

JUNIOR YEAR

COLLEGE
ADMISSIONS
ROADMAP

A GUIDE FOR THE COLLEGE-
BOUND TRAVELER

TYPES OF COLLEGES

College: An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two-year or four-year program.

University: An academic organization which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and supports at least two degree granting professional schools that are not exclusively technological (such as medicine, journalism, or agricultural).

Liberal Arts College: Four-year institution which emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. Preprofessional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.

Junior College: Two-year institutions of higher learning which provide vocational training and academic curricula (terminal and transfer).

Terminal Course: academic program which is complete. A student who completes a terminal program does not have to complete further credits or course requirements.

Transfer Course: academic program designated to lead to lead into a second program or four-year program at another college or university.

Community College: Two-year public institution offering similar programs as junior colleges offering more terminal courses/programs.

Engineering or Technical College: Independent professional schools which provide four-year training programs in the fields of engineering and the physical sciences. They are often known as Institutes of Technology or Polytechnic Institutes.

Technical School: A two-year institution which offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment. These schools may also offer one year, 18-month or 24-month certificate programs in certain craft and clerical skills.

Nursing School: There are two kinds of nursing schools. At schools affiliated with hospitals or community colleges, students receive an RN degree upon completion of their training. At schools affiliated with four-year colleges, students receive a B.S. degree. Most entry nursing positions are beginning to require a B.S. in nursing.

Military Schools: Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Coast Guard, Navy, Marines and Air Force. These institutions (West Point, Coast Guard, Naval and Air Force Academies) require recommendation and appointment by members of Congress. Private and state supported military institutions, however, operate on a college application basis. They all offer degree programs with concentrations in various aspect of military service.

BASIC QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLEGE YOU WILL WANT TO ASK YOURSELF AND DISCUSS WITH YOUR FAMILY:

Regarding Location:

- Do I want to stay near home or do I want to travel several times a year?
- What kinds of weather do I really like?
- Do I want a serene rural campus, or do I like the bustle of a city?

About the Student Body:

- Do I want a few hundred classmates, or do I want to be surrounded by thousands of students?
- Do I want a diverse student body: economically, racially, culturally, and politically?
- Do I want to be taught by and have access to professors, or taught by graduate students with little access to professors?

Regarding Academics:

- How do I compare to the profile of the average student at a college I am considering?
- Do I want an academic environment that is very demanding, or would I prefer a school where I can succeed without great pressure?
- Do I expect to graduate school?
- Do I have the academic record to be considered by a highly competitive college?

Concerning Structure:

- Do I prefer a large university with many schools and colleges and many graduate students to a smaller liberal arts setting?
- Do I want a curriculum with greater independent study and few requirements, or do I work better with clear and definite guidelines?
- Do my academic interest require specialized facilities?

On Campus Life:

- Do I want to live on campus or off campus?
- Can I have a car on campus? As a freshman?
- Am I interested in Greek life (fraternities or sororities)?
- Do I want a very active campus or will I thrive best in a more sedate, leisurely atmosphere?
- How important are intramural and intercollegiate athletic programs to me?
- Do I struggle with regulations and restrictions, or do I need them to function at my best?
- Will I like a "suitcase college" or will I prefer one where most of the students are on campus on the weekends?
- How much of a factor will finances be? Can I afford the cost of a private school or out of state school?
- Am I willing to work a part time job or take on loans to pay for my education?

- Am I interested in a cooperative education program, are internships necessary for my major and employment?
- Is my academic and extra-curricular resume strong enough to suggest I am a good candidate for scholarships based on merit not need?

THERE IS NOT ONE PERFECT COLLEGE, BUT THERE ARE MANY GOOD COLLEGES THAT MAY BE THE PERFECT *FIT* FOR YOU!

Finding the colleges that fit your preferences by answering the above questions is a starting point in your search for a college or colleges that best fit YOUR needs.

WHEN EVALUATING YOUR ACCUMULATED INFORMATION, YOU WANT TO KEEP THESE THINGS IN MIND:

1. Most colleges accept students above and below the stated average SAT and ACT scores.
2. Some colleges are de-emphasizing standardized test scores. There is a list of college that will review your application without test scores. However, scores are usually required for financial aid purposes.
3. You should not let the cost of a college deter you from applying because many expensive private schools develop a strong financial aid package for students based on the FAFSA/CSS Profile.
4. When evaluating a college through websites and literature, look for specific information relevant to your wants/needs and READ, do not skim or look at pictures.
5. Choosing a college is like buying a car or an outfit, you would not purchase either with out a test drive or trying it on. VISIT colleges before making your decision. (You do not have to visit before applying!)
6. Does the college offer internships? Study abroad opportunities? Graduation rate? Acceptance rates to post-baccalaureate programs?

PARTS OF A COLLEGE APPLICATION

1. Biographical information.
2. Academic Information
 - a. SAT, ACT, SAT II (Subject Tests)
 - b. High School 391574
 - c. Grades (Transcript)
 - d. Class Rank (Optional)
 - e. Curriculum
3. Personal Information
 - a. Essays
 - b. Extra-Curricular Activities
 - c. Interview (Not always required but recommended.)
4. Supporting Documents

- a. Teacher Recommendations
- b. Guidance Counselor Recommendation or Report
- c. Supplementary materials-additional data, resume, graded assignments

TERMS YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW

Regular Admissions- The admission plan used by a great number of colleges with application deadlines usually between January 1 and March 1 and acceptance or rejection notification during April.

Rolling Admissions- Many public universities and liberal arts colleges accept qualified students on a first come, first serve basis. A college reviews data as the application is received and return decisions are made within a few weeks after the “file” is reviewed.

Early Decision- This admissions plan involves a strong commitment to a particular college by a strong student. The Early Decision deadline is usually November 1st or 15th of the applicant’s senior year. In some cases, all student admission tests and results must be completed/available no later than the deadline date. Applicants are usually notified of the admissions decision with a month of the college’s receipt of all application materials, and applicants who are accepted are usually committed by the binding contract to attend the college. A student may only apply to one college under an early decision plan at a time.

Early Action- An option offered by an increasing number of schools which allows applicants to receive a decision by Christmas if all application materials are in by deadline date. This is usually non-binding and allows students to apply to multiple schools early. Students must be highly organized to take advantage of this admission option.

Wait List- A list of students who were not initially accepted by an institution but who may be accepted at a later date if space is available. Wait list candidates may not be notified of a final decision until after May 1st.

Deferred Admission- Many colleges offer an opportunity for a student who has been admitted to delay or defer enrollment for a year or semester. It is easier to apply during the senior year and notify the college of plans for deferral rather than apply the year after graduation.

Common Application- allows a student to complete one application and send the application to multiple schools. Over 750 schools subscribe to the Common Application.

Coalition Application-allows a student to complete one application and send the application to multiple schools. Over 140 schools subscribe to the Coalition.

STANDARDIZED TEST OPTIONS

SAT

The SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. It is a multiple-choice, pencil-and-paper test administered by the College Board. The purpose of the SAT is to measure a high school student's readiness for college and provide colleges with one common data point that can be used to compare all applicants.

The CollegeBoard recommends that students take the SAT once during the spring of the junior year and again in the fall of the senior year. Students can register for the test via the internet at www.collegeboard.com. On test day you must show up at testing center on time with admission ticket and PHOTO ID.

The SAT has **two** big sections – Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (EBRW), and Math. You can earn a scaled score of between **200** and **800** points on each section, for a total of **1600** possible points on the Redesigned SAT.

What's on the SAT:

Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 52 multiple-choice questions• 65 minutes• Passages or pairs of passages (literature, historical documents, social sciences, and natural sciences)• Learn more about the SAT Reading Test
Writing & Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 44 multiple-choice questions• 35 minutes• Grammar, vocabulary in context, and editing skills• Learn more about the SAT Writing & Language Test
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 58 multiple-choice questions (broken up into a 20-question No-Calculator section and a 38-question Calculator-allowed section)• 80 minutes (25 minutes for the No-Calculator section; 55 minutes for the Calculator-allowed section)• Algebra I and II, geometry, and some trigonometry• Learn more about the SAT Math Test
Essay (Optional*)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 1 essay• 50 minutes• Read a passage and explain how the author builds a persuasive argument• Learn more about the SAT Essay

You should research the schools you are considering on applying to and determine if they require the Essay for admission.

ACT

The ACT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. It is a multiple-choice, pencil-and-paper test administered by ACT, Inc. The purpose of the ACT test is to measure a high school student's readiness for college and provide colleges with one common data point that can be used to compare all applicants.

Students can register for the test via the internet at www.actstudent.org. On test day you must show up at testing center on time with admission ticket and PHOTO ID.

The **ACT** has four sections, sometimes called subject areas: English, Math, Reading, and Science. Each subject area is given a scaled score between 1 and 36. Those area **scores** are then averaged into a composite score, which also ranges between 1 and 36.

OVERVIEW OF ACT TEST SECTIONS

English	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 75 multiple-choice questions• 45 minutes• Tests grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and rhetorical skills• Learn more about the ACT English Test
Math	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 60 multiple-choice questions• 60 minutes• Algebra I and II, geometry, and some trigonometry• Learn more about the ACT Math Test
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40 multiple-choice questions• 35 minutes• Four passages (prose fiction, social studies, humanities, and natural sciences) with 10 questions per passage• Learn more about the ACT Reading Test
Science	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 40 multiple-choice questions• 35 minutes• Questions on science-based passages presented with graphs, charts, tables and research summaries• Learn more about the ACT Science Test
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing test is optional *• 1 essay• 40 minutes• Learn more about the ACT Essay

SAT SUBJECT TESTS OR SAT II'S

SAT Subject Tests are 20 multiple-choice standardized tests given by the College Board on individual subjects in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics and science. They are typically taken to improve a student's credentials for admission to colleges in the United States. Every test is a one-hour timed test.

It is each student's responsibility to determine if their colleges of interest require the SAT Subject Tests. This information can be obtained from reading the college admissions page guidelines or by contacting the college admissions office.

AP EXAMS-ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced Placement examinations are exams offered by the CollegeBoard and are taken each May by students. The tests are the culmination of year-long Advanced Placement courses. All AP exams have a multiple-choice section and a free-response section. AP Studio Art requires students to submit a portfolio for review.

GCC students enrolled in an AP class are required to take the corresponding AP Exam.

TOEFL- Test of English as a Foreign Language

Test of English as a Foreign Language® is a standardized test to measure the English language ability of non-native speakers wishing to enroll in English-speaking universities. The test is accepted by many English-speaking academic and professional institutions.

TEST TAKING TIPS:

1. Get a full night's sleep the night before the test. Last minute cramming is usually of limited value.
2. Get up early enough so that you can eat a nutritious breakfast and arrive at least 20-30 minutes before the start time.
3. At a minimum, take advantage of practice tests or CollegeBoard and ACT prep programs.
4. Bring a healthy snack and a drink for breaks.
5. Dress in layers, to prepare for temperature variances in testing room.
6. RELAX; a positive attitude can have a great influence on your scores.

A TIME TABLE FOR THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Getting into a college can be an adventure depending on how it is approached. In any case, there are going to be details, deadlines and decisions, all of which are easier if adequate preparation is utilized. This is a guideline, subject to the variation of your choices and preferences.

During your high school career, explore and research colleges by:

1. Searching the internet. www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search and www.princetonreview.com
2. Meeting with college representatives-each fall colleges send reps to high schools to meet with interested students. A list of visiting colleges can be found on the Senior Bulletin Board. Students must sign up in guidance and are responsible for any missed assignments.
3. Attending summer programs hosted by colleges to enhance learning or interests.
4. Visiting colleges-the best time to do this varies with your interests and needs but visiting on a day when the college is in session and the admissions office is open gives a much better view of the college. Arrange for an overnight visit if it is possible.

SECOND SEMESTER JUNIORS

JANUARY: Begin to use the sources of information about college that you have identified. Read publications and websites carefully. Talk to teachers, counselors, parents and friends in high school and college about your plans and expectations. Prepare for mid-term exams.

FEBRUARY and MARCH: Attend the National College Fair. Register for the SAT and ACT, most students take the SAT and/or the ACT more than once. Check test dates and registrations deadlines. This information is posted on the Test Bulletin Board or on-line. Attend the Junior Meeting with guidance. Be prepared to create a list of possible schools based on likes/interests.

MARCH: Continue to clarify your goals, interests and needs. Determine if you need to take the SAT Subject Tests. Plan to take these tests in June while the subject matter is fresh in your mind.

APRIL and MAY: If you have not done so, develop a list of colleges that interest you. Be sure to visit websites and social media platforms. Begin to schedule visits or initiate communication with admissions offices and coaches. Register with NCAA Eligibility Center if you are an athlete who is considering playing at the college level in either Division I or II. You can visit NCAA Eligibility Center at: <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

JUNE, JULY, AUGUST: Plan more visits, take the SAT Subject Test, start preparing for the fall SAT or ACT. Prepare a resume of your high school career to share with teachers/guidance for recommendations. Sign up for the August SAT or September ACT.

VISITING AND INTEVIWING AT A COLLEGE

1. Always make an appointment if you expect to meet with Admissions. Call or contact the admissions offices via the college website or sign up for a sponsored event. If you plan a visit to campus, attempt to schedule your interview at the end of your visit. Do this so that you have maximum opportunity to talk with students and gain firsthand knowledge about the school which can help in the interview. Ask if a tour is available and take the opportunity to drive around the surrounding area.
2. Know something about the school before your interview. The interview is a two-way street. The admissions office is interviewing you to determine if you are a “good fit” for them and this is your opportunity to ask questions to determine if the school is a “good fit” for you. Ask questions that are important to you and are not answered in the schools website/marketing materials. Give the impression that you are interested.
3. Be curious. An interviewer will show more interest in you if you are actively engaged in the process. Schools look for students who show high interest, curiosity and purpose for attending their school.
4. Remember this is a very important tool to represent yourself as something other than the numbers/information provided in your application. You are being assessed as a person and you are assessing the school. You and the school will have a decision to make. Be an active participant in the interview and tour.
5. The way you dress, act and represent yourself will be a sign as to what importance you place on this event. Sloppy, casual dress and behavior could negatively affect the school’s assessment of your intent and interest.

FIRST SEMESTER SENIORS

Fall of your Senior Year is the time to finalize your college choices and begin applying to schools. It is wise to have a plan for yourself as early as possible. Try to select schools representing two or three levels of admissions standards: “reach/dream school”, “realistic schools” and “safety schools”. Each student will meet with guidance individually to discuss where they are in the process and schedule follow up appointments if necessary.

SEPTEMBER: Sign up for the October SAT or ACT. Look over the information guidance provided the first week of school. Schedule an individual appointment with guidance. Determine if your list of schools is appropriate for your academic and personal record. Review your transcript with guidance to ensure accuracy and all graduation will be met. Ask teachers if they will write you a recommendation and share your resume. Check the Senior Bulletin Board for upcoming college visits to GCC. Sign up in guidance to meet with reps and ask questions.

OCTOBER: Attend regional college fairs (WCCC). Begin to create accounts with colleges from your list. Are they Common Application, Coalition Application or school application? What information is required for the application? Is there a required essay? What are the essay topic options? If applying for Early Decision, send your application early. Begin preparing applications for “back-up” schools. Sign up for the

December SAT or ACT if needed. The FAFSA opens on October 1. You and your family should apply for PIN numbers and start the FAFSA application. To access FAFSA: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa>. Continue to sign up for college rep visits.

The **Free Application for Federal Student Aid** (FAFSA) is a form that can be prepared annually by current and prospective college students (undergraduate and graduate) in the United States to determine their eligibility for student financial aid.

NOVEMBER: Take SAT Subject test(s) if needed. Make sure your Q1 grades are good. If required, complete the CSS Profile along with completing the FAFSA application.

Unlike the more widely used Free Application for Federal Student Aid (or FAFSA), which is required for any kind of federal aid, as well as for assistance from most states and colleges, the **CSS Profile** is just for private, **non**-federal aid. The CSS Profile is not used by every private college. You can ask the Financial Aid Offices at the schools you are applying if the CSS Profile is necessary. The list of schools that use the CSS Profile change yearly. You can access the following website for an accurate list:

<https://profile.collegeboard.org/profile/ppi/participatingInstitutions.aspx>

To access the CSS Profile: <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>

DECEMBER: If needed take the SAT or SAT Subject test or ACT. Have scores sent directly to the colleges you are applying. Send your final applications. Complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile (if necessary).

JANUARY: Keep your grades up! Many schools will want a mid-year grade report before making a final admission decision. Guidance will give you a “how-to” on sending mid-year transcript to schools. Watch your GCC email for scholarship opportunities.

SECOND SEMESTER SENIORS

FEBRUARY-MARCH-APRIL: Remember to monitor your applications to ensure all materials are received. This is peak LOCAL scholarship season; make sure you are checking your GCC email, the Scholarship Bulletin Board and/or homeroom bulletin.

BEFORE MAY 1st: Decide on the college you will attend. Send in your deposit. Notify the other schools you applied of your decision to attend elsewhere.

MAY: Take the AP exams. Prepare for graduation. Guidance will provide a “how to” for sending final transcripts to your chosen school.

FINANCING A COLLEGE EDUCATION

The cost of a college education can be daunting. If you plan on continuing your education, you should be aware of financial aid.

Most schools expect students and families to pay for most of a post-secondary education. The cost of college includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation and other personal expenses.

If the cost seems too high, don't be discouraged; financial aid is available and lower-cost options exist. Most aid comes from three levels: federal, state and institutional. Many students will not qualify for federal aid, but state and institutional aid is more accessible. You must complete a FAFSA to be eligible for state and most institutional aid. **The best single source of information regarding college costs and financial aid available is the Financial Aid Office at the schools you are applying.**

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

1. Apply for admission to the colleges of your choice. Students do not receive financial aid packages until they've been admitted; however, you should request information on financial aid programs available to you through the college when you apply for admission. The sooner your admission application is completed, the sooner you will know your financial aid package amounts. Funds are usually disbursed on a first come first served basis.
2. Complete the FAFSA beginning October 1 to ensure accurate financial aid packages. It is also important to check with the financial aid office for any opportunities that might require an application essay or test (i.e. Alumni Grants, Wimmer Scholarship Exam).
3. Complete the CSS Profile if required.

Financial Aid Package-The amounts and types of sources of money a student receives to meet financial need. This may include grants and scholarships (no repayment), loans (must be repaid) and work programs (student receives hourly wages for work performed).

The Guidance page on the GCC website, provides links to several scholarship websites that offer scholarships based on varied criteria. It is up to the student to research the scholarship criteria and determine if appropriate.

The Guidance office emails and posts local scholarship opportunities from community organizations and clubs. Again, it is up to the student to research the scholarship criteria and determine if appropriate.

OTHER TIPS

EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Impressive

1. School publications
2. Student government
3. Choir/Band/Orchestra
4. Varsity sports

5. Community Service
6. Eagle Scout/Gold Award
7. Volunteer fire person
8. Ski patrol

Unimpressive

1. Board games club
2. Radical political affiliations
3. Local band fan clubs
4. Interests...if you like to skate, horseback ride you mention in your application but don't list as extracurricular unless activity is competitive or "formal" such as 4-H affiliation
5. Controversial organizations

TEACHER AND COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Start early! Your teachers are swamped, so give them plenty of time.
2. Give your teachers and counselors all necessary materials/information. Are the recommendations on-line or paper? Guidance will provide you "how-to" for paper and mailed recommendations. Is there a form that needs completed?
3. Waive your confidentiality rights, most students do and if you do not waive it sends up a red flag to the admissions office.
4. Pick your recommenders wisely!! Chose teachers who know you personally. And, do not ask more than 3 teachers. Most applications require less than 3 recommendations.
5. Send some form of thank you to teachers who wrote your recommendations.

QUESTIONS FOR A COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE

1. Which majors attract most students?
2. Who teaches-professors or graduate assistants?
3. What is the opportunity for interaction with instructors/professors?
4. What percent of pre-professional student are admitted to professional school?
5. How important is it to declare a major at the time of application?
6. Can you transfer between colleges; e.g. If you apply to the College of Liberal Arts, can you transfer to the School of Business, or Nursing?
7. What is the graduation percentage?
8. What technology support is available?
9. What percent of students live on campus?
10. Is housing guaranteed all four years?
11. What is the profile of admitted students? SAT, QPA, Rank
12. Is there a Greek system? How strong is Greek influence on campus?
13. How do freshman schedule classes?
14. What tutoring services are available?
15. Is there a planned recreational program for weekends?
16. What opportunities are there for employment on campus?
17. What is the average debt of a student upon graduation?
18. What merit scholarships do you offer?
19. Can freshman have a car on campus?
20. What general university requirements must all students take?
21. Is there a study abroad program?
22. Are there internship opportunities available? And, do any majors require an internship?