

Applying for College: Simple Steps and Procedures

This guide has been compiled for the purpose of familiarizing students and their parents with the college selection process. This information contains a chronological timeline of college planning, ACT & SAT information, and FAFSA information. If you need more information or assistance, please contact the guidance office.

Chronological Timeline:

- **Summer before the junior year:** Self-analysis and preliminary choosing of a type of a higher education to reflect one's own needs, interest, abilities, personality, and career plans.

- **Fall of the junior year:** Meet with college admission counselors and attend college admission orientations. You should be reaching a final choice of type of schooling and preliminary consideration of specific "best" college for you. Plan to take the PSAT/National Merit Qualifying Test.

- **Winter of the junior year:** You should research the strengths versus weakness of each college you are interested in attending and narrow down your search of likely colleges to the top four or five choices.

- **Spring of the junior year:** Register to take the ACT and /or SAT on line or by mail. Registration information, practice test and testing dates are available in the career center and guidance office. The "Plus Writing" portion of both exams is recommended by most colleges and required by some. You should check with the admission office of the colleges you are interested in for their specific requirements. If your scores are not as high as you would like, retest in the fall of your senior year.

- **Summer before the senior year:** Schedule college visits, including official interviews, viewing the campus and dorms. Narrow down your search to the top two or three. Assemble your collection of academic and extra-curricular awards for use in scholarship competitions during the senior year.

- **Fall of the senior year:** Visits and interviews on college campuses should be complete. Prepare applications, references, and other necessary material (some schools require an essay) to forward to final college choices. Most colleges require that a high school transcript be sent, so request this in writing from the guidance office.

- **Winter of the senior year:** Check with your parents about what financial help you will need to secure. Apply for all financial aid and scholarships and you and your parents file the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) after January 1.

- **Spring of the senior year:** Colleges will announce acceptances and rejections. With your parents, compare college financial aid awards and/or meet with a college financial aid counselor. Select your college and mail the appropriate accept or decline statements to the college.

College Admission & Financial Aid Information

How Do Colleges Accept You?

Before a college accepts you for admission there are a number of items that the college administration looks at including: continuing rigor in the senior year, indications of your ability to succeed, your class rank, test scores, references, extra-curricular activities, personal achievements, and a possible personal interview by the college. Some colleges may even what to look at your health records. There are no particular high school subjects that guarantee you will be admitted, however most colleges require at least the following core curriculum.

- *English – 4 years
- *Math – 3 years, (Algebra I, II & Geometry)
- *Science – 3 years, (Biology, Chemistry & Physics)
- *Social Studies – 3 years, (World History, American History & Government)
- *Foreign Language – 3 years (Some may only require 2 years)
- *Fine Arts – 1 year

If you do not have the above requirements some colleges will still accept you, however you may be placed in remedial coursework.

College Entrance Exams:

Many colleges require all applicants to take entrance exams. College catalogs refer to these tests requirements under admissions procedures. The tests usually require the ACT or the SAT. Find out early if the colleges you are considering require the ACT or the SAT and what the college deadline is for receiving your scores.

Select a testing date from posted calendars in the career center guidance area. Be aware of registration deadlines and local testing sites. Complete online or mail registrations early so you are assured of a spot in the testing center.

You may want to take the ACT or the SAT at the end of your junior year to help prepare for the fall of your senior year. Be sure to request your scores be sent to the colleges you are most interested in attending. Applications for the ACT and SAT are available in the career center or online at www.act.org or www.collegeboard.com .

Should I Attend College?

Two real reasons for a college education are: 1) preparation for a career and 2) acquisition of an idea of culture. A college education helps students grow into well rounded individuals who know how to think objectively and make use of his/her best talents in society.

How Do I Choose A College?

Once you look at the details of a college, you'll see there's a lot more than the name to consider. Here are some things to think about when choosing a college:

***Location** – distance from home

***Environment** – type of school (two or four year); urban or rural; co-ed, male or female student body; religious affiliation; public or private school

***Size** – enrollment and campus size

***Admission Requirement** – deadlines; test required; average test scores; GPA and rank of the freshman class

***Academics** – majors offered; student-faculty ratio; typical class size; special programs

***Financial Aid** – deadlines; required forms; part-time student population receiving aid; scholarships; part-time employment opportunities

***College Expenses** – tuition; room and board; estimated total budget; application fee and deposit

***Housing** – resident hall requirements; availability; types and sizes; food plans

***Facilities** – academic and recreational

***Activities** – clubs; organizations; sororities/fraternities; athletics and intramurals

Student Athletes: Students looking to participate in a Division I or II collegiate sport must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center during their junior year. Students must request that their ACT scores be forwarded directly to the center by entering "9999" as a reporting selection when registering for the test.

For more information on the NCAA's core course requirements, GPA computation, and contact information to complete the amateurism questionnaire, visit <https://web1.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter/>

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):

FAFSA is an application that assists in financial aid for college bound students. The FAFSA is easier to fill out online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. You and your parents want to fill out the FAFSA in January of your senior year. There are a series of steps necessary to fill out the FAFSA:

*Plan to attend the financial aid meeting held at Alexander High School each December. Representatives from Ohio University and Hocking College will present on their specific campus, as well as present an overview on the FAFSA and financing college.

*Obtain a personal identification number (PIN) at www.pin.ed.gov. The PIN will allow you to sign your FAFSA electronically and later to access your processed FAFSA online.

***Be aware of deadlines.** Financial aid deadlines for states and schools are usually earlier than federal deadlines.

*Complete the FAFSA application after January of the senior year. You may wish to use the “web work sheet”. This worksheet is optional, but it will help you collect the information you need to fill out the FAFSA online. These worksheets are available in the career center.

*Submit your application, **make sure you receive a confirmation number.** This number tells you your application has been successfully submitted. **Keep this confirmation for your records.**

*You will receive an email with a link to your Student Aid Report (SAR). If you did not provide an email address you will receive your SAR in the mail. If you do not hear back within three weeks, go to www.fafsa.gov and select “Check status of a submitted FAFSA or Print Signature Page”.

*Every year you will need to renew your FAFSA until you graduate from college. Renewing the FAFSA is easier because your information is saved from your first FAFSA. You will just need to make changes as necessary.