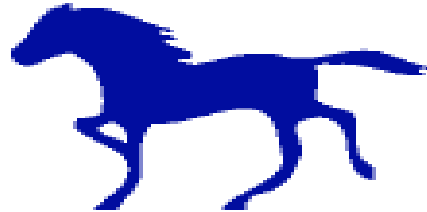


MEDFORD HIGH SCHOOL



COLLEGE APPLICATION HANDBOOK

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INTRODUCTION

You are about to embark on the most adult decision of your life. You will think about your life, your values, and what is meaningful to you in terms of your continued academic and personal development.

The college selection and application process is a complex and difficult task. This is a time of considerable growth and stress for both students and parents. Most students and their parents or guardians need and deserve assistance in this complicated process.

This handbook has been designed by the Medford High School Guidance Staff to help students and parents more thoroughly understand the many nuances of the college selection, college admission, college application, and the financial aid processes.

If you utilize the information in this handbook, you will have a good opportunity to enjoy an organized and thorough college admission process. Please take the time to evaluate the information and advice in this handbook and put it into a perspective that makes the most sense for you.

Students and their parents are encouraged to come into the Guidance Office anytime (with an appointment) in the second semester of their junior year to begin formal college search process. Guidance counselors will conduct classroom guidance meetings that outline the entire process and make students aware of the many factors to take into consideration when exploring colleges and universities.

We are available to service you to the best of our ability and experience. Please keep us informed. Let us know periodically how we can be of assistance to you during this challenging process.

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 TIMELINE FOR JUNIORS

February

- Start a college file in which to retain all college information received.

March

- By March, understand the results of their PSAT's and make any additional preparation for SAT's or ACT's, as needed. Maybe consider a formal SAT or ACT prep program or you may consider purchasing preparation books, computer programs, or CD's.
- Begin searching online for college/career search. Possible suggestions include:
 - Peterson's College Search –
www.petersons.com
 - Career Cruising –
www.careercruising.com username: medford password: careers
- Guidance Department recommends taking both the SAT and ACT, preferably in the junior year. Find out what testing is required by each college of interest and make plans to take the appropriate tests.
- Juniors should become familiar with sources of information about schools and colleges.
- Start researching colleges and determine what admissions test requirements you are likely to have to meet, and develop a timeline to follow. Be familiar with the list of SAT II Subject Tests and start thinking about when to take them. It may be a good idea to take U.S. History and/or Chemistry test(s) in June.
- Find out about Early Decision and Early Action applications and about how these effect your schedule of admission testing.
- Consider spending the time during the summer on campus in an "Introduction to College Experience" program.

April-June

- Continue to challenge yourself when selecting classes for senior year.
- Gather as much information about schools and programs as you can.
- April vacation is a great time to visit colleges. Make appointments for information sessions, tours, and interviews as needed.
- If interested in R.O.T.C or a military academy, look into special procedures and deadlines now.
- Consider which people to ask for references and make arrangements. Some possible choices include teachers, employers, clergy, etc. Two teacher recommendations are suggested.
- Attend college fairs that are available in the area.
- Find out how the financial aid system works. Do not automatically cancel out a possible school because of seemingly impossible costs. Financial assistance is primarily governed by financial need.

June- September

- Continue to gather information about schools. Take advantage of summer travel to visit schools. Talk to students who attend college about their college experiences.
- Take time to write several sample drafts of essays that might be refined later in the fall to use as application essays.

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.

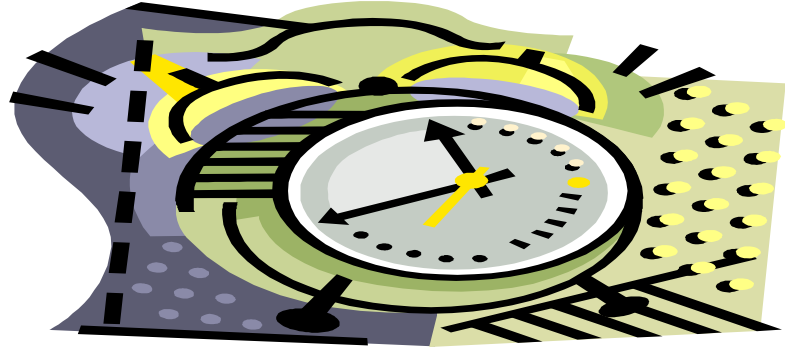
May

- 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 VISITS

If you are just beginning to think about college, start out by selecting several different types of LOCAL colleges/universities and do some "compare and contrast" tours. Pick a large and small school. Try a public and private. See a rural, suburban, and urban school. This may help you further define what you like AND what you do not.

When you decide to visit a college campus, call in advance to the admissions office to inquire about the daily tour schedule and "information sessions".

During your visit to the college, speak with students, have a meal in the cafeteria, (some colleges will treat you and your family to a meal in their cafeteria- ask about this in the admissions office), and pick up copies of the student newspaper and alumni magazine. Some colleges will also arrange for you to meet with a professor who teaches a subject you enjoy or a coach of a sport you play. See if you are able to attend a class during the day you visit.

When your visit is over take a minute to write your impressions of the college while they are fresh in your mind. After visiting one or two schools, they start to blend together and it may become easy to confuse thoughts.

Some things to think about:

- Were the people friendly?
- Did they answer your questions freely and fully?
- Were the students the type of people you would like to get to know?
- Did the campus impress you?
- What about the academic demands and academic atmosphere?





Campus Checklist

Try to speak with as many people as possible because views and opinions can vary widely. Attempt to get all your questions answered. You may have already thought of some questions but here are some you might consider.

In speaking with students...

- ✓ How many hours a week do you study? Is that typical of students here?
- ✓ Are campus jobs readily available?
- ✓ Are faculty members interested in students (undergraduate) and accessible out of class?
- ✓ Do faculty members live in the dorms?
- ✓ Do many students go home on weekends?
- ✓ What do students do for fun? Does the college support student activities?
- ✓ What is the library like as a place to study? To do research?
- ✓ What do you like MOST/LEAST about this college?
- ✓ How easy is it to get the classes you want at registration?
- ✓ What about campus safety? Is there a nighttime escort service?
- ✓ If you had to do it again, would you still choose this college?

As you tour the campus, ask yourself...

- ✓ Are the buildings in good repair? How do you like the campus? Are there new buildings as well as old?
- ✓ Is lab equipment up-to-date and plentiful?
- ✓ Are resident halls pleasant and clean... check the bathrooms.
- ✓ Are common areas of residence halls attractive?
- ✓ Are there kitchen and laundry facilities in all dorms? Are they kept clean and in good working order?
- ✓ Where is the cafeteria and what is it like?
- ✓ Are the grounds appealing as well as the setting and architecture?
- ✓ Do the students seem friendly? Do you feel comfortable speaking with them?
- ✓ What is the surrounding town or city like? Would you feel safe there?

If you attend a class, ask yourself...

- ✓ Do the students seem interested in this material?
- ✓ Is there time for question and discussion? Do the students participate? What is the usual format for class?
- ✓ Are you intellectually challenged by what is taking place in class?
- ✓ Would you feel comfortable as a student in this setting?

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.

FILLING OUT THE APPLICATION: SOME HELPFUL HINTS

KEEP YOUR COUNSELOR INFORMED

Specialized information related to specific colleges or scholarships can not be passed along if you have kept your plans to you. Talk to your counselor!

READ DIRECTIONS CAREFULLY

Keep a checklist and notes on progress. GIVE YOURSELF ADEQUATE TIME. It always seems to take longer than first estimates suggest.

DEADLINES

Since requirements and schedules vary so widely, it is important to keep track of each college and/or scholarship's requirements and deadlines. However you decide to do it, keep a written notation of all deadlines and special procedures. Take note that college deadlines and financial aid/scholarship deadlines are usually not the same.

REFERENCES

PRINCIPAL or COUNSELOR recommendations often requested on a "Secondary School Report Form". In cases when a Counselor's summary reference is desired in addition to the teacher references, the student should meet with the counselor well ahead of deadlines to discuss and arrange for its completion.

TEACHER REFERENCE often utilizing a separate page of the application form. The reference should be an objective description of the student's activity and ability as demonstrated in class. It might include comments of:

- distinguishing intellectual or personal traits
- specific accomplishments
- information regarding the things the student is enthusiastic about
- special qualities/abilities



ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Be sure to ask permission of persons you wish to use as character references. Remember to send a thank you note in appreciation.

ESSAY HINTS

- Give the college a good sample of your writing.
- Use strong writing skills.
- Master the mechanics of writing.
- Be original and fluent.
- Consider perfection. The essay is influential.
- Have your essay proofread.
- Avoid “jock” essays.
- Add an original touch.
- Stay away from gimmicks.
- Make sure your essay is grammatically correct.

ESSAYS

Use your essay(s) as a **golden opportunity** to talk directly to the college's admissions committee. Your essay can enable the committee to see you as a thinking, feeling, intelligent person rather than simply a set of statistics. It may be your only chance to share your thoughts, insights, and opinions. If you view the essay in this way, then it is clearly worth the effort to put some extra time, thought and energy into writing it. You do not have to get it right the first time! In fact it may take several drafts before you are completely satisfied with your product.

Write a draft with the main focus on content- putting thoughts down on paper. Set it aside for a few days before re-reading it with a fresh perspective and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you want to consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling, and tone. Once you have re-written your first draft you may wish to try it out on someone. They may be able to offer helpful suggestions for technical or other improvements before you complete your final copy. Most successful essays do not occur overnight. Be sure to plan in order to allow extra time for editing and re-writing.

The essay is an opportunity to take control of your application. DO NOT use the essay to:

- ◆ Whine about SAT scores, grades, etc.
- ◆ Open with the phrase, "For as long as I can remember...."
- ◆ Laundry list your activities or repeat the application
- ◆ Write what you think the admissions people want to hear
- ◆ Use flowery or inflated style

Rather, success may come your way if:

- ◆ Your writing is authentic and natural
- ◆ Write clearly AND concisely
- ◆ Write in complete sentences
- ◆ ANSWER THE QUESTION
- ◆ Demonstrate a good command of grammar with NO SPELLING OR TYPO errors
- ◆ Use humor judiciously
- ◆ Be creative and original
- ◆ Think of the reader when you write. Open with a strong first paragraph that makes them want to read further
- ◆ Select words from your own vocabulary
- ◆ Use examples to give life to your topic
- ◆ Use action words- MAKE YOUR ESSAY COME ALIVE!

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTS

Medford High School's College Examination Board (CEEB) Code
and ACT code is 221365

Virtually all four-year colleges require standardized testing results from their applicants. They include the ACT, SAT I (most schools require), and the SAT II Subject Tests, which are required by only about 140 of the more competitive colleges. PSAT and SAT's are recommended to enter four-year colleges. Information about specific college test requirements is readily available in the Guidance Office (1st floor), or at <http://www.ets.org>, <http://www.collegeboard.com>, or <http://www.act.org>

Generally the ACT and SAT I are equally acceptable. Some colleges will accept the results of the ACT in lieu of the SAT and sometimes in lieu of the SAT II. You must check the test requirements of the specific schools to which you are applying.

Normally, SAT's would be taken twice, once in May of the junior year, and then in November of the senior year, if needed. The other option, the ACT, might be taken in April or June of the junior year, and then in October or December of the senior year, if needed.

A non-official copy of your admission test scores is included with the transcript. **HOWEVER IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SEE THAT OFFICIAL REPORTS ARE SENT DIRECTLY TO THE COLLEGES FROM ACT OR THE COLLEGE BOARD.**

*** Please note that it is the responsibility of each student to know the test required for each institution to which he or she is applying. Meeting deadlines is imperative!

When registering for tests, be sure to include college code numbers in the section available on the application form. If you leave this section blank, you may later have to spend \$6 or more for each college notified.

****All Massachusetts state colleges require passing MCAS scores. All scores will be sent to colleges(public and private).

SAT Registration:

Online: www.collegeboard.com

By phone: 1-800- 778-6888

Printed copies are available in the Guidance office (1st floor)

ACT Registration:

Online: www.act.org

Printed copies are available in the Guidance office (1st floor)

PREPARING FOR ADMISSION TESTING

Is there a best way to prepare for the ACT's or SAT's? While there may be no "best way" there are a number of basic considerations with which students can become familiar. A discussion about admissions testing preparation with your counselor is strongly encouraged. Many students have wasted considerable time and money by not being familiar with basic concepts about these tests. Consider formal course preparation (Kaplan, Peterson etc.), computer preparation programs, online preparation, or CD's.

THE NIGHT BEFORE.....

Be sure to get enough sleep the night before any testing. Become familiar with testing directions beforehand, practicing does help. Doing regular educational homework and vocabulary development throughout high school is imperative.

See www.collegeboard.com regarding dates and information for PSAT/SAT's and www.actstudent.org for ACT dates and information.

PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT (National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) measures verbal reasoning, critical reading, math problem solving, and writing skills. Students are encouraged to take this the fall of their junior year.

PSAT/NMSQT FORMAT

Scoring scale: 20-80

Testing Time: 2hours, 10 minutes

Five sections: 2 Verbal sections
2 Math sections
1 Writing Skills section

- Two 250 minute verbal sections: 52 questions total, including sentence completions, analogies, and critical reading
- Two 25- minute math sections: 40 questions total, including regular multiple choice, quantitative comparisons, and grid-ins.
- One 30- minute writing skills section: 39 questions total, including identifying sentence errors, and improving sentences, and improving paragraphs. All writing skills questions are multiple choice.

SAT PROGRAM

The SAT Program consists of the SAT I: Reasoning Test and the SAT II: Subject Test.

SAT I: Reasoning Test

The SAT I measures developed verbal and mathematical reasoning skills important to college success. More than 2 million students take the SAT each year. Because courses and grading standards vary widely from school to school, scores on the SAT help colleges predict a student's ability to succeed along with other criteria like high school GPA.

The SAT consists of 10 sections, including a 25-minute essay, with each section timed separately. The essay always appears first, and the six other 25-minute sections can appear in any order, as can the two sections that are 20 minutes each. In addition, a 10-minute writing multiple-choice section appears at the end of the test.

Each SAT section is reported on a 200-800 scale, where 200 is low and 800 is high.

Critical Reading: 67 questions, 70 minutes

- Extended Reasoning
- Literal Comprehension
- Vocabulary in Context
- Sentence Completions

Mathematical: 54 questions, 70 minutes

- Number and Operations
- Algebra and Functions
- Geometry and Measurement
- Data Analysis, Statistics, and Probability

Writing: 50 questions, 60 minutes

- Essay
- Improving Sentences
- Identifying Sentences Errors
- Improving Paragraphs

Note: An additional test section (25 minutes either critical reading, math, or writing multiple-choice section) is used for equating or pre-testing and does not count toward a student's score.

SAT II: Subject Tests

The Subject Tests measure students' knowledge and skills in a particular subject and their ability to apply that knowledge (no student may take more than three tests on any date)

Format of each test: 1 hour, multiple choice (except the Writing Test which will include a 20- minute writing sample)

Specific SAT II Subject Tests may be required as part of the application procedures for a specific college. They are also sometimes used for placement purposes. Some colleges accept ACT's in lieu of SAT II scores. While approximately 100 colleges require SAT II Tests, most schools do not. Find out!

TESTING FEES:

SAT I: Reasoning Test.....	\$41.50
SAT II: Subject Test	
Basic Registration Fee.....	\$18.00
Language Test with Listening	\$19.00
All other subject tests.....	\$8.00



FEE WAIVERS FOR ADMISSION TESTING

The guidance counselors are authorized by the College Board to provide fee waivers to families who are financially disadvantaged or to limited income students. If you believe that the cost of the SAT I, SAT II, or the ACT would impose a financial burden on your family budget, discuss this with your guidance counselor ASAP. Students who qualify for these fee waivers may also qualify for fee waivers for some of their college applications.

Not sure about where you are applying to college?

Check to see what the most common requirements are and determine from the list of available tests which three are likely to be needed.

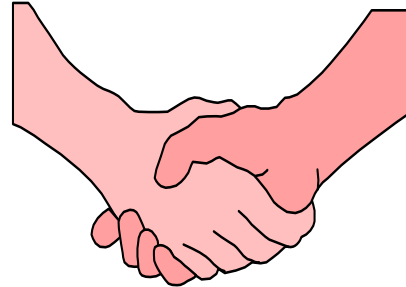
When are the best times to take Subject Tests?

Generally speaking the best time for taking an SAT II Subject Test is as close to the end of the course as possible.

- June – 10th grade Biology
- June -- 11th grade Chemistry, U.S. History
- Dec/Jan-- 12th grade Writing
- Jan -- 12th grade Math, Foreign Language, Science

Some other notes:

- ◆ Be sure to read the College Board pamphlet “College Board SAT I/II Tests” and discuss with your guidance counselor.
- ◆ When registering for the SAT II test, it is advised that you select the “Choice” option. This allows you to decide if the scores will be released.
- ◆ Be sure to read the appropriateness of taking one or more Advanced Placement tests given by the College Board each May. Arrangements need to be made before third quarter.



INTERVIEWS

The interview or the campus tour, like the entire, admissions process, can be a productive learning experience. At its best, it can be fun. Try to look on your interviewer or tour guide as a fellow human being who is a resource that will help you to understand the college, and even yourself better. Interviewers are doing their jobs because they like young people. They are not adversaries. They want to help. They may not always be successful in their efforts.

Remember that you should not judge the school wholly on the basis of a tour or interview. Also, do not make the mistake of thinking you are “in” because your host was friendly and responsive. A successful interview is one that you enjoy. Good interviews humanize the admissions process. Look on your college interview as an opportunity to have direct, human contact with the admissions counselors. Relax and make the most of it!

****Please note:** Be sure to check with each individual school. Some colleges require an interview, others do not.

A common misunderstanding by students is that it’s necessary to become some imaginary, perfect candidate... to remold one’s entire personality to fit some ideal. This is an impossible or at least self-defeating concept of the interview’s intent and value. The best attitude to cultivate is one of mutuality of interest. You, the prospective student must evaluate the institution and its ability to educate and stimulate you. The interview is a two-way process, an exchange of information. Both parties should make the effort to offer and collect relevant information from which an intelligent evaluation can be formulated. A firm handshake and eye contact are essential.

ARRIVE EARLY: You want to walk into the interview calm, cool, collected, and smiling, so always allow time to acclimate to your new surroundings.

GO PREPARED: If the questions you ask are informative and thoughtful, the interviewer will consider it as an indication of your interest and care. Be able to talk about how you use your time, describing the quality of performance, depth of involvement, and meaning of interest. Questions are frequently asked about reading habits. By taking the initiative with these opportunities, you demonstrate a level of maturity and also guide the conversation where you feel most secure and accomplished.

BE HONEST: Nobody’s perfect, and everybody knows it. The point here is to use both strengths and weaknesses because a really good candidate shows a thorough knowledge of self as well as the capacity to respect his or her self. **BE HONEST!**

SEND A THANK YOU NOTE: Common courtesy is altogether too uncommon. You are likely to distinguish yourself in a positive way from many other similar candidates. If you forgot to say something at the interview that is meaningful, mention that in your thank you note.

Prior to any interview have some understanding of the college to which you are applying. Be able to communicate your skills, interests, and how you will contribute to the college community. The following is a list of possible questions to think over (perhaps even role play) before you interview.

A College Admissions Counselor May Ask You:

1. What is your class rank? What are your SAT scores?
2. How large is your graduating class?
3. What are you interested in studying in college?
4. Why are you interested in this college?
5. What kinds of things are you most interested in outside of school and why do you enjoy these activities?
6. What is your favorite subject in school?
7. What non-required books have you read this year? What type of reading matter do you enjoy?
8. Why do you want to go to college?
9. What, in your opinion, is a college education?
10. Do you work?
11. What do you do with your summers?
12. Have you done any traveling?
13. Do you know any alumni or present students, at this college?
14. Is this your first choice?
15. What other colleges are you considering? Applying to?
16. Have you visited other colleges?
17. Have you written any term papers? On what subjects?
18. What subjects do you dislike the most?
19. Do you have any questions that you want to ask?

Although this may never be mentioned, the interviewer is mentally looking for and noting ATTITUDE CLUES, ENTHUSIASM AND YOUR ABILITY TO EXPRESS YOURSELF CLEARLY.

IF YOU CAN ARRANGE YOUR INTERVIEW SCHEDULE, TRY NOT TO INTERVIEW AT YOUR FIRST CHOICE COLLEGE, FIRST. GAIN SOME EXPERIENCE AND CONFIDENCE BY SCHEDULING OTHERS FIRST.

QUESTIONS TO ASK ON YOUR INTERVIEW

It is important to gain as much information about the school as possible during your visit to campus. After all, it may be the place where you will spend the next four years of your life. Be prepared for your interviewer to allow time to answer YOUR questions. Show them that you are interested in learning as much as possible and prepare several questions in advance to ask! Some ideas include:

- Tell me more about the _____ department/major.
- What are the most possible majors?
- Is _____ a strong major at this school?
- When do I have to declare my major?
- What is the size of a typical freshman class?
- Are the classes taught by professors or by graduate students?
- What about the labs?
- How often do classes meet? For how long?
- Is there a positive relationship between faculty and students? Can you give me an example?

- How extensive are the opportunities for internships and co-ops?
- What type of university/college programs exists for study abroad? In what countries? Is there a _____ (college name) faculty member to work with the registrar to interpret coursework from the abroad experience?
- What is the percentage of commuter students?
- What events take place on campus? (concerts, speakers, sporting events, plays)
- Can freshman have cars on campus? Is there a parking fee?
- Am I guaranteed housing? For all four years? Am I required to live on campus?
- What is the academic profile of a typical student accepted in last year's admissions process? If you have shared your transcript and academic credentials, you might also ask if the representative could share where you would have fit in last year's applicant pool.
- What is the placement rate of your graduates in the work world? In graduate school?
- What percentage of students return for their sophomore year?
- Is tutoring available? Is it free?
- Describe something about this school that you think sets it apart from other colleges.
- What are some negatives about this college? (There has to be at least one!!)



YOUR CORRESPONDENCE/THANK YOU NOTES



It is customary (and polite) to compose a thank you note after an interview. The rules for letter writing definitely apply here:

- Be sure that the appropriate salutation is used.
- If directed to a specific individual, make sure that the name is correct and that it is spelled accurately.
- Date the letter.
- Include a return address in the letter as well as on the envelope.
- Keep the letter brief and to the point.
- Check and DOUBLE CHECK spelling.
- Eliminate abbreviations.
- Review sentence structure.
- Sign the letter.
- Make a copy.
- Write legibly or type.
- Double check the address where you are sending your letter.

**Remember your written correspondence represents an image of you...
THE SAME STANDARDS APPLY FOR ALL EMAIL CORRESPONDENCE.**

Example:

45 Mountain Road
Saratoga, New York 09876
December 4, 2003

Mr. Scott Smith
Office of Undergraduate Admissions
Fine College
5 Brown Street
Beaver, CO 02320

Dear Mr. Smith:

Thank you for meeting with me last Wednesday, November 28, 2003. I found our discussion both helpful and informative. Since I am interested in playing sports at some level in college, I especially enjoyed hearing about the many opportunities to play sports at Fine College.

After our interview, I took time to walk through the campus with the student guide from Admissions and found that experience to be most helpful. My tour guide was enthusiastic, friendly, and spoke most highly of his experience at Fine College.

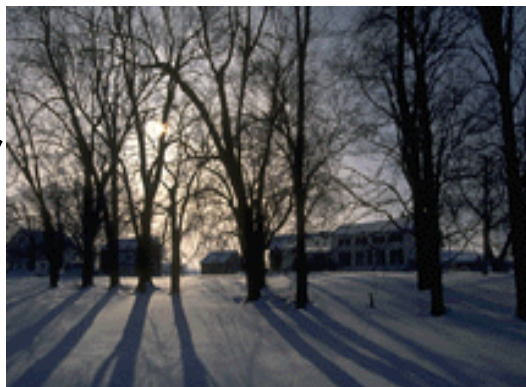
Once again, thank you for your time and for answering my questions. I look forward to submitting an application soon.

Sincerely,

PURSUING SPECIAL INTERESTS

An area of special interest or talent can make a difference in the college admissions process, and colleges and universities look to create a well-rounded collegiate community by selecting students who excel in special talents such as art, drama, speech, or athletics. Students who are interested in pursuing their passion in college are encouraged to initiate contact with the appropriate college department as early as junior year.

If there is a special talent that may be helpful to you, make plans to document it. Make tapes of performances, create portfolios, document written work that has been published. Save your graded English papers, so that if a college requests a graded writing sample, you will have selection options.

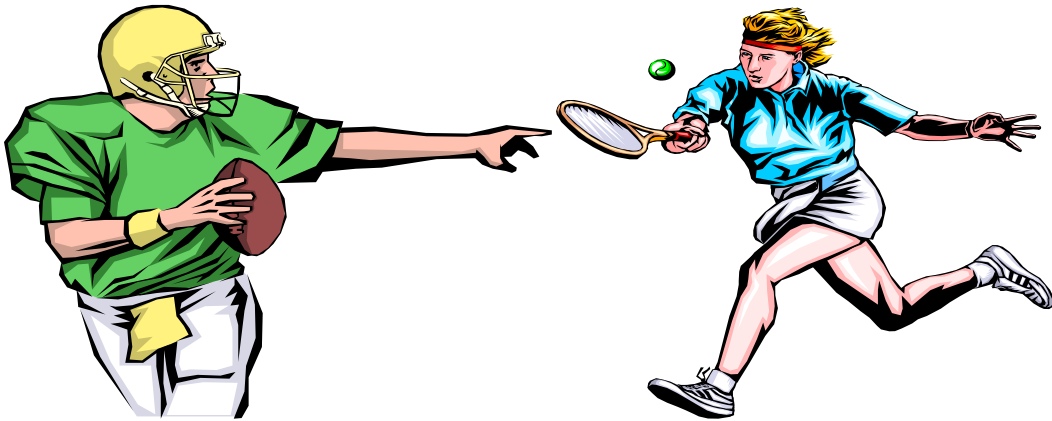


Arts: Students interested in studio art, architecture, dance, music, photography, and drama are also urged to contact the specific departments at each college of potential interest and speak with faculty. When you make plans to visit a college, also make arrangements to meet with a faculty member face to face to discuss your area of specialty and the depth and breath of offerings in your area of interest at the college.

Those students who wish to major in art will need to submit a portfolio of work to an arts school. Portfolios and tapes demonstrating your special talent can be very helpful and can offer considerable information to the college. Do not wait until senior year to develop these materials. Speak with your instructor and BEGIN preparing them now.

Athletics: There are many different levels of sports in college, from recreational and intramural league play to club and varsity teams. Generally speaking, colleges participate in intercollegiate competitive sports programs at three levels or divisions. Division I and II schools are regulated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association and athletic recruitment is strictly governed by the NCAA's rules.

A student interested in playing sports at a Division I or II level college should see the Guidance Office for an NCAA Clearinghouse Eligibility Form. It is strongly suggested that this form is completed and sent to the NCAA Clearinghouse during the summer between junior and senior year. The student may then be deemed eligible to initiate participation in the recruitment process. An application fee of \$20.00 must accompany the application form and an official high school transcript must also be sent from the Guidance Office. Additionally the student must request that the ACT or the College Board forward standardized testing scores to the Clearinghouse.



Any student interested in playing sports at a Division I, II, or III college is also advised to contact the coaches, as early as junior year, at the colleges in which you are interested. This will provide ample time for contact and continued communication with coaches. This is especially important if you play a sport. Coaches, if provided with a schedule, may take time to come see you play. If this is not feasible, they will ask you to send them a copy of a game or "skills" tape to better judge your ability and talent. Additionally, when you visit a campus, make prior arrangements to spend a few minutes to speak with the coach face to face if possible and perhaps allow discussion about the level of play at the college.

Just a tip: The Guidance Office has a book that highlights all the division I, II, and III colleges and sports offered.

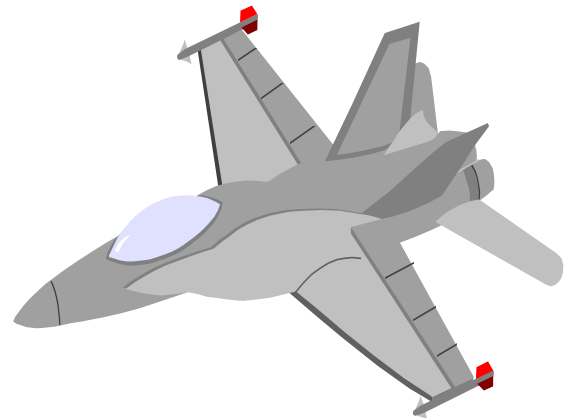
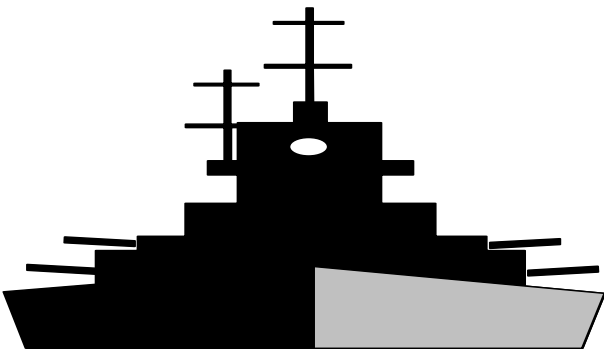


NCAA REQUIREMENTS

- * A student must have at least a 2.0 GPA (based on a 4.0 scale) in 14 courses.
- * A student must also achieve a minimum combined ACT score of 68 (sum 4 courses) or a combined SAT score of 820. To be eligible for a Division I school, the student with a minimum GPA will require a higher test score, and the student with a minimum test score will require a higher GPA.
- * There are 14 core academic units must be successfully completed during grade 9 through 12.
- * Students with approved diagnostic disabilities may file an eligibility waiver on their own behalf.

Athletes should take their SAT's and ACT's no later than spring of their junior year in order to have time to retake them if necessary.

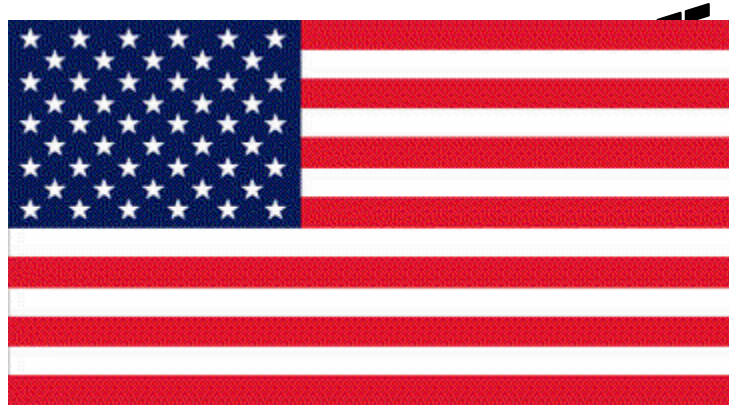
Athletes must complete a NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse Release Form, which should be completed after the completion of their junior year. This form can be downloaded. NCAA ONLINE <http://www.ncaa.org>



ROTC SCHOLARSHIPS

The many branches of the U.S. Military award a number of ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) Scholarships for students planning to enroll in college each year. These scholarships fund an enormous amount of the college education for students and they are very competitive. In choosing scholarship recipients, the branches of the military are seeking college bound students who possess certain academic skills and students who are choosing specific academic majors. Most often, students must have strong college preparatory achievement particularly in math and science and students must complete Pre-calculus by the end of their senior year. ROTC Scholarship candidates must have achieved an above average GPA and above average SAT scores.

ROTC is a 4-5 year commitment after graduation to serve in active duty. Upon graduating from college, students must accept a commission as an officer in the branch of service, which awarded military scholarship. The student is required to serve a minimum of years on active duty, and in some situations when more specialized training is required, the length of service may be extended. ROTC Scholarships are competitive and the application process is extensive. Spring of the junior year is a good time to begin this process.



Many students choose other options besides entering college the September following high school graduation and find it a valuable and rewarding experience. While this option may be considered and researched throughout senior year of high school, it is strongly recommended that you do not use this strategy in isolation.

Taking time off requires careful consideration and discussion with family members. It is strongly recommended that students considering a "year off" still pursue the college exploration and application process during senior year. This ensures that you will have options in March, April, and May available if you have a change of heart. Additionally, many colleges will allow students to defer their acceptance until the following September, enabling the student to take time to pursue other interests and experiences for a year, returning to college the next September.

Consider a year off **IF**:

- You have an opportunity to travel or work in a new environment
- You have a special interest or passion you wish to pursue outside of college
- You want to strengthen your academic profile
- You need to break from school and need to do something different

There are endless possibilities and resources available to those considering a year off experience. If a student wishes to travel there are dozens of exchange programs. For a community service experience contact *City Year*, *AmeriCorps*, or *SCA* (Student Conservation Association). *Outward Bound* and the *National Outdoor Leadership School* offer high quality programs to build self-esteem, self-reliance, and leadership skills. *Visions International* offers opportunities in cross-cultural living and outdoor exploration, while programs like *ITHAKA Cultural Study Programs* in Greece allow a student to live with a Greek family, learn the language, study the history and work on an active archeological project. Time Out Associates in Milton (info@whereyouheaded.com or www.whereyouheaded.com) is another resource worth consulting for some targeted information on programs and year off opportunities.

A student looking to strengthen their academic profile might consider a post-graduate year experience at one of the many fine independent schools in our nation such as *Andover*, *Choate*, *Exeter*, or *Taft*. Others might consider attending the *American School in Switzerland* or *Paris*. A student can spend a year in a British boarding school by contacting the *British American Education Foundation* or spend a semester in Scotland attending the *University of St. Andrews*.

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

In the financial aid process, **FILING ON TIME IS ESSENTIAL**. If you don't have all your figures guesstimate. Do not file late, as funds will probably not be available. Follow each form by the earliest deadline listed (for that form) by any of the colleges to which you are planning to apply. It is the student's responsibilities to know which financial forms each college to which they are applying requires. Pay close attention to each college deadline application.

- Get Financial Aid Forms. FAFSA should be mailed before January 1st.
- Review scholarship file and reference lists in the guidance office.
- Submit "Additional Report Request" Form if you have not arranged for official admissions testing (SAT or ACT) scores to be sent to each college.
- To take advantage of timely application opportunities, present appropriate ("Secondary School Report Form") application materials to your counselor **WELL AHEAD OF DEADLINES**. The Guidance Office requires these materials at least ten school days prior to deadline.

ELIGIBILITY

A student's eligibility for financial aid is based primarily upon his "financial need", which is defined as the difference between what it will cost the student to attend a particular school and the amount he/she and his/her parents are expected to be able to contribute toward that cost annually which is his expected family contribution (EFC). It must be understood that the financial aid system starts with the premise that the student and his parents bear the primary responsibility for funding the child's education, considering family size, income, and other relevant factors that impact on the family's ability to pay for that education.

HOW IS THE STUDENT'S EFC DETERMINED?

The FAFSA(Free Application for Federal Student Aid) must be filed by ALL applicants to two or four year colleges seeking federal financial aid. It is the ONLY financial form, which will be required by state aided two and four year colleges. The federal government, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the college financial aid officers utilize the results of the FAFSA to determine a family's "Expected Family Contribution" (EFC). (There is an expectation that the student will save some money every summer beginning with the summer of his freshman year of college). Financial need is the difference between the EFC and the total cost of attending a particular college for a year, so it varies from school to school. FAFSA can be found on the web at: www.fafsa.ed.gov

The "CSS PROFILE". In addition to the FAFSA, many private two and four year institutions will also ask that applicants complete the "PROFILE," which used different information and methodology for determining the EFC(and it is usually higher than the FAFSA EFC), which they then use to determine disbursement of their own institutional funds. Also, some schools have their own financial aid form, which they send to applicants to their school.

FILING DATES

The FAFSA itself and the Registration form for the PROFILE are available in the Guidance Office, generally in December. The FAFSA should not be filed until after January 1st of your current school year, but should be filed as soon after January 1st as possible because schools have limited federal funds and they are generally awarded on a first come, first serve basis. A good filing date to shoot for might be February 15th. The FAFSA can be filed in paper form or over the Internet-- <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

CSS PROFILE REGISTRATION

This should be TELEPHONED in, as soon as an applicant knows ALL of the schools to which he/she is planning to apply. While schools can be added later for additional cost, it will be decidedly advantageous if the student can code in all of the schools to which he/she is planning to apply on his/her initial registration form. About two-three weeks after College Scholarship Service(CSS) receives the PROFILE Registration(by telephone), the student will receive a packet containing the PROFILE itself which must be completed and filed in time to meet the earliest deadline specified by any one of the colleges to which the student is applying. Generally this will be early in February unless the student is filing an "Early Decision" application, in which case it could be required earlier.

There are two ways to register:
Phone: 1-800- 778-6888
Online: www.collegeboard.com

SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

States

Stafford Loan(subsidized or unsubsidized) which allows freshman to borrow up to \$2625.00, sophomores up to \$3500.00 and juniors and seniors up to \$5500.00.

Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students(PLUS) allows parents to borrow an amount equal to the difference between the total cost of the one year of school and the amount of financial aid the student has received.

Business

Often big corporations offer educational benefits (funding) to children of their employees. Parents should inquire about these at their place of employment. Often these are the millions of dollars of funds which commercial scholarship search services contend are unclaimed each year.

SOURCES OF HELP ON FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

College Financial Aid Officers will staff toll-free hotline(usually) during the last two weeks of January through the first two weeks of February.

BE FOREWARNED!

Finally, we recommend that you do not use any private scholarship services that may mail you forms "guaranteeing" to locate sources of aid. We know of none, that justify the expense. If you insist on using one, find out exactly under what condition you are entitled to a refund. Generally these companies locate only sources that the FAFSA and the PROFILE will locate. Obtaining refunds from these companies can be difficult.

Remember 95% of all available funds are accessed via the FAFSA and the CSS Profile.

College Admission for Those Students with Specific Needs

The college bound students who are presently receiving support services through our Special Education Department for a documented handicap or a documented learning disability should follow the same admissions process and advice included in this handbook.

College educational opportunities and support services are continuously expanding for students with documented learning disabilities. There are many colleges and universities that provide resource and learning centers, tutors, computer-aided tutorials, etc. These sources of academic support vary from college to college.

Be informed, that the special education law, which protects the rights of identified individuals up through high school, DOES NOT APPLY TO HIGHER EDUCATION. The IDEA, the individuals with Disabilities Act does not apply to higher education.

Colleges and universities do not provide special education, as we know it. However, Section 504 of 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities ACT(ADA) prohibits discrimination on the basis of a handicap and assures accessibility of programs that receive federal funding. Students are encouraged to meet with the coordinator of special services at each prospective institution to determine what type of support is available at each institution.

Please note that colleges are not obliged to alter their admission requirements in these special circumstances. However, some colleges will waive certain courses (i.e. foreign language) based on supportive testing and Secondary documentation. Some colleges will waive the SAT's or ACT's.

At the college level, students are expected to identify themselves as students with documented learning disabilities or handicap. It is important the high school student become familiar with his/her own IEP (Individualized Education Plan) and transitional needs. Students should be able to discuss their own learning strengths, weaknesses, and accommodative needs. Be prepared to discuss this information in an interview. Transition skills should include the ability to be an advocate for oneself in a logical way in high school.

Student with documented disabilities must decide whether to disclose this information to colleges or universities. Disclosing a disability may assist a student by explaining discrepancies on the transcript or maybe the absence of a foreign language.

Students who wish to disclose a documented disability during the admission process should bring a copy of his/her transcript and IEP to each college interview.

Students with further questions on this issue should seek further advice from their respective Guidance Counselor.

Since SAT's and ACT's may sometimes be waived when there is a recent documented disability, it is recommended that students in this situation do not send these test results to any colleges until the results have been received.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURES

COORDINATOR—FIRST FLOOR GUIDANCE

1. FILL OUT TRANSCRIPT REQUEST SHEET. THE GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT WILL INCLUDE SAT I AND SAT II SCORES WITH YOUR TRANSCRIPT IF THE SCORES WERE SENT TO MHS. NOTIFY COLLEGE BOARD TO SEND SAT SCORES DIRECTLY TO COLLEGES.
2. FILL OUT BRAG SHEET. INCLUDE NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ON BRAG SHEET. MAKE COPIES FOR TEACHERS FOR THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AND INCLUDE COLLEGE ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE IF TEACHER IS GOING TO MAIL IT TO THE COLLEGE FOR YOU. GIVE BRAG SHEET TO YOUR COUNSELOR. COUNSELOR WILL SEND LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION DIRECTLY TO COLLEGES.
3. CALL ADMISSIONS OFFICE OF THE COLLEGE AND REQUEST THAT THEY SEND YOU ONE. YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD MOST APPLICATIONS.
4. HAVE ANY ESSAY CHECKED FOR CORRECT GRAMMAR, ETC. BY YOUR ENGLISH TEACHER.
5. ASK THE TEACHER WHO IS WRITING A RECOMMENDATION IF YOU CAN MAKE COPIES AND USE IT FOR ALL COLLEGES.
6. TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS MAY BE DIRECTLY SENT TO COLLEGES OR BROUGHT TO THE FIRST FLOOR GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT TO BE MAILED WITH TRANSCRIPT.
7. SEND APPLICATION, ESSAY AND CHECKS DIRECTLY TO THE COLLEGES TO WHICH YOU ARE APPLYING.
8. GIVE \$5.00 PROCESSING FEE TO GUIDANCE COUNSELOR WITH TRANSCRIPT REQUEST FORM.
9. YOUR COUNSELOR WILL PREPARE A RECOMMENDATION FOR EACH COUNSELEE. THIS IS WHY IT IS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO FILL OUT THE BRAG SHEET. IT HELPS YOUR COUNSELOR KNOW MORE ABOUT YOU AND ANY SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES.
10. KEEP A CHECK LIST AND MAKE COPIES OF ALL APPLICATIONS AND ESSAYS. READ DIRECTIONS ON COLLEGE APPLICATIONS CAREFULLY.
11. PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO SEE YOUR COUNSELOR IF YOU NEED ANY ASSISTANCE OR HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.
12. MAKE SURE THAT YOUR NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER ARE ON ALL LOOSE PAPERS (RECOMMENDATIONS, ESSAYS, ETC.).
- 13. MAKE COPIES OF EVERYTHING YOU SUBMIT TO COLLEGES!**
14. TRY TO VISIT EACH COLLEGE AND HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ANSWERED. APPLYING TO COLLEGES IS A LOT OF WORK. YOU SHOULD BE METHODOICAL AND DETAIL ORIENTED. GOOD LUCK AND DO NOT PROCRASTINATE.

Medford High School Guidance Department

Student Worksheet for College Recommendation

Student Name:

Possible College Major:

Six Colleges of Interest:

ACADEMIC:

1. List any honors or awards you have won...academic, athletic, work/volunteer related.
2. Are there any factors related to your grades that you would like me to be aware of?
3. Are there any factors about admission test scores that you would like me to address?

Please list activities in which you have been involved.

Grade 9:

Grade 10:

Grade 11:

Grade 12:

INTERESTS:

1. What activities do you most enjoy outside of the classroom?
2. Which activity is most important to you and why?
3. Which activities would you like to pursue in college and to what degree?
4. What new activities would you like to pursue in college?

WHO ARE YOU?

1. What adjectives would you use to describe yourself?
2. Describe your most significant personal, study, work, travel, or summer experience.
3. Are there any outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance? (Family hardships, illness, school difficulties - **Only fill this in if you want the information shared with the colleges.**)
4. Are there any hardships that you have overcome?
5. Are there any job experiences that have been especially meaningful to you and why?
6. Where do you see yourself in five years?

What other type of information would you like your counselor to consider when writing your college recommendation?

Medford High School Guidance Department TRANSCRIPT REQUEST INFORMATION

Procedure for requesting transcripts:

1. Fill out the information requested on the Transcript Request Form at the end of this packet. Make sure you include the address and application deadline for each school. There is a \$5.00 charge to cover the cost of processing all transcript requests and letters of recommendations to be paid at the time of submitting your request to your guidance counselor.
2. Bring all of your materials (transcript request form, etc.) to your guidance counselor.
3. Quarterly, mid-year, and final report forms must be submitted on time in order for each report to be sent.
4. Counselor recommendations will be sent with the transcript and other materials upon completing steps 1, 2, and 3 of this process.

Remember, transcripts do require at least a week to process. **Please submit your materials early.** Also, if you have not included all your schools on this transcript request form, you must have it added on the form; doing this will ensure that the transcript will be sent to the additional schools.

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>