

# COLLEGE PLANNING:



## Information For Juniors

# A Message To Students

There are more than 3,500 two and four year colleges in the United States. How will you pick the right one?

It's important to draw on your knowledge of yourself - some of the things you learned in career education about skills, values and abilities. You need to ask yourself questions. Only you can determine your preferences. This booklet has been developed to help you answer questions such as: What type of college do I want to attend? ; Where do I want to be?; In what environment?; How much will it cost?; What other services do I need? With the help of workshops, literature, your parents and your counselor you can work through this process efficiently.

Every student aspires to find the "right" college. There is seldom one right choice and 3,499 wrong ones. In reality there are a number of right colleges and universities out there just waiting for you!

Happy College Hunting!

THE GUIDANCE & COUNSELING STAFF

# A Message To Parents

Preparing for college is a time of anxiety for your son or daughter. Help them by seeing that they follow the procedures properly and meet all deadlines.

Be an active participant in the exploration process and offer your guidance when weighing information and creating the list of schools to which he/she will apply. Be certain that your young adult completes all admission requirements in accordance with the required deadlines.

The college application process can be time consuming and detract from routine student responsibilities. Make sure that your young adult keeps up with all schoolwork and encourage a good attitude.

Students who apply to a range of schools will have a choice if they select well. Should a negative response be received, provide consolation and support. When good news is received, seize the time to praise and congratulate your child. You now have a college freshman in your family!

Best wishes through the college search!

THE GUIDANCE & COUNSELING STAFF

# JUNIOR CHECKLIST

## FEBRUARY

- Begin a College search.
- Develop a strategy for studying for SAT or ACT.
- Make sure a Naviance account is set up.

## MARCH

- Create an initial list of colleges.
- Register for the May SAT I or II approximately one month prior. Register at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). **Please note deadlines.**

## APRIL

- Register for the June SAT I or II approximately one month prior. Register at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com). **Please note deadlines.**
- Visit colleges during your spring break. Attend college open houses.
- Identify list of potential colleges/vocational-technical schools you are interested in and need more information about. Develop a list of questions, things you need to know about the college or school. This will be helpful when meeting with college reps or visiting colleges.

## MAY

- Register for the June ACT in early May. Register at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and be sure to **note deadlines.**
- Take the AP exams mid May.
- Take SAT.
- Add colleges to your Naviance account.

## JUNE

- Take SAT I/SAT II test in early June.
- Take ACT in early June.
- Ask Junior teachers for recommendations (optional at this time).
- Juniors looking into Division I & II sports schools – should notify your counselor and contact NCAA Clearinghouse at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)

## JULY-AUGUST-SUMMER

- Make appointments to visit and interview at colleges. Contact the Admissions Office to set up tours and interviews.
- Visit the colleges you are interested, pickup application materials and visit the Financial Aid Office to obtain information.
- Formulate ideas for your college application essay that will be part of the application process.
- Develop a first draft of your application essay.
- Email coaches if interested in participating in intercollegiate sports.
- Use the summer to enhance your resume and activity sheet i.e. travel, volunteer, job shadow.
- Begin to compose your college essays.
- Complete the Senior Questionnaire on the Guidance page of the CRCS website or pick up one in the Guidance Office.
- August SAT and ACT's are now available.

# SENIOR CHECKLIST

## SEPTEMBER

- Take strong academic courses and stay in them.
- Use your Planning Guide to help clarify your educational goals, needs and preferences.
- Reduce your list to 5-10 colleges and obtain applications.
- The Common Application on-line at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) can be used for some private schools as well as SUNY's.
- If you are applying to a SUNY school you can use the SUNY application on-line at [www.suny.edu/student](http://www.suny.edu/student)
- For any private schools not using the Common App, visit that school's website to apply.
- Check the registration dates for the SAT I, SAT II, ACT.
- Keep track of application deadlines for college applications and financial aid.
- Contact three teachers to provide recommendations for you.
- Complete the Senior Questionnaire available in the Guidance and Counseling Center.
- Register for the ACT, SAT I and SAT II if you plan to take these tests in the fall.
- Meet regularly with college representatives.
- Complete Financial Aid Profile.

## OCTOBER

- Attend the College Fair at SUNY Cobleskill.
- Check in the Guidance and Counseling Center to be sure that all teacher recommendations have been completed.
- Put finishing touches on your college essays.
- Visit colleges for tours and admissions meetings.
- Take the October ACT exam.
- Complete and send your financial aid forms. The FAFSA becomes available October 1<sup>st</sup>.

## NOVEMBER

- Research financial aid options and scholarships.
- Let your school counselor know what colleges you have applied to by using the on-line source through Common App or simply informing your counselor. This enables the guidance office to send out your supporting information.
- Take the November SAT I/SAT II.
- Attend the Financial Aid workshop sponsored by the Guidance and Counseling Center

## DECEMBER

- Pick up the required financial aid forms as they become available.
- Take the ACT, SAT I or SAT II if necessary.
- Meet with your School Counselor to verify that your college applications have been sent.

## JANUARY

- Remember to thank teachers who wrote recommendations for you.
- Men 18 or older must sign up for the selective service in order to be eligible for financial aid.
- Review course selections and requirements.

## **FEBRUARY**

- Request that your counselor forward mid-year grades to the colleges you applied to. Make sure to supply the appropriate forms.
- Update colleges on your honors and achievements.

## **MARCH**

- Make arrangement for a personal and/or alumni interview if you have not already done so.
- Check the scholarship information file in the Guidance and Counseling Center.

## **APRIL**

- Evaluate choices as you receive admissions decisions.
- Visit colleges to help you make final decisions. Ask colleges about overnight accommodations.
- After receiving notification from the colleges, make sure to pay your admissions deposit on time.
- Review your college aid reports carefully. Make copies and send the reports to the school you plan on attending.

## **MAY**

- By May 1, notify colleges if you plan to accept or reject their offer.
- Notify the financial aid office at the college of your choice that you have accepted the financial aid award.
- Take Advanced Placement exams as necessary.
- Notify your counselor of your final decision.
- If you are not accepted to any colleges, see your counselor immediately.
- **KEEP YOUR GRADES UP!** College acceptances are pending final transcript results.

## **JUNE**

- Organize materials that you receive from your college choice.
- Secure bank loans if necessary.
- Do not miss deadlines for college housing, registration and orientation.
- Be sure to thank people who assisted you with the college selection process.
- Plan your summer carefully and continue to read as much as possible in preparation for your first year of college.
- Make sure you request an Official Transcript from all of the colleges that you have earned College in the High School Credits. Colleges will only accept credits from an Official Transcript from which you earned the credits. (ex. SUNY Cobleskill, R.I.T., SUNY Oswego and SUNY Morrisville)
- AP scores must be submitted to the Registrars Office of the college you will be attending for review to determine whether credit will be granted.

# EXPLORING THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

## **FAST FACTS – Questions and Answers about College Admissions**

### **Q1. When will I submit my applications?**

As early as September of your senior year. Early Decision ranges from October 15 through December 15 based on the college plan. Private school applications are usually sent before the Winter Holiday Break. Open admissions accept applications later, this includes Community Colleges.

### **Q2. What resources are available to begin to research colleges?**

The Guidance and Counseling Center has complete information and resources to assist you.

Contact the colleges directly. The address can be found on the [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) website just by typing in the name. You can email questions directly, take a virtual tour by linking to the college website, obtain applications and create your college list.

### **Research websites like:**

**CollegeGrazing.com** – College Grazing is a tool to help students focus their thinking about college selection. Through a series of surveys (called “munchings”), users develop their own personal list of criteria for choosing a college and deciding whether a particular school is right for them. We particularly liked the section on essay writing which breaks down the process in to manageable chunks.

**College Matchmaker** – What is the right match for me? Explore some colleges and universities that meet your needs: <http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/advhome.jsp>

**College Majors** – Learn about 600 majors and careers profiled here: [www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors\\_careers/profiles/index.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/csearch/majors_careers/profiles/index.html)

**Campus Tours** – YOUiversity/TV.com features entertaining and informative video tours of college campuses from Florida to California to Hawaii: Visit [www.YOUiversity/TV.com](http://www.YOUiversity/TV.com). Also check out [www.CampusTours.com](http://www.CampusTours.com) too!

**Additional sites:**

- [Students.gov](http://Students.gov) – Student Gateway to the Future from the U.S. Gov.
- [Educationalplanner.org](http://Educationalplanner.org) – Educational planner (Peterson's)
- [Collegeanswer.com](http://Collegeanswer.com) – College Answer (Sallie Mae)
- [Myroad](http://Myroad) – College Board
- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) – College Board Website
- [The Princeton Review](http://ThePrincetonReview)
- [College Navigator](http://CollegeNavigator)
- [www.admissionsconsultants.com](http://www.admissionsconsultants.com)

**Q3. What do I need to do to Apply?**

Follow directions and read carefully. Complete every area on the application. Send high school transcripts, essays, recommendations, test scores and supplemental material if requested.

Print out a work copy and complete the application on paper before you go online. Do not leave it for the last minute.

**Q4. What is a transcript and how do I send it?**

Transcripts are a history of your semester grades, courses and levels, GPA, class rank, credits, and SAT/ACT scores.

Please request your transcript from the Guidance and Counseling Center and we will mail it for you with your other application information. If you apply on line, please remember to request a transcript be sent.

**Q5. How do I go about deciding on the type of college that's for me?**

**Major** – What are you interested in studying?

**Look at size** – Colleges come in small, medium and large. Visit colleges that feel right for you. Your final list should be narrowed down to 6-8 schools that are considered a Stretch, Target and Safety school. These are all schools with factors in common and that offer you everything that you are looking for, but whose entry statistics are 10-15% above your stats for Stretch and 10% below for Safety.

**Distance** – Close to home or the other side of the country, decide this early. Talk about this together with your parents.

**Cost** - Financial factors are important to discuss as a family early in the search process so that you have a better sense of what financial limitations you need to consider before choosing to apply to a college.



## HOW ADMISSION DECISIONS ARE MADE

This may come as a surprise, but admission decisions aren't made by tossing applications down the stairwell and accepting those students whose folders reach the bottom step. It's more like chefs with big mixing bowls-and you're responsible for providing the right ingredients. Admission professionals are looking for the right students to ensure a great outcome for everyone involved, so they take this part of their jobs very seriously. They strive to be as fair and thorough as possible, but with all the factors involved in making a decision, it may seem sometimes that the results are unpredictable. However, that's not the case.

A little bit of this and a little bit of that, as with any recipe, you have to start by gathering all your ingredients; we mean paperwork! Everything that you and your high school (and anyone else) sends to each school is filed into a folder with your name on it. Every scrap of paper which bears your name, from supplemental essays to phone message slips to thank you notes, is likely to end up there. Then, each folder is read carefully – so long as it's complete. If it isn't, it will stay on the figurative shelf to collect dust and you'll be wondering why no one has gotten back to you.

Who exactly will be looking over these folders? At small schools, the entire admissions staff may evaluate your application at great length. At larger institutions, a single admissions official may be the sole judge of your future, perhaps with a little help from the computer. At many places, decisions are made by more than one person, including admissions officials, faculty members and other administrators. Which committee gets your application may be determined alphabetically, geographically, departmentally (e.g. school of business applicants) or by the date your application is completed. The person who interviewed you, visited your high school or spoke so reassuringly to you on the phone may or may not be among the decision-makers. It's pretty normal for committee members to examine each folder independently and to assign it an overall rating before the committee meets to make final decisions.

### **Big Factors**

There are many things included in your application and each one of them will be evaluated to determine who you are and what kind of student you will potentially be. Some schools may prefer a bigger pinch of certain things than others, but they all usually require the same ingredients – it's just a matter of how much of each they wish to add. For each school it is a matter of individual taste and they are looking for just the right mix for them.

Learn more about the most common ingredients in a college application and how they factor into the final decision:

- Academics
- Extracurricular Activities and Leadership
- Essays, Recommendations and Interviews
- Other Factors
- Making the Final Cut

Source: <http://www.petersons.com>

## 12 STRATEGIES FOR JUNIORS

### **#1. Stay Focused on Academics**

Admissions officers, guidance counselors and college consultants agree that the academic record is an extremely important factor. InLikeMe.com puts a challenging curriculum and strong grades at the top of the list. A rigorous class schedule shows intellectual curiosity, a willingness to challenge yourself and comfort with hard work. There are compelling financial benefits too. A strong academic record can lead to merit scholarships and credits earned from dual enrollment, AP and IB classes and CLEP exams can cut college costs.

### **#2. Build Your Resume**

All competitive colleges seek to build a diversified and interesting student body. In past years, most successful applicants were well-rounded high-achievers. These days, there is a growing preference for involved, high-achievers and leaders who also possess a special activity (pursued with passion) that sets them apart from other applicants.

### **#3. Sign Up for a Separate College E-Mail Account**

You'll often be asked for an email address when you attend colleges presentations, fairs and register to receive scholarship and school information. A professional looking email address (e.g. first initial, last name, graduation year – nwilliams15@.....) will help show that you are a serious candidate. Gmail, with its web interface and strong search capabilities is very popular with college applicants.

### **#4. Prep for SAT/ACT and Subject Tests**

Strong college entrance exam scores not only improve your chances of acceptance, they can also lead to significant scholarship money. The SAT and ACT are very different college entrance exams. Most colleges accept either (or both). Many students have increased their scores significantly with preparation.

### **#5. Read, Write and Build your Vocabulary**

Most college students spend a lot of time reading and writing. Those with well developed skills have a distinct advantage over less prepared classmates. Enhancing your skills during high school will not only help you perform better on college entrance exams, it will prepare you for success in college. InLikeMe suggests regular reading of challenging articles and editorials from the New York Times, Wall Street Journal and/or The Economist.

### **#6. Attend College Fairs & Information Sessions**

College Fairs are a quick and low cost way (often free) to check out many schools (on the same day) and meet admissions representatives without traveling far from home. Learn to *make the most of the college fair* with effective organization, note taking and planning.

## **#7. Visit Colleges**

If you are in the area of a college that interests you, check it out. It's best to visit when school is in session, but you can get a feel for a college almost any time. If you are planning a vacation, or visiting relatives, think about nearby colleges that may interest you.

## **#8. Get up to Speed on Financial Aid & Scholarships**

A college education can be an extraordinary investment that opens doors and eyes to interesting and lucrative career opportunities, probably not otherwise possible. It can also be one of the largest investments you'll make in your lifetime. Fortunately, there are *many opportunities for financial assistance* – merit aid, scholarships, loans, grants, work study – to make college more affordable and help you pay the bill. Before you cross a college off your wish list due to “sticker shock”, understand that the real cost of college is the “net price” (list price minus the amount of financial aid) which may make the situation look a lot less dire. Speak with your guidance counselor or scholarship coordinator and learn more at [ScholarshipRoadMap.com](http://ScholarshipRoadMap.com).

## **#9. Research College Majors & Careers**

You're not alone if you are a high school student without clear direction about your future. Most young people can benefit from self-assessment tools to help define goals and explore college environments, academic majors and potential careers. InLikeMe provides advice along with helpful self-assessment tools.

## **#10. Build Your College Admissions Team**

Navigating the road to college can be a daunting experience. There's no need to go at it alone. Building Your College Admissions Team will help you benefit from the support and advice of people you know and trust such as your guidance counselor, friends & family, teachers, coaches, employers, club advisors, volunteer activity leaders and local alumni. Your counselor is a key team member. If you haven't done so already, it's a good time to meet with your counselor to map out a game plan to make sure you are on the right track.

## **#11 Start Drafting your Admissions Resume**

Your college Admissions Resume is a special resume that highlights your accomplishments during high school. It can be a tremendous asset when you fill out applications, meet with interviewers, ask for recommendations and apply for scholarships. InLikeMe's “Composing your College Resume” will tell you how to organize your activities, awards, honors, community service, leadership positions, jobs & internships and present them in a compelling resume.

## **#12. Brainstorm on College & Scholarship Essays**

Some students report a brain freeze when they sit down to write college essays. You can ease the stress and enhance your raw material (activities, leadership positions, summer job, internship, college courses, community services) with some up front planning. Colleges look for articulate, well-written, thoughtful essays providing insight into your personality, values and goals.

## BIG FUTURE

When your students take the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), they're taking a big step toward life beyond high school. How can you help them look past their scores toward their future? How can you help them assess their skills, understand their academic needs, and make sense of their interests?

Big Future is an easy-to-use on-line, personalized college and career planning kit available free of charge to all students who take the PSAT/NMSQT. This useful tool incorporates student responses that were provided when they took the test, and it presents their data back to them in four main parts:

- My Online Score Report – an enhanced score report that allows students to review each test question, the student's answer, and the correct answer with answer explanations.
- My SAT Study Plan – a customized SAT study plan based on student PSAT/NMSQT test performance, highlighting skills for review and practice
- College Search – a starter list of colleges based on the student's state and indicated choice of major
- College Planning – personalized lists of majors and careers plus access to a personality assessment that suggests other compatible possibilities

Students can access their accounts starting in mid-December. To sign in, students need:

- A College Board student account (students who do not already have a College Board account will be prompted to create one. It typically takes less than two minutes to create a free account).

## FREE SAT PRACTICE FROM KHAN ACADEMY

The College Board and Khan Academy have teamed up to provide free personalized SAT study resources at [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org).



## HONORS AND AP COURSES

### Understanding the advantages

The National Association for College Admission Counseling's (NACAC) annual State of College Admissions survey consistently finds that student performance in college preparatory classes is the most important factor in the admissions decision. With this in mind, encourage enrollment in honors and AP courses even if your students have the impression that only "top" students should take these courses or the fear that taking these challenging courses might result in a lower GPA. Advanced-level courses are worth the extra effort.

### Implications for admissions

Students don't understand how much weight college admissions officers give to advanced-level courses on an applicant's transcript. Admissions officers are not impressed by straight A's when they are all earned in easy courses.

### Honors or AP?

Honors classes:

- Offer the same curriculum as regular classes, but are tailored for high-achieving students –covering additional topics or some topics in greater depth.

AP courses:

- Cover the breadth of information, skills, and assignments found in corresponding college courses
- Align with the standards and expectations offered at leading liberal arts and research institutions
- Provide motivated and academically prepared students the opportunity to study and learn at the college level

The College Board encourages all educators to make equitable access a guiding principle for their school's AP programs, and to make every effort to ensure that their AP classes reflect the racial, ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of their student body.

Most US colleges and many international ones have an AP Credit Policy which allows students who have taken AP courses or exams to earn college credit, placement or both.

## The Extracurricular Edge

### What your students should know about out-of-school activities

You know that there is more than meets the eye to the admissions game and you want to give your students any edge you can. Admissions officers know that what potential students do with their time outside of school reveals important personal dimensions that statistics can't show.

Participating in an extracurricular activity – be it student government, a sport, a part-time job or volunteering – while maintaining good grades, demonstrates

- Time-management skills
- Ability to prioritize
- Motivation
- Responsibility
- Leadership qualities

A College Board study reveals that participants in extracurricular activities often achieve higher SAT scores.

The study suggests that important reasoning abilities measured by tests like the SAT are developed both in and out of the classroom. Results show that participation in extracurricular activities benefits minority and socio-economically disadvantaged students as much or more than economically advantaged students.

### Tips for selecting extracurricular activities

#### 1. Choose depth over breadth

Admissions officers are more likely to consider an applicant who is deeply and passionately committed to a specific activity, rather than one who is superficially involved in multiple activities. Nanci Tessier, Director of Admissions at Smith College explains, “We’re looking for a commitment to and a passion for an activity outside of the academic setting. We’re looking for depth rather than breadth.”

#### 2. Consider interests and abilities

Guide students towards activities that complement and enhance their specific interests and skills. A student who is a talented writer should consider working on the school newspaper or yearbook. Dorothy Coppock, a counselor at the Evanston Township High School in Illinois, reassures her students that a passion unrelated to school counts too; “an avid equestrian or ice-skater does not need to add on a school activity to look well-rounded.”

#### 3. Seek a balance

Achieving a balance between academics and extracurricular activities can be a challenge for students. Remind them that participating in too many activities can take away from study time. It can also lead to burnout and exhaustion.

#### 4. Count working and volunteering

The commitment to working at a job or volunteering reveals certain personality characteristics that appeal to admissions officers. It usually works in an applicant’s favor if they show a significant level of employment or community service while maintaining academic excellence.

**5. Use Internships to develop interests**

Internships can help students discover activities they feel passionate about. Work experience assists in identifying career interests and goals. It provides an opportunity to apply classroom learning to the real world. It's also a great way to earn money for college.

**6. Realize that inclusion in most lists and publications is not significant**

Colleges are interested in actual achievements. Help students recognize that colleges do not give much weight to being listed in *Who's Who Among American High School Students* or other "name only" accomplishments.

Students can strengthen college applications by exploring a couple of activities and sticking with them through high school – and they will develop skills and interests that may last a lifetime.

Source: <http://professional.collegeboard.com/guidance/prepare/extracurricular>

## Timing the SAT/ACT Testing

*These tests are expensive, make each one count! Waivers are available for students who are on “free and reduced lunch.”*

**SAT** - The SAT I and SAT II Subject Tests are given on the same test dates, the first Saturday of each month from October through June. You can use a test date for either the SAT I or SAT II, but **NOT** for both.

Most juniors will take the test anywhere from March through June of their junior year. This works well because, for the most part, they have completed their course of study for eleventh grade. They can use this knowledge for the test and it also gives them time to review their PSAT results. Students need to sign up on line at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). The results of the test are available online about 3 weeks after the testing date. If you are taking multiple tests, wait long enough to get your results before you take an additional test to improve your results.

### Strategies

- Know that the detailed personal profile questions in the center of the SAT application are optional. However, the information that you provide on the personal profile will enable colleges to identify your interests. If there is a match, you will receive material from them to help you with your college selection process.
- Know that the test is scored differently. Each correct answer is worth one point, and a portion of a point is deducted for incorrect answers. No points are lost for omitting a question.
- Know the test questions of the same type are grouped together and range from less to more difficult. Start the easy questions and do not linger over any one question.
- Understand that you are not expected to know everything on the test. If you answer one half of the questions correctly and omit the rest, you can still get an average score.
- Grid carefully and use the correct answer sheets for the right sections. Erase completely and follow the directions for gridding the student-response questions.
- Remember that the directions and question types are the same as the PSAT. You are already familiar with them. Each minute you save reading the directions is a minute more you can spend taking the test.

**ACT** - The ACT, unlike the SAT I, is curriculum-based. A September testing date is available and since this date is not used by the SAT program, it allows students to focus their attention on this test only. There is no November test date. You may sign-up for the ACT on line at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

### Strategies

- Look at both the SAT I and ACT and the requirements of your colleges to determine which one you should choose.
- Review before you take the ACT. Because the test is content oriented, recent participation in the subject and/or thorough review of materials will increase your score.
- Know the test format. This test is very different from the SAT, so you will need to become familiar with the ACT’s approach and format. **For one thing, the ACT does not penalize you for guessing.**
- Know that presently ALL of your scores will be posted on your transcript, so colleges will see every score. Make sure you are showing a track record of improvement to colleges and are not taking tests without review before hand.



## Study Practices

The SAT and ACT are two very different tests (see enclosure) so students need to study for each test separately. The formula for success is to commit 6 hours per week for six weeks prior to the test date.

Study Materials and online resources are abundant and free. Career Center has a lending library, and the Media Center has an online resource that can be found in your packet. Students and their families may decide on whether private individual coaching or small group review would be beneficial. Please make sure you speak with your counselor and the Career Center about testing schedules and practice resources.

## Sample Testing Schedule

**If you are in AP English and Algebra II or higher, you might follow this schedule:**

### Primary Option:

**SAT**

**Junior Year**

January, March, May and/or June

**Senior Year**

October

**ACT**

**Junior Year**

February, April and/or June

**Senior Year**

September and/or October

### Secondary Option:

**Junior**

May and/or June

**Senior Year**

October

April and/or June

**Senior Year**

September and/or October

## SAT vs. ACT COMPARISON CHART

The SAT and ACT are two very different college entrance exams. Both are nationally administered and are used to help colleges evaluate applicants. The SAT is essentially a three-part aptitude test (Reading, Math, Writing) while the ACT is more of an achievement test with four core sections (English, Math, Reading, Science) and an optional Writing Section. Many colleges will accept either test or both exams. Some colleges require one (typically the SAT). The chart below will help you understand the structure and content of the SAT and ACT.

	SAT	ACT
<b>Length</b>	3 Hours, 50 minutes (includes optional 50 minute essay)	3 hours, 25 minutes (includes optional 30-minute Writing Test)
<b>Sections</b>	4 sections plus optional essay: 2 Math, 1 Reading, 1 Writing & Language	4 sections (plus optional writing test), English, Math, Reading, Science, Writing
<b>Subjects</b>	Reading Math Writing & Language Essay	English Math Reading Science Writing (optional) 1 prompt 30 minutes
<b>Reading</b>	5 passages with questions 10-11 questions per passage	4 passages, 10 questions per passage
<b>Science</b>	N/A	Science (analysis, knowledge, problem solving)
<b>Math</b>	80 minutes, 58 questions: Algebra (35%), problem solving & data analysis (25%), Algebra II (27%), Geometry & Trigonometry (10%)	60 items, 60 minutes Arithmetic, algebra, geometry and trigonometry
<b>Essay Score Composition</b>	Optional (final section, 50 minutes) ½ Math, ½ Reading & Writing	Optional (final section) ¼ English ¼ Math ¼ Reading ¼ Science
<b>Scoring</b>	Aggregate score of 400-1600 based on 2 scores 200-800 (Math, evidence based Reading & Writing) Essay scored separately with Reading Analysis & Writing each reported on a 2-8 scale	Composite score 1-36 based on average of 4 sections (English, Math, Reading, Science)
<b>Penalties</b>	No penalties for incorrect answers	No penalties for incorrect answers
<b>Additional info</b>	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a>	<a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a>

Source: 2009 College and Career Readiness Workshops Resource Manual

## ***ORGANIZING INCOMING INFORMATION....***

You have probably begun to receive a lot of information from colleges, solicited and unsolicited. Some will interest you; some will not. But scan everything to make sure you don't overlook a college that you might not have thought about.

Set up a separate, clearly-marked folder as soon as you receive it. Don't throw anything away until you are positive you won't be applying there. Mark important dates for the colleges you are interested in on the Application Checklist as soon as you know them. Set up a single file with all the individual folders in alphabetical order.

## ***THE COLLEGE VISIT....***

Visiting colleges can give you a better idea about their educational programs, faculty, facilities, student body, school spirit, and general atmosphere. If a college is a clear first choice, get to that campus. But you do not need to visit every college to which you are planning to apply. Some colleges require an interview as part of the admission process, most do not. In the late spring of your junior year, schedule campus visits for summer and fall.

### **Tips for the campus visit:**

Read the materials sent by each college. The college catalog is a description of the academics and atmosphere at the institution. It includes the size of the student body, male-female ratio, admissions requirements, a history of the school, social organizations, and athletic programs. It is often less-than-fascinating reading, but it can give you some valuable information.

Select five or six colleges to visit. It is best to include a large institution, a smaller one, one in a city, and one in a campus setting. This will help you to confirm or change your ideas about what you want. Know the questions you want to ask each.

Look at college and family calendars. Choose dates and times that everyone can work with. Never schedule more than two schools in one day. Allow at least two hours for each college, as well as time for travel between them. Have alternate dates ready in case your first choice is unavailable. Call in advance to set up your tour and/or interview appointment.

If possible, try to tour before your interview. It will give you a feel for the college or university before you meet with a member of the admissions staff. You might also want to arrange meeting with coaches, department heads, professors, or friends attending the school.

Visit while the institution is in session. It is difficult to get a sense of atmosphere when students aren't around. But if your fall schedule is hectic, use the summer for your initial visits and interviews, and revisit the campuses after you have been accepted.

### **Once You Are On Campus:**

- \* Visit the library: take note of its accessibility and size.
- \* Visit the dorms, athletic fields, classrooms, dining facility and student center.
- \* Stop and talk to students all over campus.
- \* Do some snooping around to places not included on the regular tour.
- \* Read the bulletin boards to get a sense of what is happening on campus.
- \* Have a snack in the cafeteria or the student union and listen to the conversations around you.
- \* Sit in on a class.

Once you have visited a college, take a few minutes to jot down your reactions to the school. If you meet any people whom you would like to contact for more information, be sure to write down their names.

### ***MEETING COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES....***

Each year approximately 25 colleges, business schools, nursing schools and technical schools visit Cobleskill-Richmondville High School. They are eager to talk with students about the institution they represent. These are informal, often group sessions in which you can involve yourself to the degree of your choice. You may have questions or you may choose to simply listen to what the representative has to say about the college. We find that these meetings allow you to learn a great deal about many different kinds of colleges and we encourage students of all grade levels (especially juniors and seniors) to attend some of them. Most representatives visit during the fall semester. Schools scheduled to visit are announced during homeroom on the PA.

Another excellent place to meet a variety of school representatives is at College Fairs. Annually SUNY Cobleskill sponsors a College Fair in October, also there are many around the Capital District.

### ***THE INTERVIEW....***

There are two excellent reasons for scheduling a college interview. First, it is an opportunity for you to become a real person to the admissions officer instead of a combination of grades, scores, and activities on an application. Second, it lets you learn more about the college.

The importance of the interview in the admissions process varies enormously. It is certainly not the most important factor in your being admitted to a college. Some colleges don't even hold interviews, and others don't put interview notes in students' files. However, at some schools the interview can make a difference in your being admitted or not being admitted. You can't change your grades or scores, but a good interview can make you a more attractive admissions prospect to a school. This is especially true if you are applying to a selective school and are not at the top of the list for admission.

### **Tips For A Successful Interview:**

College admissions officers agree that there are certain basic rules that must be followed in order to have a successful interview:

- \* Be prepared.
- \* Take your interview confirmation with you.
- \* Arrive early for your interview
- \* Dress conservatively.
- \* Participate actively in the interview.
- \* Leave your parents in the waiting room.
- \* Be yourself.
- \* Send a thank you note.

# THE APPLICATION

## ***APPLICATION OPTIONS...***

There is not just one application deadline at many colleges nor is there just one date on which all students will be notified if they have been admitted. Colleges have adopted a variety of admission options because many students want to know early whether they have been accepted. The different admissions options are defined below:

### **REGULAR ADMISSIONS:**

The advantage of regular admissions is that it has the latest deadlines for applications to colleges. The disadvantages of this option is that it also has the latest notification dates for telling you whether you have been accepted. Selective schools will not usually send out information until early April. Most students choose to apply to college under regular admissions.

### **ROLLING ADMISSIONS:**

Many colleges, especially large state universities, admit students on a continuing basis until the freshman class is full. As soon as your application is sent in and complete, the admissions office reviews it and makes a decision. When you are notified depends on the school. Because students in this process are accepted on a first come first serve basis, it is to your advantage to apply early.

### **EARLY DECISION:**

If you have a strong high school record and really want to attend your first-choice college, you can apply under early decision. Usually, you apply in November and receive the school's decision in December. At that time you are either accepted, rejected or deferred into the regular admissions process.

Schools have different rules to this option which are imperative for you to understand. By signing up for early decision you are committed to attend that school if you are accepted.

### **EARLY ACTION:**

A few schools offer early action, which is similar to early decision. The main difference is that if you are accepted, you have until the regular admissions deadline to decide whether you want to attend that college. The students applying for this option are usually strong candidates.

It will be helpful to keep track of which admission option you will use as well as admission deadlines.

# COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURE SHEET

If you are applying to a 4 year private college and/or a 4 year SUNY school, you will be using both Naviance and Common Application to complete your application process. *Common Application* is how you apply to college. *Naviance* is how your transcript and letters of recommendation are submitted to those colleges.

Please read carefully and follow the steps below to streamline the application process:

## Step 1 Register with Common Application (CA)

- All Students who are applying to a 4 year private and 4 year SUNY schools **MUST** create a Common Application account
- Go to [commonapp.org](http://commonapp.org)
- Register with Common App and create an account
- Remember CA username and password
- Add colleges you are going to apply to into Common App
- SIGN YOUR FERPA for each school!!** \*Without this you **CANNOT** link to Naviance
- Complete and submit college applications on Common App

## Step 2 Use Naviance to link to Common Application

- Log into Naviance
- Click on *College* tab and to *Colleges I'm Applying to*
- Enter Common App username and password to link Common App and Naviance

The screenshot shows the Naviance website interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: "colleges", "careers", "about me", and "my planner". Below this is a search bar for colleges. The main content area is titled "colleges I'm applying to" and features a "Common App Account Matching" section. This section includes instructions on how to match accounts and a form with fields for "Common App Email Address" (containing "Email used for Common App account") and "Date of Birth" (containing "01/11/2001"), with a "Match" button. Below the form, there are tips for successfully matching accounts and a "Not Matched" button. At the bottom, there is a table with columns for "College", "Type", "Have you applied?", "Applications", "Expected Difficulty", "Deadline", "Transcript", "Office Status", "My App", "Results", "Edit", "Manage Communication", and "Action". The table currently shows one entry for "YCA".

**Step 3 Use Naviance to add colleges you are applying to**

- a) Click on the *Colleges* tab and go to *Colleges I'm Applying To*
- b) Select colleges you are going to apply to and add them to the list
- c) The 3 application types are: EA (Early Action), ED (Early Decision) & RD (Regular Decision)
- d) Next to each school, click on "How are you applying?" or "My App." to enter how you are applying, what your application type is and if you have submitted your common app. **This information is VERY IMPORTANT to help us meet deadlines and send transcripts to the correct places!**
- e) **Check: I have submitted my application when complete**
- f) **TELL YOUR COUNSELOR!!! Let us know when you have submitted an application!!**

colleges careers about me my planner

search for colleges

Go

MORE SEARCH OPTIONS =>

my colleges

- colleges I'm thinking about
- colleges I'm applying to

college research

- SuperMatch™ college search
- college match
- college compare
- college lookup
- college search
- college resources
- college maps
- scattergrams
- acceptance history
- enrichment programs

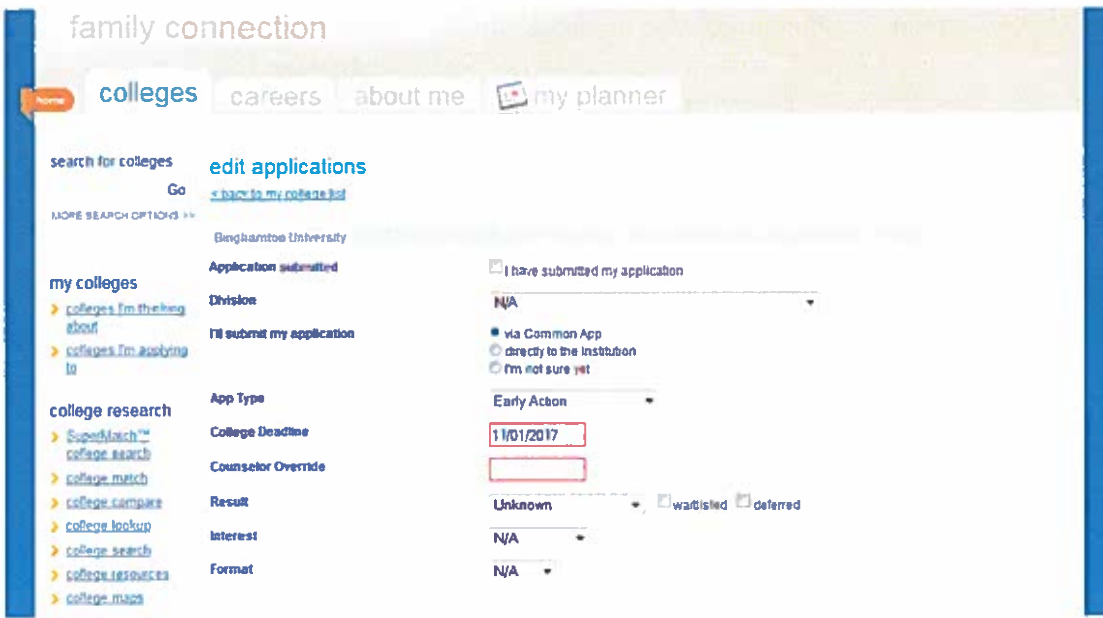
scholarships &

colleges I'm applying to

**Common App Account Matching - Complete**  
Your Common App account was successfully matched.  
FERPA Status: Waived

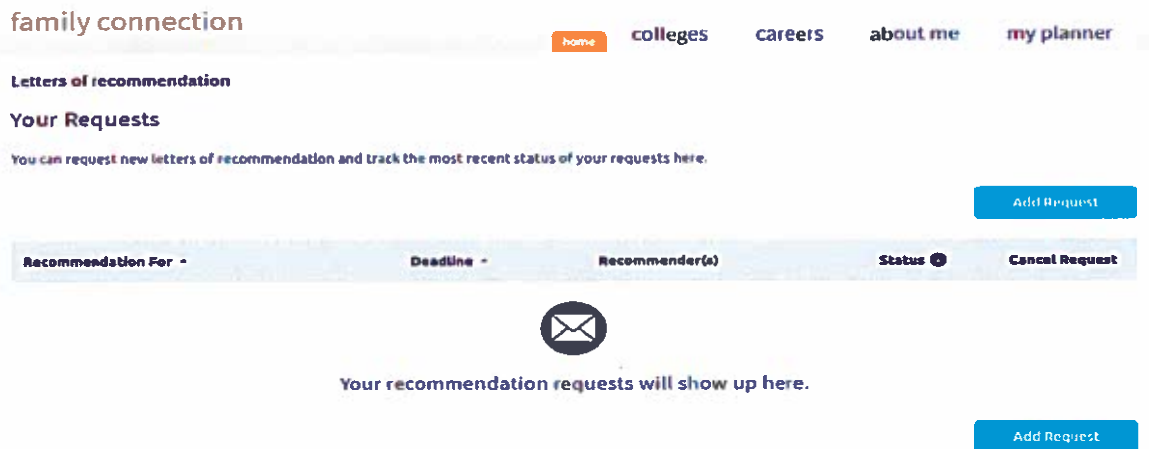
[add to this list](#) | [request transcripts](#) | [view detailed status](#) | [compare me](#)

College	Type	How are you applying?	Submissions	Expected Difficulty	Deadline?	Transcript	Office Status	My App	Results	Edit	Manage Communication	Graph	WWW
<input type="checkbox"/> Richardson	EA	Common App		N/A	Nov 01, 2017	no required	Initial materials submitted	<a href="#">How are you applying?</a>	Unknown				
<input type="checkbox"/> Le Moyne Coll	RD	Common App		N/A		no required	Initial materials submitted	<a href="#">How are you applying?</a>	Unknown				
<input type="checkbox"/> Rochester Polytechnic Inst	RD	Common App		N/A	Jan 15, 2018	no required	Initial materials submitted	<a href="#">How are you applying?</a>	Unknown				
<input type="checkbox"/> Russell Sage College	RD	Common App		N/A		no required	Initial materials submitted	<a href="#">How are you applying?</a>	Unknown				
<input type="checkbox"/> State Coll of Albany	RD	Common App		N/A		no required	Initial materials submitted	<a href="#">How are you applying?</a>	Unknown				
<input type="checkbox"/> State Coll	RD	<a href="#">on college.net</a>		N/A	Mar 15, 2018	no required	Initial materials submitted	<a href="#">How are you applying?</a>	Unknown				



#### Step 4 Teacher Letter of Recommendation

- Be aware of how many recommendation each college allows and select you teachers accordingly
- Ask teachers in person for letter of recommendation
- Go to Naviance and click on *College* tab
- Click on *Colleges I'm Applying To*
- Add teacher recommendations by using the drop down menu to select the teacher



#### **\*VERY IMPORTANT\***

The colleges on Common Application **MUST** match the *Colleges I'm Applying To* list on Naviance in order for your colleges to receive your transcript, letters of recommendation, and other required documents.

This means, if you apply later to more schools, they **MUST** be entered in Naviance!!!!

**Please be sure to verify this!!!**



## ***FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION....***

### **GETTING THE APPLICATION**

All applications can be found on the college's website, SUNY applications at [www.suny.edu/student](http://www.suny.edu/student) and the common application at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

### **FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION**

The more selective the admissions process is at a school, the greater the amount of information you will need to provide. Begin the process of filling out the application EARLY. Understand all the requirements and get the application completed in plenty of time to review it before sending it out. The most time consuming part of the application procedure is the essay and the letters of recommendations that will be addressed specifically later in the guide.

The SUNY application is a common application that is processed in Albany. You can apply to four SUNY colleges on one application. The form is then sent to the colleges to which you applied. This takes time and it is important to complete the SUNY application early so that it is not delayed in processing. Once your application is at the individual colleges, they will most likely send you a "supplemental application" that will very likely ask you for essays and recommendations.

The COMMON application which many private and SUNY colleges are now participating in is similar in its process. Again, because the initial step is what begins the process, it is important to begin early.

### **OUR PROCEDURE:**

#### **STATE UNIVERSITIES:**

1. Go to the SUNY website at [www.suny.edu/student](http://www.suny.edu/student)
2. Complete the application carefully.
3. Submit your application on line, print the "counselor page" and bring it to your Guidance Counselor so we know you have applied and can submit your transcript.
4. Make sure you fill out the Supplemental Application when applying on line.
5. Make sure you fill out the "SOAR" (Student Online Academic Record)

#### **PRIVATE COLLEGES:**

1. You can go to the website of each college you are applying to or to the Common Application website at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).
2. Give your counselor only the secondary counselor section of the application, the "College Planning Questionnaire for Seniors" and the "College Application Cover Sheet". This will be completed and sent in with an official transcript. (If you have any college credit which you want to reach your college(s) you must request an official transcript be sent from the college where you received the credit).
3. Complete your portion of the application.
4. We write recommendations for each student applying to college, therefore, we request that you complete the "College Planning Questionnaire for Seniors" which helps us to write a detailed recommendation which speaks to all of your accomplishments. Please complete this early in your senior year and turn it in to your counselor.

## ***THE COLLEGE ESSAY....***

Most selective colleges require an essay. An essay helps to determine a lot about a student. They are evaluated for creativity, writing skills and assist the admissions committee to learn more about you as a person. Use this to your advantage! We have many essay writing guides in the Guidance and Counseling Center. Also, there are wonderful teacher resources available to you all the time. Here are some writing guidelines that may help you:

**Write it yourself:** Ask an English teacher, friends or parents to make suggestions, but don't let them re-write your paper because then it will not sound like you.

**Give yourself time:** Start early enough so you have sufficient time to write, re-write and proofread all of your essays.

**Stick to the topic:** Colleges want to see how all their applicants discuss a stated topic or answer the same question.

**Be organized:** Follow the same steps that you do in writing essays for your classes. Have an introduction, body and conclusion to your essay.

**Use your own language:** Admissions officers are not impressed by fancy words taken from a thesaurus.

**Add dimension to your application:** Don't repeat what you have already said in the information sections of your application.

**Keep your essays brief:** Stay within the space limit. Extra pages do not impress admissions officers.

**Be careful with humor:** Humor can add life to your essay. Make sure it also reveals you as a clever, not a shallow person.

**Be original:** Don't quote well-known phrases that thousands of applicants have used before you.

**Be specific:** Every year applicants write about such generalities as wanting world peace, obtaining a liberal arts education and expanding their horizons. Narrow your focus to specifics like the feelings of a Vietnamese refugee, learning to appreciate poetry, and studying in Spain.

**Proofread:** Check once, twice, three times that what you have written is correct. Have others proofread your essays too.

**Adapt essays for reuse:** One essay cannot possibly be used on all applications because few questions and essay topics are identical.

**Always write optional essays:** This is just one more chance to let admissions officers learn more about you and set you apart from other candidates.

### ***RECOMMENDATIONS....***

The earlier in your senior year you ask teachers to write recommendations for you the fewer number of forms they will be busy completing for other students. Make sure you share with the teacher what your plans are and give them a copy of the senior questionnaire that you completed for your school counselor. This will help them write a thorough recommendation.

Before you ask a teacher to write a recommendation for you, it is important that you evaluate your choice since what they say about you is a crucial part of your application. The following questions will help you to decide which teachers to ask.

1. Is the teacher a good writer?
2. Have you had a class from this teacher recently?
3. Does this teacher really know you?
4. Has this teacher worked as a sponsor or coach of one of your extracurricular activities?
5. Does this teacher like you?
6. Will the teacher write a strong recommendation for you?
7. Will this teacher complete and mail the recommendation on time?
8. Did this teacher attend the college that you want to attend? (It helps if the teacher knows the school).

Select two to three teachers who you feel will write you a strong recommendation. Ask the teachers to give the final draft of their recommendation to your school counselor. This is a good time to ask your school counselor to write you a recommendation also. The Guidance and Counseling Center will forward your recommendations to the schools to which you are applying at the time the secondary school report and transcript are sent.

### ***TEACHER EVALUATION FORMS...***

Many colleges require a teacher evaluation form to be completed in addition to the letter of recommendation. These forms should be given to a teacher to complete with plenty of time before the application deadline. When you give the teacher the form, ask them to return it, when completed, to your school counselor.

It is necessary for you to communicate with your counselor which teachers you have asked to complete letters of recommendations and student evaluation forms. Also, we need to know which recommendations and evaluations you want sent to each school. In order to organize this process we ask you to complete the "College Application Cover Sheet" which you can find in the Guidance and Counseling Center.

It is your responsibility to update this form and check with your teachers periodically to be sure that the forms have reached the Guidance and Counseling Center prior to application deadlines. Recommendations from teachers will remain confidential. It is up to the teacher if they wish to share their recommendation with you.

## ***FINANCIAL AID...***

Most of the money students receive for financial aid comes from the federal government, state governments, and the college's own resources and private sources, with the most coming from the federal government. Some colleges have a lot more money available for financial aid than others. The basic type of aid which students receive are grants, loans, and employment. You may receive just one type of aid or some combination of the three types of financial aid. To be grant and/or loan eligible a FAFSA MUST be completed.

### **GRANTS:**

For students, grants are the best possible source of financial aid, as they do not have to be repaid. The federal government, state governments and colleges have grant programs. Most grants are awarded on the basis of need. Scholarships can also be included in this category even though they are often based on achievement as well as need. Scholarships can be obtained from an amazing number of sources.

Although there are many grants and scholarships available, the federal government provides most of the financial aid in this category through Pell Grants and Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants.

The Guidance and Counseling Center is notified of local and national scholarships throughout the year. We advertise these to you on the Guidance Page of the CRCS website. You are welcome to check the "Scholarship" file in the Guidance office at any time. It is important that you keep checking to see if you meet the criteria for each scholarship.

### **LOANS:**

While loans help you get an education, they can also mean you are facing a tremendous debt burden in the future. When you graduate or leave school, you have to start repaying your college loans. On certain loans you even have to start paying interest while you are still in school. Some loans are reduced if you join the military or do some type of public service. Repayment may also be delayed if you go to graduate school or serve in the military, Peace Corps, or Vista. Loans like the following ones play a big part in most students' financial aid packages:

STAFFORD LOAN  
PARENT LOANS TO UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS  
COLLEGE LOANS

PERKINS LOAN  
STATE LOANS  
PRIVATE LOANS

## **Playing for an NCAA College: It's a Contact Game**

Making the team at a Division I or II college requires you to do more than score lots of points and letter each year. Only a few outstanding athletes are sought out by top schools each year, even though there are thousands of students with a ton of skill. Market yourself by making contact with the people that matter in the arena of college athletics.

Get to know the players. If you're serious about playing a sport in college, get in touch with the coaches as soon as you know where you want to apply. Let them know you're interested in playing for them and find out what they're looking for in an athlete. Remember, unless you're big news in all the local papers, they aren't going to know who you are – you have to let them know about you!

Your high school coaches probably have collegiate contacts and may be happy to make the first call for you. Don't be surprised if you are asked to provide information detailing your athletic accomplishments as early on as your first inquiry. Later, a DVD and statistics might be requested.

Keep in mind that if you're recruited by a coach, it doesn't mean that you're guaranteed admission to the school. There's usually an admission officer who serves as a liaison with the athletic department and while decision making may be collaborative, it is the admissions office that determines if you're in or out – not the coaches or the athletic directors.

A coach's interest is not a promise of playing time either. Coaches, at all levels encourage more athletes than can ever fit on a bench. However, if you're awarded a scholarship in a Division I or II program, it is certainly a good indicator that you're destined for playing time eventually.

When you're hot you're hot. If you're a truly outstanding athlete, college coaches may be chomping at the bit to contact you, but they must abide by stringent NCAA regulations. For instance, they cannot contact you by letter until September 1 of the beginning of your junior year in high school. Additional guidelines govern the initiation of telephone calls and campus visits. Check out [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for specifics in each division.

If you're in line for an athletic scholarship, you may be expected to sign a "National Letter of Intent." The National Letter of Intent program is administered by the Collegiate Commissioners Association (CCA) and has more than 500 participating institutions in more than 50 athletic leagues. Signing this letter demonstrates your intention to enroll at a specific institution. It's supposed to help protect you from unfair or misleading recruitment practices, but it also assures coaches and athletic directors that you will show up for practice as promised. If you sign such a letter, you must abide by numerous rules, and there are stringent penalties if you don't.

Gold, Silver or Bronze? The process of applying to college and pursuing a spot on a college sports team can be complicated, especially if you're looking at NCAA member schools. You can certainly consider other schools where you can still participate in the athletic programs, but if you've got your heart set on the gold, make sure you check out the guidelines, requirements and procedures set out by the NCAA.

# GLOSSARY

**Academic advisor** – this is a senior faculty member in your area of concentration who is assigned to advise you on course selections and requirements. Before you declare your major, you will be assigned a temporary faculty advisor.

**Accelerated study** – this program allows you to graduate in less time than is usually required. For instance, by taking summer terms and extra courses during the academic year, you could finish a bachelor's degree in three years instead of four.

## **Admissions decisions:**

- **Admit** – you're in! You are being offered admission to the college to which you've applied. Your high school will receive notification too.
- **Admit/deny** – You have been admitted but denied any financial aid. It is up to you to figure out how you are going to pay for school.
- **Deny** – You are not in. The decision is made by the college or university admissions committee and is forwarded to you and your high school.
- **Wait list** – You are not in yet but have been placed on a waiting list in case an opening becomes available. Schools rank their wait lists in order of priority and, unfortunately, the more competitive schools have years when they never draw from their wait lists. After a certain time, a rejection notice is sent.

**Advanced Placement (AP) courses** – high level, quality courses in any of twenty subjects. The program is administered through the College Board to offer high school course descriptions equated to college courses and correlated to AP examinations in those subjects. High schools provide the courses as part of their curriculum to eligible students. Based on the composite score on an AP test, which ranges from 0 to 5, a college may award college credit or advanced placement to a participating student. A score of 4 or 5 on the AP test is usually required by colleges for credit or advanced placement in college courses. A 3 is sometimes acceptable in foreign languages and some other subject areas. Some colleges limit the number of AP credits that they will recognize. Check school's policies on AP credits.

**Alternative assessment** – this method personalizes the admissions process and offers students an opportunity to be viewed more individually and holistically. Less emphasis is placed on standardized test scores and more on the interview, portfolio, recommendations and essay.

**American College Testing (ACT) Program Assessment** – an alternative to the SAT, this test has gained wide acceptance by a broad range of institutions in recent years and is given during the school year at test centers. The ACT tests English, Mathematics, Reading and Science reasoning. These subject test scores can be used in lieu of SAT II subject tests, which are required for admission to some of the more competitive colleges. The score is the average of all four tests; the maximum score is 36.

**Associate Degree** - a degree granted by a college or university after the satisfactory completion of a two-year full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent. Types of degrees include the Associate of Arts (A.A.) or Associate of Science (A.S.), usually granted after the equivalent of the first two years of a four-year college curriculum and the Associate in Applied Science (A.A.S.) awarded upon completion of a technical or vocational program of study.

**Award package** – this is the way colleges and universities deliver their news about student eligibility for financial aid or grants. The most common packages include Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and Work Study.

**Bachelor's or Baccalaureate Degree** – the degree received after the satisfactory completion of a full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent at a college or university. The Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are the most common baccalaureates.

**Branch campus** – a campus connected to or part of a large institution. Generally, a student spends the first two years at a branch campus and then transfers to the main campus to complete the baccalaureate degree. A branch campus provides a smaller and more personal environment that may help a student mature personally and academically before moving to a larger and more impersonal environment. A branch campus experience may be a good idea for a student who wants to remain close to home or for an adult learner who wishes to work and attend college classes on a part-time basis.

**Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA)** – if admitted to a college, a student does not have to reply until May 1<sup>st</sup>. This allows time to hear from all the colleges to which the student applied before having to make a commitment to any of them. This is especially important because financial aid packages vary from one school to another, and the CRDA allows time to compare packages before deciding.

**College preparatory subjects** – courses taken in high school that are viewed by colleges and universities as a strong preparation for college work. The specific courses are usually in the five majors areas of English, History, World Languages, Mathematics and Science. The courses may be regular, honors-level or AP offerings and the latter two categories are often weighted when calculated in the GPA.

**College Scholarship Service (CSS)** – when the Federal Government changed the FAFSA form several years ago, the College Board created this program to assist postsecondary institutions, state scholarship programs and other organizations in measuring a family's financial strength and analyzing its ability to contribute to college costs. CSS processes the PROFILE financial form that students may use to apply for non-federal aid. This form is submitted to some 300 private colleges and universities along with the FAFSA when seeking financial aid from these institutions. Participating colleges and universities indicate whether they require this form.

**Common Application** – this college application form can save students hours of work. The Common Application is presently accepted by about 190 independent colleges. The colleges and universities that accept this standardized form gives them equal weight with their own application forms. Students complete the information on the standardized form and then submit it to any of the schools listed as accepting it. Some schools will return a supplementary form to be completed by the applicant, but most schools base their decisions on this document alone. The Common Application is available on-line at [Commonapp.org](http://Commonapp.org).

**Control** – a college or university can be under public or private control. Publicly controlled universities are dependent on state legislatures for their funding, and their policies are set by the agencies that govern them. Private colleges and universities are responsible to a board of directors or trustees. They usually have higher tuition and fees to protect the institutions' endowment.

**Cooperative education** – a college program that alternates between periods of full-time study and full-time employment in a related field. Students are paid for their work and gain practical experience in their major, which helps them apply for positions after graduation. It can take five years to obtain a baccalaureate degree through a co-op program.

**Cost of education** – this includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. A student's financial aid eligibility is the difference between the cost of education and the Expected Family Contribution as computed by the Federal Government using the FAFSA.

**Course load** – the number of course credit hours a student takes in each semester. Twelve credit hours is the minimum to be considered a full-time student. The average course load per semester is 16 credit hours.

**Credit hours** – the number of hours per week that courses meet are counted as equivalent credits for financial aid and used to determine your status as a full or part-time student.

**Cross-registration** – the practice, through agreements between colleges, of permitting students enrolled at one college or university to enroll in courses at another institution without formally applying for admission to the second institution. This can be an advantage for students in a smaller college who might like to expand options or experience another learning environment.

**Deferred acceptance** – the admissions decision is being moved to a later date.

**Deferred admission** – this policy permits students to postpone enrollment for one year after acceptance to a college or university.

**Double major** – available at most schools, the double major allows a student to complete all the requirements to simultaneously earn a major in two fields.

**Dual enrollment** – this policy allows a student to earn college credit while still in high school. Many of these course credits can be transferred to a degree-granting institution, especially if the student maintains a minimum of a B average. A college, however, may disallow courses taken in the major field of concentration at another institution because its policy dictates that all courses in the major must be taken at the college. When considering dual enrollment, students should talk with the admissions offices at the colleges they are considering enrolling in to make sure that they will accept credit transfers.

**Early action (EA)** – a student applies to a school early in the senior year, between October 30 and January 15, and requests an early application review and notification of admission. The answer usually takes three to four weeks after application. If accepted, the student is not obligated to attend that institution but can bank this admission and still apply to other colleges during the regular admission cycle.

**Early admission** – some colleges will admit certain students who have not completed high school usually exceptional juniors. The students are enrolled full-time and do not complete their senior year of high school. Colleges usually award high school diplomas to these students after they have completed a certain number of college-level courses.



**Early Decision (ED)** – Sometimes confused with Early Action, the Early Decision plan allows students to apply to an institution early in the senior year, between October 30 and January 15, and request an early notification of admission. The student and guidance counselor sign a contract with the school at the time of application that indicates that, if accepted, the student is obligated to attend that institution. Some colleges and universities offer both ED and EA options.

**Emphasis** – an area of concentration within a major or minor; for example, an English major may have an emphasis in creative writing.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** – the amount of financial support a family is expected to contribute toward a child's college education. This amount is part of the formula used by the federal government to determine financial aid eligibility using the FAFSA form.

**External degree program** – a program of study whereby a student can earn credit through independent study, college courses, proficiency examinations, distance learning or personal experience. External degree colleges generally have no campus or classroom facilities. They are sometimes referred to as “colleges without walls.”

**Federal Pell Grant Program** – this is federally sponsored and administered program that provides grants based on need to undergraduate students. Congress annually sets the appropriation; amounts range from around \$400 to \$3,000 annually. This is “free” money because it does not need to be repaid.

**Federal Perkins Loan Program** – this is a federally run program based on need and administered by a college's financial aid office. This program offers low-interest loans for undergraduate study. Repayment does not begin until a student graduates. The maximum loan amount is \$3,000 per year.

**Federal Stafford Loan** – another federal program based on need that allows a student to borrow money for educational expenses directly from banks and other lending institutions (sometimes from the colleges themselves). These loans may be either subsidized or unsubsidized. Repayment begins six months after a student's course load drops to less than half-time. Currently, the interest rate is 0 percent while in school and then is variable up to 8.25 percent. The loan must be repaid within ten years.

**Federal Work Study (FWS)** – a federally financed program that arranges for students to combine employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education or internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** – this is the federal government's instrument for calculating need-based aid. It is available on-line ([www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)). The form should be completed and submitted as soon after January 2 as possible.

**Gap** – the difference between the amount of a financial aid package and the cost of attending a college or university. The student and the family are expected to fill the gap.

**Grants/scholarships** – these are final awards that are usually dispensed by the financial aid offices of colleges and universities. The awards may be need or merit-based. Most are need-based. Merit-based awards may be awarded on the basis of excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability or a special talent.

**Greek Life** – this phrase refers to sororities and fraternities. These organizations often have great impact on the campus social life of a college or university.

**Honors program** – honors programs offer an enriched, top-quality educational experience that often includes small class sizes, custom-designed courses, mentoring, enriched individualized learning, hands-on research, and publishing opportunities. A handpicked faculty guides students through the program. Honors programs are a great way to attend a large school that offers enhanced social and recreational opportunities while receiving an Ivy League-like education at a reduced cost.

**Independent study** - this option allows students to complete some of their credit requirements by studying on their own. A student and his or her faculty adviser agree in advance on the topic and approach of the study program and meet periodically to discuss the student's progress. A final report is handed in for a grade at the end of the term.

**Interdisciplinary** – faculty members from several disciplines contribute to the development of the course of study and may co-teach the course.

**Internship** – this is an experience-based opportunity, most often scheduled during breaks in the academic calendar, whereby a student receives credit for a supervised work experience related to their major.

**Major** – the concentrations of a number of credit hours in a specific subject. Colleges and universities often specify the number of credits needed to receive a major, the sequence of courses and the level of courses necessary to complete the requirements.

**Merit awards, merit-based scholarships** – more “free” money, these awards are based on excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability and other areas determined by the granting organization, which can be a college or university, an organization or an individual. They are not based on financial need.

**Minor** – an area of concentration with fewer credits than a major. The minor can be related to the major area of concentration or not; for example and English major may have a minor in theater.

**Need blind** – admissions decisions made without reference to a student's financial aid request, that is, an applicant's financial need is not known to the committee at the time of decision.

**Non-matriculated** – a student who has either not been admitted yet but is taking classes or has been academically dismissed. Under this category, a student may neither receive financial aid nor participate in an athletic program at that school.

**Open admissions** – a policy of admission that does not subject applicants to a review of their academic qualifications. Many public junior/community colleges admit students under this guideline, that is, any student with a high school diploma or its equivalent is admitted.

**Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT)/**

**National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST)** – this test, given in October, duplicates the kinds of questions asked on the SAT but is shorter and takes less time. Usually taken in the junior year, the test also acts as a qualifying instrument for the National Merit Scholarship Awards Program and is helpful for early college guidance.

**Reserve Officers' Training Corps. (ROTC)** – each branch of the military sponsors an ROTC program. In exchange for a certain number of years active duty, students can have their college education paid for up to a certain amount by the armed forces.

**Residency requirement** – the term has more than one meaning. It can refer to the fact that a college may require a specific number of courses to be taken on campus to receive a degree from the school or the phrase can mean the time, by law, that is required for a person to reside in the state to be considered eligible for in-state tuition at one of its public colleges or universities.

**Retention rate** – the number and percentage of students returning for the sophomore year.

**Rolling admissions** – there is no deadline for filing a college application. This concept is used most often by state universities. Responses are received within three to four weeks. If admitted, a student is not required to confirm, in most cases, until May 1. Out-of-state residents applying to state universities should apply as early as possible.

**Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) I Reasoning Test** – also known as “boards” or “board scores” because the test was developed by the College Board. This test concentrates on reading and mathematical reasoning abilities and is given throughout the academic year at test centers. The maximum combined score for both sections is 1600. The writing section also has a maximum score of 800.

**SAT II Subject Tests** – these subject-specific exams are given on the same test dates and in the same centers as the SAT I. More emphasis has been placed on these tests in recent years not only because they are used for admission purposes but also for placement and exemption decisions.

**Seminar** – a class that has a group discussion format rather than a lecture format.

**Score choice** – an option available only for SAT II testing, which allows a student to review his or her scores before releasing them to colleges. Students can choose which scores to release.

**Silent scores** – the term is applied to PSAT scores because only the student and his or her guidance counselor see the scores. They are not reported to colleges. It is the “practice without penalty” feature of the test.

**Student Aid Report (SAR)** – report of the government’s review of a student’s FAFSA. The SAR is sent to the student and released electronically to the schools that the student listed. The SAR does not supply a real money figure for aid but indicates whether the student is eligible.

**Student-designed major** – students design their own majors under this policy. It offers students the opportunity to develop nontraditional options not available in the existing catalog of majors.

**Transfer program** – this program is usually found in a two-year college or in a four-year college that offers associate degrees. It allows a student to continue his or her studies in a four-year college by maintaining designated criteria set down at acceptance to the two-year program. It is not necessary to earn an associate degree to transfer.

**Transfer student** – a student who transfers from one college or university to another. Credits applied toward the transfer will be evaluated by the receiving school to determine the number it will accept. Each school sets different policies for transfers, so anyone considering this option should seek guidance.

**Upper division** – this term refers to the junior and senior years of study. Some colleges offer only upper-division study. The lower division must be completed at another institution before entering these programs to earn a bachelor's degree.

**Virtual visit** – this is the use of the Internet to investigate various colleges by looking at their home pages. A student can “tour” the college, ask questions via e-mail, read school newspapers and explore course offerings and major requirements on line. It is not a substitute for a live visit.

**Waiver to view recommendations** – the form many high schools ask their students to sign by which they agree not to review their teachers' recommendation letters before they are sent to the colleges or universities to which they are applying.

**Yield** – the percentage of accepted students who will enter a college or university in the freshman class. These students have received formal acceptance notices and must respond by May 1 with their intention to enroll. The more competitive the school, the higher the yield percentage.

Source: Game Plans for Getting into College: [www.peterson.com](http://www.peterson.com)