



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Looking for a vocational school? Do your homework first**

*BBB offers advice for choosing a trustworthy school*

**FORT WORTH, TEXAS –October 17, 2016** - With the recent nationwide closing of ITT Technical Institute, thousands of students are left with a lot of questions and now have to consider what their next steps are. ITT Tech announced the closure of all 136 locations last month, including the Fort Worth area campus.

According to the [Department of Education](#), current or recent ITT enrollees may be eligible for a loan discharge. There is also the option of transferring to another school; however, students will need to check with schools directly to determine which credits will transfer. Unfortunately, most students won't be able to finish their current program at ITT, but students who transfer to a new institution may be able to finish their current program.

Vocational schools, also known as trade or career schools, can offer training and the skills needed for a variety of jobs. While many of these programs are reputable, unfortunately, not all are and may be out to take your money. [Better Business Bureau serving Central, Coastal, Southwest Texas and the Permian Basin](#) recommends doing your homework before you commit to a program to ensure it's reputable and trustworthy.

Vocational schools train students for a variety of skilled jobs, including jobs as automotive technicians, medical assistants, cosmetologists, paralegals and truck drivers, according to the [Federal Trade Commission \(FTC\)](#). However, some of these trade schools have misled prospective students about the availability of jobs, extent of their job training programs and the nature of their facilities and equipment.

Last year, BBB received more than 900 complaints against business and vocational schools nationwide. Most complaints allege charges for courses that were never taken or the cost of courses were more than initially advertised.

Before enrolling, BBB and the FTC offer the following tips:

- **Do your research.** Do some searches online and compare information from other schools, including everything the school provides. Find out what is required to graduate, what you'll receive upon graduation and if licensing credits are transferable. Read online reviews of the schools and check out their BBB Business Review page at [bbb.org](http://bbb.org).
- **Visit the facilities.** Take a tour of the facilities in person and ask to see the classrooms and equipment that students use for training. You may also consider sitting in on a class, asking about the instructors' qualifications and talking to current or previous students about their experience.
- **Find out the total cost.** Will you need to pay by course, semester or program? Find out what the total cost of enrolling is, which may include tuition, fees for dropping or adding a class, textbooks, equipment or graduation fees. Also, if you think you may need financial aid, find out whether the school provides it or if you're eligible for federal assistance, work-study programs, scholarships, grants or student loans.
- **Find out if the school is licensed and accredited.** Consider asking the school for its licensing and accrediting organizations. In many states, private vocational schools are licensed through the state Department of Education, so find out which state agency handles the licensing. Also, do an online search to see if a school is accredited by a legitimate organization. Accreditation is a sign that the school has been evaluated and has agreed to meet certain requirements or maintain certain standards.
- **Consider other options.** Look into alternatives, such as community college. The tuition may be less than a vocational school or four-year college or university. Also, some businesses may offer education programs through apprenticeships or on-the-job training.
- **Watch out for red flags.** Before you commit to a program, read the terms and contract carefully. If the school refuses to give you documents to review beforehand, don't enroll. Also, consider it a red flag if the school pressures you to sign up or gives you information different than that in their written materials. Get everything in writing. Remember, that no school can guarantee you a job when you graduate.

### ***About Better Business Bureau:***

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