

Preparing for College

FEBRUARY 2020

OCRACOCKE SCHOOL



Overview

- Junior & Senior Year Timelines
- NC Graduation Requirements
- Admission Requirements for NC Schools
- Recommended Course Schedule
- Extracurricular Involvement
- Summer Programs & Activities
- Standardized Testing (SAT & ACT)
- Communication and Email Tips
- Introduction to Financial Aid



Junior Year Timeline

FALL

- Take the SAT in October (if interested; ask for a fee waiver)
- Keep your grades up!
- Continue to be involved in extracurricular activities
 - Consider running for leadership positions
- Talk with your parents about your academic and career goals

WINTER

- Attend college fairs if your school has them
- Register for the right classes and plan the rest of high school
 - Make sure your schedule includes college prerequisites

SPRING

- Visit some colleges
- Take the ACT when your school offers it (late Feb/early March)
- Keep your grades up!
- Run for leadership positions if able and interested

Senior Year Timeline

FALL

- Re-take ACT/SAT (if needed)
- Visit some colleges
- Finalize college list.
- Apply! Pay attention to deadlines.
- Keep your grades up!
- Research scholarships and keep track of deadlines.

WINTER

- Monitor your applications!
- Complete FAFSA ASAP after October 1
- Don't ignore emails from any colleges where you have applied.
- Keep your grades up!

SPRING

- Visit colleges again.
- Inform your guidance counselor of outcomes.
- Keep your grades up!
- Make your choice by May 1

If you want to get a 4-year degree...

You have options!

- 1) Go to a community college and earn your Associate in Arts first, then transfer to a four-year institution
 - Benefits:
 - Complete many of your general education requirements at a cheaper price
 - Allows you to transfer to one of the 17 institutions of The University of North Carolina system as a junior after you complete the A.A. program
- 2) Go straight to a four-year institution and enter as a first-year student

NC Minimum Graduation Requirements

Courses Required	Credits
English	4 sequential (English I, II, III, and IV)
Mathematics	4 (NC Math 1, 2, and 3 and a fourth math course aligned with the student's post-high school plans.)
Science	3 (a physical science course, Biology, and earth/environmental science)
Social Studies	4 (including American History: Founding Principles, Civics, and Economics; American History Parts I and II; and World History)
Health/PE	1
Electives	6 (2 electives must be any combination of Career and Technical Education, Arts Education, or World Language; 4 must be from one of the following: Career and Technical Education, J.R.O.T.C., Arts Education, or any other subject area)
Total:	22 credits <i>Note: Ocracoke School requires 28 credits to graduate.</i>

Colleges look at...

- **Grades and academic performance (GPA)**
- **Rigor in curriculum (honors, AP)**
- Letters of recommendation (if required)
- Personal essays (if required)
- Extracurricular activities
- SAT/ACT scores



dream
HARD
work
HARPER

Minimum Admission Requirements for NC Universities

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES:

- 4 units of English (writing and literature)
- At least 4 units of mathematics (two algebra, one geometry and a higher level mathematics course for which algebra II is a prerequisite)
- 3 units in science, including at least one unit in a life or biological science, at least one unit in a physical science, and at least one laboratory course
- 2 units of social science, including United States history
- At least 2 units of a foreign language
- Either SAT or ACT scores, depending on the university requirements

PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES:

- 4 units of English (writing and literature)
- 4 units of Math (Algebra 1, Geometry, Algebra 2, or equivalent, plus an advanced math)
- 3 units of Natural Science (biological science, laboratory science, and physical science)
- 3 units of Social Studies, including US History
- 2 units of the same Foreign Language (3 is recommended)
- Either ACT or SAT scores, depending on the University requirements

Recommended course schedule

- To be competitive for admission, enroll in honors and AP classes! Ocracoke offers AP U.S History.
 - Taking distance learning courses is fine as long as you meet the university's minimum admissions requirements.
- Your 2 foreign language credits should be in the same language.
- Challenge yourself. But don't overload so much that you crash and burn.
- Talk with your counselor to let them know your goals.



Extracurricular activities

- Participate in sports and clubs that interest you.
- Colleges appreciate hard work and want students who have interests and strengths beyond the books.
- Extracurricular involvement includes:
 - Clubs/teams
 - Sports
 - Volunteer work
 - Translating/interpreting for family and friends
 - Childcare
 - Work/job
 - Anything you do outside of school that takes up time



Summer Programs & Activities



- Take advantage of summer break!
 - Participate in a summer pre-college program
 - Increase your community service
- In NC, some pre-college programs include:
 - Governor's School for rising seniors (<http://www.ncgovschool.org/overview/>)
 - Must be nominated by your school/counselor; nomination deadline is mid-November
 - Summer Ventures in Science and Mathematics for rising juniors and seniors (<https://www.ncssm.edu/summerventures/admissions>)
 - Application opens October 15
 - NC State Summer Programs (<https://emas.ncsu.edu/precollege/programs/high-school-students/>)
 - UNC Summer Programs (<https://diversity.unc.edu/access/prospective/>)
 - Other opportunities: <http://www.rivermill-academy.org/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=50727472>

Tip: look for programs that are free and 'residential' (live on campus)

Standardized testing **ACT**® **SAT**®

- Most colleges ask for an SAT or ACT score
 - These standardized tests compare your Math and English/Reading abilities with other students across the state and nation.
- You can take these tests multiples times. There are multiple test dates each year.
 - I recommend you take both then pick one to focus on and retake the one with the best score.
- Both tests are multiple choice! They take approximately 3-4 hours to complete.
- The SAT has two sections: math, reading (optional writing section)
- The Act has four sections: English, math, reading, science (optional writing section)

Standardized testing

ACT[®] SAT[®]

- Take the PSAT in October of junior year
 - PSAT is for Juniors only. Helps you qualify for the National Merit Scholarship and possibly others. Deadline to sign up is early September.
 - **Talk to your counselor to see if your school will offer this.**
 - If you can't take the PSAT, then take the full SAT – **ask for a fee waiver!**
- Take the ACT in February of junior year
 - All juniors in NC public schools take the ACT every February FOR FREE, so make sure you take it.
 - Did you take the Pre-ACT in fall of sophomore year?
- Average ACT score in NC is 19 (out of 36); Average SAT score is 1098 (out of 1600)

SAT Test Sites for 2019-2020

- As of February 2020, Ocracoke will be a test site for the SAT for the following dates:
 - May 2, 2020
 - June 6, 2020

ACT Test Sites for 2019-2020

- As of February 2020, Ocracoke will be a test site for the ACT on three test dates for the 2019-2020 academic year.

Ocracoke

Ocracoke High School

Center Code

224700

Test Dates

14-DEC-19

04-APR-20

13-JUN-20

Standardized testing **ACT**® **SAT**®

How to prepare?

- SAT: Khan Academy (<https://www.khanacademy.org/test-prep/sat>)
 - Create an online account to access practice questions, practice tests, online instruction/teaching
- ACT: Free Test Prep Resources (<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation.html>)
 - ACT Academy
 - Webinars
 - Free Study Guide
 - Question of the Day

Remember: These scores do not define you! It is just one piece of your application.

Communication and Email Tips

- Create a professional email address, if you don't already have one.
 - Ideally Google email account (Gmail)
 - Gives you access to other Google products that are helpful in college
 - Use an email that is not your school/Hyde County email address
 - Why? Your school email address is long and difficult to remember
 - Eventually it is deactivated after you graduate
 - Make sure it is easy to remember and does not include too many numbers!
- Good example: estefany.sanchez@gmail.com
esanchez@gmail.com
- Bad example: soccerlover@gmail.com
estefany135798642@gmail.com



Communication and Email Tips

- Check email regularly – many programs and colleges rely only on email to communicate with you. They require a timely response.
 - Check every day if possible!
 - Get in the habit now.
- Formal responses
 - When communicating with any program or college representative, use formal writing. You want to make a good impression!



Communication and Email Tips

Good example:

Dear Mr. Smith,

I hope this message finds you well. I wanted to know if you could send me information about your pre-college summer program. I appreciate your help and look forward to your response.

Best,

Natalia Castro

Not so good example:

Hi!

Can you send me info about your program? Thanks 😊





Intro to Financial Aid

Types of Financial Aid

- 1) **GIFT AID** – Free money; comes from the federal government, colleges, or private institutions
 - Grants
 - Scholarships
- 2) **WORK STUDY** – Money you work for; employed by your school
- 3) **LOANS** – Money you must pay back; usually federal loans
- 4) **PRIVATE LOANS** – Not recommended, should be your last resort.

Financial Aid Categories

Need-based

- Dependent on family's financial circumstance
- The more 'need' you have, the more aid that is available.
- Includes loans, grants, work study
- Apply:
 - FAFSA
 - Financial aid forms

Merit-based

- Competitive
- Given based on your academic or athletic accomplishments
- Not dependent on family's financial circumstance
- Includes grants and scholarships
 - Free money!!
- Apply through a separate application

FAFSA

FAFSA = Free Application for Federal Student Aid

- FAFSA determines how much financial aid you will get from the federal government.
 - Pell Grant – free money!
 - Direct Loans – need to pay back
 - Federal loans have an interest rate of 5.05% - much lower than private loans!
- The FAFSA opens on Oct. 1 every year. Fill it out as soon as possible on or after Oct. 1 at the official government site, fafsa.gov.



Home



About Us



PIN Site



StudentAid.gov



Help

SEARCH

English

Español

Get help paying for college

Submit a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)



New to the FAFSA?

**Start A New
FAFSA**

Returning User?

- Make a correction
- Add a school
- View your Student Aid Report (SAR), and more...

Login

Scholarship Websites

- **Explore the Financial Aid page for each college** you're interested in to see which scholarships are available and require a separate application.
- **Check with your high school counselor!** They have a list of scholarships you may be eligible for.
- Good websites:
 - National: www.finaid.org
 - National: <https://blog.prepscholar.com/top-scholarships-for-high-school-seniors>
 - North Carolina: https://www.cfnc.org/paying/schol/all_schols.jsp
 - Undocumented: <http://undocuments.web.unc.edu/funding/>
 - Undocumented: <https://www.thedream.us/scholarships/opportunity-scholarship/guidelines/>
 - Undocumented: <https://www.goldendoorscholars.org/>

Applying for Scholarships

- **Start researching now!** Some deadlines are as early as September of senior year.
 - Many deadlines are up by early January.
- **Organize yourself:** Keep a Word document or binder with the deadlines and requirements for each scholarship (earliest deadlines first).
 - Many scholarships require essays and/or letters of recommendation.
- **Ask your teachers for recommendations ASAP** - at least two weeks in advance. Do not expect them to write recommendations during Christmas break!
- **Get official copies of your transcript BEFORE winter break.** The office will be closed during that time.
- **Don't ignore smaller scholarships.** If you get three \$500 awards, that is just as valuable as one \$1,500 prize.
- If your goal is a 4-year university, the Pell Grant alone is not enough. Apply to private scholarships!! Apply early and apply to every scholarship you qualify for.
- During winter break: Complete scholarships with January and February deadlines.

Complete ALL Financial Aid Forms by Deadlines!

- When in doubt, ask questions!
 - Always good to confirm that the school/scholarship organization received your materials.
- Keep copies of all documents (FAFSA and scholarship applications)
- Read/review everything carefully
- **Check student portals and e-mails for any requests for additional/missing information**
- Stay on top of it

Important Dates for Senior Year

- Complete college applications – **Sept. to Jan. 1**
- Complete financial aid forms – **Oct. 1 to Jan. 1**
 - FAFSA
 - CSS Profile (for private schools)
 - Additional forms required by colleges
- Apply for private scholarships – **Jr./Sr. Year**

Questions?

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