

How to Think Through the Decision to Go to Culinary School

A guide for advancing in or switching to the culinary field

"Should I go back to school?"

It's a common question. In this guide, we outline a step-by-step plan to help you decide if going to a culinary or pastry arts school makes sense for you.

1. Understand Your Motives

Why are you considering going to culinary or pastry school? Rank the following factors to gain a little more clarity on your motivations.

Do something you're passionate about:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

Have more opportunities for promotion:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

Work in a high-energy environment:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

Do a job that makes a difference for others:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

More mental stimulation:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

Start a new business:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

Do a job with lots of variety:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

Do a job that lets you be creative:

	1	2	3	4	5	
Less Important						More Important

My top 3 priorities are:

2. Financing: How Will You Pay for Culinary or Pastry Arts School?

How much would you be willing to pay for school out of pocket? How much would you be comfortable borrowing? Evaluate your existing resources and whether or not you plan to continue working while in school.

As a first step, evaluate your **existing resources** such as monthly income and savings. What amount of your annual income and savings would you be willing to allocate towards your educational expenses?

Some employers are also willing to reimburse a portion of educational expenses.

Income allocation

Savings allocation

Employer reimbursement

Other funding sources

Student loans are a common way for people to pay for culinary school. But borrow with discretion! It's important to remember how much you'll be comfortable with paying back down the road. See Escoffier's guide to understand more about [financing your culinary education](#).

For my education expenses, I'm comfortable with borrowing approximately:

Loan amount

Grants and scholarships for those who qualify: While never guaranteed, you should research and apply for any [grants or scholarships](#) that might be available to you. Contact [Escoffier's Financial Aid advisors](#) for assistance. Also try this list of [resources for non-traditional students](#). If you're active military, a veteran, or certain family members, be sure to look into the [GI Bill](#) for culinary school.

3. Research Programs of Interest

Do you want to study Culinary Arts or Pastry Arts? Will you aim for a diploma or degree?

Personal considerations:

- Will you keep working, or be a full-time student?
- What are your family and other obligations to keep in mind? How will you balance those? What will change in your weekly or upcoming plans?
- Can you meet the required study schedule?

School considerations:

- Is the institution accredited?
- Who are the faculty? What is their work experience and credentials?
- Have you seen the curriculum? Does the school teach things you want to learn? If you need flexibility, does the school offer 100% online programs with industry externships?

Logistical considerations:

- Do you meet the basic requirements, like having a high school diploma or GED?
- Can you meet the upcoming deadline for application?

4. Plan For Your Success

Culinary and pastry arts school is a commitment. You need to allocate time for studying, cooking, delivering your work to Chef Educators, and collaborating with fellow students. You need support.

People I can depend on to help hold me accountable to my educational goals include:

Considering my schedule, I can dedicate this many hours to school each week:

ONLINE PROGRAMS

ADMISSIONS:

1-866-470-6904

admissionsonlineboulder@escoffier.edu

ONLINE FINANCIAL AID:

1-877-452-5489 option 1

financialaidonlineboulder@escoffier.edu

CAREER SERVICES:

Jane Jepson

402-370-6363

janejepson@escoffier.edu

BOULDER, COLORADO CAMPUS

ADMISSIONS:

1-877-249-0305

303-494-7988

admissionsboulder@escoffier.edu

FINANCIAL AID:

720-457-9468

jhagen@staff.escoffier.edu

CAREER SERVICES:

Kate Sweasy

720-457-4214

ksweasy@escoffier.edu

AUSTIN, TEXAS CAMPUS

ADMISSIONS:

1-866-552-2433

512-451-5743

admissionsaustin@escoffier.edu

FINANCIAL AID:

512-451-5743

tbargas@staff.escoffier.edu

CAREER SERVICES:

Ann Derrick

512-381-7252

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