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### Elizabethtown College

Founded in 1899, in Central Pennsylvania, Elizabethtown College has 1,800 undergraduates as well as small graduate programs in Occupational Therapy, Peace Education, Special Education and Public Policy. Located in a region with several liberal arts colleges as well as one of the largest state universities in the US (Penn State-University Park), Elizabethtown has signature programs in Communications, Education, Engineering, Music Therapy and Occupational Therapy. Overall, the college offers more than 50 majors and over 80 minors.

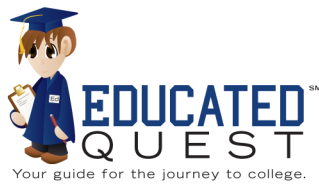
While the college is cross shopped against other liberal arts colleges, it also considered against other Pennsylvania schools that offer these degree programs. Approximately two thirds of the students come from Pennsylvania, although the college also draws well from neighboring states: New Jersey, New York and Maryland. Elizabethtown was founded as one of the Colleges of the Brethren along with Bridgewater College (VA) Juniata College (PA), McPherson College (KS), Manchester University (IN) and the University of La Verne (CA). But it markets itself as a secular institution. While Elizabethtown is considered a Regional University—the majority of degrees are not in the traditional liberal arts subjects—it has the look and feel of a small college. There is really no similar school within Pennsylvania in terms of academic mix, though Misericordia University, located near Scranton, comes quite close.

Elizabethtown is not an exceptionally selective college. The school accepted just over 70 percent of the students who applied to join the Class of 2014. About a quarter of the accepted applicants decided to come. Admissions are rolling. A decision can be made within two weeks after all materials are in. Admissions are also need-blind, rare for a college that accepts the a large majority of its applicants.

The deadline for students interested in Occupational Therapy is December 1st; this program has room for only 60 first-year students. The deadline to apply to the Honors Program is January 15th. Elizabethtown is also engaged in joint degree programs in Law, Physical Therapy and Medicine have December 15th deadlines. This is one school where interviews are encouraged to help applicants become more familiar with the college as well as the academic programs.

Elizabethtown had a wait list of 77 students in 2014. It later offered admission to 42 of these students. The college is test-optional for students with a GPA of 3.5 or higher and rank in the top ten percent of their classes. Among the 2014 admitted students who submitted SAT scores, the middle 50 percent scored between 1020 and 1240 (out of 1600) on the Math and Critical Reading sections of the test. Honors students are expected to score 1200 or higher with no score lower than 550. The range for the ACT Composite was between 22 and 28.

Elizabethtown retained 86 percent of the students who entered in 2013 and graduated 71 percent of the class that entered in 2009. These are good indicators considering that more than a third of the Class of 2013 earned degrees in the Health Sciences, Sciences, Mathematics and Engineering, the hardest majors, while another 16 percent earned their degree in Business, according to *College Results Online*. The numbers are also impressive because 40 percent of the students are the first generation in their families to attend college. The *New York Times* has



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reported that Elizabethtown ranks 23rd in the nation for its success at graduating students who qualify for the Federal Pell Grants.

### Costs

Elizabethtown's direct charges, tuition and fees, room and board, for 2015-16 were approximately \$51,850, lower than the more selective liberal arts colleges in Central Pennsylvania such as Bucknell, Franklin & Marshall and Gettysburg. Just over a fifth of the students qualified for a Federal Pell Grant, and likely Pennsylvania's grant as well, to help lower the costs of their education. About half of the student body holds campus jobs to help cover costs. It is quite possible for a Pennsylvania resident with a strong academic record to receive a degree from Elizabethtown for less than s/he might pay to attend one of the state universities, provided that s/he receives one of the more generous scholarships.

The college offers generous scholarships ranging for \$5,000 (Mosaic for students from under-represented groups) to the Stamps Scholarship, which includes full tuition plus a \$6,000 grant towards education for life and professional experiences while enrolled. More typical awards are the Dean's Scholarship (\$18,500 for this academic year), Provost's Scholarship (\$21,500) and the Presidential Scholarship (\$24,500). Students have to remain in good academic standing to have their scholarship renewed. There is no minimum GPA requirement. This encourages students to pursue one of the more challenging majors, if they wish. In addition, students who continue towards the Masters degree in Occupational Therapy have their scholarship renewed for the fifth year, a benefit that is not offered by other Pennsylvania colleges that offer the degree program.

Elizabethtown aided 91 percent of the students who requested financial aid, according to *Big Future*, the College Board's search site. The balance of aid weighed 75-25 in favor of scholarships versus loans and jobs. On average, the college met 82 percent of need for its students. Only 22 percent had their full need met.

The average indebtedness of Elizabethtown students who took out loans and graduated in 2014 was approximately \$30,400, according to the Project on Student Debt. This is over \$3,000 more than students are allowed to borrow through the Federal Stafford Student Loan program. However, Elizabethtown student borrowers borrowed, on average, less than Penn State-University Park, University of Pittsburgh and Temple graduates borrowed to complete their degrees. Student borrowers who graduated from Misericordia University, the most comparable school, owed, on average \$5,000 more than Elizabethtown students.

Only 11 percent of the class of 2014 had to borrow from a source other than the Federal Government, impressive for a private college. The average amount borrowers borrowed in 2014 also includes students who were in the fifth year of the Occupational Therapy program. These students would represent more than ten percent of a senior class. Education students also have the option of remaining on campus for a fifth year to pursue a masters degree.



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### Curriculum

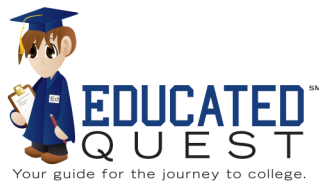
Elizabethtown has general education requirements much like any liberal arts college, including a freshman seminar. Where the school stands out is in offering [Signature Learning Experiences](#) outside of the classroom as well as a [Sophomore Experience](#) to help students towards choosing a major as well as possible career paths. The Sophomore Experience engages the faculty, academic advising and career development staff to set direction. The college has also done an excellent job of designing classroom settings around the different academic programs.

Signature Learning Experiences include Internships, Study Abroad, Research, Service and a Capstone course, are offered by other colleges. However, Elizabethtown aims to have each student participate in at least one beyond the Capstone, which is taken in their senior year. This is definitely possible for all students as internships, practicums, clinical experiences and student teaching are among the offerings within most of the majors. There are many opportunities for students to work around Lancaster or Hershey, both close by, as well as in Harrisburg with state government and legislative interests. Elizabethtown ranks first among Pennsylvania schools for students awarded Finnegan Fellowships to participate in the state's political processes in Harrisburg. The college faculty also have working relationships with practitioners at Penn State's Medical Center in Hershey. The college also offers co-op programs in business and engineering where students alternate between classroom instruction and full time work over three years. This adds an extra year to complete the degree, but also helps a student to present a more impressive resume.

Elizabethtown has an impressive number of [partnerships towards advanced degrees](#) for a small school. The college offers early-entry partnerships for admission into law school with Drexel University and Widener University. The college also offers an impressive number of partnerships to enable students to pursue advanced degrees in medicine, molecular medicine, osteopathy, physical therapy, optometry, dentistry and pharmacy. There is also the opportunity to pursue a joint bachelors/masters programs in Environmental Management and Forestry at Duke University.

The college's [Occupational Therapy](#) program competes against four other Pennsylvania schools for students: Alvernia College, Misericordia University, Thomas Jefferson University and the University of Scranton. The program does not require Organic Chemistry or Calculus. However, it requires strong performances in the science courses to stay in and graduate with the master's degree. Elizabethtown's program is the second-oldest in Pennsylvania, and unlike similar programs, offers students the opportunity to study abroad.

Elizabethtown is also one of the smallest colleges in the U.S. to offer an accredited [engineering program](#) with degrees in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering as well as a general engineering degree, a program in Industrial Engineering and Management and a program in Sustainability Engineering. This might be an excellent choice for students who want to study engineering as well as a second major and still graduate in four years. It might also be an attractive option for an engineering student who might also want to study abroad. While the college's degree programs are structured around a four-course load, it is possible for higher-achieving students to take a fifth class for no additional charges.



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Other impressive programs, given the size of the school are [Communications](#), which offers a Corporate Communications track as well as a Mass Communications track; [Music Therapy](#), which concludes with a six-month clinical assignment; and [Elementary and Early Childhood Education](#) which offer placements in schools each academic year as well as the option to pursue a masters degree in a fifth year while completing a teaching certification. The business program, designed around concentrations, also collaborates with the Mathematics department to offer a blended major called [Mathematical Business](#) for students interested in analytics as well as a major in [Actuarial Science](#). Elizabethtown is also one of the smallest schools that offers [a major in Japanese](#) as well as a [Chinese Studies program](#). The [Honors Program](#) has its own seminars as well as honors-level coursework. It also requires a senior honors thesis.

You are not likely to see large classes at Elizabethtown. Less than one percent of all classes offered by the college had more than 50 students, according to the data that the school submitted to *US News*. Approximately two thirds of all classes had fewer than 20 students. The college advertises a student-faculty ratio of 11 to 1, comparable to other schools of its size. While the college has small numbers of students pursuing graduate degrees, those students do not teach in college classrooms.

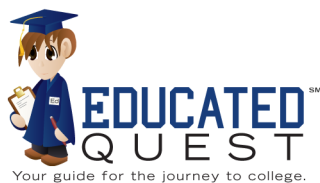
Elizabethtown students gave their faculty a rating of 3.62 (out of a possible 5) on [RateMyProfessors.com](#). But it should be noted that students at Misericordia University, the most comparable school in Pennsylvania as well as neighboring states, gave their faculty a higher rating (3.76).

### Community

Elizabethtown is located in a small town that is near many larger cities, provided that you have access to a car to get to them. The college is located close to Lancaster and Hershey, which have many things for college students to do, and it is situated less than two hours from Baltimore, Philadelphia and Washington DC. Amtrak train service to Philadelphia and Washington DC is in Lancaster. The college allows all students to have cars and charges no fee for a parking permit. Either a car or car pool is truly necessary for students to get to internships and similar assignments off campus.

The campus has a mix of colonial style and modern buildings. The college has done an excellent job of upgrading interior spaces for classes, small group study and student activities. Leffler Chapel, which is non-denominational, has one of the more impressive theaters that you will ever see at a small school. The campus also has a man-made lake by the chapel. There is no need to cross streets to get around on foot. The campus is surrounded by local residences; it has a secure, small-school feel to it.

Elizabethtown provides more detailed crime statistics than most schools of its size, according to the college's [Clery Report](#). Alcohol-related crimes are the most reported. Disciplinary referrals trended upward between 2012 and 2014 from 126 to 153. There were reported incidents of weapons possession, fondling, dating violence and stalking over the three year period. It is difficult to tell, given the layout of the campus and the surrounding neighborhood, the opportunities for students to work and study away from campus, if the report is an example of



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better law enforcement and reporting, or reflects issues of campus safety that still require resolution. Elizabethtown is more residential than most colleges. Virtually everyone lives on campus and there is no Greek life. The environment is not conducive to the crimes reported.

Elizabethtown competes in the [Landmark Conference](#) in 20 sports. Approximately 30 percent of the students compete in varsity athletics at the NCAA Division III (non-scholarship) level. The college has most recently won conference championships in cross country (men's and women's) and women's tennis and secured runner-up status in field hockey, men's soccer and softball.

### Comforts

Virtually all Elizabethtown students live on campus unless their families reside within 40 miles or are pursuing a master's degree through the occupational therapy or education programs. Housing options, depending on class, include traditional residence halls, Living-Learning Communities, townhomes, apartments, and single homes (Student Directed Learning Communities for juniors and seniors). The college will offer five freshman learning communities in 2016-17. They include Honors (for the Honors Program students), PIE Slices (Engineering and Physics), Business, Substance Free and Stonewall (LGBTQ).

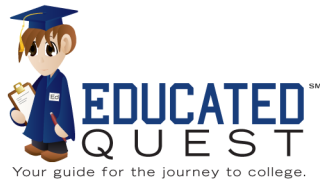
The number of apartment and townhouse beds is limited to 384, less than half the number of students in the junior and senior classes. While upper-class students will choose to study aboard or study away in other US cities, other students have the option to live in college-owned houses that also host 11 student-directed learning communities. These houses, with names such as Angels in the Outfield and The Cell are organized around academic and service missions. Between apartments, townhouse and the learning communities, most upper-class students can have an less-supervised living experience if they want it.

The default meal plan is the Gold Plan which is one of the less expensive meals plans offered by the college. It includes unlimited meals (aka swipes) in the dining hall as well as 10 guest meals plus \$100 in Jays Bucks to spend at the Blue Bean, a coffee shop or The Jay's Nest, a student center eating place. [Ten theme dinners](#) are among the campus traditions.

### Connections

Among the approximately 10,800 Elizabethtown alumni registered on [LinkedIn.com](#), the more than 2,200 live in or around Philadelphia, nearly 1,900 are based around Lancaster and Hershey, over 1,600 are based around Harrisburg and more than 1,000 live and work along the Baltimore-Washington Corridor. Beyond these regions the alumni base spreads thin. However, the majority of Elizabethtown students traditionally came from Pennsylvania as well as the neighboring states when they entered as freshmen or transfer students.

The career development center engages students early, structured around a [Four-Year Exploration Plan](#) for most majors. This involves not only the career center; it includes academic departments and advising. On average between 2012 and 2014, 85 percent of graduating seniors were either employed or continuing their education full time within year after graduation. On average nearly two thirds of a class is employed full-time within a year, similar to more selective



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schools. Unique to smaller schools, Elizabethtown publishes [outcomes by major for recent graduates](#) on its Web site.

### Conclusions

Elizabethtown offers more academic options than prospective students might expect from a small school as well as a very personalized approach to a college education. It also offers many opportunities to build a resume for employment or further education despite not being in the heart of a large city. The college can house everyone who needs a bed on campus. Elizabethtown also offers more reasonable financial aid packages than most similar schools.

It's hard to fault Elizabethtown as a college in its efforts to fulfill an academic as well as a service mission using the resources that are available to the students, faculty and staff. But the location might be more isolated than many students would like. Students should be prepared to bring a car to campus or make friends with several classmates who have one. There are many things to do around Lancaster, Harrisburg and Hershey that are easier to reach by car than buses.

Elizabethtown offers many options in the liberal arts. However, the signature academic programs such as Education, Engineering, Occupational Therapy and Music Therapy, among others, as well as the numerous joint degree options form the better reason to consider and choose the school.

### Report Card for Elizabethtown College

- Four-Year/Six Year Graduation Rates A/A
- Freshman Retention: A
- Costs: A
- Curriculum: A
- Community: B+
- Comforts: A
- Connections: B