private Institutions		
	Enrollment	Program Graduates	Ratio of Graduates to Enrollment	Enrollment	Program Graduates	Ratio of Graduates to Enrollment
Cosmetology	3,807	858	23%	9,414	4,156	44%
Massage Therapy	714	346	48%	7,783	3,356	43%
Patient Care Technician	2,507	412	16%	2,282	1,087	48%
Phlebotomy	882	457	52%	1,700	1,403	83%
Nursing Assistant	1,088	844	78%	5,007	4,469	89%

Source: OPPAGA analysis of Department of Education and Commission for Independent Education program data.

Exhibit 9

Public Career Education Programs Had Higher First-Time Licensure Passage Rates Than Private Programs



Source: OPPAGA analysis of licensure test data.

Students from public programs had higher passage rates on state licensure/certification exams. Licensure passage rates provide a direct measure of how well specific training programs are preparing students to work in related occupations. Four of the programs we examined train for occupations that have a state licensure or certification examination. Students completing massage therapy and cosmetology programs must pass state licensure exams in order to work in those occupations. Students completing nursing assistant and patient care technician programs may voluntarily take the state examination to become a certified nursing assistant unless they plan to work in a nursing home, in which case it is required.

As shown in Exhibit 9, a higher percentage of students from public programs we examined passed state licensure/certification exams than students from private programs. For example, 65% of students from public massage therapy programs passed their state licensure examination, compared to 50% of students from private programs.

Exhibit 10

Students From Public and Private Programs Earned Comparable Wages

Training Program	Average Hourly Wages and Tips ¹	
	Public Programs	Private Programs
Cosmetology	\$14.22	\$13.20
Massage Therapy	\$35.27	\$32.53
Certified Nursing Assistants (Patient Care Technician and Nursing Assistant Programs)	\$10.60	\$10.25

¹ Certified Nursing Assistant rates do not include tips.

Source: OPPAGA analysis of profession survey.

Students from public and private career education programs earned comparable wages upon entering the workforce. The ultimate success of career education programs is whether students completing the programs obtain employment and improve their wages. We surveyed individuals working in Florida as cosmetologists, massage therapists, and certified nursing assistants to determine if their wages differed based on where they received their

training (public versus private institutions). As shown in Exhibit 10, the average hourly wage differences between public and private program graduates were minimal and not statistically significant.

Agency Response—————

In accordance with the provisions of s. 11.51(5), *Florida Statutes*, a draft of our report was submitted to the Commissioner of Education to review and respond. At the time of publication, the department had not provided a written response. The response is now provided on page 20.

Appendix A

Methodology

To examine differences between public and private career education programs, we focused our assessment on five programs offered by both sectors: cosmetology, massage therapy, phlebotomy, nursing assistant, and patient care technician (with the latter two programs combined into a 'Patient Care' category). Our analysis included multiple components: (1) surveys of both students who recently completed training programs and individuals currently working in related occupations, (2) analysis of program completion information, (3) analysis of student pass rates on state licensure examinations, (4) analysis of institutional program cost information, and (5) a survey of public and private institutions' program admission and completion requirements.

Selection of programs

Targeted occupations lists are developed each year at the state and regional levels. As these lists may change each year, we focused our analysis on occupations included on the statewide list over a three-year period (2006-07, 2007-08, and 2008-09) and inclusion on the regional lists of over half of the regional workforce boards in 2008-09. We did not include occupations on supplemental statewide lists as these lists are used to address a region-specific or temporary need. Based on this assessment, we selected five occupations that were not on the targeted occupations lists: cosmetology, massage therapy, patient care technician, phlebotomy, and nursing assistant.

Program graduate wages – survey

We conducted surveys of recent program graduates and individuals working in the profession to determine wages of public and private program graduates. Our survey addressed in-field placement, full-time employment, self-employment, and tips. Due to the time and cost of conducting surveys with statistically reliable samples, we focused our analysis on five training programs (with the 'Patient Care' category including both nursing assistant and patient care technician programs) that are not on the targeted occupations lists, are provided by both public and private schools, and had high enrollment in the public sector.

We used the Department of Education's student-level data to identify public program graduates. To identify recent program graduates of private programs and individuals working in the profession, we used the Department of Business and Professional Regulation's database for licensed cosmetologists, and the Department of Health's databases for licensed massage therapists and certified nursing assistants.⁸ As shown in Table A-1, we categorized the five programs into nine different sample groups to allow for comparisons between public and private programs as well as occupations.

⁸ Individuals working in cosmetology and massage therapy must be licensed in order to work in the field; nursing assistants must be licensed if they work in nursing homes.

Table A-1
Survey Groups Consisted of Both Recent Graduates and Individuals
Working in Professions

Survey Groups		Sample Pool	Sample Size	Completed Surveys
Recent Program Graduates	1. Cosmetology – Public	642	627	255
	2. Cosmetology – Private	3,147	3,027	357
	3. Massage Therapy – Public	155	151	77
	4. Massage Therapy – Private	2,180	2,091	413
	5. Phlebotomy	677	629	252
	6. Patient Care ¹	1,200	1,083	314
Individuals Working in Professions ²	7. Cosmetology	53,914	2,902	428
	8. Massage Therapy	28,280	2,903	471
	9. Patient Care ¹	144,458	2,828	449

¹ The 'Patient Care' group included the following training programs: Patient Care Assistant; Patient Care Technician; Home Health Aide; and Nursing Assistant.

² Because the sample pool was large for the 'profession' surveys, we drew a random sample of 3,000 from each group to obtain the number of completed responses needed to provide a statistical representation.

Source: OPPAGA survey of career education training programs.

Program completion

We analyzed student-level program and employment data to evaluate the performance of selected public and private career education programs. While public institutions submit student-level data that can be used to calculate program completion rates, the Commission for Independent Education does not require private institutions to submit data on the progress of individual students. Rather, private institutions report aggregate data on the total number of students enrolled in and graduating from each program in a given year. To assess program completion differences between public and private institutions, we compared programs based on the ratio of total program graduates in 2007-08 to the total number of students enrolled (graduates per 100 students enrolled) in 2007-08. This provided comparable information on the effectiveness of a program in producing graduates relative to the population of students being served.

Analyses of student pass rates on state licensure examinations

To determine the percentage of students in the programs that passed state licensure exams on their first attempt, we examined agency licensing test data. For cosmetology, we examined Department of Business and Professional Regulation data for all individuals who took the state certification exam during Fiscal Year 2008-09. For massage therapy, we examined data from the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork, Inc., for all individuals from Florida who took the exam in either 2008 or 2009. For nursing assistant, we examined Department of Health data for all individuals who took the exam between July 2007 and June 2009.

Public institutional program cost survey

State level expenditure data currently collected for school districts and colleges does not account for costs of specific career education programs. We surveyed districts and colleges to obtain 2007-08 expenditure data for the programs we examined. We determined the average cost per contact for each program by summing the total expenditures reported through our survey and dividing those expenditures by the total contact hours reported for the program.

We then multiplied these average cost figures by the standard contact hours for the programs to determine the total cost for one student in the public sector.

Public and private institutional admission/completion survey

To identify differences in admission and completion requirements between public and private sector career education programs, we surveyed institutions from both sectors. We emailed surveys to all community colleges, school districts and private institutions that offered the five programs we examined in 2007-08 (the most recent data available). These surveys asked for specific information regarding admission and completion requirements for the programs they offered, and the basic skills remediation the institutions provided. The surveys sent to public institutions also asked for information about additional student costs (i.e., lab fees, supplies, books, etc.) that are not included in these programs' tuition but are included in the cost to attend private programs. We made follow-up phone calls to community colleges and school districts that had not returned the survey by the deadline, and also made additional calls to public institutions to determine the reasoning behind having or not having certain admission and completion requirements. We also made follow-up phone calls to private institutions and conducted shortened telephone versions of our survey with institutions that had not responded to the email survey; and we asked the private institutions the reasoning behind having or not having certain admission and completion requirements.

Appendix B

Public Sector Students Were More Likely to Attend an Accredited Institution Than Private Sector Students

Public institutions offering one or more of the five programs we analyzed were more likely to be accredited than private institutions. Nearly all (86%) of the public institutions that offered these programs were accredited, while less than half (49%) of the private institutions were accredited by federally approved agencies. Non-accredited programs were typically offered at smaller public and private institutions that (based on 2007-08 enrollment numbers) serve relatively few students statewide. Table B-1 shows the percentage of public sector students enrolled in accredited institutions offering one or more of the five programs we examined, and Table B-2 shows the same information for private sector institutions. Table B-1 shows that 86% of public institutions offering these programs were accredited, and these institutions accounted for 96% of student enrollment in the five programs. Table B-2 shows that although only 49% of private institutions we examined were accredited, these institutions accounted for 74% of student enrollment in the five programs.

Table B-1

Most Public Sector Students in Programs We Examined Attended Accredited Institutions¹

Program	Number of Schools Accredited	Percentage of Schools Accredited	Total Enrollment	Enrollment in Accredited Schools	Percentage of Students Enrolled in Accredited Schools
Cosmetology	36 of 39	92%	3,811	3,734	98%
Massage Therapy	19 of 19	100%	714	714	100%
Patient Care Technician	32 of 36	89%	2,507	2,369	94%
Phlebotomy	21 of 22	95%	882	828	94%
Nursing Assistant	15 of 18	83%	1,088	1,034	95%
All Schools Offering One or More of the Five Programs	44 of 51	86%	9,002	8,679	96%

¹ Of public institutions that offered one or more of the five programs we examined, all community colleges were accredited, six school district technical centers were not accredited (in DeSoto, Gadsden, Indian River, Monroe, Sumter, and Wakulla counties), and one school district technical center (in Flagler County) was pre-accredited (in the process of accreditation; counted in the table as not accredited).

Source: OPPAGA analysis of 2007-08 Florida Department of Education enrollment data and the U.S. Department of Education Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs.

Table B-2

Most Private Sector Students Attended Accredited Institutions; Most Students in Phlebotomy and Nursing Assistant Programs Attended Non-Accredited Institutions

Program	Number of Schools Accredited	Percentage of Schools Accredited	Total Enrollment	Enrollment in Accredited Schools	Percentage of Students Enrolled in Accredited Schools
Cosmetology	53 of 84	63%	9,548	8,769	92%
Massage Therapy	51 of 76	67%	9,531	8,653	91%
Patient Care Technician	15 of 34	44%	2,335	2,045	88%
Phlebotomy	8 of 31	26%	1,663	534	32%
Nursing Assistant	8 of 60	13%	4,981	750	15%
All Schools Offering One or More of the Five Programs	99 of 202	49%	28,058	20,751	74%

Source: OPPAGA analysis of 2007-08 Commission for Independent Education enrollment data and the U.S. Department of Education Database of Accredited Postsecondary Institutions and Programs.

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February 5, 2010

Mr. Gary VanLandingham, Director
Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability
111 West Madison Street, Room 312
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1475

Dear Dr. VanLandingham:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the draft report entitled *Public Career Education Programs Differ From Private Programs on Their Admission Requirements, Costs, Financial Aid Availability, and Student Outcomes*. The Department of Education (DOE) appreciates the opportunity provided for collaboration to ensure the accuracy of the report. Since non-college credit programs offered by school districts, Florida Colleges and private sector providers are critical to providing the skilled talent for Florida's workforce, your report provides a summary of some key characteristics of each system.

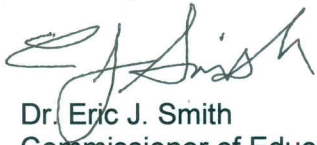
The Department would like to note that program structure for non-college credit (clock hour) programs in districts and Florida Colleges may impact one of the performance calculations in your report. In Exhibit 8, the ratio of graduates to enrollments is utilized as a proxy measure for program completion. However, the program structure may negatively affect performance of public sector programs on this measure. For example, the patient care technician program was selected as a comparison program in this chart and showed a ratio of 16 graduates per 100 students enrolled. While this program is only 600 hours for public programs and may be completed within a year, the public sector program standards are structured in such a way to allow multiple exit points for students. There are five occupational points, prior to the final completion, that are designated as "terminal" in the frameworks, indicating that students can exit at that point in the program with a clear occupational outcome. These earlier potential exit points for the patient care technician program include nurse aide or orderly, advanced home health aide, patient care assistant, and allied health assistant. A district or college may enroll students in this program with the knowledge that they intend to exit at earlier points, since they

Dr. VanLandingham
February 5, 2010
Page Two

can obtain the skills necessary for employment in high demand fields. These earlier exit points would not be reflected as completions in the calculation in Exhibit 8.

Again, my thanks for the opportunity to review this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Smith", written in a cursive style.

Dr. Eric J. Smith
Commissioner of Education

The Florida Legislature

Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability



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