

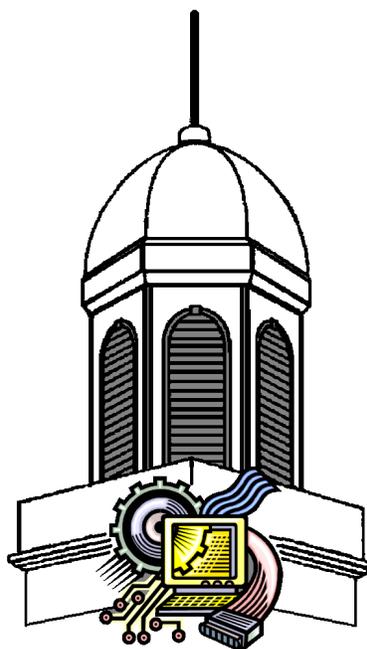
# Guide for College Admissions

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## Table of Contents

Preface for Students .....	Page 4
Preface for Parents.....	Page 5
College Planning Timeline .....	Page 6
Four Steps to College Admissions .....	Page 13
Self Assessment .....	Page 14
Describing Yourself .....	Page 15
Setting Goals for College.....	Page 16
Where to Study and Why? .....	Page 17
Thinking About College Majors .....	Page 18
High School Resume .....	Page 19
Research and Evaluation .....	Page 23
Resources.....	Page 23
Academic Self-Evaluation .....	Page 24
Selecting Your Potential Colleges .....	Page 24
My College List .....	Page 25
Campus Visits .....	Page 26
Things All Colleges Consider .....	Page 27
What Do Very Selective Colleges Want? .....	Page 28
Three Levels of College Selectivity.....	Page 29
The “Right” College for You.....	Page 30
Cost Determination.....	Page 33
College Cost Comparison .....	Page 35

Application Mechanics .....	Page 36
Application Process Guide .....	Page 36
The Essay .....	Page 40
Recommendations .....	Page 40
Personal Data Form for Recommendations .....	Page 42
Interviews .....	Page 45
Getting the Most Out of an Interview .....	Page 45
Important Reminders .....	Page 47
College Application Log .....	Page 48
Test Scores Explained .....	Page 49
Test Comparison Chart .....	Page 50
Financial Aid .....	Page 52
What is Financial Aid? .....	Page 52
Types of Financial Aid .....	Page 52
Sources of Financial Aid .....	Page 53
SCCHE Scholarships and Grants .....	Page 56
Technical College Admissions .....	Page 63
What if I Do Not Get Accepted? .....	Page 64
Do You Want to Be a College Athlete? .....	Page 65
Glossary of College Terms .....	Page 72



## PREFACE FOR STUDENTS

Welcome! The purpose of this guide is to assist you in career and college planning-- a process designed to help you progress to more independence as you make important decisions concerning your future. Proper information and guidance removes the mystery and confusion of applying to colleges and universities. The time you spend now exploring and participating in this challenging process will be rewarded later with your enrollment in the college or university of your choice.

The purpose of this guide is to serve as a guide for students planning to attend a college or university. We strongly suggest that parents and students use this as a guide. Specific admission requirements will vary from college to college. The ultimate responsibility lies with the student and the parent in obtaining college admissions. *The key to successful admission to a college or university lies in careful planning and timely completion of all required steps.* This guide will lead you through these steps. Keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Begin planning early and ask questions as you go along.
- Use the resources available to you in your school's Guidance Office.
- Complete all steps in the admissions and financial aid process as early as possible when applying to colleges or universities.
- Be realistic about how you will pay for your education. You must talk openly with your parents throughout the admissions process.
- Talk with students who have studied at colleges and universities in the U.S.
- Share this guide with your parents. Suggest that they read the special section "Preface for Parents" on the next page.

Following the suggestions in this guide will be good practice for exercising control over your own life and future. Soon you will be making some important decisions and choices. Be prepared to accept the added responsibility and freedom.

*This publication is designed as a guide only. Circumstances concerning college admissions and scholarship applications vary from year to year. Spartan Educational Services, LLC, Student Centered Education Consulting Group, LLC, or any employee is not liable for omissions, changes, or mistakes that are found or not found in this guide. Admission to college is the responsibility of the student and his/her family.*

## PREFACE FOR PARENTS

There is absolutely no question that the last few years of high school and the initial college years are a time of transition for students and their parents. There is no way to move through such an important passage without some feelings of dislocation and loss. Parents have an extremely difficult and delicate role to play in the college decision-making process. There is no routinely “right” way to handle all its challenges. Fortunately, there is information and advice to help families find their own answers in the college admissions experience.

First, parents must try to separate their own aspirations from those of their children. Naturally, we all want to live for our children, setting examples for them, supporting them, and counseling them. However, we don’t want to live through our children, directing them, insulating them, and controlling them. Thus, if you hear yourself saying “We are applying to College X...” be aware that you are mixing up your own life with the goals of your son or daughter.

Second, parents need to remind themselves that the college search and application process should be a journey from adolescent dependence to adult independence. This means that parents have a dual responsibility; to educate their children about the realities of the admissions process, and to inform them about the responsibilities that come with the immense freedom they will enjoy the moment they step onto a college campus as a freshman.

Third, parents should look on the college admissions process as one of their last major opportunities to educate their children. Once again, parents have a chance to teach their children about the things they value most. They can show how much they trust their child to fashion his or her own values and to act reasonably and humanely in a complicated world. Parents also have a valuable opportunity to instill in their children a crucial sense of self-worth as they go through the college search process together. Thus, in advising them, supporting them, in letting them make mistakes, and in letting them go, parents can give their children a healthy feeling of self-esteem. You are helping out while letting go.

Finally, it is important for parents to realize they are not alone in this process. You and other parents may be going through the “letting go” process for the first time or perhaps you have past experience with the process and can be helpful to those going through it for the first time. The point is you are not alone. Parents can become a powerful support system for one another by talking with each other, the school counselor, the teachers, and college admissions officers who want to share this experience with you.

College counseling intensifies in Grade 11. Juniors should participate in a college orientation program that introduces the general college admissions process. Students should meet with their counselor for an “Individualized Graduation Meeting” to review the transcript, academic progress, test scores, and to discuss post-graduate plans. Parents are encouraged to participate in this conference. In Grade 12, students will meet with the school counselor as often as they request. Please feel free to contact the school counselor at any time during this process.

# COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

## Directions

This timeline is designed as an overview of the admissions process to colleges and universities for students in Grades 10, 11, and 12. It also may vary from college to college. Check with your potential colleges for information on the application process. Deadlines are very important. Review the timeline each month and check off each item as you complete it. Be sure to ask your counselor any questions you may have.

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students

It is never too early to begin preparation for college and careers. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade is a good place to begin to explore potential careers and college choices.

- Take the strongest courses in preparation for high school level courses in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Parents should help their students begin exploring career interests and college preferences.
- Use PSAT given in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade to review college preparation level and to qualify for the Junior Scholars Program.
- Develop with the junior high school an individual graduation plan. This plan will be updated yearly until the student graduates from high school.
- Parents should take their student on college visits and tours during school holidays.
- Start preparation for college entrance testing by working on vocabulary and reading skills. Use SAT word list on line at: [www.majortests.com](http://www.majortests.com). The ACT word list can be found at [www.collegeraptor.com](http://www.collegeraptor.com).
- Parents should begin planning for college expenses and learning about scholarship programs.
- Students should decide on an extracurricular activity in which they want to specialize and begin a resume of activities listing both school and community or church activities.
- Parents and students should attend special awareness sessions presented by the high school on college and workforce readiness.

## Freshmen

Freshmen should begin the process of preparing for college and workforce readiness.

- Take a strong college prep program to prepare academically for senior high school courses.
- Continue to work on reading and vocabulary skills. Use SAT/ACT word lists.
- Update the individual graduation plan developed in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade.
- Work with parents and counselors to begin the process of selecting a career cluster and interest area.
- Develop a plan of study for the remainder of your high school career.
- Continue making preparation for college entrance testing. Start working with PSAT, SAT, and ACT preparation programs on line.
- Take a sample SAT/ACT to determine weaknesses and areas which need extra work.
- Attend awareness sessions conducted by the high school on college readiness and planning for college costs.
- Continue to update your resume and obtain quality extra-curricular experiences. Work in community service or church activities to improve your resume.

## Sophomores

In the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, students should begin the process of making some very important decisions on college admissions.

- Take a strong academic program in the college prep, honors, advanced placement, and dual enrollment tracks if you want to attend a four-year college or university.
- Take the PreACT during 1<sup>st</sup> semester.
- Use the [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com) to do a personal profile and start considering careers of interest.
- When the results of your PreACT return in January, review your scores and make plans to work on improving them.
- Become actively involved in two or three extra-curricular activities and work hard in those organizations to develop leadership skills and resume items. It is far better to be an active member or an officer and earn recognition in two or three clubs or activities than to join everything and do very little.
- Find some community service activities in which to participate and start documenting your work and time.

## Juniors

This year is your most important one! Many colleges will initially evaluate your application based on your academic record through Grade 11. Make sure you are pursuing a strong academic program that is challenging and equal to your abilities. You should choose the most challenging academic courses you can. We highly recommend that you take college prep, honors, advanced placement, and dual enrollment courses if you plan to attend a four-year college or university.

Be sure to continue your involvement in extracurricular activities and consider taking a leadership position in one activity. You should discuss standardized testing requirements with your counselor during the first semester. **After consulting with your school counselor**, make arrangements to take the appropriate SAT's, ACT's, ASSET/COMPASS/ACCUPLACER and/or other necessary college entrance tests. Also, make arrangements to attend test preparation sessions.

We strongly suggest that students consult with the school counselor in order to determine which college entrance test is best for them for college admission purposes. The counselor will consider the student's academic portfolio to include rigor of coursework and previous assessments taken.

During your junior year you will begin to receive admissions and scholarship information in the mail. It may look like junk mail, but it is not. It could save you time, help you make your decision about college, and could also save your parents some money.

## August

- Review your high school transcript, coursework, and activity plans.
- Prepare to register for the senior year. Know what courses are required.
- Keep in mind that colleges look for the following:
  - challenging coursework
  - a strong GPA
  - involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports, volunteer work, or church activities; remember do not be a joiner – get involved!!
- Review your transcript to see where you are in relation to a four-year college admission, NCAA guidelines, and scholarships. If you have questions, immediately see your counselor.
- Begin preparing for college/career readiness assessments.
- Begin looking at colleges to determine some possibilities.
- If you have not done so already, start preparing your resume.

## September

- Identify sources of college and career information at your school. Start looking through guidance publications, college catalogs, guidebooks, and on line material.
- Meet with college representatives that visit your school.
- Put together a list of 10 colleges that you would like to attend. Visit and read information on each one.
- Attend college information sessions held in your area.
- Talk to your parents and your high school counselor about where you want to go to school. Inquire about the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT).
- Obtain dates and locations of college fairs and 'parent nights' in your local area.
- Parents should attend a meeting with the school counselor about college information and things to plan for your senior year.
- Plan some exploratory visits to colleges that interest you during your weekends and holidays.

### **October**

- Take the PSAT which is the qualifier for the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid/parent nights.
- Talk to college representatives that visit your high school.

### **November**

- Start looking into eligibility requirements for federal and alternative student loans. A good source of FREE, up-to-date information on low-cost student loans is found on [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com), [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov), and [www.scstudentloan.org](http://www.scstudentloan.org).
- Talk to your counselor about taking the ACT/SAT.

### **December**

- Your PSAT/NMSQT score report should arrive.
- Begin to narrow your college choices.
- Based on your PreACT in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, begin intensive work on weaknesses to improve your test scores. Contact your teachers if needed for advice.
- Start planning to take the ACT and/or the SAT, if necessary. Check with the colleges you are applying to and find out specific testing requirements. Ask your high school counselor about registration deadlines and which test to take based on previous scores.

### **January**

- You should begin researching 3-5 schools that interest you most.
- During your college visits, make sure you meet with an admissions representative and a financial aid officer to find out what types of aid are available.
- Attend financial aid nights, if you have not already done so.

### **February**

- Start seriously investigating private scholarships and other student aid programs.
- Register for your senior classes.
- Register and study for the SAT and/or the ACT.
- Attend SAT and ACT workshops.

- Meet with your counselor and discuss with your parents the following items:
  - Progress towards graduation and admission to a college or university.
  - Make a final determination of courses needed during the senior year.
  - Discuss career goals.
  - Review with your parents your family's financial situation and ability to pay for college.

### **March**

- Continue investigating outside funding sources.
- Register and study for the SAT and/or the ACT exams if you have not already done so.
- For more information about financial aid, college entrance exams and financial aid, visit the SAT website at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or ACT at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

### **April**

- Begin scheduling visits to schools that are on your final list. If appropriate, apply for an interview and/or an overnight visit.
- Take an SAT or ACT prep course to help prepare for the upcoming test.
- Begin preparing essays for college admissions and scholarship applications.
- Consider the early decision option if provided by the college or university to which you are making application.
- Sign up for the National SAT or ACT tests to be given in May or June. Check deadlines!

### **May**

- Take the SAT and/or the ACT exams. Many students obtain their highest scores in May or June of the junior year.
- Take Advanced Placement (AP) exams which are given in high schools nationally in early May. (Except for a few exceptions, students must be enrolled in AP courses to take the test).
- Be aware of the test dates and registration deadlines for the remaining national test dates. You may take them during your senior year in high school.
- Continue compiling information as to which organizations award scholarships to graduating seniors. (You may have to begin applying the summer after your junior year).
- Obtain a summer job that might be related to your career interests.
- If possible, save some money from your summer job to pay for college costs. Establish a saving's account that is only for college so that you are not tempted to use it.
- If you travel this summer, consider scheduling a college visit.

### **June-August**

- Take the SAT and/or the ACT exams in June if you did not take them last month.
- Read a variety of books and magazines and review your math skills over the summer. This will help you prepare for the SAT or ACT.
- Continue to prepare for SAT or ACT tests in the fall.
- Visit college campuses if possible.
- Do summer reading. Find a genre that you like and read several books. Many colleges and scholarships will ask you about the last books that you read. Senior English teachers will be happy to give you some suggestions that will help in college and/or in your senior year.

### **Seniors**

Seniors should recognize that the timeline for applications is critical. A school's guidance department has to handle hundreds of applications each year. For the best service, please submit your application in time to process it before the deadline. **It is extremely difficult and many times impossible to prepare an application or recommendation with a one day notice.** You are responsible for ensuring that your applications and recommendations are submitted on time to meet the deadlines set in the application process.

### August

- Review and complete all steps in this guide.
- Meet with your school counselor to finalize a list of colleges and to clarify any questions you have.
- Review the college's website regarding the on-line application and what is needed to apply.
- Attend senior informational sessions.
- Organize yourself by setting up a separate folder for each college you are considering. Keep all information and correspondence relating to that college in the appropriate folder.
- Read and reread college materials. Check to see which standardized tests, essays, and letters of recommendation are required.
- Check on dates of important ACT and SAT tests and mark your calendar.
- Do not take a marshmallow senior year fluff courses. Remember, it counts in the admissions process. Colleges only give you conditional admissions until they receive the final transcript of your senior year.

### September

- Register for the ACT and/or the SAT. Most colleges consider either SAT or ACT scores for college admissions. Some colleges are test optional. Consult with the college on specific requirements.
- Prepare your resume and the personal data form before requesting letters of recommendation.
- Submit on-line or return the applications (neat and before the necessary deadlines).
  - Remember many persons with similar qualifications are competing with you for admissions or a scholarship.
  - Admissions and awards sometimes are awarded based on very small differences between candidates.
- Ask your teachers, principals, and/or school counselors for letters of recommendation.
- Begin your first drafts of college application essays if required; participate in essay writing workshops if offered.
- Continue to read college materials as you receive them. File them in the appropriate folders.
- Consider visiting a college that you are considering in the fall. Spend a day and see what life is like on the campus.

### October

- Continue working on college essays. Ask a friend, teacher or counselor to proofread your work.
- Decide on the Early Decision option.
- Begin a discussion of financial aid options with your counselor and your parents if you are planning on making an aid request.
- Parents should be making plans to file their income tax returns as soon as possible after the end of the year so that financial aid applications can be completed as early as October. The computation of the amounts of aid available is based on the "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" (FAFSA). This is a prerequisite for almost all financial aid applications. The amount of aid available for each student is based on the parent's completed tax returns. They are generally taken in the order that they are received. The FAFSA website is [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov).

**November**

- Meet deadlines for the Early Decision option.
- Check to see that all letters of recommendations have been submitted by the deadline.
- Complete your applications and essays.
- Make sure SAT or ACT scores have been sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- You must request to have your scores sent from the SAT/ACT testing agency to the college.
- Discuss score reporting requirements with your counselor.
- Request mid-year reports, if needed by the college.

**December**

- Check again on your application deadlines, especially for early decisions. Have them completed before the first week in December.
- If applying for financial aid, complete the proper federal forms and/or the college forms. Have them ready to send electronically no later than the first of the year.
- Check deadlines for scholarship applications.

**January**

- Arrange campus visits or interviews for January and February.
- Request college visit absence excuses from the guidance office.
- Submit completed financial aid forms, preferably electronically.
- Reply promptly and completely to any requests for additional information you may receive from colleges to which you have applied.
- If the college requires an updated transcript, you may submit mid-year transcripts to all colleges to which you have applied via Parchment.

**February-April**

- Discuss college choices with your parents and your school counselor as you receive acceptance letters.
- If you are enrolled in AP, contact the college to determine how they will count AP scores towards course advancement.
- Check to see if you must reserve a dorm room early. Some colleges will accept, but will not have dorm rooms for students requesting rooms late.
- Maintain your grade point average. Do not let "senioritis" keep you from attending the college of your choice. Their acceptance of you is a conditional acceptance and requires that you maintain an acceptable record.
- If requested, the Guidance Office will submit a report of your 2nd semester grades to the college you choose to attend via Common App. Students initiate the School Report.
- By the end of April, call colleges from whom you have not yet received a response.
- Retake the SAT or ACT, as necessary, to obtain the necessary score for the Life Scholarship or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

**May**

- Report your final college decision to your school counselor and notify the schools you have chosen not to attend of your decision.
- Confirm dormitory reservations and send in deposit by the required deadline.
- Select your roommate. If possible, get someone you know who will be serious about their studies and who shares a similar approach to college and academics.
- Take the AP exams if appropriate. Remember it will be July before the scores are returned.
- GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL!!!

**June-September**

- Be sure you have submitted all required fees (health insurance, residence halls, etc.).
- Make travel arrangements.
- When your AP scores arrive, make sure that your college gets a copy and that you have a discussion with admissions about the courses that you will exempt.
- Pack
- If you have your class schedule, consider developing a study schedule that you can stick with each day.
- Find out about organizations that you want to join. College organizations are no different from high school in that you should be looking for quality involvement that will develop leadership and your resume. You will need it when you start looking for a job or applying to graduate school.
- Give your parents a schedule of visitation days. Also tell them when to expect the interim and final grade reports (after all they are paying for it).

**YOU ARE ON YOUR WAY!**

## FOUR STEPS TO COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Below is a brief description of college admissions "steps" as an overview of the entire process. All students regardless of where you intend to study should complete STEP 1 on the following pages.

### **STEP 1--SELF-ASSESSMENT: Discovering Who I Am and What I Want**

The first step in the college admissions process involves asking yourself some very important questions. Consider your values, your strengths, your weaknesses, your goals, and your reasons for wanting to go to college. Your answers will change as you learn more about yourself and begin to clarify your plans for the future. This is a starting point and a tool to use for further discussion with your parents and counselor about your high school record and future educational and career plans.

### **STEP 2--RESEARCH AND EVALUATION: Finding the Right School**

At the second step you must decide what factors are important to you and then determine the colleges or universities that will best meet your needs. This task is accomplished by using the resources available in your school's Guidance Office. Normally, you will identify five or six colleges for which you meet the entrance requirements. You will then evaluate your academic record, which includes your courses, grades and class rank, as well as evaluate your test scores and extracurricular activities to determine your eligibility.

### **STEP 3--COST DETERMINATION: Comparing College Costs**

The third step will help you match your financial resources to the cost of your college education. You will consider the cost of tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and personal expenses in determining which type of school is the best for you and your family financially.

### **STEP 4--APPLICATION MECHANICS: Applying for Admission**

The fourth step will provide you with all the information you need to complete your applications in a timely manner. Organization is the key factor in keeping track of all deadlines. Applying for financial aid is a similar but separate process in which deadlines and organization are equally important. (Details about financial aid will be discussed in a later section of this guide).

The information in this section is adapted from  
*Destination College: A Guide to the College Admissions Process (1988)*, by Barbara G. Heyman.

## STEP 1 - SELF ASSESSMENT

### Who am I? Where am I going?

Good decisions are made with information, analysis, and reflection. In order to make a decision about your life after high school, you must think about yourself a little more than you have done before. Once you have taken a good look at yourself, you will then have a basis for deciding upon strategies for getting from where you are now to where you want to go.

Basically, you will need to answer four important questions. Who am I? What do I want? Where am I going? How do I get there? The following worksheets are designed to help you think about yourself in preparation for finding the colleges or universities that will best suit your needs. Once you have made this initial evaluation, the following steps will be easier.

### Ordering Values

Values are, quite simply, what people want and believe in. Values are subject to change as needs are satisfied or frustrated. Overall, values are the essence of our internal motivation and our consequent behavior. Below is a list of thirteen common values. Study the list carefully and then arrange the thirteen values in order of their importance to you as you see yourself now. Start with "1" for the most important and end with "13" as the least important. No ties, please!

- \_ Advancement: getting ahead.
- \_ Adventure: doing something new, different or exciting.
- \_ Competence: doing a good job; mastering a task; being skillful.
- \_ Creativity: designing something new; performing artistically; finding new solutions.
- \_ Duty: doing what you know needs to be done.
- \_ Honesty: being frank and genuinely yourself with others.
- \_ Independence: being free from constraints and able to make your own choices.
- \_ Leadership: directing or showing others how to do something.
- \_ Material Comfort: enjoying money and possessions; economic security.
- \_ Power: having control, authority, or influence over others.
- \_ Security: being sure about your place; feeling safe; having basic needs met.
- \_ Service to Others: doing something helpful for other people because you want to.
- \_ Social Approval: gaining prestige, praise or approval from others; acceptance.

## DESCRIBING YOURSELF

Below are listed a number of descriptive adjectives. Indicate how well each adjective describes you by circling the appropriate number, using the scale given below:

1: Not Well at All      2: Moderately Well      3: Very Well      4: Extremely Well

1. Impatient	1	2	3	4	26. Initiating	1	2	3	4
2. Attentive	1	2	3	4	27. Dependent	1	2	3	4
3. Nurturing	1	2	3	4	28. Self-critical	1	2	3	4
4. Indecisive	1	2	3	4	29. Goal oriented	1	2	3	4
5. Realistic	1	2	3	4	30. Cooperative	1	2	3	4
6. Adaptable	1	2	3	4	31. Insensitive	1	2	3	4
7. Confident	1	2	3	4	32. Patient	1	2	3	4
8. Passive	1	2	3	4	33. Serious	1	2	3	4
9. Compassionate	1	2	3	4	34. Receptive	1	2	3	4
10. Independent	1	2	3	4	35. Gentle	1	2	3	4
11. Selfish	1	2	3	4	36. Trusting	1	2	3	4
12. Decisive	1	2	3	4	37. Confrontational	1	2	3	4
13. Sensitive	1	2	3	4	38. Responsible	1	2	3	4
14. Sharing	1	2	3	4	39. Aggressive	1	2	3	4
15. Manipulating	1	2	3	4	40. Impulsive	1	2	3	4
16. Defensive	1	2	3	4	41. Critical	1	2	3	4
17. Self-starting	1	2	3	4	42. Logical	1	2	3	4
18. Aware	1	2	3	4	43. Self-conscious	1	2	3	4
19. Timid	1	2	3	4	44. Controlling	1	2	3	4
20. Accepting	1	2	3	4	45. Creative	1	2	3	4
21. Well organized	1	2	3	4	46. Consistent	1	2	3	4
22. Tense	1	2	3	4	47. Open	1	2	3	4
23. Sense of humor	1	2	3	4	48. Willing to risk	1	2	3	4
24. Assertive	1	2	3	4	49. Vulnerable	1	2	3	4
25. Respectful	1	2	3	4	50. Relaxed	1	2	3	4

1. List the five most important adjectives of the 3's and 4's that describe you. Using a "+" sign determine if the adjective is a positive trait for you. Using a "-" sign determine if the adjective is a negative trait for you. List five of each.

Strengths

Weaknesses

1		1	
2		2	
3		3	
4		4	
5		5	

2. Now do the same thing using 1's and 2's.

1		1	
2		2	
3		3	

## SETTING GOALS FOR COLLEGE

The setting of goals becomes increasingly important as you complete each stage of your education and begin to think, decide and live for yourself. Goal setting is a matter of considering alternatives, establishing priorities, and developing strategies for reaching the goals. It is important to periodically review your goals for purposes of checking your progress and adjusting your goals as necessary.

Below are listed six goal areas which you should consider in preparing for further education in college. Read them over carefully and decide on the importance of each by checking the appropriate rating from 1 to 5.

- 1: Of No Importance
- 2: Of Little Importance
- 3: Of Moderate Importance
- 4: Of Much Importance
- 5: Of Very Much Importance

**A. Intellectual Growth** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Your ability to understand and use concepts and principles from several broad areas of learning.

**B. Social Growth** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Your understanding of other people and their views; your experience in relating to others.

**C. Aesthetic Growth** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Your awareness and appreciation of the literature, music, art and drama of your own culture and of others.

**D. Educational Growth** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Your understanding of a particular field of knowledge; your preparation for further education.

**E. Vocational Growth** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Your preparation for employment in a particular vocational or professional area.

**F. Personal Growth** 1: \_\_\_\_\_ 2: \_\_\_\_\_ 3: \_\_\_\_\_ 4: \_\_\_\_\_ 5: \_\_\_\_\_

Your development of attitudes, values, beliefs, and a particular philosophy of life; your understanding and acceptance of yourself as a person; your ability to be realistic and adaptable and to make decisions about your future.



## THINKING ABOUT COLLEGE MAJORS

A college major is a series of courses designed to provide you with a strong background in the academic area in which you are most interested. It is okay if you don't know now what you want to major in. The first year of college is the time to experiment to see what you like to do, and what you want to pursue. For now, think about your strengths and interests. Try to take courses that will utilize your strong abilities and strengthen your weaknesses. Most colleges allow you to take an introductory course in a major. This will enable you to see if you like a major.

1. What courses reflect your academic strengths?

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2. In what courses do you need improvement?

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3. What extracurricular activities do you enjoy most?

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4. What type of field or educational major would make you happy?

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5. Which jobs could support your desired lifestyle?

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6. How much time are you willing to spend in school to complete a major?

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### **LIST THE MAJORS THAT INTEREST YOU**

Using the research that you have done, and after talking about your plans with your parents, teachers, and counselors, list the majors that interest you below.


### **HIGH SCHOOL RESUME**

To further highlight your strengths, list your academic honors and activities for grades 9 - 12.

## HIGH SCHOOL RESUME

<b><i>9<sup>th</sup> Grade</i></b>	
Academic Honors	
Awards	
School Activities Clubs/Trips/Offices Held/Teams	
Community Activities	
Work Experience	

## HIGH SCHOOL RESUME

<b><i>10<sup>th</sup> Grade</i></b>	
Academic Honors	
Awards	
School Activities Clubs/Trips/Offices Held/Teams	
Community Activities	
Work Experience	

## HIGH SCHOOL RESUME

<b><i>11<sup>th</sup> Grade</i></b>	
Academic Honors	
Awards	
School Activities Clubs/Trips/Offices Held/Teams	
Community Activities	
Work Experience	

## HIGH SCHOOL RESUME

<b>12<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	
Academic Honors	
Awards	
School Activities Clubs/Trips/Offices Held/Teams	
Community Activities	
Work Experience	

## STEP 2 - RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

### **Finding the Right School**

In Step 2, you will identify the factors you consider most important in choosing a college or university. Begin your college research by using the resources available in the High School Guidance Office. Titles of available materials are listed below. The list below is only a sample of the resources available. **Do not forget to include the Internet as a valuable resource in your research.**

### GUIDANCE RESOURCE MATERIALS

#### COLLEGE PLANNING RESOURCES

Peterson's Guide

SCOIS- [www.sccis.intocareers.org](http://www.sccis.intocareers.org)

[www.mycollegeoptions.org](http://www.mycollegeoptions.org)

<https://www.che.sc.gov/institutions-and-educators/higher-education-institutions>

Achieve College Consulting- <https://achievecollegeconsulting.com/>

Next Step College Prep- [www.nextstepcollegeplanning.com](http://www.nextstepcollegeplanning.com)

#### COLLEGE PUBLICATIONS - The most up-to-date information is found on the college's website.

College catalogs and bulletins

Digital information about college campuses

"College Information File" of view books and applications

Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete

#### FINANCIAL AID

SC Student Loan - [www.scstudentloan.org](http://www.scstudentloan.org)

The College Board- [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

College Costs and Financial Aid Guide

[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)

[www.sctuitiongrants.com](http://www.sctuitiongrants.com)

[www.sccollegeaid.org](http://www.sccollegeaid.org)

#### COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

Study guides for preparing for the SAT/ACT

Websites and Study Guides for the COMPASS/ASSET/ACCUPLACER

Test Skills for the PSAT/SAT

PLATO—SAT Preparation

Kaplan SAT/ACT Preparation Program

SAT/ACT Preparation Classes/Boot camps

#### CAREER INFORMATION

[www.microcareerburst.com](http://www.microcareerburst.com)

[www.stoodnt.com](http://www.stoodnt.com)

SCOIS [www.sccis.intocareers.org](http://www.sccis.intocareers.org)

[www.knowitall.org](http://www.knowitall.org)

ASVAB

WIN Assessment

## ACADEMIC SELF-EVALUATION

Admissions officers at colleges and universities try to develop a complete profile of you as an applicant to their institutions. They are looking for evidence that you will be a successful student at their institutions, one who is likely to finish a degree program and graduate. In making that judgment, admissions officers will consider many factors....academic record, test scores, recommendation letters, extracurricular activities, essays, etc. To increase your awareness of some of your qualifications, fill in the following information. (Ask your counselor for help if needed). You will use this information repeatedly as you complete your applications.

Cumulative GPA	_____
Rank in Class	_____ out of _____
PSAT Scores	Verbal _____ Math _____ Writing _____ Selection Index: _____
SAT Composite Test Scores	Reading _____ Math _____ Writing _____ Total: _____ (best score in each area)
ACT Test Composite Score	Composite Score: _____

## SELECTING YOUR POTENTIAL COLLEGES

Using this personal information gathered in Steps 1 and 2 you can now develop a list of six to ten colleges based on your interests and personal profile. Be realistic about your choices. You should be as enthusiastic about your tenth potential choice as you are about your first choice. Consult a college guide or the Internet to be sure your grade point average and test scores are within the admissions parameters of the schools you are considering. We suggest that you categorize schools into three groups.

### **Category 1: REACH SCHOOLS**

This category will contain schools which admit fewer than 33% of students with academic profiles like yours. Generally, these are usually highly competitive/selective schools with difficult criteria for admittance.

### **Category 2: 50/50 CHANCE SCHOOLS**

This category should contain schools for which you meet most of the admissions criteria. They are competitive and selective. You should have at least a 50/50 chance of being admitted to these schools, but there is still a possibility for rejection. If you get deferred or placed on a waiting list from a school that you have a chance at being admitted, try writing a personal letter to the school explaining why you think that you belong there. This is always worth a try, but be prepared for further rejection or hard work if you are accepted.

### **Category 3: SAFETY SCHOOLS**

This category should contain schools that give you a high probability of admission. Based on your grades, test scores, extracurricular activities, and other factors, these schools should admit you without any problem.

## MY COLLEGE LIST

	<b>Category 1 Schools</b>	<b>Category 2 Schools*</b>	<b>Category 3 Schools</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			

1. \* The Category 2 list should be your largest one.
2. You should have at least two choices in the Category 3 list.
3. Do not place a school on your category three list because you know that you can be admitted. Only list schools that you know you could happily attend.

## CAMPUS VISITS

### CAMPUS VISITS

After you have developed a list of colleges that meet your criteria, it's time to consider campus visits and interviews. Although catalogs, view books, and the Internet introduce you to a college, nothing equals the experience of seeing it for yourself. If you cannot visit a college, use the other evaluative means at your disposal, such as asking the college for names of recent graduates (in order to have someone other than the admissions officer to answer your questions), and/or watching an on-line video tour of the campus. (Ask the college or check in the Guidance Office).

Be aware that the best time to see a college is when students are on campus and classes are in session. Contact the admissions office ahead of time to make arrangements, because schedules fill up fast. When you contact the admissions office, ask for written or electronic confirmation of your arrangements. You might request one or more of the following:

- A tour of the grounds and facilities.
- A meal in a college dining facility.
- A tour of a dorm or two. It may be possible to spend the night.
- The names and locations of popular coffee shops or snack bars, where you can meet students.
- Permission to visit a particular class, or to meet with a certain professor or coach.

### A SAMPLE SCHEDULE

Never schedule visits to more than two colleges in one day. Allow at least two hours for each college. Since there really is a lot to cover in one visit, ideally consider staying overnight. You might arrive at noon, for example, take an afternoon tour, eat dinner in the dining hall, and participate in a social, cultural, athletic, or other campus activity in the evening. The next day, you might attend class, stroll around campus, chat with students, talk to faculty, eat lunch with students, and have your interview.

Don't miss reading the campus newspaper, bulletin boards, and posters during your visit to get a flavor of student activities and concerns. Ask students for their opinions of the college, its housing, activities, academics, and faculty, but realize that student opinions vary widely. Most importantly, carry a notebook and make detailed notes of your impressions to help you recall important information.

See your counselor and request a college visit day. Students can be granted excused absences for college visitation days.

## THINGS ALL COLLEGES CONSIDER IN THE ADMISSIONS PROCESS

The selection process varies considerably from college to college. What seems to be an important factor in one institution may be less so in another. There are, however, certain things that all colleges would consider relatively important and they are listed below. Most colleges base selection on a combination of these factors.

### **1. Academic Record**

According to many college admissions officials, the single most important factor in the college admissions process is the course load you take and the grades you receive. The first thing admissions officers see is your transcript. The better it looks, the greater your chance of being admitted to the colleges of your choice. You should also realize that colleges are interested in the type of courses you take-- whether they are strictly academic (and of a high level such as Advanced Placement or Dual Enrollment) or whether they are easy. If you select non-academic courses in order to have high grades, you will be defeating your purpose.

### **2. Results of College Entrance Tests**

The purpose of standardized tests like the SAT or the ACT is to give an objective evaluation of a student in comparison to a wide range of other students. A high school transcript will tell a college how well a student did in a specific course; the objective tests will reveal how the student's general knowledge and verbal and mathematical skills compare with hundreds of thousands of other students. While some colleges are test optional, most colleges require either the SAT or the ACT. You must determine ahead of time which tests are required at the colleges or universities to which you are applying.

### **3. Recommendations**

Most colleges will ask for one or more evaluations from counselors and teachers. Such recommendations are generally based on things like ability, motivation, initiative, maturity, leadership, concern for others, warmth of personality, likelihood of success in college, etc. These evaluations touch upon aspects not generally measured by tests or recorded on transcripts.

### **4. Special Talents, Interests, Skills**

Colleges are also interested in knowing about your interests, activities, special skills, unusual experiences, and even unusual family circumstances. These considerations are especially important to the more selective colleges which can accept only a small percentage of the large number of applicants, most of whom have excellent qualifications.

In general, colleges will look at all information that describes the applicant. It should be kept in mind that **COLLEGES LOOK FOR PROVEN ABILITIES RATHER THAN PROMISES TO DO BETTER.**

## WHAT DO VERY SELECTIVE COLLEGES WANT?

### All students should be thoroughly grounded in six specific subject areas.

For students interested in attending a selective college, they should consider the following information. Students will best serve themselves in preparing for college level work by electing challenging courses in each of the following disciplines:

- **The Arts:** Two challenging courses which introduce students to the arts (music, theater, dance, and studio art) and other cultural traditions are recommended.
- **Foreign Languages:** Given the fact that colleges prepare graduates to live and work in a multicultural society at home and abroad, knowledge of a foreign language - modern or classical - is an important component of one's preparation. Students, therefore, are expected to pursue the study of a foreign language through the third - or fourth - year level in high school, and should be encouraged to continue language study through their senior year.
- **History:** Students should devote at least four courses to the study of history, including the history of the United States and the history of some other part of the world.
- **Literature:** A strong program should include a literature course in each of the four high school years. Students should enter college having read a broad range of literary works, both classic and contemporary, from several different cultures, and they should have written frequently about these works.
- **Mathematics:** Students are expected to have advanced as far in this discipline as the curriculum allows, taking advantage of all available technology through all four years - from graphing calculators to statistical software packages.
- **Science:** Students should have a familiarity with the basic sciences: biology, chemistry, earth science, and physics - and should endeavor to take three laboratory courses in the basic sciences.

Involvement in Extra-Curricular Activities also helps college-bound students to strengthen habits that will lead to success in college. CONTINUOUS AND INTENSIVE INVOLVEMENT IN A FEW ACTIVITIES IS PREFERRED OVER SPORADIC AND SUPERFICIAL ACTIVITY IN SEVERAL AREAS.

Students are also expected, at minimum, to be able to use the computer for word processing. In addition, they should have some familiarity with spread sheets and database manipulations.

The strength of the academic program you follow in your junior and senior years is given serious weight in the admissions process. There is a natural tendency to want to relax, especially in the senior year. This should be avoided if you want to earn admission to the most competitive schools.

## LEVELS OF COLLEGE SELECTIVITY

There are three levels of college selectivity. Different colleges have different admissions requirements. Students should prepare to enter the colleges based upon their personal preferences and career goals.

- **Open Enrollment** – These are schools designed to take adult learners and students with academic needs and provide services (remedial or refresher) to enable them to enter their selected program. These schools also provide associate degrees, specialized industrial certifications, and certificates to graduates. Technical colleges, junior colleges, and community colleges fall into this category. Many of these schools do not require SAT or ACT for admission. To avoid remedial programs, students must meet minimum standards for direct entry into many degree programs.
- **Selective Enrollment** – These colleges and universities have SAT/ACT, class rank, and pre-requisite course requirements for entry. Most students in a college preparatory program can be admitted to one of these colleges or universities.
- **Highly Selective Enrollment** – These colleges and universities require very high SAT/ACT (1100+ or 24+) scores, top class rank, and high school GPA. Students admitted to these schools must rank near the top of their class. Many times admission requirements differ due to majors selected by entering students. Most students admitted to these schools are taking honors, advanced placement and dual enrollment college courses.

SELECTIVITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES		
Open Enrollment	Selective or Selective +	Highly Selective
Aiken Technical College	Anderson University	Clemson University
Allen University	Bob Jones University	Columbia College
Benedict College	Charleston Southern University	Columbia International University
Central Carolina Technical College	Clafflin University	Converse University
Clinton Junior College	Coastal Carolina University	Erskine College
Denmark Technical College	Coker College	Furman University
Florence-Darlington Technical College	College of Charleston	Presbyterian College
Greenville Technical College	Francis Marion University	University of South Carolina
Horry-Georgetown Technical College	Lander University	Wofford College
Midlands Technical College	Limestone University	
Morris College	Military College of South Carolina (The Citadel)	
Northeastern Technical College	Newberry College	
Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College	North Greenville University	
Piedmont Technical College	South Carolina State University	
Spartanburg Community College	Southern Wesleyan University	
Spartanburg Methodist College	USC-Aiken	
Technical College of the Lowcountry	USC-Beaufort	
The American College of the Building Arts	USC-Upstate	
Tri-County Technical College	Winthrop University	
Trident Technical College		
USC-Lancaster, Salkehatchie, Sumter, Union		
Voorhees College		
Williamsburg Technical College		
York Technical College		

Several of these colleges and universities use a sliding scale for admissions. The high school GPA, class rank, and SAT/ACT test scores are used in combination for college admissions. For example, a student with a lower SAT/ACT score can still gain admissions with a high class rank, and high school GPA. Admissions to certain majors can also affect the level of selectivity. For example, a freshman entering in an engineering major would have higher entrance requirements than a freshman entering in history.

## THE "RIGHT" COLLEGE FOR YOU!

It is not uncommon for students to feel overwhelmed with college information. You may already be receiving a flood of college view books, brochures, and letters as a result of taking various national tests. Each college insists that they offer the most and the best. Many students feel a lot of pressure to make the correct college choice. In reality, there are probably a dozen or more correct colleges for you. Often, it is not what the college will do for you, but rather, the amount of effort you put into the experience that makes the difference. A positive attitude is more closely related to college success than is the degree of services a college may offer. Nevertheless, it is important to have some guidelines for evaluating and sorting through the bewildering array of college options.

### DETERMINING THE RIGHT COLLEGE

#### **1. How does the college recruit students and does it offer special programs to ease the transition to college and sharpen students' basic skills?**

College recruiters should be actively seeking students of differing personalities, backgrounds, ages, and perspectives. Admissions counselors should be able to put you in touch with recent graduates and also be able to tell you which students are less likely to be successful. Colleges should recognize the special challenges of your freshman year by taking steps to help you feel at home and by acquainting you with campus resources. Most colleges offer freshmen orientation programs. In addition, a good college will help freshmen enhance the necessary skills for successful college work-- verbal and written communication, basic computing, and research skills. A student should be expected to demonstrate these skills in all classes, not just in English.

Questions to ask: What type of student is most likely to succeed? Most unlikely? How many freshmen transfer after one year? How many stay and graduate? Are students involved in planning freshmen orientation? When is it held and how does it work? What library services are available to undergraduates, and how do students learn to use them?

#### **2. Will the college's academic programs fully prepare you for the world in which you will work and live?**

An effective college should ensure that all students will master a wide range of core courses and that professors, in every subject, will relate their disciplines to others and to current world concerns. Check the college's catalog/website to read course requirements and descriptions.

Questions to ask: How does the college support students wanting to design their own programs or to develop an interdisciplinary major? In what departments are computer skills taught? How do professors relate their courses to current world events? How are students involved in scheduling speakers and other cultural programs on campus? How does the college encourage and develop links between the classroom and the outside world?

### **3. Do college policies promote intellectual excitement?**

A quality education should not be too easy. Freshmen should be taught by the best, most experienced professors on campus. Faculty members should demonstrate a command of their subject, enthusiasm for learning and support for the exchange of ideas. Colleges that care about teaching encourage faculty members to meet with students outside of class and train faculty to be good advisors. Also, a good college will offer you the necessary resources such as labs, computers, library materials, etc. for you to have access to the most up-to-date research in your field of study. Refer to college guides, catalogs, and the Internet for more information or better yet take a campus tour.

Questions to ask: How many professors are in their offices with open doors to encourage student visits? Do the best professors teach freshman? Are campus labs, computer centers, studios, and theatres adequate to meet student needs? Ask students to tell you about the best professors they've had and why? What off-campus or study abroad learning experiences are offered in your field?

### **4. Is the campus community vigorous, diverse, caring and unified?**

A good college does not separate academic and extracurricular activities. Quality colleges also encourage a broad spectrum of student activities and ask students to determine how college funds are shared among student groups. Students should feel part of a community that not only understands its own mission but also demonstrates concern for the broader community. It is increasingly common to see students, faculty and staff unite to support a community service project such as feeding the homeless, creating adult literacy programs, etc. Such colleges often institute honor codes to enforce high standards of conduct.

Questions to ask: How well kept are the residence halls? How involved are students in governing residence halls? Do students value health and study skills sessions? How many students are involved in community service projects? How often do administrators seek student views on important issues? Is academic achievement considered as important as athletic or social success? Does the college have an honor code? Is the campus friendly?

### **5. Does the college demonstrate a commitment to wellness and to students' personal growth and safety?**

The college should support a model of prevention and the importance of maintaining wellness. In response to new information on diet, exercise, stress, relaxation, substance abuse, etc., colleges have developed wellness programs for faculty, staff, and students. The goal is to provide information and support for the psychological, physical, and spiritual aspects of healthy living. Good colleges have also refocused their security efforts to emphasize education and crime prevention. Measures such as improved campus lighting and telephone access, or greater provisions for security patrols and escorts are examples of safety conscious efforts.

Questions to ask: During what hours are exercise rooms, running tracks, swimming pools, and counseling centers open? With which hospital is the college affiliated? What health insurance plans are available? Which faiths sponsor spiritual counselors on campus? Do dining halls offer salad bars and fresh fruits? What are the prevailing attitudes about mental health? What are students' attitudes about security? Is the campus well lit? Do security officers patrol 24 hours a day?

## **6. Is the college attuned to you and your needs and interests?**

Does the campus have what you really want? For example, does it have the academics that will suit your individual needs? Does the campus provide opportunities and encourage participation in foreign travel, personal research, or other activities?

If you read college publications with your priorities and questions in mind, you'll probably save time by weeding out institutions that don't measure up. Now, as you select colleges for your college list, you'll know what to look for and what questions to ask. Ultimately, the process of making a final college choice can be both rewarding and fun.

\* Information in this section is adapted from "The New Measure of College Quality," by Catherine L. O'Shea, as it appeared in Peterson's Guide to Four-Year Colleges 1991.

## **7. What type of "safety net" does the college provide for students needing additional help?**

Prospective students should consider the counseling and academic assistance programs provided to students.

Questions to ask: Do you have an academic assistance and/or tutoring program available for all students? How does it operate? Is there a cost for this assistance? Does the college have a counseling program for students having personal difficulties? What services does the college provide in preparing for a career? Is there a job placement program?\*

\*Presentation by Columbia College on June 19, 2006

## **STEP 3 – COST DETERMINATION**

### **General**

The cost of going to college is something you and your family should think about early in your college planning. Costs differ from one institution to another, so you should make an estimate for each of the colleges you are considering. Your total budget should include the following expenses for each year of study.

### **Tuition and Fees**

Tuition and fees are usually charged on a semester basis. Some colleges also offer course work in the summer period (June - August); if you plan to take courses in the summer, you must increase your budget to allow for additional tuition and fees. Generally, tuition charged for attending a state school is less than that charged by a private institution. At some colleges a student may take between twelve and eighteen credit hours for the same tuition price. At other colleges a student's exact costs will vary with the number of credit hours he or she carries. Many colleges charge additional fees for special music or art classes, for participation in activities, for athletics or for laboratory costs. Remember that tuition and fees listed in a college guide may be outdated.

### **Room and Board**

Room and board includes the charges for a room in college housing (usually shared with one other student) and regular meals for the nine-month academic year. The cost of meals varies according to the type of program you choose. For example, there are breakfast-and-dinner plans, five-day meal plans, or seven-day meal plans. Some college meal plans are optional; students living in apartments or off-campus may choose to prepare their own meals. (This may be more economical for you). Again, add the cost for housing and meals for the summer period if you are planning to attend summer school.

### **Books and Supplies**

The cost of books and supplies varies. If you are planning to study in a field that requires special supplies, such as engineering, art, or architecture, your expenses are likely to be higher than average. Some college bookstores offer discounts on used books or students can download books electronically. Other supplies you should plan on buying include a computer, notebook paper, binders, pens/pencils, etc...

### **Transportation**

Transportation costs will depend upon the location of the college that you plan to attend. If it is some distance, you will need to start with the cost of two round-trip tickets from your home to school each year. This will increase if you plan to come home more than at the start and the end of the school year. If you are going to a school in the area, then the cost of commuting to the college should be calculated at roughly \$.60 per mile. If you live off-campus, you will have to calculate the mileage from your apartment to the campus and the cost of a parking permit. If you live on campus, consider if the college will allow freshmen to have cars on campus. The fees for parking cars off-campus can be very expensive (\$200 to \$300 per semester).

### **Other Personal Expenses**

Personal expenses include such costs as health insurance, clothing, laundry, telephone bills, entertainment, and snacks. If you have special medical needs, additional funds may be needed to meet your living expenses.

### **Inflation and Tuition Increases**

Over the past several years, we have seen a steady increase in tuition costs from South Carolina colleges and universities. When on a tight budget, even a small increase could make the difference between attending or not. Make allowances of 10% per year for such increases and fluctuations in tuition, books, and housing costs.

**Out-of-State Charges**

If you are going to attend a state-supported college or university in another state, you are going to have to pay much more than residents of that state. Also, the admissions process to an out-of-state school is more difficult and very selective. If you attend a college or university that does not have a major offered by any college or university in this state and South Carolina has a reciprocal agreement with that state, you may attend at in-state tuition rates. Check on it.

## COLLEGE COST COMPARISON

As you consider the schools to which you plan to apply, compare the costs of attending each school. Remember that college costs are rising and are likely to be somewhat higher by the time you enter college. It is best, when comparing costs, to use a single source of information such as the COLLEGE COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID GUIDE available in the Guidance Office, or check with the college's website (Financial aid will be discussed in a later section of this guide.)

List below your top four college choices from the College List you developed in Step 2 (you may want to duplicate this page first in order to compare the costs of all of the colleges on your list). Then fill out the costs for each school. Refer to the school's financial information as obtained from a college guide, a college website or from the literature the college may have already sent you.

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4
<b>COLLEGE NAME</b>				
<b>TUITION+15%</b>				
<b>ROOM &amp; BOARD +15%</b>				
<b>BOOKS &amp; SUPPLIES+15%</b>				
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>				
<b>PERSONAL EXPENSES</b>				
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>				

Don't rule out any college on the basis of cost alone. Investigate the financial aid resources at schools that seem beyond your ability to pay.

## STEP 4--APPLICATION MECHANICS

### Applying for Admission

One way that college is different from high school is that you are usually assigned work at the beginning of the semester. Then you are on your own to plan and complete your assignments by the deadlines prescribed in a syllabus or course outline. The application process is very similar. Following the "timeline" in the beginning of this guide, you now have an opportunity to practice organizing yourself and accomplishing tasks within the suggested time limit. For instance, in the July and August that precede your senior year, you will contact colleges in which you are interested and request application materials. From then on, you must keep track of all deadlines and be certain to file applications well in advance of those dates. Refer to the "Application Process Guide" below.

## APPLICATION PROCESS GUIDE

### 1. Obtain Applications.

After reading college guides, attending College Fairs and researching the Web, you will have developed a list of 5 to 10 colleges that meet your qualifications and interests. Use the sample letter below to prepare individual requests to each college for application and financial aid information. You will apply online; however, an initial contact with the school is still a good idea. You could use the following letter as an e-mail.

<p>Month, Day, Year</p> <p>Admissions Office (use name and title if known)</p> <p>Name of College</p> <p>Address of College (include city, state, and zip code)</p> <p>To Whom It May Concern (or name of Admissions Officer using Mr. or Ms.):</p> <p>I am interested in applying for admission to (name of university or college) as a freshman for the fall semester of _____. I am a currently a senior at _____. I would appreciate receiving the following information:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Application for admission</li> <li>2. A college catalog or bulletin.</li> <li>3. Application for on-campus housing.</li> <li>4. Financial aid information and form. (Include if appropriate).</li> </ol> <p>Please send the requested information to the following address:</p> <p>Name</p> <p>Address</p> <p>City, Country (U.S. addresses require City, State, and Zip Code)</p> <p>Thank you for your assistance. Sincerely,</p> <p>(signature)</p> <p>Your Name Typed Here</p> <p>Your email address</p>
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Some college advisors recommend sending separate requests to admissions offices and financial aid offices because big campuses house these offices in separate buildings. If financial aid is a critical issue for you, it may be worth mailing two letters to assure the sending of the appropriate information. A letter addressed to the financial aid office would request financial aid information only.

## **2. Get Organized...Try a Folder System**

Organizing yourself now will save you time and headaches later on! In each folder place the following information: application form, college catalog or bulletin, financial aid material, correspondence between you and the school, and any other relevant material (for example, your impressions of the school obtained on a campus tour).

## **3. Make a Working List...Talk to Your Counselor!**

Now is the time to start preparing applications to those schools that you are considering. It may be helpful to create a comparison chart (on a separate piece of paper) to aid you in narrowing down choices (see sample below).

Factors:	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
How Selective?				
Admission category?				
Financial Aid Availability?				
Dorms/Campus Environment?				
Sports/Activities?				
Total Expenses?				

Remember to categorize your applications as suggested in the "What Are Your Chances?" section of this guide. Your list of applications should range from approximately five colleges to no more than ten. If you are undecided about a particular school, put the folder aside. Come back to that college after you have completed the remainder of your list and then determine whether you wish to attend the school. Apply only to universities you would be happy to attend! A school is not considered "safe" if you really don't want to go there. In that case, why bother applying?

## **4. What Type of Admission Will You Seek?**

Most colleges have application procedures that fit one or more of the following categories:

**Early Decision:** Under this type of plan, you apply early to a specific college and they agree to notify you in December of their decision. It is understood that you can only apply to one school for early decision and that if you are accepted you will withdraw applications made to any other colleges. The college may accept you, defer you to a regular admissions status, or reject you. Deadlines range from October 15 to January 1 of your senior year, depending upon the particular school. You should apply for Early Decision only if you are confident that a particular college is your first choice. Once you have been accepted for Early Decision by a university, you are ethically bound to attend. You may have to pay an additional handling fee for requesting an early decision on your application.

**Early Action:** This type of plan is offered only at a limited number of very selective schools. You may apply Early Action to only one of these colleges, but you are allowed to apply to the other universities under their regular admissions procedures at any time. Deadlines for filing are around November 1 of your senior year. Students are notified of their acceptance, deferral or rejection in December. If you are accepted, you are not obligated to make your final decision until May 1. Thus, Early Action differs from Early Decision in that you are not obligated to attend the accepting institution.

**Rolling Admission:** Under this admission plan colleges process applications throughout the year on a first-come, first-served basis until the freshman class is filled. You are notified of your acceptance or rejection several weeks after you have applied. If the school abides by the Candidates Reply Date Agreement then you will not be forced to agree to attend until after decisions have been made on all of your other applications. There is value in having at least one rolling admissions school on your list as it helps to reduce the anxiety most students have about being accepted. Watch other things on this process! Some colleges will accept, but housing may be limited and this, not academic qualifications, may limit a student's ability to attend a particular college.

**Early Evaluation:** The few colleges that use this plan give your application an early reading and rate you as a "Likely", "Possible", and "Unlikely" candidate. If you are rated "Likely", then you have a good chance of gaining admission to the institution. If you are rated "Possible", then you have a 50-50 chance of admission. An "Unlikely" rating tells you to concentrate your efforts elsewhere.

**Standard Admission:** Under this plan your application must be submitted to a college before a specific date, usually Jan 1, Jan. 15, Feb. 1, Feb. 15, or Mar. 1. The exact date varies from college to college. Generally, you will hear from the school in early April. You may be accepted, you may be rejected, or you may be placed on a waiting list. If accepted, you must commit yourself around May 1. If you are wait-listed, it means that the college reserves the right to offer you admission if they lack sufficient students who accept their offer of admission to the freshman class. Some colleges take students off their waiting list in late April and some continue the process until August. Each school's procedure is different.

## **5. Application Paper Work: It gets done IF you are organized!**

You will soon be an expert in completing forms... There will be many to complete. Some applications are more complex than others. However, they all ask essentially the same questions. Who are you? What have you done in school and in your community? What is important to you? What do your teachers think of you? These questions are answered on an Application Form, a School Report Form, an Essay or Personal Statement and on Recommendation Forms. **Most of this information is completed and submitted online.**

## **6. Waiver of Rights**

Many college applications have a question asking if you waive your right to see what a counselor or teacher writes about you in a recommendation. Experience tells us that colleges prefer to receive confidential letters of recommendation since they believe that teachers and counselors are more apt to be honest when the letters are not accessible to students. If the right is not waived some admissions officers may place less value on a candidate's recommendations. The federal law on which this waiver is based only allows you access to the files at a school you are attending. It is not a right that gives you any real protection or real access to information. You will also find that most staff members will agree to let you read their letters before they are sent if asked.

## **7. Secondary School Report Form**

This part of the application is submitted through the Common App. Students should complete the online portion of the form, the section which identifies you, and then submit it electronically. Under some circumstances, guidance will complete this form, and the student will submit it directly to the college. The report will include a school profile, any recommendations on file, a copy of your transcript, including class rank, and a list of your current courses. **If the college requests grades, students can send a copy of their first semester grades to each college through Common App. The colleges call this a High School Midyear Report. You are responsible for submitting those forms to your school counselor so that he/she can submit them to the requested colleges. Most forms are submitted electronically. It is important to know your counselor's email address.**

## **8. Other Suggestions For Completing Applications**

- Practice on a photocopied application.
- MAKE IT NEAT!!! WHITEOUT, SLOPPINESS, ERASURES, AND STRIKE OVERS COMMUNICATE A BAD MESSAGE ABOUT YOU.
- If the computer keyboard is "not your thing" you should ask your counselor for a copy of the application or print a copy of an actual on-line application for your practice exercise.

## **9. A Special Word On Official Test Scores**

**TEST SCORES SENT TO COLLEGES BY YOU OR THE GUIDANCE OFFICE ARE NOT OFFICIAL TEST SCORES. STUDENTS SHOULD REQUEST TO HAVE THEIR SCORES SENT DIRECTLY TO THE COLLEGE BY THE COLLEGE BOARD OR ACT TESTING AGENCY.**

## THE ESSAY

Many college applications ask for one or more types of essays. Some essays ask you to respond to a question or statement in a short-answer, in a paragraph, or in a full-page essay. Your writing is a significant source of information, enabling an Admissions Committee to learn more about you than is revealed by your grades and test scores. Since the essay is an important part of your application, it will be read carefully; you should treat it seriously. The process of writing an essay involves four steps: planning, writing a first draft, editing and revising, and writing a final draft. Bear in mind the following tips:

1. Be sure you understand the college's topics and directions. Check its publications for descriptions of the personal qualities it is looking for in an applicant. An essay for that college might demonstrate and persuade the institution that you have those qualities.
2. If a question requires that you write about yourself, use the personal inventory you compiled in Step 1 (your goals, values, high school resume, etc.) to focus your response.
3. Since most colleges ask questions that are similar, it is advisable to make a list of all the questions and compare the similarities. It is usually possible to write a good essay that can be used for several colleges.
4. It helps to discuss the questions with a friend, teacher, or counselor if you need help selecting a topic.
5. Think about the format you might use to convey your essay topic. Straight prose is fine, but if your theme lends itself to another approach, try it. You may win points for creativity. Write a rough draft of your essay. Set the draft aside for 24 hours, and then read it to spot clichés, triteness, vagueness, dullness, grammatical errors, and misspellings. Is your essay focused on your theme, or does it ramble? Is it confusing, or boring? Does the introduction "grab" the reader's attention?
6. Ask someone you trust and respect to read your essay and give you his or her candid impressions. But you must not let this person rewrite your essay. Although you may seek help from others in selecting a topic or in editing, you must do the writing. College Admissions Committees are not easily fooled.
7. Be accurate and write sincerely in your best natural style. Use simple and concise language.
8. Avoid trying to guess what the college wants you to say. There are no "right" answers to the essay questions.
9. Avoid trying to be funny or clever. If you are naturally humorous and clever in the use of language, exercise your talent, but avoid trying to force humor.
10. Type the final draft of your essay onto the application form unless you are specifically asked to respond in your own handwriting. If so, use blue or black ink, and be sure your responses are neat and legible.
11. Confine your answers to the space provided.
12. If an optional essay or paragraph is suggested, do it! It will show you are willing to go the extra mile.

### **Letters of Recommendation by Principals, Teachers, & Counselors**

Your school counselor or principal will, at your request, prepare a letter of recommendation that will be sent with any School Reports requested by colleges. You may also be asked to submit one or two letters from teachers who know you well. Both of these requirements should be discussed with your counselor and teachers well in advance of any college deadlines. Teachers are happy to respond to your request for letters; however, they are not able to write separate letters for each school. Your first step is to personally ask a teacher for a letter and provide them with a copy of the Personal Data Form described below. They will write your letter and submit it to you or submit it electronically to the college, at your request. If a college provides you with a specific form, please give it to the counselor. Most forms are submitted electronically from the student's online college account.

### **Recommendation Form**

Before requesting recommendation letters complete the Personal Data Form on page 42. Also, attach a copy

of your high school resume. This form requires you to summarize your goals and activities as an aid for the people who write your recommendations. Your guidance counselor may also require a short interview to gather additional information.

### **Other Notes on Recommendation Letters**

- You should always make your request for a letter of recommendation in person.
- Do not assume that it will be done without a direct talk with the writer.
- Be sure to make your request well in advance of any deadlines.
- Your teachers, administrators and counselors are doing you a favor, so be sure to extend them the courtesy of sufficient time.
- It is also important to thank them once the letter is written.

## Personal Data Form for Recommendations

### NOTE TO STUDENT

Many colleges and universities and scholarship applications often require recommendation letters from teachers and counselors. The information you provide on this form will be used to help the writer in preparing your letter. The more detailed you can be, the better a letter they will be able to write. Please print your responses neatly as the form will be duplicated and sent to each person you have listed on the upper right hand corner of this page. Remember, you are responsible for requesting a recommendation personally from each person you list on the form. Recommenders may require that you interview with them before they write a letter so be sure to give them sufficient time to meet college deadlines. Submit this form to the person.

### NOTE TO TEACHERS

Recommendation letters provide important support for student applications. We suggest that you focus on specific observations of activities, projects, or talents that you can support with anecdotal comments. Since writing ability is an important consideration in applications, any comments that can be made about a student's ability to use language would be appropriate. Please return your completed recommendation to the Guidance Office. Your comments will be handled with the level of confidentiality selected by the student on the waiver statement on the back of this form. If you have any questions or concerns about how best to proceed, please feel free to stop by the Guidance Office for additional information.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ (Last, First, and Middle Names)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

### COLLEGE PLANS

- Describe the type of college or university you are seeking. (Location, size, private/public or list schools to which you know you will be applying.)


- List the specific schools and/or scholarship organizations for which you need a recommendation. Addresses and contact persons should be included. A letter is much more effective when addressed to a person and not "To Whom It May Concern."


- What are your educational objectives? If you have decided on an academic major, please include it here.


- Why did you select the major listed above?


- Please describe what you think you might be doing 5 years from now.


## EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

1. List previous high schools and include their location. (State/country and grades of attendance.)


2. If you had high school to do over again, what might you do differently?


3. What subjects/courses have you liked best? Why?


4. What subjects/courses have been most difficult for you? Why?


5. Is your high school record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? Please comment on any circumstances that may have interfered with your academic performance.


6. Attach a copy of your resume to this recommendation.


7. Name one thing in school, at work, or in the community that happened (success) as a direct result of your hard work and leadership. (STAR – Situation, Task, Action, Result)


8. Which school or non-school award or activity has been most meaningful to you? Why?


9. What activities do you participate in outside of school? (For example, include church, hobbies, volunteer work, sports, etc.) How many hours per week do you spend on charitable activities?


10. Do you work? If so, how many hours per week? What are your duties on the job?


#### SELF-APPRAISAL

1. What is your greatest strength? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your greatest weakness? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Note anything else about yourself that you think should be included in a recommendation.


**Student Access Statement:** It is your responsibility to inform teachers in advance about the level of confidentiality you select for the letters of recommendation you ask them to write. Some teachers prefer to write letters only when a student has no access, which means you will not be able to read the letter of recommendation. Other teachers will want you to have full access, and may even provide you with copies of their letters. There may also be some who will agree to giving you partial access, which means that they, and /or your counselor, will discuss the general tone of the letter but you will not read it directly and copies will not be provided. The choice of access is yours, but you must talk about your preference with your teachers in advance so that they have knowledge of that preference before they agree to write a letter for you. Admissions officers place more value in a letter if the student has not had the opportunity to read it. Please signify your choice by putting your initials in the appropriate blank and signing and dating this form.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

NO ACCESS  FULL ACCESS  PARTIAL ACCESS

## INTERVIEWS

The admissions interview is changing in importance. Although most colleges still grant interviews, very few require them, and many do not consider them in their decisions because they are swamped with applicants and cannot interview everyone.

Some colleges have replaced interviews with group information sessions, which may include campus tours for small groups of applicants and their parents. In some cases (like living overseas), it is more likely that a college alumni who lives in the area will be appointed by the college to meet with prospective students to discuss the college and answer questions. Be sure to check with the Guidance Office to see which college offers tours. It is usually possible to schedule personal interviews with these college representatives.

If you are interested in a college that does not require an interview, you may want to consider an interview if you feel your application does not convey your real strengths; if you need to explain something that affected your grades in high school, such as an illness or a family divorce; or if you simply want to personalize your application. You may also benefit from an interview if you are a student with a borderline application, provided you have something meaningful to say.

## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF AN INTERVIEW

1. Before the interview, study print and online materials about the college and review your responses to the exercises in Step 1 of this guide and on your "Personal Data Form." Remember the two subjects most likely to be discussed are "you" and "the college."
2. Develop specific questions about the college: its programs, facilities, and any other topic important to you but not covered in materials you have received. Listed below are some typical examples of the kinds of questions students ask:
  - When must I declare a major? Is it difficult to switch?
  - Do senior faculty members teach freshmen?
  - Which departments are considered the strongest on this campus?
  - Are off-campus programs available for credit? Co-op programs? Internships? Study abroad?
  - How diverse is the student body? Does one group dominate?
  - What happens on weekends? Do many students go off-campus?
  - What services does the university offer for international students?
  - What facilities are available for sports and exercise?
  - What kinds of counseling and placement services are available if I need them?
  - Are there any hidden qualities that I should know about this school? Any recent or upcoming changes?
  - How would you describe the sense of community and school spirit at this college?

3. Rehearse answers to questions about your test scores, grades, courses, extracurricular activities or employment, your goals, how you spent your summers, and why you are interested in this college. Listed below are some examples of questions college interviewers like to ask.
  - Why are you considering this college?
  - What might your teachers say is your greatest strength as a person? As a student? What are your shortcomings in those areas?
  - Do you have a hero or heroine? Who and why?
  - If you could reach for a telephone and talk to any living person, whom would you call? Why?
  - Have you ever thought of not going to college? What might you do instead?
  - What events this year have made you feel indignant? Involved?
  - What do you do in your spare time?
  - What do you enjoy reading?
4. Don't forget to carry your half of the conversation. An interview is an exchange of information. Be prepared to take some initiative, to mention those things you want to emphasize and do so with enthusiasm.
5. Be on time, neatly dressed and well groomed. Be aware of non-verbal cues such as maintaining eye contact, shaking hands firmly, and maintaining good posture.
6. Answer questions to the best of your ability, but don't be afraid to admit you don't know something.
7. Thank the interviewer before you leave and send a thank-you note later.

## IMPORTANT REMINDERS

### **Complete Financial Aid Forms Before The Deadlines.**

If you are applying for financial aid, be sure you have the appropriate forms. Work on a photocopy first and when all the information is complete and correct, transfer it to the online application. In most cases, you will need parental assistance to complete the forms. Electronically submit all forms before the deadline date. Ask your counselor for clarification when needed. It is also strongly suggested that you contact the financial aid department at the college which you are considering as well for help and suggestions.

### **Proofread And Save All Completed Forms.**

This step is essential! Check both applications for admission and financial aid for accuracy, spelling, grammar, word usage, etc. A professional presentation is important for all forms. Be sure to save and file your final completed applications, including essays, to be prepared in case of electronic submission errors.

### **See Your School Counselor To Discuss Submitting Applications.**

Most applications for admission should be submitted between Thanksgiving and the end of the first semester (except for Early Decision applications due earlier—check with the college). Upon your request, The Guidance Office will compile the additional parts required to complete your application (such as recommendation letters and official transcripts) to submit electronically. **It is the student's responsibility to make sure that all applications and any supplemental forms are submitted by the application deadline. Most forms are submitted electronically.**

### **Send All Required Test Scores. This Is Your Responsibility!**

Most colleges require official score reports of the SAT or ACT tests be sent directly to their institution from the Educational Testing Service in New Jersey. You are responsible for requesting the scores and paying fees. Remember, that each time you register for any of these tests, your test fees include the sending of four reports to colleges named on your registration form. You should do this on line. Reports to more than four colleges can be requested at an additional cost. Your scores will reach the colleges about four weeks after the test is given. It pays to be organized so you can take advantage of this service.

### **Inform Each College Of Your Final College Choice.**

Now that your applications are in, relax and enjoy the summer. Some students plan trips to their college for campus tours or campus interviews (Both should be arranged ahead of time.) This can be an excellent opportunity for you to gather more information to help you make your final college choice. Remember college acceptances can begin during 1<sup>st</sup> semester and continue through April. When you decide on the college of your choice, be sure to send registration and/or housing deposits by the required deadlines. Avoid responding affirmatively to more than one college to allow you more time to decide. The practice of double-depositing is considered unethical and some colleges now check with each other to see which students have sent in deposits. Do not forget to write a short letter to any other colleges that have accepted you to inform them of your final college choice.

## COLLEGE APPLICATION LOG

This form can help you keep track of your progress in processing your applications.

	#1	#2	#3	#4
COLLEGE NAME City and State				
Application Date Requested				
Date Received				
Application Deadline				
Essay (s) Date Completed				
Requested Teacher Recommendations				
Application mailed Hard Copy/Date				
Online/Date				
Fee Sent/Amount				
Tests Taken SAT/ACT				
Scores submitted to college.				

## TEST SCORES EXPLAINED

### General

It is important to keep in mind that test scores are just one of many indicators that colleges and scholarship agencies use when they evaluate students for admission, financial aid, or course placement. Test scores and high school grades together are usually better indicators of future academic success than either is alone. WE ADVISE STUDENTS TO TAKE BOTH THE ACT AND THE SAT!

### SAT Test Scores

SAT scores for the Reading, Math, and Writing sections are expressed as numbers on a scale that ranges from a low of 200 to a high of 800. Scores of around 500 are usually considered average. The SAT score range is between 400 and 1600 for your total score and 200-800 for each of your two sub scores, Math and Reading/Writing. The reading score indicates the degree of verbal fluency which is considered highly essential for academic success in college. The math score measures math skills important for students who plan to pursue university training in the fields of science, engineering, accounting, statistics, etc. The writing section measures a student's ability to write and apply proper grammar and usage.

### ACT Scores

ACT scores are reported in four areas--English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science reasoning. A composite score is the average of the four test scores. Composite (average) score on the four tests range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). Seven sub-scores are also provided to help you identify particular areas of strength and weakness. The sub-scores range from 1 (low) to 18 (high). ACT scores are a measure of your current level of educational development in the areas that the tests cover. Knowledge and skill in these areas are generally essential for admission to college and are considered important for success in college studies. Most colleges now accept the ACT as an entrance examination. Check with the college to which you are applying to be sure.

## TEST COMPARISON CHART

TEST	DESCRIPTION	WHY TAKE IT?	WHEN TO TAKE
PreACT	This test is administered to all 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students. Test is a predictor of success on the ACT and is a tool in helping with career and academic achievement.	Provides valuable information to the student on areas of weakness in their preparation for college.	All 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students will take in the first semester.
PSAT/NMSQT Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test	Multiple choice test which consists of three sections-- Verbal, Math, and Writing	Provides practice for taking the SAT later. You receive your test booklet to analyze strengths and weaknesses. Juniors may enter scholarship programs.	Take first semester of Grade 11; can take as early as Grade 10.
SAT Scholastic Aptitude Test	3 hour multiple choice test that tests Evidence-Based Reading/Writing/Language and Math.	SAT scores are used by colleges as one factor to help decide on admissions. It is also used by some organizations to determine scholarship winners.	Take 2nd semester of Grade 11.
ACT American College Testing Program	The ACT is America's most widely accepted college entrance exam. The test consisting of 4 sections: English; Mathematics; Reading; and Science The writing test is optional and measures skills in planning and writing a short essay.	ACT scores are accepted by colleges for admissions. Like the SAT take either or both tests--the ACT covers more topic areas.	Take in Grade 11 or Grade 12.
AP Advanced Placement Testing Program	Advanced Placement (AP) is a program that teaches college level courses in high school. Students in the honors program take a series of prerequisite courses prior to enrolling in the AP course.	Students passing the test will receive college credit. Depending upon the score, 3.0 to 5.0, and the college, students may exempt 3 to 6 hours of college work saving the parents money and enabling the student to graduate quicker or take a lighter course load.	Generally taken in 11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> grades.

<b>TEST</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>WHY TAKE IT?</b>	<b>WHEN TO TAKE</b>
COMPASS/ASSET/ ACCUPLACER TESTS	The COMPASS/ASSET/ACCUPLACER tests are assessment tests used primarily by technical and two-year colleges to place students in courses and/or programs of study.	These tests help identify skill level in major subject areas in order to place you in the best courses for your skill level.	Generally taken in the 12 <sup>th</sup> grade year.

## FINANCIAL AID

The following information was provided by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. For additional information visit their website at [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov). Award amounts quoted in this section may change. Visit the website for updated information. Also regulations and policies change. It is the student and the parent's responsibility to work with the college financial aid representatives to obtain funding for an education. This information is presented as a guide to help in that process.

### WHAT IS FINANCIAL AID?

Financial Aid is money supplied by some source outside of the family to help pay for the cost of a student's education beyond high school, commonly referred to as postsecondary education. Postsecondary education includes colleges and universities, postsecondary vocational schools and technical, trade, and business schools.

### TWO BASIC CATEGORIES OF AID

#### **Need-Based Aid**

Need-based aid constitutes the major portion of assistance available for postsecondary education. When a student does not have sufficient family resources to pay for an education beyond high school, that student is considered to have a financial need. Having financial need is the primary requirement for receiving need-based aid, although the student will have to meet other eligibility criteria as well. Whether or not the student has sufficient family resources to meet the cost of attending a postsecondary school is usually determined by collecting financial data about the student and his or her family. The data is analyzed according to a standard set of calculations. This need assessment, or need analysis as it is generally called, results in an Expected Family Contribution, which is abbreviated as EFC. The EFC represents the amount of resources, in dollars, that the student and his or her family are expected to have available to contribute towards postsecondary educational expenses for a given year.

#### **Non-Need Based Aid**

Non need-based aid may also be referred to as merit-based aid and is generally given to students in recognition of special skills, talent, or academic ability. Qualifications for merit-based aid are usually competitive in nature, and recipients are chosen because of their superiority in whatever criteria used for selection. Non need-based aid may also be awarded based on other criteria such as field of study, community service, or leadership abilities.

(Reprinted from *The Advisor: A Counselor's Guide to Student Financial Assistance*. 1998-99 Edition)

### TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

Within each category of financial aid (need-based and non need-based), there are three types of aid:

1. Grants- Do not have to be repaid, nor do they have to be earned.
2. Loans- A loan does have to be repaid, unless it carries a provision that allows all or part of it to be canceled if the student fulfills certain requirements.
3. Employment-A straightforward exchange of money for work performed.

## SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

For each type of aid (grant, loan, employment), there are four sources: federal, state, institutional, and private.

1. Federal--The federal government is the largest source of need-based aid. Most federal aid is made available through the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
2. State--State-supported financial aid varies from state to state and may carry restrictions regarding residency in the state and/or attendance at a school within the state.
3. Institutional--Many colleges and universities also provide need-based and non need-based aid to their students. This type of aid is usually referred to as institutional aid and varies by school.
4. Private--Private aid can be a significant help in meeting education costs and reducing debt, but typically requires the most work on the part of the student in terms of locating the sources of funding and applying for the aid. (Reprinted from *The Advisor: A Counselor's Guide to Student Financial Assistance*, 1998-99 Edition).

## HOW CAN STUDENTS LOCATE INFORMATION CONCERNING FINANCIAL AID?

The easiest way for students to locate financial aid information is through the Internet. They can also access information at their local library, bookstore, or the postsecondary institution they plan to attend.

## FEDERAL FINANCIAL AID PROGRAMS

Federal Pell Grant--Federal Pell Grant, unlike a loan, does not have to be repaid. Pell Grants are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned bachelors' or professional degrees.

Check the website or college financial aid office for the current maximum amount that this program will pay. The maximum can change each award year and depends on program funding. The amount will depend not only on financial need, but also on the costs to attend school, a student's status as a full-time or part-time student, and plans to attend school for a full academic year or less.

Your school can apply Pell Grant funds to your school costs, pay you directly (usually by check), or combine these methods. The school must tell you in writing how and when you'll be paid and how much your award will be. Schools must disburse funds at least once per term (semester, trimester, or quarter). Schools that do not use semesters, trimesters, or quarters must disburse funds at least twice per academic year.

### **Institutional Grants**

Colleges provide institutional grants to help make up the difference between college costs and what a family can be expected to contribute through income, savings, loans, and student earnings.

Other institutional grants, known as merit awards or merit scholarships, are awarded on the basis of academic achievement. Some merit awards are offered only to students whose families demonstrate financial need; others are awarded without regard to a family's finances.

Some grants come with special privileges or obligations. You'll want to find out about the types of grants awarded by each college you are considering.

## **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, Federal Work Study Program, and Direct Subsidized and Unsubsidized Loans**

The FSEOG, FWS, and Subsidized/Unsubsidized loan programs are called campus-based programs because they're administered directly by the financial aid office at each participating school. Not all schools participate in all three programs. Unlike the Federal Pell Grant Program, which provides funds to every eligible student, the campus-based programs provide a certain amount of funds for each participating school to administer each year. When the money for a program is depleted, no more awards can be made from that program for that year. So, make sure you apply for federal student aid as early as you can.

FSEOGs are gift-aid for undergraduates with exceptional financial need. Pell Grant recipients with the lowest EFCs will be the first to get FSEOGs, which don't have to be paid back. You can get between \$100 and \$4,000 a year, depending on when you apply, your financial need, and the funding at the school you're attending. FSEOGs are awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned bachelors' or professional degrees.

Federal Work-Study (FWS) Program provides part-time jobs for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need, allowing them to earn money to help pay education expenses. The program encourages community service work and work related to the recipient's course of study. FWS can help you get your foot in the door by allowing you to gain valuable experience in your chosen field before you leave school.

Subsidized and unsubsidized loans are federal student loans for eligible students to help cover the cost of higher education at a four-year college or university, community college, or trade, career, or technical school. The U.S. Department of Education offers eligible students at participating schools Direct Subsidized Loans and Direct Unsubsidized Loans. They are also called Stafford Loans.

### **Federal and Direct Stafford Loans**

Stafford Loans are a major type of federal loan. A Federal Stafford Loan is a long-term, low interest, variable rate loan available to students to help pay expenses related to attending a college or university. A number of schools participate in the William D. Ford Direct Loan Program (Direct Loans). Under this program, the funds for your Stafford Loan come directly from the federal government. If your school does not participate in Direct Loans, the funds for your Stafford Loan will come from a bank, credit union, or other lender that participates in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) Program.

If your school participates in Direct Loans, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) serves as your Stafford Loan application. If your college or career school participates in the FFEL Program, the school may give you a separate Stafford Loan application to fill out in addition to the FAFSA. In either case, after your FAFSA is processed, your school will review the results and will inform you about your loan eligibility.

### **PLUS Loans**

PLUS Loans are available through both the FFEL program and Direct Loans to meet education costs. Parents who do not have a bad credit history can borrow a PLUS Loan to pay the education expenses of a child who is a dependent student enrolled at least half time in an eligible program at an eligible school. Parents complete an application, which is available from their school's financial aid office.

To find additional information on federal student aid and to view student aid publications online, visit their web site at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) or by phone at: Federal Student Aid Information Center 1-800-4-FED-AID (1-800-433-3243)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON FEDERAL PROGRAMS

The U.S. Department of Education is the largest federal source of financial aid for college making available more than \$125 billion in aid to students. However, there is additional assistance available from a variety of programs administered by the federal government. A brief listing is provided below:

**AmeriCorps:** A service program administered by the Corporation for National and Community Service, AmeriCorps allows people of all ages and backgrounds to earn help paying for education in exchange for a year of service. The education award can be used to pay education costs at qualified institutions of higher education or training, or to repay qualified student loans. You may locate information on their website at [www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

**The U.S. Public Health Service:** A variety of loans, scholarships, and faculty loan repayment programs are available for students in the health professions. Help in several areas, including dentistry, public health, optometry, and veterinary medicine, is available through the Public Health Service, a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For additional information visit their website at <https://www.usphs.gov>.

**Access America for Students:** Access America provides links to scholarship and grant sites, state aid information, and more. Visit their website at [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov).

**The U.S. Armed Forces:** Financial aid opportunities are also available through the U.S. Army. For more information on recruitment incentives, visit the U.S. Department of Defense Defenselink Web site at [www.todaysmilitary.com](http://www.todaysmilitary.com). There are links for parents and students. You can also contact your local recruiter.

**The South Carolina National Guard College Assistance Program (SCNG CAP):** It was established in 2007, offering financial assistance to members of the South Carolina Army and Air National Guard by providing incentives for enlisting or remaining for a specified time in either the South Carolina Army or Air National Guard (SCNG). SCNG CAP is administered by the Commission on Higher Education along with the South Carolina National Guard. SCNG CAP recipients may receive up to a maximum of four thousand five hundred dollars (\$4,500) for the Army National Guard and up to a maximum of nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) for the Air National Guard per year. The cumulative total of all college assistance program benefits received may not exceed eighteen thousand dollars (\$18,000). These SCNG CAP benefits will cover the cost of attendance as defined by Title IV regulation; however, the benefit maximum per award year may be reduced if, in combination with other financial aid, the cumulative total of all aid received would exceed the cost of attendance. A SCNG CAP recipient shall not qualify for college assistance program benefits for more than one hundred thirty (130) semester hours or related quarter hours from the time of initial eligibility into the SCNG CAP. For more information, visit [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov).

## SOUTH CAROLINA SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS

### SOUTH CAROLINA NEED-BASED GRANT

#### S.C. Tuition Grant

The S.C. Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission administers the Need-based Grants Program for independent colleges and universities in South Carolina as a part of the Tuition Grants Program. The Grant must be applied directly towards tuition and fees at the college for a maximum of eight full-time semesters. The grant is available only to eligible S.C. residents attending qualified S.C. independent colleges/universities full-time at the undergraduate level.

The application for a South Carolina Tuition Grant is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA can be obtained from all South Carolina high schools, colleges, and the South Carolina Tuition Grants Commission. By submitting the FAFSA directly to the federal government's processor and by listing the South Carolina independent college of your choice in the college choice section, the Tuition Grants Commission will be able to electronically receive your application from the federal processor. The Commission will then use your application information to determine your eligibility for a South Carolina Tuition Grant. Also, since South Carolina Tuition Grants are available only to legal residents of South Carolina, be sure to accurately complete all questions on the FAFSA regarding state residency.

Because the South Carolina Tuition Grant is based on financial need, the Commission calculates financial eligibility based on the following factors: (1) family income, (2) family assets, (3) cost of the college selected, (4) number of family members in the household, and (5) the number of household members attending college.

Freshmen must graduate in the upper 75% of their high school class or score at least 900 (Critical Reading and Math only) on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or at least 19 on the American College Test (ACT) or graduate from a SC high school with at least a 2.7 GPA on the SC Uniform Grading policy to meet the academic standard for eligibility. For upperclassmen, the academic standard for eligibility requires full-time students to successfully complete and pass at least 24 semester hours each year. Students who do not meet these academic standards are ineligible for a South Carolina Tuition Grant regardless of financial need. A combination of family resources, the cost of attendance of the independent college selected, and the final funding of the Tuition Grants Program by the State Legislature determine the actual amount of each student's grant.

For additional information contact the S.C. Tuition Grants Commission at (803) 896-1120 or at <http://www.sctuitiongrants.org>.

### SOUTH CAROLINA'S MERIT BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

#### The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship

The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship is a merit-based scholarship administered by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. Palmetto Fellows may receive up to \$6,700 their freshman year and up to \$7,500 for their sophomore, junior and senior years. Half of the Scholarship is awarded in the fall term and half in the spring term. The Scholarship must be applied directly toward the cost of attendance, less any other gift aid received. Assuming continued eligibility, Palmetto Fellows may receive Scholarship funding for a maximum of eight full-time terms of study toward their first bachelor's degree or ten consecutive terms for the first approved 5 year bachelor's degree program at an eligible four-year institution in South Carolina. **The Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Enhancement** was established in 2007 to increase the number of students who major in mathematics and science in South Carolina. For

Enhancement eligibility, Palmetto Fellows must declare a major in an approved math or science program and successfully complete at least fourteen credit hours of instruction in mathematics **or** life and physical science **or** a combination of both by the end of the first academic year. Eligible students may receive up to \$10,000 per year beginning with their sophomore year of college.

Eligibility requirements include: scoring at least 1200 on the SAT or 25 on the ACT; earning a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale; ranking in the top six percent at the end of their sophomore, junior, or senior year; being enrolled in a public or private high school or an approved home school program of study; being a legal resident of South Carolina as defined in applicable State statutes governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes, being a U.S. citizen or permanent resident who meets the definition of an eligible non-citizen under State residency; be seriously considering attending, have applied, or have been accepted for admission to an eligible four-year baccalaureate-granting public or private college or university in South Carolina; certify that he or she has not been convicted of any felonies, and has not been convicted of any alcohol or drug-related misdemeanor offenses within the past academic year by submitting a signed affidavit to the financial aid office at the institution at which the student is enrolled; and certify that he or she does not owe a refund or repayment on a State Grant, Pell Grant or Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and is not in default on a loan under the Federal Perkins Loan or Federal Stafford Loan program.

#### **Alternative Criteria**

**Students with a 1400 SAT or 31 ACT and earn a minimum 4.0 cumulative GPA are now eligible without regard to class rank or 1200-SAT or 25-ACT by the June test administration of senior year and earn a minimum 3.50 GPA and rank in the top 6% of their class at the end of their sophomore, junior or senior year. Always consult with the SC Commission on Higher Education for the most up to date information.**

School counselors are required to complete the online application for eligible students. All eligible students are notified by their school counselor and are given necessary forms, which must be submitted to the SCCHE. Application materials must be submitted to the Commission on Higher Education by the established deadline. The priority deadline is usually mid-December and the final deadline during the month of June of the student's senior year.

For more information about the Palmetto Fellows Scholarship contact the Commission on Higher Education at (803) 856-0738.

#### **The LIFE Scholarship**

The Legislative for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship Program was approved by the 1998 General Assembly. The program is administered by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and is a merit-based scholarship program. The purpose of the LIFE Scholarship program is to increase access to higher education; improve employability of South Carolina's students; provide incentives for students to be better prepared for college; and to encourage students to graduate from college on time.

#### **General Eligibility Requirements:**

To qualify for a LIFE Scholarship, a student must meet ALL of the following requirements in addition to the initial eligibility requirements. If you are a first-time entering freshman you must:

- Graduate from high school or complete a home school program as prescribed by law;
- Attend an eligible South Carolina public or private college or university;
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of college enrollment;
- Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident;
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student;

- Certify that he or she has not been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor convictions within the past academic year;
- Verify that he or she does not owe a refund or repayment on any federal or state financial aid;
- Must not be a SC HOPE Scholarship, Palmetto Fellows Scholarship or Lottery Tuition.

## LIFE Scholarship Award Amounts

(Amounts are Subject to Change)

Eligible Institutions	Award Amount
Four-year public	Up to \$5,000 each academic year toward the cost of attendance
Four-year Independent	Up to a maximum of the average annual cost of-tuition at the State's four-year public institutions, not to exceed \$5,000
Two-year Public and Technical	Up to the cost-of-tuition plus a \$300 book allowance
Two-year Independent	Up to the maximum annual cost-of-tuition at the State's two-year USC regional public institutions plus a \$300 book allowance.
Life Scholarship Enhancement	Awarded <b>after</b> the freshman year after having completed a certain number of hours in approved math and/or science courses.
Please note that award amounts are dispersed half in the fall term and half in the spring term and may be used to cover the cost-of-attendance. Also, the information provided in this handout is subject to change. The Commission on Higher Education will update the information as necessary.	

### Initial Eligibility Requirements:

In order to qualify for the LIFE Scholarship, first-time entering freshman attending an eligible four-year institution must meet two of three of the following criteria:

1. **Earn a 3.0 cumulative grade point ratio on the Uniform Grading Scale by the end of the senior year.**
  - a. The grade point ratio must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The GPA must be calculated after official completion of courses required for graduation.
2. **Score an 1100 on the SAT or an equivalent 22 on the ACT**
3. SAT/ACT scores will be accepted through the June test date of the high school graduation year.
4. The student must use the highest SAT Math score combined with the highest SAT Reading score (formerly known as the Verbal score). It is permissible to select scores from different test administrations in order to obtain the qualifying composite score. Students cannot use both Reading and Writing subsection scores to meet the minimum 1100 SAT score.
5. **Graduate in the top 30% of the graduating class**
  - a. The ranking percentages must be reported in two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The class rank must be based on the Uniform Grading Scale.

If a first-time entering freshman graduates from a non-ranking South Carolina approved home school association or out-of-state preparatory school and attends an eligible two-year institution, he must earn a cumulative 3.0 grade point ratio (GPR) upon high school graduation on the Uniform Grading Scale

**First-time entering freshman attending an eligible two-year or technical institution must earn a 3.0 cumulative grade point ratio on the Uniform Grading Scale as described above (1a). The standardized test score and class rank requirements are waived; however, the college may require a placement test.**

There is no application for the LIFE Scholarship. The college or university you attend will determine eligibility based upon the official high school transcript and will notify you directly if eligible for the LIFE Scholarship. If you believe that you are eligible, but have not received information from the institution, please contact the financial aid office at the college or university for additional information.

### **Early Graduates**

Students who complete their high school graduation requirements prior to the official graduation date reported on the final high school transcript may be eligible to receive the LIFE Scholarship pending the approval of the Commission on Higher Education. An Early Graduation Application Form can be obtained from the Commission on Higher Education or [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov). The form must be submitted to CHE for consideration. Students and parents should meet with financial aid to determine eligibility.

For more information about the LIFE Scholarship contact the LIFE Scholarship coordinator at (803) 856-0738 or [www.che.sc.gov](http://www.che.sc.gov).

### **The S.C. HOPE Scholarship**

The SC HOPE Scholarship Program was established under the SC Education Lottery Act approved by the General Assembly during the 2001 legislative session. The program is a merit-based scholarship created for students attending a four-year institution who do not qualify for the LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

The scholarship is awarded during the freshman-year of attendance only. Funding for the program is included in the annual appropriation to the Commission on Higher Education and will be dependent upon the annual proceeds generated by the SC Education Lottery.

Amounts may vary. Award amounts are disbursed half in the fall term and half in the spring term. The HOPE Scholarship in combination with all other scholarships and grants shall not exceed the cost-of-attendance as defined in Title IV regulations for any academic year.

### **General Eligibility Requirements:**

In order to qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship, a student must meet the following general and initial eligibility requirements:

- Graduate from high school or complete a home school program as prescribed by law;
- Attend an eligible South Carolina public or private college or university;
- Be a South Carolina resident at the time of high school graduation and at the time of enrollment;
- Be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident;
- Be enrolled as a full-time degree-seeking student;
- Certify that he or she has not been convicted of any felonies and has not been convicted of any alcohol or other drug-related misdemeanor convictions within the past academic year;
- Verify that he or she does not owe a refund or repayment on any Federal or State financial aid; and
- Must not be a LIFE or Palmetto Fellows Scholarship recipient

### **Initial Eligibility Requirements:**

In order to qualify for the SC HOPE Scholarship, first-time entering freshman must meet the following criterion:

**Earn a 3.0 cumulative grade point ratio on the Uniform Grading Scale at the end of the senior year.**

The grade point ratio (GPR) must be reported to two decimal places (minimum) and cannot be rounded. The GPR must be calculated after official completion of courses required for graduation. For more information about the S.C. HOPE Scholarship Program, please the SC Commission on Higher Ed at (803) 856-0738.

**The Lottery Tuition Assistance Program**

The financial aid office on each two-year college campus administers the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program. The Technical College System administers the Lottery Tuition Assistance Program for technical colleges.

A student may receive up to the cost-of-tuition. For example, at Spartanburg Methodist College, the award amount is limited to the highest in-state tuition rate at a two-year public institution.

In calculating the amount awarded in Lottery Tuition Assistance, all federal grants and Need-based Grants must be awarded first before determining the amount eligible in Lottery Tuition Assistance to be used for payment towards cost-of-tuition. The college at which the student is enrolled will notify each student of the exact award amount based upon the number of eligible recipients and available funding each academic year.

In order to qualify for Lottery Tuition Assistance, a student must meet ALL of the following minimum requirements before being awarded:

- File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form and complete the process to determine eligibility for federal student aid each academic year;
- Be a legal resident of South Carolina as defined in applicable State statutes governing the determination of residency for tuition and fee purposes;
- Be enrolled at the time of the grant disbursement in a minimum of six credit hours for the term and be making satisfactory academic progress towards an associate's degree;
- Verify that he or she does not owe a refund or repayment on a State Grant, Pell Grant or a Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant and is not in default on a loan under the Federal Perkins Loan or Federal Stafford Loan program; and
- Not be eligible for or a recipient of the LIFE Scholarship.

**The Archibald Rutledge Scholarship Program**

The Archibald Rutledge Scholarship Program is administered by the State Department of Education. Archibald Rutledge was South Carolina's first Poet Laureate.

Funds are appropriated annually in his honor to be used for scholarships that are awarded in four areas: drama, creative writing, music, and visual arts. High school seniors enrolled in a South Carolina public school who are planning to attend a South Carolina college or university are eligible to apply. The students compete in one of the four areas. The money may be used for tuition, room/board, and instructional resource expenses at any South Carolina college or university.

Applications are available through high school guidance counselors or on-line. You may also contact the State Department of Education at 803-734-8500 or visit their website at <https://ed.sc.gov/instruction/standards-learning/grants-and-awards/archibald-rutledge-scholarship-program/> for additional contact information.

## SOUTH CAROLINA LOAN PROGRAMS

The S.C. Student Loan Corporation is the statewide lender for the following programs.

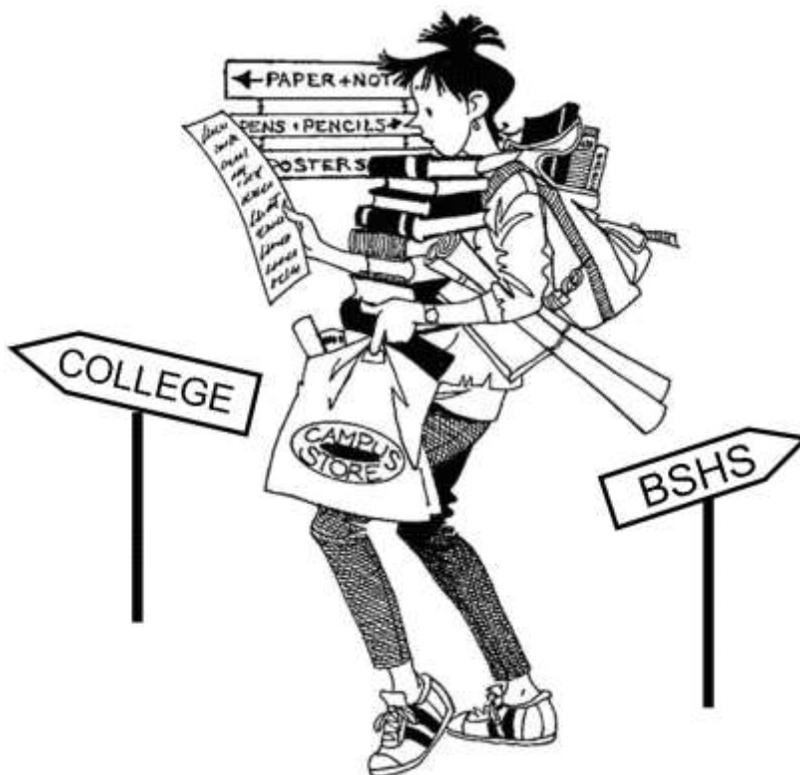
### S.C. Teachers Loans

These loans are available for those students who intend to teach within the state's public school system. This loan is cancelled by teaching in an area of critical need. In order to be eligible, entering freshmen must have been ranked in the top 40% of their high school graduating class and have a SAT or ACT score equal to or greater than the state average for the year of graduation. Enrolled undergraduate students must have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.75 on a 4.0 scale and have successfully completed the EEE/Praxis I Exam.

### Palmetto Assistance Loan

The Palmetto Assistance Loan (PAL) is the S.C. Student Loan Corporation's supplemental loan for students and parents of students who are enrolled at least half time. Undergraduate students must have a creditworthy cosigner. Repayment does not begin until the student graduates or drops to a less than half-time status.

If you need further information on these programs visit the following website: [www.scstudentloan.org](http://www.scstudentloan.org) or please call the South Carolina Student Loan Corporation at (800) 798-0916.





## TECHNICAL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

### General Information

Students have access to the technical college system of South Carolina. Students not wanting to take a four-year course of study and want to earn an associate's degree or certificate in a technical area are encouraged to apply. Most technical colleges offer a university transfer program that will allow any student to complete his first two years of college before enrolling in a four-year institution. The education at technical colleges is first-rate and will help prepare you for entry into a promising career.

### Admissions

Technical colleges have an "open door" policy and do not refuse admission to the college based on academic history or test scores. However, entry into the college does not constitute admission to a particular program of study. Placement into a program is based on standards that will offer the student success in that program.

Students who need extra help prior to entering a program of study will be provided remedial or developmental courses. These must be completed prior to taking courses directly related to degree work.

Spaces in many career programs are limited and fill quickly.

### Application Timing

Timing is critical. Students should apply at least eight weeks before the semester starts so that the process can be completed quickly.

### Requirements for Admission

- Students must submit a completed admissions application.
- Most students take the college's entrance test used for placement -OR- they have previously taken the SAT or ACT test.

**YOU DO NOT NEED TO TAKE THE SAT OR THE ACT FOR TECHNICAL COLLEGE ADMISSIONS! WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THAT YOU TAKE EITHER TEST IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO ATTEND A TECHNICAL COLLEGE.**

- Submit a high school transcript or GED scores.
- Set up an interview with an admission counselor at the technical colleges.

## WHAT IF I DO NOT GET ACCEPTED OR CAN NOT AFFORD TO GO TO THE COLLEGE OF MY CHOICE?

### General Information

What if I am not accepted to a college that I have wanted to attend ever since I was a small child? What if I simply cannot afford four years of college? What are my alternatives?

### Suggested Alternatives on Academics

- Attend a technical, junior, or two-year college and transfer. If you have high grades in a two-year program and, if you meet the requirements, you can transfer to the college of your dreams. You must show the four-year college that you have been successful and can handle college work.
- Attend a four-year college on your list and transfer. Generally, colleges will allow transfers from accredited institutions after one or two years of work. Again, you must have good grades showing that you can do college work.

### Suggested Alternatives on Finances

- Attend a university transfer program at one of the technical colleges. This will get you the same credits and save you thousands of dollars. Costs are much lower and you can work, save, and live at home.
- Find another way to obtain financial aid. Colleges give aid in a wide variety of areas including cheerleading and band. Search for something that a college would pay to have you on their campus.
- Take an associate's degree in a technical area; learn a trade; work; and then attend the college of your choice.
- Join the military and take advantage of the GI Bill benefits after enlistment.

**NOTE: MANY PEOPLE HAVE OVERCOME ACADEMICS AND FINANCES TO GRADUATE FROM THE COLLEGE OF THEIR CHOICE. REMEMBER THE FINAL DIPLOMA WILL SAY NOTHING ABOUT WHERE YOU ATTENDED TWO YEARS, BUT WILL SIMPLY STATE THAT YOU HAVE EARNED A DEGREE.**

## DO YOU WANT TO BE A COLLEGE ATHLETE?

### General Information

If you want to enroll in a college or university and want to participate in sports or receive an athletic scholarship, the NCAA has established standards that a student must meet. The standards are different for students attending Division I vs. Division II schools. The NCAA has a scale that is determined by NCAA GPA on core courses and SAT/ACT scores.

Please check with your counselor or the athletic office for more information on these requirements. They will also provide you with information on which schools are Division I and II.

### Requirements for Division I Colleges and Universities

To establish initial eligibility and participate in sports at a Division I college or university a student must meet the following criteria:

- Graduate from high school;
- Complete the minimum 16 core courses listed below;
  - Four units of English
  - Three units of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
  - Two units of a natural or physical science (including one year of a lab science if offered by your high school.
  - One extra unit of English, mathematics, or natural/physical science;
  - Two units of social science;
  - Four units of extra core courses (from any category above or foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy)
  - **NOTE:** Computer science courses can be used as core courses **only** if your high school grants graduation credit in math or natural or physical science for them, and if the courses appear on your high school's core-course list as math or science courses.
- Earn a minimal required GPA in your core courses. **THIS IS BASED ON NCAA CALCULATIONS AND NOT ON YOUR SCHOOL'S GPA CALCULATIONS.**
- Earn a combined SAT and ACT sum score that matches your CORE-COURSE GPA in the score index on pages 70-71.
- Persons not meeting these requirements will be listed as a "non-qualifier." As a "non-qualifier," you:
  - May not participate in athletic competition or practice during your first year in college;
  - May receive financial aid based solely on need; you **will not** be given any financial aid based on athletics your first year in college.
  - May play only three seasons in your sport if you maintain your eligibility from year to year (to earn a fourth season you must complete at least 80 percent of your degree requirements before beginning your fifth year of college).
  - **Note:** More information can be obtained at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org).

## **Requirements for Division II Colleges and Universities**

To establish initial eligibility and participate in sports at a Division II college or university a student must meet the following criteria:

- Graduate from high school;
- Complete the minimum 16 core courses listed below;
  - Three units of English
  - Two units of mathematics (Algebra I or higher)
  - Two units of a natural or physical science (including one year of a lab science)
  - Three additional units of English, mathematics, or natural/physical science;
  - Two units of social science;
  - Four units of extra core courses (from any category above or foreign language, comparative religion or philosophy)
  - NOTE:** Computer science courses can be used as core courses **only** if your high school grants graduation credit in math or natural or physical science for them, and if the courses appear on your high school's core-course list as math or science courses.
- Earn a 2.2 GPA or better in your core courses. THIS IS BASED ON NCAA CALCULATIONS AND NOT ON YOUR SCHOOL'S GPA CALCULATIONS.
- Achieve a combined SAT score of 820 (Reading and Math sections) or ACT sum score of 68.
- Students that do not meet all of the requirements above for a Division II college may qualify as a "partial qualifier" if they meet the following requirements:
  - Graduated from high school;
  - Meet the minimum SAT or ACT score---OR---
  - Completed the 16 unit core requirements above with a 2.00 GPA.
- A "Partial Qualifier" may do the following:
  - Practice with the team at home during your first year of college;
  - Receive an athletic scholarship during your first year of college;
  - Not compete the freshman year;
  - May compete in four seasons remaining if you maintain your eligibility from year to year.
- Persons not graduating from high school or who have not met the SAT/ACT minimum score and the GPA of 2.2 in the 16 core courses will be listed as a "non-qualifier." As a "non-qualifier," you:
  - May not participate in athletic competition or practice during your first year in college;
  - May receive financial aid based solely on need; you will not be given any financial aid based on athletics your first year in college.
  - May play only four seasons in your sport if you maintain your eligibility from year to year.

## **Which Courses are Approved by the NCAA for Athletic Use?**

Contact the athletic office for this information. You may also see the list at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net). Your counselor or a member of the athletic office can help you determine which courses will qualify. IF YOU WANT TO BE A COLLEGE ATHLETE MAKE SURE THAT YOU PLACE THESE COURSES IN YOUR LONG-RANGE PLAN.

## **Calculating Your NCAA Core Course GPA**

The following forms will help you calculate your NCAA Core Course GPA. Again, please note that this is not the weighted GPA system that we use to calculate your high school averages.

- Step 1—Obtain from the athletic office or your counselor the list of approved courses. Also ask for your transcript.
- Step 2—For the approved courses place the grade and the credit in the proper blank.

- Step 3 – Place the grade points in the next blank. An A equals 4.0; B=3.0, C=2.0, D=1.0
- Step 4 – Do the math. Multiply the credit times the grade points to obtain the quality points.
- Step 5 – Total the credits and place in the blank at the bottom of the page.
- Step 6 – Total the quality points and place in the blank at the bottom of the page.
- Step 7 – Divide the total quality points by the total number of credits to obtain the GPA. (Total Quality Points/Total Number of Credits)

**Courses taken in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade may count if the course is on the high school transcript with a grade and credit AND if it appears on the NCAA list of approved core courses.**

**If you have more core courses than you need in an area, select the course with the highest grade.**

## DIVISION I WORKSHEET TO DETERMINE CORE GPA FOR NCAA ELIGIBILITY

ENGLISH (four units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
<i>Example: English 9</i>	<b>A</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(4.0 X 1)=4</b>
				0
Total English Units and Quality Points				
MATHEMATICS (3 units required Alg I or higher)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
				0
Total Math Units and Quality Points				
NATURAL/PHYSICAL SCIENCE (two units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
				0
Total Science Units and Quality Points				
EXTRA UNIT IN ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, OR NATURAL/PHYSICAL SCIENCE (one unit required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
				0
Total Extra Unit and Quality Points				
SOCIAL SCIENCE (two units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
				0
Total Social Science Units and Quality Points				
EXTRA CORE COURSES (4 units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
				0
Total Extra Core Units and Quality Points				
CORE COURSE GPA CALCULATION				
Total Number of Units		Total Quality Points		Core Course GPA

## DIVISION II WORKSHEET TO DETERMINE CORE GPA FOR NCAA ELIGIBILITY

ENGLISH (three units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
<i>Example: English 9</i>	<b>A</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(4.0 X 1)=4</b>
				0
Total English Units and Quality Points				
MATHEMATICS (two units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
Total Math Units and Quality Points				
NATURAL/PHYSICAL SCIENCE (two units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
Total Science Units and Quality Points				
EXTRA UNITS IN ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS, OR NATURAL/PHYSICAL SCIENCE (three units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
Total Extra Unit and Quality Points				
SOCIAL SCIENCE (two units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
Total Social Science Units and Quality Points				
EXTRA CORE COURSES (four units required)				
Course Title	Letter Grade	Grade Points	Credit	Quality Points
				0
Total Extra Core Units and Quality Points				
CORE COURSE GPA CALCULATION (16 core courses required)				
Total Number of Units		Total Quality Points		Core Course GPA

## **Now That I Have My NCAA Core Course GPA, How Do I Determine Final Eligibility?**

Division I eligibility is based on a scale depending upon the SAT/ACT scores and the Core Course GPA. The SAT score is determined by adding the Reading and Math together. The ACT score is determined by adding the Math, Science, English and Reading together, NOT THE COMPOSITE SCORE WHICH IS AN AVERAGE.

My Best SAT Reading Score \_\_\_\_\_ + My Best SAT Math Score \_\_\_\_\_ = Total SAT Score \_\_\_\_\_

ACT English \_\_\_\_\_ ACT Math \_\_\_\_\_ ACT Science \_\_\_\_\_ ACT Reading \_\_\_\_\_ = ACT Total \_\_\_\_\_

NCAA Core Course GPA	SAT Reading and Math Total Score	ACT Total Score
3.550 & above	400	37
3.525	410	38
3.5	430	39
3.475	440	40
3.45	460	41
3.425	470	41
3.4	490	42
3.375	500	42
3.35	520	43
3.325	530	44
3.3	550	44
3.275	560	45
3.25	580	46
3.225	590	46
3.2	600	47
3.175	620	47
3.15	630	48
3.125	650	49
3.1	660	49
3.075	680	50
3.05	690	50
3.025	710	51
3	720	52
2.975	730	52
2.95	740	53
2.925	750	53
2.9	750	54
2.875	760	55
2.85	770	56
2.825	780	56
2.8	790	57
2.775	800	58
2.75	810	59
2.725	820	60
2.7	830	61
2.675	840	61

NCAA Core Course GPA	SAT Reading and Math Total Score	ACT Total Score
2.65	850	62
2.625	860	63
2.6	860	64
2.575	870	65
2.55	880	66
2.525	890	67
2.5	900	68
2.475	910	69
2.45	920	70
2.425	930	70
2.4	940	71
2.375	950	72
2.35	960	73
2.325	970	74
2.3	980	75

Student athletes who have a core below a 2.3 will be an academic redshirt at a Division 1 college. Visit [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org) for more information regarding Division II colleges.

2.29	990	76
2.275	990	76
2.25	1000	77
2.225	1010	78
2.2	1020	79
2.175	1030	80
2.15	1040	81
2.125	1050	82
2.1	1060	83
2.075	1070	84
2.05	1080	85
2.025	1090	86
2	1100	86

## GLOSSARY OF COLLEGE TERMS

The reading of college guides and catalogs will expose you to a new vocabulary of college terms. The following glossary highlights the most common words found in admissions and financial aid materials.

**Academic Advisor:** The person who guides a student in his or her course selection--usually a member of the school's faculty or staff.

**Academic Year:** The period of time during which formal instruction is offered. It usually lasts from September to May or June. The period from June through August is not generally considered part of the academic year, even if summer sessions are held.

**Accelerated Program:** This is a college program of study completed in less time than is usually required, most often by attending classes in summer or by taking extra courses during the regular academic term. Completion of a bachelor's degree program in three years is an example of acceleration.

**Admit-Deny:** A student is admitted to a particular college but denied financial aid.

**Advanced Placement Program (AP):** A program of college-level courses and exams for high school students. High schools administer the examinations to qualified students, and many colleges offer advanced placement and/or college credit to students who obtain satisfactory scores.

**Alumni:** Individuals who have graduated from an institution.

**American College Testing Program (ACT):** Colleges use this test or the SAT to help determine eligibility for admission.

**Associate Degree:** A degree awarded by a two-year college.

**Audit:** To attend a course for purposes of attaining information only and not to receive a grade. Auditing students are generally not required to take examinations or turn in written assignments. No credit is given for an audit.

**Baccalaureate or Bachelor's Degree:** This is the degree earned after successfully completing an under-graduate college or university program. This degree typically takes four years to complete, although it can vary from three to five years. This may be earned either as a Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A.) or a Bachelor of Science Degree (B.S.). Your major area of study will determine the degree earned.

**Bursar:** The school treasurer--the person to whom a student pays tuition and fees.

**Calendar:** The formal schedule of academic year events which includes examination periods, registration periods, and school holidays. The most common calendars are those based on semesters, trimesters, or quarters.

**Campus:** The physical grounds and buildings of the institution. A campus map will show students where classes and other events are held.

**Catalog (Bulletin):** A book describing an institution's courses, regulations, fees, tuition, faculty, location, entrance and other academic requirements, scholarship and financial aid information.

**Class Rank:** This is the standing of a student in relation to other students at the same school in the same

year of study.

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

**College Scholarship Service (CSS):** CSS is the financial aid division of The College Board. CSS processes the financial PROFILE form. The information collected on the PROFILE is required by many colleges and scholarship programs to assist them in awarding private non-federal aid.

**College Work-Study Program (CWSP):** A program for students who are eligible for financial aid which provides them with part-time jobs both on and off campus. Foreign students are eligible for campus jobs under a similar program.

**Common Application:** Over 1000 public and private colleges and universities accept this college application. A student can complete one application and send it to several schools. This can save a great deal of time. These can be accessed electronically at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

**Conditional Admission:** Colleges might accept some students who do not meet admission standards on the condition that they meet those standards soon after they enroll. (For example, students may be told they need to attain a higher level of English proficiency.)

**Consortium:** Colleges which have joined together to make their collective resources available to all students.

**Cooperative Education:** A college program in which a student alternates between periods of full-time study and full-time employment in a related field. Students are paid for their work at the prevailing rate. Typically, five years are required to complete a bachelor's degree under the cooperative plan, but graduates have the advantage of having completed about a year's practical work experience in addition to their studies.

**Course Load:** The number of courses that a student takes each semester. A unit (generally numerical) given by an institution to students who have successfully completed a course. A student must earn a specified number of credits before he or she will be allowed to graduate. The number of credits given for a particular course is contained in the institution's catalog or bulletin.

**Credit by Examination:** Many institutions will allow students to gain credits without taking a course if they are successful in passing an examination which covers the material presented in the course. Advanced Placement Program (AP) and College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) are the most common programs.

**Cross Registration:** The practice, through agreements between colleges, of permitting students enrolled at one college or university to enroll in courses at another institution without formally applying for admission to the second institution.

**Dean's List:** A listing of students who receive special recognition for academic excellence. Criteria for the dean's list vary among institutions and programs.

**Deferred Admission:** This is the practice of permitting students to postpone enrollment for one year after acceptance to a college.

**Dependent Student:** A student who meets one of the following criteria: is claimed as a tax exemption

by either parent; will receive more than \$750 from either parent for the year; or lives with either parent for more than six weeks in the year.

**Doctorate or Doctoral Degree:** The most advanced academic degree offered in the United States, generally awarded after at least three years of graduate work following the bachelor's and master's degree.

**Dormitory (Residence Hall):** A building on campus used to house students.

**Double Major:** Any program of study in which a student concurrently completes the requirements of two majors.

**Early Action:** An admissions procedure whereby select colleges allow highly qualified students to apply to a college in fall and receive an early reply. This decision is binding on the college but not on the student.

**Early Decision:** An application to one college which obligates the student, if accepted, to attend that school. The applicant is usually notified of acceptance, rejection or deferral in December of the senior year.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** This is a service provided by the U. S. Department of Education that allows students and parents to apply for federal student aid. The web site is [www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov). This form is also used by many other aid programs and colleges to determine a student's eligibility for financial aid.

**Financial Aid:** The total amount of financial aid a student receives to help meet college costs. Aids such as loans, grants, scholarships, or work-study are combined in a "package" to help meet the student's need.

**Financial Aid Award Letter:** A record of the federal student aid you have received. If you have received federal student aid and you transfer, you must request that your old school send your financial aid transcript to the school you will be attending.

**Full Academic Load:** A minimum number of courses a student must take to be considered a full-time student. The number is usually different for undergraduate and graduate students.

**Good Standing:** A student who makes appropriate progress toward fulfilling the requirements of the program in which he or she is enrolled is considered to be in good standing.

**Graduate Study:** A program leading to a master's degree or doctoral degree; advanced study generally following the bachelor's degree.

**Grant:** A scholarship award based on need. Parental income must be below certain established guidelines for a student to be eligible for a grant. Grants can be federal, state or indigenous to the particular college.

**Honors Program:** Any special program for very able students that provides the opportunity for educational enrichment, independent study, acceleration, or some combination of these.

**Humanities:** The branch of learning which constitutes the backbone of the liberal arts education. (For example, languages, history, literature, and philosophy)

**Independent Study:** Students are given the opportunity to pursue an area of interest in close cooperation with college faculty.

**Interdisciplinary:** Refers to programs or courses that use the knowledge from a number of academic disciplines, such as a combination of biology and physical sciences or of engineering and business.

**Internships:** Short-term, supervised work experiences, usually related to a student's major field, for which the student earns academic credit. The work can be full or part time, on- or off- campus, paid or unpaid.

**Liberal Arts Program:** A bachelor's degree program consisting of courses selected from among history, anthropology, literature, chemistry, English, mathematics, and other general disciplines, intended primarily to provide general knowledge. The program also satisfies pre-professional program requirements.

**Major:** The field or subject which a student has chosen as his or her principal area of study (For example, mathematics, engineering, economics, biology, art, or French). There are usually a certain number of credits that must be taken in one's major.

**Matriculate:** To enroll in a college or university; enter, join, sign up, and register for classes.

**Minor:** A secondary course of study. A certain number of credits are required, usually less than the major course of study.

**Master's Degree:** The diploma awarded after one or more years of graduate level work.

**Open Admissions:** The college policy of admitting high school graduates and other adults generally without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as high school subjects, high school grades, and admissions test scores. Virtually all applicants with a high school diploma or its equivalent are accepted.

**Orientation:** Periods (usually 2-4 days) in which new students are introduced to the college, its programs, and its facilities.

**Pass/Fail:** A grading option at some colleges whereby a student takes a course and, rather than a number or letter grade, he or she receives a Pass or Fail.

**PSAT/NMSQT:** Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test: A two hour and 45 minute version of the SAT measuring reading, writing, and mathematical abilities that are important in many college programs. The test is administered each year to high school juniors or sophomores.

**Prerequisite:** A course which a student must complete before being permitted to enroll in another course.

**Private Institution:** Colleges and universities that receive little or no direct financial support from government sources. They are also known as independent institutions.

**Probation:** A warning to a student that his or her academic performance is below acceptable standards and he or she may warrant dismissal unless grades improve. The student must earn satisfactory grades for one or two semesters to be removed from probation.

**Public Institution:** Colleges and universities that receive substantial financial support from local or state government sources.

**Registrar:** The person at the college or university who is responsible for student enrollment and academic records.

**Registration:** The process of choosing a program and having it approved. Students usually register for classes every term.

**Residency Requirements:** Most colleges and universities require that a student spend a minimum number of terms taking courses on campus (as opposed to independent study or transfer credits from other colleges) to be eligible for graduation. Also, residency requirements can refer to the minimum amount of time a student is required to have lived in a state in order to be eligible for in-state tuition at a public (state-controlled) college or university.

**Rolling Admissions:** An admissions process used by some colleges whereby admissions decisions are made on applications as they are received instead of by a specific date. The student must then send in a nonrefundable deposit within a certain period of time to reserve his or her space.

**SAT I Reasoning Test:** This test or the ACT is required for admission to most colleges. Colleges will specify which test is required. It is a three-hour exam consisting of Critical Reading/Writing, and Math. The test measures Evidence Based Reading/Writing/Language and Math developed over time. Scores range from 200 (low) to 800 (perfect). The highest total score is a 1600.

**Scholarships:** Financial aid based on achievement, not need. Scholarships are usually given for excellence in academics or athletics.

**Study Abroad:** Any arrangement by which a student is enabled to complete part of his or her college program, typically the junior year of college, in another country.

**Syllabus:** A course outline prepared for students by the professor.

**Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):** This test is offered for those students whose native language is not English. It is a four hour multiple choice exam designed to measure a student's English language proficiency.

**Transcript:** The official record of a student's courses and grades. Most colleges require transcripts be sent directly from the institution at which the grades were earned to insure authenticity.

**Transfer Student:** A student who enrolls in a college after having previously attended one or more other colleges.

**Trimester:** An academic calendar period of about 15 weeks. Three trimesters make up one academic year. Students make normal progress by attending two of the trimesters each year and in some colleges can accelerate their programs by attending all three trimesters in one year.

**Tuition:** The cost of the academic program undertaken.

**Undergraduate Study:** A program leading to an associate or bachelor's degree; generally follows

high school.

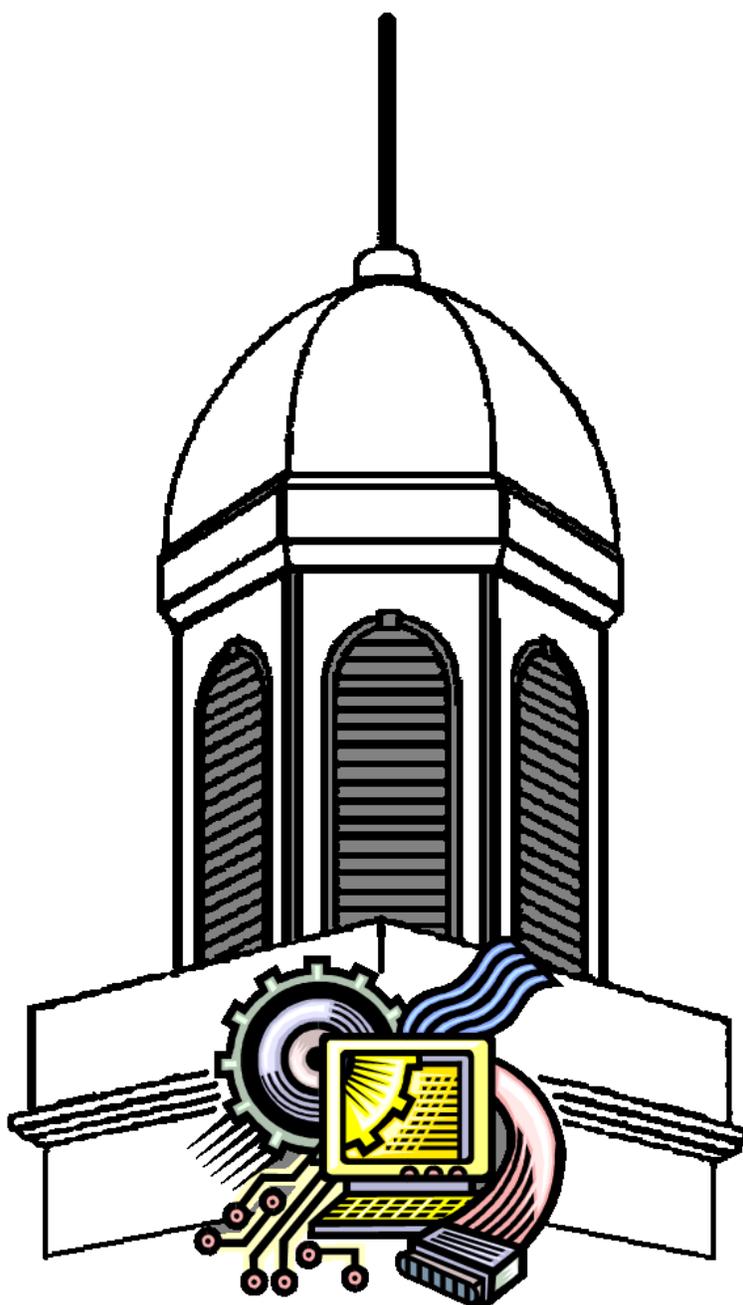
**University:** An academic organization which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degree-granting professional schools such as medicine, dentistry, journalism, or agriculture. It is composed of a number of "schools" or "colleges," each of which encompasses a general field of study.

**Wait List:** A list of students who were not initially accepted by a college but who may be accepted at a later date if space becomes available. Students who are wait-listed by their first choice school should consider visiting or writing a letter expressing their desire to attend.

**Work-Study:** Work study is a program provided by many colleges that allows a student to work and pay for college costs.

### Special Notice

**If you do not have a Social Security Number and you are a U.S. citizen or a resident alien, you should begin the process of getting one as soon as possible. You must have one to complete the FAFSA and most colleges and universities use the number in the admissions filing system.**



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