



# York Suburban

## SCHOOL DISTRICT

*A Community of Encouragement. A Culture of Excellence.*

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**2017 - 2018**

### **College & Career Handbook**

**A Guide for Post-High School Planning and  
Applying to College**

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# College Planning Checklist

## Freshman Year

- Establish good study skills and do well in school. Your grades are the most important aspect of your college applications.
- Talk with your high school counselor about classes they recommend for college preparation and admission. When possible, take challenging courses.  
Set personal and academic goals for each year of high school, starting in 9th grade.
- Volunteer in your community in an area you're passionate about. A minimum of 50 hours of community service is required for entrance into the National Honor Society. Students may also earn high school credit for approved community service hours (60 hours = ½ credit). If you are interested in earning credit, please see your counselor to discuss the process.
- Get involved with sports and extracurricular activities that interest you.
- Consider creating your own club, organization, or business.
- Enter essay contests, science fairs, and other opportunities to gain experience and possible scholarships.
- Complete the freshman English research paper, which allows you to research a possible career choice.

## Sophomore Year

- Talk with your high school counselor about your aspirations and the colleges and careers you are considering.
- Continue to participate in extracurricular activities and volunteer in areas of interest to you.
- Take the PSAT.
- Start researching colleges online, paying attention to admissions criteria (SAT scores, GPA, rank, etc.).
- Attend college fairs in the area and meet with college representatives when they visit your high school.
- Get a part-time job or internship, ideally in an area you're considering working in.
- Spend time shadowing people in career areas you're interested in pursuing.
- Start talking with your parents and other adults you know about their careers, as you explore what you'd like to do when you get out of college.

## Junior Year

- Take academic elective courses (extra math, science, foreign language, etc.).
- Work hard academically; junior year is an important one!
- Attend the junior year guidance class to learn about the junior year testing timetable.
- Consider taking an SAT prep course. In general, work SAT practice time into your daily schedule at least six weeks before you take the test.
- Take the PSAT in October; the junior PSAT score may qualify you for National Merit Scholarship money.

- Create a student account on the College Board website ([www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)). Utilize the link with Khan Academy to review and practice for the SAT.
- Register for the SAT during the fall semester; take the SAT during the spring semester.
- Talk with your high school counselor about suggestions for colleges.
- Research colleges online and make a list of schools you'd like to visit in person.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask when touring schools.
- Put together a college comparison worksheet.
- Schedule time to tour campuses and meet with advisors and faculty; interview with an admissions counselor if possible.
- Find out about the admissions criteria for the schools you're interested in and work toward those goals.
- Look for scholarship information online and start thinking about the types of scholarships you'd like to aim for ([www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)). There is also a national scholarship search in Naviance.
- Get a part-time job or internship in a field that interests you.
- Consider putting together a portfolio that highlights your special skills and talents.
- Create a resume to be used when asking teachers for letters of recommendation.
- Attend the Admit One college program in March; this will allow you to hear from parents of seniors who have just gone through the college admissions process.
- Use Naviance to gather college and scholarship information.
- Meet with college representatives at YSHS in the fall months. College visits are posted in Naviance, on the TV scroll, and on NewsLink.
- Attend the York College Regional College Fair in October.
- Attend the junior course selection appointment with your counselor to discuss senior classes and postsecondary school plans.
- Plan your summer: work, school, college visits (write or call ahead for interview appointments).
- Look over college applications and note deadlines and requirements.
- Take Advanced Placement Exams, if appropriate.

## Senior Year

- Attend the senior guidance class (takes place during English IV class period), to learn the college application process.
- Create a short list (3-5) of colleges you will apply to, and complete the admissions applications.
- Review all college application deadlines.
- Identify and ask teachers for letters of recommendation (minimum 2 weeks turnaround time).
- If needed, turn in materials for counselor recommendation (minimum 2 weeks turnaround time).
- Log into Naviance and add the colleges you will be applying to; submit your request for your transcripts to be sent to those colleges. Lastly, complete a tracker form in the guidance office, indicating who will be submitting your letters of recommendation, and where they should be sent (along with your transcript).
- Contact the College Board to request test scores be sent to your colleges, if not already done.
- Apply for scholarships and turn in financial aid forms by the required deadlines.
- Update Naviance as you receive college admissions decisions; ultimately, indicate where you will

attend college.

- Attend Financial Aid Night in October; complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), starting October 1st. Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report. It should arrive four weeks after you complete the FAFSA. Eventually, compare financial aid packages from different schools.
- Ask your high school counselor office in January to send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied.
- If possible, visit colleges where you were invited to enroll; this will help you make your final decision.
- Once you choose a school: send in your initial deposit; notify schools that you aren't attending; apply for housing; learn about the school (ex: course selection dates, faculty/programs in your major, transportation/parking needs, etc.); attend a summer orientation; make a list of what you need to take to college, including books, clothing, personal care products, and your computer gear; work with your parents on a budget; check out where your classes will be and what other facilities/resources are on campus.

## Naviance Online Tool

There are career research tools, college research tools, and college application tools in Naviance. The college research tools are meant to help students find colleges that are the right fit. The college application tools merely help students manage the college application process by keeping an electronic record of college application materials; however, actual college applications are not found in Naviance or submitted online in Naviance.

College research, a list of college applications submitted, teacher and counselor recommendations, high school transcripts, scholarships, and enrichment programs can all be managed from Naviance.

The following college research tools are available in Naviance:

**SuperMatch™ college search-** a visually-based search that helps students find the right fit for college. Students select from a list of college decision factors and rank their importance. As the student makes selections, the best match colleges appear with information about why the college(s) is a good match. Students can save their searches and add colleges to the Colleges I'm Thinking About list from here.

**College Match-** this tool uses colleges on the student's application list and shows colleges that match those colleges. There are three components: Colleges Looking for Students Like You, which compares against students at the high school; Colleges Other Students Like, which compares against students in the Naviance Network; Colleges That Have Accepted Students Like You, which compares against students at the high school.

**College Lookup-** this tool allows students to find specific colleges by name, by alphabet, by state or by country. From here the student can view the college profile, which has the same valuable information that you can view in Naviance.

**College Search-** an advanced search tool that enables students to create searches that focuses on college criteria that is important to them, such as school type, location, students admissions, athletics, majors, costs and special programs. Students can save searches.

**College Resources-** provides a list of web resources about colleges, financial aid , test prep, college athletics, military and other key topics in the college admissions process.

**College Maps-** shows students where colleges are located. The map tool is MapQuest. A visual representation can give students insight into colleges they are interested in. The College Maps tool shows colleges on the map using the College Groups feature in Naviance. It displays maps of colleges from common lists like Ivy League or Common Application.

**Scattergrams-** a graphical view of application outcomes (accepted, denied, waitlisted) at a college for recent York Suburban High School applicants using GPA and SAT scores. Students can gauge their chances of acceptance by comparing personal GPA/SAT numbers with those of successful applicants.

If there is not enough data, the scattergram may not show results. This tool pulls from historical data of YSHS graduates.

**Enrichment Programs-** Displays a list of enrichment programs entered by YSHS in Naviance or those in the Naviance database by browsing by letter or selecting a category or search by keywords. The results can be filtered ordered by name, location, deadline, or last updated. Naviance has a partnership with TeenLife.com, a public database of enrichment programs.

Also in Naviance is a schedule for ***college admission representatives visiting York Suburban High School***. This schedule of upcoming college visits is located in the top section under the *colleges* tab. Students may view the schedule and sign up to attend these rep visits to YSHS. After students complete their college research, they begin to narrow down their interests and decide which colleges they plan to apply to.

Students manage college application materials in Naviance with the following tasks:

- add college names to their active applications list
- add teacher names to the letter of recommendation list
- select the application method and type used for each college application (i.e. Common Application, Rolling Decision, Early Decision, etc)
- if appropriate, match The Common Application account with the Naviance account
- record submission of a college application
- request the high school transcript be sent to a college
- request specific teacher's recommendation letter be sent to a college
- view submission status of transcripts and recommendation letters

## Admissions Test Information

Students should plan to take the SAT twice during their junior year. The test is administered at York Suburban High School on the December, May, and June test date. A third testing option for seniors, if necessary, is the October date. Students can view the testing dates and register for the SAT at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

### New SAT Information

New SAT - 2016
3 hours long (3 hours and 50 minutes with the optional essay).
Consists of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Evidence-Based Reading and Writing</li><li>• Math</li><li>• Essay (Optional)</li></ul>
Focuses on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applied knowledge</li><li>• Words in context</li><li>• Purposeful reasoning (college readiness is an emphasis)</li></ul>
Optional 50-minute essay given at the end of the test. The score is reported separately from the rest of the exam.
Multiple-choice questions have 4 answer choices.
No deduction for wrong answers

### ACT Information

The ACT is another option for students for college admissions testing. The majority of colleges/universities will accept either the SAT or the ACT as part of the admissions process. See the chart below to see the major differences in the two exams. In general the ACT is more curriculum-based and tests academic preparedness, factual knowledge, and specific skills from subjects studied in high school. There are four required sections (English, Math, Reading and Science Reasoning) and an optional writing section. Students receive a separate score for each of its four sections, plus an overall average score, with a maximum score of 36.

### SAT or ACT? Do you know which test is right for you?

Colleges accept both tests equally, so the choice is up to you!  
Here's what you need to know to compare the exams.

SAT <a href="http://www.sat.org">www.sat.org</a>	ACT <a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a>
<b>Test Structure:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Math</li></ul>	<b>Test Structure:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Math</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• Writing and Language</li> <li>• Essay (Optional)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading</li> <li>• English</li> <li>• Science</li> <li>• Essay (Optional)</li> </ul>
<b>Length:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hours (without essay)</li> <li>• 3 hours, 50 minutes (with essay)</li> </ul>	<b>Length:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 hours, 55 minutes (without essay)</li> <li>• 3 hours, 40 minutes (with essay)</li> </ul>
<b>Reading:</b> 5 reading passages	<b>Reading:</b> 4 reading passages
<b>Science:</b> None	<b>Science:</b> 1 science section testing your critical thinking skills (not your specific science knowledge)
<b>Math:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arithmetic</li> <li>• Algebra I &amp; II</li> <li>• Geometry, Trigonometry and Data Analysis</li> </ul>	<b>Math:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arithmetic</li> <li>• Algebra I &amp; II</li> <li>• Geometry and Trigonometry</li> </ul>
<b>Tools:</b> Some math questions don't allow you to use a calculator.	<b>Tools:</b> You can use a calculator on all math questions.
<b>Essay:</b> Optional. The essay will test your comprehension of a source text.essay.	<b>Essay:</b> Optional. The essay will test how well you evaluate and analyze complex issues.
<b>Scored:</b> From 400-1600	<b>Scored:</b> From 1-36

## SAT and ACT Scores Reporting

Both the SAT and ACT can be taken multiple times to improve scores. Students can choose (at registration or later) where to send their scores and can choose which test sitting's scores to send. If you choose to send scores from a particular sitting, all the scores from that sitting will be sent. You cannot choose to send math scores from one sitting and reading scores from another. Some colleges encourage you to send all your scores from one test (either the SAT or ACT) and they will pull the best score from each test.

## Preparing for the SAT and ACT

- Take a practice test online through Khan Academy: <https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat>
- Obtain a book of hints and practice tests. Books are available in the counseling office or from local bookstores.
- Visit the ACT Prep web site: <http://www.actstudent.org>
- Visit the SAT Prep web site: <http://sat.collegeboard.com/practice/sat-practice-questions>
- Take an SAT/ACT prep class at York Suburban High School. We offer both a fall and a spring prep course. If those dates don't work, York College and Penn State York both offer a prep course.

## SAT Subject Tests

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour tests measuring knowledge in specific subjects, typically required by more competitive colleges. Not all colleges require these tests for admission decisions. It is your responsibility to find out how many and which SAT Subject Tests are required by the colleges to which you are applying. Subject tests should be taken at the end of a one-year course, such as biology, and as late as possible in continuing courses, such as foreign languages. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics and science. They are all multiple-choice and scored on a 200–800 scale. The best way to prepare is to take the relevant courses and work hard in them. SAT Subject Tests are generally given six times in any given school year, on the same days and in the same test centers as the SAT — but not all 20 tests are offered on every SAT date. The Language with Listening tests are only offered in November.

Important information about the SAT Subject Tests: Students can take one, two, or three Subject Tests on any test date; students can't take the SAT and an SAT Subject Test on the same day; some SAT Subject Tests require students to bring special equipment — for example, CD players for Language with Listening tests; and students choose what tests to take when you register, but on test day, you can add, subtract, or switch tests — with some limitations.

## College Visits

A visit to a college that you are considering is highly recommended. A first-hand look will provide valuable information to help the student choose a college that will be a solid fit. Use the college's website to find the dates and times for tours and open houses. Verify if registration is required prior to your visit.

During your visit to the campus make sure that you schedule an appointment with the admissions office. Personal contact with the admissions office demonstrates your interest to them.

During your visit, ensure that you:

- Attend the information sessions that are held for prospective students and parents.
- Ask questions about academic entrance requirements and the major(s) that you are considering.
- Ask about the placement record for graduates in your field of interest.
- Ask about financial aid opportunities, as well as deadlines, required forms, etc. Ask about dual enrollment, college, college in the high school and and/or credit for Advanced Placement exams.
- Take a guided tour if available. Be sure to visit the dorms, dining hall, library, etc. Take pictures and notes to help you remember the campus.
- Meet with faculty in the academic area of interest to you. Attend a class or two to get an idea of typical size, teaching style, and academic atmosphere.
- Talk to students about the general academic environment, campus life, and social activities. Some colleges will arrange for you to spend the night with a student in a dorm.
- Meet with the college coach, if you are hoping to play a college sport.
- Pick up a student newspaper. It will give you an insight into important student issues and campus activities.
- Take notes during sessions and write down your impressions (pro and con) as soon as possible. If you are visiting several campuses you may find that the information begins to blend together and your notes will help with future decision-making.
- While it's acceptable for parents to ask a few questions, the student should take the lead.

### York Suburban School District Board Policy 204 – College Visits

College visits should be scheduled outside the regular school day whenever possible.

Each junior and senior student is permitted three college visits per academic year.

If an appointment with a college official must be scheduled on school time, the following procedures **must** be followed or the absence will be considered unexcused:

- A request from the parent/guardian must be submitted to the guidance office at least one week in advance for pre-approval.
- The student must be accompanied by a parent/guardian.
- An appointment with an admissions officer must be scheduled.
- A letter from a college official on the college letterhead which verifies the date and time of the visit must be submitted to the attendance office upon return to the high school.

The college visit request form is available at

<http://www.yssd.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=kjf1em3hZz4%3d&tabid=5812>

## Sample Questions for a College Interview

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Why do you feel you will be successful in this major at this college?
3. Are your grades an accurate reflection of your potential? If not, please explain.
4. What makes you an ideal candidate for this college/university?
5. Why do you want to study at this college/university?
6. What will you contribute?
7. What have been your most satisfying and most disappointing experiences?
8. What is your strongest asset? What is your weakest trait?
9. How would you describe your work style?
10. If you had a dispute with a peer, how would you handle it?
11. Give me an example of something you had to learn that was difficult?
12. Tell me about a challenge in your life that you overcame.
13. How do you define success?
14. How do you define professionalism?
15. What are your career goals for the next five years?
16. What did you gain from your summer employment/volunteer work experience(s)?
17. Tell me about your extracurricular activities and interests.
18. Which of your activities is most rewarding and why?
19. What are one or two areas in which you think you could improve?
20. What accomplishments in your life are you most proud?
21. What has been your experience in working as part of a team?

# Choosing the Best College Fit

## Assess Yourself

- Recognize your strengths and weaknesses.
- Analyze your interests and values.
- Know your reasons for wanting to pursue higher education.
- Are you comfortable with the distance from home?
- Prepare for a career and expand learning.
- Increase your earning potential.
- Extracurricular activities and social life.
- Influence of family and friends.

## Consider College Characteristics and Opportunities

- Review available majors and educational programs.
- Type of college -- public vs. private, Military Academy, 2 yr. vs. 4 yr.
- Academic Interests and Degrees offered.
- Admissions requirements --average standardized test scores,college admission selectivity, etc.
- Geographic Location & campus setting -- rural, small town, city, metropolitan, etc.
- Costs and Financial aid.
- Special programs --- Academic support programs, services for students with special needs, internship programs, study abroad, ROTC, etc.
- Campus athletics and activities
- Size of student body and the campus.

## Visit Colleges

- Compile information from various resources such as college websites, Naviance, college fairs, visits by admission reps at YSHS, videos, virtual tours, internet.
- Complete a College Comparison Worksheet of most promising 8 - 12 colleges.
- Weigh advantages and disadvantages of each college.
- Reduce number of colleges to your top best matches.
- Access applications online or contact admissions office.
- Schedule appointments for campus visits - refer to Campus Visit information.

## Apply For Admission and Observe Deadlines

- Narrow choices. It gets expensive to apply to numerous colleges.
- Review college admissions requirements and that Scattergram in Naviance.
- Know the application fees and deadlines. Plan ahead and request recommendations and transcripts early to ensure that your application packet is received on time.
- Refer to YSHS "College Application Procedures" handout.
- Schedule required interviews and/or auditions. Review available scholarships at the college and in Naviance..

## How Do I Choose a Major?

- Complete the Do What You Are, Myer's Briggs Personality Inventory in Naviance and review the results.
- Complete the Interest Profiler in Naviance.
- Review career clusters in Naviance.
- Watch the Roadtrip Nation videos in Naviance.
- Assess yourself and your interests.
- What classes do you like?
- What are your strengths and weakness?
- Research careers and shadow, if possible.

## Resources for Parents of College-Bound Students

<http://www.parentsandcolleges.com> - Contains resources on college planning, career success, application process, financial aid, and top 10 lists.

<http://collegetipsforparents.org> - Contains articles written by parents of college students, videos, a blog, and financial planning information.

<http://www.universityparent.com> - Provides information on specific university resources, important dates, and local services near campus.

### Books for Parents of College-Bound Students

- *Parents' Guide to College life: 181 Straight Answers on Everything You Can Expect Over the Next Four Years (College Admissions Guides)* by Robin Raskin.
- *Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding the College Years* by Karen Levin Coburn and Madge Lawrence Treeger.
- *Colleges that Change Lives: 40 Schools That You Should Know About Even if You're not a Straight A Student* by Loren Pope.
- *When Your Kid Goes To College: A Parent's Survival Guide* by Carol Barkin.
- *You're on Your Own (But I'm Here If You Need Me)* by Marjorie Savage.
- *Admissions Confidential* by Rachel Toor, a former Duke admissions officer.
- *Empty Nest, Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College* by Andrew Van Steenhouse.
- *Doors Open From Both Sides, The Off-To-College Guide From Two Points of View: Parents and Students* by Margo E. Bane Woodacre.
- *The College Guide for Parents* by Charles Shield - Published by the College Board.
- *Paying for College Without Going Broke* by Kalman A. Chany with Geoff Martz - Published by The Princeton Review.
- *The Best Way to Save for College: A Complete Guide to 529 Plans* by Joseph F. Hurley.
- *Recommended by the National Association for College Admission Counseling* [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)
- Subject-Specific Books:
  - *Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD* by Peterson's.
  - *K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities* by Princeton Review.

## Applying to College: Action Steps for Seniors

- Review the application instructions for all of the schools to which you are applying. Whether you use the Common Application or an application specific to the school, you need to understand the directions and deadlines.
- Log in to your Naviance account. In the COLLEGES tab, use the 'Colleges I'm Applying To' link to develop your list: click the 'Add To My List' tab and search for colleges.
- For Common App users only: complete the aqua-colored box in the 'Colleges I'm Applying To' section, labeled 'Common App Account Matching'. Type in your commonapp.org username and password to connect your Common App account with Naviance.
- List your colleges in Naviance and request that your official transcript be sent from the Guidance Office. There is a 2-week minimum turnaround on official transcripts.
- Note if you want to meet the Early Action, Early Decision, or Regular Decision deadline. Remember that you can only apply to one school via the Early Decision protocol and you are committing to attend that school if admitted. Pay close attention to deadlines!
- Check to see if you need a counselor recommendation, teacher recommendations, and/or a Secondary School Report. If so, visit the 'Letter of Recommendation' section and make requests for those items. Be sure to speak with your counselor and teachers about writing your recommendations prior to making the electronic requests. Following the electronic requests, write a short thank you note to those writing your recommendations. There is a 2-week minimum turnaround on letters of recommendation.
- Complete a tracker form (found in the Guidance Office), which is a paper trail request for your official transcript and letters of recommendation.
- Update Naviance when college application decisions are reached. Updating this information is required to graduate. You must list the decision of each application and identify your destination college.

## Teacher Recommendations - Guidelines

Every college has a different requirement for teacher letters of recommendation. Our recommendation is to send at least one teacher letter, unless the college specifically states "no letters accepted."

Recognize that writing a teacher recommendation letter is a favor and that the teacher completes on their own time. Be considerate and give at least 2 weeks notice before the letter is due. The student will need to work with their guidance counselor to determine the best teacher to ask.

Students need to select teachers in Naviance as well as ask teachers in person. **Here are the steps to secure teacher letters of recommendation:**

1. The student should have a face-to-face conversation with the teacher. We would suggest stopping in their classroom before or after school. Some teachers like to interview students before writing letters, so this initial meeting might be to set up a later interview.
2. Students will need to go into Naviance. Once logged in; click on the colleges tab at the top, click on "letters of recommendation, and select the teacher in the drop down menu. Type a message in the box: Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation for me. I appreciate your time. \*sign your name. \*\*\*\*If you are using the Common Application, you should add that in your message. This signals to the teacher that they also have to complete the Common App Teacher Evaluation Form.

3. We recommend for students to write the teacher a thank you note.

## Commonly Asked Questions about Recommendation Letters

### Should I send a recommendation even if it's not required?

Some colleges will see these as useful pieces of additional information, especially if you feel that you may be “on the border” for admission. If you had something traumatic occur in your life or an illness that had affected your grades, a recommendation letter would be a helpful addition to your transcript.

### How many recommendations should I send?

Always check each school's requirements to determine whether or not they specify who they want letters from. The school may have standard forms that have to be completed specifically by a teacher and/or guidance counselor. It is fine to send an additional letter beyond the required, but only if you feel that you need to submit extra information. Remember—quality is more important than quantity! Most colleges that require letters will only require 2---3 (typically one from counselor and one or two from academic teachers). Some schools do not encourage students to submit more than they require, so please read admissions/ applications policies carefully! A bunch of letters that essentially say the same thing will be more of a burden than a benefit.

### Should I waive my right to see the teacher evaluation forms that some colleges require?

A college/university considers that evaluation to be a more “honest” one if you waive your right to view it. If you choose not to waive your right to view it, they may question your reasoning.

### Who should write your letters of recommendation?

You should ask a teacher who you have had an academic class in high school. Most colleges prefer letters from teachers you have had during junior or senior year to speak about your most recent progress. You want to pick someone who you think will write you a helpful recommendation and who knows you well as a student and as a person. Your teachers and your counselor are excellent sources because they can comment on your overall academic strengths and community involvement and have experience writing these letters. A supplemental source is any extracurricular recommendations from coaches, a principal, or employers.

## The Common Application

The Common Application is a standardized application used by close to 700 colleges and universities. These colleges are public, private, large, small, secular, and religious. Instead of filling out eight different applications, you can simply fill out one and submit it to each college. Be aware that you may need to submit additional or separate documents to some colleges. You also still need to pay individual application fees for each college. To view the current list of colleges accepting The Common Application, go to <http://www.commonapp.org/search-colleges>

Colleges request a large amount of information from applicants, and The Common Application simplifies the process by collecting much of that information in one place. This prevents students from repeating the details of their background, education, activities, and testing over and over again, for every college application on each college's website. It also enables students to stay on top of deadlines and manage school-specific tasks – within one website.

Naviance has a special relationship with The Common Application so the two sites share information seamlessly. However, students must Match their Common Application account with their Naviance

account (also called Family Connection) in order for them to work together. This video tutorial explains how to Match the two accounts: <https://vimeo.com/102639828>

**Are counselor recommendations a requirement every time the student chooses to apply using The Common Application?**

For the most part, yes. High school counselors MUST write and submit a recommendation letter every time a student applies using The Common Application. The letter of recommendation and the Common Application Secondary School Report are completed by the high school counselor and sent as one document to colleges.

**Are teacher recommendations a requirement if the student chooses to apply using The Common Application?**

Yes. Usually one or two teacher recommendations are required when a student applies using The Common Application. However, YSHS teachers are not required to write recommendations for every student, so recognize that you are asking for a favor. It is polite (and expected at YSHS) to ask for this favor in person. Teacher recommendations are submitted electronically to colleges via Naviance, unless the college has another preferred method. See the Teacher Recommendations section for additional instruction on securing a recommendation letter from a teacher.

## College Essay

At the beginning of the senior year, a college essay will be the first writing assignment in English Seminar and CP English IV. Students are asked to bring a prompt from a college that they plan to apply. During this process, students will receive feedback regarding their essay and corrections will be made to ensure that students are submitting a solid essay with their college applications.

### 2017/2018 Common Application Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

### Essay Tips from Colleges and Universities

- **Swarthmore College** - List ideas for your essay before you begin any actual writing. You will start to see connections between certain ideas, which will make your essay strong and cohesive.
- According to the **MIT** admissions office, too many students focus on a “moral of the story” at the end of their essay. Instead of explicitly stating what you gained from the experience you are writing about; leave this to the interpretation of the reviewer
- The **University of Virginia** tells prospective students that “a good essay is good not because of the topic but because of the voice. A good writer can make any topic interesting.”
- **Carleton College** - Make it fun. If you're recounting an amusing and light---hearted anecdote from your childhood, it doesn't have to read like a Congressional Act — make it fun!
- **Amherst College** - Admissions staff want to read about personal experiences and how you responded. SAT scores can't describe losing a family member, winning your swimming meet, the best view in your town, or how it felt to cook Thanksgiving dinner for your family for the first time. A good essay will draw the reader in, give them a glimpse into your everyday life.
- **Pomona College** - Demonstrate, don't tell. Your actions and behavior can do the talking for you. Writing that “after participating in Model United Nations I have a much greater appreciation for other cultures” is not as compelling as writing “defending the position of other countries has convinced me that there is no single correct approach to international policy. I now make it a

point to take in world news everyday so that I am better informed about why other countries pursue policies, even if I don't agree with those policies."

- **Pomona College** - Let your credentials speak for themselves. There's no need to write an essay conveying how serious an academic you are. Your transcript and recommendations will do that. Similarly, your extracurricular activities will speak volumes about how engaged you are.
- According to **The University of Texas at Austin**, quality matters. "Remember that your goal is to share important things about yourself while skillfully expressing yourself in writing."
- **Yale** states that "your perspective - the lens through which you view your topic – is far more important than the specific topic itself. In the past, students have written about family situations, ethnicity or culture, school or community events to which they have had strong reactions, people who have influenced them, significant experiences, intellectual interests, personal aspirations, or – more generally – topics that spring from the life of the imagination."
- Don't write a "McEssay." This advice comes from an administrator at the **University of Virginia**, who complains that such generic essays (typically 4ive paragraphs) "consist primarily of abstractions and unsupported generalization. They are technically correct in that they are organized and have the correct sentence structure and spelling, but they are boring."
- **Stanford University** - "Ask if the essay's tone sounds like your voice. If those closest to you do not think your essay captures who you are, we will not be able to recognize what is distinctive about you. While asking for feedback is suggested, do not enlist hired assistance in the writing of your essays."

### College Essay Resources

- Essay Edge - Writing help packet - <http://www.essayedge.com>
- Johns Hopkins University - Essays that Worked - <http://apply.jhu.edu/apply/essays.html>
- Top ten tips from the National Association for College Admission Counseling - <https://www.nacacfairs.org/learn/apply/EssayTips/>
- The College Board - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays>
- Your YSHS senior English teacher.

# Financial Aid Information and Timeline

## Junior Year

- Prepare for the ACT/SAT and take rigorous high school courses. High test scores and/or GPA provide opportunities for scholarships.
- Visit prospective colleges' websites. All colleges provide a net cost calculator on their web sites which estimate college costs. Be sure to review if the calculator is providing you with a net cost figure or a net price figure. Net price calculators may not be comparable among colleges.
- Review costs of prospective schools and complete the fafsa4caster <https://fafsa.ed.gov/FAFSA/app/f4cForm?execution=e2s1> to estimate eligibility for federal student aid.
- Attend Financial Aid Night at York Suburban High School to learn about basic financial aid information
- Begin researching scholarship opportunities through scholarship search engines such as:
  - [Naviance](#) - Click on the colleges tab and scroll to the bottom where you will see "national scholarship search".
  - Big Future Scholarship Search <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>
  - Fin Aid [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
  - Fast Web [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
  - [www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)
- Sometimes scholarships are given by companies and service organizations. Check your place of employment and your parents'/guardians' place of employment. Also ask your parents/guardians to check with any organizations where they hold membership.

## Senior Year

- Attend Financial Aid Night at York Suburban High School to learn about basic financial aid information and get questions answered
- Create an FSA ID (Federal Student Aid Identification) so that you can electronically sign the FAFSA online. <https://fsaid.ed.gov/npas/index.htm> (Student AND one of their parents or guardians must each have their own FSA ID)
- File the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1 at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> The Free Application For Federal Student Aid is the first step in obtaining grants and loans from most colleges.
- Complete the Pennsylvania State Grant application. After you submit the FAFSA, on the FAFSA website you'll see a link to complete the Pennsylvania State Grant. If you miss the link, you'll need to wait three days after submitting the FAFSA and complete the state grant application on PHEAA's website. PHEAA is the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.
- Once you've submitted your FAFSA, you should receive a Student Aid Report (SAR) Review the SAR for any mistakes and report them to your prospective colleges.
- Check with your prospective schools about financial aid forms, institution-specific scholarships, deadlines, and requirements.
- If required, complete an additional financial aid form called the CSS/Financial Aid Profile at <https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile>
- Apply for scholarships (local, national, and institution-specific). Local scholarships can be found in Naviance. National scholarships can be located using any free scholarship search engine, such as fastweb,

- College Board's BigFuture, and Naviance's national scholarship search.
- Compare your admissions offers and financial aid award letters.

## College Funding Options

Every college website includes Financial Aid information. Read the financial aid information listed for the colleges to which you apply!

There are four general types of financial aid available to assist families in paying for college.

1. Grants
2. Scholarships
3. Loans
4. Work Study

**Grants** are awarded based primarily upon family income. The lower a family's annual income, the more grant money a student may get. A few state grants aren't related to family income, however. The source of most grants is the federal or state government. Grants are gifts to students which do not have to be repaid. Consider them free money!

Most **scholarship** funds are provided directly by the college, a corporation, a civic or fraternal organization, churches, and clubs. The eligibility criteria for scholarships vary widely, however, scholarships are generally awarded for a talent or an achievement. Scholarships are also free money. Beware, it could be a scam if you are asked to pay for a scholarship application.

When you've exhausted every possibility for scholarships and grants, you may find that a student **loan** is your last option to pay for college. Go to MySmartBorrowing.org, PHEAA's free, interactive tool, you can use to make smart decisions about career choice and paying for higher education.

**Work Study** is when the college employs a student for a stipulated number of hours per week. The money earned is applied to college costs.

Aid for college is also available to members of all military branches. Loan forgiveness programs exist for specific career occupations as well. And remember, there are some income tax deductions and credits that may be taken for educational expenses.

## Financial Aid and Scholarships YSSD Links

[www.yssd.org](http://www.yssd.org): Buildings ► High School ► Guidance ► Financial Aid/Scholarship

-or-

<http://www.yssd.org/Buildings/HighSchool/Guidance/FinancialAidScholarshipInformation.aspx>

## Information for Student Athletes

Students who plan to participate in college athletics must be familiar with National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility requirement: In order to be eligible for college athletics, a student must meet minimal requirements in GPA and SAT scores according to a sliding scale. The scale can be found at: <http://www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future/test-scores>. This requirement is based on the standards published by the NCAA for the current school year. More details can be found in the NCAA publication at the Eligibility Center website, accessed by the following link: <http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CBSA16.pdf>.

All student-athletes considering college athletics should also register with, and review the information at, the NCAA Eligibility Center, which can be accessed at [http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA\\_EMS/NCAA.jsp](http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp). NOTE: The NCAA has its own method of GPA calculation: A 2.0 overall GPA at York Suburban HS does not equate to a 2.0 GPA with the NCAA. Only select courses are used in the NCAA GPA calculation: Qualifying core courses are found on the Eligibility Center's website.

Talk to your coach about your interests and see how they might be able to guide you. Recruitment often means videotaping your game play and skill sets, along with preparing an athletic resume for submission to coaches. For most sports, coaches may not contact you until July 1 after your junior year. However, you may contact them via email and they may respond to inquiries.

The NCAA lists the rules and procedures for recruitment and playing a Division I, I-A, II, II-A or III sport in college. Find the colleges, conferences, and coaches that offer your sport at each level of participation and the direct links to their websites. NCAA rules are extremely specific and must be followed by both coaches and prospective athletes. The Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete may be a useful resource. Order a free copy by calling 1-800-638-3731 or by downloading it at <http://www.ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CBSA17.pdf>.

Other helpful resources include:

- [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org) for the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletes
- [www.njcaa.org](http://www.njcaa.org) for the National Junior College Athletic Association
- Guidebook available through publishers: *A Student Athlete's Guide to College*, by Hilary S. Abramson

## Advice for Visual / Performing Arts Majors

Various degree options are available for art-related subjects. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree with a major in arts can be earned at many traditional four-year colleges. The Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) for artists/performers or Bachelor of Music (BM) for musicians are commonly earned at a conservatory or stand-alone art school. At a large university, visual and performing arts departments sometimes offer both BA and BFA/BM options.

Students in the visual or performing arts should expect to prepare a portfolio or audition in addition to submitting the usual application for admission. This process can determine your admission to a BFA/BM granting school. At a traditional college, auditions and portfolios may be linked to talent scholarships rather than admission to the major. Some schools hold on-campus auditions on specific dates and others will allow you to submit a digital video.

For additional advice about applying to a visual or performing arts program, please speak to your art/music teacher and visit: <http://www.petersons.com/college-search/music-school-dance-school.aspx>

## Local Post Secondary Options

- Consolidated School of Business – <http://www.CSB.edu>
- Empire Beauty School - <http://www.empire.edu/cosmetology-schools/pennsylvania/york>
- Harrisburg Area Community College - [www.hacc.edu](http://www.hacc.edu)
- Harrisburg University - <http://harrisburgu.edu/>
- Millersville University - <http://www.millersville.edu/>
- Penn State York Campus - <http://www.yk.psu.edu>
- Pennsylvania College of Art and Design - <http://pcad.edu/>
- Pennsylvania College of Health Science - <http://www.pacollege.edu/>
- Thaddeus Stevens College Of Technology - <http://www.stevenscollege.edu>
- The Art Institute of York - <https://www.artinstitutes.edu/york>
- York College of Pennsylvania - <https://www.ycp.edu>
- York County School Of Technology Adult Education Program - <http://www.ytech.edu/adulted>
- York Technical Institute - <http://www.yti.edu>
- York Technical Institute Motorcycle Technology Center - <http://www.yti.edu/programs/MotorcycleTechnology/>

# Useful Website and Exploration Options

## Information on specific colleges:

- College specific websites
- Naviance
- Review resource books such as Petersen's, Fiske, Insider's Guide, Barron's, etc
- Email a YSHS alumni who is attending the college
- College Fairs (York College and at [www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org))
- Common Application Website: [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

## Finding a good college match for you:

- [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- [www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)
- <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=yshs> – Naviance
- Talk to your counselor, parents, alumni, etc.

## College visits at York Suburban:

- Naviance - <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=yshs>
- TV Scroll
- Newslink

## Scholarships:

- Naviance—current list of scholarships at <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=yshs>
- [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
- [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org)
- [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) - federal financial aid form

## Testing dates, registration information, score reports:

- [www.sat.org/register](http://www.sat.org/register)
- [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

## Gap Year options

- <http://www.yorkrotary.org>
- [www.andeo.org](http://www.andeo.org)
- [www.gapwork.com](http://www.gapwork.com)

## Playing sports in college:

- <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/>

## You Made Your College Choice: What's Next?

The next few months are going to be busy and exciting as you prepare to go to college. Before you arrive on campus, use the following checklist to make sure you stay on track:

- Set your "College I'm Attending" in Naviance; this will notify the Guidance Office to send your final HS transcript to that college or university. We will then place your name and destination on the college map in the hallway showcase.
- Read and respond promptly to all the information and forms you receive from your college. You'll need to set up orientation activities, financial aid, housing, meal plans and more, so be careful not to miss any deadlines. Typically, submitting your deposit to a college will start the process for each of these areas.
- Accept your financial aid offer. This is separate from your college's acceptance offer. You don't have to accept the entire financial aid package; you might want to take out a smaller loan, for example. Decide what to accept and then complete and return the form by the deadline.
- Take care of loan paperwork. If you're accepting a loan as part of your financial aid package, you'll probably need to fill out the loan application as soon as possible.
- Choose housing if you won't be living at home. If you're going to live in a dorm, your college will send you housing information as well as a contract that you must return. If off-campus housing is an option you're interested in, contact your college's housing office for help.
- Select a meal plan if you're living on campus. Enrolling in one may be mandatory for on-campus students. Off-campus students may also have the option of signing up for a meal plan.
- Check computer requirements to see if incoming students need to have a computer. Some colleges may help students buy a computer.
- Start shopping and packing. Think about what you'll need to bring, where to get it and how to transport it. Making a shopping list is a good starting point.
- Contact your roommate if you'll have one and if your college makes contact information available. This will allow you to get to know your roommate in advance and coordinate with him or her about what to bring to college.
- Get a physical before college starts. Most incoming college students have to submit the results of a recent physical exam and their vaccination history before they can register for classes.
- Attend pre-orientation programs, if offered. These programs let first-year students meet one another and can be a great way to ease into campus life.
- Find out if you have to take placement exams to determine your level in reading, writing, math or other subjects. Your standardized-test scores may enable you to skip some placement exams, but look into testing requirements and exam schedules.
- In May, you will participate in a transition class at York Suburban High School. You will have the opportunity to ask questions of first year college students/recent YS grads. This is a great opportunity to receive advice on classes, roommates, studying, book purchasing, packing, etc.
- Thank your supporters. Your counselors, teachers, coaches, scholarship sponsors and family all probably helped you get to college. Let them know how much you appreciate their efforts.

## The AP Program: Resources for Students and Parents

<https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-insights-parents-families.pdf>

## Glossary of Terms

**A.A.** - This stands for an "associate of arts" degree, which can be earned at most two-year colleges. **A.A.S.:** This refers to an "associate of applied science" degree, which can be earned at some two-year colleges.

**Accredited** - Official recognition that a college or university meets the standards of a regional or national association. Although international students are not required to attend an accredited college or university in the United States, employers, other schools, and governments worldwide often only recognize degrees from accredited schools.

**Acceptance** - The decision by an admissions officer or committee to offer the opportunity for enrollment as a student at a particular institution.

**ACT** - A two-hour-and-55-minute examination that measures a student's knowledge and achievement in four subject areas -- English, mathematics, reading and science reasoning -- to determine the student's readiness for college-level instruction. There is also an optional writing test that assesses students' skills in writing an essay. The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36 for each of the four areas. The four subject area scores are averaged to create a Composite Score.

**Advanced Placement (AP)** - AP courses are college-level classes taught in the high school following guidelines and covering material that will instruct students in AP subject areas and should prepare them to take Advanced Placement tests offered by The College Board in hope of earning college credit.

**American College Test (ACT)** - A standardized college entrance exam administered by the American College Testing Program. Four separate, multiple-choice tests measure knowledge of English, math, reading, and science, and one optional writing test measures essay planning and writing skills. Most students take the ACT during their junior or senior year of high school, and most colleges and universities accept scores from either the ACT or SAT. Some schools may recommend, but not require, international students to take the ACT or SAT.

**Application** - A college application is part of the competitive college admissions system. Admissions departments usually require students to complete an application for admission that generally consists of academic records, personal essays, letters of recommendation, and a list of extracurricular activities. Most schools require the SAT or ACT. Deadlines for admission applications are established and published by each college or university.

**Art School (Arts College, Art Institute, Conservatory)** - An institution specializing in the visual, performing, and/or creative arts.

**Associate Degree** - An undergraduate degree awarded by a college or university upon successful completion of a program of study, usually requiring two years of full-time study. An associate's is typically awarded by community colleges; it may be a career or technical degree, or it may be a transfer degree, allowing students to transfer those credits to a four-year bachelor's degree-granting school.

**ASVAB** - Armed Services Vocational Battery is a multiple aptitude battery that measures developed abilities and helps predict future academic and occupational success.

**Athletic Scholarships** - These scholarships are based upon athletic ability and your prospective college's departmental needs. Division I, II, and III college athletic scholarships are very difficult to receive because of fierce competition.

**Award Letter** - An award letter from a school states the type and amount of financial aid the school is willing to provide the student, if s/he accepts admission and registers as a full-time student.

**B.A., B.S., BFA** - B.A. stands for "bachelor of arts," B.S. stands for "bachelor of science" and B.F.A means "bachelor of Fine Arts". All the mentioned degrees can be earned at four-year colleges.

**Bachelor's** - An undergraduate degree awarded by a college or university upon successful completion of a program of study, typically requiring at least four years (or the equivalent) of full-time study. Common degree types include bachelor of arts (B.A. or A.B.), which refers to the liberal arts, and bachelor of science (B.S.). A bachelor's is required before starting graduate studies.

**Best Fit** - The college search is not about getting into the best college. There is no school that is best for all students. Some students do best at large public universities; others excel in small liberal arts colleges; still others want to study far from home. If you want to make the most of college, don't just apply to the big-name schools or the ones your friends are excited about. Do your own research to find schools that are the best fit for you.

**CEEB** - A six-digit number assigned by the College Entrance Examination Board to every high school. York Suburban High School's code is 395-448.

**Certificates** - In an economy that increasingly rewards specialization, more and more institutions are offering certification

programs, typically a package of five or six courses, for credit or not, taken over three to 18 months. Some cost a few thousand dollars, others much more.

**College Rep Visit** - This is when a college or university admissions representative visits a high school or community site for the purpose of recruiting students for admission to the institution. **College Search:** These are the steps you take in the early phases of college planning in order to identify, locate, and investigate college-level programs that meet your individual interests, abilities, and needs as a student.

**College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS Profile)** – A financial aid form from the College Board required by many private colleges to determine eligibility for non-federal financial aid.

**College Work Study Program (FWS)** - Federal money distributed by college to provide part-time jobs to student who need help paying college expenses. Work study jobs are awarded to the student by the financial aid office.

**Common Application** -The Common Application (informally known as the Common App) is an undergraduate college admission application that applicants may use to apply to any of the approximately 700 member colleges and universities. Instead of a student needing to complete a separate college application for each institution, a student can complete just one Common Application.

**Community College** - Community colleges, sometimes called junior colleges, technical colleges, or city colleges, are primarily two-year public institutions providing higher education and lower-level courses, granting certificates, diplomas, and associate's degrees. Many also offer continuing and adult education. After graduating from a community college, some students transfer to a four-year liberal arts college or university for two to three years to complete a bachelor's degree.

**Core requirements:** Mandatory courses that students are required to complete to earn a degree.

**Deferred Admission:** - A category of admission used in conjunction with early (action, decision, notification, or acceptance) plans to indicate that a student has not been admitted early but will remain in the applicant pool for reconsideration during the review of applications for regular admissions.

**Deferred Enrollment** - This is a category of admission available at some institutions for fully accepted students who wish—for a justifiable reason—to take a semester or year off before enrolling in college.

**Degree** - A diploma or title awarded to students by a college or university after successful completion of a program of study.

**Demonstrated Need** - This is the difference between the cost of attending a college and your expected family contribution. **Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The EFC is the amount of money you and your family could be expected to pay for one year of college costs, based on the data gathered from the FAFSA and determined by a federal formula applied to that data. This figure often differs from the actual amount you will be required to pay.

**Developmental Education** - Instructional and support activities designed to keep unprepared students in college and help them improve their basic skills so that they can successfully complete a program and achieve their educational goals.

**Direct Loan Program** - The William Ford Direct Loan Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Education to provide loans that help students pay for their postsecondary education.

**Early Action** - Early action is when a prospective student applies for admission by early deadline (before the regular admission deadline) and receives notice of acceptance, denial, or deferment with no obligation to the university to enroll, if accepted for admission.

**Early Admission** - Through this program, qualifying high school juniors with outstanding academic records may forego their senior year in high school and enroll in a college or university.

**Early decision** - A program offered by some colleges and universities that allows students to submit an application to their top-choice school early, typically in November or December, and receive the decision early, usually in mid- or late December. If accepted, students are required to enroll at that school and withdraw all applications to other schools. Although some schools allow international students to apply via early decision, applicants who apply for financial aid may not receive a decision any earlier than those who apply through the regular decision process.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC)** - An amount of money that the federal government specifies as the responsibility of a family to contribute toward a student's college education. The EFC is calculated from a formula that the government applies to the information on the FAFSA.

**FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) - [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) Learn all about the FAFSA, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, usually the first step in seeking financial aid for higher education. The Student Guide [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) Available in English and Spanish, the Student Guide is a comprehensive resource on student financial aid from the U.S. Department of Education.

**FastWeb** - [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) This free service from Monster.com allows users to search over 1.3 million scholarships worth more than \$3 billion.

**Federal Pell Grant** - This grant is a form of financial aid provided by the Federal government to students whose FAFSA indicates a high level of financial need.

**Federal Perkins Loans** - These loans are similar to Stafford loans in that no interest accrues while you are in college. The interest rate is lower, and the repayment grace period is longer than that of a Stafford subsidized loan. The need-based standards are more stringent for the Perkins loan and funds are awarded based on the FAFSA Student Aid Report. Institutional

**Fees** - These are charges that cover costs not associated with the student's course load, such as costs of some athletic activities, clubs, and special events.

**Financial Aid Package** - The total amount of financial aid a student receives. Federal and nonfederal aid—such as grants, loans, or work-study—are combined in a "package" to help meet the student's need. Using available resources to give each student the best possible package of aid is one of the major responsibilities of a school's financial aid administrator.

**Financial Need** - The difference between the total cost of the school (tuition, room and board, and expenses) and the family's ability to pay (the EFC).

**Gap-Year Programs** - Year-long programs designed for high school graduates who wish to defer enrollment in college while engaging in meaningful activities, such as academic programs, structured travel, community service, etc. Notification Date: The date by which applicants who are accepted for admission are expected to notify the institutions of their intent to enroll and make enrollment deposits. That date is often on or around May 1st.

**GPA (Grade point average)** - A student's overall academic performance, which is calculated as a numerical average of grades earned in all courses. The GPA is determined after each term, typically on a 4.0 scale, and upon graduation, students receive an overall GPA for their studies.

**Graduate Degrees** - These degrees are earned beyond the bachelor's degree when the student completes graduate school curriculum requirements. Common examples include the MA (master's degree), PhD (doctoral degree) MBA (master's degree in business administration), MD (medical doctor).

**Grant** - A type of financial aid that consists of an amount of free money given to a student, often by the federal or a state government, a company, a school, or a charity. A grant does not have to be repaid. Grant" is often used interchangeably with "scholarship.

**Institutional Grant** - This is a need-based grant provided by an institution and offered to students whose families are unable to pay the full cost of college. Institutional grants do not have to be repaid. Merit-Based.

**Institutional Loan** - Any student loan administered by the college or university using the institution's funds as the source of funding. Perkins Loans may also be considered institutional loans.

**Junior college** - A two-year postsecondary institution that offers the associate degree. Also referred to as a community college.

**Khan Academy** - Practice exercises, instructional videos, and a personalized learning dashboard that empower learners to study at their own pace in and outside of the classroom are provided free of charge. Practice in Math, science, computer programming, history, art history, economics, etc. are provided.

**Liberal Arts College** - A degree-granting institution where the academic focus is on developing the intellect and instruction in the humanities and sciences, rather than on training for a particular vocational, technical, or professional pursuit.

**Major** - The academic subject area that a student chooses to focus on during his or her undergraduate studies. Students typically must officially choose their major by the end of their sophomore year, allowing them to take a number of courses in the chosen area during their junior and senior years.

**Matriculation** - The payment of deposits, tuition, fees, and other charges to enroll in a program of studies at an educational institution. A university might make a distinction between "matriculated students," who are actually accumulating credits toward a degree, and a relative few "non-matriculated students" who may be "auditing" courses or taking classes without receiving credits.

**Merit aid / merit scholarships** - A type of financial aid awarded by a college or university to students who have demonstrated special academic ability or talents, regardless of their financial need. Most merit aid has specific requirements if students want to continue to receive it, such as maintaining a certain GPA.

**Minor** - An academic subject area that a student chooses to have a secondary focus on during their undergraduate studies. Unlike a major, a minor is typically not required, but it allows a student to take a few additional courses in a subject different

from his or her major.

**NCAA - National Collegiate Athletic Association** - is a non-profit association which regulates athletes at many institutions, conferences, organizations, and individuals.

**Need-based financial aid** - Financial aid that is awarded to students due to their financial inability to pay the full cost of attending a specific college or university, rather than specifically because of their grades or other merit.

**Need-blind admissions** - A college or university's policy of accepting or declining applications without considering an applicant's financial circumstances. This policy does not necessarily mean that these schools will offer enough financial aid to meet a student's full need. Only a handful of U.S. colleges or universities offer need-blind admissions to international students.

**Net price calculator** - An online tool that allows students and families to calculate a personalized estimate of the cost of a specific college or university, after taking into account any scholarships or need-based financial aid that an applicant would receive. By Oct. 29, 2011, each higher education institution in the United States is required by law to post a net price calculator on its respective website.

**Non-matriculated** - Enrolled in a college or university's courses, but not in a program of study leading to a degree.

**Open admissions** - A college or university's policy of accepting all students who have completed high school, regardless of their grades or test scores, until all spaces are filled. Most community colleges have an open admissions policy, including for international students.

**Orientation** - A college or university's official process of welcoming new, accepted students to campus and providing them with information and policies before classes begin, usually in a half-day or full-day event. Many colleges and graduate schools offer a separate orientation just for international students to cover topics such as how to follow immigration and visa regulations, set up a U.S. bank account, and handle culture shock.

**Part-time student** - A student who is enrolled at a college or university but is not taking the minimum number of credits required for a full course load.

**Pell Grant** - Financial assistance awarded by the federal government on the basis of need to be used at any eligible institution. The grant may be used toward tuition, room and board, or other educational costs. Grants do not have to be repaid. Apply using the FAFSA.

**Placement Tests** - Colleges and universities use these examinations to place students in courses—most often mathematics and foreign languages—that match their proficiency. In some cases, a student's level of competency on the test may exempt them from having to take a course required for graduation.

**PLUS Loan**: The Federal Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS) allows parents, regardless of income, to borrow up to the total cost of education minus the amount of any other financial aid awarded by the institution or the government.

**Private Institution** - This is a college or university funded by private sources without any control by a government agency. The cost of attending a private institution is generally higher than the cost at a public institution.

**Private Organization Scholarships**: These scholarship opportunities number in the millions. Places of worship, labor unions, school districts, chambers of commerce and philanthropic organizations are all excellent sources for college scholarships. Sit down with your family and make a scholarship search list of potential sources.

**PSAT** - The Preliminary SAT, a standardized practice test cosponsored by the nonprofit College Board and the National Merit Scholarship Corp., which measures reading, writing, and math skills, giving students experience with the SAT. Students usually take the PSAT in their junior year of high school, and U.S. citizens and permanent residents can submit their scores to qualify for National Merit scholarships.

**Reach School** - A college or university that you have a chance of getting into, but your test scores, GPA and/or class rank are a bit on the low side when you look at the school's profile. The top U.S. colleges and top universities should always be considered reach schools. Recommendations: Statements or letters of endorsement written on a student's behalf during the college application process.

**Regular decision** - An admissions process used by colleges and universities that typically requires applicants to submit their materials by January 1; an admissions decision is generally received by April 1, and if admitted, students usually have until May 1 to respond to the offer. The majority of applicants are evaluated during regular decision, rather than early action and early decision.

**Rolling admissions** - An admissions process used by some colleges and universities in which each application is considered as soon as all the required materials have been received, rather than by a specific deadline. Colleges and universities with this

policy will make decisions as applications are received until all spaces are filled. A response is usually received in 4-6 weeks.

**Room and board** - Housing and meals. "Room and board" is typically one of the costs that colleges and universities will list in their annual estimated cost of attendance, in addition to tuition, fees, and textbooks and supplies. If students choose to live in dormitories, they may be required to buy into a meal plan to use on-campus dining facilities.

**Safety School** - A college or university where you clearly meet the admission requirements.

**SAT Reasoning Test** - The SAT is a standardized test required by many US colleges and universities as part of their admission process. The score a student gets on the SAT is often used as a predictor of how a student is likely to perform in college-level studies. An SAT score is not supposed to be used as the sole admissions criterion admissions committees should also consider high school grades, recommendations, essays and other relevant information in offering places on their undergraduate courses.

**SAT Subject Test** - SAT subject tests (also known as SAT II tests) are offered in many areas of study including English, mathematics, many sciences, history, and foreign languages. Some colleges require students to take one or more SAT subject tests when they apply for admission.

**Scholarship** - A type of financial aid that consists of an amount of free money given to a student by a school, individual, organization, company, charity, or federal or state government that does not have to be repaid. Scholarship is often used interchangeably with grant.

**Stafford Loan** - Loan program in which eligible student borrow from a bank or other financial institution. The federal government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school. Repayment and interest begins six months after the student graduates, leaves school, or drops below half-time student status.

**Student Aid Report (SAR)** - The information you will receive approximately 3-6 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. Your SAR will report your EFC.

**Transcript** - An official record of a student's coursework and grades at a high school, college, or university. A high school transcript is usually one of the required components of the college application process. An official copy of this document must be sent directly from the high school to the college.

**Tuition** - This is the amount of money that colleges charge for classroom and other instruction and use of some facilities such as libraries.

**Undergraduate Student** - A student enrolled in a 4- or 5-year bachelor's degree program, an associate's degree program, or a vocational or technical program below the baccalaureate.

**Wait List** - A list of qualified applicants to a school who may be offered admission if there is space available after all admitted students have made their decisions. Being on a wait list does not guarantee eventual admission, so some students may choose not to remain on the list, particularly if the school is not their first choice.

**Work Study Program** - A financial aid program funded by the U.S. federal government that allows undergraduate or graduate students to work part time on campus or with approved off-campus employers. To participate in work-study, students must complete the FAFSA. In general, international students are not eligible for work-study positions.

## Online Resources

- ACT - <http://www.act.org>
- Advanced Placement Exams - <http://apcentral.collegeboard.com/apc/public/courses/index.html>
- Air Force – <http://www.airforce.com>
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) - <http://official-asvab.com/applicants.htm>
- Army - <https://www.army.mil/>
- Big Future - <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>
- CLEP - <https://clep.collegeboard.org>
- Coast Guard - <https://www.gocoastguard.com/>
- College Board - <https://www.collegeboard.org>
- Common Application - <http://www.commonapp.org>
- CSS Profile - <http://css.collegeboard.org>
- FAFSA - <https://fafsa.ed.gov>
- Khah Academy (Free Preparation for SAT and other classes) - <https://www.khanacademy.org>
- Marines – <http://www.marines.com>
- National Guard – <http://www.nationalguard.com>
- National Merit - <http://www.nationalmerit.org/s/1758/start.aspx?gid=2&pgid=61>
- Naviance - <https://connection.naviance.com/family-connection/auth/login/?hsid=yshs>
- Navy – <http://www.navy.com>
- NCAA - <http://www.ncaa.com>
- NCAA Eligibility Center - [http://web3.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA\\_EMS/NCAA\\_EMS.html#](http://web3.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA_EMS.html#)
- Peterson's - <https://www.petersons.com>
- PHEAA - <https://www.pheaa.org>
- PSAT - <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>
- ROTC - <http://www.military.com/ROTC>
- SAT – <http://www.sat.org>
- SAT Score Converter - [https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/scores/understanding-scores/sat-score-converter?ep\\_ch=PR&ep\\_mid=11243888&ep\\_rid=41334940](https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/scores/understanding-scores/sat-score-converter?ep_ch=PR&ep_mid=11243888&ep_rid=41334940)

## Notes