

COUNTDOWN TO COLLEGE

Deciding On The Best College For You!

Frequently Asked Questions:

Where do I begin?

The first thing to do would be to arm yourself with enough information to make a good decision. So, do some homework. In any decision, good information improves the appropriateness of your choice. Part of making a good decision is to be informed and to “shop around” by attending college fairs, college tours, attend summer classes, talk to faculty, coaches, and other adults. The best way to make a decision is to know what is out there.

A good place to start is to go to www.careercruising.com. This can be found in the library at MHS. Username—Medford and password-- careers

What kinds of things should I look for?

There are many factors to consider when exploring colleges and universities. Factors include: size, location, type of curriculum, student body size, student life, admission requirements, housing, athletic and curricular activities, 2-yr, 4yr, vocational school, etc.

Should I wait until I know exactly what I want?

NO. Waiting to look until you know “exactly” what you want will often result in missed opportunities. Remember final choices do not have to be made until May 1st of your senior year and “shopping” usually helps to clarify what you want.

What are admission requirements?

ALL COLLEGES HAVE DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS. It is important to check with colleges about their individual requirements.

Some questions to look for include:

What tests are required? Is an interview required or recommended? Are essays required? Are teacher recommendations required? What is the application fee? What are the deadlines for applications, financial aid, and housing? Is there an audition or portfolio?

What are some good sources of information?

Sources of information include:

- College reference books in the Guidance office, public library, book stores, internet, etc.
- Consultations with people acquainted with specific colleges.
- College visits, tours, and interviews.
- College advertising, catalogs, video tapes, brochures, CD's and internet

COLLEGE SEARCH RESOURCES ON THE WEB

College Admission

College Board

<http://www.collegeboard.com>

Peterson's Online

<http://www.petersons.com>

CollegeNet

<http://www.collegenet.org>

Preparing your Child for College

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/Prepare>

Princeton Review—"The Best 351 Colleges"

<http://www.review.com/college>

America's Best Colleges

<http://www.usnews.com>

Common Application

<http://www.commonapp.org>

Financial Aid

Financial Aid Information

<http://www.finaid.org>

FAFSA Online (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Estimation Form

<http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml>

Student Guide (U.S Department of Education)

<http://studentaid.ed.gov>

FastWEB (online scholarship search)

<http://www.fastweb.com>

Yahoo Financial Search

http://www.yahoo.com/education/financial_aid

MOLIS (Minority Online Scholarship Information)

<http://galaxy.einet.net/hytelnet/OTH023.html>

Athletics

NCAA Clearinghouse

<http://www.ncaa.org>

College Timetable for Seniors

September- October

- Register for fall admission testing (SAT and/or Act). Be sure to include your college code numbers for official reports **to be sent to the colleges of your choice**.
- Visit with counselors to be sure your list of college considerations is appropriate.
- Attend college fairs with your parents(especially when college fairs visit MHS).
- Attend college open houses.
- Call colleges for college applications, catalogs, and financial aid applications.
- Arrange for teacher recommendations to be completed and filed in a timely manner.
- Arrange for college interviews(if required or recommended).

October- December

- Check to be sure that your permanent report card is accurate.
- Complete all early decision and/or early action applications according to specific college deadlines. Be sure to fill out early financial forms for early applications.
- Complete a Transcript Request form and Brag Sheet. Be sure to make copies of your Brag Sheet for your each teacher and guidance counselor who is writing your recommendations.
- Complete the essay portion (if required). Make sure to have your essay checked for grammatical errors by your English teacher.
- Read DIRECTIONS and COMPLETE APPLICATIONS THOROUGHLY and ACCURATELY. Have your applications proofread by a reliable source.
- Have your applications into the guidance office at least **two weeks** before it is due!
- Register for the Dec SAT II tests or ACT tests.

December- January

- Register for the January SAT's if necessary.
- Obtain and complete all scholarship applications. Be sure to return by the specified deadline.
- Complete and mail individual college financial aid forms and the CSS profile as required.
- Notify Guidance Office if mid-year grades need to be sent to colleges.

February- March

- Wait patiently. Think about your potential choices.

April

- Make a final college choice.

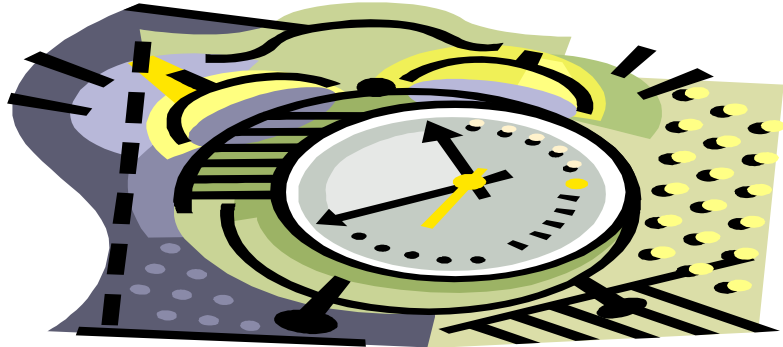
May

- Reply to all colleges that you are admitted to.

June

- **GRADUATION!!!!!! CONGRATULATIONS, YOU HAVE EARNED IT!**

Time to Get Started!



College Application Process

What to expect from your counselor:

- Interest and encouragement.
- Help in locating and utilizing handbooks, computer programs, and videos.
- Straight answers and suggestions.
- Time for discussion and feedback assistance in filling out applications as needed.
- Encouragement.

What not to expect from your counselor:

- Read your mind.
- Make choices for you.
- Make appointments for you.
- Send out applications without ample notice.

What your counselor expects of you:

- **BE ORGANIZED** and make all appointments early in the process (spring of junior year) to develop an application strategy.
- Take responsibility for choices that are made.
- Understand that information accumulates from many sources. Don't expect to find all you need to know in one place.
- Try on different ideas.
- Make appointments when you have questions or want to talk things over.
- Call colleges and request information.
- **Read application instructions carefully and completely.**
- **Completely fill out all application materials.**

COLLEGE APPLICATION PACKAGE

A college application usually has many parts. Colleges will usually ask for the following components:

- High school transcript.
- Your permanent report card showing the 9th, 10th, & 11th grades.
- Your senior 1st quarter grades.
- Recommendations you have gathered from teachers, counselors, coaches and other school personnel.
- End-of-year junior rank-in-class.
- College admission test scores.
- Application fee.
- Essay (if required)
- Your high school profile.

Please note: Applications forms vary considerably. In all cases there is a personal information form to be filled out by the applicant. In some cases, the application also includes a section to be filled out by the counselors or a teacher. Carefully read and follow all! An important timesaver is the Common Application. It can be downloaded and printed out or you can apply online at www.commonapp.org.

College Admission Options

From the National Association for College Admission Counseling

There are many different admission options. It is important for you to understand the various plans and deadlines and discuss with your parents and counselor which one is appropriate for you.

Regular Decision

This is the most common plan. Typically students will apply to a college sometimes before the deadline, which may range from January 1st to May 1st (with the exception of some California colleges which have earlier deadlines). After the deadline, the college reviews all the applications and chooses those students it wants to admit, giving those students usually until May 1st to reply to the offer of admission.

Early Action

This is a plan for THE STRONGEST ACADEMIC STUDENTS to apply to ONE Early Action college. The decision will be made by December 15th, but the student does not have to commit to the college until the common reply date May 1st, at which time he or she may choose to go elsewhere (colleges applied to on regular decision plans). This option is particularly competitive, and some colleges reject some students whom they foresee as being weak in the later, regular admission pool. Generally, it is the most selective colleges that have this type of plan. Students who are deferred in the early round will be considered later in the context of the entire regular admission.

Early Decision

This is the plan for the student who has a first choice college and is a reasonably STRONG CANDIDATE FOR THAT INSTITUTION. Many colleges have more than one early decision deadline: however if admitted, you are expected to attend the college and withdraw other regular admissions you have filed. You are asked to sign a statement of intent. You should only pursue this option if you are absolutely certain about your choice. It should not be used as a means to simply complete the process early. Obviously, you cannot file simultaneously more than one early decision application. Again, deferred students will be reconsidered in the later rounds.

Rolling Admission

This term is used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decisions to students soon after they are made. If you are applying for financial aid you will follow application deadlines set by the school. You may apply to other colleges and you will not be required to make a decision regarding enrolling before May 1st.

Wait List

This term is used by institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or deny you admission, but rather 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.

