

Question 9: How And When Do I Apply?

Question #1:
What Is College?

Question #2:
How Does The College
Catalog Work?

Question #3:
Is College Right For Me?

Question #4:
How Do I Choose A
Major?

Question #5:
What Do I Need To Go To
College?

Question #6:
How Do I Choose The
Right College?

Question #7:
What Are My Housing
Options?

Question #8:
How Will I Pay For
College?

Question #9: How And When Do I Apply?

Question #10:
What Else Do I Need To
Know And Do?

Before you submit a college application you need to conduct research and gather as much information as possible. Either on your own, or with friends, you can:

- attend college fairs and sessions to collect information and ask questions about class sizes, academic support features and special opportunities
- request additional information from school guidance staff and college staff
- search on the Internet to see all the possibilities available to you
- read, talk, listen and analyze with school and college staff, friends and family, to see your possibilities from many different perspectives
- visit campuses to gather information and see for yourself what campuses look like
- read and complete the questionnaires in this resource handbook
- complete additional quizzes and questionnaires to compile your strengths, values, goals and needs that will direct you in your college decision making
- plan, organize and update your portfolio so you will waste no time addressing the sections of the form on volunteering, community service, participation, leadership and special awards
- review your options for attending colleges and eliminate those that you do not want, based on location, program availability for your goals, academic rigor, sports and other opportunities and other personal preferences
- decide on the number of colleges to which you will apply. Over ten is probably too many, under three is probably too few, six is a good number. Your top two should be your “reach” colleges. In the best case scenarios you would be ecstatic to be admitted. The last two should be what you could live with in your worst case scenarios, your “safety” colleges. The middle choices should be good realistic choices, your “target” colleges.

The Application Process

Regular Admission to college means that you will:

- meet the college’s final deadlines for applications, often mid January or later
- hear back from the college by mid April
- give your answer to the college early, or no later than May 1, after you have compared offers
- Regular Admission includes Rolling Admission. That is, some colleges will respond to accept you at any point after they receive your application.

Question 9: How And When Do I Apply?

Early Decision is a variation on the college application process. Applications are completed in November in an attempt to secure a place in the college of your choice as soon as possible in the fall, rather than having to wait for application results the following spring. You can apply to only one college for Early Decision. If you are offered a spot you must accept it immediately. Early Decision application acceptances are binding.

Early Action is like Early Decision but not binding. Restrictive Early Action (or Single Choice Early Action) allows candidates to apply to only one Early Action institution and to no Early Decision institutions. Non-Restrictive Early Action has none of these limitations. Regardless, the applicant is still permitted to reject any offer of admission in both types of Early Action. You may or may not wait until spring to give your answer to an Early Action offer.

How To Apply

The *Common Application* form is available both online and in paper/pencil format. Both are accepted but the online version is preferred. Since not all colleges use the *Common Application*, for some of your choices you may be using that college's specific form. Many colleges that use the *Common Application* use it as their sole form but some require an additional supplementary form which addresses issues specific to that college.

Whether or not you are using the Common Application, it is important to know the basic parts of a standard application package. These components are:

- the form itself with basic personal information
- your test scores (SAT or ACT) and your high school marks
- the essay
- recommendations/letters of reference
- the interview, which is often optional.

The SAT/ACT

Your tests scores along with your grades are an important piece of your application. Most, but not all, colleges require that you write the SATs

(Scholastic Aptitude Test) or the ACT (an alternate). On the internet, it is easy to find detailed profiles of each college's requirements including information regarding the suggested SAT scores that have been required for entrance.

The SATs measure your reading comprehension skills, essay writing ability and mathematical reasoning skills. You pay a fee to write them but this fee can be waived if you cannot afford to pay. Talk to your guidance counselor about this if it is an issue. The SATs are held in a controlled environment, in prearranged locales in the U.S. and various other parts of the world, customarily in October, November, December, January, March, May and June. Your results are compared to those of every other person at approximately the same grade level (Grade 11 or 12) who took the test. You may take the test as often as you wish but the results rarely vary up or down by more than two points. You are advised to take the test no more than twice.

If you intend to take the SATs you should take them in the spring of your junior year and if necessary the fall of your senior year and definitely no later than January of the year you will be entering college.

SAT Subject Tests

The SAT subject tests are required by some colleges. They are available in English, Mathematics, Sciences, History and Foreign Languages. Even if they are not required by a college some students choose to take them in their areas of strength. They should be taken at the end of your Junior Year or at the beginning of your Senior Year. Additional details are available at www.collegeboard.com

The PSAT/NMSQT

The PSAT/NMSQT stands for Preliminary SAT/ National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. It is a standardized test which allows you to qualify for major scholarship programs while at the same time giving you the opportunity to practice for the SAT. The PSAT measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills and writing skills. A perfect score is 240. Many students choose to take this test both in their sophomore and junior years.