



## Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department University

### WHAT IF I ALREADY HAVE MY ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE AND WANT A BACHELOR'S DEGREE?

A Bachelor's degree is awarded to students who have successfully completed a 4-year course of college studies. It is also a prerequisite for graduate programs (Master's and Doctoral degrees, including in law). Students must complete a total of 120 to 132 units of course work, depending on the area of study and the school. This total includes 60 units of lower-division credit (which may be transferred from a community college) and 60 units of upper-division coursework from a 4-year college or university. Note that all lower-division courses must be fully accredited and transferable to the 4-year school. You may also take these lower-division courses at a 4-year school: They generally offer the widest selection of majors, but their tuition is steep compared to that of a community college.

LASDU also provides plenty of information about specific schools. Once you identify your interests and goals, it's easier to see which kinds of schools offer the best programs for you. Most *postsecondary* (after high school) *public* institutions of higher learning are state-supported, while most *private* ones are businesses or are supported by a religious institution such as a church.

Schools offering programs shorter than 2 years provide focused training and award you a certificate of completion. Two-year institutions offer *associate's degrees* (the *AA*, or Associate in Arts, and Associate in Science). Four-year schools offer *bachelor's degrees* (*baccalaureate* degrees: the *Bachelor of Arts* or *BA*, and the *Bachelor of Science* or *BS*). Consider these kinds of institutions as you plan your continued education:

### Why Should I Shop Around?

You should check out more than one school, and ask lots of questions! A good school will be happy to answer your questions about its programs, but a poor one won't. Ask:

- How many entering undergraduate students stay for the following year (the *retention rate*)?
- How many students complete their programs within 150% of the expected length of the program (the *graduation rate*)? For example, how many students finish a 2-year program within 3 years?
- Academic counselors at a school can assess any credits you may already have earned through earlier programs or LASD training.