

SCHS COLLEGE PLANNING HANDBOOK



**South Central High School
3305 Greenwich Angling Rd.
Greenwich, Ohio 44837
Phone: 419-752-3354
Fax: 419-752-6927
CEEB Code: 362435**

**School Counselor: Mary McKee
mmckee@south-central.org**

COMMUNICATION & DEADLINES

HOW DOES S.C.H.S. COUNSELING OFFICE COMMUNICATE WITH YOU?

1. **Announcements**
 - a. Video Announcements during advisory period
 - b. Miss McKee's Google Classroom
 - c. On the S.C.H.S. website
2. **Letters sent home as needed**
3. **Visits to Senior English classes or Advisories**
4. **Twitter @SC_MCKEE**
5. **Scholarship lists**
 - a. Posted in Miss McKee's Google Classroom
 - b. Posted on website www.south-central.org/o/high-school/page/guidance--147
 - c. Listed on announcements
 - d. Emailed to all seniors
6. **Special Meetings**
 - a. Individual conferences with each senior (September)
 - b. Individual conferences with each junior (October)
 - c. College planning/Financial aid meeting (October)
 - d. College Credit PLUS (CCP) Meeting (January) for grades 6-11

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- When applying online, be sure to print out all **supplemental forms** such as teacher/counselor recommendation forms and the college prep form and turn them into the proper people.
- Some colleges such as Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati, Ohio University and Miami University, must have **your test (ACT/SAT) scores sent directly to them**. They will not accept the test scores on your high school transcript.
- Be sure to put the **high school code (362435)** on your testing request for ACT/SAT.
- Be sure to **update your resume** whenever you have any changes. The completion of your resume should be taken seriously and must be an honest representation of what you have done throughout your high school career.
- It is the student's responsibility to make sure all the proper forms are submitted to the School Counseling office in a **timely fashion** for all college and scholarship applications.
- You must complete the **college visit forms** and return it to the main office **one week before your visit**. Your parents also need to call the main office on the morning of your visit.
- CCP students: it is your responsibility to obtain **college transcripts** from the college you take courses through and have them sent to the college you plan to attend. (See CCP Transcript Request)

IMPORTANCE OF DEADLINES

There are **very specific deadlines** for college applications, scholarships, college visit request forms, filing your FAFSA and turning in community service documentation. Remember about deadlines:

- For scholarships, we set a due date one week before it is due to the scholarship company for the following reasons:
 - Additional information is usually required such as a transcript, letters of recommendation, etc.
 - Outgoing mail goes from the counseling office to the Board of Education Office for postage and is then mailed out from there.
 - There are occasions when school might be cancelled or emergencies come up within the counseling office.

Grad. Class Google Classroom

Throughout the year, important announcements pertaining to FAFSA, scholarships, ACT/SAT, as well as documents, website links, and resources will be posted in student's Graduating Class Google Classroom. When new announcements and materials are posted in the Google Classroom, students are automatically sent a notification to their student email directing them to visit the recent posting.

SCHS GUIDANCE WEBSITE

www.south-central.org/o/high-school/page/guidance--147

The planning information available on the website will help prepare students for their future educational decisions. The Guidance Site provides links to information on colleges, careers, testing, social concerns, scholarships, scheduling, and graduation.

OHIO MEANS JOBS

ohiomeansjobs.org

Each student should have made an account in one of their classes through Ohio means Jobs. It is important that each student update their status once they apply to a college or for a scholarship. If a student has a question about password/username, they can ask Miss McKee for help.

To Do's Timeline

<u>SENIOR Year To-Do's</u>	<u>When</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Register online for the ACT or the SAT if you didn't take it as a junior or if you aren't satisfied with your score.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Sign up to meet with college admission advisors when they visit S.C.H.S. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College Representative/ Military Recruiter Visits to SCHS Google Calendar 	August-November
<input type="checkbox"/> Request your ACT/SAT scores be sent to the colleges you are considering.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Ask appropriate community leaders, counselor, and/or teachers to write recommendations for you. Ask early in the year or at least two weeks before application deadlines.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Review your transcript with your school counselor; make sure you are on-target to graduate.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Check to make sure your courses meet college admission requirements.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Update your resume.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Stay involved in school activities and community service.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Research apprenticeship programs, technical/trade schools and military options, if interested.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Note college application periods and pay particular attention to deadlines. More competitive colleges often have November deadlines for admissions.	August/September
<input type="checkbox"/> Organize files, photocopy applications and begin to fill out rough drafts.	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletes playing Div. 1 or 2 sports register online for the NCAA Clearinghouse. Athletes must be cleared to play sports at Division I and II colleges. Ask Miss. McKee to send your transcript.	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend the College Fair at Firelands College or OSU Mansfield	September
<input type="checkbox"/> Attend college info. meetings with your parents. Check for virtual options.	September/October
<input type="checkbox"/> Contact colleges you hope to attend and arrange another on-campus visits.	September/October
<input type="checkbox"/> Decide on the number of colleges to which you will apply (3-5). Research the cost to apply (See ohiomeansjobs).	September/October

<input type="checkbox"/> Have your parents gather financial records and get financial counseling, if needed.	September/October
<input type="checkbox"/> Email college financial aid offices requesting information and applications for scholarships and financial aid. Remember your best source of funding is university-based scholarships and aid.	September/October
<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form (FAFSA) from the internet (www.fafsa.ed.gov .) Work with your parents to complete it.	Beginning in October 1 st
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the FAFSA and submit it electronically (www.fafsa.ed.gov).	After October 1 st
<input type="checkbox"/> Watch for the Student Aid Report (SAR) to arrive, giving the amount of student aid for which you are eligible. This report is generated from your FAFSA. Make sure your colleges receive it. Keep the original. Call 1-800-4FED-AID if you have questions.	After filing FAFSA
<input type="checkbox"/> Organize your planner for college application, scholarship and audition deadlines.	All year
<input type="checkbox"/> Finish your research, compare colleges, and reduce your list to five or ten schools. Meet with your counselor to review your college list. Consider sending in “early decision” and “early action” applications. Be sure you understand the meaning of these terms.	Fall
<input type="checkbox"/> Apply for private, local, state, national, and university-based scholarships.	All year March 1st, 2021 for local scholarships
<input type="checkbox"/> Male students who are US residents or citizens (upon turning 18) must register with the Selective Service- www.sss.gov - required for financial aid purposes.	Upon turning 18
<input type="checkbox"/> Review your 7 th semester grades with your school counselor; make sure you are on-target to graduate.	January
<input type="checkbox"/> Complete and mail university/college-based scholarship and financial aid Forms. Most are due in February.	January
<input type="checkbox"/> Have your school’s counselor send 7 th semester transcripts to colleges that request them.	February
<input type="checkbox"/> Inform your counselor of your first choice colleges. Stay in contact with your representative at those colleges.	February
<input type="checkbox"/> Some college acceptance letters may arrive. File away acceptance letters. Print acceptance emails and file as well.	All year

<input type="checkbox"/> Notify your college counselor of scholarships/academic awards that you have received.	All Spring
<input type="checkbox"/> Review the acceptances and financial aid offers you have received.	April
<input type="checkbox"/> Send thank you notes to anyone who wrote you a letter of recommendation or awarded you a scholarship	Upon receiving
<input type="checkbox"/> Register and pay for new student orientation and create campus email	May
<input type="checkbox"/> Be checking your college email- colleges will send important emails to you college email account only.	Spring/Summer
<input type="checkbox"/> Final Transcripts- Your counselor will send your final transcript (with your senior grades) to your future college as soon as grades are finalized. Please let your counselor know what college to send final grades to. Don't forget NCAA Clearinghouse!	May
<input type="checkbox"/> If you took BGSU, NCSC, OCC or any other college courses throughout high school, request a sealed official transcript and send it to your new college's admissions office. SCHS cannot do this for you! (look on the registrars' page on the college website)	May
<input type="checkbox"/> Enroll in summer Freshman Orientation Session or Freshmen Experience and attend all advising days, open houses, orientation programs, and registration offered by your college.	May/June
<input type="checkbox"/> If you are taking out any student loans, complete the MANDATORY Entrance Loan Counseling Session and sign your Master Promissory Note. Login to https://studentloans.gov using your FSA ID to complete this process. If your parents took out any loans for you, they will need to do this too.	After July 1st

College Entrance Testing - The ACT and SAT are college admission tests administered on national test dates. It is strongly recommended that students begin taking these tests 1-2 times their Junior year and then finish with in the Fall of their Senior year. Admission is based on these scores and your high school GPA in core classes. Always check with admissions offices, if you have a question about their policy on scores, class rank, or the calculation of GPAs.

American College Test (ACT)- composed of the following tests: English, Math, Reading, Science, and an optional Writing test. Not all colleges require the optional writing score, so it is important to research the colleges of interest and what their testing requirements are. Students receive four test scores ranging 1-36, a composite ranging 1-36, and a separate Writing score. There is no penalty for guessing on the ACT. Please visit www.actstudent.org for more information.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)- composed of a Reading, Writing/Language, and Math test. Students receive three test scores ranging from 400-1600. Students need to contact their colleges of choice to see which test their college accepts. Please visit www.collegeboard.org for more information.

Act Test Dates (Nationally)

2020-2021 Test Dates (National)		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	(Late Fee Required)
September 12, 2020 September 13, 2020 (Sunday) September 19, 2020	August 31	No late fees
October 10, 2020 October 17, 2020 October 24, 2020 October 25, 2020 (Sunday)	September 25	No late fees
December 12, 2020	November 6	November 7 - November 20
February 6, 2021	January 8	January 9 - January 15
April 17, 2021	March 12	March 13 - March 26
June 12, 2021	May 7	May 8 - May 21
July 17, 2021*	June 18	June 19 - June 25

Go to www.actstudent.org to see ACT test dates offered at your preferred testing location

Should I Study for these tests?

The best preparation for either test is taking a solid high school course load and taking your schoolwork seriously. At a minimum, you should go through the practice tests distributed freely by the testing companies. Know what to expect on the test day.

- Get plenty of rest the night before the test.
- Eat the kind of breakfast that will give you the energy you need for a long period of intense concentration.
- Dress comfortably.

Additional practice can be found at:

- <http://www.actstudent.org>
- <http://www.collegeboard.com>
- <http://www.princetonreview.com>

COLLEGE PLANNING & HIGH SCHOOL COURSEWORK

Five reasons to take challenging courses:

As you register for your High School classes, here are five good reasons why you should take challenging courses:

1. Colleges look at the high school courses you've taken and want to see that you weren't coasting through.
2. Tough courses give you the knowledge and skills you need to do college work.
3. Students who take challenging courses score higher on the ACT and SAT.
4. You'll be less likely to need remedial courses in college.
5. You will have more options for college and a career. ACT's list of high school course recommendations can serve as a guide for planning your choices. Be sure to check with the colleges and universities you're interested in to compare the requirements. The ACT minimum recommendations are:

Courses Recommended Years (more rigorous than minimum needed for graduation)

- English 4
- Mathematics 4 (Algebra I and II, Geometry, and higher level math)
- Natural Sciences 4 (with lab experience especially Chemistry and Physics)
- Social Studies 4
- Foreign Language 3- 4
- Additional courses: Some colleges and universities require other classes as prerequisites for admission, such as two or more years of the same foreign language or courses in the visual arts, music, theater, drama, dance, computer science, etc.

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

FINDING A COLLEGE THAT FITS (Use Ohio Means Jobs for more help!)

STEP 1: KNOW YOURSELF

As you really begin to think about applying to college, take time to think about yourself. Think about your goals, your likes and dislikes, your abilities and your resources.

Your Goals

- What subjects interest me?
- What do I want to be?
- Do I want to continue my education after high school?
- Do I need to go to college for this career?

Your Likes and Dislikes

- Do I want to live away from home? If so, how far away?
- How important is it that friends go to the same college that I attend?
- Am I comfortable around a lot of people at the same time?
- Do I want to be with different kinds of people or people just like me?
- Would I prefer a city, the suburbs, small towns, or rural areas?
- Do I have any special concerns (religious, special customs, dietary, etc.)?
- Which activities are most important to me (arts, sports, clubs, and so)?
- Do I want to play sports in college?
- Which special opportunities are important? (study abroad, independent study, exchange programs)

Your Abilities

- What kind of student am I?
- What are my strongest and weakest subjects?
- Do I have any special needs (medical, disabilities, learning, and so forth)?
- How are my study skills?
- How well do I handle competition and pressure?
- What are my special talents?

Your Resources

- Are there limits to what I can pay for college?
- Will my family be able to help me?
- Can I go to college full-time if I want?
- How will I get to classes (live on campus, drive, public transportation, and so forth)?

STEP 2: LOGISTICS AND DEMOGRAPHICS TO CONSIDER

Of the more than 2,000 American colleges and universities, no two are alike. Choosing the one that is just right for you requires research. This research must be done at two levels: externally and internally. The external research can be done on the Internet, reading college magazines, visiting the campus, meeting with college admissions representatives at school, or speaking with an alumni. The internal questions you must ask yourself are: What are your needs? What kind of college or university will satisfy those needs?

How do I choose a major?

The choice of a major and the choice of a college as well, hinge upon your choice of a career. What kind of work do you want to do in your life? Once you decide this, your major will effectively be chosen. Choosing a college then will be a matter of researching schools which offer programs in your chosen career. Your college years will demand much from you, mentally, physically, emotionally, and financially. Finding just the right college will help make this time more productive and enjoyable. Begin your research early and don't stop until you find the college that's for you!

How much can I afford to spend?

Even though the cost of a college education will repay itself many times over during your lifetime, you must start with a practical assessment of your resources: your family's contribution, scholarships, grants, loans, part time work. A student who is determined to receive a degree can do so by making the most of the opportunities available.

Where do I want to go?

You will attend college for at least 2 years, perhaps as many as 4 or more years. In what kind of setting are you most comfortable? Near a big city? In a small town? Close to home? Out of state? Your comfort level will affect every aspect of your time in college.

How difficult are the entrance requirements?

Some schools have rigid entrance requirements, while others are more flexible. Your task is to review the admission requirements of each potential college, and compare them to your high school record (GPA, ACT score). Most of your applications should go to the schools whose requirements most closely match your record; however, do not hesitate to also apply to a "reach" college where you just miss the requirements.

What size school would be best for me?

- **Large universities** provide many academic, athletic, and social options for their diverse student populations. Most large universities consist of a number of 'colleges' (departments) which have unique admission requirements. These schools offer undergraduate through doctoral degrees.
- **Small universities** offer a more intimate setting. The admission requirements may be high, but the scholarship packages are generous.

What kind of school would be best for me?

- **Private** schools may have high entrance standards and high tuition rates.
- **Public** schools generally offer lower tuition rates to in-state students.

- **Liberal Arts** colleges emphasize a well-rounded educational foundation upon which further studies can lead to success in a number of possible careers. Because the enrollment is usually small, students and faculty have more opportunity to interact.
- **Specialized** colleges offer focused study in a particular area of interest, such as computer graphics, business or the arts among others. If you are certain of your career field, these schools will allow you to specialize in that area.
- **Religious** colleges allow students to pursue their educational goals within the framework of the school's religious beliefs.
- **Single-Gender** colleges eliminate the distraction of the opposite sex while still allowing students to enjoy a social life on campus. This arrangement often reduces social pressure which enables students to achieve more academically.

WHAT A COLLEGE LOOKS FOR

It is the responsibility of the college admissions committee to assemble a freshman class that meets the requirements of its institution. As colleges and universities get more competitive for admission every year and colleges have more applicants than available space, certain criteria are established for admission. Admissions considerations include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------|
| ● Rigor of courses taken in H.S. | ● Diversity |
| ● Academic record (GPA) | ● Internships and jobs |
| ● Standardized test scores | ● College interview |
| ● School organizations and activities | ● Portfolio |
| ● Community and volunteer activities | ● Resume |
| ● Letters of recommendation | |
| ● Special interests and talents | |

No single factor will determine acceptance or rejection. A school desires to see the student has selected challenging courses in high school that will help the student grow academically. Sometimes it is better to do well in demanding college prep classes than to do excellent in lower level courses that do not challenge the student. They want to know about interests, accomplishments, and future goals. Colleges look for students who demonstrate initiative and will be lifelong learners.

Most colleges are now asking for senior year schedules in the application process. Colleges want to make sure that students are continuing to take a strong academic schedule their senior years. Literature has documented the fact that college freshman do better their first year if they have taken tougher courses their senior year of high school which included an English, math, science, and social studies course. Many colleges are requesting senior year first semester grades to make sure the potential student is staying on track.

Why would a college rescind acceptance? <https://blog.collegevine.com/why-would-a-college-rescind-an-acceptance/>

SCHS COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

It is very important to organize yourself for the college selection process. The counseling department encourages you to follow the following procedure.

1. Get a file box to keep copies of all of your applications and any literature from the colleges where you apply. It is best to have a separate folder for each college inside of this file box.
2. Once you visit a college, make a list of the "positives and "negatives" as well as questions about the college. Store this in the college folder in the file box.
3. Student completes their applications online. We do not keep copies of your application but do record the date we send your transcript to the college. You can check with us about when we sent your transcript. Colleges that have a rolling admission policy take anywhere from two to four weeks to get back to you. Some colleges will not respond until a certain date.
4. Request your transcript from Miss. McKee in person or via email. Be sure to include what college to send to as well as the colleges preferred way to receive transcripts; email, fax, or postal mail.

5. Remember to have your applications in at least two weeks before they are due to the college. Neatness does count in completing the applications in BLACK or BLUE INK, if not filled out online.
6. Over 600 colleges use the Common Application for college applications. Please check with your schools of choice.
7. Pay specific attention to the application deadlines. Allow enough time for South Central High School to send your transcripts. Please make sure to request transcripts at least two weeks before it is due to the college.
8. Select references wisely. Use those who personally know you, your academic record, your strengths and your accomplishments.

THE ONLINE APPLICATION

MOST colleges state that the online application is the preferred method of applying since it allows for a seamless entry of student data into their computer systems and reduces errors. Following is a list of suggestions to assist students with the online application process:

1. As with the paper application, accuracy and thoroughness count.
2. Remember to print a copy of the online application for your records.
3. Read ALL directions carefully before beginning the process
4. Most applications allow for the creation of an account so the application can be filed in stages; others require that it be completed and submitted in one session. Allow sufficient time for either process.
5. You must notify the counseling office when you submit an online application.
6. Online applications require that a transcript be sent separately. Let the guidance office know you need a transcript.
7. Make certain that any required secondary school forms be printed out so you can submit them to your counselor along with your transcript request.
8. Remember that required application fees must either be paid by a credit card online at the time of submission or that a check must be sent to the college through the mail. Without this, the application is incomplete.
9. Check to see how you will be notified that the college receives the online application. Print a copy of that verification. If verification is not received in a timely manner, you will need to follow up.



EARLY DECISION VS EARLY ACTION

Early decision (ED) plans are binding — a student who is accepted as an ED applicant must attend the college. **Early action (EA) plans are non binding** — students receive an early response to their application. High school seniors who apply to college early—through "Early Decision" or "Early Action" programs with fall deadlines—are more likely to receive admission letters than those who apply using the regular deadlines and processes at more than 80 percent of the colleges that report such statistics. Approximately 500 colleges have early decision or early action plans, and some have both. Some colleges offer a non binding option called **single-choice early action**, under which applicants may not apply ED or EA to any other college.



ED (Early Decision) applicants

- Apply early (usually in November) to first-choice college.
- Receive an admission decision from the college well in advance of the usual notification date (usually by December).
- Agree to attend the college if accepted and offered a financial aid package that is considered adequate by the family.
- Apply to only one college early decision.
- Apply to other colleges under regular admission plans.
- Withdraw all other applications if accepted by ED.

- Send a nonrefundable deposit well in advance of May 1.

EA (Early Action) applicants

- Apply early.
- Receive an admission decision early in the admission cycle (usually in January or February).
- Consider acceptance offer; do not have to commit upon receipt.
- Apply to other colleges under regular admission plans.
- Give the college a decision no later than the May 1 national response date.

Who should apply early?

Applying to an ED or EA plan is most appropriate for a student who:

- Has researched colleges extensively.
- Is absolutely sure that the college is the first choice.
- Has found a college that is a strong match academically, socially and geographically.
- Meets or exceeds the admission profile for the college for SAT® scores, GPA and class rank.
- Has an academic record that has been consistently solid over time.

TOP TEN COLLEGE APPLICATION MISTAKES

Senior year is hectic, but don't let the frenzy affect the quality of your college applications. Take your time, pay attention to detail and plan ahead so you can meet the deadlines. Following are some of the top responses from counselors and admissions staff that shared the most common mistakes on college applications.

1. **MISSPELLINGS**—This is a big pet peeve of admissions people. If you misspell words on something as important as the application, it shows that either you don't care or you aren't good at spelling. Some students even misspell their intended major.
2. **GRAMMATICAL ERRORS**—It isn't good enough to just spell check. Proofread for grammatical errors.
3. **FORGOTTEN SIGNATURES**—Make sure you sign and date the form. Often students overlook it if it's on the back of the form. Make sure all spaces are completed.
4. **COUNTY VS. COUNTRY?**—Read carefully. If the form asks what COUNTY you live in, the United States should NOT be the answer.
5. **LISTING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES THAT AREN'T**—Those that make the list include sports, the arts, formal organizations and volunteer work. Talking on the phone and hanging out with friends don't make the cut.
6. **NOT TELLING YOUR COUNSELOR WHERE YOU'VE APPLIED**—If you apply online be sure to tell Miss McKee. No decision can be made on your application until your official transcript reaches the college and only the counseling office can send out your official transcript.
7. **WRITING ILLEGIBLY**—First impressions count, so take your time and use your best handwriting. It will make a better impression.
8. **USING AN E-MAIL ADDRESS THAT FRIENDS MIGHT LAUGH ABOUT, BUT COLLEGES WON'T**—Select a professional email address. Keep your fun address for friends, but select an address using your name for college admissions.
9. **NOT CHECKING YOUR EMAIL REGULARLY**—If you've given an e-mail address, the college will use it. You don't want to miss out on anything because you didn't read your email.
10. **LETTING MOM OR DAD HELP YOU FILL OUT YOUR APPLICATION**—Admissions people know if your parents help, whether you have two different styles of handwriting or if your admissions essay sounds more like a 45-year-old than a 17-year-old. It's fine to get advice, but do the work yourself.

TIPS FOR PARENTS ABOUT THE APPLICATION PROCESS

- **MAKE AN ACTION PLAN AND STICK TO IT** - Together with your son or daughter and his or her college counselor, construct an outline for the entire



college admissions process, from initial browsing for information to deciding where to attend. Create an itinerary for visiting colleges and filing college and scholarship applications as well as financial aid forms. Post the calendar in a handy location, touching base periodically with your child to monitor progress. Update this calendar as you receive further information from the high school or college where your son/daughter attends/applied.

- **PLAN OUT YOUR TESTS.** - In this competitive admissions environment, standardized tests are becoming increasingly important. Plan to take the SAT and/or the ACT more than once. If your son/daughter is going to a competitive college, they may need to take several SAT Subject Tests.
- **HAVE YOUR CHILD CONTACT THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICES.**
- **KEEP COPIES OF EVERYTHING.** - It's a great idea to invest in a plastic file box. Set up file folders for each college to which your child is applying. Keep all correspondence within these folders. Document phone calls as well—always get the names and titles of those with whom you have had contact.
- **FILE ALL FINANCIAL AID FORMS AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (can begin FASFA OCT. 1st)**
Do all tax forms promptly so you can complete the required financial aid applications.
- **VISIT YOUR CHILD'S TOP COLLEGE OPTIONS.** If you can, visit all the colleges where your child is applying. There is no substitute for a campus visit, and college-produced videos are NOT “the next best thing.” NEVER stick strictly to a “packaged” admissions visit consisting of an information session/interview and a slide show or tour. Balance the experience by lunching on your own in the dining hall and browsing around campus. When you do visit, make sure that you allow enough time on campus for your son or daughter to explore on his/her own—this will be the perfect time for you to meet with a financial aid officer.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

When requesting a letter of recommendation, please follow these helpful hints:

1. Plan ahead to meet your timeline. Allow a week to ten days for the completion of your letter. This person possibly has other letters to be written ahead of yours. Do not request last minute recommendations.
2. Ask a teacher from one of your CORE academic classes, counselor, administrator, employer, scoutmaster, group advisor, or clergyman/woman who knows you well and can recommend you positively.
3. Make your request personally to the one who is to write your recommendation: give a copy of your resumé.
4. If the letter needs to emphasize a special accomplishment or skill such as leadership, community service, or music, please indicate the emphasis to the person writing the recommendation.
5. If it is to be sent to the sponsor: supply an addressed, stamped envelope. Do not include a return address.
6. It is recommended that you do not photocopy letters of recommendation. Current date, most recent academic data, and an original signature should be included in the recommendation.
7. Be sure to thank these individuals formally for their time and effort.

COLLEGE/SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

Too often the essay simply puts into prose what already has been stated in the application: a list of activities in sentence form. BORING! Don't be afraid to let them see who you really are and what is in your heart and soul. Here are some excellent tips:

WRITING THE ESSAY FOR YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION

What is the one thing you can control on your college application? You'll find that most applications are full of questions about who you are and what you've done with your life so far. By the time you start filling out your application, your grade point average is pretty well set and results of your standardized tests are in. And at this point, it's too late to do more for your school and community. So what's the one thing you can control on your college application — the one thing that can make you stand out from the crowd?

YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY . . . TOTAL CONTROL

That's right. The easiest way to sway an admissions officer on your application is through your college essay. Admissions officers read thousands of application essays every year. With a great essay, you can become an extraordinary applicant in a sea of ordinary applicants. There is no better way to get noticed as a unique applicant than with a unique essay. What you say in your essay – and how you say it – can have a significant impact on your admission decision. It's your one chance to give admissions officers a real look at your **PERSONALITY** and **ACADEMIC POTENTIAL**. You have the control to show the admissions officer what you're really made of! Here are some tips to use when writing your college essay.

WHERE TO BEGIN...

- Plan ahead.
- Choose wisely if more than one topic.
- Be unique. Be yourself!
- Organize your thoughts.

AFTER YOU'VE WRITTEN IT...

- Let it sit for a day or two.
- Proofread.
- Get feedback from others.
- Check for content. Did you tell them about yourself?
- Proofread again.

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. Since our knowledge is limited to the information provided, why not then use this opportunity to tell us anything you think we should know?
2. What do you see as the turning point(s) or important events in your life and why do you view them as such?
3. Who are the people who have done the most to influence your personal development and in what ways?
4. What prominent person (past or present) do you particularly admire? Why?
5. What idea has most influenced your life? Explain.
6. What is the most critical moral, ethical, or social problem facing America?
7. Describe your idea of the honorable person. Feel free to use examples.
8. Discuss briefly the one or two extracurricular, work or community activities that have meant the most to you.
9. Write a brief essay of 200-500 words on any topic of direct personal importance to you.
10. If you were given the opportunity to spend an evening with any one person, living, deceased, or fictional, whom would you choose and why?
11. Please cite and discuss a literary quotation or brief passage that has special meaning to you.
12. Write a personal essay of 250-500 words. This is to help us learn more about you—your experiences, values, or interests. You might describe a person or event that has been especially influential in your life; you might write about your goals for the future; or you may write about anything that you feel will enable us to know you better.
13. Describe a situation in which your values or beliefs caused conflict with someone you respect. How was the situation resolved?
14. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
15. Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you and explain that influence.
16. I will be an asset to _____ College/University because...
17. What is your favorite word and why?
18. The Honor System is an important element of student life at our college. The Committee on Admissions would like to know something of your views on honor.

Additional resources:

- Writing Your Application Essay by Sarah Myers McGinty
- The Best College Application Essays by Mark Alan Stewart
- The Elements of Style by Strunk and White
- www.commonapp.org/tips.htm

COMMON APPLICATION ESSAYS

Common App Personal Essay-Colleges can either make the personal essay optional or required. In the writing section of your Common App tab, you will see a table that lists each college's requirements.

College-specific questions-College-Many colleges include short answer questions or essay prompts within this section. You can find specific information about each college's individual writing prompts on the Common App website.

Writing supplements-Some colleges use a separate writing supplement. Not all colleges have a writing supplement. Some colleges only request this supplement based on how you answer other questions. You can find more information about writing supplements on the Dashboard or your My Colleges tab.

THE INTERVIEW

Before you get to this point in the application process, most of what you have done is on paper. This will be your first “live” contribution to the process. Typical interview questions asked by an Admissions Counselor might be:

- Why are you considering this college?
- What do you want to get out of your college experience?
- What do you plan to major in? Why?
- What do you plan to be doing ten years from now?
- What have you liked or disliked about your high school?
- If you were the principal of your high school, what would you change?
- What would you like to tell us about yourself?
- Do you have any heroes, contemporary or historical?
- How do you spend a typical afternoon after school?
- What events have been significant in your life?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school or community?
- What is the most important thing you have learned in high school?
- What books not required by your courses have you read recently?
- Tell us about your family

EXTRA TIPS

In the college interview, be yourself. In the final analysis, the student should always take into consideration the fit and the feel of the college. How did you feel when you're on the campus? Does it feel like the fit is there? Ask questions of several students. Do you like these students? If a college can sense that the student has risk-taking about them, or a sense of humor, or other related things, those are the pluses. Ask at the end of the interview about your chances of getting in. Be direct on that.

BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

- Call to make an appointment.
- Do research about the school to which you are applying.
- Take a tour of the campus, preferably before the interview.
- Practice answering sample questions.
- Dress appropriately and professionally.
- Arrive early for the interview.
- Try to arrange interviews so your “first choice college” is last. This will give you experience.

DURING THE INTERVIEW

- Look alive! Be energetic! Be yourself!
- Maintain eye contact.
- Listen carefully.
- Answer each question briefly and specifically.
- Ask questions which reveal the research you have done.
- Be positive.

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Send a thank you note.

CHECKLIST FOR THE CAMPUS VISIT

One of the best reasons for the campus visit is to see first-hand what the physical facilities are like and to get a sense of the atmosphere of the college. It is also ample opportunity to talk to a student tour guide and ask what life is like at that school. Try to take the tour before your interview. The more information you have before the interview, the better off you will be.

- Prior to your visit, go to the college website to find out all pertinent information
- Meet with an Admission Counselor.
- Verify admission requirements.
- Ask about financial aid opportunities. What percentage of students receive financial assistance?
- Take a campus tour.
- Investigate your academic program.
- Plan to drive at least one mile in each direction around the campus to see what the surrounding area is like. Check out public or school sponsored transportation.
- Attend a class or two.
- Talk with students and faculty.
- Visit the Career Center.
- Bring a journal to jot down your impressions.
- Visit when school is in session.
- Take a look at computer and science lab facilities.
- Is the library comfortable and easily accessible with assistance?
- Eat a meal on campus.
- What are travel abroad possibilities?
- Can you get a tutor easily if needed in the learning center? Check it out...
- Check out the residence halls, library, student union and recreation center.
- Find out about campus activities.
- Dress comfortably and casually but appropriately
- REMEMBER you are making an impression on college personnel who will later decide the outcome of your admissions application. EVERYTHING counts! Ask relevant questions; show your level of interest in the school; and take ownership of the process.
- Discuss your chances for success:
 - ...admission
 - ...graduation
 - ...placement



QUESTIONS TO ASK THE TOUR GUIDE OR ADMISSIONS COUNSELOR

- How do students feel about the course load?
- What is the relationship between faculty and students?
- Are professors available or required to see undergraduates during office hours?
- Are most courses taught by professors or are most courses taught by graduate students?
- What is an average class size?
- Is there a fraternity and/or sorority system?
- Is the student social life centered on campus? Tell me about activities.
- Do students stay on campus on the weekend? What is there to do on weekends?
- Can freshmen have cars on campus? Is there bus transportation?
- Are students advised well? Is academic counseling easily accessible?
- What academic tutoring and/or personal counseling services are available for students who are experiencing difficulties adjusting to college?
- What provisions are made for campus safety? Is the surrounding area safe?

- Is on-campus housing available?
- Are health services available on campus?
- What departments have the best reputations?
- How successful are the college's graduates in finding jobs?
- (Ask students) Are you able to register for the classes you want?
- What is the average class size?

TOUGH CAMPUS VISIT QUESTIONS

Academics: Asking the Tough Questions

- What academic elements are considered in the admissions process-courses, grades, test scores, rank, interests, institutional needs, essays, recommendations, interviews? How important are each of these factors?
- What are the largest classes you could have as a freshman or sophomore?
- Who teaches the freshman classes? Teaching Assistants and Graduate Assistants?
- (If this applies to you) Are there any special support services if you are a special needs student (ADD, ADHD, LD, etc.)? How do these support services function and is there any additional cost charged for these services?
- Is there any Honors Programs? How do you qualify?

Social/Recreational: Asking the Tough Questions

- What activities do students participate in during their free time-on ?
- Is the campus Greek? (In other words, does it have fraternities and sororities?) If so, what percent of the student body participates in Greek life? How do students who elect not to participate in the Greek system fit in?
- What are the most popular extracurricular activities? Are there any particularly notable activities?
- What portion of the student body lives on campus? Percent of the students remains on campus for the weekends?
- What are the issues on campus that charge up the students?

Auxiliary Services: Asking the Tough Questions

- Where do students go if they have a medical emergency?
- What tutoring, counseling, and support services are available on campus and how are they accessed?
- What computer access will you have? Is internet available across campus?
- What laundry facilities are available?
- What are the safety issues on campus? How are they addressed?
- Federal law requires schools to provide safety information to students.

Housing/Food Services: Asking the Tough Questions

- Is campus housing guaranteed for all four years? What percent of students live on campus all four years?
- What housing options exist? (Honors housing? Theme housing? Single sex? Coed? Greek? Honors?)
- What meal plans are available? Are freshmen required to purchase a specific type of meal plan?
- What hours may students access food services?

Paying For It: Asking the Tough Questions

- What is the yearly cost of attendance, including books, tuition, fees, housing, meal plans?
- Does your ability to pay the full cost of attendance have any impact on the college's decision to admit you?
- Which financial aid forms are required? The most common is the FAFSA, but some schools have institutional or school specific forms and some states have special forms-just ask to see what you need!

- What percent of entering freshman received aid? What was the average freshman aid package? Is there a way aid is packaged-loans first, for example? If you are unhappy with your aid package, is it negotiable at all?
- If you demonstrate need, will the school be able to prepare a financial aid package that will meet 100% of your demonstrated need?
- What types of payment plans exist for paying the Estimated Family Contribution?

Bonus Tips:

TIP #1

So you want pre-med? A student thinking about undergraduate school, thinking pre-med...it may be in the student's best interest to go after a college a notch below the school you're thinking of, because a 3.5 undergraduate GPA at a very fine school might be better on med applications than a 2.8 earned grinding and struggling at an elite institution.

TIP #2

For the very, very top schools—the top 50—you bet SATs or ACTs are very important and are a great filter. That is to say, low SAT/ACT scores equal rejection. But the colleges here might be doing you a favor and sparing you from extremely challenging coursework and unattainable expectations.

SCHOLARSHIPS

It is the responsibility of each student to complete, and submit his or her scholarship applications in a timely fashion!

SCHOLARSHIPS are awards of money (non-repayable) granted on the basis of student achievement. Typically, scholarship selection is based on academic excellence (GPA and standardized test scores), special talents, leadership, community service, financial need, and written or oral communication. Major sources of scholarship monies include postsecondary schools, the military, professional, business, fraternal, religious, civic, and union organizations as well as individual donors. ***The largest awards of scholarship money come from the individual colleges and universities.*** To apply to out-of-state schools, contact the financial aid office of each school for individual applications and additional information.

Other sources of scholarships may be obtained through research in school libraries, school career centers, the public libraries, or through browsing the Internet. You will generally find that your research, using these sources, will be just as effective as that conducted by a scholarship search service which charges a fee for their assistance. Parents should consult their place of employment, credit union, union affiliations, and churches for additional scholarship sources.

LOCAL AND HURON COUNTY SCHOLARSHIPS

Various times, throughout the school year, scholarships are available to our students on a local level. These can be from organizations, clubs, businesses, and individuals in the Huron County or local area. When a new scholarship comes into the Counseling Office, it is announced on the morning announcements. This information is also available on the posted announcements, on the bulletin boards, and through email. These will be made available in March.

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS - Virtually hundreds of scholarships are available on the national level. However, it is important to be aware of several factors when applying for national monies:

- The competition for these scholarships is much greater, you are competing in a field of students from all states.
- Both school and local libraries contain reference information for use when searching for scholarships. Some of these resources are more reliable and accurate than others due to their extensive research base (i.e., Princeton Review, College Board, Barron's).

Don't Get Scammed on Your Way to College!

Financial aid scams are a hot topic these days. You should be aware of the tactics companies use to convince student to buy their services. Here are some of the most common claims students are hearing:

“If you use our services, you're guaranteed to get at least \$2000 in student aid for college, or we'll give you your money back.”

This claim doesn't mean anything. Most students are eligible for at least \$3,500 in unsubsidized student loans anyway – and because a student loan is considered student aid, you won't be able to ask for a refund if that's all you're offered. No one can guarantee to get

you a grant or scholarship. Remember, too, that refund guarantees often have conditions or strings attached. Get refund policies in writing.

“I’d like to offer you a scholarship (or grant). All I need is your bank account information so the money can be deposited and a processing fee charged.”

Watch out! It’s extremely rare for legitimate organizations to charge a processing fee for a scholarship. Some criminals imitate legitimate foundations, federal agencies, and corporations. They might even have official sounding names to fool students. Don’t give anyone your bank account or credit card information or your Social Security number (SSN) unless you initiate the contact and trust the company. Such personal identifications information could be used to commit identity theft. If you’ve been contacted by someone claiming to be from the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and asking for your SSN or bank account information, do not provide it. (ED does not make such calls.) To find out how to prevent or report a financial aid scam, visit or call:

Federal Trade Commission - www.ftc.gov/scholarshipscams
1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357)

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Inspector of General Fraud Hotline - www.ed.gov/misused
1-800-MIS-USED (1-800-647-8733)

REGISTER TO VOTE

Voting is the privilege and responsibility of all citizens 18 years of age or older. To register to vote, send in a voter registration form on or shortly after your 18th birthday. You can pick up the registration form at a library or download one online <http://www.sos.state.oh.us/sosapps/voter/vrequest.aspx>

Registration forms must be mailed at least 30 days prior to the election in which you intend to vote. If you have questions regarding voter registration you may call the county auditor.

You must be a U.S. citizen, have lived in the state, county, and precinct for thirty days prior to the election, be age 18 by voting time, and not be serving a sentence which denies your civil rights.

ADDITIONAL WEB SITES

FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION

FastWEB	www.fastweb.com
College is Possible: Paying for College	www.collegeispossible.com
Fresch Magazine	www.freschinfo.com/FRESCH
Sallie Mae Financial Aid	www.salliemae.com
The Financial Aid Page	www.finaid.org
Completing the FAFSA	www.fafsa.ed.gov
College Aid	www.collegeaid.net
The Next Step Magazine	www.nextstepmagazine.com
OnlineCollegeFair.com	www.onlinecollegefair.com
Peterson’s Education & Career Center	www.petersons.com
Private Colleges & Universities	www.privatecolleges.com
Studyabroad.com	www.studyabroad.com
State colleges/universities in Ohio	www.huronhs.com/guidance/ohiostate.php
Ohio Independent Colleges and Universities	www.huronhs.com/guidance/ohiopriate.php
List of colleges around the world	www.braintrack.com
Art Institutes	www.aii.edu
College directory by state	www.utexas.edu/world/univ/state
Campus Tours	www.campustours.com
College Bound Network	www.collegebound.net

College Night
 CollegeTown USA
 Cyber Guidance Office
 Embark
 Fish Net
 High School Hub
 CollegeView
 CollegeXpress
 College Site for students with Disabilities
 Student & Parent Guide to Education
 One Stop Career & College Planning

www.collegenight.com
www.collegetownusa.com
www.cyberguidance.net
www.embark.com
www.mycollegeguide.com
www.highschoolhub.org
www.collegeview.com
www.collegeexpress.com
www.educationquest.com
www.gocollege.com
www.educationplanner.com

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

NCAA
 NAIA
 NCAA Clearinghouse Registration
 Campus Champs

www2.ncaa.org
www.naia.org/local/collegebound.html
www.ncaaclearinghouse.net/ncaa/NCAA/common/index.html
www.campuschamps.com

COLLEGE ADMISSION TESTING SITES

CollegeBoard Online (SAT)
 ACT Home Page
 Kaplan
 PrincetonReview

www.collegeboard.com
www.actstudent.org
www.kaptest.com
www.review.com

CAREER INVESTIGATION

YouScience
 Student Edge
 Ohio Means Jobs
 Planning a Career
 My Majors
 Princeton Review
 ACT Student
 Collegeboard
 Coolworks
 Job Hunters Bible
 Career Toolbox
 CNN/Money Magazine
 Forbes Magazine
 Next Step Magazine

<https://www.youscience.com/>
www.studentedge.com
<https://jobseeker.k-12.ohiomeansjobs.monster.com>
www.adventuresineducation.org
www.mymajors.com
www.review.com/career
www.actstudent.org
www.collegeboard.com
www.coolworks.com
www.jobhuntersbible.com
www.myfuture.com
www.money.cnn.com/magazines/business2/nextjobboom
www.forbes.com/2009/01/16/hot-jobs-pay-leadership-careers-salary.html
www.nextstepmagazine.com

CCP Transcript Requests

North Central State College

<https://www.ncstatecollege.edu/cms/student-records>

BGSU Firelands

<https://www.bgsu.edu/registration-records/records-services/ordering-official-transcripts.html>

Owens Community College

https://cdn.owens.edu/forms_current/tranreq_current.pdf

College/ University Application USERNAMES and PASSWORDS to Remember:

Source	Username	Password

College Application Deadlines

College/University	Application Type (EA, ED, Reg)	Application Deadline
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

College Application Notes

College/University	Date Submitted	Date Transcript requested from Counseling Office
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		

7.		
----	--	--