



College Applications Review

Updated March 2020

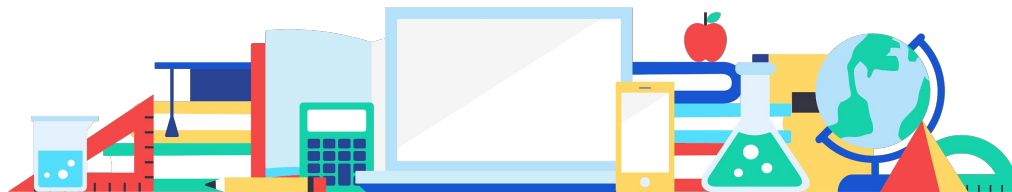


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12th Grade Action Items



12th Grade

- Students should be thinking about what they want to do after graduation.
- It's never too late to start making plans.
- It is important to acknowledge that college or diving into a 4-year college is not for everyone. There are so many options.
- Encourage student to meet with their guidance counselor in the beginning of the year to ensure they're on track to graduate, along with post-grad plans.
- Some students might be taking SAT and ACT for the second or third time. If a student hasn't taken either test yet, insist that they sign up for the earliest date available.

Tips

Students should also let their high school counselor know as soon as possible if they require financial assistance to complete the college application process. The high school counselor is the person most likely to be able to provide students with SAT and ACT fee waivers, and possibly even request application fee waivers from the students' colleges of choice.

Unless the students strongly believe that they will be able to score significantly better during their third attempt, we generally don't recommend to take a test more than twice. Instead, we encourage students to focus their time and resources towards improving other components of their college applications.

12th Grade (Continued)

- Students need to carefully research the schools they are interested. Avoid picking a school solely on rankings. Encourage students to pick schools based on academic, financial, and socio-emotional fit.
- Knowledge of school allows them to craft a better essay, as some schools ask students “why this school?”
- Resources:
 - ◆ Ask “How will you fit within the target’s school community?”, “How will they utilize the school’s resources?”
 - ◆ Collegeboard
 - ◆ On-Campus Visits
 - ◆ Previous alumni.

While admissions decisions are finalized once they are officially released, financial aid packages can be modified. Students are encouraged to speak with their prospective schools’ financial aid offices if they need more aid in order to attend the school (the worst could happen is the school declining to offer the student more aid).

12th Grade (Continued)

- Students should have secured at least one recommendation from an 11th grade teacher before summer.
- If they haven't yet, ask more adults for recommendations as soon as school year begins.
 - ◆ Teacher from a class they excelled in.
 - ◆ Coaches.
 - ◆ Volunteer supervisor.
 - ◆ In most cases, anyone that isn't a family member or friend.
- It's okay for students to request letters without knowing which specific school they'll be applying to. Students can follow up later.
- Students need to give recommenders enough time and information about themselves (such as a "brag sheet" or their resume).

Students should continue to work hard in school even after their college applications are officially submitted.

High school is not over until the student walks across the stage in cap and gown, and receives their diploma.

12th Grade (Continued)

- Colleges might be required to send in grades from Senior Year/Semester 1 or schedule of senior year classes + grades until junior year.
- Students need to continue to challenge themselves.
- AP Exams: High schools might exempt them out of introductory college courses (saving money down the road).
- Just because a student can take every advanced course available doesn't mean they should.
- College applications will take up a big chunk of their time. It's all about balance.

Students will also be required to submit a final transcript at the end of their senior year to the college or university that they will be attending, and colleges retain the right to alter scholarship eligibility or revoke enrollment offers if they notice a decline in a student's academic performance.

“Senioritis”, if gets out of hand, may result in students failing senior year and losing their admissions offer.

12th Grade (Continued)

- Recommend students to create a tracker. Finalize list of schools, write deadline on calendar, and plan their time accordingly.
- Perspective: Their college application is an opportunity to tell their own story.
- Requirements Tracker (Resource)
- College Marathon isn't over once applications are submitted. Next steps: \$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$
- Most colleges allow students to submit application before LoRs are ready. Remind recommenders to make sure to submit by deadline.
- FAFSA: Opens October 1. Encourage students to submit by Jan 1. It's based on prior-prior year taxes (So for Fall 2018, it would be based on 2016 taxes).

Deadlines

Pay attention to school's specific deadline. Deadlines are not universal, as each school has its own deadlines.

Some schools require everything to be submitted by a specific date, whereas some schools might have different deadlines for each application material.

Early decision deadlines are typically in late October/early November.

12th Grade (Continued)

- If a student is 24 or under, they are considered as dependent (unless special circumstances).
- Have parent (or guardian) sit through the FAFSA as there are several questions regarding the household.
- Schools also require a CSS Profile and supplemental financial aid application to be completed.
- FAFSA might request verification.
- For some institutional scholarships, students might have to apply for FAFSA by a certain deadline.
- Students do not have to know what school they are attending at the time of filling out FAFSA. They can just list everywhere they're applying.

Deadlines

Regular deadlines for most schools are typically in the first two weeks of January (mostly January 1-so beware of winter break plans).

For rolling admissions, submit everything as early as possible. The earlier a student applies, the more spots available.

Some schools, with rolling admissions, might have a specific scholarship deadline. This means if a student applies by a certain date, they will be considered for institutional funding.

12th Grade (Continued)

- Students should be diligently working on scholarship applications, beyond FAFSA.
- Resources: Institutional scholarships, fastweb.com, scholarships.com., unigo.com, and more!
- Lots of free money out there, not enough people taking it.
- Some scholarships are open to all students while some might directed to students of a certain background.
- Merit-Based Scholarships: Individual achievements (Academic, Athletic, or Artistic)
- Need-Based Scholarship: Closes gap between EFC (estimated family contribution) and COA (cost of attendance).
- Some scholarships are awarded once-a-year while some scholarships renew every year.

While admissions decisions are finalized once they are officially released, financial aid packages can be modified. Students are encouraged to speak with their prospective schools' financial aid offices if they need more aid in order to attend the school (the worst could happen is the school declining to offer the student more aid).

12th Grade (Continued)

- Some scholarships fund students directly while others coordinate with the school.
- Schools can range from \$100 to as much as \$50,000 or full tuition.
- Some scholarships application might ask students to write essays and others just might ask for student's credentials.
- Ask students to pay attention to the school's institutional scholarships and deadlines.
- Use FinAid/Net Price Calculator on school's websites!
- State scholarships: Some states offer a scholarship for students that attend an in-state college or university. Encourage students to reach out to guidance counselor early!
 - ◆ Ex: Florida (Bright Futures)

While admissions decisions are finalized once they are officially released, financial aid packages can be modified. Students are encouraged to speak with their prospective schools' financial aid offices if they need more aid in order to attend the school (the worst could happen is the school declining to offer the student more aid).

12th Grade (Continued)

- Each school has a different policy when releasing admissions decisions.
- National Decision Day: May 1. In most cases, student must pay an enrollment deposit in order to secure the seat.
- Some schools offer “Admitted Students Day” where they showcase everything the school has to offer. Good way for students to compare schools.
- When students have more than option to choose from, there are several criteria to consider before committing.
 - ◆ Rank schools based on how happy the students thinks they will be and how the school resources will help.
 - ◆ Rank schools based on financial aid package and how much it will cost per year to to attend each school.
 - ◆ Think long term. This decision determines the next 4 years of their life, and their foundation of their careers.

UPchieve Consultants: It is very important that you do not make (or hint at) the final decision for students. Rather, your job is to help your students reason through their options so they can select the school that is most appropriate for them academically, financially, and socially.

12th Grade (Continued)

- When students have more than option to choose from, there are several criteria to consider before committing.
 - ◆ Some students might value taking out many student loans for a prestigious school whereas some students might value going to an-instate school for much cheaper. It based on the student's preference.
 - ◆ Decisions might not be solely based on the student's preference. Some students might have family responsibilities which they have to also consider.
 - ◆ Do not hint at a final decision for the student. Ask many guiding questions to help them decide a school that is best for them academically, financially, and socially.
 - ◆ Congratulate students on their achievements! They made it through!

UPchieve Consultants: It is very important that you do not make (or hint at) the final decision for students. Rather, your job is to help your students reason through their options so they can select the school that is most appropriate for them academically, financially, and socially.

Finalizing a List of Schools



Finalizing a List of Schools

- 2-4-2:
 - 2 Safety Schools, 4 Match Schools, and 2 Reach Schools.
- **We recommend students to keep the list of schools they intend to apply to between 5-8 schools.**
- Instead of spreading themselves too thin (and wasting time & money), students should focus on 8 schools or less. Craft the best applications possible for these schools.
- Ask students for their reasoning for each school. If your students are only applying to schools within one category (only safety schools or only reach schools), share your concerns.

Finalizing a List of Schools

Safety Schools

- Student's credentials fall above the school's average range for accepted students.
- Student can be certain that he/she will be admitted.
- Not always a desired choice, but recommended so that students have something to fall back on.
- **Recommendation:**
 - **1 Academic Safety School**
 - **1 Financial Safety school**

Match Schools

- Student's credentials fall well within (or even exceed) the school's average range for accepted students.
- No guarantees, but students have a good shot of getting admitted.
- A match school can be a local state school or an out-of-state private college.
- It might not be student's dream school, but student should be happy to select a match school as his/her final choice if it turns out to be best option.
- Applying to match schools is a wise decision for every student, from the 'C' student to the valedictorian.
- Recommendation: 4 Match Schools

Finalizing a List of Schools

Reach Schools

- Student's credentials fall above the school's average range for accepted students.
- Student can be certain that he/she will be admitted.
- Not always a desired choice, but recommended so that students have something to fall back on.
- **Recommendation:**
 - **1 Academic Safety School**
 - **1 Financial Safety school**

Tip for UPchieve Consultants

- If you get a chance to go over the list of schools with your students, do not discourage students from applying to reach schools. Instead, ask them to justify their reasons for applying to each school and do share your concerns if students are only applying to reach schools and not safety schools.

When to Apply



When To Apply

Early Decision

- Binding: Students are obligated to attend the school they were accepted to as an ED applicant.
- ED applications are due in Late Oct/early Nov and notified mid-Dec.
- If admitted, students must withdraw all other applications.
- Most schools require student applying ED, parent, and counselor to sign an ED agreement form spelling out the plan's condition.
- The only exception to get out of the commitment is that students can't afford due to the lack of financial aid.

Early Action

- Non-Binding: Students have until May 1st to make a decision.
- Students who are already accepted to a school as an EA applicant are allowed to apply to other schools during the regular decision cycle.
- EA applicants usually receive their admission results early in the admissions cycle (January or February).

When To Apply

Early Action & Early Decision

- Pros: Shorter waiting period, save time and expense of submitting multiple apps, more time to prepare for college if accepted early, reassess options and apply elsewhere if denied.
- Cons: Pressure to commit to one school early on, unable to compare financial aid packages, limited time to work on other apps if not accepted, develop senioritis if accepted early.
- Reminder: ED & EA applicants must take SAT/SAT Subject Test by October of senior year.

Does It Increase Chances?

- While reported early acceptance rates are usually higher, it is not always true that applying early will increase a student's chance of acceptance.
- Colleges vary in the proportion of the class admitted early and in the percentage of early applicants they admit. Higher admission rates for ED applicants may also correlate to stronger profiles among candidates choosing ED.
- Students should ask the admissions officers whether their institution's admission standards differ between ED and regular applicants, and then assess whether applying early makes sense given their own credentials.

When To Apply

Regular Decision

- Nonbinding: Students may apply to as many schools as their time and resources allow.
- Normal process where students apply by a certain published deadline and all applicants are notified on a certain promise date (usually by April 1st so students have a month to think about it).
- Competition with a bigger school of applicants for the remaining spots in each school's incoming class.
- This option allows them one or two extra months to work on their college applications.

Rolling Admission

- Nonbinding. Allows candidates to submit their applications anytime within a large window of about 6 months long.
- Some schools do not have a previously specified end date (the window simply closes when all spots are filled) or some schools have priority and nonpriority cycles. Some schools have a published date.
- Applicants are usually notified within a few weeks as soon as their decisions are made.
- Might be less competitive for students as the school receives applicants in bursts.
- Students can finish their application anytime (but sooner the better). Students can carefully review application and not get anxious.
- Priority Deadline: Some schools might have a deadline for students to be considered for scholarships, housing, and other financial aid packages.
- Drawbacks: Schools often use a first-come, first-served method to grant housing and financial aid. Schools might underestimate the number of students who will accept the admission offer which can lead spots being filled rapidly. In this case, well-qualified applicants can be denied later.

The Application Process



The Application Process

Here's how you can encourage students during the application process:

- College admission is not as competitive as students think. 85% of schools accept 50% or more of their applicants.
- Admissions officers care about the overall picture too and not just standardized test scores. Focus on the student's strengths rather than trying to cover up/defend their weaknesses.
- Colleges are not necessarily looking for only-well rounded applicants. Some schools build a well-rounded class by admitting applicants that specialize in different areas.
- Put in extra effort whenever there's a chance (for example: respond to an optional short-response question/essay, send in an optional recommendation letter, schedule an optional interview, etc.) as a way to express interest in the school.
- The dedication will go a long way if an applicant happens to be a borderline case.

Questions That College Admissions Officers Will Be Thinking About

- Has the student been working to capacity in his/her academic pursuits, full-time or part-time employment, or other areas?
- How has the student used his/her time?
- Does the student has initiative? Is he/she a self-starter? What motivates him/her?
- What sort of human being is the student—now? In the future?
- Does the student care deeply about anything—intellectual interests? Extracurricular activities?
- Personal connections?
- What has the student learned from his/her interests? What has the student done with his/her interests? How has the student achieved results or failure?
- In terms of extracurricular, athletic, community, or family commitments, has the student taken full advantage of opportunities? What is the quality of his/her activities? Does the student appear to have a genuine commitment or leadership role?

Questions That College Admissions Officers Will Be Thinking About (cont.)

- What choices has the student made for him/herself? Why?
- How open is the student to new ideas and people?
- What about his/her maturity, character, leadership, self-confidence, warmth of personality, sense of humor, energy, concern for others, and grace under pressure?
- Will the student be able to handle the pressures and freedoms of college life effectively and responsibly?
- Has the student demonstrated extensive knowledge of our school?
- How do the student's academic interests align with the resources our school offer? Will the student benefit from attending our school?
- Will the student contribute something to our school community?
- Would other students want to room with, share a meal with, be in a seminar together with, be teammates with, or collaborate with this student in a closely-knit extracurricular group?

Common App

- Most popular, central college admissions application system.
- Nearly 700 of U.S Colleges & Universities are members of Common App.
- Ask for basic information from the students and their families.
- Students can get a head start by collecting this info before they begin the application.
- This [guide](#) summarizes the components of the Common App.
- Every school that uses Common App DOES NOT have the same requirements. Make sure students use the requirements tracker and research the supplemental requirements for each school.
- “Highly selective” schools tend to have more requirements than “less selective”, such as more LoRs.
- **UPchieve Consultants, we strongly recommend you register an account with CommonApp (as an Education Professional) and familiarize yourself with the application. CommonApp also provides very clear instructions on how to navigate through their system [here](#).**

Common App

Common App consists of the following components:

- Profile
- Family
- Education
- Testing
- Activities
- Writing
- College-Specific Questions
- College Writing Supplements

Students should be prepared to provide the following information:

- Basic Family Info
- Senior Year Class Schedule
- Extracurricular Activities (inside and outside of school)
- Work Experience
- Awards & honors
- Test scores (SAT, ACT, SAT Subject Tests, AP, and IB)

Please note: students should not write a personal statement that mentions a specific school as the application will be shared with all of the institutions that the students intend to



Applications

Applications outside of Common App

- A number of schools have their own application system (especially major state schools and community colleges).
- Examples: CUNY, SUNY, University of California
- Despite their differences, all schools essentially ask for the same information as the Common App.

Important: College application deadlines are not universal

- Students should strive to remain aware of the specific deadlines for each school they intend to apply to.
- Please note: Some schools have more than one annual application cycle (i.e. early vs. regular decision, fall vs. spring term entry)
- Some schools have multiple deadlines for different parts of the application, and some schools require everything to be submitted at the same time by a certain deadline.

Applications

Emails

- Make sure students have a professional email address to use for college (and other professional matters).
- A professional email should contain part (if not all) of the student's full name for easy identification purpose.
- Students shouldn't pick an email that they'll be embarrassed by in 5-10 years.
- Encourage habitually checking email.
- Main form of communication between college and student in the application process.

Keeping track

- Students should keep a copy of everything they submit to colleges for personal records in case something goes missing.
- Keep track of all submission confirmation receipts/emails just in case students need to follow up with the school for any reason, or vice versa.

Application Fees and Waivers

- There is an application fee for almost every school.
- If students are eligible to receive SAT waivers, they will also receive 4 college application fee waivers from College Board when they receive their SAT score (if the student is a senior) or in the fall of their senior year (if the student is a junior).
- However, not every school accepts the College Board application fee waiver. Students can check which schools accept this waiver with the following link:
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/college-application-fee-waivers/participating-colleges>
- Some schools might not accept the College Board application fee waiver and instead, have their own procedure for distributing fee waivers.
- Even for the schools that don't explicitly mention fee waivers, it does not hurt for students to contact the school and ask.
- (Usually when students take the extra step to reach out, the school will be glad to provide some assistance.)

Essays



Personal Statement

- For Common App, students will be asked to choose to respond to 1 out of 5 prompts.
- Prompts will generally be broad in nature and ask for students to share experiences relating to their: background, identity, interest, talents, accomplishments, transition into adulthood, a lesson learned from failure, a problem solved, or an idea challenged.
- Word Limit for Common App: 650 Words
 - Students should aim to reach 80% of the word limit or use full range.
 - Do not go over the word limit.

Things to keep in mind:

- Think small
- Focus on the details (show, don't tell)
- Branding: After reading the student's personal statement, the reader should be able to summarize the applicant in a few sentences

Short Response

- Topics vary depending on the school.
- Topics might be very specific.
- Require students to get straight to the point in their responses.
- Limited word count.
- Students should focus their answer on a single event that exemplifies their primary point.
- **Tip:** Encourage students to use active voice to avoid getting wordy. It'll help with the word count.
- Example: 500 Words. Why do you want to attend this college/university?
 - ♦ Student might talk about certain courses, programs (ex: study abroad), family attended the school, etc.
- Example: 500 Words. How will you contribute to this campus?
 - ♦ This requires a little bit of research from the student.
- Although it's a short response, students might struggle with going over the word count or not answering the question.

Supplemental Essay

- Topics will vary by the school.
- It can be hard to prepare for this essay ahead of time.
- Encourage students to create a “bank” of people or events that have been influential throughout their life in order to speed up this process.
- All previous writing tips are applicable here.
- Some supplemental essays may ask applicants to explain why they are applying to this specific school.
- Therefore, students should do thorough research regarding the features and key characteristics of the school.
- Students need to demonstrate both how they will utilize the school’s unique resources to succeed as well as how the school will benefit from offering the students admission (over other applicants).

Disciplinary History

- It is important for students to be sincere and take responsibility for their actions.
- Some infractions will be deemed more serious than others.
- Academic dishonesty, violence, theft, or any repeating pattern of bad behavior could be a deal breaker for some schools.
- However, many schools understand that students sometimes make poor choices. If a student can show they have learned from their mistakes and discontinued previous behaviors, this infraction might not make a difference.
- Students should be honest, take responsibility, and don't overshare. Use guidance counselor for help.
- Encourage students to discuss with their guidance counselor to discuss what the high school reports to colleges.
- Counselor report. The trust from the high guidance counselor and other teachers needs to be earned. It shouldn't be an expectation.
- It is beneficial to develop a relationship with the school counselors as they can provide comments on how the student has grown and learned from the incident in order to ease admissions officers' concerns when reading about the student's disciplinary history.
- Also applies to other recommenders for LoR. The recommender(s) can vouch for the student's growth and maturity since the incident.



Optional/Additional Information

- Some students leave this blank.
- This section can help address confusion or concerns for admissions officers.
- This can be an opportunity to discuss the following matters:
 - ♦ Gap in timeline/educational history
 - ♦ Failed course
 - ♦ Extenuating circumstances that impacted student's ability to perform well or participate in extracurricular activities (ex: family demands)
- DO NOT use this section to discuss additional interests, personal characteristics, or achievements.
- These areas are highlighted in other parts of the application.

Other Application Materials



Recommendation Letters

- Not required for all schools, but a vital component in the college admissions process.
- Recommenders shouldn't be adults who are related to the student.
- Recommenders should have witnessed the student's growth over their high school career and can testify to the student's readiness for college.
- Students should ask for recommendation letters from those who will take time to compose a personalized letter.
- Bonus: It can be handy if a student can get a LoR from someone who is an alumnus of the school they are applying to.

Recommendation Letters

- Students should ask for LoR ahead of time and provide recommenders with ample time (**ideally 1 month**) to write their letters before the deadline.
- Students should provide recommenders a resume/brag sheet, list of schools, instructions on how to submit the letters (online/offline), and school's deadlines.
- If recommenders need to mail in their letters of recommendation, we also recommend students give their recommenders stamped and addressed envelopes to show respect for the recommenders' help.
- Common Choices:
 - ♦ Teachers (including teachers from elective courses)
 - ♦ Volunteer coordinators
 - ♦ Extracurricular activity advisors
 - ♦ Coaches
 - ♦ Employers
 - ♦ Internship coordinators
 - ♦ Guidance Counselor
 - ♦ College Access Counselor (Ex: AVID)

Recommendation Letters

Some schools require recommenders to hold a specific position (such as a guidance counselor while others allow students to choose any recommenders.

- High School Counselor: In addition to a recommendation form, high school counselors also need to complete a school report which consists of a school profile, the student's academic profile and disciplinary history (or lack of). There are three additional forms (Optional Report, Mid-Year Report, and Final Report) that high school counselors may use to update colleges about a student's academic progress subsequent to submitting the initial School Report form.
- Teacher: Teacher Evaluation focuses on the student's academic and personal characteristics as demonstrated in the teacher's classroom.
- College admissions officers are interested in knowing the unique relationship between the recommender and the applicant in addition to a statement on the applicant's character and abilities and potential success within and contributions to a college community. Please note that each school can decide which types of other recommenders it accept, or not accept letters of recommendation from other recommenders at all.

Recommendation Letters

- If a student doesn't know who to ask for a letter of recommendation, tell them to ask their 11th grade teachers!
- 11th grade teachers are ideal candidates (as they have spent more time in the classroom with the students compared to 12th grade teacher, and their interactions with the student are more recent than the student's interactions with their 9th and 10th grade teachers).
- LoRs can help describe student's characteristics that aren't listed on the application. The more people that can describe how great a student is, the better.
- There are no limits on how many recommenders students can ask, and there are no rules requiring one recommendation letter has to be sent to all schools.
- Students can pick and choose which recommender is more appropriate for the school they are applying to.
- We recommend 3 letters of recommendation for each school (unless if the school specifies).
- This limit shows respect for the admission officers' time.

High School Transcript

- Students should be aware of the process, contact person, time required, and necessary forms needed to successfully obtain a copy of their official high school transcript.
- Students should send transcripts early as it takes time for transcripts to be sent and processed.
- Follow up with the college/university to ensure transcript has been received.
- **Tip:** Students should obtain an unofficial copy of their transcript and ensure all entries are correct.
- Students should contact their high school counselor or school staff to correct any errors found.

Test Scores

- We recommend students to use the free score reports for their institutions to receive their scores.
- For schools that allow superscoring, students should wait until all schools are available to decide which scores to send.
- Remind students to send scores before they graduate as some schools use standardized test scores as “placement exams”.

SAT:

- Students can send up to 4 free score reports to colleges every time they register for SAT/SAT Subject Tests. They can choose during registration or 9 days after test date.
- Eligible students can receive up to 4 fee waivers, to be used for 2 SAT registrations and 2 SAT Subject Test registrations. These students are also eligible for 4 additional free score reports during their testing lifetime, totaling up to 12 free score reports.

ACT:

- Each ACT registration comes with 4 free score reports. Students can choose to send their score at the time of registration or wait until the following Thursday after their test date.
- Eligible students can receive a maximum of 2 fee waivers, totaling 8 free score reports.



Test Scores

AP Exams:

- Every year that a student takes AP exams, they have the chance to send one free score report.
- In order to send scores, students must write down the 4-digit code of the college, university, or scholarship program on their first AP answer sheet.
- Seniors: AP Exams follow Decision Day (May 1st) so ask students to be aware of the 4-digit code of their future school.
 - ♦ Decent AP scores will help students place out of some intro courses in colleges (allows rooms for more electives and save money on tuition).
- For example, a student that received a “5” on AP Calc might be able to avoid an entry level math course.
- Juniors: If a student is planning to apply ED (early decision), instruct students to write that school’s 4-digit code on their registration. It’s not a big deal if they don’t.
- Most schools allow students to self-report their AP scores in their college applicants.

Test Scores

IB Exams:

- Most colleges allow IB students to self-report scores (if taken as a junior) or which exams they plan to take at the end of the year.
- Students can request to have an official I.B transcript sent to one U.S post-secondary school for free, before results are released.
- Since IB Exams take place after Decision Day (May 1), we recommend students to send scores to the university they have committed to.

Resume

- Resume gives an overview of student's experiences to-date while highlighting their strengths.
- Students should focus on activities that they feel define them rather than finding something for every category.
- Resumes should stay within one page.
- Students will need to pick and choose which activities are most relevant for each school & program they are applying to.
- We recommend that students create a “master version” of their resume which features every single experience and can be as long as the student wants.
- From there, the student can create one-page resumes tailored to the different schools.
- Formatting matters. There is no one set way to design a resume but resumes should follow a consistent format.
- If students are struggling to fill lines on their resume, ask them questions about their specific responsibilities.

Resume

Categories:

- Education
- Internship & Work Experience
- Extracurricular Activities: Sports, Volunteering
- Awards & Honors
 - ♦ *Note: Perfect attendance and honor roll recognitions are trivial and should not be included.*
- Professional Skills, Hobbies, and Talents
 - ♦ *Examples: coding ability & knowledge of programming languages, Microsoft Office, graphic & web design, photography, videography, foreign languages, ability to play instruments, martial arts, etc.*

Resume

Tips for drafting an effective resume:

- Remember to include full name & contact information
- Use bullet points and be precise
- Use active verbs to describe roles and responsibilities, focus on personal contribution and impact
- Emphasize leadership positions
- Include quantitative data whenever possible (“managed a team of volunteers” vs. “managed 37 volunteers”)
- Use past tense and present tense correctly and consistently for past and current activities
- Complete sentences are not necessary, avoid using articles (the, a, an), helping verbs (have, had, may, might), being verbs (am, is, are, was, were), or non-universal abbreviations (For examples: “supervise admissions consultants team”, “assess new academic software”)
- Clearly and consistently indicate the positions held and duration of involvement for each activity
- Read out loud for any errors.
- Have someone proofread the resume.

College Admissions Interview



Interviews 101

- Interview Methods:
 - ♦ On-Campus, Alumni Interview, Virtual Interview, etc.
- Tips: Students should be themselves but also be on their behavior. Dress professionally.
- A poor interview can hurt their chances, as much as a good interview enhances their prospects.
- Some school offer interviews and some don't. Students should check their emails habitually so they can respond in timely fashion if colleges and universities extend interview offers.
- Interviews help schools see qualities that can't be conveyed through a written application.

Interviews 101

- Students should be prepared to do the following:
 - Talk about themselves
 - Their interests
 - Why that specific school
 - Academic & Professional Aspirations
 - Think about the interview as the oral part of their application.
 - Bring up new things that aren't already listed on the application.
 - Show that they've done extensive research on the school, but still inquire about the school.
 - Bring a list of prepared questions.
 - Keep the interviewer alert and engaged.
- While the interview is for the school to get to know the student, it's almost important for the student to get to know the school.

Student-Athletes



Extra Steps To Express Interest And Verify Eligibility

- Attend summer sports camp at a college of interest so the college coach can see the athlete play (and student can check out the campus).
- Earn a certain minimum GPA in the NCAA-specific core courses and a certain minimum score on the SAT or ACT.
- Send letters of interests to colleges in their sophomore or junior year letting college coaches be aware of the student's interest.
- Prepare an athletic resume containing basic student information, sports statistics beginning in 9th grade and academic record.
- Submit video showcasing athletic skills in a competitive situation. Accompany it with a statistics summary.
- Use a special application marked with a code supplied by the college's athletic department to indicate the athletic department is interested in the student.

Extra Steps To Express Interest And Verify Eligibility

- Register with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Eligibility Center in the beginning of junior year. Students who have received a waiver for the SAT or ACT are eligible for a waiver of the registration fee.
- Registration includes personal information and questions about the student's course work and sports participation outside of high school. Official high school transcripts (by completion of junior year) and SAT/ACT score report are also required. Students must be cleared by the Eligibility Center before they receive athletic scholarships or compete in NCAA Division I or II schools.
- Follow NCAA amateurism rules about receiving a salary or prize money for athletic participation, playing with a professional team and other areas.
- Update the information on the athletics participation section online regularly, up until the time when students request a final certification of their status (usually 3~4 months before enrolling in college).

Intercollegiate Teams

Associations/Conferences:

- National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)- MOST INFLUENTIAL. Includes largest colleges.
- National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA)
- National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA)

NCAA Divisions:

- **NCAA Division I:** Most competitive athletically, can offer full and partial athletic scholarships (partially funded by the NCAA) and have academic eligibility requirements.
- **NCAA Division II:** Less competitive than Division I and have different eligibility guidelines and financial aid offerings.
- **NCAA Division III:** No academic eligibility requirements and no NCAA-funded financial aid. (However, the colleges can offer scholarships of their own.)
- **Prospective Division I and II athletes** need to take NCAA-specified core courses beginning in 9th grade (**NCAA Course Work Requirements**). Generally, more students fail to qualify to play NCAA sports because of lack of appropriate course work than for low test scores.

Student-Athletes

Eligibility:

- There are strict rules and timelines regarding contact from NCAA Division I and II coaches. Interested students must reach out to college coaches in time for the coach to watch them play, while still following the eligibility rules.
- College coaches eager to secure their athletes may urge students to apply ED. All the pros and cons of applying ED previously explained still apply here.

Research:

- When researching colleges, student-athletes should also examine the colleges' online team rosters (if possible) for information such as how many players a team has for each position and the athletic stats of the players.
- This will give an idea of how the students ranks among the team and their chance of admission.
- They should also take into consideration the graduation rate of athletes at the college, it indicates how likely the athlete's life is conducive to academic success.

Student-Athletes

Foresight:

- Student-athletes should keep in mind that athletic participation is only a part of the college experience.
- They should take into consideration the scenario where they couldn't play (perhaps due to injury) or simply just decided not to play.
- In addition, the admission office – not the college coach – decides whether students are admissible, therefore athletic eligibility does not guarantee admission.

FAFSA



FAFSA

The Basics:

- Opens October 1. Encourage students to submit by Jan 1. It's based on prior-prior year taxes (So for Fall 2018, it would be based on 2016 taxes).
- If a student is under the age of 24, they are considered as dependent (unless special circumstances).
- Have parent (or guardian) sit through the FAFSA as there are several questions regarding the household.
- Website: <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>
- Student and parent(s) will need to create a FSA ID.
- **COA:** Cost of Attendance. This is a sticker value listed on websites.
- **EFC:** Estimated Family Contribution.
- **Net Price Calculator:** Some schools feature a Net Price calculator on their websites. This helps them gain some knowledge about what to expect once they receive their FAFSA.
- Institutions might require students to fill out FAFSA by a certain deadline to qualify for institutional scholarships.

FAFSA

Types of Federal Funding:

- Scholarship
- Grant
- Federal Work Study
- Subsidized Loans
- Unsubsidized Loans

Financial Aid Packages:

- Some packages include loans as part of their package.
- No-Loan schools do not include loans in their financial aid packages.