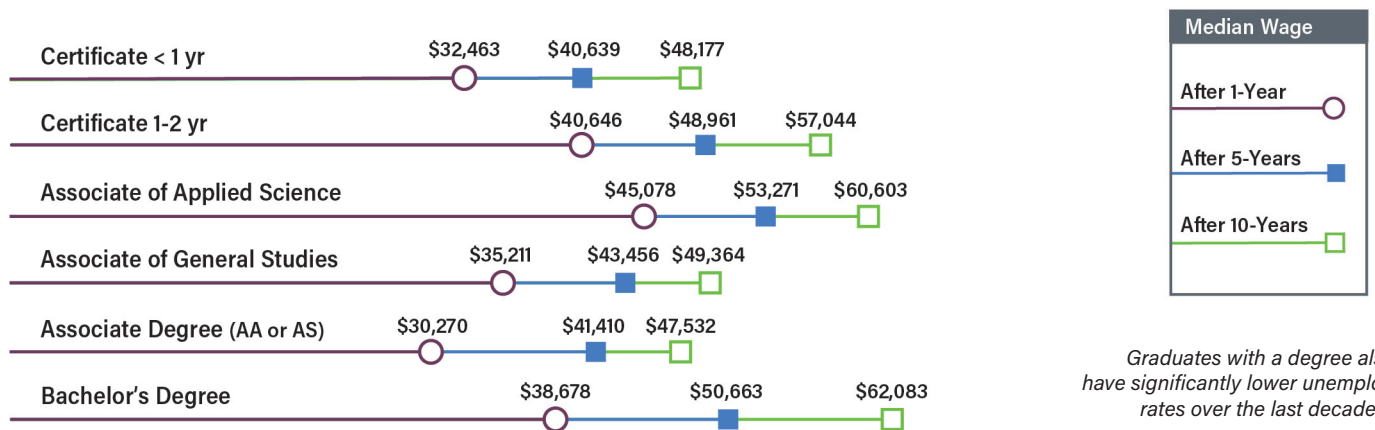


Intentional Pathways

The pathways students choose impacts the return on investment they experience

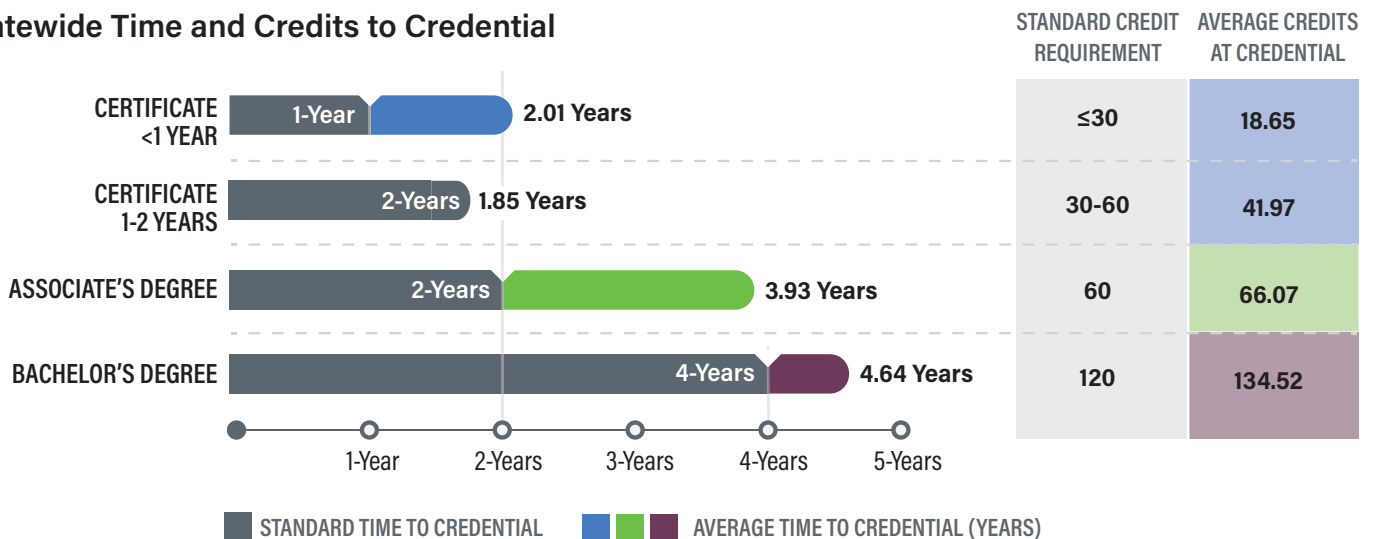
Students may consider numerous factors before and while they are enrolled at postsecondary institutions to maximize return on investment. Factors such as household income, industry demand, and the economy, are outside of students' immediate control. However, students do have control over the pathways they choose. For example, average wage outcomes after one, five and ten-years varies depending on the type of credential a student pursues. Even more variation exists across the different types a programs a student pursues within these degree levels, see program-specific information here: <https://cdhe.colorado.gov/post-secondary-degree-earnings-outcomes-tools>.

Median Wage Outcomes for Graduates Over 10 years



Students can dramatically reduce the cost of education by reducing the time and credit load it takes to complete a postsecondary credential—a strategy that also increases their likelihood of success.


Statewide Time and Credits to Credential



To ensure affordability and maximize the ROI of a credential, students and institutions should:

- Act to reduce the time it takes to complete to ensure students realize the increased wage earnings they receive from a degree sooner.
- Minimize the number of credits students take beyond what is required to complete a credential to ensure they are not paying more tuition or take longer than they need to.

Think about how choices about pathways impact students. The personas below represent some of the most common choices Colorado students are making.




STUDENT 1

DEGREE TYPE: **Certificate <1**

MAJOR: **Trades**

AVERAGE 5-YEAR WAGE: **\$45,308**

TIME AND CREDITS TO DEGREE: **2.01 yrs // 18.65**




STUDENT 2

DEGREE TYPE: **Associate of Applied Science**

MAJOR: **Health**

AVERAGE 5-YEAR WAGE: **\$58,900**

TIME AND CREDITS TO DEGREE: **4.09 yrs // 72.24**




STUDENT 3

DEGREE TYPE: **AA/AS**

MAJOR: **Arts, Humanities and Education**

AVERAGE 5-YEAR WAGE: **\$41,324**

TIME AND CREDITS TO DEGREE: **3.77 yrs // 64.03**



STUDENT 4

DEGREE TYPE: **Bachelor's**

MAJOR: **STEM**

AVERAGE 5-YEAR WAGE: **\$61,695**

TIME AND CREDITS TO DEGREE: **4.64 yrs // 134.52**

Key Student Decisions:

- 40% of recent high school graduates complete 12 or more credits via concurrent enrollment, reducing time to degree by at least a semester and saving them money.¹
- Adult students may save time and money by using Prior Learning Assessment to get credit for work, military or other experience.
- Research shows that colleges can be more affordable and improve outcomes by helping students enroll in a major early in their degree program and accumulate program specific credit sooner.²

1 <https://highered.colorado.gov/pathways-to-prosperity-postsecondary-access-and-success-for-colorados-high-school-graduates>

2 https://www.deltacollege.edu/sites/default/files/what_we_are_learning_about_guided_pathways-ccrc.pdf

For More Information

Colorado Department of Higher Education
<https://highered.colorado.gov/>

The Roadmap to Containing College Costs and Making College Affordable:
<https://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Roadmap-to-Containing-College-Costs-and-Making-College-Affordable.pdf>

Colorado Rises: Advancing Education and Talent Development
<http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/>

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