

# Maine Township High School East



## *College Planning Guide*



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# CRC RESOURCES

## [CRC Website](#)

CRC Website offers information on a variety of subjects such as college and career planning, financial aid and scholarships, and job postings.

## [CRC Google Drive](#)

CRC Google Drive contains brochures, pamphlets, and handouts on topics such as college and career planning, financial aid and scholarships, resumes, etc.

## [Appointments](#)

Mr. Ibrahimovic is available for appointments during regular school hours. Students and parents can schedule appointments using the [online appointment scheduler](#).

## [College/Military Rep Visit Calendar](#)

College and Military representatives visit the CRC to speak to students and parents about their respective institutions. The reps are a great resource to learn more about and make connections with these institutions.



## Services Offered by the CRC Staff

1. **Individual Counseling** - Mr. Ibrahimovic is available by appointment for counseling relating to career exploration, college selection, and general financial aid.
2. **Group Counseling** - Mr. Ibrahimovic facilitates the several groups throughout the year.
  - a. **College Admission Counseling for 2nd Semester Juniors** - prepares students for the college admission process that they will experience during senior year.
  - b. **College Admission Counseling for 1st Semester Seniors** - guides seniors through each of the steps in the college admission process.
  - c. **Career Exploration Group for 2nd Semester Sophomores** - allows students to explore and reflect on careers in order to start formulating a post-high school plan.
  - d. **Dreamers Group** - designed to help students that are Undocumented/DACA navigate the post-high school process.
  - e. **Parent University** - designed for parents that have not graduated from college in the United States. This group will serve as an educational tool to help parents become more knowledgeable about the college admission process.
3. **Workshops** - CRC staff host a number of one-day workshops to help students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), college applications, and scholarships.
4. **Hosting College and Military Representatives** - CRC hosts approximately 60-80 college/military representatives each semester. Students and parents are invited to speak directly to the representatives.
5. **General College Admission Assistance** - CRC staff are available every day for drop-in assistance regarding college application, FAFSA, sending transcripts, ordering and signing up for standardized tests, and much more.

# **MAINE TOWNSHIP DISTRICT 207 PROGRAMS**

## **DISTRICT 207 FINANCIAL AID NIGHT**

Maine East High School

March 8th, 2018

7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

District 207 Financial Aid Night introduces students and parents to the topic of college affordability. The audience will learn about various sources of financial aid and how to maximize the most amount of money for a college or post-high school training program.

## **SPRING COLLEGE PANELS**

Maine East High School

March 20, 21, 22

Approximately 50 colleges representatives visit Maine East High School in groups of 5-6 over a period of five days. These reps will provide information about their respective institutions. The panel format of the presentation provides a good opportunity to compare multiple colleges.

## **OPTIONS FAIR**

Maine East High School

April 4th, 2018

8:30-10:30am

Maine East Options Fair hosts approximately 30-40 post-high school training and educational programs that do not require a 4-year college degree. Some of the programs that are represented include (but not limited to): military, Oakton Community College career programs, and apprenticeships.

## **DISTRICT 207 COLLEGE FAIR**

Maine East High School

September 13, 2018

6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

District 207 College Fair hosts approximately 170-180 colleges from across the United States. This event is the perfect opportunity to get sampling of a variety of colleges so as to start creating a college list.

# PART 1

## College Planning Timeline



# Why Go to College?

## (How about ... to get a good job!)

### Can't I get a good job now?

Yes, maybe you could, but a college degree will make your chances even better. Check out the earnings and unemployment rates below for people 25 years and older with different levels of education.

Unemployment rate in 2014	Level of education completed	Mean (average) earnings in 2014
9.0%	Less than a high school diploma	\$30,108
6.0%	High school graduate, no college	\$43,056
6.0%	Some college, no degree	\$48,984
4.3%	Occupational program (career school)	\$48,152
4.6%	Associate degree (academic program)	\$52,364
3.5%	Bachelor's degree	\$74,308
2.8%	Master's degree	\$88,036
2.1%	Doctoral degree (e.g., Ph.D.)	\$105,456
1.9%	Professional degree (e.g., M.D., J.D.)	\$124,904

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey, unpublished tables, 2015

Sometimes it's hard to stay in school if you think you need to be working to earn money. But if you get an education beyond high school, you'll have a wider variety of jobs to choose from, and you'll earn more—especially in the long run.

### But I don't know what career to go into!

If you can't decide what to do, talk to your school counselor or visit [StudentAid.gov/prepare](http://StudentAid.gov/prepare) to find out how to prepare for college and explore your career options.

### Doesn't college cost a lot of money?

Think of college as an investment: You spend money now so you can earn more later. The U.S. Department of Education may help you pay for your education. Take a look at [StudentAid.gov](http://StudentAid.gov) for information about our federal student aid programs. The site also links to a free scholarship search at [StudentAid.gov/scholarships](http://StudentAid.gov/scholarships).

Still have questions? Call the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243).

Download this fact sheet at [StudentAid.gov/resources](http://StudentAid.gov/resources).

# College Planning Timeline

**Planning for life after high school is a four-year process, but with good planning it can be a fun, interesting experience. Use the following information as a guideline for you as you progress through your 4 years of high school.**

**TIP:** Once you have completed an item then check it off by holding the ALT button and clicking the box. You will then be able to select the checkmark icon.

## EVERY YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL

- Take challenging classes in core academic subjects.
- Keep up your grades! If you are struggling in any classes, be sure to seek out assistance from your teacher(s), COACH, or other tutoring options at Maine East.
- Be involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you or let you explore career interests. Consider working or volunteering. Remember – it’s quality (not quantity) that counts.
- Talk to your school counselor and other mentors about education options after high school.
- Explore your interests, values, and abilities by using surveys.
- Work with a parent/guardian to estimate your financial aid and think about studies beyond high school.

## FRESHMEN YEAR TIMELINE AND TASKS

### Academics:

- Focus, focus, focus on starting high school on a strong note. High school is a lot harder than junior high school and many students struggle during their first semester.

### Activities:

- Try out a few activities, clubs, and/or sports that sound interesting. Colleges want to see that you are getting involved in more than just academics. [Full list of activities can be found here.](#)

### Legwork:

#### **FALL:**

- Participate in student services programming so you can start exploring your strengths and career interests.
- Get help from teachers or one of the academic learning centers when you find yourself falling behind or struggling in a particular area.
- Take the PSAT.

#### **WINTER:**

- Evaluate your academic performance when you get your report card. Are you happy with your grades? If not, make a plan to meet with your counselor and teachers to learn how to improve your study habits.

#### **SPRING:**

- Meet with your counselor to discuss sophomore classes you would like to take. Try to challenge yourself by taking an advanced class or two during sophomore year. Be careful not to jump into too many challenging classes because you can sabotage your grades if you get too overwhelmed.
- Look over your PSAT results and identify strengths and areas for improvement.

#### **SUMMER:**

- Read a book!** Many students start to lose academic skills after a long summer.
- Think about what activities you will like to continue sophomore year and if you will like to try something new.

## SOPHOMORE YEAR TIMELINE AND TASKS

### Academics:

- Continue to do well in your classes. If you were not happy with your freshman grades, then consider altering your approach to studying, note taking, etc. Grades are the leading determinant of college admission and scholarships - so A’s and B’s are the way to go!

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- ❑ Do the same or better than Freshmen year. Downward trends in grades are not desirable.

### Activities:

- ❑ Continue to dedicate yourself to 2-3 activities, sports, or clubs. It is more important to show dedication to a few activities over a long period of time, rather than try 10-15 different activities for short period of time.

### Legwork:

#### **FALL:**

- ❑ Take the PSAT.
- ❑ Participate in student services programming to further narrow down career interests.
- ❑ Explore [Career Cruising](#) to learn about about jobs and career fields.

#### **WINTER:**

- ❑ Evaluate your first semester of sophomore year grades.
- ❑ Make a plan how you will maintain or improve for second semester.

#### **SPRING:**

- ❑ Go over your PSAT results. Have you done better than last year? What areas do you need to improve on?
- ❑ Create a [College Board](#) account and link it with [Khan Academy](#) so that you can get personalized tutoring to improve your PSAT score.
- ❑ Visit the CRC during college rep visits to learn more about colleges
- ❑ Attend the College Panels in March.
- ❑ Look into college summer programs. Speak to the CRC counselor for assistance. College summer programs are a great way to learn more about colleges, provide academic enrichment, and look great for your college application activities list.
- ❑ Participate in a job shadowing event. Learning about careers through first-hand experiences is a great way to narrow down the careers you will pursue after high school.

#### **SUMMER:**

- ❑ **Read a book!**
- ❑ Attend a college program.
- ❑ Visit some local colleges. There are approximately 30 colleges within a 45 minute driving radius of Maine East.

## **JUNIOR YEAR TIMELINE AND TASKS**

Essays and testing and APs, oh my! This is an important year as much of what you do will represent a big chunk of the data colleges will use for admission. If things have not been completely successful academically in the past, now is the time to show an upward trend. This can also be a time of leadership outside of the classroom. Explore activities that interest you so that you can flourish!

### Academics:

- ❑ Continue to take or seek out challenging courses but watch out for academic overload. You want to get the best grades you can get but you also want to stay sane.
- ❑ These will be the most recent grades your colleges will have when you apply next year. Therefore, study hard and seek help from a teacher or other resource if necessary.
- ❑ Speak up in class. You will need to ask your junior year teachers for college recommendations. They can't know you without hearing your thoughts.
- ❑ Discuss testing plans with your parents and counselor. Ask about ways to get some ACT practice and tips before taking the test in the spring. Remember, you can take the ACT and SAT more than once, so don't worry if you don't get your ideal score the first time. Schools will take your highest score.
- ❑ Meet with your counselor to make sure you are on your way to meeting your graduation requirements.

### Activities:

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- ❑ Develop a leadership role in some of your activities. This shows that you've worked hard, are dedicated to an activity, and play well with others.
- ❑ If you have not yet done so, create a resume of activities, academic experiences, hobbies, and awards. This helps you take inventory of all you've done. You can use the resume or journal on your Naviance Family Connection account to keep track of everything. Continue to update this throughout the year.

### Legwork:

#### **Fall:**

- ❑ Prepare for the ACT and/or SAT. There are free websites. There are also test prep classes.
- ❑ For some, take the PSAT in the fall.
- ❑ Research colleges. Consider aspects such as size, distance, location, and cost. Talk to people you know who went to college to learn about what to expect.
- ❑ Visit college campuses! Make plans for college visits on your days off and over the summer. Take notes during each visit. **DO THIS ALL YEAR!!**
- ❑ Attend college fairs such as the District 207 College Night in the fall with your parents. Talk with the representatives at these fairs. They can give you a feel for what the college is like and they will be good as a future contact.
- ❑ Use your Family Connection and Career Cruising accounts to continue investigating your career interests.
- ❑ Attend college visits in the CRC. Meet with as many colleges as you can. Continue with this throughout the year.

#### **Winter:**

- ❑ Meet with your counselor to register for your courses for senior year. Think about your interest in a career pathway and college major to make sure that you are signing up for appropriate courses during your senior year. Make sure you are also enrolling in the most challenging courses for which you are qualified.
- ❑ Register for and take the ACT and/or SAT at least two times during junior year (there are April and June test dates). Students who receive free books can get a waiver from the CRC to pay for two exams. Determine if you need to take SAT Subject Tests for any of your colleges (most common at highly selective schools.)
- ❑ Ask your counselor and the college counselor about summer opportunities on college campuses. These can be a great way to find out what college life is all about. They provide great experiences in terms of learning about majors and career pathways, and they also can also be included on your college applications.
- ❑ Attend the District 207 Financial Aid Night in January. Discuss the topic of paying for college with your parents. Complete the FAFSA4caster on the FAFSA.GOV website.

#### **Spring:**

- ❑ Once you have an ACT or SAT score, talk with your counselor and begin to build a college list.
- ❑ Begin creating a list of schools/programs that fit your goals. Gather information on each of the schools including academics, financial aid, scholarships, etc. Try to attend events that these colleges are hosting (open houses, information sessions, tours, etc.).
- ❑ Complete the Net Price Calculators on each college's website. Talk to your parents/guardians about your college list and about paying for college. Look into potential scholarship possibilities.
- ❑ Attend college information sessions hosted by colleges at local hotels and on college campuses. Also, continue to attend college visits in the CRC.
- ❑ Identify a teacher who can write a letter of recommendation on your behalf. Prepare the letter of recommendation documents for the teacher(s) and counselor. These documents can be found on the CRC website.
- ❑ Plan ahead for summer. Look for ways to get experience in a career area. Apply for one or more of the following: job shadowing, internship, volunteer opportunity, summer camp on a college campus focusing on a major/career.

#### **Summer before 12<sup>th</sup> grade:**

##### Activities

- ❑ Use your summer well! Volunteer or job shadow. Explore your areas of interest as much as possible.

##### Legwork

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- Continue investigating and visiting schools. Visit as many of your schools as you can.
- Narrow down your list of colleges. Be sure you have at least one safety school, one financial aid safety school, and a good fit school on your list. Create a chart of their deadlines including their application deadlines, housing deposit deadlines, and financial aid deadlines.
- Sign up for another ACT. There are ACTs in September and October.
- Start a scholarship search.
- Begin your college essays.
- Begin some applications such as the Common Application starting in August.
- If you have not yet done so, determine if you will need letters of recommendations from teachers and/or your counselor. Complete the letter of recommendation forms from the CRC website.
- Update your list of activities, honors, leadership roles, and awards. Use them to build a resume.

## **SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE AND TASKS**

Almost done! This is a year of hard work and continued preparation for after high school. Colleges will look at your grades from the entire year, so be sure to keep up your grades throughout the year!

### Academics:

- ✓ Make sure you have completed your graduation requirements and are meeting the course requirements of the colleges on your lists.
- ✓ Your admission is contingent upon a consistent academic performance on the final transcript. Take challenging classes, and keep up the hard work! Seek out assistance if you need help.

### Activities:

- ✓ Update/Finish your list of activities and make sure your counselor gets a copy so they can write an accurate letter of recommendation for you. Be sure to stay involved and even take on leadership roles. You can still explore new activities this year.
- ✓ Take the ACT or SAT again if you feel you need to boost your score for college admission or scholarship consideration.

### Legwork:

#### **August/September:**

- Meet with your counselor. Are you on track for graduation? Review or create your college list with your counselor and parents. Take note of the application deadlines and apply accordingly.
- Update your list of your activities, honors, leadership roles, and awards.
- Create your account on Parchment (linked through the CRC website). Order transcripts to be sent to the schools you're applying to and/or to the Common App.
- If you need recommendations, ask your counselor and/or teacher(s) to write a college recommendation letter for you well in advance. It is necessary to give them a minimum of 2 weeks to write your recommendation, so plan ahead.
- Register for the ACT, SAT or other tests if you are taking them.
- Attend District 207 College Night
- Schedule campus visits, and attend college visits in the CRC.
- Start your scholarship searches. Keep an eye on the CRC scholarship calendar.
- Start and edit your essays and give them to your English teacher to proofread.
- Your ACT scores are on your transcripts. However, some schools require your official ACT or SAT scores (such as University of IL). This is done through the ACT and SAT website. Send your scores.
- If you need waivers for your college applications and/or the ACT, be sure to see in the CRC.

#### **October:**

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- ❑ FAFSA application goes live on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The earlier you submit the better.

### **November/December:**

- ❑ Keep track of your deadlines and fill out each application carefully. Complete your applications.
- ❑ If they are not complete, continue to edit your essays.
- ❑ Complete Net Price Calculators for your schools. Have conversations with your parents about paying for college. Be sure you have financial safeties on your college lists. Prepare materials for the FAFSA. (See [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov) for information.)
- ❑ Continue searching for and applying to scholarships.

### **January/February:**

- ❑ A month from the date you submitted your application, check online or call colleges and confirm that your application is complete.
- ❑ Attend the Financial Aid Night for District 207.
- ❑ Continue searching for and applying to scholarships.

### **March/April:**

- ❑ As decisions from colleges arrive stay calm and breathe!
- ❑ Explore the colleges to which you have been accepted. Visit the campuses again. Make sure the environment is a good fit for you. If you will be living away from home, you may want to reserve housing at more than one college. Watch for housing deadlines.
- ❑ Review the financial aid packages from your colleges. Ask questions if you are uncertain! See the FAFSA expert in the CRC.

### **May 1:**

- ❑ By May 1, notify the school you plan to attend that you have accepted their offer of admission. Make your college decision official by sending in your deposit. Finally!
  - ❑ Send your final transcript to the college. (Go to [Parchment.com](http://Parchment.com))
  - ❑ Be sure to review all the important information for your school including orientation dates and housing information.
- Finally, don't forget to bookmark the CRC webpages! The CRC website is extremely helpful and filled with lots of college and career information. This can be accessed through the Maine East homepage. Go to Maine East > Departments > Career Resource Center to find links to the following pages: **Career Exploration**, **College Visitors**, **College Planning**, **Financial Aid**, **Scholarship Info**, and much more!



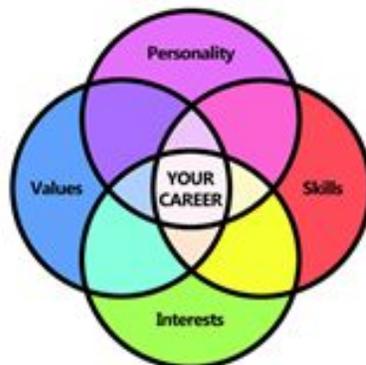
## Tips for Career Exploration

**Learn about yourself** – Choosing a career is not a one-time event where you will randomly select a career path to follow. Instead, choosing a career should involve constantly exploring your personality, skills, interests, and values.

1. **Take career assessments** – A variety of assessments exist that allow individuals allow students to gain further insight into themselves and relate these characteristics to the world of work. A variety of resources for career exploration can be found in the following pages. Taking an exploratory assessment may be a confusing endeavor. The CRC offers individualized career counseling in order to assist students in understanding their results.
2. **Reflect on the classes you've taken** – The classes you take in high school mold, to a certain degree, aspects of our career choice. In one way or another, classes in high school are the foundation of all careers. Students should reflect on their favorite and least favorite classes; classes in which they have excelled and ones in which they struggled; etc.

**Learn about the world of work** – Students should have a realistic understanding of the requirements of various career fields before dedicating time, money, and effort toward entering that field.

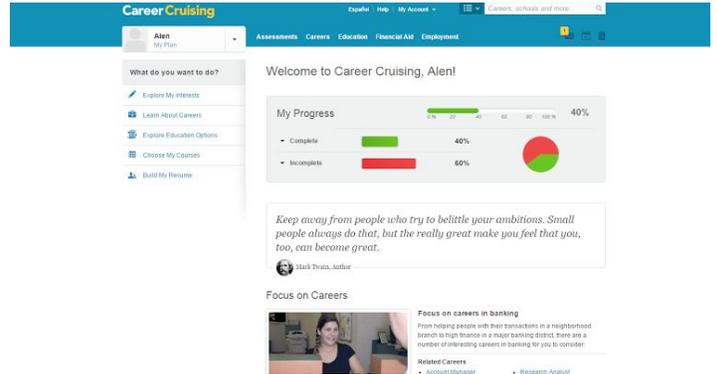
1. **Take elective classes and participate in activities and clubs**– Maine East offers a variety of elective classes that offer students hands-on experience with various career fields. Additionally, various activities and clubs provide insight into career fields.
2. **Try out a volunteer, shadow, or internship opportunity** – Maine East has an extensive internship program that allows students to try out different careers by working directly within their career of interest. Examples of career internships include working at architecture firms, restaurants, businesses, and law firms.
3. **Interview a professional** – Many careers aren't how they appear in media. When students cannot take on an internship or volunteer experience, an interview with a professional within s specific career can provide great insight.
4. **Research careers** – There are a variety of resources to find out information about careers. On the next page there are a variety of resources that will give students insight into the reality of careers.



# Suggested Sites & Resources for Career Exploration

## [Career Cruising](#)

- Login information
  - Your login was provided during Freshmen and Sophomore programming. If you have misplaced or forgotten your login information, please contact your counselor or the CRC staff.
- Assessments
  - My Matchmaker - students receive career and career cluster suggestions based on an interest survey.
  - My Skills - students gain an understanding of their level of readiness for specific careers based on their current skills.
- Career Information - allows students to research hundreds of careers and learn about education requirements, job duties/responsibilities, pay and job availability, and much more.
- Guides Activities for self-reflection
  - [My Matchmaker](#)
  - [My Skills](#)



## [Illinois Career Information System \(CIS\)](#)

- Login information
  - Click on IL RESIDENTS and then CIS
  - Username: Illinois; Password: careers
- Assessments
  - Reality Check Activity - find out how much money your ideal lifestyle will require.
  - Career Cluster Inventory - short survey to help students identify career clusters that match their interest.
  - Work Importance Locator - students explore careers based on specific work values.

## [O\\*Net Online](#)

### [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#)

- Discover thousands of jobs that exist in our society.
- Explore trends in job availability and pay.

# PART 3

## Researching Colleges and Making a College List



# Suggested Sites & Resources for Conducting a College Search

## NAVIANCE FAMILY CONNECTION

- Login Information
  - Username: School email (ex. [jsmith123@s207.org](mailto:jsmith123@s207.org))
  - Password: School ID #
- COLLEGE
  - College SuperMatch - allows students to narrow down a list of colleges based on personal preferences such as location, major, school size, etc.
  - Scattergrams - shows students previous Maine East applicants to various colleges and their outcomes (accepted, denied). This provides students with a realistic understanding of their own chances for admission into colleges.
- Guided Activities
  - [Career Profiler and College SuperMatch](#)

## College Board

- Sign up to take the SAT, learn information about AP classes, and explore colleges.

## ACT

- Provides testing information, test prep, and college/career/financial aid resources.

## RESOURCE BOOKS

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>College Admission: From Application to Acceptance, Step by Step</i></li><li>● <i>Rugg's Recommendations on the Colleges</i></li><li>● <i>The College Finder</i></li><li>● <i>The Fiske Guide</i></li><li>● <i>The Insider's Guide to Colleges</i></li><li>● <i>Choosing a College Major</i></li><li>● <i>Book of Majors (College Board)</i></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <i>The Best 377 Colleges</i></li><li>● <i>Profiles of American Colleges</i></li><li>● <i>The Fastest Growing Careers</i></li><li>● <i>The Best Career for your Personality</i></li><li>● <i>Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding the College Years</i></li><li>● <i>Crazy U: One Dad's Crash Course in Getting His Kid into College</i></li></ul>
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## CRC Google Drive

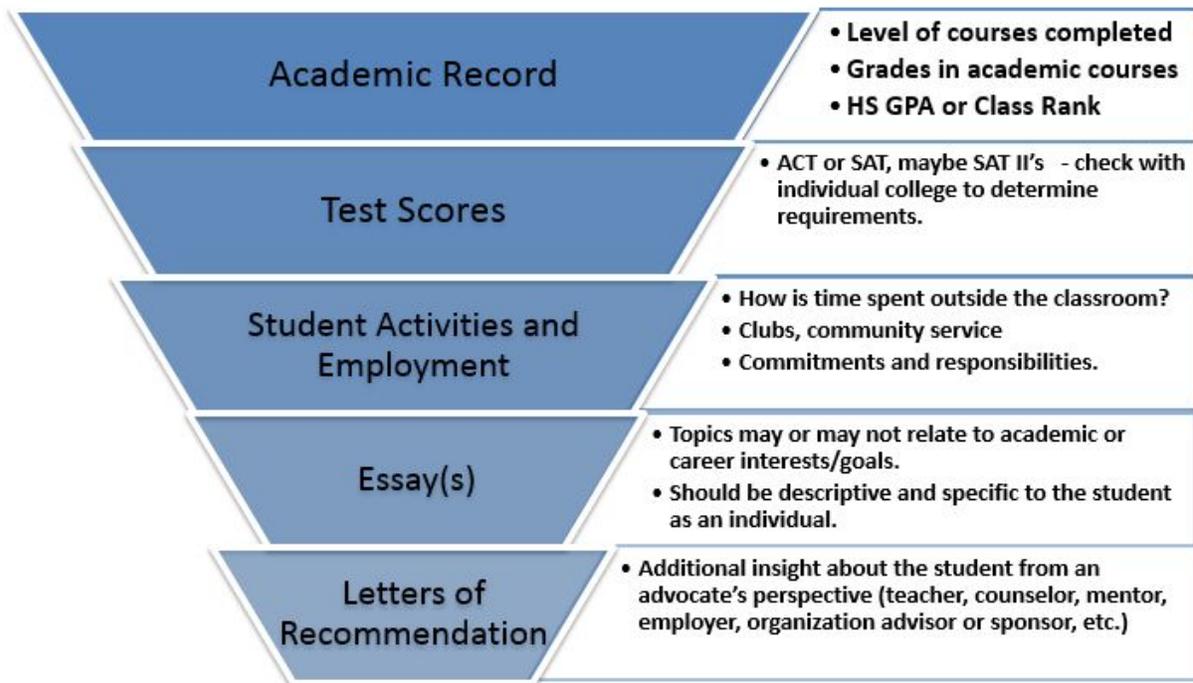
- CRC Google Drive has handouts on topics such as: the financial aid process, writing the college essay, how to navigate a college fair, questions to ask on a college campus visit, the college interview, how to search for scholarships, asking your teacher for a letter or recommendation, application tips, and much more!

## COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

- Visit the CRC through the day during the fall and spring to talk with students about colleges, majors, admissions, scholarships & financial aid, and other unique campus opportunities. Keep a close eye on the [College Visit Calendar](#) to see who is coming to visit!

# Understanding College Admission Procedures

Every college has a unique set of criteria for admission into their university. The most common criteria that are evaluated are: academic record, test scores, student activities/employment, essay(s), and letter(s) of recommendation. Some colleges utilize all of these criteria, and others do not. Additionally, each college determines the level of importance they want to place on a particular criteria. For example, College A may view Test Scores as *VERY IMPORTANT*, while College B views Test Scores as *SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT*.



- **Academic Record** - Academic record is the most widely used criteria for college admission. As the chart above shows, generally it is also the most heavily weighed (i.e. most important) in the admission process. Your academic record will be examined for rigor, number of core classes completed or in progress, and overall trends in grades (upward GPA trend, downward GPA trend).
- **Test Scores** - Test scores (ACT or SAT) are the second most common criteria for college admission. They are either as important or slightly less important than the academic record. Colleges have no preference between which standardized college admission test (ACT or SAT) scores you provide. However, some highly selective colleges may require a SAT Subject Test for admission into particular programs of study. A number of colleges have started to implement a *Test Optional* admission policy that allows students to apply for admission without submitting a test score. Additional materials such as writing supplements or letters of recommendation may be required, or more weight is placed upon the Academic Record in order to make up for a lack of test score. Test optional may be a good option for students that have an excellent GPA but do not score well on standardized tests. [Test optional school list can be found here.](#)
- **Student Activities/Employment** - Colleges will evaluate whether a student has been involved in the school, community, and work. Involvement in activities shows well-rounded character; signifies that the student will be involved on the college campus; and showcases student organization and time management skills.

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Generally, it is more important to show quality (the length of time dedicated toward select activities) rather than quantity (trying large number of activities but for short periods of time).

- **Essay** - A certain population of colleges require an essay as part of their college admission process. Topics of essays may include (but not limited to): interest in the particular college; interest in a particular field of study; information on student background. The essay is your ability to provide a personal touch and insight into your personality/character that your academic record and test scores are not able to show. Admission officers may use the essay to determine your fit for their college and understand your overall writing ability.
- **Letter of Recommendation** - Finally, a college may utilize letters of recommendation to provide an outsider's perspective on the applicant. Acceptable recommenders are usually teachers and counselors, but may also include coaches and employers. In any case, it is important to find the teacher/counselor/coach that knows you best and can provide an in-depth perspective of you as a student and person.

# Finding Your College Match/Fit

As you start compiling a list of prospective colleges there are two important factors to consider - fit and match. College fit generally relates to finding colleges that fit with your personal preferences in a variety of categories. Simultaneously, you will also need to consider whether these colleges match your academic profile.

## College Fit

In order to be fully successful in college you need to find one that fits your personal lifestyle and preferences. Generally speaking, personal preferences can be broken down into the FIVE P's - Person, Place, People, Program, and Price. Everyone will place different levels of importance on each of these categories.

**Person** - You will need to consider your learning style, time management, organization, and advocacy skill. For example, you may learn best in smaller classes that allow for discussion of material. In this case, a college with small classroom sizes may be a good fit for your.

**Place** - You will need to consider where you will spend four or more years. Will you need to commute to school? In which case, a college that has good access to public transport may be preferred. Do you not like the hustle of the big city? Then you may consider a school in a suburb or rural rea.

**People** - How many people do you want to be surrounded by? Does diversity matter to you? There are many questions to consider when thinking about what type of people you want to spend four years around. These people will also be your professional networks for job searching.

**Program** - If you want to become an engineer then you want to find a college that has this major. If you haven't decided what you want to be, then you may want to find a college that has a wide variety of majors for you to explore.

**Price** - This aspect is often the most difficult for students to reflect on and may require parental participation. In short, will you be able to afford to go to this school? Will you be eligible for financial aid with this particular institution?

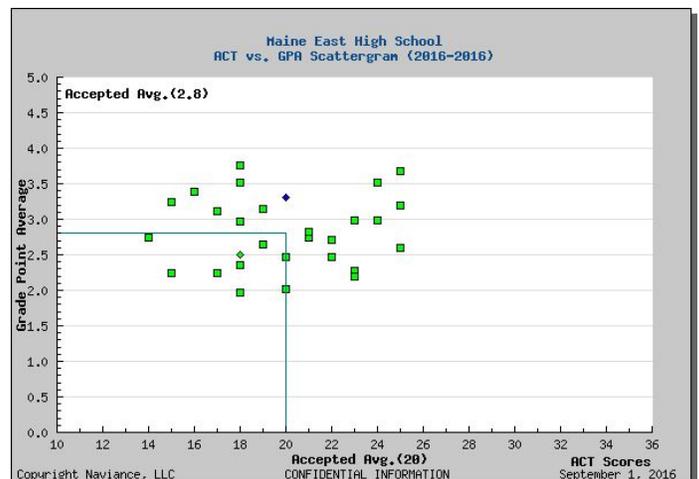
[This questionnaire can assist you in exploring your preferences in regards to the Five P's.](#) After completing the questionnaire, input your answers into [Naviance SuperMatch](#) to get a list of colleges that fit your personal preferences.

## College Match

Considering whether a college **matches** your academic profile is a simultaneous process to considering whether it fits your preferences. As mentioned in the previous section, your academic record and test scores are the most heavily weighed aspects of college admission. Thus, using your GPA and SAT/ACT score is usually the quickest way to get a gauge of your chances of gaining admission into a particular college (i.e. whether it matches your academic profile).

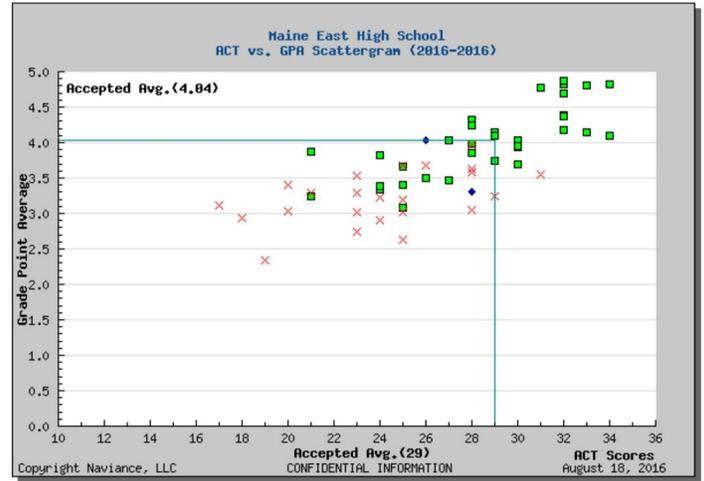
Colleges will fall into one of three match categories: **safety, target/match, or reach**. Naviance Scattergrams (pictured below) is a great way to gauge to which category a college will belongs according to each student's academic profile. For the purposes of practice, let's consider a case scenario of a student that has a 4.0 GPA and a 28 ACT in order to determine safety schools, target/match schools, and reach schools.

**Safety School.** A college would fall in the Safety category if the student applying has a very high chance of getting accepted. This means that the student has credentials (GPA, Test Score) that are above the typical admitted student of that particular college. College A (pictured on the right) would probably be a safety school for our example student (GPA 4.0, ACT score 28). Their credentials would place them well above the other accepted students from our high school.

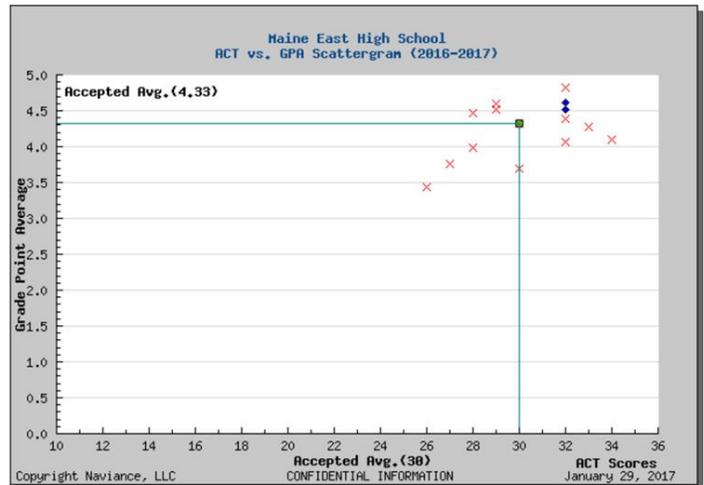


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**Target/Match School.** A Target/Match school's average GPA and Test scores would be very similar to the applicant's GPA and Test Scores. Admission to a student that has close to average GPA and Test scores is not guaranteed, but is probably likely. A student would be well suited academically at a Target/Match school because they will be around other students of similar academic backgrounds and abilities. College B (pictured on the right) would most likely be a Target/Match school for our example student (GPA 4.0, 28). There are some students with similar credentials that were not accepted (Red Xs), but also many that did get accepted (Green Squares).



**Reach School.** A college would fall in the Reach category if the student's credentials (GPA and Test Scores) are well below the average GPA and SAT scores of admitted applicants to that particular college. College C (pictured on the right) would be a Reach for our example student (GPA 4.0, 28 ACT). The majority of students (with similar and even higher credentials) that have applied to this college were not accepted.



# Assessing Your List of Colleges

As you develop a list of colleges that interest you, be sure you can answer these questions about them.

## **The basics**

- Where is the college? Can you locate it on a map? Is it too close to home? Is it too far? Is it too cold or too hot there?
- Have you taken the course work the college requires for admission?
- What size is the college? How many students are undergraduates?
- What is the college's selectivity ratio (what proportion of applicants were admitted last year)?
- Does the college offer majors that interest you?
- Is the college coed or single sex?
- What percentage of students live off campus?
- How many of the students graduate in four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their sophomore year?
- How much does the program cost? What is the total per-year expense?
- What type of financial aid is available?

## **Where would you fit in?**

- What are the admission test scores at the colleges that interest you? Where does that place you?
- What were the high school GPAs of most of the freshmen last year?
- Are freshmen guaranteed on-campus housing? If not, where do they live?
- Are there extracurricular activities that interest you?

## **Visit the colleges' websites, read the guidebooks and look at their literature**

- What are their strong academic programs? (Ask a college representative, students, graduates and teachers.)
- What courses are required for graduation?
- Are the courses you need/want available each semester? At convenient times?
- Are there special programs that interest you (study abroad, internships, etc.)?
- What is the social life like? What percentage of students join fraternities or sororities?
- Do the pictures and the language the college uses to describe itself attract you?
- What is your general impression of the college?
- Is the school accredited?
- If professional certification is required for employment in the field that interests you, how many students enrolled in the school's program pass the certification exam?

## **Admission process**

- When are applications due?
- Does the college accept the Common Application? If so, does it require supplemental forms?
- What does the application contain? Are essays required?
- Is an interview suggested or required? Is an interview available from staff or alumni?
- When may you visit the college? What is its policy regarding campus visits?
- What are the financial aid deadlines? What financial aid forms are required?

## **Now answer these questions**

- Am I a strong candidate for admission to this college?
- If I am not a strong candidate, what are my chances?
- Do I want to visit this college?
- What additional information do I need?

*Source: Susan Stagers, Cary Academy, North Carolina*

**Handout 31** page 2 of 2

# Tips for Parents on Finding a College Match

How can your child find colleges that match his or her needs? First, identify priorities. Next, carefully research the characteristics of a range of schools. Finally, match the two. Here are some college characteristics to consider.

## **Size of student body**

Size will affect many of your child's opportunities and experiences:

- range of academic majors offered  
extracurricular possibilities
- amount of personal attention your child will receive
- number of academic resources (e.g., books in the library)

In considering size, your child should look beyond the raw number of students attending. For example, perhaps she's considering a small department within a large school. She should investigate not just the number of faculty members, but also their accessibility to students.

## **Location**

Does your child want to visit home frequently, or is this a time to experience a new part of the country? Perhaps he would like an urban environment with access to museums, ethnic food, or major league ball games. Or maybe he hopes for easy access to the outdoors or the serenity of a small town.

## **Academic programs**

If your child knows what she wants to study, she can research the reputations of academic departments by talking to people in the fields that interest her. If your child is undecided, as many students are, she may want to choose an academically balanced institution that offers a range of majors and programs. Students normally don't pick a major until their sophomore year, and those students who know their major before they go to college are very likely to change their minds. Most colleges offer counseling to help students find a focus.

In considering academic programs, your child should look for special opportunities and pick a school that offers a number of possibilities.

## **Campus life**

Your child should consider what college life will be like beyond the classroom. Students have to maintain a balance between academics, activities, and social life. Before choosing a college, your child should learn the answers to these questions:

- What extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, and organizations are available?
- Does the community around the college offer interesting outlets for students?
- Are students welcomed by the community?
- Is there an ethnic or religious group in which to take part?
- How do fraternities and sororities influence campus life?
- Is housing guaranteed?
- How are dorms assigned?

## **Cost**

In considering cost, look beyond the price tag. For most students, today's college costs make finances an important consideration. At the same time, most colleges work to ensure that academically qualified students from every economic circumstance can find financial aid that allows them to attend.

# Tips for Parents on Finding a College Match

## **Diversity**

Your child should explore what she might gain from a diverse student body. The geographic, ethnic, racial, and religious diversity of the students can help students learn more about the world. Investigate which student organizations or other groups with ethnic or religious foundations are active and visible on campus.

## **Retention and graduation rates**

One of the best ways to measure a school's quality and the satisfaction of its students is to learn the percentage of students who return after the first year and the percentage of entering students who go on to graduate. Comparatively good retention and graduation rates indicate that responsible academic, social, and financial support systems exist for most students.

# Campus visits .....

## There's no substitute for seeing a college yourself!

There are lots of ways to find out about a college, from brochures to videos to college fairs.

But the bottom line is that

nothing beats the test of going to a college and seeing it for yourself.

Here are some ideas to help you make the most of a campus visit.

A campus visit is informative at any time, but it's best to see a college in action when students are in classes.

### Before you go

#### Call the admissions office in advance

Just as there's no substitute for seeing a college firsthand, there's no substitute for advance planning.

When you call the admissions office, tell them the date you'd like to visit and the time of day you expect to arrive.

If you want to stay overnight in a residence hall, ask if they can make arrangements.

Also, find out about lining up an interview (if they offer them and you'd like one) or attending an information session, visiting classes and talking with faculty.

Colleges encourage visits, but their schedules for tours, interviews and overnight stays might fill up early. Call ahead!

#### Read up on the college and think about questions

Go back through the information you've collected about the college. Check the resources at your school's guidance office and browse the college's Web site, if possible.

This research will help you

think of questions to ask and aspects of the college to explore while you're there.

The other side of this page has lists of questions to help you get started. As you think of other questions, write them down.

Have some extra time during your visit? Stop by the campus coffee shop or grill, read bulletin boards, try to strike up conversations with students, or go to a play or lecture.

### While you're there

#### Talk to as many students as you can

Once you're on campus, try to take advantage of a variety of ways to learn about the college:

- Meet with an admissions officer or attend an information session
- Take a tour of the campus
- Sit in on a class

- Have a meal in the cafeteria
- Pick up copies of the student newspaper and alumni magazine.

Throughout your visit, talk to as many students as you can and don't be bashful about asking questions!

Nervous about the interview? That's natural. Try to look at it as a conversation in which you ask questions, too. You'll be more likely to relax, be yourself and enjoy it.

#### Prepare for the interview

If you have scheduled an interview, take along your list of questions, so you're sure to cover everything you wanted to find out.

You'll probably be asked about your academic background,

interests, hobbies, goals and why you're interested in the college, so be ready to talk about that.

As with any interview, be on time, or call ahead if you know you'll be delayed.

#### Take time to look around on your own

Take some time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere. While

organized activities can give you information you can't get on your own, the reverse is true, too.

**Lots  
and lots  
of ????**

You've probably already thought of lots of questions to ask during your campus visit.

Here are some suggestions, but be sure to ask the questions that are important to YOU.

**When you talk to students, ask . . .**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical here?                   | 7. Are campus jobs readily available?                                  |
| 2. Are faculty members interested in students and accessible outside of class? | 8. Is there easy access to computers? Where are they located?          |
| 3. Do many students go home on weekends?                                       | 9. What's the library like as a place to study? to do research?        |
| 4. Are the athletic facilities open to all students or only to athletes?       | 10. What do you like most about this college? least?                   |
| 5. Is it possible to study in your dorm room?                                  | 11. How easy is it to get the classes you want?                        |
| 6. Is the food good?   | 12. If you could change something about this school, what would it be? |

**If you attend a class, ask yourself . . .**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Are students prepared for the class? Do they seem interested in the material?                      | 3. Is there time for questions and discussion? Do students participate? |
| 2. Do I feel that the students are learning—either new facts or new ways of thinking about a subject? | 4. Am I intellectually challenged by what is taking place in the class? |
|   | 5. Is there good rapport between professors and students?               |

**As you tour the campus, ask yourself . . .**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Are the buildings in good repair? the grounds well-kept?   | 3. What's the cafeteria like?                                |
| 2. Are the residence halls pleasant and quiet enough to study in? Are there laundry and kitchen facilities? | 4. Are computers and lab equipment up-to-date and plentiful? |
|   | 5. What's the surrounding town or city like?                 |

**In an interview or information session, you could ask . . .**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Does the college have academic programs that fit my interests?                                    | 5. How many students will there be in courses I'm likely to take in my first year? Are those courses taught by professors or graduate assistants? |
| 2. Where are computer terminals located? Will I have to pay extra for computer time?                 | 6. What kinds of campus jobs are available for first-year students?   |
| 3. Will I have access to special equipment (such as an electron microscope) as a first-year student? | 7. Will there be any new programs or facilities in the next two years?  |
| 4. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the college's advising system?                           | 8. What are the college's recent graduates doing now?   |

**After  
the visit**

**Write down your impressions**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Were the people you met friendly? Did they answer your questions fully and candidly? | 3. Were the students the kind of people you'd like to get to know? |
| 2. What do you think of the quality of instruction and the academic atmosphere?         | 4. Did you like the social atmosphere?                             |
|   | 5. Would you like to spend more time there?                        |

People's views about a college or university can vary widely, so try to talk with as many people as possible.

Write down your questions so you'll remember them and can refer to them during your visit.

As you tour the campus and talk with people, ask yourself whether this is a place where you'd feel comfortable and able to learn and do your best.

Are you interested in any extra-curricular activities? If so, ask about them and try to see the facilities.

If possible, write down your impressions of the college while they're still fresh in your mind.

# College Visit Checklist

DECIDE

To help you find the right college, fill out one of these forms each time you visit a school.

College Name

City

State

Size

Tuition

Room/Board

Financial Aid Options

## Admissions Contact

Name

Email

Phone

## To-Do Checklist

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to professors              | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to students                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the library               | <input type="checkbox"/> Visit student housing                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tour campus                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Read bulletin boards                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in on a class               | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out recreational facilities     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at a cafeteria              | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out student activities          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to an admissions counselor | <input type="checkbox"/> Tour the city around campus           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Read the college newspaper      | <input type="checkbox"/> Eat at an off-campus student hang-out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Check out computer labs         | <input type="checkbox"/> Picture yourself living here          |

## Rate It

On a scale of 1-5, 5 being the best, rate the following:

- People \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Life \_\_\_\_\_
- Classrooms \_\_\_\_\_
- Residence Halls \_\_\_\_\_
- Town \_\_\_\_\_
- Campus \_\_\_\_\_
- Food \_\_\_\_\_

## Ask a Student

- What is the best part about this college?
- What is the worst part?
- What is a typical day like?
- What do the students do on the weekends?
- How are classes structured?
- Why did you choose this college?

## The Best Part About My Visit

## The Worst Part About My Visit

# Going to a college fair.....

## What is a college fair?

A college fair is a gathering of college representatives. It's your chance to pick up brochures and ask questions about a variety of colleges, all in one place.

Fairs range in size, from smaller events at high schools or community centers with representatives from just a few institutions to fairs in large cities that feature hundreds of colleges and universities.

In some cases, colleges are represented by full-time admissions officers from the campuses, while other times the tables are staffed by the colleges' alumni or current students.

Some fairs also include information sessions on topics like financial aid, as well as opportunities to talk with experienced high school counselors who can advise you on the college admissions process.

## Before you go to the fair

Before you go to a college fair, think about what kind of college would suit you best. The following questions will help you get started.

- Would you prefer a large university, a small college, or something in between?
- What type of setting would you like: city, suburban, small town, rural?
- Do you want to stay close to home or go some distance away?
- Are you looking for a college with a particular religious affiliation?
- What academic program(s) are of interest to you? Are you interested in a specific degree program, such as nursing or engineering?
- Do you want opportunities for study abroad?
- Is it important to you to be involved in community service? Do you want to participate in particular sports or extracurricular activities?
- Are there special services that you might need from the college, such as tutoring?

This is also a good time to gather information from people and resources around you. Talk to your counselor about your college plans. Use resource materials at the guidance office or library and on the Web to research colleges. Talk to your parents, family and friends.

## Practical tips for making the most of a college fair

- Take along a pen and a small notebook. Also, take a bag to carry the brochures you pick up, unless you know that the sponsors of the fair will provide one.
- Print out some address labels with your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, high school and year of graduation. Spend your time at the college tables asking questions, not filling out contact cards!
- When you arrive, check out the floor plan and find out where the tables for your top choice colleges are located so you can go directly to them.
- Write your most important questions down in advance so you don't forget them.
- Check on whether any information sessions, such as financial aid, are being offered. Interested? Budget your time accordingly.
- Jot down notes about a college while your memory is fresh, such as right after visiting the table.
- Pick up the business cards of any representatives you talk to, so you can contact them if you have any more questions.

## Use your time wisely

The fair will be open for a limited number of hours, so plan to use your time wisely.

Make a list of the colleges that interest you the most. You'll want to make sure to stop by those tables first.

What about other colleges that you think might have potential, but don't make your top

choices list? Plan to visit those after you have gathered information from the colleges at the top of your list.

If there's still time left after that, browse around any tables that catch your eye. Sometimes a college you've never heard of has just the major or activity that you're seeking.

## What to ask at the fair

You can get general information about a college or university from its Web site or from college guidebooks. If possible, gather this information ahead of time about the colleges that interest you the most. That will give you the background to dig deeper with your questions.

At the college fair, you can talk one-to-one with admissions representatives. This is your chance to go beyond the general information and ask questions that are unique to **your** interests and situation.

For example, if you are interested in majoring in biology, you could ask about the sequence of courses you would be likely to take your first year, about opportunities for students to conduct research in biology, and about what recent biology graduates are doing now.

Make a list of questions to ask about your top choice colleges. Asking each representative the same questions will help you compare different colleges. But you might also have some questions that are specific to a particular college or university.

Time will be limited, so prioritize your list to make sure you get answers to your most important questions.

Ask each admissions representative how you can contact him or her if you have any questions after the college fair.

A college fair is your chance to go beyond the general information and ask questions that are unique to **your** interests.

## Questions to ask

To help you get started, here are some questions you might ask at the fair. Remember, though, to concentrate on questions that address your specific interests.

### Campus life

- What percentage of students live on campus (first-year and upperclass)?
- How are roommates selected?

- What recreation facilities and student organizations are there for the activities that I enjoy?

### Academics

- How do first-year students choose their classes?
- How many students will be in the classes I'm likely to take during my first year?
- How are faculty advisers assigned, especially before a major has been chosen?
- When must I choose a major?
- What is the process to apply for study abroad?
- What types of internships are there in my areas of interest? How do students find internships? Do they receive academic credit?
- What services are available on campus to help me with career planning?
- What percentage of last year's first-year students returned for their sophomore year?
- What percentage of students graduate in four years? What percentage graduate in five years?

## After you get home

- Make a point of going through the materials and your notes within one week after the fair. You'll probably remember more about your conversations with college representatives while the memories from the fair are still fresh.

- Follow up with any college that interests you by contacting the admissions office to ask further questions and, if possible, plan a visit to the campus.

## College Representative Visits to the CRC

Representatives from colleges and universities around Illinois and United States make personalized trips to the Maine East CRC every Fall and Spring Semester. This is a perfect time to learn about a specific college directly from the source. It is also a great way to leave a positive impression on the representative (Tip: Many of the representatives will be the ones reading your college applications!).

[CRC Calendar](#)

[Pass to the CRC](#)

## 20 Questions to Ask a College Representative

Whether you meet them at a college fair or on a campus visit, college reps genuinely enjoy talking to high school students and answering questions about their college. The following questions will help start a good dialogue:

1. What makes your college unique?
2. What academic programs is your college most known for?
3. How would you describe the kids that go there? Where do most of them come from?
4. Where do kids hang out on campus?
5. What happens on weekends—are there things to do on campus or in town, or do most kids go home?
6. Are fraternities and sororities a big part of campus life?
7. What are the housing options for freshmen?
8. Do many students live off campus?
9. Is there a sports complex or fitness center?
10. What are the most popular clubs and activities?
11. What's the security like on campus?
12. What's the surrounding area like? Is it easy to get around?
13. What are the most popular majors?
14. How would you describe the academic pressure and workload?
15. What support services are available (academic advisers, tutors, etc.)?
16. Do I need to bring my own computer?
17. What's the faculty like? How accessible are they outside of class?
18. Are there opportunities for internships?
19. Is there job placement help for graduates?
20. Are any big changes in the works that I should know about?

*Source: Get it Together for College 2nd ed. (College Board 2011).*

### Handout 3E

# How to Make the Most of a College Interview

- The interview is primarily for you to learn about the college and to allow the interviewer to learn about you. Use it as a tool to assist your college selection. The interview can have a positive effect on your admission — rarely a negative one. Relax and be yourself!
- Your interview will usually be with an admissions staff member, but it may be with a student, alumnus or a professional interviewer. Keep this person’s perspective in mind. Don’t write off the college just because you think you had a bad interview. Interviewers have bad days, too.
- The interviewer is eager to get to know you and will try to put you at ease. The interviewer will answer your questions but will be more interested if you have helpful questions that show you’ve done some research on the college already.
- An important part of preparation is self-assessment. Know your rank, your test scores and your present areas of interest. If you are undecided about your career, feel free to say so (half of college students change their intended major). Think through some areas you would like to explore, competencies you would like to develop and projects or situations that intrigue you.
- Don’t go unprepared. Do your homework about the school to get the obvious questions answered. You don’t want to be silent when asked, “What would you like to know about our college?” Questions or comments like, “What kinds of internships are there, and how often do students take them?” show more maturity in your thinking than asking about the number of books in the college library.
- Interviewers may ask questions about your interests, extracurricular activities/jobs, books you’ve read, meaningful experiences, reasons for applying to this college, life at school and similar topics. Be ready to talk about these subjects.
- Be honest. Everyone has strong and weak points. College will help you with some of the latter and promote the former.
- Plan to have your interview alone. Most admissions officers prefer to speak with your parents after talking with you, rather than during the interview.
- Dress neatly and comfortably.
- When you return home, **write a thank-you note** to the person who interviewed you.

*Source: Adapted from material prepared by Gloria Mueller, Glenbrook High School, Illinois*

## Handout 3G

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# SAMPLE COLLEGE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Why are you considering this college? What can this college offer you?
- Why do you want to go to college?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What makes you think that this college would be a good match?
- Where else are you applying and why?
- What do you hope to major in?
- What do you expect to be doing ten years from now?
- What do you hope to do after graduation?
- How do you define “success?”
- What have you liked or disliked about your school? What would you change?
- How would you describe yourself to someone who did not know you?
- What newspapers and magazines do you read?
- What books not required for school have you read recently?
- What television shows do you watch?
- What do you do for fun?
- What do you do best?
- What did you do this summer?
- Tell us about your family.
- How do you spend a typical afternoon after school? Evening? Weekend?
- What extracurricular activities have you found most satisfying?
- What are your strengths? Weakness? What has been your proudest achievement?
- 23. What makes you special?
- 24. If you could talk with anyone living (or deceased) person, whom would it be and why?
- 25. Who is your hero?
- 26. Who is an historical figure you admire?
- 27. What do you think of the latest headlines?
- 28. What events have been crucial in your life?
- 29. What is the most important thing you’ve learned in high school?
- 30. Tell me about a high school experience most important to you.
- 31. What mark do you feel you’ve left on your school?
- 32. What will you do outside the classroom at our school?
- 33. What do you want to get out of your college experience?
- 34. What about you is unique? What could you contribute to our college community?
- 35. Talk about a significant challenge you have encountered.
- 36. Is there anything you’d like to tell us about your transcript?
- 37. What is your greatest passion?
- 38. How would your friends describe you?
- 39. If you had high school to do over again, what might you have done differently?
- 40. What are your goals for your senior year?
- 41. If you had \$1,000 to give away, what would you do with it?

<http://www.emmawillard.org/faqs/college-resources/college-interview>

<http://collegeapps.about.com/od/theartofgettingaccepted/tp/interview-for-college.htm>

## Is Community College Right for You?

- You know where you want to be but need some training to get there
- You want to explore different choices before settling on a path
- You need to cut the cost of a four-year college degree
- You want to sharpen your study skills before enrolling at a university
- You want small classes and personal attention during your first college years
- You want to continue to work at your job while going to college
- You want to live at home

If you checked even one box on the quiz, you may want to check out a community college. You won't be alone—45 percent of all first-year college students start at a community college.

These institutions offer two kinds of education:

1. If your goal is a four-year degree, you can earn a two-year (associate) degree at a community college, then transfer to a four-year college as a junior.
2. You can earn an occupational degree or certificate in two years or less, then start working immediately in a high-demand field.

Many community college students have jobs and family responsibilities. Scheduling classes may be a big challenge. So community colleges tend to offer courses during the day, in the evening, and on weekends. They have pioneered new teaching methods, too. Some offer courses online (distance learning), combine Internet and classroom learning, give interactive TV courses, condense semester courses into shorter time frames, and more.

Interested? You don't have to wait. Consider taking a community college course during high school. You will learn what college work is like, and rack up some college credits, too.

*Source: The College Board*

# Part 4

## College Applications



# General College Application Procedures

## 1. Complete the College Application

Colleges encourage online applications. On a college's website, you can locate the type of application system they utilize. Some colleges only utilize their own application system, some only utilize the Common Application, and others utilize both (i.e. you can submit an application in either system). Colleges have no preference how you submit an application.

## 2. Submit SAT/ACT Test Scores

- a. Most schools require an official Test Score (ACT or SAT). You can log into [ACT](#) or [College Board](#) website to request a copy of your score to be sent.
- b. Some colleges ([click here for list of local colleges](#)) will accept the test score from your official high school transcript. Maine East High School can list your test score on your transcript if you provided permission during registration through Infosnap.
- c. If you are applying to a college using a Test Optional Policy, then do not submit test scores.

## 3. Request an official transcript - Your high school academic record may be reported one of three ways:

- a. **Common Application** - If you are submitting college applications using the Common App, then your Counselor will upload your high school transcript as part of the School Report.
- b. **Parchment** - If you are submitting applications through another system that is not Common App, then you will need to log into your parchment account and request an official high school transcript to be sent.
- c. **Self-report** - Some colleges allow you to self-report the classes you have taken and the grades that you received.

## 4. Submit all supplemental materials - Read all of the directions to ensure you are completing all the necessary steps and submitting all of the required materials. Proofread carefully!

- a. **Essay** - A college may or may not require an essay as part of their application. If an essay is required for the application, make sure to have it proofread by a counselor, teacher, or college/career counselor. Later in this section you will find tips on writing an effective college essay.
- b. **Letters of Recommendation** - Are letters of recommendation from your teacher or counselor required? If yes, make sure to give your recommenders at least 2 week notice prior to the application deadline. If letters of recommendation are optional, speak to your counselor, teacher, and/or college/career counselor to evaluate whether a recommendation may strengthen your application. If letters of recommendation are not accepted by the college, do not have a teacher or counselor send one in because they will not be taken into account. Fill out the Student Self-Assessment and share it with your recommender prior to them writing the letter ([click here for Student Self-Assessment](#)).

# Registering and Sending Transcripts via Parchment

## Registering

1. At the beginning of senior year you will get an email with a specific code to register you with parchment. This code will pre-fill information about you based on your ASPEN account.
2. [Once you have your code then click on this link.](#)
3. College admissions officials expect your credentials to be confidential. Under the FERPA Privacy Rights section we recommend that you “**Waive Your Right to Access.**”

## Sending Transcripts

1. **MAIN PAGE.** Select the blue **ORDER** Button under your **Your Credentials from Maine East High School** in the middle of the page
2. **SELECT A DESTINATION PAGE.** Type in the name of the college in the search box, and select **Search**. Next, **Select** the desired school from the list that appears. If the college you want appears twice, you will select the UNDERGRADUATE.
3. **ORDER DETAILS PAGE.** When do you want your transcript sent (Send Now or Hold for Grades)? If you are submitting an application prior to 1st semester finishing, then you want to select **Send Now**. If you select **Hold for Grades** then your transcript will not be sent after 1st semester grades are posted. You may **Add Another Destination** in order to send your transcript to multiple schools at once. Review your order and keep selecting **Continue**.
4. **PROVIDE CONSENT PAGE.** Sign your name on the line using your mouse, type in your parent’s or guardian’s name (if you are under 18) or your name, and check the box that certifies the information is correct. Select **Save and Continue**.
5. **PAYMENT INFORMATION PAGE.** Sending transcripts to many colleges in the Midwest will be free. If there is no fee then you will automatically be skipped past this page. Some schools may cost up to \$2.55 plus handling fees. Students who receive free books should notify Ms. Linda Trinite (Registrar) that their account is set up prior to ordering transcripts. These students can receive 4 additional free transcripts. Otherwise, transcripts must be paid for online with a credit card or debit card. You will need to pay and submit for transcripts outside of the Midwest Consortium.
6. [A step-by-step video to sending transcripts can be found on this link.](#)

## Self-Reported Academic Transcript

The colleges on this page allow students to self-report their high school academic courses and grades. A **FINAL TRANSCRIPT** is still required upon graduation from Maine East.

**Important Tip:** **DO NOT** falsify courses or grades on the Self-Reported Academic Record. Each university will check your final transcript to ensure that the information provided in your Self-Reported Academic Record was correct. University may rescind your admission if you are found to be falsifying information on your Self-Reported Academic Record.

California State System	University of California System
Florida State University	University of Florida
Illinois State University	University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Iowa State University	University of Kansas
Kansas State University	University of Montana
McGill University	University of Nebraska
Montana Public Universities	University of Pittsburgh
Northern Illinois University (self-reported or official)	University of Washington
Rutgers University	University of Georgia
State Universities of New York (SUNY)	University of South Carolina (student has to upload an unofficial copy as well)

## Self-Report Test Scores and Test Scores on Transcript

[These colleges allow students to self-report their test scores.](#)

[The following local colleges accept test scores from Maine East Transcript.](#)

## Common Application Instructions and Tips

1. Over 700 colleges use the Common App. Students will need to create an account on [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org). Make sure to keep track of your login information.
2. For a detailed step-by-step guide to the Common App [please visit the Common App YouTube Page](#).

# THE COMMON APPLICATION

## University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Instructions

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) requires all students to self-report their academic classes and grades. As a result, a transcript is not required with an application for admission. The self-reported grades will serve as a transcript. However, students that are admitted and choose to enroll will need to submit a final official transcript upon graduation. The final transcript will then be matched to the self-reported academic record. An offer of admission can be rescinded if any discrepancies are found or the final transcript is not submitted. UIUC reserves the right to ask for the official transcript at any point during the application process.

1. Complete all parts of the online application to UIUC [admissions.illinois.edu/apply](https://admissions.illinois.edu/apply)
2. **Do not send a transcript.** Instead you will fill out a Self-Reported Academic Record within the actual application.
3. Have **OFFICIAL TEST SCORES** sent from ACT/SAT. UIUC does not accept ACT/SAT scores from high school transcript or other submission methods.
4. Once these steps are completed, your application should be considered complete.
5. As with all applications, continually check your email and UIUC application site for updates or information about missing materials.



# Tips for Undertaking the Application Process

## Getting started

- Set up a folder for each application. Keep all material relevant to each college in its own folder.
- Request letters of recommendations at least two weeks (a month is better) before the deadlines.
- Review all application requirements. Set up a schedule for completing them. You might want to put off this task as long as you can, but procrastination is risky. There is a lot to do, especially if you have several essays to write. You may not do the application (and yourself) justice if you leave it until the last minute. Remember: Leave enough time for correcting and revising.

## Completing the application process

- Review each page of the application and its directions completely before you start to work on it.
- Be accurate, honest and neat. Spell correctly and use correct grammar.
- Don't type your essay directly into the application. Draft it separately, then upload the final, proof-read version.
- Request the testing organization to send your official test scores directly to the colleges. Do not send a photocopy of your own test score report unless requested to do so. Sometimes, a college accepts a photocopy as a means of obtaining preliminary information, but it will need the official report to make an offer of admission.
- When you have completed your application, ask someone to review it and check it for errors.
- Print and save to your hard drive the completed application before you send it.
- If you file an online application, be sure to tell your counselor when you have submitted the application and which materials the school needs to send to the college (such as recommendations or the transcript).

## Tips for online applicants

- Make sure a person whose opinion you trust reviews the application for errors before you send it.
- Use standard spelling and grammar — not email-ese: Treat this like a paper application.
- Spell your name the same way on the online application and on other components that are sent via mail; this will help the colleges match the components of your application in a timely way.
- Have your test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying, if you haven't already.
- Print out a paper copy for your records.
- Do not apply electronically and send a paper copy in the mail: Wait for confirmation that the electronic copy was received (you should get that within three or four days, if not sooner).
- Tell your counselor of every online application you send, so he or she can send transcripts and letters of recommendation.

### Handout 4B

# College Admission Tests

TEST STRUCTURE AND FORMAT	THE NEW SAT	ACT
Testing time	3 hours + 50-minute SAT essay (optional)	2 hours 55 minutes + 40-minute essay (optional)
Score range	Composite 400-1600 (SAT Essay: reported in 3 dimensions, each 2-8)	Composite 1-36 (writing domain scores: 2-12)
Test length and time	<p>Number of questions: 154 Time per question: 1:10</p> <p><b>Reading Test</b> 65 Minutes 52 Questions</p> <p><b>Writing and Language Test</b> 35 Minutes 44 Questions</p> <p><b>Math Test</b> 80 Minutes 58 Questions</p> <p><i>Use of a calculator on some problems</i></p>	<p>Number of questions: 215 Time per question: 0:49</p> <p><b>Reading Test</b> 35 Minutes 40 Questions</p> <p><b>English Test</b> 45 Minutes 75 Questions</p> <p><b>Math Test</b> 60 Minutes 60 Questions <i>Use of a calculator on some problems</i></p> <p><b>Science Test</b> 35 Minutes 40 Questions</p>
FREE PRACTICE (offered by the testing agencies)	<p>SAT has partnered with Khan Academy to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• four full-length practice tests</li> <li>• sample test questions</li> <li>• personalized practice recommendations</li> </ul> <p>Additional practice questions and exams are available at <b>sat.org</b>.</p>	<p>ACT offers sample test questions at <b>actstudent.org</b>.</p>

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# NATIONAL TEST DATES

TEST	HOW TO REGISTER	COST	TEST DATE	REGULAR REGISTRATI ON DEADLINE	LATE REGISTRATI ON DEADLINE	MAINE EAST CODE
SAT	<a href="#">Register online</a>	\$45.00  With essay: \$57.00	<b>*April 10, 2018</b> <b>*State SAT*</b> May 5, 2018 June 2, 2018 August 25, 2018 October 6, 2018 November 3, 2018 December 1, 2018	<b>In-school</b>  April 6, 2018 May 3, 2018		141595
SAT Subject Tests	<a href="#">Register Online</a>	\$26.00 basic fee + \$20.00 for additional subject tests <i>Language Test &amp; Listening:</i> \$26.00 additional per test	Same as SAT but not all subjects are offered on every test date NO SAT Subject Tests given in March	Same as SAT	Same as SAT	141595
ACT	<a href="#">Register online</a>	\$46 With writing: \$62.50  Late Fee: add \$29.50 Standby Fee: add \$53.00	April 14, 2018 June 9, 2018 July 14, 2018 September 8, 2018 October 27, 2018 December 8, 2018	March 9, 2018 May 4, 2018 June 15, 2018	March 10-23, 2018 May 5-18, 2018 June 16-22, 2018	141595
AP	Register at Maine East	\$92.00	May 7-18, 2018	Register and pay in the bookstore mid-March. Deadline TBA.	Not available	141595
CLEP	Contact Oakton (847) 635-1939	\$80 + \$15 service fee				141595

# **Staying Organized During the College Admission Process**

Can you imagine balancing 8-10 college applications all requiring 4-5 different components (essays, letters of recommendation, test scores, etc) at different times in the year? Now add in the fact that you will be taking rigorous senior year classes and participating in extracurricular activities. It is going to be a busy year! You will need to maintain impeccable organization to make sure all parts of your application are turned in on time. Forgetting to turn in one item could mean disqualification from the admission process.

Here are a couple of organizers to help you with that process.

- [College Organizer 1](#)
- [College Organizer 2](#)

# Sample Resume

---

## First Name Last Name

12345 Hemingway Ln.  
Park Ridge, IL 60068  
(123)456-7890 student@s207.org

## Work Experience

### Country Club

Summer 2011 and 2012

#### Lifeguard

- Monitored swimming areas for rule violations and drowning victims.
- Assisted in maintaining pool facilities and recreation areas surrounding pool areas.
- Supervised entertainment activities sponsored by country club.

### Hawkins, Robins, Warbler and Finch, Attorneys at Law

Fall 2009 - Fall 2010

- Picked-up and delivered catering and supplies for luncheons and corporate functions.

## Volunteer Work

### Big Brothers/Big Sisters

2011 - 2012

- Assisted with and participated in group activities and field trips.
- Monitored youth during activities.
- Tutored ages 8-13 and assisted with homework assignments.

### Texas School for the Blind

2008

- Read literary masterpieces into a tape recorder for use by the community.
- Assisted with volunteer office duties.

## School Activities/Clubs

### National Honor Society

2011, 2012

### Pep Squad

2010, 2011

Decorations Committee Chair — 2011

### Latin Club

2010, 2011, 2012

Secretary — 2010

Vice President — 2012

## Awards and Honors

Student of the Months, April 2015 for Algebra 2

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Other sample resumes, resume templates, and resume writing tips can be found in the [CRC Google Drive](#) and in your [Career Cruising](#) account.

# Top Ten Tips for Writing a College Essay

**Start early.** The more time you have, the less stress you'll have. You'll have plenty of time to give the essay your best effort.

**Be yourself.** Take a moment to think about what interests you, what you love to talk about, what makes you sit up and take notice if it's mentioned in class or on TV. Then write about it. One of the biggest mistakes students make is "writing what they think others want to hear, rather than about an issue, event, or person that really had significance for them," says an admission and financial aid official at a New York college. An essay like that is not just boring to write, it's boring to read.

**Be honest.** You're running late (see #1), you can't think of what to write, and someone emails you a heartwarming story. With just a tweak here and there, it could be a great essay, you think. It's what you would have written if you'd just had enough time. Don't be fooled! College admission officers have read hundreds, even thousands of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism. Adapting an e-mail story, buying an essay from some Internet site, getting someone else to write your essay, admission people have seen it all. Don't risk your college career by taking the easy way out.

**Take a risk.** On the other hand, some risks can pay off. Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing. Imagine an admission officer up late, reading the fiftieth essay of the day, yours. Do you want that person to nod off because he or she has already read ten essays on that topic? "The danger lies not in writing bad essays but in writing common essays, the one that admission officers are going to read dozens of," says an associate director at a Pennsylvania high school. "My advice? Ask your friends what they are writing, and then don't write about that!"

**Keep in focus.** This is your chance to tell admission officers exactly why they should admit you. Unfortunately, some students try to list every single reason, their stellar academic record, their athletic prowess, their community service, all in a page or two. When that happens, the essay looks like a grocery list. Even though the Common Application main essay has a suggested minimum of 650 words, with no limit, every admission officer has a big stack to read every day; he or she expects to spend only a couple of minutes on the essay. If you go over 700 words, you are straining their patience, which no one should want to do. Instead, read the essay question carefully and jot down a few ideas. Then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to that main theme throughout the essay. You don't have to list all your achievements, that's what the rest of the application is for. Use the essay in a creative way to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.

**Write and rewrite.** Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try. It's not possible, and all that pressure is likely to give you writer's block. For your first draft, write anything that comes to mind about your topic. Don't worry too much about grammar or spelling. Just get it down on paper (or computer screen). Then let it "rest" for a few hours or a few days. When you come back to the draft, look for ways to make it more focused and better written. Some people are "fat" writers: they write long, wordy first drafts that need to be shortened later. Others are "skinny" writers: they write short and simple first drafts and then need to add details or examples to "flesh out" the skeleton. Either way, don't be afraid to make major changes at this stage. Are there details that don't really relate to the topic? Cut them. Do you need another example? Put it in.

*Here are two other things to try, suggested by one college counselor.*

- Remove the introductory and concluding paragraphs, and then see if your essay seems stronger. These paragraphs are often the most likely to have unnecessary detail.
- Go through the essay and cut out every "very" and every "many." Words like these are vague, and your writing is often stronger without them.

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**Get a second opinion.** Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they're sent to the publisher. When you've rewritten the essay to your satisfaction, find someone who can give you advice on how to make it even better. Choose a person you respect and who knows something about writing, a favorite English teacher, a parent, or a friend who writes for the school paper. Ask them to tell you what they like best about your essay, and what you can do to improve it. Criticism of your writing can be tough to hear, but try to listen with an open mind. You don't have to make every change suggested, after all, it's your essay and no one else's, but you should seriously consider each suggestion.

**Proofread.** Finally, you're ready to send your essay. Not so fast! Read it over one more time, looking for those little errors that can creep in as you write or edit. If you're using a computer, also run a spell check. Sometimes, it can be difficult to catch minor typos—you've read the essay so many times that you see what should be there rather than what is there. To make sure you catch everything, try reading your essay out loud or having someone else read it out loud to you. Another strategy is to read the essay backward, from the last sentence to the first. That makes it just unfamiliar enough for errors to stand out.

**Be accurate.** Applying online may feel like you're sending email, but you're not. An Oregon director of admission warns against using informal email language, incorrect capitalization or abbreviations such as BTW or "thanx," which are not appropriate to a formal document. Make sure your online essay represents the best of you.

**Don't expect too much from an essay.** The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered. "Can [the essay] make a difference in getting the 'thin versus thick' envelope? Absolutely," says the New York director. "But that is the exception rather than the rule." That's because admission officers look at the whole package, your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. A great essay rarely makes up for a weak academic record. On the other hand, a mediocre essay won't necessarily consign your application to the "deny" list. So make your essay as well-written as you can, but don't put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.

# 8 Tips to Crafting Your Best College Essay

## 1. Get started by brainstorming

Starting the essay can be the hardest part. Brainstorming about your personality traits and defining your strengths is a good place to begin.

## 2. Let your first draft flow

After you've gathered your notes, create an outline to organize your essay and decide where you want examples to appear. Now you're ready to write your first draft. Don't worry about making it perfect. Just get your ideas flowing and your thoughts down on paper. You'll fix mistakes and improve the writing in later drafts.

## 3. Develop three essay parts

- Introduction: One paragraph that introduces your essay.
- Body: Several paragraphs explaining the main idea with examples.
- Conclusion: One paragraph that summarizes and ends the essay.

## 4. Be specific

Give your essay focus by figuring out how the question relates to your personal qualities and then taking a specific angle. Make sure everything you write supports that viewpoint. Read about how some students conquered the essay.

## 5. Find a creative angle

Katherine, a college freshman, had to describe why she would make a good Reed College student for that school's essay. "I am a huge fan of Beat Generation writers, and many of the West Coast Beat writers attended Reed," she says. "So I related my love for writing and the Beats to why I would be a great fit for the school."

## 6. Be honest

The essay question might ask you about your best quality, an experience that shaped you or the reason you want to attend a certain college. Don't be tempted to write what you think the admission officers want to hear; answer the question honestly.

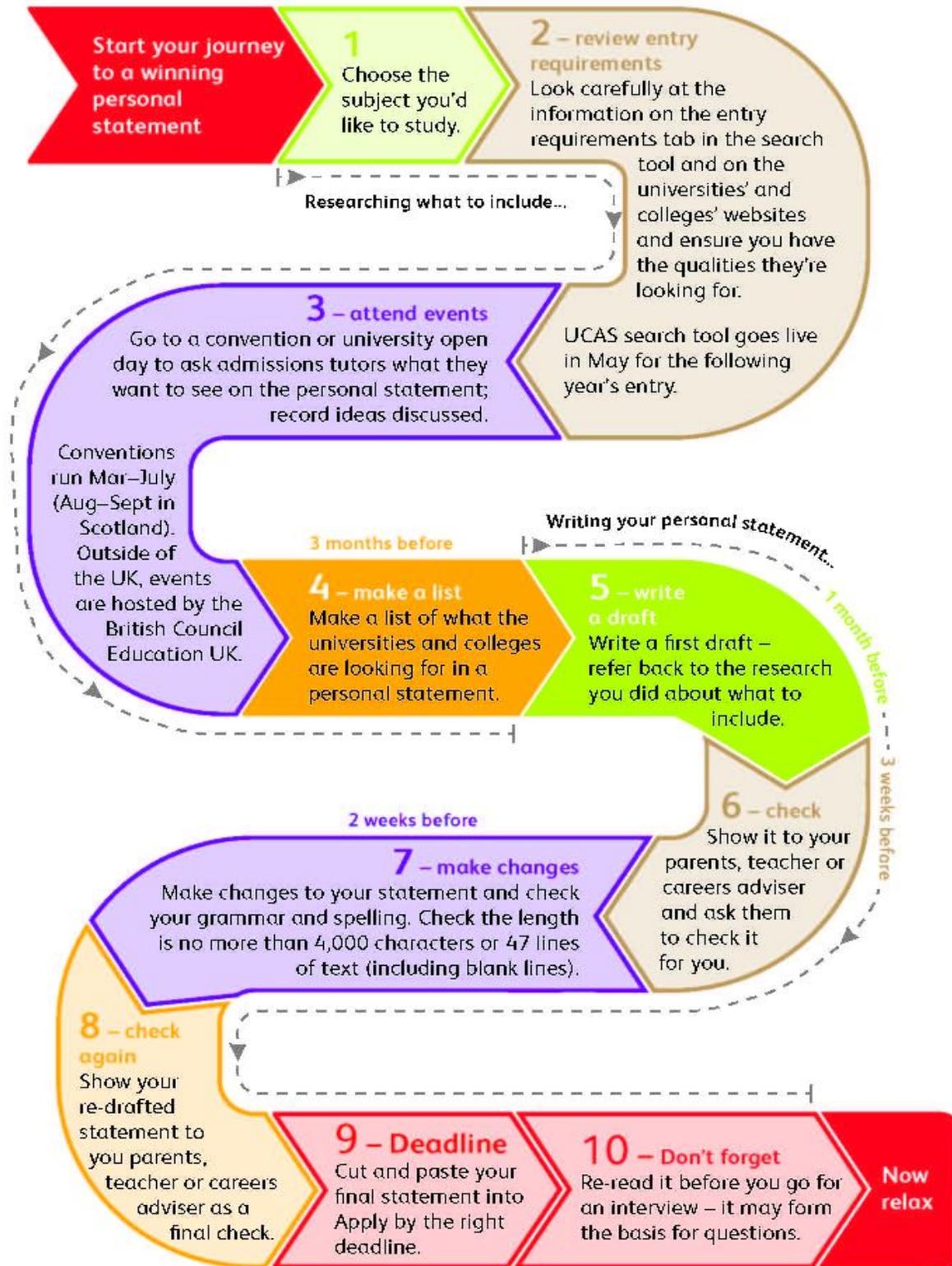
## 7. Get feedback

Show your draft to family, friends or teachers. Ask if it makes sense and sounds like you. Consider their feedback and make changes, but keep your voice. High school senior Dana warns, "Make sure the essay is in your own voice. If at some point you read over your essay and you hear your mother's voice, something is wrong."

## 8. Proofread and make corrections

Read your essay over carefully to check for typos and spelling and grammar errors. It's best to ask someone who hasn't seen it yet to take a look as well. They're likely to see mistakes you won't catch.

# My personal statement timeline



# 2016-2017 Common Application Essay Prompts

Students that are completing their applications via the Common App have a choice between five essay prompts. The minimum word count is 250 and the maximum is 650. The following prompts were available for the 2016-2017 applicants. Common App occasionally changes prompts so the exact prompts for the 2017-2018 applicants will not be available until summer 2016.

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, and an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

## Other Frequent Essay Topics and How to Approach Them

**Why do you want to attend our university, or why do you want to attend this particular program at our university?**

Be prepared to demonstrate an understanding of the school beyond the basics. You need to take a generic question and add some special qualities to make it your own. Stay away from talking about supporting their sports programs, liking their pretty campus, or general statements about the quality of the programs.

- Do some research about specific things that you want to take advantage of at their school or a program that is unique?
- Is there a specific professor or research project that specifically excites you?
- How do you see yourself fitting into their student body based on the type of student/person you are?
- What do you want to get involved in?
- What you will add to their campus?

**Why have you chosen your particular major of study?**

Try to find a personal spin or approach to where the inspiration comes from that has guided you in the direction of your intended major. Is there a personal experience, an influential person in your life, a passion for a particular class or internship/job? Try to stay away from themes such as “wanting to help people,” or “just liking a particular subject in school.”

# Part 5

## Financial Aid



# Sites and Resources for Financial Aid and Scholarship Sites

## [Maine East CRC Scholarship List](#)

- As we receive scholarship listings from our community, state, or even national organizations, the information is updated in the CRC Google Sheet form.
- **TIP:** Start with local scholarships. They are often lower in amount, but your chances of getting them are higher because competition is much lower than national scholarship competitions.

## [College Greenlight](#)

- College Greenlight is a Chicago-based scholarship search engine that is endorsed by the Illinois Student Assistance Commission.

## [Family Connection Naviance Scholarship Search](#)

- Log into your account with your username and password and go to the Colleges Tab. Under the Colleges Tab, there is a national scholarship search provided to you by Sallie Mae.

## Other Scholarship Websites

- <http://www.scholarships.com>
- <https://www.cappex.com/scholarships>
- [fastweb.com](http://fastweb.com)

## [FAFSA.ed.gov](#)

- Official government website to file the FAFSA. Students applying for aid for the 2018-2019 academic year should complete the **FAFSA for the 2019-2020 School Year**.
- **Remember** - **October 1st** is the earliest day you can submit your FAFSA for the 2018-2019 school year.

## [FSAID.ed.gov](#)

- You may obtain an ID number from the Office of Federal Student Aid (FSA ID) at the time you submit your FAFSA. If you would like to create your FSA ID ahead of time, you may use this website.
- **Tip:** You must remember all of the login information exactly. Otherwise, this will delay the submission of your FAFSA. Be sure to write the information down.

## [StudentAid.ed.gov](#)

- A one-stop-shop for everything you need to know about federal financial aid including grants, loans, the FAFSA application process, etc.
- Want to know how much your student loan payments will be? [Try this great tool from Student Aid!](#)

## [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#)

- Illinois Student Assistance Commission's website lists various college planning and financial aid resources for students and parents.

## Net Price Calculator

- Look for the **Net Price Calculator** on each individual college website (usually found under the Financial Aid page). Students and parents can see estimated financial aid packages based on student information (GPA, PSAT/SAT scores) and parental/student financial information (tax returns).

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- **TIP: EVERY** family should complete a Net Price Calculator to get an early understanding how much college will cost them.

### CSS Profile

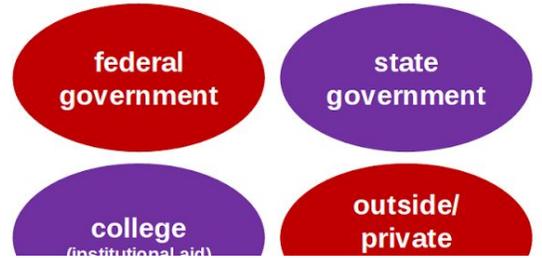
- Certain colleges (usually colleges that try to meet as much student aid as possible) require a CSS Profile. The CSS profile is more detailed than the FAFSA and will consider more components such as family expenses. Only do a CSS Profile if the college requires it.

# Sources and Types of Financial Aid

Financial aid comes in many forms and from various sources. The four main sources of financial aid are the **Federal Government, State Government, College/University, and Private Sources.** There are lots of places to look for money!

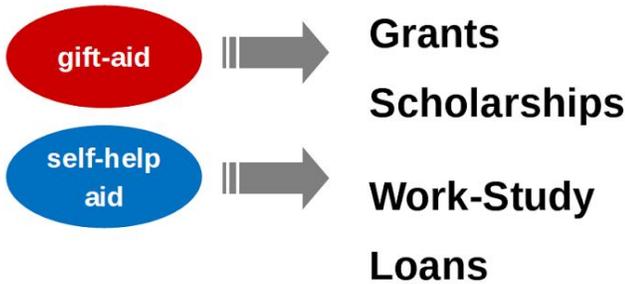
## Sources of Financial Aid

Financial aid comes from a variety of sources



## Types of Financial Aid

There are many types of financial aid.



These funds may be merit-based, need-based, or non need-based.

**Grants** - money given to the student that does not need to be repaid. It is based on demonstrated Financial Need of the family as determined by the FAFSA.

**Scholarship** - money given to the student that does not need to be repaid. Usually based on academic merit (grades and test scores), but may also be based on talents, personal characteristics, or athletic engagement.

**Work-Study** - money given to the student by

the federal government and attending college. Student has to work in order to earn this money.

**Loans** - money given to the student by the federal government or other source that needs to be repaid typically after graduating from college.

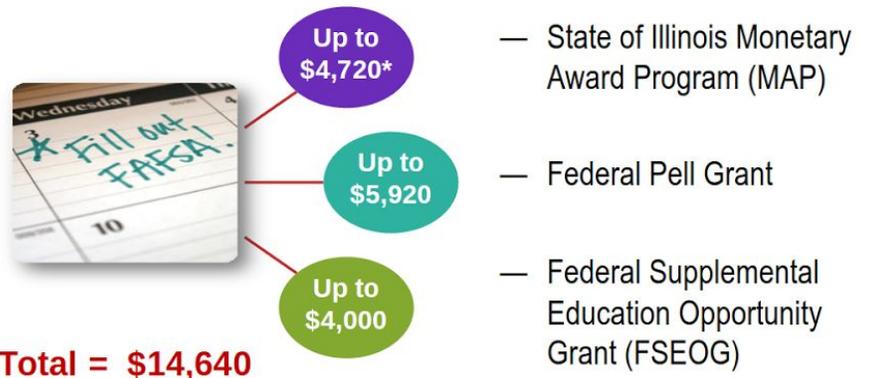
**MAP GRANT** - Money given to eligible Illinois residents that are attending a college/university in Illinois. Based on financial need as determined by the FAFSA.

**Federal Pell Grant** - money given to eligible students that are attending a college in the United States. Based on financial need as determined by the FAFSA.

**FSEOG Grant** - additional money given to eligible students that show high financial need.

## The Big Three

### Maximum Award Amounts for 2015-16



**Total = \$14,640**

\* Based on funding as of publication date. Announced grant awards could increase or decrease throughout the academic year.

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# FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROGRAMS 2017-2018

Program and Type of Aid	Program Information	Annual Award Amount (subject to change)
<b>Federal Pell Grant</b> Grant: does not have to be repaid	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need who have not earned bachelor's or professional degrees.	Amounts can change annually. For 2017–18 (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018), the award amount is up to \$5,920. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/pell-grant">StudentAid.gov/pell-grant</a> for more information.
<b>Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG)</b> Grant: does not have to be repaid	For undergraduates with exceptional financial need.	Up to \$4,000. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/fseog">StudentAid.gov/fseog</a> for more information.
<b>Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant</b> Grant: does not have to be repaid unless student fails to carry out service obligation	For undergraduate, postbaccalaureate, and graduate students who are completing or plan to complete course work needed to begin a career in teaching. As a condition for receiving this grant, student must sign a TEACH Grant Agreement to Serve in which the student agrees to perform four years of qualifying teaching service and meet other requirements.	Up to \$4,000. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/teach">StudentAid.gov/teach</a> for more information.
<b>Iraq and Afghanistan Service Grant</b> Grant: does not have to be repaid	For students who are not Pell-eligible due only to having less financial need than is required to receive Pell funds; whose parent or guardian died as a result of military service in Iraq or Afghanistan after the events of 9/11.	The grant award can be equal to the maximum Federal Pell Grant amount (see above), but cannot exceed your cost of attending school. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/Iraq-Afghanistan">StudentAid.gov/Iraq-Afghanistan</a> for more information.
<b>Federal Work-Study</b> Work-Study: money is earned; does not have to be repaid	For undergraduate and graduate students; part-time jobs can be on campus or off campus. Money is earned while attending school.	No annual minimum or maximum amounts. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/workstudy">StudentAid.gov/workstudy</a> for more information.
<b>Direct Subsidized Loan</b> Loan: must be repaid with interest	For undergraduate students who have financial need; U.S. Department of Education generally pays interest while the student is in school and during certain other periods; student must be at least half-time. Interest rate is 3.76% for loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2016 and before July 1, 2017, and fixed for the life of the loan. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/interest">StudentAid.gov/interest</a> for more information.	Up to \$5,500 depending on grade level and dependency status. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub">StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub</a> for more information.
<b>Direct Unsubsidized Loan</b> Loan: must be repaid with interest	For undergraduate and graduate or professional students; borrower is responsible for all interest; student must be at least half-time; financial need is not required. Interest rate is 3.76% (undergraduate) and 5.31% (graduate or professional) for loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2016 and before July 1, 2017, and fixed for the life of the loan. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/interest">StudentAid.gov/interest</a> for more information.	Up to \$20,500 (less any subsidized amounts received for same period), depending on grade level and dependency status. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub">StudentAid.gov/sub-unsub</a> for more information.
<b>Direct PLUS Loan</b> Loan: must be repaid with interest	For parents of dependent undergraduate students and for graduate or professional students; borrower is responsible for all interest; student must be enrolled at least half-time; financial	Maximum amount is cost of attendance minus any other financial aid received.

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	<p>need is not required; borrower must not have an adverse credit history. Interest rate is 6.31% for loans first disbursed on or after July 1, 2016 and before July 1, 2017, and fixed for the life of loan. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/interest">StudentAid.gov/interest</a> for more information.</p>	<p>Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/plus">StudentAid.gov/plus</a> for more information.</p>
<p><b>Federal Perkins Loan</b> Loan: must be repaid with interest</p>	<p>For undergraduate and graduate students with exceptional financial need. Eligibility depends on the student's financial need and availability of funds at the school. For questions on Perkins Loan eligibility, students must contact the school's financial aid office. Interest rate is 5% and fixed for the life of the loan.</p>	<p>Undergraduate students: up to \$5,500; graduate and professional students: up to \$8,000. Visit <a href="http://StudentAid.gov/perkins">StudentAid.gov/perkins</a> for more information.</p>

# Important Information Regarding 2019–20 FAFSA®

## **What is the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) and how is it changing?**

The FAFSA® is the application that students must complete to apply for federal student aid, which can be used to attend an eligible college or career school. Federal student aid includes Federal Pell Grants, federal student loans, and work-study opportunities. In addition to determining eligibility for federal student aid, many states, private organizations, colleges, and career schools rely on information from the FAFSA to determine eligibility for nonfederal sources of aid.

Two major changes to the FAFSA will take effect for the 2017–18 school year. (The 2017–18 school year runs from July 1, 2017, through June 30, 2018.)

1. The FAFSA will be available earlier (October 1 of the previous year instead of January 1 of the upcoming school year).
2. The FAFSA will collect income information from an earlier tax year.

Here’s a table with a summary of the changes. You’ll find details below the table.

<b>When a Student Is Attending College (School Year)</b>	<b>When a Student Can Submit a FAFSA</b>	<b>Which Year’s Income Information Is Required</b>
<b>July 1, 2019–June 30, 2020</b>	<b>October 1, 2018–June 30, 2019</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021</b>	<b>October 1, 2019–June 30, 2020</b>	<b>2018</b>

### ***1. The FAFSA will be available earlier.***

Currently, students cannot complete a FAFSA for the upcoming school year until January 1. For example, for the 2016–17 school year, an applicant cannot complete a FAFSA until Jan. 1, 2016. Beginning with the 2017–18 school year, applicants will be able to complete a FAFSA as early as October 1 of the previous year. (See table.)

### ***2. The FAFSA will require information from an earlier tax year.***

The second major change also begins with the 2017–18 FAFSA cycle. Currently, in addition to other information, FAFSA applicants (and their parents, if applicable) must report the prior year’s income information. For example, for the 2016–17 school year, applicants must report income information for 2015—the tax year before the beginning of the school year. Beginning with the 2017–18 FAFSA, students will report income information from two years prior, which in this case is 2015 income information—two tax years before the beginning of the school year. (See table.)

## **How will an earlier FAFSA and the change to the income year benefit students?**

Benefits include the following:

- **Alignment.** The financial aid application process will be more aligned with the college application process.
- **Certainty.** Students (and their parents, if applicable) will not need to estimate income information.
- **Less pressure.** There will be more time for students to explore and understand financial aid options and apply for aid before state and school deadlines.

## **Will colleges change their financial aid processing timelines due to the FAFSA being available earlier?**

Whether a college changes its financial aid processing timelines when the FAFSA becomes available on October 1 is a decision that each college will make. Students should contact their schools to determine whether the schools will adjust their processing timelines once the FAFSA is available earlier.

## **Do students still have to complete the FAFSA every year?**

Yes. Because eligibility for federal student aid does not carry over from one school year to the next, students will need to fill out the FAFSA for each school year in which they plan to be a student. Eligibility for financial aid can differ from year to year for various reasons, including a student's or family's financial situation and the number of family members enrolled in college.

## **Do families need to complete their taxes before they fill out the FAFSA?**

No. If students (and their parents, if applicable) are required to file taxes, they do not have to complete their taxes before they fill out the FAFSA. Considering that many state and college FAFSA deadlines fall before the April 15 tax deadline, applicants have been allowed to provide estimated income information. Example: The 2016–17 FAFSA will ask for 2015 income information. If applicants estimate income, they will need to log back into the FAFSA once their 2015 taxes are complete and correct any information that needs to be corrected.

Beginning with the 2017–18 FAFSA, students will report income information from two years prior, which in this case is 2015 income information. Considering that the 2015 tax filing deadline is April 15, 2016, and the 2017–18 FAFSA will become available on Oct. 1, 2016, applicants are very likely to have completed their taxes before October 1, and the tax information would be available to be reported on the FAFSA.

## **How does information transfer from the IRS to the FAFSA?**

The IRS Data Retrieval Tool (DRT) allows applicants (and their parents, if applicable) to access the IRS tax return information needed to complete the FAFSA, and transfer the required information directly into the FAFSA from the IRS. The FAFSA includes a link to the IRS if an applicant is eligible to use the IRS DRT.

## **Can a student still be selected for verification if he or she is using 2015 income information on his or her 2017–18 FAFSA?**

Yes. A student can be selected for verification by either the U.S. Department of Education or by the student's school. Verification is a process by which a student is required to submit documentation that the data reported on the student's FAFSA is accurate. The financial aid administrator at a student's college may make corrections or updates to the student's FAFSA based on the documentation provided as part of the verification process.

# Complete Guide to FAFSA and the Financial Aid Process

**Step 1:** Determine if you are eligible to file the FAFSA

- [Click here to see eligibility requirements](#)

**Step 2:** Gather all the appropriate materials you will need to file a FAFSA

- [Click here to see materials you will need to fully complete a FAFSA](#)

**Step 3:** Create a FSA ID for yourself and for one parent

- [fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov)
- [Click here for a step-by-step video to creating a FSA ID](#)

**Step 4:** File the FAFSA

- [Fafsa.gov](https://fafsa.gov)

**Step 5:** Check your email for updates to the status of your FAFSA

- You will get email notifications for three possible reasons:
  - Your FAFSA was successfully processed and no further action is necessary
  - Your FAFSA is missing something or information could not be matched. You will need to do an update to your FAFSA to resolve the issue
  - You were selected for further verification and will need to provide more detailed information to specific college(s)

**Step 6:** Compare your Financial Award Letters

- [Click here for a short video on understanding Financial Award Letters](#)
- [Click here to explore the Financial Award Letter comparison worksheet](#)

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## **Creative avenues of financial aid (page 2)**

### **Part-time employment**

Recent studies show that more than half of all college students work part-time to help cover college costs. Keep in mind that a student's first priority is to stay on top of his or her studies. Students should not jeopardize course work by taking on more work hours than they can handle. Research shows that more than 20 hours of part-time work a week may have negative effects on a student's grades.

### **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships provide structured, on-the-job training under the supervision of a qualified member of a profession. Of the 20,000 occupations listed in the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, the Bureau of Apprenticeship Training considers only about 800 to have apprenticeship opportunities. Federal regulations prohibit anyone under 16 to be considered as an apprentice. Apprenticeship programs have different requirements. For example, some require a high school diploma, some require specialized course work, and some have few requirements except motivation. If you are considering an apprenticeship, check with your school counselor, local state employment office, or the Bureau of Apprenticeship Training in your area.

### **AmeriCorps**

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engage volunteers to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health and the environment. AmeriCorps members are eligible to receive an education award after successfully completing a term of service. The amount of the award depends on the program in which you participate. For more information, go to [www.americorps.org](http://www.americorps.org).

**Source:** Frederick County, Maryland, Public Schools

## “Special Circumstances” Letters

Sometimes when one has completed filling out the FAFSA you know that the questions you just answered did not offer you an opportunity to explain your unique situation. Perhaps there has been a job loss since last year or a retirement will begin. Perhaps you have extraordinary medical bills or eldercare responsibilities.

Financial aid offers can be changed from the one provided by the FAFSA formula to reflect a student’s or family’s unique financial circumstances. Only the Financial Aid Administrator of a college has the authority to use his professional judgment to make such a change. The best way to communicate individual circumstances to the Financial Aid administrator is to prepare a letter describing what obligations and resources the student/family actually have to meet educational costs. December and January are the best time to begin working on a family’s “Special Circumstances Letter,” but these letters can be sent whenever a family needs to ask for more aid. The following is an outline of important information to include and some tips to help get you started:

1. Address the letter to the Director of Financial Aid at the selected college.
2. First Paragraph
  - ✓ Introduce the student to the reader and include the student’s social security number. Most colleges track students by social security numbers.
3. Second Paragraph
  - ✓ Explain that in addition to submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), an explanation of special financial circumstances not noted on the FAFSA form is included in the letter. Explain any unusual expenses from the past year or those anticipated during the current year. Schools routinely adjust financial aid based on reduced family income, unusual medical/dental expenses, changes in marital status, and number of household post-secondary students.
  - ✓ Provide a list of all monthly or annual financial obligations not included on the FAFSA. It is not necessary to itemize each expense they can be grouped in large categories-housing, transportation, personal debt and credit cards, food, clothing or other bills. (Please understand that adjustments are rarely, if ever, made for consumer debt.)
4. Third Paragraph
  - ✓ Show how much money remains each year after paying all bills and explain how much of this money can be contributed to the student’s college costs.
5. Fourth Paragraph and Conclusion
  - ✓ Thank the Director for her/his consideration and offer to discuss these details by phone or in person if necessary. Provide an address and, if possible, a phone number with appropriate times to reach you.

**Do not** mail this letter or any other supplementary data with you FAFSA form.

**Do** mail your letter (and supplementary data) to the Financial Aid Administrator of each school you are still considering.

## **Twenty Questions to Ask About Financing College**

1. What's the average total cost of attendance (tuition and fees, books and supplies, room and board, travel, and other personal expenses)? Do any of these costs vary by program?
2. What are the ranges of costs for the different housing options and meal plans?
3. By how much should I expect my costs to increase each year? (A three- to five-year history of cost increases should be available.)
4. Does financial need have an impact on admission decisions?
5. How is financial aid affected if I apply via an Early Decision or Early Action program?
6. Does the school offer scholarships or other types of aid that aren't based on financial need?
7. What forms are required to apply for financial aid?
8. What is the priority deadline to apply for financial aid?
9. When will I be notified about financial aid award decisions?
10. Will the financial aid offer take into account the full cost of attending, including books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses?
11. What percentage of need does this college attempt to meet on average?
12. Will the financial aid office provide me with an explanation of how my financial need and award package were determined?
13. What financing options are available to help us pay our share of the costs?
14. What is the average amount of student loan debt incurred by graduates?
15. If the financial aid package isn't enough, can I appeal? Under what conditions, if any, will the aid office reconsider the offer?
16. How will the aid package change from year to year? What will happen if my enrollment status or my family's financial situation changes?
17. What are the academic requirements or other conditions for the renewal of financial aid, including scholarships?
18. When can I expect to receive bills from the college? Is there an option to spread the yearly payment over equal monthly installments?
19. How much money will I need during the first week of school for books, supplies and other initial expenses? Can these expenses be charged to my account?
20. Regarding student employment, including the Federal Work-Study Program: How are jobs assigned? How many hours per week are students expected or allowed to work? How often and in what manner are they paid?

## Financial Aid Glossary

**Award letter.** A document notifying admitted students of the financial aid being offered by the college. The award letter provides information on the types and amounts of aid offered, as well as the students' responsibilities and the conditions governing the awards.

**Cost of attendance.** The combined expenses of attending college, including tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and living expenses. The cost of attendance is compared with the student's expected family contribution to determine the student's need for financial aid.

**CSS PROFILE.** A Web-based financial aid application provided by the College Board and used by some colleges and private scholarship programs to award their private financial aid funds.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).** The form that must be completed by everyone applying for federal financial aid. It can be completed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).

**Financial aid package.** The total financial aid offered to a student by a college, including all loans, grants, scholarships and work-study opportunities.

**Financial need.** The difference between the total cost of attending a college and a student's expected family contribution (EFC).

**Grant.** A monetary aid award given to a student that does not have to be paid back. The terms "grant" and "scholarship" are often used interchangeably, but grants tend to be awarded solely on the basis of financial need, while scholarships may require the student to demonstrate merit.

**Independent student.** Students that are either age 24 or older, married, a veteran, an orphan, or have legal dependents. Independent students do not need to provide parental information to be considered for federal financial aid programs. However, private institutions may require independent students to provide parental information in order to be considered for nonfederal funding.

**Merit aid.** Financial aid awarded on the basis of academic qualifications, artistic or athletic talent, leadership qualities, or similar attributes. Most merit aid comes in the form of scholarships.

**Need-based aid.** Financial aid given to students who have demonstrated financial need, calculated by subtracting the student's expected family contribution from a college's total cost of attendance.

**Priority date.** The date by which applications for financial aid must be received in order to be given the strongest possible consideration. Thereafter applications are considered on a first-come, first-served basis, and only to the extent the college still has aid money left after all the priority offers have been made.

**Self-help aid.** Student financial aid, such as loans and jobs that requires repayment or employment.

**Subsidized loan.** A need-based loan where the entity awarding the loan pays the borrower's interest while he or she is in college at least half-time, thereby subsidizing the loan.

**Work-study.** An arrangement by which a student combines employment and college study. The employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education and internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

# Part 6

## Student Athletes



# NCAA Eligibility Center



The screenshot shows the NCAA Eligibility Center website. At the top center is the logo for the NCAA Eligibility Center, which consists of a blue circle with 'NCAA' in white and 'Eligibility Center' in blue text to its right. Below the logo is the word 'WELCOME!' in white. A red banner contains the text: 'The NCAA Eligibility Center will not combine section scores from the SAT taken beginning in March 2016 with scores taken prior to March 2016. [Read More](#)'. Below this is a green banner featuring a photo of a smiling young man in a light blue polo shirt with a brown bag slung over his shoulder. To the right of the photo, the text reads 'NCAA COLLEGE-BOUND STUDENT-ATHLETES' in white, with a white button below it that says 'ENTER HERE'. At the bottom of the green banner is a yellow-green banner with the text 'HIGH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' in white and a white button to its right that says 'ENTER HERE'. At the very bottom of the page, there is a small link: 'Click [here](#) to view the technical requirements for this website.'

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

Student-athletes should visit the official website to review eligibility requirements and to register to participate in sports at Division I or Division II schools. Learn more about playing college sports!

# NCAA Academic Eligibility Standards

<b>Division I</b>	<b>Division II</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete the 16 core-course requirement in eight semesters:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4 years of English</li> <li>○ 3 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)</li> <li>○ 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by the high school)</li> <li>○ 1 extra year of English, math or natural or physical science</li> <li>○ 2 years of social science</li> <li>○ 4 years of extra core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, nondoctrinal religion or philosophy)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Earn a minimum required grade-point average in core courses</li> <li>• Earn a combined SAT or ACT sum score that matches the core course grade-point average and test-score sliding scale. (For example, a 3.000 core-course grade-point average needs at least a 620 SAT).</li> </ul> <p>Student-athletes enrolling in college in August 2016 and later must meet all of the above requirements to receive aid in the first year and practice in the first term. In order to compete in the first year, prospects must meet all of the above and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn at least a 2.3 GPA in core courses</li> <li>• Meet an increased sliding-scale standard</li> <li>• Complete 10 core-courses prior to the start of the seventh semester, at least seven in English, math and science.</li> </ul>	<p>If you enroll in a Division II college and want to participate in athletics or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year, you must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graduate from high school;</li> <li>• Complete these 16 core courses:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 years of English</li> <li>• 2 years of math (Algebra 1 or higher)</li> <li>• 2 years of natural or physical science (including one year of lab science if offered by your high school)</li> <li>• 3 additional years of English, math, or natural or physical science</li> <li>• 2 years of social science</li> <li>• 4 years of additional core courses (from any category above, or foreign language, nondoctrinal religion or philosophy);</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Earn a 2.000 grade-point average or better in your core courses; and</li> <li>• Earn a combined SAT score of 820 or an ACT sum score of 68.</li> </ul>

# Athletic Letter of Interest

Your letter can be very simple. A coach needs to know your academic ability and athletic level. Your letter should include this information if you want to receive a realistic response from a coach.

Send the letters during your sophomore or junior year. Get on coaches' recruiting lists early. You can send the same letter to the coaches at all the colleges that seem like a good fit for you academically and athletically. Be sure, of course, to make the appropriate changes in each letter to reflect the correct college and coach name.

## **Suggested items to include:**

1. your test scores
2. your GPA and class rank
3. athletic abilities (events, times, positions, stats, etc.)
4. your goals and aspirations (be realistic)
5. current team, coach's name and telephone number
6. birth date, height, weight (optional — depends on the sport)
7. interest in scholarship (if this is a priority for you)
8. whether a videotape is available

## **Appropriate things to request:**

1. application form
2. college catalog
3. media guide or team brochure

## **Additional things to mention:**

1. if a parent or relative is an alumnus/alumna
2. if you are new to the sport
3. other sports you currently compete in and the level you're at

## **Attachments:**

1. résumé
2. recommendation letters (optional)
3. competition schedule

# **Part 7**

## **Students with Special Needs**

# Advocacy 101: Know Your Disability

Review your case file with your parents and Individual Education Plan team to better understand your disability and its effect on your learning. Ask the following questions:

- What is my disability?
- How does it affect how I learn?
- What are my academic strengths?
- How do I learn best?

You might also consider meeting with the doctor or school psychologist who performed your assessment (testing). However, individual appointments with a doctor or psychologist can be expensive.

## **Become a “self-advocate” while still in high school**

A “self-advocate” communicates his or her needs with logical and positive language. To be an effective self-advocate, you must understand your disability, know how it impacts your learning and become comfortable with describing your disability and your academic-related needs to others. At the college level, you are responsible for identifying and requesting support services. Parents aren’t normally involved with your education at the college level, and most colleges prefer working directly with you, the student.

## **Practice self-advocacy now**

Participate in discussions at your IEP meetings. Understanding your learning strengths and weaknesses gives you valuable knowledge that can influence your IEP planning.

Listed below are ideas on how you can actively participate in your IEP meetings. Your parents and teachers can help you take these important steps.

## **Before each IEP meeting:**

Understand the purpose of the meeting.

- Know who will be there and each participant’s role at the meeting.
- Review the report from your last IEP meeting. Understand the goals listed on the report.
- With another person, practice saying how you accomplished the goals.
- Establish new goals and be prepared to state them.

## **At the IEP meeting:**

Summarize your past goals and accomplishments.

- State your new goals.
- Ask for ideas and feedback from other members.
- Know what support and help you will need in order to accomplish your goals — and ask for it.
- Ask questions when you don’t understand something.

# College Accommodations and Services

Colleges are not required to follow an IEP or high school 504 plan. Colleges draw a distinction between accommodations and personal services, and yet there is a fine line between them. Accommodations are guaranteed under Section 504 and the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). Their purpose is to place a student with disabilities on a level playing field — to have the opportunity to compete with students who do not have disabilities.

Personal services are not guaranteed or mandatory. Services are special procedures or devices that a college may provide to help students. Some services are accommodative, such as note taking. Others are considered personal services, such as typing or personal care assistance. Many colleges do not provide personal services because of the extra expense, staffing and administrative burdens involved and because they are not required to do so.

Students may have to negotiate with the coordinator or director of accommodative services or the 504 coordinator to arrange for what they feel is needed. Colleges have no legal obligation for students with disabilities to “do better.” However, they *do* have an obligation to level the playing field and to provide students with accommodations so they will have equal access to an education.

You can ask for anything if it is reasonable and if it is justified because of the effect the disability has on you. It is not the disability — it is its effect — that determines your eligibility for assistance. In other words, a deficient reading skill would not automatically qualify a student for extended time for tests. Extended time would be allowed because the disability has a definite, strong effect on the student’s ability to take the test in the same amount of time as students without the disability.

Points to remember:

1. A college does not have to provide any accommodation or service that would fundamentally alter the nature of a course or core academic requirements.
2. A college does not have to provide any accommodation or service if it would place an administrative or financial burden on the institution.
3. A college does not have to provide any accommodation or service of a personal use nature.
4. A college has the right to offer an accommodation in place of the one requested. Although colleges generally try to honor the preferences for a specific accommodation requested by a student, a college may provide an accommodation other than the one preferred by the student if the institution can show that its choice is just as effective.
5. A college is not required to follow an IEP or high school 504 plan.

*Source: Allen Tinkler, educational consultant for students with special needs, N.Y.*

**Handout 11C**

# Questions That Students With Special Needs Should Ask and Questions That the College Might Ask

## General

1. Is there a specific office that serves students with disabilities?
2. Do full-time professionals staff the program?
3. What documentation must I bring to document my disability? How current must it be?
4. Who decides if I qualify for accommodations?
5. Who should or would be notified of my disability?
6. Who is responsible for arranging accommodations?
7. What is the advisement system for students with special needs? Will advisers help with course selection and course load options?
8. What are my responsibilities for making sure I receive the services I need?
9. Is there an active support group on campus for students with disabilities?
10. How well-informed are faculty members regarding students with disabilities? Are they willing to work with these students?
11. Are the classrooms/buildings physically accessible?
12. How many accessible dorm rooms are available?

## Specific

1. What accommodations are available — for example, tape recorders, taped texts, note takers?
2. What is the procedure for getting textbooks recorded on tape?
3. Are waivers or substitutions granted to students who, because of a disability, cannot pass certain courses such as foreign language or statistics?
4. Does the college provide adaptive equipment for student use?
5. Where do students go to take tests with modifications? How is this service arranged?
6. How is the need for class notes met for qualifying students? Are note takers trained? Paid?
7. Does the college provide printed materials in alternative format?
8. What kind of tutoring is available? Are the tutors peers or staff? Is tutoring available in all subjects? Is there a limit to the amount of tutoring I may receive? Is there a fee?
9. Does the college offer courses or workshops in study skills or writing skills?
10. Is adaptive software such as voice recognition software or writing support software available on campus? Is training in the use of the software provided?
11. May students with disabilities take a reduced course load and still be considered full time?  
Will this affect their financial aid?

## Questions the college might ask you

The college disabilities office may ask these questions. Write down your answers and review them with someone familiar with your academic strengths and difficulties, such as your IEP manager, a teacher or a school counselor, before you visit the campus.

1. What is your disability?
2. How does it interfere with your learning?
3. How comfortable are you in discussing your disability with teachers?
4. What are your academic strengths?

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5. In what areas do you have difficulty or problems?
6. What accommodations will you need?
7. What kind of support services have you used in high school?
8. Which were the most helpful?
9. Are you willing to work harder than other students to be successful in college?
10. How do you manage your time?

## Glossary

**Accreditation** – A “stamp” of approval by an educational or professional organization stating that the college meets the regulations determined by this group. Each region of the country has its own accrediting organization: Southern, Middle Atlantic, New England, North Central, and Western.

**ACT Assessment**- A group of standardized tests administered by ACT, Inc. This assessment (or a substitute) is required or recommended by most colleges as part of the admission process. The tests measure educational development in English, mathematics, Reading, and Science Reasoning. Students can take the ACT multiple times a year at various testing centers.

**Advanced Placement** – Granting of credit and/or assignment to an advanced course on the basis of evidence that the student has mastered the equivalent of an introductory college course.

**Advisor** – A member of the teaching faculty who advises students on course selections and curriculum concerns.

**Aid Package** – A combination of aid (possibly including a scholarship, grant, loan, and work-study) determined by a college financial aid office.

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

**Associate of Arts Degree** – A degree granted by a college or university for a program that requires two years of full-time study.

**Baccalaureate Degree** – Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, or any other bachelor’s degree granted by a college or university of a program that typically requires four years of full-time study.

**Calendar** –

**Traditional Semester** – two approximately equal semesters similar to the Maine Township Calendar

**Early Semester** – Two semesters with the first semester being completed before Christmas.

**Quarter** – three equal terms of about 12 weeks each.

**Trimester** – Calendar year divided into three equal semesters. Third semester replaces summer school.

**4-1-4 or 4-4-1 term** – Two equal terms of about 16 weeks each studying 4 courses, with a 4 week interim term studying one course.

**Carnegie Unit** – One Carnegie unit is given for a successful completion of one year’s study of one college preparatory or academic subject in a high school. Some colleges refer to these as “academic units.” The name comes from the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

**Career-oriented Program** – A group of courses that prepare students primarily for employment, often in a specific occupation. Such a program which can last a few months or more than two years, may lead to a certificate, diploma, or associate degree.

**Church or Religiously Affiliated College** – A private college that is financially supported and whose policies are influenced to varying degrees by a church or religious group.

**Class Rank** – A student’s standing based on his/her academic record as compared with that of other members of the class. In a class of 100, the highest ranking student would be number 1 at the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile. Maine East DOES NOT report class rank.

**College Transfer Courses** – Courses intended for transfer of college credit to bachelor’s degree programs elsewhere. For instance, Oakton and Triton have courses that will transfer to other 4-year colleges/universities.

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**Cooperative Work-Study Education** – A program in which the student alternates between full-time college study and full-time paid employment related to the area of study. Under this plan, the bachelor’s degree often requires five years to complete.

**Core Curriculum** – A group of courses in varied areas of the arts and sciences, designated by a college as one of the requirements for a degree.

**Consortium** – A voluntary association of two or more colleges providing joint services and academic programs to students enrolled in member institutions. Students at one campus are allowed to attend courses and use the facilities at other member campuses.

**Cooperative Education** - A program integrating classroom study and work experience while offering credit and salary.

**Credit by Examination** – A program through which some colleges grant course credit based on results of ACT or SAT Scores, CLEP, AP, or another exam developed by the college.

**Credit Hour** – A unit of academic credit that often represents one hour of class time per week for a period of study (semester, quarter, etc).

**Deferred Admission** – The practice of some colleges that allows students to postpone enrollment for one year.

**Early Action** – A type of admission plan that allows students to apply early in the admission cycle (on or before a specific deadline) and receive an answer earlier than regular decision.

**Early Admission** – Admitting students of superior ability into college courses and programs before they have completed the standard high school program.

**Early Decision** – A type of admission plan offered by some colleges in which (1) students must withdraw their applications to all other colleges if they are notified of acceptance, or (2) students may not apply to any other colleges until they have been rejected by that institution. In the latter case, students must usually apply no later than November 15 and be notified of their acceptance or rejection by December 15.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** – The application for federal student financial aid, processed at no cost to the applicant. It is used to determine a student’s eligibility for federal grant, loan, and work funds. Some schools may require an additional form for which there may be a processing fee.

**Federal College Work-Study Program** – A government-supported financial aid program coordinated through financial aid offices whereby an eligible student (based on need) may work part time while attending class at least half time, generally in college related jobs. To apply, file a FAFSA.

**Federal PLUS** - A loan program in which parents, graduate students, and self-supporting undergraduate students can borrow from a bank or other lending institutions. To apply, file a FAFSA.

**Federal Pell Grant** - Financial assistance awarded by the federal government on the basis of need and designated to provide the “floor” of an aid package for post-secondary education. The grant may be used toward tuition, room and board, books, or other educational cost, and requires no repayment. To apply, file a FAFSA.

**Federal Stafford Loan Program** – A loan program in which a student may borrow from a bank or other financial

**Grade point average (GPA)** - An indicator of the student’s overall scholastic performance, the GPA is computed by totaling the number of grade points earned in each course (generally, A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) and then dividing by the total number of courses carried.

**Grants** - Awards based on financial need that do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, and educational institutions.

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**Honors program** - A plan designed to encourage superior students to engage in a more challenging program than is required. Students who succeed in meeting the requirements of an honors program are usually granted “honor” degrees.

**Humanities** - These refer to the cultural world. The humanities are usually classified as art, the classics, dramatic art, English, general and comparative literature, journalism, music, philosophy, religion and language. Many colleges divide their offerings into three divisions: humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences.

**Independent study** - An arrangement that allows a student to earn college credit through individual study, usually planned with and supervised by a faculty adviser.

**Internships** - Short-term, supervised work experience, usually related to a student’s major, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full or part-time, on or off campus, paid or unpaid.

**Liberal Arts** - A broad course of instruction comprising the arts, natural sciences, language, literature philosophy, religion, and the classics. The Latin origin of the term, artes liberales, literally means “the arts that free” (the mind and spirit).

**Matriculation** - The process whereby a student is accepted, pays the fees, and enrolls in classes - officially becoming a student at the college. This term is only applied to freshmen or to a transfer student’s first enrollment.

**NCAA Initial-Eligibility Certification** - In order to participate in intercollegiate sports and NCAA Division I and Division II colleges, student-athletes must submit their ACT/SAT scores to the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. When registering for either test enter “9999” as one of the college choices to have test scores sent to the Clearinghouse.

**Needs Analysis** - The process used to evaluate an applicant’s financial situation to determine how much financial aid a student would be eligible for to meet post-secondary educational expenses.

**Open admissions** - The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications; such as high school grades and admission test scores.

**Placement tests** - A battery of tests designed to assess a student’s aptitude and level of achievement in various academic areas so that he or she may be advised to enroll in the appropriate level classes.

**PLAN** - A tenth grade assessment from American College Testing designed to help students improve their post-secondary planning and preparation. PLAN contains academic tests, an interest inventory, study skills assessment, and student information section, and is similar in content and format to the ACT Assessment.

**Private college/university** - An educational institution of higher education that is not supported by public taxes. Private colleges may be independent or church-related.

**PSAE** – Prairie State Achievement Exams are a series of exams required of all Illinois public high school juniors. PSAE is scheduled the last Wednesday and Thursday in April.

**PSAE ACT** – The first day of PSAE testing is an official ACT - the results of which can be used for any college application.

**PSAT** - An eleventh grade assessment from the College Board designed to help practice for the SAT/Subject Tests.

**Public college/university** - An educational institution of higher education that is supported by public taxes.

**Registration** - A process at the beginning of each semester or quarter whereby the student selects the courses he or she will enroll in, pays the appropriate fees, and sets up a class schedule for the semester or term.

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Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) - Air Force, Army, and Navy programs that combine military education with baccalaureate degree study, often with financial support for those students who commit themselves to future service in the Armed Forces.

**Rolling admission** - An admission procedure by which the college considers each application as soon as all required materials have been received. The college then notifies each applicant of acceptance or rejection as soon as possible.

**Rush week** - A period set aside with the approval of the college for fraternities and sororities to issue invitations to prospective members. "Delayed Rush" usually indicates this week is held during second semester.

Scholarships - Non-repayable awards to students based on merit or merit plus need.

**SAT** - A test of verbal and mathematical abilities given by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) throughout the year at specified test centers and required or recommended by many colleges as part of the admission process, sometimes in combination with one or more of SAT II tests which are achievement tests from sixteen subject areas.

**Seminar** - A course in which a small group of students, headed by a professional, engage in research and discussion.

Teaching Assistant - (sometimes called a graduate assistant) A graduate student whose job on campus to help him/her meet his/her educational expenses is to teach, and often to grade, underclassmen.

**Transcript** - The official record of a student's academic performance from the time of entrance in a given institution to the end of the latest semester.

**Tuition** - The charge for instruction. Generally designated for a year or semester for a full-time student; for part-time students it is often designated by the credit hour of a course. Room and board and books are separate, additional costs.

**Universal Reply Date (May 1)** - Unless a student has requested "early decision", applicants have until no later than May 1 to notify colleges of their intent to attend in the fall. Responses earlier than May 1 are welcome but are equally as binding. On May 2 your spot may be granted to someone on a waiting list if you have not responded.

**Wait list** - A term used by institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or deny you admission. Rather, the institution extends to you the possibility of admission in the future. Colleges offer admission to wait list candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admission.