



# SENIOR SURVIVAL KIT

GALENA PARK HIGH SCHOOL

<http://www.galenaparkisd.com/campuspages/gphscampus/index.php>

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## The College Application Process

### HOW DO I SEND MY TRANSCRIPT AND COLLEGE INFORMATION TO THE COLLEGE?

- (Step 1) Apply Texas – For Texas Public Colleges and Universities

<http://www.applytexas.org>

Complete the application one of three ways. (1) Some colleges allow you to complete and submit an application online. (2) Go online and download an application. (3) Contact the office of admissions and have them send you an application.

- ✓ Read the application thoroughly for instructions.
- ✓ Gather all forms that need to be signed/completed by counselors and/or teachers.
- ✓ Take special notice of deadlines.
- ✓ Make copies of completed applications.

- (Step 2) Submit “Secondary School Report”, “Counselor Recommendation Form”, “College Prep Form” and “Midyear Report” **IF NEEDED**

- ✓ Give the signed “Secondary School Report”, “Counselor Recommendation Form”, “College Prep Form” and “Midyear Report” to your Counselor.
- ✓ A “Parent Brag Sheet” and “Senior Student Questionnaire” must be completed only if a letter of recommendation is needed. Submit these two forms to your Counselor. Both forms are available in the Counselor’s office or on the GPHS Counselors’ website. Allow a minimum of 10 school days.

- (Step 3) Request your official transcript.

- ✓ See the Registrar to order a transcript.

- (Step 4) Teacher Recommendation **IF NEEDED**

- ✓ The student should ask the teacher if they are willing to write a recommendation.
- ✓ Give the teacher the “Request For Letter of Recommendation” form. The form is available in the Guidance office or on the Guidance website.
- ✓ Allow a minimum of 10 school days.
- ✓ The student picks up the letter of recommendation from the teacher.

- (Step 5) The Counselors’ Secretary will notify the student when the forms are complete.

- (Step 6) Send ACT/SAT test scores to the college.

- ✓ Use the official reporting services from ACT/SAT
 

<a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>	ACT phone # 1-319-337-1270 or Live Chat
<a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a>	SAT phone # 1-866-392-4088

- (Step 7) Assemble all parts of the application and mail it directly to the college admissions office.



## PARENT BRAG SHEET

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

This sheet will not become a part of your son(s) or daughter(s) college application. It is used to help the counselor complete a college secondary school report or a college recommendation.

If it is easier to use a computer and type your responses please feel free to do so. Not all questions may apply for your son or daughter. Leave questions that don't apply blank.

1. Describe briefly what you see as your son(s) or daughter(s) greatest strengths (academic and personal).

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2. If you had to describe your son(s) or daughter(s) in five adjectives, what would they be?

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3. Please write an appraisal of your son or daughter, assessing personal and academic qualities and promise as a college student. Colleges are particularly interested in evidence about character, maturity, independence, values, enthusiasm, and any special talent or quality.

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4. To what extent has your son or daughter been interested in academic work and made full use of his or her intellectual potential?

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5. How would you and others describe your son's or daughter's relationships with his or her peers and teachers?

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6. To what extent has your son or daughter shown special initiative or leadership abilities?

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7. Are there any special circumstances, background information, or other factors you feel may be relevant to your child's application?

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8. Please rate your son or daughter in the following areas:

1. Average 2. Above average 3. Excellent (top 10%) 4. Outstanding

\_\_\_\_ motivation \_\_\_\_ leadership \_\_\_\_ energy \_\_\_\_ creative qualities  
\_\_\_\_ self confidence \_\_\_\_ maturity \_\_\_\_ personality \_\_\_\_ concern for others  
\_\_\_\_ self discipline \_\_\_\_ initiative \_\_\_\_ sense of humor \_\_\_\_ respect for others

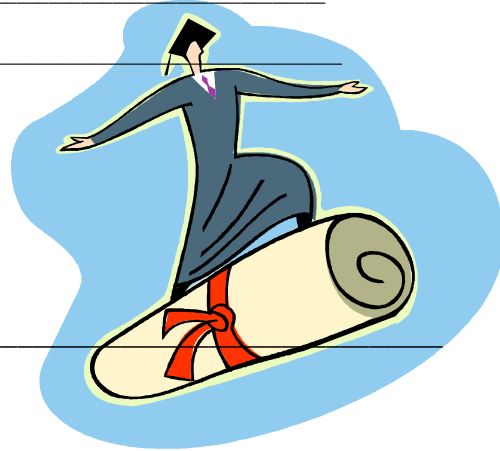
# Request for Letter of Recommendation

**\* Please allow 10 working days for a counselor or teacher to complete your recommendation letter\***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_



**Recommendation letter is needed for:**

College Application (List all):

\_\_\_\_\_

Scholarship (List all):

\_\_\_\_\_

Employment:

\_\_\_\_\_

**High School Activities** (note years of participation & leadership positions):

*Example: Marching Band*

*Years 1, 2, 3, 4,*

*Squad Leader (3, 4)*

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Community Service/Employment:**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**Honors & Awards:**

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

**What major are you considering to study? Why? And/Or why is this specific college/university a good fit for you?**

**Pick a moment where you were most proud of your actions and describe it. Tell why you take pride in it.**

**List three words that someone would use to describe you. EXPLAIN each in several sentences.**

**List two teachers from Galena Park High School who know you well:**

## **TIPS TO THE COLLEGE CAMPUS VISIT...**

### **COLLEGE CAMPUS VISITS**

- Oxford College's "Tips To The College
- "Campus Visit"
- What to do before, during, and after the campus visit
- Top 10 List of things to do on a campus visit
- Questions to ask on the college visit
- CampusTours.com - Virtual College Tours
- eCampusTours.com - 360° x 360° tours

1. Select the number of schools you want to visit (4-6)
2. Research the school prior to the visit.
3. Make a list of questions you would like to ask and do not be afraid to ask them.
4. Call for an appointment at least two weeks ahead.
5. Request a campus tour when you call.
6. **BE ON TIME!** If you have to postpone your visit or will be late, please call the college to let them know of your delay.
7. Dress appropriately for the appointment.
8. Be honest about your strengths and weaknesses. **BE YOURSELF!**
9. Try and visit when students are there and sit in on classes.
10. Spend the night and see college through the eyes of a current student.
11. Evaluate your visits and narrow your choices to those you really liked.
12. If you had an individual interview, it is nice to write a note to the Admissions Office afterwards.
13. If questions come up after the visit, do not hesitate to contact the people you have met. Most schools have 800 numbers or e-mail and welcome your questions.
14. Stay in touch with admission representatives that you met at the colleges.

#### **BEFORE YOUR VISIT**

1. Call in advance to arrange a visit/tour.
2. Re-read your college catalog and other info.
3. Be familiar with your high school academic record.
4. Make a list of questions you want to ask.

#### **THE VISIT**

1. Be on time for your tour/visit.
2. Allow plenty of time to see the campus and meet with Admissions people.
3. Feel free to discuss the chances for admission. Don't expect any type of a firm decision.
4. Pick up admission & financial aid info.
5. Don't hesitate to discuss \$\$\$ concerns.
6. Get the names of the people you meet with.

#### **THE TOUR**

1. The Library
2. Academic Facilities
3. Living Quarters/Dorms
4. Talk with students!!!

#### **AFTER THE VISIT**

1. Make some notes about the visit; good and bad.
2. Write a thank you note(s) to the person(s) you met with.

#### **TOP 10 LIST OF THINGS TO DO ON A CAMPUS VISIT** (besides take the tour!)

1. Check out the size of the campus. Does it appear manageable? Will you need a car...a bike?
2. Have lunch with a student. How is the food?



3. Go to a dormitory and see a student's room. Do the residence halls have lounges or study areas? What kind of recreational facilities are available? Are laundry facilities available?
4. Find out where students hang out and spend some time there yourself.
5. Read the student newspaper. This is an excellent way to find out about day-to-day campus life. Does it look like there is a lot going on?
6. Talk with faculty as well as students.
7. Visit whatever departments you have an interest in. There is the possibility of getting an appointment with the department chairperson.
8. Take a camera.
9. Take notes immediately after the visit! After you have made a few visits, it becomes very difficult to remember which campus was which.
10. Ask pertinent questions but also try to do your homework before your visit. Try not to ask some of the more obvious questions that you can easily find out just by skimming a brochure.

### **QUESTIONS FOR THE COLLEGE VISIT**

#### **A. Academic Courses**

1. How much flexibility will I have in my curriculum? Can I change majors? Can I double major? Is there a "core curriculum?"
2. Will I have an assigned advisor for all four years? Can I choose my own advisor?
3. What is the average class size?
4. What is the faculty/student ratio?
5. How many majors are offered at your school? Do you have a major in \_\_\_\_\_?
6. Can I get an internship in my field of study?
7. Can I study abroad?
8. How many credits do students usually take each term?

#### **B. Faculty**

1. What percent of the faculty teach freshmen and sophomores?
2. Are they full-time professors?
3. Will I be taught by graduate assistants?
4. How accessible are the faculty?
5. Will I have the opportunity to do research with a professor in my major field of study?

#### **C. Student Life**

1. What kinds of students go to school there? Are they diverse? Are they all from the local area? Are they tolerant of different kinds of students?
2. What kinds of student organizations are there on campus?
3. Are there fraternities and sororities?
4. Is there school spirit?
5. What kinds of athletic teams are there?
6. Are there intramural leagues?
7. Is there an effective student government?
8. What happens on the campus on the weekends?

#### **D. Miscellaneous**

1. Are freshmen required to live on campus?
2. Is housing guaranteed for four years? What would be the best dormitory for a freshman? Can I change dorms?
3. How is the food?
4. Does your school have a safe campus?
5. How active are the alumni? Where do they go after graduation? What percentage goes on to graduate school?
6. What kinds of support services are available? (i.e. tutoring, services for students with special learning needs, etc.)?
7. Do I need to have a computer? Are computer labs readily available throughout campus?
8. Can I have a car on campus?

#### **E. Financial Aid**

1. How much does your school cost? Does this include room, board, and fees?
2. How can I apply for financial aid? Does your school offer athletic, merit, and/or performance scholarships?
3. Can I get a job on campus?

### Differences Between High School & Colleges/Universities

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE/UNIVERSITIES
HS students are in class approximately 6 hours a day,	College classes may meet only once or twice a week,
HS students have contact with their teachers four or five times a week,	The opportunities for direct teacher contact are much more limited,
HS students spend a limited amount of time completing homework assignments at home,	College students must learn how to budget study time for themselves,
They often work on assignments during a study hall or resource room period,	As a general rule, for every hour of class time, college students need to spend three hours of out of class time preparing assignments,
In high school, homework is often assigned on a day-to-day basis, and students are expected to turn it in daily, or weekly, for teacher feedback.	
High school classrooms typically contain 25 to 30 students,	Many college classrooms consist of large lecture halls for 200 to 300 students.
In high school, homework is often assigned on a day-to-day basis, and students are expected to turn it in daily, or weekly, for teacher feedback.	In college, "homework" often consists of long-range assignments (with no scheduled check-ins) such as term papers involving extensive use of Internet resources or cooperative assignments with peers.
High school students frequently receive feedback and grades from teachers	It is not unusual for college students to receive only two or three grades per semester. The first grade may not appear until the mid-term, five to six weeks into the semester.
High school grades that were once based on subjective measures like "effort" or the "degree of improvement" are replaced in college	In college, grades are assigned by teaching assistants who are looking for prescribed responses and mastery of course objectives as stated in the syllabus.
High school teachers are often responsible for teaching a broad range of students and for teaching factual content,	College instructors often expect students to integrate course information independently from a variety of sources rather than merely parroting back isolated facts,
High school teachers are known for taking attendance, regularly checking notebooks and homework assignments,	College professors rarely take attendance and seldom monitor students' daily work. They typically lecture non-stop and require students to think analytically, and to synthesize abstract information on their own,
High school students find that their free time is often structured by limitations set by parents, teachers, and other adults.	College environments require students to function independently by managing their own time both during the day and at night,

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Q. I want to go to college. How do I know where?**

- The decision of where to go to enroll in college is a very personal one. It is dependent upon a number of factors, such as: your major; whether you want to live on campus or commute from home; if you want to go to a women's college or college sponsored by a religious denomination; if you prefer a large urban university or a small college in a suburban or rural setting; what you can afford, etc. Find out as much as you can about different possibilities and visit different types of schools to see what you like. Go to college search sites.

### **Q. I want to go to college. How do I know what to major in?**

- This question is best answered with another question: What type of work would you like to do after you graduate from college? If you do not know, then the first thing you might want to do is investigate various careers. There are several books and web sites that can help you with this search. Information in these books generally includes what kind of academic preparation is necessary for a particular career. Most colleges, however, do not require that you declare a major until your Junior (third) year. Therefore, you can enter college as an undecided major. After 1-2 years of completing courses in a variety of disciplines you will probably find yourself drawn to a particular subject area. Several colleges also offer majors in broad disciplines such as Liberal Arts and Humanities.

### **Q. Is a college visit really important? What about an interview?**

- A college visit (and an interview) is very important. Even if it is not required by the college. A college visit is one of the most valuable ways for you to determine if the college is right for you. Most colleges welcome the opportunity to show you around campus and tours are often scheduled regularly. Touring campus is a good way to find out if you would be comfortable attending that particular school. An interview is mutually beneficial (for you and the college). It gives you an opportunity to get answers to questions that might not be addressed in the college brochures and it gives the school an opportunity to learn things about you that you may not have included in your application.

### **Q. What is the difference between degrees: Associate, Bachelor, Certificate, etc.?**

- A certificate can usually be earned in one year or less. Certificates are granted by two-year colleges and some four-year colleges, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. An associate's degree can be completed in two years. They are granted by two-year and some four-year colleges and universities.

A bachelor's degree is granted only by a four-year college or university.

### **Q. What is the Common Application? Where and when can it be used?**

- The Common Application is the recommended application form for 209 selective, independent colleges and universities for admission to their undergraduate programs. Many of these institutions use the form exclusively. All of the schools give equal consideration when reviewing the Common Application and the college's own form. Experience with the Common Application over a period of more than 20 years has demonstrated its advantages to students, counselors, and teachers. The concept is simple: Students complete one Common Application form, photocopy it, and send a copy to each of the participating colleges to which they'd like to apply. This procedure simplifies the college application process and eliminates duplication of effort. The Common Application is also available online.

### **Q. What is the CEEB (CB) Code? How do I find it?**

- The CB code (formerly known as the CEEB code) is a four-digit number that is used when requesting to have SAT or AP scores sent to colleges and some scholarship programs. This code is usually provided in the college or scholarship recruitment literature. You can find the codes for all of the colleges and scholarships in SAT I and SAT II Registration Bulletin. Code lists are also available through College Board Online. Galena Park High School - CEEB code number is **442680**

### **Q. Can I apply to a college online?**

- Yes, in most cases. Admission application instructions can usually be found on a college's web page. Generally the online application is just the beginning of the application process — the data on your application will be entered into the system, but you will still have to submit other information (application fee, essays, test scores, and recommendations) separately.

### **Q. How do colleges decide who to accept?**

- There are several answers to this question— it depends on to what type of college(s) you are applying. Most community colleges and some private colleges are "non-competitive" or have "open" admission. This means that any applicant supplying proof of high school graduation or its equivalency (such as a GED, EDP, or ABE) may become a student. Depending on how "competitive" or "selective" they are, other colleges use a variety of criteria for determining acceptance for admission. Most schools will look closely

at your high school grades and SAT scores and will require that you submit from 1 to 3 essays. If English is not your first language, most colleges will require you to take the Test Of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the SAT II English Advanced Placement Test. Students applying for a major in the arts are often required to audition or submit a portfolio. Many colleges require that you come to campus for an interview. Minimum standards will vary from college to college, but most colleges take all facets of students' applications (grades, test scores, essays, interview performance) into consideration when making a decision.

**Q. What is the difference between Early Decision and Early Action?**

- Early Decision: Some colleges use this system to accept students with strong high school records who have a high interest in attending that school. The deadline for early decision is generally early (Nov. 1) and students are obligated to enroll if they are accepted. Do not apply "early decision" unless you're confident that the college is your first choice. Early Action: Students who apply under a college's early action plan receive a decision earlier than the standard response date but are not required to enroll at that college or to make a deposit prior to May 1. Requesting "early action" means that the college admissions office will make a decision on your application before having evaluated all of the other applications.

**Q. What is "open admission"? "rolling admission"?**

- "Open" admission means a college will admit anyone who has a high school diploma or its equivalency (GED, EDP, ABE). "Rolling" Admission means the college does not have a firm application deadline. They will accept students throughout the year and even through the summer if there are still openings in the class. However, you cannot count on a slot still being available if you wait until summer to apply. If the class (or major) is filled before your application is received, you will not be admitted for that semester regardless of your qualifications. If a college has a rolling admission policy, it is best to apply as soon as possible.

**Q. When and how do I find out if I have been accepted to a school?**

- The school's admissions office will send you an email or a letter notifying you of whether or not you are accepted for admission. If you are applying to a school that has a "rolling" admission policy you could get a letter within just a few weeks of submitting your application. Many schools have a single notification date, usually April 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Q. I want to transfer to another college. What is the process?**

- If you are currently enrolled in a two-year college, you should notify your academic advisor or transfer counselor as early as possible that you would like to transfer to another school. Several two-year colleges have what are called "articulation agreements", "transfer compacts" or PTAs (Participating Transfer Agreements) with four-year colleges. This means that if you take the approved courses (agreed upon by the two- and four-year schools involved in the agreement/compact) and meet the previously-agreed-upon minimum grade point average, you can transfer the maximum amount of credits to the four-year school.

Often students transferring from a two-year school to a four-year school will discover that the admission and financial aid application process is more complex for the four-year school. Luckily, your academic advisor or transfer counselor can help you through that process. If, however, you are transferring from one four-year college to another one, you should contact the admissions office of the school to which you wish to transfer as soon as possible.

**Q. What is Advanced Placement (AP)?**

- Advanced Placement (AP) is a college-level exam offered for high school students by the College Board in a number of different subjects. These tests are scored on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest score. Many highly selective colleges give college credit for high AP scores.

**Q. I'm not sure how to select a major. Where should I start?**

- Choose this. Do that. Don't do this. Does it seem like you're balancing on a very fine line between success and failure? Don't worry: it's not as thin as you think. We're just here to make sure you make it across the line safely, and as smoothly as possible.

*The decisions you will be/are making during college are life shaping - but DON'T STRESS OUT COMPLETELY! Learn more about job fields and how to make the most out of your years in college.*

*Take the time to look in front of you and make your dreams and aspirations a reality.*

## **COLLEGE SEARCH FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

### **Collegesboard College Search** - <http://apps.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp>

College Search offers two starting points. Use the College MatchMaker to find colleges that meet all of your needs or use the College QuickFinder to explore a school already familiar to you. Either way, you'll find the latest info on 3,600+ colleges, plus easy access to related tools.

### **Colleges and Universities by State** - <http://www.50states.com/college/> .

This site list every college located in the US by state.

### **Braintrack** - <http://www.braintrack.com/>

Braintrack has over 6,900 links to universities and community colleges from around the world.

### **Princeton Review College Search** – <http://talk.collegeconfidential.com/college-search-selection/454006-princeton-review-counselor-o-matic.html>

Provides information to students on college search, selection and admissions process. There is also a college discussion section.

### **CollegeNET** - <http://www.collegenet.com>

CollegeNet lets you conduct college search based on criteria such as major, location, and tuition or do a search by state of four-year colleges and community, technical, and junior colleges. Set up a profile for yourself and conduct a scholarship search that best matches your qualifications with MACH25. Apply online to over 500 colleges and universities in the United States.

### **IPEDS College Opportunities On-Line (IPEDS Cool)** -

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cool/Search.asp>

IPEDS Cool is a way of finding out about a specific college or set of colleges from a database of 7,000 colleges and universities in the United States compiled by the National Center for Education Statistics in the U.S. Department of Education. You can get information on type of institution, degrees offered, tuition and fees in addition to costs of room and board, books and supplies.

### **Index of University and School Home Pages** -

<http://www.wisemantech.com/guidance/collegehp.htm> .

Links to various schools and majors organized alphabetically.

### **Schools in the USA** - <http://www.schoolsintheusa.com/>

Search for colleges by field of study, state and tuition rate.

### **University and College Directory** - <http://www.university-directory.org/>

Search for accredited colleges by state.

## COMMUNITY COLLEGES

**Community College Web** - <http://www.mcli.dist.maricopa.edu/cc> This site links to 1,257 community colleges in the U.S., Canada, and elsewhere around the world. Search alphabetically (by the first letter of the college's name), geographically (by the country/state/province), or by keywords in the college name or location.

**Community College Directory** - <http://www.community-college.org/> Search 1,300 U.S. community colleges by state..

**Community Colleges** - <http://cset.sp.utoledo.edu/twoyrcol.html> . This site links to over 1,000 two-year colleges in the United States listed by state.

**Business, Trade, and Technical Schools** - <http://www.rwm.org/rwm/states.html> . Search for postsecondary vocational schools by state.

**GoTRAIN** - <http://www.GoTRAIN.com/> . / Technical schools and vocational training.  
<http://www.technical-schools-guide.com>

# Students Rights & Responsibilities

National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) sponsors 47 National College Fairs™ in the U.S. that you are invited to attend free of charge.  
Visit [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org),  
Events Calendar for



## Students' Rights and Responsibilities

1631 Prince Street  
Alexandria, VA 22314-2818

Phone: 703/836-2222  
800/822-6285  
Fax: 703/836-8015

[www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)  
If you need more information about college admission, contact the counselors in your school. They want to help you make good decisions about your future.

### When You Apply to Colleges and Universities, You Have Before You Apply:

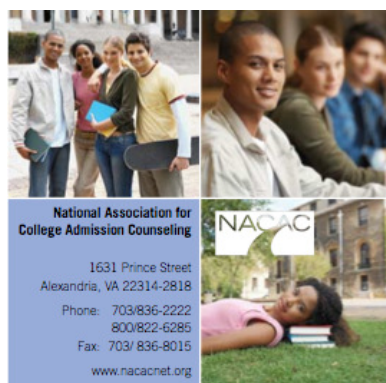
- You have the right to receive factual and comprehensive information from colleges and universities about their admission, financial costs, aid opportunities, practices and packaging policies, and housing policies. If you consider applying under an early admission plan, you have the right to complete information from the college about its process and policies.
- You have the right to be free from high-pressure sales tactics.

### When You Are Offered Admission:

- You have the right to wait until May 1 to respond to an offer of admission and/or financial aid.
- Colleges that request commitments to offers of admission and/or financial assistance prior to May 1 must clearly offer you the opportunity to request (in writing) an extension until May 1. They must grant you this extension and your request may not jeopardize your status



## Students' Rights and Responsibilities In the College Admission Process



### As You Apply:

- You must complete all material required for application and submit your application on or before the published deadlines. You should be the sole author of your applications.
- You should seek the assistance of your high school counselor early and throughout the application period. Follow the process recommended by your high school for filing college applications.
- It is your responsibility to arrange, if appropriate, for visits to and/or interviews at colleges of your choice.

### Financial Aid:

- The types of financial aid, including federal, state and local government, need-based and non-need based, and private scholarships and awards
- The methods by which a school determines eligibility for financial aid; how and when the aid is distributed
- Terms and conditions of campus employment, if financial aid is delivered through a work-study aid program.

For more information about student financial aid, visit [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov).

### Campus Security:

Procedures and policies for reporting crimes and emergencies on campus, as well as the system of adjudication  
The number and types of crime reported on and around campus  
The school's drug offense policy, as well as descriptions of the school's drug awareness and drug use prevention programs.  
To compare campus crime statistics for different

## Prospective students have the right to know:

### Colleges Must Provide: General:

- The cost of attending an institution, including tuition, books and supplies, housing, and related costs and fees
- Requirements and procedures for withdrawing from an institution, including refund policies
- Names of associations that accredit, approve or license the institution
- Special facilities and services for disabled students.

### Academics:

- The academic program of the institution, including degrees, programs of study, and facilities
- A list of faculty and other instructional personnel
- A report on completion or graduation rates at the college
- At schools that typically prepare students for transfer to a four-year college, such as a community college, information about the transfer-out rate.
- For more information about transferring from a two- year to a four-year institution, see
- The College Transfer Student in America: The Forgotten Student (\$80

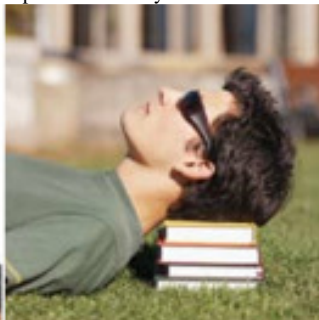
(Order  
[www.aacrao.org/publications/catalog.cfm](http://www.aacrao.org/publications/catalog.cfm).)



### If You Are Placed on a Wait/Alternate List:

- The letter that notifies you of that placement should provide a history that describes the number of students on the wait list, the number offered admission, and the availability of financial aid and housing.
- Colleges may require neither a deposit nor a written commitment as a condition of remaining on a wait list.
- Colleges are expected to notify you of the

for admission and/or financial aid.  
 • Candidates admitted under early decision programs are a recognized exception to the May 1 deadline.



#### After You Receive Your Admission Decisions:

- You must notify each college or university that accepts you whether you are accepting or rejecting its offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have made a final decision as to the college you wish to attend, but no later than May 1. It is understood that May 1 will be the postmark date.
- You may confirm your intention to enroll and, if required, submit a deposit to only one college or university. The exception to this arises if you are put on a wait list by a college or university and are later admitted to that institution. You may accept the offer and send a deposit. However, you must immediately notify a college or university at which you previously indicated your intention to enroll.
- If you are accepted under an early decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications. If you are an early decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid.

colleges,  
 Visit <http://ope.ed.gov/security>.

#### Definitions of Admission Options in Higher Education

##### Non-Restrictive Application Plans

##### Regular Decision

Definition: Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

Commitment: Non-binding

##### Rolling Admission

Definition: Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

Commitment: Non-binding

##### Early Action (EA)

Definition: Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

Commitment: Non-binding



resolution of your wait list status by August 1 at the latest.

#### When You Apply to Colleges and Universities, You Have Before You Apply:

- You have a responsibility to research, and to understand and comply with the policies and procedures of each college or university regarding application fees, financial aid, scholarships, and housing. You should also be sure you understand the policies of each college or university regarding deposits you may be required to make before you enroll.

#### Restrictive Application Plans

##### Early Decision (ED)

Definition: Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

Commitment: Binding



##### Restrictive Early Action (REA)

Definition: Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

Commitment: Non-Binding



## Getting Ready For College

### **EXAMINE YOURSELF: How do your dreams and views of yourself match what you have done?**

- What subjects do you like best? What courses do you do well in?
- What are your hobbies or interests outside of school? What talents or skills do you use?
- What are your strong points? Do you have strong organizational skills? Leadership ability? Creative ability?
- What are your values? Are you competitive? Adventurous? Do you aspire to fame? Money? Power? Is family life, service to others, religion, etc. important to you?

### **RESEARCH TO DETERMINE YOUR COLLEGE CHOICES**

- There are several criteria that may influence your decision about the colleges that you consider:
- **Size** – total student enrollment, size of the freshman class, size of instructional classes
- **Location** – distance from home, the environment surrounding the campus (urban/suburban/rural), access to cultural and social opportunities
- **Student Body** – ethnic/religious origin, coed or single-sex, male-female ratio, geographical distribution, resident/commuter, academic background of students
- **Academics** – focus of curriculum, liberal arts/technical/professional, teaching or research emphasis, availability of intended major, academic requirements, academic challenge, honors programs, advanced credit (IB) policy, off-campus opportunities
- **Extracurricular** – fraternities/sororities, special interests, recreational opportunities available on and off campus
- **Finances** – total cost per year, including tuition and fees, room and board, books, personal expenses, travel costs, scholarship opportunities.

### **PLAN YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH**

- Follow these logical steps:
- Write or email colleges that interest you
- Review literature and websites about the colleges
- Decide which colleges you would like to visit
- Schedule campus visits and interviews
- Prepare for visits and interviews
- Discuss your impressions of the colleges visits with a college advisor
- Review application materials
- Decide upon the final list of colleges

### HOW MANY COLLEGES SHOULD A STUDENT APPLY TO?

As the process of college selection is an individual one, based upon the student's interests, accomplishments and needs, there is no one answer that applies to everyone. Applying to more than eight colleges may be superfluous. Although the schools to which you will be applying may vary in selectivity, each should meet the general criteria that you have established.

There are three broad categories into which colleges under consideration should be placed:

- REACH – The most selective schools representing your ideal choice, a possible risk, but still within a realistic range for you in terms of academic survival at college.
- LEVEL – Schools that usually accept students whose credentials tend to match those of the applicant. To determine which schools fit into this category, you should review the entering class profile of the college, which is on file in the College Office.
- SAFETY – A school that still embodies all the qualities you are seeking, but is a confident choice in terms of the type of student that the college tends to admit.

**The breakdown as to how many “reaches”, “levels”, and “safeties” are sufficient depends upon several factors:**

- Academic record
- Proposed major (some programs have restricted numbers)
- Student's contribution to campus diversity – geographic and ethnic factors
- Specific talents
- Requests for financial aid and the college's financial aid policy.

**As a general rule, applying to two “reaches”, two or three “levels” and at least one “safety” college should be sufficient.**

More than half of the students entering colleges in the United States choose a liberal arts program which does not require them to commit to a specific field of study until the third year of college. Thus, it is to your advantage to be honest if you are truly uncertain about what you want to study, as college will offer the opportunity for exploration. Unless you are absolutely certain about pursuing a pre-professional curriculum, it may be in your best interest to indicate “undecided”. Sometimes indicating a professional career interest on an application can work against your chances for admission.

**Entrance criteria at universities outside of the United States may vary according to the program and space availability. Many universities will not consider a student unless specific entrance standards are realized. (e.g. earning the IB Diploma).** Others may offer “conditional” admission. It is important to select a program choice that suits your personal and career goals as the admission offer is for a specific program only.

## **WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR IN PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS**

As students set the tone of a campus, admissions officers attempt to “balance” the class. This means that they look for students who bring individual talents and strengths to the composite whole of the new class of entering students. Don’t be afraid to ask an admissions officer what the college is seeking. You may be surprised to learn that your qualifications match the college’s needs. Often, a specialized musical talent or athletic promise might strengthen your chances for admission.

**Overall, there are several general factors that admissions officers consider in making admissions decisions, in addition to specialized strengths that some students are able to offer. In order of their importance, below are the criteria that influence admissions decisions.**

### **GRADES AND COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL**

Your high school record is the most important factor in determining your admission decision to college. The test question used by admissions officers is, “Has the student taken advantage of the challenges available in the high school?” Strong grades reflect that the student has been willing to work hard and has a sense of responsibility towards academics. A poor grade or two in the first or second year of high school, however, does not shut doors and rule out a student’s chance for admission to a selective college. If grades improve, colleges will take notice. What they are looking for is a pattern, and stronger performance in the latter years of high school is far more important than in earlier years.

Colleges also place much emphasis on the diversity of your coursework and the level of difficulty. Your success in rigorous classes such as IB subjects gives you an edge in the admissions process at selective colleges. In general, by meeting UNIS graduation requirements; you will have fulfilled the expectations of many selective colleges in terms of the balance of your academic program.

### **STANDARDIZED TESTS**

Although most American colleges, as well as colleges in Canada, Japan, and some in the U.K. require or expect students to submit the results of college entrance tests such as the SAT I, SAT II, or the ACT, far less emphasis has been placed on these tests recently. More details about Testing is provided in the UNIS (United Nations International Schools) *Future Planning* packet “TESTING FOR COLLEGE ADMISSIONS.”

Many of the popular guidebooks list average test scores of students at a college. Keep in mind that an “average” is not a minimum, and don’t become discouraged by the published score. Studies have shown that colleges are inconsistent in how they report scores. For students whose first language is not English, submitting a TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) score signals the college that the student has another language background. The TOEFL score is often considered in conjunction with or as a supplement for the verbal SAT score.

### **EXTRACURRICULAR/COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES**

Most American colleges, and especially the liberal arts colleges, are interested in what students do outside of the classroom. Your involvement in photography, theater, performing arts, soccer, swimming, UNIS/UN, publications, Amnesty International, STEP, etc. will undoubtedly make you a more interesting applicant and should definitely be brought to the attention of the admissions officer. What you do during your summers is also a feature that may influence the success of your candidacy for admission.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

What others have to say about you can clearly influence your candidacy, although to what degree differs from college to college. Most colleges require a recommendation from your college counselor. It is also the college advisor’s responsibility to fill out the “referee’s statement” on the British UCAS form, as well as for Japanese and French applications. Refer to the UNIS *Future Planning* packet on “RECOMMENDATIONS.”

**ESSAYS**

This is the part of the application process over which you have the most control. Most colleges require the student to submit at least one essay. Prepared over time, and well thought out, the essay is not a daunting task. Refer to the UNIS *Future Planning* packet on “WRITING THE COLLEGE ESSAY.”

## SAMPLE CRITERIA FOR COLLEGE SELECTION

*Each of you has different aims and interests. The criteria below may influence your choice.*

- Academic programs (availability of intended major, dual majors, class-size, honors programs, off-campus opportunities, strength of desired program, 3-2, academic support programs, etc.)
- Academic requirement for graduation
- Admissions criteria (selectivity, special admissions plans—rolling, early action, early decision; importance of interview, recommendations, special factors influencing decisions)
- Advanced standing credit given; IB credit policy
- Affiliation of the college (religion) Art studios, availability of facilities for non-art majors?
- Athletics (intercollegiate, intramural), scholarships, NCAA division
- Calendar plan of the college (semester, trimester, January term, block plan)
- Campus (appearance, location)
- Career advisement and placement
- Cars (parking availability, freshman policy)
- Climate Competition level among students
- Computer facilities and resources, access for using equipment
- Consortia opportunities/cross-registration
- Cooperative Work Study programs
- Cost of the college
- Course offerings
- Cultural opportunities on and off campus
- Dietary considerations
- Drama program – opportunities for freshmen to be in productions
- Employment opportunities on and off campus
- Enrollment (total, size of freshman classes)
- Environment (rural, suburban, urban), college relationship with the community
- ESL services available
- Exchange programs (international and within the United States)
- Extracurricular offerings
- Faculty (accessibility, percent full time, percent holding doctorates, relationships with students)
- Financial aid availability, aid for international students, scholarships
- Fraternities, sororities
- Geographic location (distance from home, country)
- Grading policy (Pass/Fail option, freshmen grading)
- Graduation rate – retention of students
- Graduation requirements
- Honor system
- Housing (availability, options, off-campus)
- Independent study opportunities
- Internship opportunities
- Laboratory facilities
- Library (open or closed stacks, carrels, hours open, resources – inter-library, audiovisual, and software)
- Music practice rooms – available to non-music majors?
- Photography – darkrooms available?
- Placement record – graduate school entrance, job placement
- Publications (variety, opportunities for freshmen)
- Religious affiliation
- Research opportunities
- Scholarships (types: merit awards or need-based? Available after freshman year?)
- Student body (background of students, student attitude, single-sex or coed)
- Student government
- Study abroad
- Theater Transportation availability – bus, train, airport, campus shuttle
- Transfer possibilities
- Type of school – college or university, 2 or 4 year, pre-professional or liberal arts

## 30 QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE YOURSELF

The following questions will help you keep the focus of college selection and admission where it belongs: **on you as an individual**. Your responses will help reveal what you should look for in colleges and prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews. Use extra pages if needed.

### Your Goals and Values

1. **What aspects of your high school years have you enjoyed most?** Have you missed out on anything? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently?
2. **What values are most important to you?** What do you care most about? What concerns occupy most of your energy, efforts and thoughts?
3. **How do you define success?** Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
4. **What kind of person would you like to become?** Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you like to change about yourself?
5. **Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be?** If you had a year to go anywhere and do what you wanted, what would it be?
6. **What events or experiences have shaped your growth and your way of thinking?** **Your Education**
7. **What are your academic interests?** Which courses have you enjoyed the most? Which have been the most difficult for you?
8. **What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own?** Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments, topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects, personal reading, school activities, job or volunteer work. What do they reveal about you?
9. **How do you learn best?** What methods of teaching engage your interest and effort the most?
10. **How would you describe your school?** Is learning and academic success respected? Has your school environment encouraged you to develop your interests, talents and abilities? Have you felt limited in any way? What would you preserve or change about your school?
11. **How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss ideas, and exchange ideas?** What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience?
12. **How well has your school prepared you for college?** In what areas of skill or knowledge do you feel confident? Inadequate? Have you been challenged enough?
13. **Have you worked up to your potential?** Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Are your SAT scores? What do you consider the best measures of your academic potential for college?
14. **Are there outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance in high school?** Consider factors such as illness, an after-school job, home responsibilities, excess school activities, lengthy commute, emotional stress, parental pressure, English not spoken at home, family or personal problems.

### Your Activities and Interests

15. **What activities do you enjoy most outside the daily routine of school and other responsibilities?** Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made other choices?
16. **Do your activities show a pattern of commitment, competence or contribution?**
17. **How would others describe your role in your school and home community?** What do you consider your most significant contribution?
18. **After a long, hard day, what do you enjoy doing most?** **The World Around You 1**
19. **How would you describe your school, family, and hometown (country)?** How has your environment influenced your way of thinking? Have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by your home or school?
20. **What do your parents and friends expect of you?** How have their expectations influenced the goals you have set for yourself? What pressures have you felt to conform?
21. **What has been the most controversial issue in your school?** How does the issue concern you? How do you respond? What has been your reaction? Opinion?
22. **How do you deal with people who think and act differently than you do?** What viewpoints challenge you the most? How do you respond? What do you learn about yourself?

23. **What distresses you most about the world around you?** If you had the opportunity to change the world, where would you start?
24. **Do you have any current heroes or heroines?** Historical heroes or heroines?
25. **What books have you read which have changed your way of thinking?**
26. **How would someone who knows you well describe you?** Your best qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with their assessment? Have you grown or changed recently?
27. **Which relationships are most important to you and why?** Describe the people you consider to be your best friends? Your critics? Your advocates? In what ways are they similar or different from you?
28. **Describe the groups in your school?** Which ones do you feel you belong to? Which ones do you feel alienated from? What kind of people do you associate with and admire?
29. **How are you influenced by others who are important to you?** What pressures have you felt to conform? How important is acceptance? How do you respond to pressure? Competition? Challenge? Failure? Criticism? Disappointment?
30. **How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself?** What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice or guidance from others? Are you a risk taker? Willing to try something new?



**COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

SCHOOL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION TYPE & DATE SENT:**

Apply Texas App. \_\_\_\_\_

Common App. \_\_\_\_\_

Paper or online \_\_\_\_\_

**FORMS NEEDED**

School report \_\_\_\_\_

Transcript \_\_\_\_\_

Letter of Recommendation(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher evaluations \_\_\_\_\_

**ADMISSIONS TESTS**

ACT \_\_\_\_\_

SAT \_\_\_\_\_

SAT SUBJECT \_\_\_\_\_

TSIA \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION DEADLINE**

Early decision \_\_\_\_\_

Early action \_\_\_\_\_

Regular \_\_\_\_\_

**FEES**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_