

North Hills Prep School

Post High School College and Career

Planning Guide

TABLE of CONTENTS

**Introduction**  1

1. **Career Planning & Post High School Options**

The Five P’s: Person, People, Place, Program, Price 3

Options after High School 6

Community College Information 7

1. **College Planning**

Freshman, Sophomore, Junior & Senior Year Timelines 8

Getting Started: The College Search 18

Choosing the “Right” College 20

Visiting with College Representatives 21

The Campus Visit 22

Sample Questions to Ask During the Campus Visit 24

The College-Bound Student in Performing or Visual Arts 25

1. **College Admissions**

College Entrance/Placement Tests 33

Schedule of Testing Dates 34

Admission Categories – General Guidelines 35

Checklist for the Application Process 36

Counselor/Teacher Recommendations 37

The Essay 38

The College Interview 40

Making the Final Decision 41

1. **College & Career Resources**

The World Wide Web 43

Steps to Financial Aid 44

Nine Survival Skills 48

College Comparison Worksheet 49

College Application Worksheet 50

Glossary 51

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Dear THG’s Parkhill School Students and Parents,

We have compiled this planning guide to help alleviate the anxiety associated with the daunting task of gathering information regarding your options after high school. This information, which is at the core of the decision-making process, can be clearly overwhelming for many students and their parents. The search for a post high school plan is understandably confusing and can become quite stressful. Each student’s needs and goals are different. Our intended purpose is to help THG’s Parkhill School’s students and parents gain a better understanding of the vocational program, community college and university admission process and to assist you in finding a successful match. This is an exciting time in all of your lives, please enjoy it!

Sincerely,

Elin Bradley

Director of Administration and Enrichment

**The Five P’s**

**(Person, People, Place, Program, and Price)**

An easy and systematic way to start your college search is to understand the 5 P’s. Remember, the earlier you start your search, the more prepared you will be in your senior year.

**THE PERSON**

Who is this applicant? What classes has s/he taken in high school? What activities? Having a good sense of self is a great place to start the college selection process!

* How would I observe you learning while in a classroom?



* Do you make yourself known to your teachers?
* What type of college will best fit YOUR personality?
* What are YOUR goals and expectations for yourself in college?

**THE PEOPLE**

With whom are you going to learn? You will spend a great deal of time with these people. They will help you network for success; they will mentor you, and challenge your vision of the world.

People concerns:

* Cultural and religious diversity
* Religious affiliation and diversity
* Geographic diversity
* Social structures and traditions
* Student/faculty rapport
* Connections and networking

Based on this developing picture of the people/community at the school you want to attend, you need to look for a school community where you will fit in and will be comfortable. A campus visit is an important part of researching this piece.



**THE PLACE**

There are 168 hours in a week. You will spend about 100 hours in class, studying, or sleeping. What are you going to do with the other 68 hours?



Place concerns:

* Distance/travel options/costs
* Size of campus
* Climate
* Geography
* Physical environment

**THE PROGRAM**

**Career/Major**

The *old* question was, “What are you going to be?” because people generally worked at one job until retirement. The *new* question is “What do you want to be for the *first five* years after college? The *second five* years?” The US Department of Labor says that today’s high school students will have *five to eight major job changes* in their lives. Your choice of major should prepare you for your immediate career path as well as prepare you with a broad set of transferable skills that will widen your world vision and help you prepare for an uncertain future. ***Beware of rankings!*** Your job is to find the school that is best for YOU; **YOU** should rank the schools – don’t let other choose for you!

**Program Concerns:**

* Calendar system (semester, trimester, quarter)
* Type of school (public, private, rural, urban)
* Degree programs
* Clubs/Extra-curricular opportunities
* Major/Minor
* Study abroad opportunities
* Internship opportunities
* Research opportunities

**Undecided?** That’s OK! It’s the most popular choice, and often the wisest. However, even if you are undecided, you should still investigate options that interest you now. You can continue to re-evaluate them as you learn more.



**THE PRICE**



The cost of a college experience can have a significant affect on where you go. Generally, the price of a college education is the second most expensive purchase in your life!

Price concerns:

* State vs. private institutions
* Sticker price vs. actual cost of attendance
* Merit awards and scholarships available
* Athletic awards/scholarships
* Residency
* Average student/parent debt upon graduation



**Options after High School**

**What path after high school will best meet your needs and help you reach your goals? Besides a four-year college, the following are other options some students may want to consider.**

**Career and Technical Schools:** These types of schools are usually privately owned and the programs they offer vary greatly from several months to two years or more. There is an emphasis on career-related education, technical skills and hands-on training. Some fields in which you can receive training at a vocation school are: medical assistant, automotive technology, air conditioning and refrigeration, travel and tourism, electronics, engineering, technology, dental assistant, and business data processing. Because these schools advertise extensively in the media, some schools have achieved a high level of name recognition. Programs vary a great deal in quality; thus parent and students should practice good consumer skills when investigating and contracting for vocational education. When considering a business, technical, or trade school, check carefully into its accreditation, employer recognition, and costs. To help judge the quality of a school, check with the California Department of Consumer Affairs - Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education ([www.bppve.ca.gov](http://www.bppve.ca.gov)) or the Better Business Bureau. Also, ask for names of employers of former students, check with these employers to see how they regard the school.

**Art & Design Schools:** Programs offered at fine arts schools vary considerably. Some require exceptional talent and skills and may lead to direct job placement. The programs at art and design schools may include writing, film, dance, music, musical theater, and the visual arts. Majoring in one of the arts will teach students how to pursue with discipline and dedication, an interest or activity s/he enjoys. Again, be sure to thoroughly research the school to be sure you will be getting the experience you expect.

**Military:** Enlistment in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, or Coast Guard is at least a two-year commitment. On-the-job training is available in a wide variety of careers, including computer programmers, aircraft mechanics, medical service technicians, etc. In addition, the leadership and management training you receive prepares you for your future career. Financially, the military helps pay for your education in several ways and, in return, you fulfill your obligation. Representatives of the branches visit each high school on a monthly basis during lunch periods.

**Apprenticeships:** On-the-job training is provided and you are hired as a trainee to learn a craft or trade from an experienced craftsperson. It is for students whose personal preferences lie in working with both their heads and their hands. You will receive real-world training and experience, as well as entry into difficult-to-break-into trades, such as plumbing or electrical work. In an apprenticeship program, you literally earn while you learn. Sometimes previous training from a trade school or the military may be helpful in becoming a good candidate for an apprenticeship.

**Employment:** Employment is an appropriate option for some high school graduates. Students who choose employment as their post-high school option should have a three to five year plan. This will help ensure that they do not get trapped in a dead-end job. Students should realize that they can go back to school anytime, even if it is only to take a course or two.

The Career and Transition Counselor is a great resource to help you explore and find out more about these options.

**Community College/CLC**

Community colleges are the “open door” to higher education for all of us. The mission of the community college is far different from the traditional four-year college. Community colleges exist to afford every high school graduate the opportunity to further his/her education, whether that individual be an 18-year-old grad, a 42-year-old mother returning to the work force, or a veteran re-tooling skills to advance in a career.

The resources of a community college are utilized by many kinds of students. Among those are students who did not perform well in high school, either due to lack of motivation, or behavioral or social difficulties. These students are often not quite sure *if* they want to go on to college, or if they have the *ability* or *motivation* to succeed. They use the community college as “undecided” for one semester, take general courses, and *then* decide whether they want to enter either a vocational or transfer program.

Community colleges offer students different types of degrees. The Certificate Program is a one-year career program designed to prepare students for immediate entry into a specific job. The Associate of Arts and Associate in Science are two-year degrees designed for students who will transfer to a four-year college or university to complete a bachelor degree. The Associate of Applied Science degree is awarded upon completion of a two-year career program designed to prepare the student for the immediate entry in to a specific career field.

**Some Advantages to Attending a Community College**

* You receive a good education at a fraction of the cost.
* The college transfer program allows you to get some of your core requirements out of the way in a less expensive way. It may dramatically decrease the need for student loans.
* You can establish a college record which will allow you to transfer into a four-year college.
* You are also offered a variety of programs designed to prepare you for immediate job market entry.
* Classes are small and are taught by faculty who are committed to teaching and preparing you for your next step: going to a four-year college or beginning your career.
* If your goal is to transfer credits to an out-of-state four-year college, check with an advisor at the community college. S/he will help you design a course schedule geared to the admission requirement of that particular college.

If you are interested in attending Community College, talk with your Career & Transition Counselor. We work very closely with the local community colleges to help high school students apply, register, and transition to their program.

**PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE BEGINS NOW**

**Freshman Year College Planning**

**Welcome to high school.  There are some things you should keep in mind during your freshman year in order to stay on track and prepare for your educational future.**

* Build strong academic, language, mathematics and critical thinking skills by taking challenging courses.
* Study hard and get excellent grades.
* Strengthen your vocabulary by increasing your reading.
* Become involved in co-curricular activities (student council, volunteer, peer tutor).
* Meet your high school guidance counselor or Director of Education to discuss your plans for the next four years.
* Browse through college literature or surf the Web to get an idea of what kinds of schools may be of interest to you.
* Check out what high school courses colleges require.
* Keep an academic portfolio and co-curricular record.
* Research career possibilities.
* Begin saving money for college.

**PREPARING FOR COLLEGE**

**Sophomore Year**

**Objective:  Concentrate on academic preparation and continue to develop basic skills and co-curricular interests.**

**September**

* Consult your guidance counselor or Director of Education about taking the PSAT in October.  The PSAT is the preliminary test that will prepare you fro the SAT I.
* If you plan on taking the ACT, talk to your guidance counselor or Director of Education about taking the PLAN in November.  The PLAN is the preliminary standardized test that will give you some preparation for the ACT.
* You need to register several weeks in advance for the PLAN and the PSAT, so consult your guidance counselor or Director of Education early in September.

# October

* Take the PSAT for practice.  The results will not be used for college admission.
* Sign up, if you have not done so already, for co-curricular activities that interests you.  The level of involvement and accomplishment is most important, not the number of activities.
* Keep a record of your co-curricular involvement, volunteer work, and employment (all year).

# November

* Make sure you are “on top” of your academic work.  If necessary, meet with your teacher for additional help.
* Save your best work in academic courses and the arts for your academic portfolio (all year).
* Take PLAN Assessment.

# December

* Receive results of PLAN and/or PSAT.  Read materials sent with your score report.  Consult your guidance counselor or Director of Education to explore ways to improve on future standardized tests and courses to discuss which may be required or beneficial for your post-high school plans.

# January

* Keep studying!!!
* Volunteer - a great way to identify your interests and to develop skills.

# February

* It is never too early to start researching colleges and universities.  Visit your guidance office to browse through literature and guidebooks or surf the Web and check out college and university home pages.

# March

* NACAC has developed a list of on-line resources to help you in the collegeadmission process called Web Resources for the College-Bound.  You can get information on-line free at the NACAC Web site ([www.nacac.com/techctr.html](http://www.nacac.com/techctr.html)).

# April

* Register for the June SAT II: Subject Test.  These are one-hour exams testing you on academic subjects that you have already completed.  Among the many to choose from are biology, chemistry, foreign languages and physics.  Many colleges require three SAT II: Subject Tests.  One of these should be Writing; usually, the other two can be of your choosing, although some colleges recommend/require Math IC or IIC.
* See your guidance counselor or Director of Education for advice and registration.
* Continue to research career options and consider possible college majors that will help you achieve your career goals.

# May

* Plan now for wise use of your summer.  Consider taking a summer course or participating in a special program at a local college or community college.
* Consider working or volunteering.

# June

* Take the SAT II: Subject Tests that you registered for in April.  Consider electing score choice so you can see your test scores before deciding whether to release the results to colleges.  It a good idea to plan on taking the SAT II: Subject Tests again in the spring of your junior year or the fall of your senior year.  You then have the option of releasing only your best scores to colleges.

# Summer

* Make your summer productive.  Continue reading to increase your vocabulary.  Sign up for a PSAT/SAT prep course.

**MAKE THIS YEAR COUNT**

**Junior Year College Prep**

**Objective:  Begin college selection process.  Attend college fairs, financial aid seminars, general information, sessions, etc., to learn as much as you can about the college application process.**

**September**

* Register for the October PSAT.  Meet with your guidance counselor or Director of Education to review your courses for this year and plan your schedule for senior year**.**
* Save samples of your best work for your academic portfolio (all year).
* Maintain your co-curricular record (all year).

**October**

* Junior year PSAT scores may qualify a student for the National Merit Scholarship Competition and the National Achievement and National Hispanic Scholars Programs.  Even though these scores will not be used for college admission, it is still a good idea to take the PSAT.  The more times you take standardized tests, the more familiar you will become with the format and the types of questions asked.

**November**

* Junior year grades are extremely important in the college admission process because they are a measure of how well you do in advanced, upper level courses.  Grades also are used to determine scholarships and grants for which you may be eligible.  So put in extra effort and keep those grades up!
* If you will require financial aid, start researching your options for grants, scholarships and work-study programs.  Make an appointment with your guidance counselor or Director of Education or start by visiting NACAC’s Web Resources for the College-Bound to do research on your own using the internet ([www.nacac.com](http://www.nacac.com))

**December**

* During December you should receive the results of your PSAT.  Read your score report and consult your school counselor to determine how you might improve on future standardized tests.  The PSAT is excellent preparation for the SAT I, which you will take in the spring.
* If you plan to take the ACT, register now for the February ACT.  Many colleges accept the ACT (American College Test) or the SAT I.  Some colleges require the ACT or both SAT I and SAT II.  When you begin to **explore different** colleges and universities, double-check to see if they prefer or require the ACT, the SAT I and/or the SAT II.

**January**

* Begin to make a preliminary list of colleges you would like to investigate further.  Surf the Web and use the college resources in the guidance office or local public library.
* Ask your parents for your Social Security number.  If you were never issued a Social Security number, contact the closest Social Security office as soon as possible to obtain a number.

**February**

* Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss your preliminary list of colleges.  Discuss whether your initial list of colleges meets your needs and interests (academic program, size, location, cost, etc…) and whether you are considering colleges where you are likely to be admitted.  You should be optimistic and realistic when applying to colleges.
* Register for the May or June SAT I.  Prepare for the SAT I by signing up for a prep course, using computer software, or working with the faculty to fine tune your skills.  Don’t spend so much time trying to improve standardized test scores that grades and co-curricular involvement suffer.

**March**

* + Write, telephone, or email to request admission literature and financial aid information from the colleges on your list.  There is no charge and no obligation to obtain general information about admission and financial aid.

**April**

* + When selecting your senior courses, be sure to continue to challenge yourself academically.
* Take SAT I, and register for June SAT II: Subject Tests for those courses covered during your junior year.
* Continue to evaluate your list of colleges and universities.  Eliminate colleges from the original list that no longer interest you and add others as appropriate.
* Look into summer jobs or apply for special summer academic or enrichment programs.  Colleges love to see students using their knowledge and developing their skills and interests.

**May**

* Attend a college fair to get more information about colleges on your list.  NACAC sponsors college fairs in cities across the country during the fall and the spring.  Your guidance counselor will notify you of a fair nearest you.

* Get a jump start on summer activities - consider enrolling in an academic course at a local college, pursuing a summer school program, applying for an internship, working, or volunteering.
* Begin visiting colleges.  Phone to set up appointments.  Interviews show interest, enthusiasm and initiative on your part and provide an excellent opportunity to have your questions answered.  Set up interviews as early as possible interview times become booked quickly!
* Take the SAT I or SAT II

**June**

* After school ends, get on the road to visit colleges.  Seeing the college firsthand, taking a tour and talking to students can be the greatest help in deciding whether or not a school is right for you.  Although it is ideal to visit colleges during the academic year, going in the summer will be valuable.
* Take the SAT I or SAT II

**FINALIZING PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

# Senior Year College Prep



Objective: Apply to colleges. Make decisions. Finish high school with pride in yourself and your accomplishments.

**September**

* Make sure you have all applications required for college admission and financial aid. Write, call, or email to request missing information.
* Check on application and financial aid deadlines for the schools to which you plan to apply. They may vary and it is essential to meet all deadlines!
* Meet with your guidance counselor or Director of Education to be sure your list includes colleges appropriate to your academic and personal record. Review your transcript and co-curricular records with your school counselor to ensure their accuracy.
* Register for the October/November SAT I and/or SAT II: Subject Test, or September/October ACT.
* If the colleges require recommendations, ask the appropriate people to write on your behalf. At least three weeks before the due date, ask your counselor and teachers, employers, or coaches to write letters of recommendation. Provide recommendation forms, any special instructions and stamped, addressed business envelope to the people writing your recommendation. Be thoughtful! Write thank-you notes to those who write recommendations and keep them informed of your decisions.
* Plan visits to colleges and set up interviews (if you didn’t get to them during the summer or if you want to return to a campus for a second time). Read bulletin boards and the college newspaper. Talk with current students and professors.

## October

* Attend a regional college fair to investigate further those colleges to which you will probably apply.
* Mail applications in time to reach the colleges by the deadlines. Check with your guidance counselor (Director of Education) to make sure your transcript and test scores have been/will be sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
* If applying early decision or early action, send in your application now. Also prepare applications for back-up schools. Remember, if you are accepted under the early decision option, you are expected to enroll at thatcollege and towithdraw all other applications. Submit financial aid information if requested from early decision/action candidates.
* Register for the December/January SAT I and/or SAT II: Subject Tests, or December ACT if you have not completed the required tests or if you are not happy with your previous test scores and think you can do better.
* Have official test scores sent by the testing agency to colleges on your list.

### November

* Take the SAT I or SAT II if appropriate. Don’t forget to have test scores sent to colleges on your list.
* Be sure your first quarter grades are good.
* Continue completing applications to colleges. Make copies of all applications before mailing the applications.
* If you need financial aid, obtain a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) from your guidance office. Check to see if the colleges to which you are applying require any other financial aid form. Register for the CSS Profile if required and obtain the college’s own financial aid forms, if available.
* Keep all records, test score reports and copies of applications for admission and financial aid. Do not throw anything away until at least the end of your first year in college. Having detailed records will save you time and effort should anything be lost or should you decide to apply in the future for other colleges and scholarship programs.

### December

* Have official test scores sent to colleges on your list if you have not done so.
* Consult your school counselor again to review your final list of colleges. Be sure you have all bases covered. It is a good idea to make copies of everything before you drop those envelopes in the mail. When mailing your application, make sure you send it certified and get a receipt. If for some reason your application gets lost, you will have a back-up copy.
* If you applied for early decision, you should have an answer by now. If you are accepted, follow the instructions for admitted students. If the decision is deferred until spring or you are denied, submit applications now to other colleges.

### January

* Keep working in you classes! Grades and courses continue to countthroughout the senior year.
* Request, in writing, that your counselor send the transcript of your first semester grades to the colleges to which you applied.
* Parents and students, complete your income tax forms as soon as possible. You will need those figures to fill out the FAFSA.

### February

* Remember to monitor your applications to be sure that all materials are sent and received on time and that they are complete. Stay on top of things and don’t procrastinate; you can ruin your chances for admission by missing a deadline.
* If you completed a FAFSA, you should receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) within four weeks after submitting the FAFSA.
* If more than four weeks have passed after sending in your FAFSA and you have not received an acknowledgement, contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center at (319) 337-5665.
* Complete scholarship applications. You may be eligible for more scholarships than you think, so apply for as many as you can.
* Enjoy your final year in high school, but don’t catch senioritis!

### March

* Stay focused and keep studying - only a couple more months to go!

### April

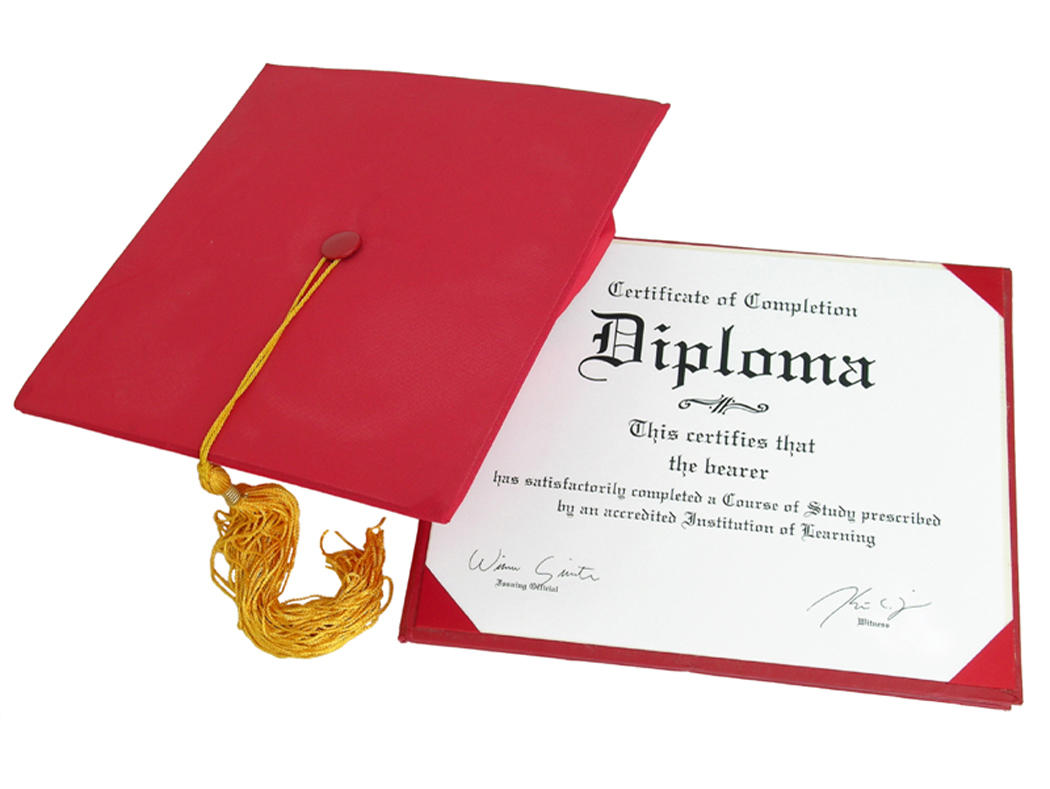
* Do not take rolling admission applications for granted. (Some colleges do not have application deadlines; they admit students on a continuous basis.) These schools may reach their maximum class size quickly - the earlier you apply, the more availability there may be.
* Review your college acceptances and financial aid awards. Be sure to compare financial aid packages in your decision-making process. If you are positive you will not enroll at one or more of the colleges that accepted you, please notify those colleges that you have selected another college. Keeping colleges abreast of your plans might enable those colleges to admit someone else. If you know which college you will attend, send your tuition deposit and follow all other instructions for admitted students.

### May

* By May 1, decide on the one college that you will attend. By May 1, send in your tuition deposit to the college you will attend. Notify the other colleges that accepted you that you have selected another college.
* BE PROUD - you have completed a difficult task!!!!
* If your first-choice college places you on their waiting list, do not lose all hope. Some students are admitted off the waiting list. Talk with your counselor, and contact the college to let them know you are still very interested. Keep the college updated on your activities.
* Take Advanced Placement examinations, if appropriate and request that your AP scores be sent to the college you will attend.

### June

* Request that your counselor send your final transcript to the college you will attend. Notify the college of any private scholarships or grants you will be receiving.
* Know when the payment for tuition, room and board, meal plans, etc., is due. If necessary, ask the financial aid office about a possible payment plan that will allow for you to pay in installments.
* Congratulations, you’ve made it through high school!!!! Enjoy graduation and look forward to college.



**Getting Started**



At first, trying to decide which college is going to fit your needs seems overwhelming. Anyone who picks up one of the college guides for the first time without a clue as to which college to attend usually encounters a great deal of anxiety. There is strategy. If you start early and don’t leave things to the last minute, it can be fun…really!

Evaluate yourself: What are your strengths and weaknesses? Look at your transcript; do your grades represent your best effort? What were your favorite courses? What are your interests? Any ideas about what career you might pursue? Use the college and career interest surveys to help you focus on your likes and dislikes and to explore career options. Utilize your resources through www.careercruising.com.

Take your ACTs and/or SATs: Use your scores, along with your grades, to help you determine the level of college competitiveness that would be most comfortable for you. Be careful that you don’t place too much importance on the test scores. While they are important, what classes you take and how well you do in them, as well as your extracurricular involvement and community service, are considered greater indicators of your potential for success in college.

Talk to college reps: Important! They have a good source of information about their schools, both the strengths and weaknesses. They often bring applications and viewbooks and can become your advocate if you decide to apply. See page 21 for questions to ask college reps and the procedures you need to follow to visit with them.

Talk to parents, other students, counselors, teachers and the college counselor; it helps you sort through the information, so you can decide what is important to you in college selection.

Use page 49 to help develop a list of schools that will fit your needs. You begin by identifying criteria that are important to you such as location, size of school, setting, interesting major(s), athletic, or music programs, etc. You can repeat this as often as you wish; it is the very process that helps you begin to make decisions.

##### The College Search

(Continued)

Remember to do careful research. The issue is not just getting into a good college, but receiving a diploma from that school. What is the most important is that you find a school that is a good match for you. There is more than one college at which you can be happy and meet your educational goals.

Research your college list: Visit the Career & Transitional Counselor; use the catalogs, files, and CDs/DVDs to find out more about your colleges. Be sure to check entrance requirements carefully. Talk with people again. Visit with representatives from schools, and ask lots of questions. Write to colleges for catalogs, applications for admission, financial aid and scholarship information.

Plan a campus visit: See pages 22-24 for details for what to get out of a visit. Use pages 55-56 to keep notes on each visit. Some colleges also sponsor local events to market their schools. These are great opportunities to get acquainted with these institutions.

Apply to college in the fall of senior year: If you have done thorough research, you should be able to narrow down your choices to no more than four to six college to which you will apply. It is a good idea to apply to schools in the three categories: clear admits, probables (pretty sure of admittance), and reaches (wishful hope for admittance).

Seek a college that is an ACADEMIC fit: You want to be challenged academically but not overwhelmed or in over your head.



**Choosing the “Right” College**

The process of choosing the “right” college is often very difficult. What is it that I’m looking for in a school? How many students are on campus? Do I want to stay close to home? Can we afford a private school? And soon…making a college choice is an important decision that may be a challenge. Until you find a place to begin, or a method to organize your thoughts and ideas into smaller, more manageable pieces, it may seem almost impossible to make any decision, let alone a good one. Many students going through this process are under the impression there is only **one** school which will fit their needs. In reality, there are more than 3,000 accredited institutions in the higher learning in the U.S. – and a good many of those would be equally suitable for you. The final selection of a college rightfully belongs to the student, but parents and the counseling staff can provide much insight. Here are a few suggestions you should remember. Always keep in mind, “A *good* school is a school that meets ***YOUR*** needs.”

1. Discuss your plans with your counselor. It is often beneficial to have your parents participate in this meeting. College selection is a team process.
2. Talk to parents, teachers, friends, and former North Hills Prep School graduates who are currently college students.
3. Become familiar with internet sources for college searching.
4. Attend college rep visits.
5. Attend the college fair.
6. Visit colleges. Call in advance, stay overnight, meet students, attend classes, and arrange to meet with admission staff and/or faculty from a specific area of study in which you are interested.
7. Think about how you best learn and feel most comfortable:
   1. Large or small classes
   2. Competitive or more relaxed atmosphere/environment
   3. Diversity of student body
8. Attempt to seek a ‘match’ – a school at which you feel both challenged and comfortable.

**Visiting with College Representatives**

**Questions to Ask College Representatives**

**Admission**

What are the admission requirements?

Do you admit students on GPA? Class rank? Test scores? Academic units required?

How important are recommendations and personal statements? Is there a counselor

Print-out page with the application?

**Academics**

Does the school offer majors of interest to you?

What opportunities are there for research or study abroad?

Are there internships or co-ops?

**Application**

When should I file for admission?

What percentage of applicants is admitted?

**Tests**

Do you accept both the ACT and the SAT as college admissions?

What is the average range of test scores for entering college freshmen?

Do I need to take the SAT II?

**Financial Aid/Cost**

What is the estimated annual total cost?

What are the sources of financial aid and scholarships?

**Housing**

How difficult is it to get on-campus housing?

How and when do I apply?

What percent of students live on campus?

Are there separate residences for freshmen?

**The Campus Visit**

There is no better way to learn about a college, its faculty, facilities, academic and social climate, and physical environment than to visit the school. It is your best resource, and just being on a college campus for a few hours will tell you much about both you and the college.

While it’s true that the best time to visit a college is when classes are in full session, many families use their summer vacations to explore college choices. You can meet with some students and tour the campus, but keep in mind there will just not be as much activity during the summer. If possible, students should try to re-visit their top choices in the fall of senior year or after they’ve been admitted. Regardless of when you visit, general guidelines always apply.

1. Call the admission office at least two weeks in advance. When calling, be sure to request a tour, interview (if possible), class visit, directions to campus and the admission office, and local motel/motel and Bed & Breakfast information. This is also the time for special requests: meeting with a coach, faculty member, financial aid officer, and sitting in on a call, or staying overnight in a residence hall. If you have a special need, don’t be afraid to ask.
2. Become familiar with the college before you visit. Research it online and in the career and transition office file cabinets.
3. Make a list of questions to ask during your visit. Try not to ask questions simple research could have answered (hint #2 above). See some good sample questions on page 24.
4. Be prepared to share information about yourself such as GPA, current classes, and extracurricular involvement. Request an unofficial copy of your transcript from the Registrar and take it with you on visits.
5. Put some thought into where *your parents* stay during your visit. While *you* should stay in the dorm if at all possible, *they* might consider a B&B rather than a large hotel. Generally, the folks who own B&B’s are locals who know a good deal about the school and community, and much information is shared between all the guests at the breakfast table. Very often these guests are other families who are either looking at the college or who have children attending the school.
6. Two visits per day, possibly three, should be the maximum if the schools are fairly close to each other. At the end of each visit jot down notes while the impressions are still clear in your mind. (See page 49: College Comparison Worksheet)
7. Don’t judge a college by one student, one faculty member, or one tour guide. Remember, a single person cannot represent the entire school.
8. After the visit, write a short thank you note to any staff member who gave his/her time to you.



**The College Visit Continuum**

**Convenience Visits:** Freshmen & Sophomores should visit schools as often as they can. Visit nearby schools or plan to visit a school while on vacation. The more schools you visit, the better your sense of fit.

**Strategic Visits**: During your Junior and early Senior years, visit the schools which meet your criteria. Do they look as good as they do on paper/internet?



**Surgical Visits:** During your Senior year…you have applied, and maybe even been accepted! You have until May 1st to re-visit, compare, and make a decision as to which school you will attend.

**Things to Do During a Campus Visit**

* Eat in a dining hall
* Visit the neighborhood in which the college is located
* Read the bulletin boards and the college newspaper
* Visit the library
* Ask Questions!
* Ask Questions!
* Ask Questions!
* Take a tour
* Visit one or more classes
* Talk to as many students as possible

~Ask them about the academic and social life on campus

* Observe students as you walk around and see if you can picture yourself as a member of the student body.
* Stay overnight in a residence hall

**Things to Look For During a Campus Visit**

* Library (not number of volumes, but *your access* to them)
* Labs (not necessarily the sophistication of the equipment, but *who* has *access* to it)
* Computers (same as labs)
* Theater facilities
* Music and art studios (space to practice and work when you wish)
* Residence halls (singles, doubles, suites, co-ed, cleanliness)
* General neatness of the campus (poor maintenance or vandalism reflect college or student attitudes.
* Student attire (neat, sloppy, causal, or high style)
* Friendliness (eye contact, offers to help, hellos)
* Student conversations (tone and topic)
* Security (too many pass key and locks may indicate problems or may simply mean the college is concerned with your safety)
* Athletic facilities

**a**

**Sample Questions**

**Questions to Ask During a College Visit**



1. What is the amount and kind of study necessary for success?
2. What percentage of first-year students return for the sophomore year?
3. What percentages of students graduate in four year?
4. Are there special academic programs? Study abroad?
5. Is there an advising system? How is it organized and who are the advisors?
6. What types of tutoring programs are available?
7. What is the geographic, ethnic, religious, and racial makeup of the student body?
8. What special interest groups are available?
9. How is admission determined? What is the importance of ACT? SAT? GPA? Class Rank? Extracurricular?
10. What are the hot issues on campus?
11. Is guaranteed housing available? All four years?
12. How are roommates assigned?
13. What percentages of students go home on weekends?
14. What percentage of students is involved in the Greek system? What is the impact of fraternities and sororities on campus? Are Greek parties and events open to all?
15. What percentages of seniors go on to graduate school?
16. Is there a career planning and placement center for students?
17. What is the job placement record for graduates in the field(s) you might study?
18. Are merit scholarships available? What are the criteria for selection?
19. Is this college “need blind” or “need conscious” in the selection process? In other words, does the ability to pay enter into the admission decision?
20. What forms are required to apply for financial aid?



**College-Bound Student in Performing or Visual Arts**

**Tips for Performing Visual Arts Students**

*(reprinted for the NCAC website,* [*www.nacanet.org*](http://www.nacanet.org)*)*

Students who wish to study visual or performing arts have some unique challenges and options during their college search. If you are considering a major in music, art, dance, or drama, read on from some advice from the experts.

**A Difference of Degree**

Prospective arts majors have two degree options: a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with a major in the arts and a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) for artists/performers or Bachelor of Music (BM) for musicians. The BA degree is the typical liberal arts degree – students who major in English, history, and other humanities majors also earn BA degrees. The BFA or BM degree is more focused and intense. “There is a world of difference between a BA in music and a BM in music,” says Anthony Celentano, school counselor/military advisor at Pope John XXIII High School (NJ), who holds a BM and MM (master of music.). “A BA in music will be pretty much like any other BA degree – lots of courses outside your major with approximately 12 or so courses in your major. That’s not a lot of music for the student who is looking for an intense musical experience. A BM in music essentially is a professional degree. Within my 120+ credits for my BM, only 36 were liberal arts courses. The remainder were music or degree-related courses: private lessons, conducting classes, music history, music theory, etc.”

Which degree you choose depends on your college and career goals. If you have a high degree of commitment to your art and desire an intense, often competitive college experience, a BFA or BM might be right for you. If you would rather study a variety of subjects along with your arts major, a BA may be the way to go.

**Types of Colleges**

Visual and performing arts students have several types of colleges to consider. Conservatories and stand-alone arts schools offer an immersion-type experience for students earning BM or BFA degrees. All of the students you meet at this type of school will be artists, and the atmosphere is often highly competitive.

Some larger universities offer BFA/BM degrees as well as BA degrees in the arts. You may find somewhat self-contained music or arts schools within the larger university. In this atmosphere, you could pursue the more specialized degree while still keeping the door open to taking a few liberal arts courses (which would be unavailable at specialized music or arts school). In addition, a university-based arts program might give you the option of pursuing a double degree, such as a BM in music and a BA in history. (A double degree would require more than four years, however.

**The Application Process**

In addition to completing a typical college application, students in the visual or performing arts should prepare a portfolio or audition. Each arts program has different requirements, so you should contact the schools as early as possible to obtain their portfolio or audition requirements.

Although your portfolio or audition is an important part of the application, arts programs consider your academic record and test scores.

“Some [colleges] place greater value on academics, while others lean more twoard the student’s portfolio or audition,” according to a workshop on arts programs presented at several NACAC meetings (compiled by Kavin Buck, UCLA; Jane Buckman, Cornish College of the Arts; Ed Schoenberg, Otis College of Arts and Design; and Jenny Woo, UCLA). “Most colleges balance the student’s creative talent with their academic achievements.”

**Assessing Your Abilities**

If you’re interested in pursuing an arts major and career, now is the time to seek objective opinions of your abilities in the field.

James Gandre, Dean of Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University (IL), offers this advice to young musicians: “In addition to asking for honest advice and evaluation from high school ensemble and private teachers, students can get outside assessment from musicians at a local symphony, dance company, theatre, etc. Of course, everyone doesn’t live in a big city, so this may require driving one to two hours or more to get this advice, but it’s worth it.”

Visual arts students can receive portfolio evaluations and college information at one of the Nation Portfolio Days sponsored by an association of art schools and art departments at universities. For more information, talk to your guidance counselor or art teacher, or visit [www.npda.org](http://www.npda.org).

**Other Considerations**

All students benefit from visiting the colleges which interests them and asking questions about academics, student life, and other facets of college life. As an arts student, you may have different or additional things to consider.

* **Location:**
  + The location of your chosen college may be more important to arts students than to students in other majors.
  + “There may be many factors to consider when choosing where to study.” Note the workshop authors. “For arts students, these should involve access to professional venues such as museums, galleries, theaters, and concerts. Also, do these venues attract regional, national, or international talent to inspire and educate the students? Additionally, the opportunity to perform, exhibit, and have active internships is vital to a young artist’s education.”
* **Facilities:** 
  + In addition to checking out residence hall rooms, classrooms, and athletic facilities, art students should look at a college’s studio space or practice rooms, performance or exhibit venues on campus, darkroom facilities (for photographers), computer resources, and any other resources specific to your field of study. Ask questions about how accessible these resources are to students; attractive studios are of no help if there aren’t enough to go around.
* **Reputation and Philosophy:**
  + Talk to your art, music, drama, or dance teachers about the reputations of the colleges you’re considering. Ask the colleges about career opportunities for graduates and about what their alumni are doing. The goal here is to get some idea of how the program is perceived by professionals in your career field and what career opportunities you might have when you complete college.
  + Also, ask about each college’s philosophy. Different fine arts or music programs can have very different emphases. For example, one music program may emphasize classical music, while another specializes in more modern forms, like jazz. Similarly, the intensity of competitiveness, workload, and pressure can vary from school to school. During your visits and talks with students and faculty, try to get an impression of the daily pressures of being a student in that particular program.
* **A good fit:**
  + Finally, as for any student, visual and performing arts students need to find a college that fits their personality, interests, and goals. Especially for very ambitious students, it’s easy to be dazzled by the prestige of a top professional school or arts department and overlook the question of whether the program is right for you.
  + “When working as dean of enrollment at New York City’s Manhattan School of Music, I would run across the occasional unhappy student who came to New York City because someone else had told them that New York or Manhattan School of Music or a particular teacher was perfect for them. They listened to those mentors instead of their gut and made a wrong choice,” says Gandre. “No matter how talented the student and how wonderful the school, fit is always crucial.”

*Written by Jennifer Gross*

*Finally, don’t forget…*

* **Faculty:** When majoring in the fine arts, the faculty/student relationship is especially important. Learn about the professors, their experiences and affiliation, and your chances of studying with them.
* **Performance/Internship opportunities:** Ask the number of performing ensembles at the school. Are opportunities open for all students? Can non-majors participate in ensembles? Does the program offer **internships** as ways to include practical experience in real jobs?

**Some helpful websites:**

* [www.artschools.com](http://www.artschools.com)
* [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org) (National Assoc. for College Admission Counseling – info on fine arts college fairs)
* [www.dance-teacher.com](http://www.dance-teacher.com)
* [www.act1books.com](http://www.act1books.com)



**So you want to be a “music” major. Now what?**

First things first, you need to talk to people. Anyone who might have some insight into music schools including your band, choir, or orchestra director, your private lesson teacher, your youth orchestra conductor, your peers, and former classmates who are in a music school. The music world is a relatively small one yet it is still fairly unknown to you, so gather as much information as possible.

**Performance vs. Education**

If you are absolutely sure that you are willing to enter the extremely difficult field of being a professional musician, then a performance degree is for you.

If you are like the majority of people who enjoy playing and want to become the best musician they can be, but aren’t absolutely sure of what you’ll be doing, then an education degree might be a better choice.

**Here are some things to consider.**

1. **Next**

In the world of music, you rarely get jobs based on your diploma or your resume. Instead, it is almost always based on an audition, an audition in which anyone, someone with a music degree, or someone with an engineering degree can take and potentially win.

1. **You’re Certified!**

Most education degrees, on the other hand, also come with certification to teach, usually K-12 music courses. Performance majors, if they decide later that they want to teach, have to go back to school and pay more money to get certified.

1. **“I need a job man!”**

The number of full-time orchestral jobs is very small in comparison to the number of people who audition for those spots. The positions are essentially lifetime appointments and therefore do not open up frequently. The vast majority of professional, performing musicians earn their income doing a multitude of things, mainly private teaching and playing with community orchestras.

1. **“But I don’t want to give up my playing.”**

Performance-wise, you don’t have to give up anything as an education major. You can participate in all of the same ensembles, continue taking lessons and otherwise become as strong a musician as a performance-only major. In fact, many schools will let you complete the requirements and earn both majors. This is something that should be checked into at any school you are considering.

1. **“But I couldn’t do what my band director does.”**

Most high school students have not had the opportunity to lead groups, especially musical ensembles in rehearsal, and most assume that they would not be good at it. This is an unnecessary negative attitude that could potentially cut-off a career. Leading a group is one of the many things you are taught in an education program, and again, you are not required to be a teacher with an education degree, but it’s an available option; an option you wouldn’t otherwise have as a performance-only major.

**Things to consider for a music degree:**

1. **Go to the best school you can get into.** (This also applies to education majors as well but sometimes conservatories do not have strong education programs.) This may seem obvious, but with so many things to consider when choosing a school it can sometimes be forgotten. You have a very limited amount of time to get as good as you can possibly get. You need to be constantly surrounded by other people who are much better musicians than you, whether they are professors, or more importantly, other students. There is no better motivation to practice than to have someone in your same class who is twice as good as you. A list of top music schools is provided on the next page.
2. **Know the faculty.** Who will you study with? Take a lesson with them if possible. This person will be your biggest source of musical knowledge for the next four years; you should make sure that your personalities will work together.
3. **Beyond Music.** Some conservatories have programs with nearby liberal arts universities. For example: Peabody/John Hopkins, New England Conservatory/Harvard, Julliard/Columbia, Eastman/University of Rochester. This will allow you to explore other areas of knowledge, **BUT…**
4. **Beware of double-degrees!** Many schools, in an attempt to lure top students in an increasingly competitive market, have heavily promoted double-degree programs. These are aimed at the highly accomplished high school students who are talented in different areas of study, say biology and music. In high school, these students are accustomed to moving quickly from one topic to another and doing exceedingly well by high school standards. Please remember that college classes move along at a much faster rate. Also, assuming you went to the best school you could get into, you will find that the one hour of practice per day that made you the top player in high school doesn’t quite allow you to keep up with the extremely talented college musicians who practice four hours a day and don’t have to worry about a four-hour chemistry lab each week for their other degree.

**Big vs. Small Schools**

1. **“I’m worried about being lost in the shuffle of a large school.”**

Big schools can be as big or small as you make them. If you are in a music school of a large university, the vast majority of your time is going to be spent around the few hundred students in that school, not in the general university population. However, if you want to meet more people and have a big school experience once you are more comfortable, that option is available to you.

1. **“What about large lecture classes, will I be getting the same education?**

As a music or music ed major, your first two years of classes are generally going to be filled with music theory, music history, aural skills, lessons and ensembles. All of those classes, with the exception of music history, will be sizes similar to what you

have had in high school. You will also have some general education required courses to take, for example Psychology 101, and these may be large lectures. But these are general ed classes, not your main focus.

1. **“Will a small school offer the same opportunities as a large school?”**

* There is a lot of variance between schools. Some small colleges have an incredible music school, others may offer a music degree but the ensembles may be no better than your high school ensembles.
* Not all courses that are offered at large schools are offered at smaller schools. For example, a well-rounded program should have a series of music theory courses, a separate class for aural skills, a series of music history courses, diction classes for singers, piano skills classes, classes on how to teach general music, choral music, instrumental music, composition. Some also offer classes in music business, music technology, and music therapy. You need to look into a school’s course offering regardless of size.

**Below is a list of conservatories and universities with music schools.**

* Please note that virtually every university, regardless of size, offers a music degree but many of these schools are not good options.
* No one person can vouch for all the universities listed for all potential majors.
* The small colleges listed are those in the Midwest area.

###### Conservatories

Cincinnati Conservatory of Music Cleveland Institute of Music

Curtis Institute of Music (Philadelphia)

Oberlin Conservatory (Ohio)

Julliard SOM (School of Music)

Manhattan SOM (New York City)

New England Conservatory (Boston)

Eastman SOM (Rochester, NY)

Peabody U. (Baltimore)

Mannes College (New York City)

Berklee College of Music (jazz only)

Colburn School (Southern California)

**Larger Schools that have strong Music**

**Performance programs**

Northwestern U.

De Paul U. (Chicago)

U. of Illinois – Urbana

Indiana U. (Bloomington)

U. Of Michigan (Ann Arbor)

Michigan State U. (East Lansing)

U. of Iowa (Iowa City)

U. of Wisconsin – Madison

Boston U.

Rice U. (Houston)

Eastman SOM (Rochester, NY)

Hartt College of Music (Hartford, CT)

Oberlin Conservatory

North Texas U. (Denton)

Michigan State U. (East Lansing)

U. of Texas - Austin

Arizona State U. (Tempe)

U. of Colorado – Boulder

U. of Southern California (Los Angeles)

U. of Texas – Austin

Vanderbilt U. (Nashville)

Florida St. U. (Gainesville)

U. of Missouri – Kansas City

###### Smaller Music Performance

Augustana U.

Illinois Wesleyan U.

Lawrence U. (Appleton, WI)

St. Olaf College (Northfield, MN)

Butler U. (Indianapolis)

U of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

Roosevelt U. (Chicago)

Simpson College (Idianola, Iowa)

Luther College (Decorah, Iowa)

Concordia College (Moorhead, MN)

**Music Education Schools – Wind and Percussion Education**

Northwestern U.

U. of Illinois – Urbana

U. of Iowa (Iowa City)

Michigan State U. (East Lansing)

St. Olaf U. (Northfield, MN)

North Texas U. (Denton)

U. of Wisconsin – Madison

Illinois State U. (Bloomington)

Augustana U. (Rock Island)]

U. of Miami (Florida)]

De Paul U. (Chicago)

Ohio State U. (Columbus)

**Music Education Schools – String Education**

Northwestern U.

U. of Illinois – Urbana

U of Wisconsin – Madison

Ohio State U. (Columbus)

Florida State U. (Gainesville)

**Music Education Schools –**

**Vocal Education**

Illinois State U. (Bloomington)

Millikin U. (Decatur)

Augustana U. (Rock Island)

U. of Missouri – Columbia

U. of Oklahoma (Norman)

**College Entrance/Placement Tests**

**College Admission Tests:** Most colleges require an **ACT** or **SAT**. Some of the more highly selective colleges also require the SAT II subject tests. It is your responsibility to know which tests each college requires.

Every time you take an ACT or SAT I, you should take advantage of the “pre-paid” reports (four for ACT, four for SAT I) and send your scores to colleges of interest to you. These scores are not part of your transcript and will not be sent when you apply to colleges senior year. If a college you apply to does not have a copy of your tests scores, you will need to pay approximately **$9** for **each college** you want your ACT scores sent to. It may take up to seven weeks for ACT and SAT to process these.

**Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT):**

This is a *practice* test of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I) and the first step in qualifying for the National Merit Scholarship Program. It is given to juniors in October. **This is not an admission test.**

**American College Test (ACT):** This is one of two test options which may be used for college admission. Juniors **MUST** take the ACT in the spring of their junior year as part of the state-mandated Prairie State Examination. The writing component is included with this test date. The test must be taken to qualify for the Illinois Student Assistance Commission’s Honorary Illinois Scholar Award. The ACT is given on six Saturdays during the school year.

**Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I):** This is one of the two test options that may be used for admission. Most schools will accept either the SAT or the ACT for admission. Juniors are encouraged to take the SAT I in May or June of their junior year. The SAT now includes a writing section. The SAT is administered on seven Saturdays during the school year.

**SAT II subject tests:** These tests are given in subjects such as English, Foreign Languages, Science, History and Mathematics. Many selective colleges usually require up to three subject tests for admission and/or placement. They are given on most corresponding dates as the SAT I testing.

**Advanced Placement (AP) Tests:** These are offered in May in various subject areas. Participants are enrolled in specific AP or honors courses in their high school to prepare for these tests. Students scoring well in theses (usually 3, 4, or 5) may receive college credit and/or placement in the corresponding academic discipline. Each test is a three-hour comprehensive examination.

**School Year Ending 2016 (2015-2016)**

This year's test dates, normal registration deadlines, late registration deadlines, and score availability are below.   ACT dates are blue.  SAT dates are red.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Which Test?** | **Test Date** | **Deadline** | **Late Deadline** | **Score Release\*\*** |
| ACT | Sept 12, 2015 | Aug 7, 2015 | Aug 21, 2015 | Sept 21, Oct 5, 2015 |
| SAT | Oct 3, 2015 | Sept 3, 2015 | Sept 22, 2015 | Oct 22, 2015 |
| ACT | Oct 24, 2015 | Sept 18, 2015 | Oct 2, 2015 | Nov 10, 17, 2015 |
| SAT | Nov 7, 2015 | Oct 9, 2015 | Oct 27, 2015 | Nov 26, 2015 |
| SAT | Dec 5, 2015 | Nov 5, 2015 | Nov 23, 2015 | Dec 24, 2015 |
| ACT | Dec 12, 2015 | Nov 6, 2015 | Nov 20, 2015 | Dec 23, Jan 6, 15-16 |
| SAT | Jan 23, 2016 | Dec 28, 2015 | Jan 12, 2016 | Feb 11, 2016 |
| ACT | Feb 6, 2016 | Jan 8, 2016 | Jan 15, 2016 | Feb 16, 23, 2015 |
| New SAT | Mar 5, 2016 \* | Feb 5, 2016 | Feb 23, 2016 | Mar 24, 2016 |
| ACT | Apr 9, 2016 | Mar 4, 2016 | Mar 18, 2016 | Apr 27, May 11, 2016 |
| New SAT | May 7, 2016 \* | Apr 8, 2016 | Apr 26, 2016 | May 26, 2016 |
| New SAT | June 4, 2016 \* | May 5, 2016 | May 25, 2016 | June 23, 2016 |
| ACT | June 11, 2016 | May 6, 2016 | May 20, 2016 | June 22, 29 2016 |

**Admission Categories**



**General Guidelines**

Please note, this is a subjective analysis of categories based on data used by college guidebooks. Remember colleges and universities use many different factors to determine admission eligibility. These many include any or all of the following factors:

* **Test scores**
* **Chosen College major**
* **Special talents**
* **Community involvement**
* **Letters of recommendation**

Recommended High School Academic Subjects

4 Years English

4 years Advanced math

3 years Lab science

4 years International language

3 years Social \studies

Honor and AP course work recommended

4 years English

4 years Advanced math

3 years Lab science

3 years International Language

3 years Social Studies

Same as above with possibly one year less in math and international language

4 years English

3+ years Advanced math

2+ years Lab science

2+ years Social Studies

Same as above

General College Prep Curriculum

Vocational Students: Diploma/Specialty requirements plus courses in the area of interest or career.

* **Pattern of high school course work**
* **Overall grades in academic courses**
* **Athletic ability**
* **Evidence of exceptional motivation**
* **Leadership roles**

**Admission Competition** **SAT/ACT Scores**

**Categories**

**Most Competitive:**

(Selective, Difficult)

May only admit under 20% 1300-1600

of applicants 29-36

Highly Competitive

(Selective, Difficult)

May only admit 20-30% 1220-1300

of applicants 27-29

**Very Competitive:** 1140-1220

(Selective, Difficult) 25-27

May only admit 33%

Of applicants

**Moderately Competitive**  950-1140

(Selective, Difficult) 20-25

**Competitive:**

(Selective, Difficult) 910 or less 17-19

**Open Admission** Not required

Specialized

Admission criteria and competition Not available

**Application Process**

* Applications can be submitted online or downloaded from the college website.
* Be sure to fill out your application carefully and completely. Don’t forget to sign your application. Some applications require a parent/guardian signature also.
* Make copies of any applications, essays and correspondence sent for your own files.
* Obtain and fill out a transcript release form from NHP’s front office.
* Bring completed application (if not done online), application fee if required, and transcript release form to your counselor. If the application requires a counselor and/or teacher recommendation, ask them personally, providing them with the necessary information.
* The front office generates the official transcript with the school seal, GPA, and senior year courses to include with application.
* The Registrar mails completed application, transcript, counselor recommendation, teacher recommendation and school profile.
* You must have your test scores sent to the schools by one of the following methods;
* By having scores sent when you initially register for the test
* By submitting an additional score report online

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

[www.collegeboard.com/?student](http://www.collegeboard.com/?student)



**Counselor/Teacher Recommendations**

Colleges seeking information on your motivation, abilities, creativity and academic strengths may request up to two teacher recommendations. Choose teachers to write who know you well, preferably 11th and 12th grade teachers. Highly selective colleges will require recommendations from teachers as well as counselors. Most public universities do not require recommendations except for special circumstances. If you are foreign born, have been ill or had other events in your life which may have affected your academic record, it could be to your advantage to share this information with the Admissions office. **A recommendation will have more credibility if you have signed the waiver of right to see the recommendations.**

1. Ask the **teacher** for a recommendation in person at least three weeks before the date you wish to have it sent. This rule applies to counselors as well, if the recommendation requires more than just filling in some spaces on the application. The **teacher’s** perspective is to write about you **in the context of their classroom.** The counselor’s recommendation is tot provide an **overall perspective of you as a student in the high school.**
2. Supply the teacher/counselor with information about yourself. A resume of activities inside and outside of school, leadership positions, interests, talents, and special class projects would be especially helpful. The more information you provide, the more likely you will receive a very meaningful, helpful recommendation.
3. The Career and Transition Counselor has a self-evaluation form for you to complete to help the teachers writing your recommendations get to know more about you. This will help them make your recommendation more personal and meaningful.
4. Teachers give their recommendations to your counselor, or mail them directly to the college. If you request the teacher recommendation be sent directly to the college, supply the teacher with a stamped envelope addressed to the Director of Admissions. Follow specific instructions from each college regarding this process.
5. Check with your counselor in two weeks to see if the recommendation is in. If not, gently remind the teacher/counselor of the deadline date.
6. Be sure to follow up with a **thank you** note to the teacher/counselor.

**The Essay**

The importance of the college essay varies from college to college. Many private and some highly competitive state universities require an essay. Typically, the more selective the school the more important the essay. Colleges ask for an essay for two reasons: They want to see how well you write and communicate, and more importantly, they want to see you as an individual. Think of the essay as a “story” which elicits an emotion from the reader.

There is no formula, no format necessary for a perfect essay, but it can be one of the most carefully considered and influential parts of your application. Yours will be read; write it well – it is a significant way to help you in the evaluation process. It is your chance to show the real you and another way to make your application come alive.

**Essay Topics**

For the most part, essays will fall into three categories: the “You” question, the “Why us” question, and the “Creative” question. The goal of all three types of questions is the same; to gather more personal and revealing insights into you as an individual for the admissions committee to consider.

**Tell us about yourself – the “You” question**

This open-ended question requires that you write about your best subject, YOU! Think about your personality and accomplishments and what best illustrates your strong points: who are you, what do you think and do, and what are your goals? Strive to show how your experiences have shaped you as an individual. If you write about adversity, like an illness or a death, accent the positive and emphasize what you’ve learned from the experience (how it affected you personally). Use details, not generalities.

**Tell us why you want to come here – the ‘Why Us” question**

Respond to this question by considering why you want a higher education and what you hope to accomplish with a college degree. Tell why you think that particular school is the right place for you. Use examples after you’ve read about the college, hopefully visited, and talked with students on campus. Be as specific as possible in your examples.

**The Creative Questions**

Here you may be asked to respond to work of a particular author, a quotation, an important issue, how someone or something has influenced your life, or a humorous incident. Be sure to illustrate with examples how a book, quotation, or idea you discuss reflects your outlook and aspiration.

**The Essay**

*(Continued)*

**Essay Tips**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Answer the question. | Stick to the length that is requested. |
| Write about something you care about; your passions. | Don’t use the essay to justify weaknesses in grades or test scores. Special pleading should be done in a separate letter. |
| Use vigorous language – strong verbs and precise nouns. | Don’t wait until the last minute. Get started during the summer after junior year. |
| Write in your own “voice” and style. Be yourself. | Follow the five C’s of essay writing. CONCISENESS, CLARITY, CANDOR, COMPLETENESS AND CONTRIBUTION. |
| If humor is part of your style, feel free to use it. | Check and re-check for correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. |
| Make sure you have one GREAT idea. Use specific details to make your writing come alive. | Keep your audience in mind. |
| Make sure the essay represents your own work. The idea should be yours. | Be honest. |

**Sample Essay Questions**

1. Please use the space on this page to let us know something about you that we might not learn from the rest of your application. There is no “correct” way to respond to this essay request. In writing about yourself, you will convey to us a sense of yourself. (Yale University)
2. What has influenced you most to apply to Emory?
3. Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence. (Common application question)
4. Explain how a particular literary work has influenced you. (Johns Hopkins University)
5. Describe the most humorous moment of your life. Please use detail. (DePaul University)
6. Ask and answer the one important question that you wish we had asked. (Carleton College)
7. Please relate your interest in studying at Georgetown to your future goals. How do these thoughts relate to your choice of major? (Georgetown University)

**The College Interview**

Few colleges actually *require* a college interview. It is used to make personal contact with an admissions counselor to put a face with your application. So take the interview seriously, but don’t over-rate its importance. Here some suggestions for the college interview.

1. Know yourself. How do your learn best? What are your interests and goals? Is there any special area you’d like to explore? What your strengths and weaknesses?
2. Be prepared. Be ready to ask questions as well as to answer them. Do your research; know the college. Don’t ask a lot of questions about things that can easily be found in any college guidebook. But do ask at least one good question. If you do not, you may give the impression that you are unprepared or not really interested.
3. Dress neatly (a shirt and tie, or a dress is still an important mean of impressing an interviewer).
4. Meet your interviewer with a firm handshake and maintain eye contact as you talk and listen.
5. Be prepared to talk about yourself: your academic record, career interests, extracurricular activities, and your interest in *this* college.
6. Be yourself – do not pretend to be something or someone you are not.
7. Above all, RELAX! Interviews are meant to be informative to both parents.
8. Write thank you notes after interviews.

**Questions you might anticipate in an interview**

1. How did your hear about us?
2. Why are you interested in us?
3. What other colleges are you looking at/
4. What is/are your favorite subjects and activities?
5. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
6. Do you have a specific major in mind? (“Undecided” is okay, just talk about one of your favorite courses or activities.)
7. Tell us about your high school.
8. Tell us a little bit about yourself.
9. What books have you read recently outside of required school reading?
10. What do you think you will contribute to our school?

**Making the Final Decision**

After a year or more of working and worrying, it’s done: you’ve received word from all the colleges to which you applied. All that remains in your college quest is making the final decision. Which college will you attend?

This decision may be easy for students who were accepted to their first-choice college. But for the majority of students - those who first choice denied their application or those who never had a clear first choice- that final decision can be difficult. If you’re agonizing between two or more colleges, read on for help in making that big decision with confidence.

**Back to Basics**

Before you look at the colleges themselves, go back to where you started – **yourself.** Think about what you want out of college. Have your priorities changed since you began the college search? Some students find that their preference and goals change somewhat over the course of their college search, as they learn more about college and about themselves.

Take a few minutes to jot down the top five (or more) things you want out of your college experience. If you’re feeling more ambitious, write a description of your ideal college. What do the classes look like? What kind of things do you envision yourself doing on the weekends? What interests do you plan on pursuing (academic or otherwise) while at college? The more details you can think of, the better.

Then sit back and look at what you’ve written. Do one or more of the colleges you’re considering match your description? Is there one college that has most of the characteristics that interest you?

**Dare to Compare**

Every college has different strengths and weaknesses. One college might have a better reputation in your preferred major – but not the extracurricular activities you want. Another may have a strong program in your favorite extracurricular activity – but also a higher price tag. A third may seem like it has everything, except for the fact that it is much farther away from home that you’re really comfortable with.

It’s easy to start thinking in circles when you try to compare two or more colleges that you genuinely like. Here’s one way to help get your thoughts in order.

“Spread out all the acceptance letters and financial aid offers out on the dining room table,” Laurice Sommers, coordinator for college partnerships and curricular enrichment for the Los Angeles Unified School District, said. On one blank sheet of paper for each college, make two columns – “like” and dislike” (or “pro” and “con”). Then list the positive and negative aspects of each college.

“This exercise helps students to look at the colleges objectively and provides a starting place for the family conversation,” Sommers said.

**On the Road**

One of the best ways to clarify your choices is to visit the colleges, even if you’ve been there before.

During these visits, spend as much time as possible talking to people – current students, faculty members, coaches, and others. Many colleges allow prospective students to stay overnight in a residence hall to get a taste of student life. Read the student newspaper, attend a class or two, and work out in the gym. Stand in the middle of campus, look around, and try to imagine yourself spending the next few years here.

“A visit can go a long way towards helping a student feel that the fit is right,” Dave Fletcher, associate director of admission at Barry University (FL), said.

Financial Check

If you need financial aid to afford college, cost may become the deciding factor.

Compare financial aid offers carefully. If you’d be paying about the same at each college, look at what kind of aid each college offers. Colleges can vary widely in how much of their packages are grants (free money) versus loans (that you pack back).

Also, discuss with your parents the real cost of attending each college. Two colleges may have similar costs, but you may end up spending more to travel to a distant college versus one nearer home; or you may spend more at an urban campus, since living in a city is usually a bit more expensive initially may wind up being a reasonable, if you can graduate on time!

But don’t feel obligated to go to the least expensive school just because it is the least expensive. It may be worth it to you and your family to pay a bit more if the college is a better match for your needs.

Consult with Others – but Make Your Own Decision

Talk about your options with your family, friends, high school counselor, and teachers. Often just discussing your choices and your thought about them can help you make up your mind.

But don’t let others make up your mind for you. What’s right for your friends or impressive to your teachers is not necessarily right for you.

“Although [others] shouldn’t tell you where to attend, they can often offer insight you haven’t thought about,” Shere said.

The Gut Factor

When it comes down to that final decision, many experts advise students to go with their gut feeling – that indefinable confidence that a particular college just “feels right.” After all, you’ve done the research, you’ve put in the work of applying, and several admission offices have given you their vote of confidence. So go with the college that you feel comfortable with, the one that you’re excited about – the one that makes you think, “This is THE college!”

Don’t Stress

You may feel that there’s only one “right” choice, and that choosing “wrong” dooms you to four years of misery. In reality, you chose the colleges you applied to very carefully – and you’d probably be happy at any of them. Remember, too, that your choice is not necessarily final: a good number of students transfer every year. Of course, many more students don’t transfer – which is a good sign that the majority of college students are happy with their choice.

*Jennifer Gross, National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)*

**The World Wide Web**



The Internet contains a staggering amount of information related to the college selection process. There is just as much information out there on choosing careers, majors and finding financial aid. There are so many web sites out there and some are better than others. How does one choose the best sites? We have lots of information here to answer the most frequently asked questions.

We recommend you to use our web service, Career Cruising . Families should definitely become familiar with it as it has been designed with one goal in mind: to help your students plan their future. With exceptional assessment tools, detailed occupation profiles and comprehensive post-secondary education information, students can move through the career exploration and planning process. Check out their website at [*www.careercruising.com*](http://www.careercruising.com).

**Steps to Financial Aid**

Be sure to work very closely with the College Financial Aid Officers. Make sure your parents read this sheet with you because much of the information will involve them too. Start early and note important deadlines.

**In your Junior year:**

1. Contact colleges that interest you to obtain admissions and financial aid information.
2. Parents, review your family financial situation with your student and develop some realistic parameters.

**In your Senior year:**

1. Determine college costs. Don’t eliminate any college because of high costs at this point…look carefully at financial aid and average number of years to graduate.
2. Apply for admission. Many colleges require both an application for admission and financial aid before they can determine a student’s chances for aid.
3. Investigate all possible sources of aid. The major sources of aid are grants, scholarships, loans and work.
4. November – both the student and parent should apply for a FAFSA PIN# ([www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov)). Attend Financial Aid Workshop.
5. December – pick up the FAFSA on the Web Worksheet form at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Some private colleges also require the CSS profile.

Three good, general rules that apply to **all** financial aid application situations are:

**Plan Ahead**

#### Ask Questions

#### Be Aware of Deadline Dates

**Steps to Financial Aid**

***(Continued)***

A statement designed to drive parents and students crazy is: “Hundreds of millions of dollars in scholarship money go unclaimed each year.” The truth is, most what goes unused is really employee tuition remission benefits, not miscellaneous scholarships for which students have not applied.

**In your senior year** **(cont.)**

1. January – Submit application for Financial Aid. Submit the FAFSA on-line after January 1. If you have not received your W2 forms, you may estimate your income and then send in official copies at a later date. Watch for a FAFSA Completion Workshop at your school. These workshops will help you complete this process.
2. In about one week, you will receive the Student Aid Report (SAR), which will identify the student’s Expected Family Contribution (EFC). Verify that your SAR is correct; then sign Part II.
3. Mail the entire SAR to the Financial Aid Office(s) of the school(s) you plan to attend.
4. The Financial aid administrator of the college develops a financial aid package, which is a mix of aid from various programs. It may include a grant, low interest loan, scholarship and work-study plan.
5. The Financial Aid Office sends an award letter to the student.
6. The student must accept or decline the offer, sign the award letter and return it to the Financial Aid Office.
7. The college/university will credit the student’s account or issue checks directly to the student to pay the cost of education.

A mistake some families make is not applying for financial aid. It can never really be predicted whether or not you will qualify, and many schools require the FAFSA in order to award scholarships – even those not based on financial need.



Be aware of some SCHOLARSHIP SCAMS! Scholarship and financial aid offers that show up in the mail on the Web may be the tools of con artists designed to bilk parents and students eager to find ways to pay college expenses. Beware of the following phrases: “you’ve been scheduled to participate” or “chosen” or “specially selected,” May I have your credit card or bank account number to register you or hold this scholarship?” Or, “This scholarship will cost some money.” Be wary of “being selected by a national foundation” or “you’re a finalist” in a scholarship contest you never entered! Check with your counselor prior to scheduling or paying for anything.

# Steps to Financial Aid

# Steps to Financial Aid

# *(Continued)*

One of the most frequently asked questions by students and parents during the college search is, ‘Where can we get information about financial aid and/or scholarships?” Fortunately, there are many resources available to research. The following scholarship sources are available for students and parents to explore.

**Resources for Financial Aid**

Colleges/Universities: Most colleges offer scholarships and are the best sources for possible academic, athletic and special talent scholarships. Many of the scholarships can be found in the college files in the CRC.

Scholarship Bulletin: includes a current list of scholarships sent directly to the high school. The list includes private and local scholarships like Rotary, MacLean Fogg, and the Lions Club Scholarship. This information can also be found on the Career Cruising website.

Books: There are a multitude of books available in your local library.

Organizations: Companies/business often offer scholarships for employees or children of employees. Some churches offer scholarships for persons of that faith.

## Financial Aid Websites: UPDATE!!!

The search for scholarships can be extremely time consuming. The summer between junior and senior year is a great time to begin this demanding process.



**MORE HELP WITH FINANCIAL AID…**

**Two important questions to ask college reps/admissions:**

1. **How much of a student’s demonstrated need does your school meet?**
2. **What is your school’s endowment?** This can indicate a college’s financial health.

My family and I have discussed the cost of my education:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On my list of schools I have:

Private\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Public In-State\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Public Out-of-state\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Financial aid is available through many sources:**

**U.S. Department of Education** *(ED)* is federal agency, which provides college funding in the form of **grants, scholarships** and **educational loans.**

**Illinois Student Assistance Commission** *(ISAC)* is the state agency that administers state and federal scholarships and grants, college saving and prepaid tuition programs, and educational loans.

**The four types of financial assistance are:**

**Scholarships Grants**

**Work-Study Loans**

These funds many be merit-based or need based.

**Forms** to be aware of:

**FAFSA** (available in December)

**CSS Profile** (available in September)

**INSTITUTIONAL FORM** (available from the institution)

**SCHOLARSHIP NOTIFICATIONS at NHP**:

Bulletin Boards (Guidance Office, Halls, Internet)

College Career Resource Center

**FREE SCHOLARSHIP SEARCHES:** [**www.fastweb.com**](http://www.fastweb.com) **and** [**www.finaid.org**](http://www.finaid.org)

**BEWARE OF SCAMS:** Check them out on: [www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov) or scholarships.com

*Although you may still have questions and concerns about financing your education, do no let the cost of school keep you from applying. Investigate all school opportunities and complete the necessary financial aid forms before making your final decision.*



**Nine Survival Skills**

**Survival Skills for College Admission**

1. **Read the directions** on all applications and other materials and follow them “to the T”.
2. **Know tests (ACT, SAT I, SAT II**) and **courses** required for admission to each college.
3. **Observe all deadlines.** When you receive an application, make a list of all deadlines.
4. **Be organized!** Applications tell the colleges about you. Take care with your applications and present yourself well.
5. **Stay focused** on what you need to do.
6. **Be considerate** of your counselor and the Registrar by observing deadlines, giving sufficient time to process your applications to colleges.
7. **Avoid “senioritis”.** Your senior grades may be crucial to your chances of admission.
8. **Check with your counselor or college counselor** if you hear something you aren’t sure is true. There are many false rumors out there.
9. **Relax and have fun!** The College Admission process is not a life-threatening experience. **Remember, there is more than one school that can meet your needs.**

**College Comparison Worksheet**

The criteria to be used when making college comparisons will vary according to student need. Add other criteria as appropriate before comparing colleges.

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ACT/SAT\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Rank\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_GPA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Comparative Criteria College A College B College C College D**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Enrollment – Undergraduate |  |  |  |  |
| Location |  |  |  |  |
| Campus setting: urban/rural, residential |  |  |  |  |
| Cost-tuition, room & board |  |  |  |  |
| Admission requirements/ACT/SAT, class rank |  |  |  |  |
| Freshman average class size |  |  |  |  |
| Application procedure deadline |  |  |  |  |
| Application fee |  |  |  |  |
| Academic atmosphere (competitiveness) |  |  |  |  |
| Academic Program (major) |  |  |  |  |
| Activities or special interests |  |  |  |  |
| Percent returning freshmen |  |  |  |  |
| Athletic programs |  |  |  |  |
| Type of housing available |  |  |  |  |
| Percentage of students receiving financial aid |  |  |  |  |
| Financial aid form required/preferred |  |  |  |  |
| Personal Impressions (distinctive characteristics) |  |  |  |  |
| Parent Opinion |  |  |  |  |
| Your order of preference |  |  |  |  |

**College Application Worksheet**

The criteria to be used when making college comparisons will vary according to student need. Add other criteria as appropriate before comparing colleges.

Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ACT/SAT\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Rank\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_GPA\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Questions/Tasks College A College B College C College D

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paper app or online? |  |  |  |  |
| Application fee paid? |  |  |  |  |
| Essay required or N/A? |  |  |  |  |
| Test scores: ACT or SAT? |  |  |  |  |
| Date scores sent from test company – scores sent from test company – scores are ***NOT*** on your transcript! |  |  |  |  |
| Teacher rec required? |  |  |  |  |
| Names(s) of Teacher(s) asked to write recs |  |  |  |  |
| Will teacher give rec to counselor/CRC or send directly to college? |  |  |  |  |
| Transcript release completed |  |  |  |  |
| Counselor part of app submitted or N/A? |  |  |  |  |
| Date all parts of the application procedure completed. Hooray! |  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Notes:** |
|  |
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|  |

**Glossary**

**ACT – A**merican **C**ollege **T**esting, Examination used for admission to and/or placement in college.

**Admission Policies**

1. **Regular Admissions –** Specific deadline for applying; student usually notified by April 15th and must notify school by May 1st if he/she plans to attend.
2. **Rolling Admissions –** School continuously processes applications; student receives reply four to six weeks after application submitted. This is the most popular admissions policy today.
3. **Early Plans –** There are three general early admission policies today:
   1. **Early Decision** – ONLY for the student who knows ‘the” school he/she wants to attend. This is a binding agreement and he/she must enroll unless the financial aid award is inadequate. He/she should rank in the top 10-20% of the class and have a strong grade point average and test scores. Usually must apply by early November to that school. Student forfeits right to wait until May 1st to reply to offer of admission.
   2. **Early Action/Notification** – Usually, a student applies by early November and is notified of admission much earlier than April. You may wait May 1st to respond to an offer of admission. As a rule of thumb, do not apply to an Early program until you:
      1. Clearly understand all the requirements and consequences of such a program (usually spelled out in the application)
      2. Talk over the decision to apply with your counselor and your parents.
   3. **Single-Choice Early Action** – Allows applicants to apply to as many colleges as they want under a Regular admission time frame but does not allow a candidate to apply to other schools under any type of early action, early decision or early notification program. Students are asked to sign statements indicating the applicant is aware of the terms of Single-Choice Early Action. This program differs from Early Decision in that students have the right to wait until May 1st to reply to an offer of admission.

**Admit/Accept** – A college has officially notified you of your acceptance. You have until May 1st to formally commit to attending.

**Application Fee** – A non-refundable fee usually charged for making application to a college.

**Bachelor’s Degree** – See “Degree” below.

**College Career Day** – Brings representatives from a large number of college and universities into a single, concentrated environment.

**College Representative** – An admissions counselor or representative from the Office of Admissions at a particular school.

**College/University** – These two words both refer to the same thing: a place where you can continue your education beyond high school. A college typically refers to a small (50-3,500 students usually) school awarding undergraduate degrees; different fields of study are separated by a department structure.

A **university** typically refers to a larger (2,000+ students) school awarding both undergraduate and graduate degrees (beyond the bachelor degree); different fields of study are separated by a college structure. (For example, the University of Illinois has several different colleges: Liberal Arts and Sciences, Business, Education, Engineering and Fine/Applied Arts.)

**Common Application** – (informally known as the Common App) is an undergraduate college admission application that applicants may use to apply to any of 392 member colleges and universities in the U.S.

**Community College** – A college that offers two-year programs rather than four-year. Students can earn the Associate of Arts degree and complete general education requirements for a Bachelor’s degree.

**Deferred** – The college has decided not to make an application decision at this time. They will make a decision to admit or deny you by April. You should have enough time to make your decision by the May 1st Universal Reply Date.

**Degree** – After attending four years of college, or completing from 120-128 semester hours of coursework, you receive a **Bachelor’s degree**. There are various Bachelor degrees, depending upon your major:

B.A. – Bachelor of Arts (most majors in liberal arts areas – English, Language, Education, etc.)

B.S. – Bachelor of Science (includes Engineering, Business)

B.B.A. – Bachelor of Business Administration (only at some schools)

B.M. – Bachelor of Music

B.F.A. – Bachelor of Fine Arts

After you successfully complete the course requirements at a community college, usually from 60-62 hours of coursework, you receive an **Associate’s degree**. The two most common Associate degrees are:

A.A. – Associate of Arts

A.A.S. – Associate of Applied Science

**Deny/Reject** – College admission office notice of non-acceptance to their school.

**FAFSA**- Free Application For Student Assistance. This federal form must be completed to receive financial aid from a college. It must be completed after January 1st of a student’s senior year in high school. An EFC (Expected Family Contribution) is determined by FAFSA, and the student and college is notified of that amount.

**Financial Aid** – Monetary support to defray the costs of a college education. This could include Federal aid, state aid, university awards/scholarships, and several forms of need-based aid. In order to receive financial aid, you must complete the FAFSA (and/or CSS, if your school requires it).

**Graduate Assistant/Teacher Assistant** (**GA** or **TA**) – An assistant to the professor in a college course. Typically, a graduate student completing work in a specific area related to the course with which s/he is assisting.

**Grant** – Money that does not have to be paid back and is awarded to an incoming student.

**Honors Program** –A program designed to encourage superior students to engage in a more challenging program than is commonly required in their area of concentration. Students completing the stringent requirements are usually granted ‘honors’ degrees.

**Hours** – In college, credits are awarded on the basis of semester or quarter hours of class attendance, instead of units. Most schools require 120-128 hours for graduation. Most classes meet three hours per week, and most students take five classes. 5 classes X 3 hours = 15 hours of credit that would be awarded each semester. (Remember, for every hour of class time, you are generally expected to spend from one to two hours on outside preparation, or 15-30 hours per week of study minimally…)

**Housing Deposit** – Refundable OR non-refundable deposit made with a college to confirm and guarantee student residence.

**Letter of Intent** – Formal and binding arrangement between a DI-II student-athlete and a college, mutually agreeing on the student’s intention to enroll at the school and participate in the recruited sport.

**Liberal Arts** – Refers to the study of general knowledge in the humanities including sciences. Liberal arts majors include literature, the arts, the social sciences, and education. Also refers to college curriculum (plan of study), which requires you to take one or more courses in each of the humanities as well as science and math; provides a broad base of knowledge before you specialize in one area. If you are undecided about a major, a liberal arts college or major is an excellent choice!

**Major/Minor** – a major is a concentration of related courses in a field of study, generally consisting of 24-50 semester hours; some majors may require a minor concentration.

**MAP Award** – Monetary Award Program. This program is administered through the State of Illinois.

**Matriculation** – Formal enrollment in a college or university.

**Merit Award** – Scholarship or grant awarded by the college to reward superior students. The awards are usually renewable through the college, if the student maintains a certain GPA.

**NAIA** – National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics. Intercollegiate association regulating college athletics. See pages \_\_\_\_\_\_

**NCAA** – National Collegiate Athletic Association. Intercollegiate association regulating college athletics. See page \_\_\_\_\_

**Private college/university** – An educational institution which is not supported by public taxes. These schools may either have a religious affiliation or be independent.

**Quarter System** – Division of the academic year into four sections; fall, winter, spring, and summer quarters; each quarter is ten to eleven weeks in duration.

**Registration** – The process, prior to the beginning of each semester/trimester/quarter whereby students select courses, pay fees, and develop their class schedules for the term.

**Rights & Responsibilities** – See inside back cover of this workbook.

**ROTC** – Reserve Officer’s Training Corps. Many colleges have units which offer two and four year programs of military training culminating in an officer’s commission.

**Rush Week** – A period set aside, with the approval of the college, for fraternities and sororities to issue invitations to prospective members. ‘Delayed rush’ indicates that this is held just prior to, or at the beginning of, the second semester.

**SAT** – **S**cholastic **A**ptitude **T**est. Examination used for admission to and/or placement within a college.

**SAT II** – Subject Area Tests. Tests administered through the College Board. Topic areas are: English, History, Mathematics, Science, and Language.

**Scholarships** – Financial support provided by either a private or public source. Funds are generally awarded either through a competitive process or are need-based.

**Semester** – A division of the academic calendar into two separate units of equal duration.

**Transcript** – An official record of a student’s academic performance from the time of entrance to the last semester. Test scores are not included on this official document.

**Trimester** – Academic calendar divided into three separate units of equal duration.

**Tuition** –The charge for instruction. Generally designated for either a year or a semester for a full-time student; part-time students are designated by the credit hours of the courses in which they are enrolled.

**Wait Listed** – The college admission office has placed your name on a list. You have neither been accepted or denied. If you continue to have interest in the school, you need to notify them of your interest. Wait listing can be compared to an “admissions limbo.” Often, selective schools have more qualified students than they have placed in their admitting pool, so they create a wait list. Typically, students are admitted from a wait list by the end of June, after the May 1st Universal Reply Date. Students who are waitlisted should contact their counselor immediately to determine action to be taken.



**NOTES**



**NOTES**



**Students’ Rights & Responsibilities in the Application Process**

Your **RIGHTS** entitle you to:

Receive full information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial aid, scholarship, and housing policies. If you consider completing an early decision application, you should obtain complete information from the college regarding its process and policy.

Wait to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until you have heard from all college and universities to which you have applied or until May 1, whichever comes earlier.

If you think your rights as a student have been infringed upon or denied, see Mrs. Boyle or Ms. Donovan first, and then contact the college or university immediately to request additional information or the extension of a reply date.

Your **RESPONSIBILITIES** are:

Notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting ifs offer of admission. You should make these notifications as soon as you have heard from all the colleges to which you have applied or by May 1, whichever is earlier. Also, if you are accepted under an early decision plan, which requires you to attend that institution, **you must withdraw** applications submitted to other colleges or universities at the time of that acceptance and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, the previously mentioned withdrawal of other applications presumes you have received notification about financial aid.\*

Confirm your intention to enroll and submit a deposit to **only one college** or university by its required notification date, **May 1**. If you are put on a Wait List by a school and are later admitted by that institution, you may choose to accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify any other school to which you had previously indicated your intention to enroll.

**Letters to withdraw your application from a college** should include your address, the date, your signature (with your name printed clearly underneath), your social security number, the fact that you had to withdraw your application, and (optionally) the name of the school you plan to attend. This information can be placed on a postcard and mailed as soon as you are sure which college you will attend. This is a courtesy to fellow students on housing and wait lists, as well as to the school.

\*Any violation of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) Statement of Students’ Rights & Responsibilities will be reported by District 128 to all concerned colleges and universities.