



The Christian Student's Guide to **Choosing the Best Online University**

INTRODUCTION



QUESTION

1



Whether you're enrolling in school for the first time, or looking to finally finish that degree you started a while ago, choosing the right online university can feel overwhelming.

- **Where is God calling me?**

- **Can I afford this?**

- **How will I care for my family during this time?**

- **How will my faith and worldview fit into this journey?**

- **Is this school accredited?**

- **Will my past credits transfer?**

- **What kind of support will I find along the way?**

- **Will I find career success once I graduate?**

You're likely asking many questions about affordability, career success and credit transferability. And these aren't just important questions to ask. They're critical questions that need solid answers as you search for the school that will best meet your needs.

At Clarks Summit University (CSU), we believe you're more than just another student. As a Christ-follower, your needs and your passions extend far beyond the world's success measures, and for the last eight decades, we've been equipping students to be leaders who make a profound impact on the world around them.

This guide has been created to answer eight of the most common questions we hear from students who are beginning their search for an online college. Your answers to each of these questions will provide great insight as you set out to take the next step forward in your professional career.

You have taken the first step to achieving a big dream, and because education is one of the biggest investments of your life (with one of the biggest returns on investments, too), we're here to help you every step of the way.

Your answers will provide incredible clues into the path God is calling you to explore. We're here to help you sort through any questions you might have. Just reach out to us at:

admissions@ClarksSummitU.edu.

This can be one of the hardest questions to answer, but understanding your calling in the professional world often begins by differentiating between a job and a vocation.

What's the difference?

If you simply want to make a living, then you're likely just looking for a job.

If you want to make a difference, then you're looking for a vocation.

Vocation is defined by calling. It is "work" that speaks to your passions, your gifts and your strengths.

Perhaps you're just starting to pursue a vocation, or maybe you're looking to grow where you're already serving. No matter where you are on your journey, Clarks Summit University is here to help you think through questions of vocation so you can clarify your goals and your pursuits. We're also committed to helping you discover opportunities that will connect your passions and gifts to the professional world.

Take a moment to consider the following questions:

- How has God gifted you?
- What opportunities has He laid before you already?
- What passions do you already have?
- Where can your gifts, opportunities and passions be used in relevant ways?
- What is your end goal?

QUESTION 2



Can I afford this?

**Clarks Summit University
is a leader in affordable,
online education. Credit
hours for an online bachelor's
degree start at just \$365.
(2018-2019 academic year)**

It's a question everyone is asking: How can I best pay for a college education?

As an adult learner, this question may feel a little more pressing. You may be dealing with rent or a mortgage, utilities, car payments, groceries...no one has to tell you how expensive life is because you're living it every single day.

If you're planning to attend a traditional, four-year private university, you may have already discovered that the average cost for tuition is \$34,740. And if you plan to live on a university campus, be prepared to tack on an additional \$12,210 for a grand total of \$46,950 per year.¹

Those are some big numbers, but here's the good news:

You're considering an online degree, and because online education typically eliminates fees like room and board and other on-campus costs, getting an online degree is almost always more affordable than earning a degree at a traditional, brick-and-mortar college.

Clarks Summit University is a leader in affordable, online education. Credit hours for an online bachelor's degree start at just \$365 (2018-2019 academic year). With our no-hidden-fees policy, you can be confident that this cost covers all technology and course fees - and that's something you'll be hard-pressed to find at any other major online university.

Additionally, we offer more than eight tuition discounts to online students, including a Christian Worker Discount, Military Discount and International Student Discount. If you're an online undergraduate student, you are also eligible for additional scholarships and grants that can significantly reduce the price of earning an online degree.

Wonder what this means for you? Ask for your detailed estimate on an affordable, online education at admissions@ClarksSummitU.edu.

QUESTION 3



How will I care for my family during this time?

We get it.

You aren't a traditional college student, and you're looking for more than a traditional college education.

You need a program that fits into your lifestyle and sets you on a firm path to achieving your goals.

The best part about an online education is that it fits into your time and works with your schedule. You won't find set class times, and this means you can work in the early morning hours or even late at night when the house is quiet - if that's what it takes to pursue your dreams.

At Clarks Summit University, we've been equipping students for world-changing careers since 1932, and we've learned a lot about what it takes to help students successfully navigate through their educational journey.

Many colleges and universities focus on retention strategies and student success, and CSU takes this commitment one step further. Because we are a community of individuals who love and serve God together, support and encouragement are woven into our spiritual DNA - and we go out of our way to structure the online learning environment in a way that facilitates exceptional learning within the boundaries of our students' everyday lives.

**Want to learn more about the online learning environment?
Connect with your personal admissions representative
at admissions@ClarksSummitU.edu.**

QUESTION 4



How will my faith and worldview fit into this journey?

With the Bible as our authoritative filter, we never shy away from tough questions, and we use biblical truth to guide us towards reasonable answers.

There's a lot to be said about the power of a college education. The knowledge you'll gain will serve as a filter for all other knowledge learned in the future, and your college education will become a foundational pillar of your worldview – the way you see and understand the world around you.

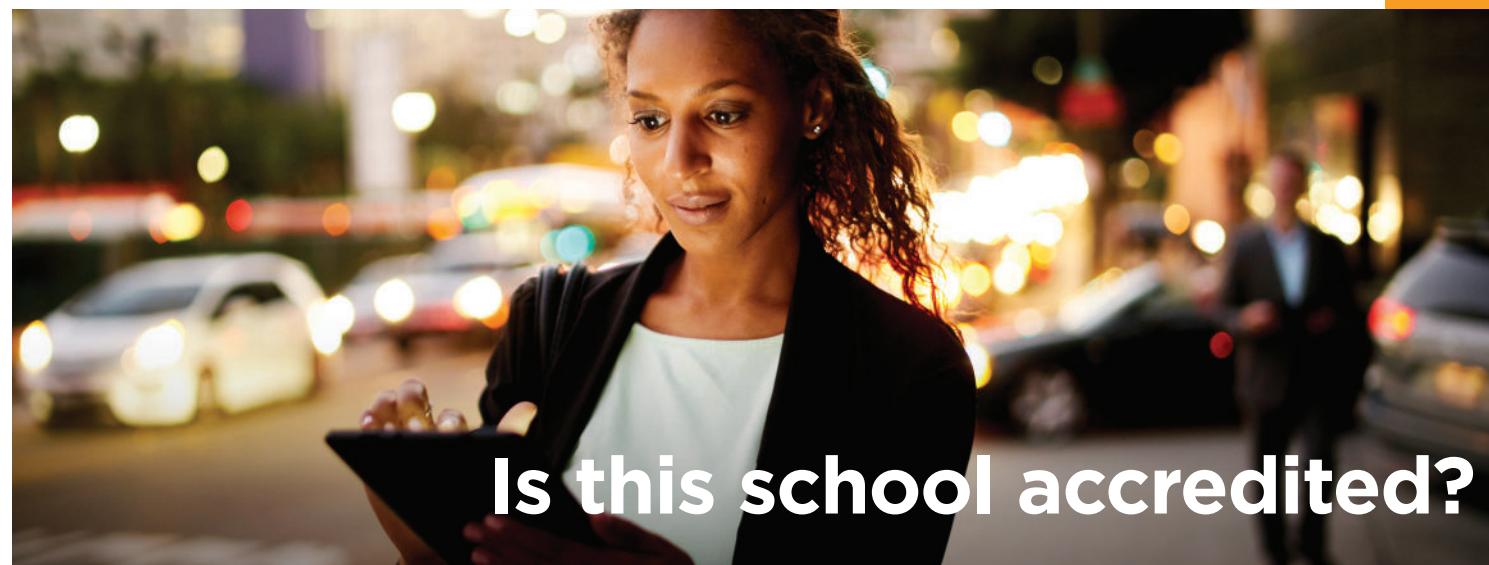
In her 2014 speech, "Is College Worth It?" Harvard President Drew Faust said that "a quality college education teaches you how to begin to educate yourself, a project that will last the rest of your life. It offers a laboratory of possibility."² And she was right. A good education will force you to think through questions of existence and purpose, not just in the present moment, but throughout your entire life.

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- What is my responsibility to the world around me?

The community at Clarks Summit University uses questions like these to help students think critically through all knowledge. With the Bible as our authoritative filter, we never shy away from tough questions, and we use biblical truth to guide us towards reasonable answers. At CSU your faith is viewed as the most valuable aspect of your personhood, and we're here to help you leverage it in ways that will empower you to be relevant in today's world.

[Read real-life stories of ways students have used their faith and learning to impact the world.](#)

QUESTION 5



Is this school accredited?

If you haven't been asking this question during your college search process, you'll definitely want to start.

Choosing a school that is recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation is important because it guarantees that your degree will be recognized by other institutions of higher learning and that it will be respected by current or potential employers.

To earn accreditation, a school must meet or exceed minimum standards of quality. All accredited schools must prove the data they cite for financial stability, retention and placement rates. Schools must also set goals for improvement and growth, structure coursework and curricula in specific ways and arrange their governing bodies to involve faculty, staff, students, graduates and advisory boards. Without accreditation, students cannot apply for financial aid, and most professional certifications and licenses will only be issued to students who graduate from an accredited school.

Choosing a school that is accredited is important because it guarantees that your degree will be respected by other educational institutions as well as current and prospective employers.

Clarks Summit University is accredited by the [Middle States Commission on Higher Education](#), a regional accrediting agency recognized nationally, and all degrees have been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Since 1968, CSU has also been accredited by the [Association for Biblical Higher Education](#).

[Discover how an online degree can equip you for success.](#)

QUESTION 6



Will my past credits transfer?

Before you even apply to Clarks Summit University, we'll complete an audit of your existing credits and let you know what credits you can expect to transfer.

Transferring can be stressful and challenging, and many transfer students are juggling school with job and family responsibilities. If this sounds familiar, know that you're not alone.

Today's college student is more likely to work while attending classes, and more than 25 percent of college students are raising families in between coursework. It's no wonder that more than 50 percent of all bachelor's degree recipients transfer universities before earning a degree.³

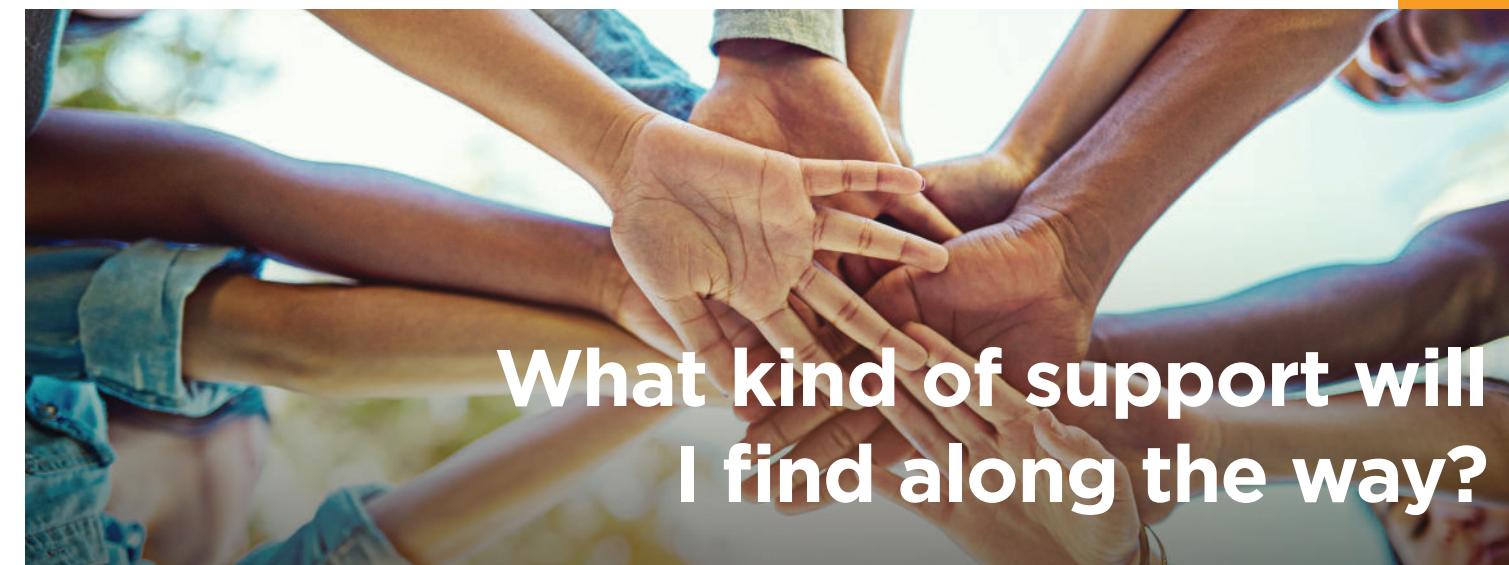
Balancing it all can be a tough gig, but with the right support, it's possible.

As a transfer student, one of the surest ways to set yourself up for success is ensuring that your hard-earned credits will actually transfer. Data proves that when you transfer into a new institution with most or all of your credits, you're 2.5 times more likely to graduate.⁴

Before you even apply to Clarks Summit University, we'll complete an audit of your existing credits and let you know what credits you can expect to transfer. If you're an online undergraduate student, we'll accept up to 75 percent of your credits, and if you're a graduate-level student, we'll take anywhere from 30 percent to 50 percent of your past credits - depending on which program you enroll in.

**Want to get specific details on your previous credits?
Connect with us at admissions@ClarksSummitU.edu to get started.**

QUESTION 7



What kind of support will I find along the way?

- **Who will be available to help you through technical difficulties?**
- **What happens when you have a late-night question about an assignment that's due at 11:59 p.m.?**
- **Will you have peer-to-peer interactions that promote deeper learning and important professional connections?**
- **How will your professors foster an environment of challenge and care?**
- **Should you expect to have a personal academic advisor?**

In the early days of online education, faculty-to-student interactions were hit and miss. For many colleges and universities, an online degree was an easy way to cut costs and make a quick profit, and many programs still exist that provide little support to online students. Data shows a direct connection between a student's success and the level of support received during coursework,⁵ so as you're choosing online colleges, it's important to understand that when it comes to providing support beyond enrollment, not all online programs are created equally.

How do you sort it all out?

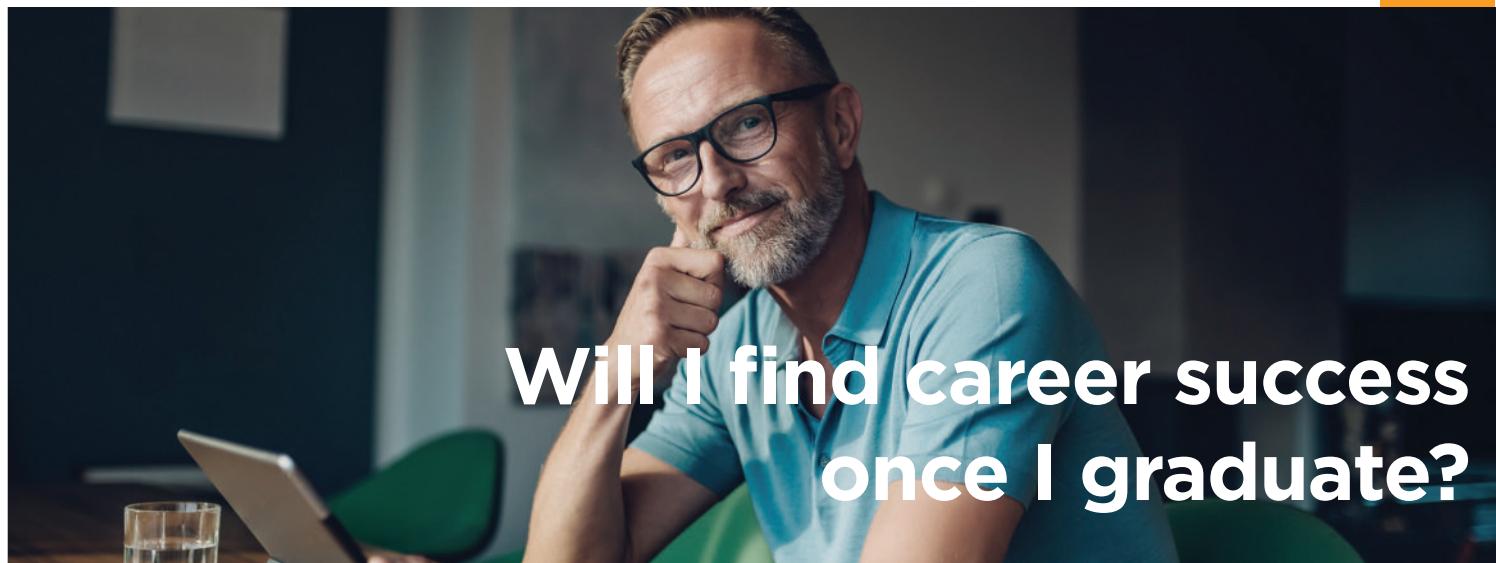
Be sure to ask specific questions about the type of support you can expect from student services and course instructors.

As a Clarks Summit University student, you'll be partnered with a personal academic advisor who will help you develop an educational plan and register for classes. Your academic advisor will advocate for your success and help you handle any challenges and obstacles that arise during coursework.

Additionally, our faculty describe themselves first and foremost as mentors. They work hard to develop relationships with you as they share knowledge from their experience in the industry. This is a big reason why our students share prayer requests in class and develop lifelong relationships that lead to personal and professional growth.

**Have more questions about what student success looks like?
Reach out to us at admissions@ClarksSummitU.edu.**

QUESTION **8**



Will I find career success once I graduate?

As a private, Christian university, Clarks Summit University has emerged as a leader when it comes to preparing graduates for career success.

Anecdotal knowledge has often said that a college degree is the pathway towards earning a higher income, but now we have the data to prove it. A 2015 study by the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce found that college graduates earn \$1 million more over the course of a lifetime than those who never graduate from college.⁶ Even more, as a liberal arts graduate, you're in high demand. Hiring managers from companies like Leidos, American Express, Deloitte, Amazon and Slack have consistently said they want to hire liberal arts graduates because these are the employees who know how to problem-solve, work with a team, think critically and communicate well.

As a private, Christian university, Clarks Summit University has emerged as a leader when it comes to preparing graduates for career success. Our Master of Science in Counseling graduates who went on to take the National Counselor exam for licensure boast a 100% first-time pass rate. An impressive 93% of Divinity graduates had jobs in the field within 6 months. And our undergraduate students find the training and confidence they need to start new careers and advance in current jobs.

Perhaps most powerful, with more than 13,000 alumni throughout the globe, Clarks Summit University graduates are equipped with a strong network of professionals who understand the value of a CSU degree. These alumni know the benefits of hiring a CSU graduate, and our Career Services department offers career assistance to you at any point throughout your career journey.

[Ready to get started? Explore your online degree options.](#)



Choosing an online college takes time and consideration, but it doesn't have to be an overwhelming process. When you ask the right questions, you'll find the right university that will help you achieve your goals.

Use the checklist on the following page as you consider your options, and if you're looking for an affordable education that offers a strong career network and an intentional focus on your faith, we're confident you will find what you're looking for at Clarks Summit University.

[Learn how to get started with your dream at \[clarkssummit.edu/csu-online\]\(http://clarkssummit.edu/csu-online\).](#)

1 The College Board, "Average Published Undergraduate Charges by Sector and by Carnegie Classification, 2017-18," Trends in Higher Education, <https://trends.collegeboard.org/college-pricing/figures-tables/average-published-undergraduate-charges-sector-2017-18>

2 Drew Faust, "The Case for College," Harvard.edu, 24 October 2014, <https://www.harvard.edu/president/speech/2014/case-for-college>

3 Peter McPherson, "Our college students are changing. Why aren't our higher education policies?" The Washington Post, 6 June 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/our-college-students-are-changing-why-arent-our-higher-education-policies/2017/06/06/1fc0e37c-3678-1e7-b412-62beef8121f7_story.html?utm_term=.349e22713b54

4 "Taking Credit: How to Make Sure Your Course Credits Transfer When You Do," College Affordability Guide, <https://www.collegeaffordabilityguide.org/transfer-credit/>

5 Adrianna Kezar and Dan Maxey, "Faculty Matter: So why doesn't everyone think so?" The NEA Higher Education Journal, Fall 2014, <https://www.nea.org/assets/docs/HE/e-Kezar.pdf>

6 Anthony P. Carnevale, Ban Cheah, and Andrew R. Hanson, The Economic Value of College Majors, Georgetown University, 2015, <https://cew.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/Exec-Summary-web-B.pdf>

Your Online College Checklist:

Fill in the chart with information for each college you're considering, and then consider which one might best equip you to follow God's call.

SCHOOL NAME	 CLARKS SUMMIT UNIVERSITY	COLLEGE OPTION 2	COLLEGE OPTION 3	COLLEGE OPTION 4
COST PER CREDIT HOUR	\$365* <small>*undergraduate online</small>			
TUITION DISCOUNTS & SCHOLARSHIPS	CLICK FOR CSU ONLINE TUITION DISCOUNTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS ►			
LENGTH REQUIRED TO COMPLETE DEGREE	EARN YOUR DEGREE IN AS LITTLE AS TWO YEARS <small>(varies by program)</small>			
MAJORS OF INTEREST	CLICK FOR ONLINE DEGREES OFFERED AT CSU ►			
STUDENT/FACULTY RATIO	11:1			
ACCREDITATION	MIDDLE STATES COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION AND ABHE			
TRANSFER POLICY	CLICK FOR DETAILS ON CSU ONLINE TRANSFER CREDITS ►			
FAITH STATEMENT/RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION	CHRISTIAN/BAPTIST			