

ROCKVILLE HIGH SCHOOL



COLLEGE PLANNING GUIDE

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Dear Parents and Students,

Welcome to the College Planning Guide. A student's junior year is the time to begin making plans and asking questions about post-secondary options. During this process, parents and students will be asking many questions and investigating which options best meet the student's individual goals, interests, and abilities.

This handout was designed to provide current resources that will help to guide parents and students through the post high school planning process. This can be both an exciting and an overwhelming time for both students and parents. Planning appropriately can alleviate much anxiety.

The foundation of junior planning is organization. We hope that this book will assist parents and students in organizing their ideas and, thereby, making good decisions about the future.

Enclosed you will find many domains to visit. Remember, this is a team effort involving parents, friends, teachers, and guidance counselors. Please follow the timeline listed in the Junior and Senior Calendar portions of this book; this will help as you begin this involved yet exciting process.

Sincerely,
The Rockville High School Guidance Department Staff

Junior/Senior Year Month-to-Month Calendar

February

- Five semester (2 ½-year) class rank distributed
- Register online for March SAT Reasoning Test
- Meet with counselor to finalize senior year course selection
- Attend College Planning Evening with parents
- Visit potential colleges during vacation

March

- Take SAT Reasoning Test
- Register online for May SAT Reasoning Test
- See counselor about Summer enrichment opportunities

April

- Develop a preliminary list of colleges of interest and obtain information online
- Schedule college visits
- Explore Early Decision/Early Action options
- Attend National College Fair at CT Expo Center in Hartford
- File service academy & ROTC scholarship applications
- Visit colleges during vacations
- Counselors meet with juniors (re: college and career plans) – parents are welcome to attend
- See counselor about Summer enrichment opportunities

May

- Counselors meet with juniors (re: college and career plans) – parents are welcome to attend
- Identify teachers whom you can ask for recommendations
- Take SAT Reasoning Test (Important for Early Action/Decision)
- Complete Advanced Placement exams (if appropriate)
- See counselor about Summer enrichment opportunities

June

- Take SAT Reasoning Test (Important for Early Action/Decision)
- Continue with college search
- Plan summer visits and/or interviews with colleges
- Become active in volunteer work
- File NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse forms (if appropriate)
- Senior graduation credit check

September

- Register for the October SAT Reasoning / Subject Tests
- Attend Senior Class Meeting
- Speak with College representative (30-40 visit in the fall)
- Receive six semester (3-year) class rank
- Finalize college list
- Begin drafts of college essays
- Arrange for college interviews (if necessary)

- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications
- Visit the Career Center to research careers
- Complete senior activity sheet
- Ask teachers for letters of recommendations

October

- Attend Tri-Town College Fair
- Counselors meet with seniors individually (re: college and career plans) – parents are welcome to attend
- Speak with College representative (30-40 visit in the fall)
- Submit Early Decision college applications to counselor 2 weeks prior to the deadline
- Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- Continue to work on college essays and begin completing applications
- Submit Transcript Release Form and Senior Activity Sheet to your counselor
- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications
- Visit the Career Center to research careers
- Attend college open house programs

November

- Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- Complete college applications
- Speak with College representative (30-40 visit in the fall)
- Submit Early Decision college applications with 9" X 12" envelope and four stamps to counselor 2 weeks prior to the deadline (Check deadlines for example UCONN is December 1)
- Counselors meet with seniors individually (re: college and career plans)
- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications
- Visit the Career Center to research careers
- Attend college open house programs
- Attend Financial Aid Evening

December

- Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- Complete and submit college applications with 9" X 12" envelope and four stamps to counselor 2 weeks prior to the deadline
- Obtain PIN number for Free Application for Federal Students Aid (FAFSA) by applying at www.pin.ed.gov
- Speak with College representative (30-40 visit in the fall)
- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications

January

- File Free Application for Federal Students Aid (FAFSA) information online at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Speak with College representative (30-40 visit in the fall)
- Complete and submit college applications with 9" x 12" envelope and four stamps to counselor 2 weeks prior to the deadline
- Submit requests and 9" x 12" envelope with two stamps for midyear transcripts to be sent
- Take the SAT Reasoning or Subject Tests
- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications
- Review local scholarship list online at www.RockvilleHighSchool.org

February

- Submit all financial aid forms and applications (if not completed)
- Submit requests and 9" x 12" envelope with two stamps for midyear transcripts to be sent
- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications
- Get local scholarship applications in Guidance Office

March

- Completely explore the colleges you applied to
- Verify FAFSA Student Aid Report
- Visit the Guidance Office for scholarship applications
- Get local scholarship applications in Guidance Office
- Submit local scholarship applications

April

- Review college responses and financial aid offers with parents and counselor
- Visit college of choice before making final decision
- Notify college of choice and submit deposit by May 1

May

- Complete Advanced Placement Exams (if appropriate)
- Withdraw in writing from the schools you have decided not to attend
- Inform your counselor of your final decision
- Apply for student loans (if necessary)
- Apply for a summer job (if necessary)

June

- Submit requests for final transcripts to be sent to NCAA Clearinghouse (if necessary)
- GRADUATION

SELF-EVALUATION

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Why do you want to go to college?
- What satisfactions and frustrations do you expect to encounter in college?
 - What are you looking forward to? What worries you most?
 - What do you hope to gain from college?
- Which interests do you want to pursue in college?
 - Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities? Consider all your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities.
 - Are you more interested in career preparation, technical training, or general knowledge and skills?
- What degree of academic challenge is best for you?
 - What balance of study, activities, and social life fits you best?
 - How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life – books, ideas, issues, and discussions?
 - Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard, or one where you can make respectable grades?
 - How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
- What type of location do you want?
 - Urban or rural?
 - Do you prefer a fast-paced environment like a big city school (New York University or Boston University) or do you desire a more serene and relaxed environment that you'll find at more rural schools?
- How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country?
 - How often do you want to be able to go home?
 - What kind of change in your lifestyle and perspective might be exciting or distressing and overwhelming?
- What lifestyle do you want?
 - There are conservative schools, liberal arts schools, fraternity/sorority-oriented schools. They all provide you with an education but take into consideration the environment that you want to be in when you are not studying.
- What size school do you want to attend?
 - Do you want huge lecture halls for classes or more quiet classrooms with fewer people?
 - Do you want to attend a school with a few hundred people or 20,000?
- How would you feel about going to a college where the other students were quite different from you?
 - Would you find it an exciting or an intimidating environment?

CHOOSING A COLLEGE

Factors to Consider

Admission Requirements

- What high school courses are required?
- Are entrance tests required? SAT or ACT? What scores are acceptable?
- Is a certain grade point average or class rank required?
- Will my activities and school involvement be considered?
- Is there an essay on the application?
- Is there an Early Decision or Early Action program?
- On what basis are applicants accepted?
- Are personal interviews or letters of recommendation required?
- Do certain majors have special requirements?
- What percentage of applicants is accepted?
- Can admission denials be appealed?
- What are the application filing dates?

College Characteristics

- Where is the college located (city, suburb, small town, or rural setting)?
- How many hours away from home is the college?
- What is the surrounding community like?
- Is the college public, private or church affiliated?
- What is the current student enrollment?
- What special or unique programs are offered?
- Does the college have general education or course distribution requirements? What are they?
- What is the academic calendar (semesters, quarters, or trimesters)?
- Are students guaranteed housing?
- What public transportation is available?
- How close is the nearest airport?

Academics

- What is the average class size? Largest? Smallest?
- How many students in last year's freshman class returned for a second year?
- What was the grade point average for the freshman class last year?
- What is the college's procedure for student orientation, placement, and scheduling? Are classes guaranteed?
- How is a faculty advisor assigned to students?
- What services does the school offer for students who are undecided about a major?
- What percentage of students complete a degree in four years? Six years?
- Are students taught by full-time faculty members, graduate assistants, or a combination of both?
- What types of additional services are provided by the school at no additional cost to the students (e.g., tutoring, career and personal counseling, developmental reading and study-skills workshops, job placement, services for learning disabled students)?
- Is there an honors program? What are the qualifications for entry?

Social Life

- What is the average age of the student body?
- What is the male to female ratio?
- What is the ethnic diversity on campus?
- What percent of students reside on campus?
- Are dorms co-educational or single sex?
- Is it a “suitcase college” where many students leave on the weekends?
- What are the procedures for selecting a roommate?
- What are some of the rules and regulations that govern the campus and dormitory life?
- Where do the majority of students come from?
- Do most of the students commute or live on campus?
- What types of student activities are there?
- Are sororities and fraternities on campus? What percentage of students are members?
- What athletic programs are available?
- Is the surrounding community supportive of the college?

Cost

- What is the cost of tuition?
- What are the costs for room and board? Are there any other fees?
- How much did costs increase from last year to this year?
- Is there a difference in the cost for an in-state and an out-of-state student?
- Are accepted students required to place deposits for tuition and housing? Are these deposits refundable?
- Are deposits required each year for returning students?
- When do the bills have to be paid?

Financial Aid

- What percent of students receive financial aid based on financial need?
- What percent of students receive scholarships based on academic ability?
- What would be a typical financial aid package for a freshman?
- What percent of those who apply for financial aid receive it?
- What are the financial aid application procedures and deadlines?
- Is there a tuition payment plan?

Types of Colleges

- College: An institution that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two-year or four-year program.
- Junior College: A two-year institution of higher learning that provides career and vocational training and academic curricula. Community colleges are two-year colleges.
- Terminal program - An academic program that is complete unto itself. A student who completes it may not be admitted to a four-year college for further study without completing additional course requirements.
- Transfer program – An academic program that is designed to lead into a four-year program at another college or university. The two-year graduate transfers as a junior to the four-year institution.
- Liberal Arts College: A four-year institution that emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. Pre-professional or professional training may be available but is not stressed.
- Military Academy: The United States service academies prepare both men and women for careers in the military, Merchant Marines, or Coast Guard. Students attending one of the academies have all educational expenses paid for by the federal government and receive a monthly stipend as well. Admission selectivity is highly competitive. Except for the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, the service academies require a congressional nomination. Each of the academies requires that graduates complete a number of years within the service following graduation.
- Technical College: A two-year institution that offers terminal occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering, technology, and the physical sciences. These schools may also offer one-year certificate programs in certain crafts and clerical skills.
- University: An academic institution which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which supports at least two degree-granting professional schools that are not exclusively technological. It is generally composed of a number of “schools” or “colleges,” each of which encompasses a general field of study.

Categories of Colleges

Category I

These are a student's top choice schools. It is fine to include in this group a couple of "long shots," sometimes referred to as "REACH" schools.

Category II

These are schools that possess the significant feature you want and at which the probability of admission is even to slightly better than even. These are sometimes referred to as "REALISTIC" schools.

Category III

These are schools that have most of the features you want and at which the probability of admission is highly likely. These schools are sometimes referred to as "SAFETY" schools.

A few points of caution as you are choosing:

- Many students spend hours deciding on their few top choices and five minutes selecting one or two safe schools. It is strongly advised that you spend as much time and consideration when selecting your fifth choice school as you do your top choices.
- The selectivity of any institution is dependent on the size of its applicant pool which, in turn, may be affected as much by geographic location, popularity, and reputation as by actual academic quality. Many schools, for a variety of reasons, may be a Category II from an admissions perspective but still offer Category I academics.
- We would like to dispel the notion that if you want to go to a good school you must look at an Eastern school; there are many good schools throughout the country.
- Many students and parents still feel that they can select any one of the state universities as a safety choice. This is no longer the case (if in fact it ever was).
 - Students and parents must realize that state universities are becoming more and more competitive, both for in-state and out-of-state applicants.
 - Many state universities have established quotas governing the number of out-of-state students admitted, thereby creating strong competition for a limited number of places.
- While useful in many ways, publications that attempt to rank or compare schools based on "objective" criteria should not be used exclusively. All students must make their own personal decisions and a magazine or guide cannot include personal needs in the rankings. Colleges with high average SAT scores or low acceptance percentages are not necessarily the best for you.

Categories of College Decisions

Regular Decision

Applications are accepted by the college up until the stated application deadline. All applications are reviewed and decisions are mailed to everyone at the same time, usually in late March or early April, but no later than April 15.

Early Decision

Some students are so sure of their first choice college early in their senior year that they apply for what is known as “Early Decision.” Students electing this plan agree to withdraw any other applications they may have submitted if the first choice college informs them that they have been accepted. This is a binding agreement to attend if accepted. Notification of acceptance may occur as early as November of the senior year. Depending on the date of notification and deadlines of other colleges of interest, students sometimes do not need to submit any other applications when applying to their first choice school through the Early Decision program. A student may only apply to **ONE** school for Early Decision.

Early Action

Many colleges offer a plan known as “Early Action.” This differs from Early Decision because students are not committed to enrollment if admitted. Notification of admission is usually received earlier than with Regular Decision. Students then have until the customary Candidates’ Reply Date (May 1) to indicate their intention. For the most part, students may apply under Early Action to as many colleges as they choose. There are some colleges with restrictions. Students should check each school’s policies. Most Early Action applications are due either November 1 or November 15.

Open Admissions

This is a college’s policy to admit high school graduates, generally without regard to conventional qualifications, such as high school subjects, high school grades, and admissions test scores. Thus, virtually everyone who applies is accepted.

Rolling Admissions

Some colleges indicate decisions as soon as they have evaluated a student’s credentials. These decisions are made at any time during the year, usually by February. In most cases, they do not require a response until May 1.

Wait List

Students who are qualified for admissions but whose credentials are not as strong as others in the applicant pool may be placed on the Wait List. This means that they might be offered a place after the May 1 Candidate Reply Date. The college then knows how many students plan to enroll. Some years colleges never resort to their Wait List because the original number of accepted and accepting students meets their quota for the fall.

COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS

Scholastic Aptitude Tests (SAT)

Entrance examinations are required for admission at most colleges. Students should carefully check the admissions requirements at prospective colleges to determine whether SAT Reasoning Test and/or SAT Subject Tests are required. Ordinarily, there is no need for a student to take the SAT Reasoning Test or the SAT Subject Tests more than once before the senior year unless he or she must do so to meet the requirements of a specific college (such as Early Decision) or if his or her scores seem low and inconsistent with his or her academic record and PSAT scores.

SAT Reasoning Test

The SAT Reasoning Test is comprised of three parts: Critical Reading (200-800 score range), Math (200-800 score range) and a Writing component (200-800 score range) for a total score range of 600-2400. The test is three hours and forty-five minutes in length.

The SAT Reasoning Test includes a Writing component. The essay question will ask test takers to take a position on an issue and support it persuasively with examples from their studies and experience. It is an open-ended question so examinees can answer it successfully in many different ways. Students won't have to have any prior knowledge about the topic to write an effective essay. Different colleges will use the Writing score in different ways. Writing scores may be used for admissions decisions and possibly for placement in English Composition courses. However, for the first few years, some schools may choose to use the Writing score for research purposes only and not for decisions about admission or placement.

SAT: Subject Tests

The SAT Subject Tests are one-hour examinations which measure the student's level of achievement in certain subject areas. Some colleges require or recommend these tests for admission and/or placement purposes. Check the admissions requirements of the schools to which you are applying. Generally, most colleges and universities do not require or recommend the SAT Subject Tests for admission or placement in college courses. Furthermore, schools that do require or recommend the tests may specify one, two, or three tests and also identify which tests to take.

The SAT Subject Tests may be taken in the junior year to facilitate the application process in the fall of the senior year. Also, many students may be better prepared to take the tests in subject areas that they will not pursue during their senior year (for example, United States History, Chemistry, and/or a foreign language). However, students may elect to take the SAT Subject Tests during their senior year when decision for applications to specific schools are more clear and certain.

SAT Subject Mathematics Tests

Check the admissions requirements of the schools to which you are applying. The schools that do require or recommend the SAT Subject Mathematics test may specify Level 1C or 2C. Level 2 is a more advanced mathematics test and may be required of students applying for an engineering major or for placement in mathematics courses. Generally these students are in Pre-Calculus as juniors.

Fee Waivers

Fee waivers for the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests are available from your counselor if you meet certain economic guidelines.

Testing Accommodations

Students with disabilities, whose documentation has been validated by the College Board, will be provided with testing accommodations. Speak with your counselor for more information well in advance of the registration deadline.

SAT Question and Answer Service

For certain test dates, the Question and Answer Service (QAS) is available through the College Board for a fee. Students can see the actual questions and correct answers, as well as whether they answered correctly, incorrectly, or omitted the question. QAS includes information on question types and level of difficulty. Students will also have access to a copy of their essay.

For all other test dates, Student Answer Service (SAS) is available. SAS does not provide the actual questions, but it does send the student a list of question types and difficulty levels along with a description of how they answered the questions. Students also have access to a copy of their essay. Check the registration bulletin or www.collegeboard.com to determine whether the test date in question is eligible for QAS or SAS.

SAT Registration www.collegeboard.com

Parents should be aware that the College Board (which administers the SAT and PSAT) is an independent agency and may release students' names and addresses to interested colleges and universities.

The Guidance Department strongly recommends that students register online to take the SAT tests. To do so, students will need the following code numbers to complete their online registration:

High School Code – 070645

Test Center Code (for Rockville High School) – 07615

When registering online, students can:

- Receive immediate confirmation of date and test center assignment
- Print and make corrections to the admission ticket
- View and/or send previous scores
- Search for information about careers, colleges, and financial aid
- Search for codes (test centers and college, scholarship, and major codes)
- Try the SAT Question of the Day
- Better understand the test's structure and see which section was not scored
- Find out the source and author of reading passages
- Get explanations for verbal and math questions
- Order test preparation materials
- Find financial aid calculators

American College Testing (ACT)

The ACT assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to complete college-level work. The multiple-choice tests cover four skill areas (English, mathematics, reading, and science). The Writing Test, which is optional, measures skill in planning and writing a short essay.

- The ACT is universally accepted for college admission. Virtually all colleges and universities in the United States, including the Ivy League schools, accept it.
- The ACT is curriculum based. The ACT is not an aptitude or an IQ test. Instead, the questions on the ACT are directly related to what you have learned in your high school courses in English, mathematics, and science. Because the ACT is based on what is taught in the high school curriculum, students are generally more comfortable with the ACT than they are with the traditional aptitude tests or tests with narrower content.
- The Composite Score and each Test Score (English, Math, Reading, Science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). The Composite Score is the average of the Test Scores, rounded to the nearest whole number.
- The Writing Test is scored separately.
- Accommodations will be provided for students with learning disabilities whose documentation has been validated. See your counselor well in advance of the registration deadline for additional information.
- Fee waivers are available. See your counselor for additional information.
- In addition to the academic tests, the ACT also provides test takers with a unique interest inventory that provides valuable information for career and educational planning and a student profile section that provides a comprehensive profile of a student's work in high school and future plans.

ACT Registration

www.act.org

The RHS Guidance Department strongly recommends that students register online to take the ACT. To do so, students will need the following code numbers to complete their online registration:

High school code: 070645

Test center codes:

East Hartford High School: 179220

Conard High School (West Hartford): 210460

Hall High School (West Hartford): 210470

When registering online, students can:

- Receive immediate confirmation of date and test center assignment
- Print and make corrections to the admission ticket
- View and/or send previous scores
- Search for information about careers, colleges, and financial aid
- Search for codes (test centers and college, scholarship, and major codes)
- Order a copy of their test questions and answers
- Cancel scores
- Receive Preparing for the ACT booklet
- View sample tests

THE COLLEGE VISIT AND INTERVIEW

The Campus Tour

The campus tour is usually conducted by a student. These students are trained to show you the important parts of the campus, to answer your questions, and to give you information about the school. The tour usually lasts for an hour and will include visits to the library, student center, athletic facilities, a dorm, a classroom, and possibly a laboratory. This is a good time to ask a student questions that would give you a student's perspective. Don't be hesitant about asking questions that will assist you in the decision-making process but remember that your tour guide may be submitting a report on your visit. Many families find it helpful to take pictures and keep a list of what was photographed. This may help you to later distinguish among schools.

Possible questions to ask on the tour include:

- Where do students study?
- Are there quiet floors in the dorms?
- Are there single sex dorms?
- Are there substance-free dorms?
- Do any of the co-ed dorms have co-ed bathrooms?
- What percentage of students remain on campus on the weekends?
- What are the library's hours?
- Is there a fitness center on campus for students who are not athletes?
- Are there fraternities and sororities on campus? What is the percentage of students that participate? What is social life like for students who do not participate in Greek life (members of a fraternity or sorority)?
- What intercollegiate or intramural sports are available? What division?
- What services are available to students (for example, general or career counseling, free health care, tutoring if needed, help finding off-campus employment during the school year or the summer, junior year abroad)?
- Are the professors and other instructors accessible? Are their office hours posted?

Suggestions for College Visits and Interviews

Some colleges require an interview as part of the admissions process but most do not. It is still important for you to visit the college at which you may spend four years of your life. The visit and/or interview may help you in your selection of a college or to verify your choice of a school.

Interviews can follow several formats. It can be designed to share information or to evaluate you as a candidate for admission. The information type of interview can be either an individual or group interview. Some colleges use the evaluative interview to determine your viability as an applicant.

Just as no two colleges are alike, neither are any two interviewers alike. They range from the very friendly to the coolly reserved. Yet an interview is much more than a custom; it is the best opportunity for you to get to know the college and for the college to gain insights about you. Along with your school records, test scores, activities, and evaluations, the interview can distinguish you from the crowd and give you individual identity. Don't be stressed out but be prepared for some challenging questions.

Here are some hints to make your interviewing experience pleasant and to decrease your anxiety.

- Schedule the appointment well in advance by email or phone. Many colleges will require several months advance notice during the most sought-after times, usually September to December of the senior year.
- Schedule your first choice last. Practice your interview techniques at colleges that are far down on your list of preferred choices and leave your first choice colleges until last.
- Never fail to keep an appointment. If you absolutely must cancel, be sure to call regarding the cancellation.
- Be well informed about the contents of the college catalog in advance of the interview. Try not to ask questions that can be answered by reading the school's brochure or catalog.
- Bring a copy of your latest high school transcript and test scores to present to the interviewer if requested.
- Develop a resume of your school activities, community involvement, work experience, and hobbies. Be prepared to answer questions concerning them and correlate them with the college you are visiting.
- Have your parents with you when you visit. However, be sure you give the interviewer time to talk to you alone. Remember that you are the one seeking admission to college.
- Act naturally and be yourself. The interviewer wants to know you as you are, not as you wish you were. Do not be "on stage."
- Review some of the questions in the sections that follow with a friend, parent, teacher, or counselor. This will reduce anxiety and nervousness when the actual interview takes place.
- Be prepared with a list (either mental or concisely written) of points you wish to have clarified and/or questions you would like answered.

- Give credit where credit is due. If your school is the reason you have done well, say so. If a subject is your favorite because of a superior teacher, pay him or her the compliment.
- Have a choice of career or major in mind. It gives you something to discuss
- Tell the interviewer about the subjects you like best and/or least and be able to give thoughtful reasons for such judgments.
- Plan to stay on the campus long enough to see it in action and try to visit a class or dormitory. By doing so, you will be better able to decide whether this college is the one best suited for you.
- Be honest; say what you mean and mean what you say. Honesty pays.
- Dress properly. Being neat, clean, and conservatively dressed will never hurt you.
- Be prompt. Allow sufficient time to arrive at the school before your scheduled interview. Walk around if possible. Call if you will be late for the appointment.
- Mail your thank you note. The interviewer will appreciate this gesture.

Questions that Students are Often Asked at a College Interview

The following questions are a cross section of those that are generally asked at college interviews:

- How did you first hear about our college?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your career goals (long-range and short-range)?
- What accomplishments have you achieved or activities have you participated in that have a particular effect on you and your life?
- What might you be interested in as a future profession?
- What are your academic strengths and weaknesses?
- What is the most significant contribution you have made to your school?
- How do you spend your leisure time?
- What teacher impressed you the most in the past year?
- What three books have impressed you most in the past year?
- What were the three most important events in your lifetime?
- What decisions have you most regretted? Why?
- What are your priorities in selecting a college?
- How familiar are you with this college and its programs?
- Where do you see yourself in four years?
- Discuss your most stimulating intellectual experience.
- What problems are the most critical for the U.S. in the next five years?
- Who has been the greatest influence in your life?
- Are there any questions that you want to ask?
- Why should we accept you at our college?

Questions Students Should Ask at College Interviews

Visit the college while it's in session so that you will be able to talk not only with the admissions officer, but also with the students who attend the college.

You may wish to ask some of these questions while you're visiting and interviewing:

- Are you familiar with my high school? Is there anything I can tell you about it?
- How many of your graduates go on to graduate school?
- What do students do on weekends?
- Can you tell me about the placement record of graduates with major companies?
- How successful have graduates from my intended major been in getting jobs in their own or related academic areas?
- What athletic teams and clubs are the most popular here?
- Do you place more emphasis on class rank or standardized test scores in your admissions decisions?
- What percent of the entering freshman class return for their sophomore year? What percent graduate in four years?
- How large are your freshman introductory classes?
- How do I compare academically with students already attending this school?
- Is there a computer network from the school library that can be accessed by all dorm rooms?
- If majoring in an area requiring certification, licensing, etc., ask whether the program will qualify you for entrance into the profession and prepare you for state or national certifying examinations.
- What are the chances of my being admitted based upon my high school record?
- What attention is the college presently paying to such topics as drug-alcohol counseling and campus safety?

Corresponding with Colleges via Email

The nature of email is informal compared to standard business mail but it is important not to be too informal. The following are a few thoughts and suggestions regarding corresponding with colleges via email:

DO

- Remember that your email messages may be added to your admissions file.
- Choose an appropriate email address. You may want to rethink addresses like partygirl@hotmail.com or hatetostudy@yahoo.com.
- Give your full name, address, phone number, and high school in each message.
- Spell-check your email and use proper punctuation.
- Use salutations (for example, "Dear Admissions Officer").
- Be as polite and respectful in an email as you would be in a face-to-face meeting or telephone conversation.
- Use the "reply with history" function to help schools remember the questions you asked in previous emails.
- Check the email address of the recipient before hitting the "send" button.
- Check the school's website if you have a lot of questions before sending an email. If you still have specific questions, it is better to call the school and have an actual conversation.

DON'T

- Don't use all lower or upper case letters. All lower case is difficult to read and all upper case can give the impression of SHOUTING!
- Don't use "IMPORTANT INFORMATION" or "Please read" as subjects for your e-mail. These are commonly used for junk emails or viruses.
- Don't use attachments. Schools are wary of attachments since they may carry computer viruses.
- Don't send anything confidential in an e-mail. Emails are more like a postcard than a letter in a sealed envelope.
- Don't send blanket emails to a lot of schools at once. Do some research and then ask questions indicating a genuine interest.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

The Application Timeline

1. Finalize the list of college(s) and obtain the applications from the college(s) or online.
 - Apply online if possible
 - Download a copy of the application from the website or get a paper copy by calling the college
 - Connecticut state college and university applications can be obtained in the Guidance Office
2. Ask teachers to write recommendations
 - Give the teacher(s) at least three weeks notice to write the recommendation
 - Give the teacher(s) a copy of your Student Activity Form (see pages 25 and 26 for sample)
 - Teachers should give their letter(s) to the student in a sealed envelope to hand in to their counselor with the final packet to be mailed.
 - Write thank you notes to the teachers.
3. Write the essay(s) required for the application(s). Have your teacher, parent, and/or friend read it over.
4. Complete the application(s).
 - Make a copy for a rough draft.
 - Save any notices of confirmation from the college (online or email).
 - Save copies of all of your application materials, essays, etc.
5. Give your counselor a copy of your Student Activity Form and a signed Transcript Release Form.
6. Give the completed application(s) to your counselor with an appropriately-sized (9"x12"), addressed envelope and four stamps. If you completed the application(s) online, your counselor will use the envelope to send your official transcript, etc. It is highly recommended that you give your application to your counselor by early December.
7. Go online to www.collegeboard.com to be sure you have sent your SAT scores to every one of the colleges to which you are applying.
8. Arrange for Advanced Placement scores to be sent to the colleges. You can do this at www.collegeboard.com (A.P. Central, Exam Grades, Grade Reporting Services)
9. Arrange for your midyear grades to be sent to the colleges if requested.
10. Apply for financial aid using the Financial Aid Form (FAFSA) and/or the CSS/Profile.
11. Keep track of your PIN numbers and passwords.
12. Apply for local scholarships.

The College Application Packet

Application

The application serves the purpose of identifying the student to the college (name, address, high school, etc.), as well as letting the college know something about the student's personality (personal statement). It is highly recommended that students type their applications although careful printing or neat script is just as presentable. Applying online is becoming an excellent alternative, and in some cases, is preferred or even required by colleges.

SAT, ACT, and/or Advanced Placement Scores

These scores are sent directly to colleges at the student's request. Colleges only accept scores reported to them through the testing agency.

Official High School Transcript (see page 27 for a sample transcript)

Courses taken and grades received in grades nine through twelve are listed on the high school transcript. In addition, the transcript shows the student's rank in class, and grade point average. Testing scores (SAT, ACT) will no longer be seen on the transcript. The student's guidance counselor has the responsibility of sending the transcript to colleges. In general, colleges will not accept an official transcript unless it is sent directly from the high school.

Essay

This important item deserves a special section of its own!

School Profile

A high school profile describes the community, curriculum, and grading system. The guidance counselor will insert this document into the packet prior to mailing it.

Guidance Counselor Recommendation

The counselor's recommendation letter differs from the classroom teacher's letter both in length and intention. The teacher's report is generally content-oriented, deals with the student's academic qualities, and is written by a teacher whom the student has chosen. The guidance counselor presents the school's view of the student, giving the relative strength of the student's performance in all academic subjects over a period of years, and assessing the intensity of involvement in co-curricular activities.

Letters of Recommendation

Some colleges request that classroom teachers assess an applicant's ability.

Students are expected to use courtesy and consideration when requesting letters of recommendation. How you handle yourself in this process says a lot about the kind of person you are. Be sure to give the teachers at least three weeks to write the recommendation. Provide them with a Student Activity Form and a stamped envelope if they will be mailing the recommendation letter themselves.

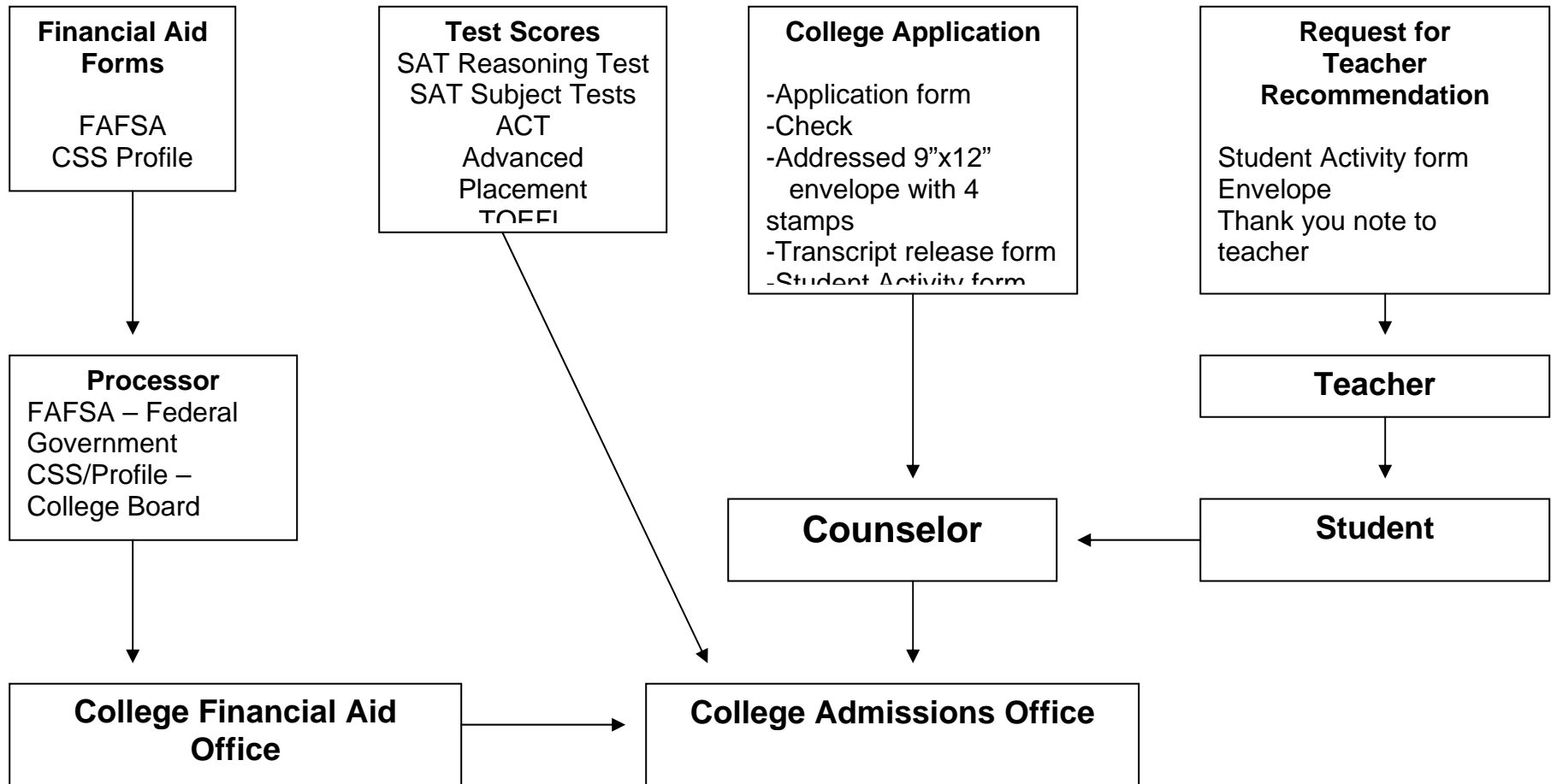
Sample Essay Questions Asked by Colleges

- In what ways have you grown intellectually during your years in high school? Who or what has contributed to that growth?
- Please describe in detail a special interest, experience, or accomplishment that you consider significant. If you prefer, you may submit an essay on some topic of local or national importance about which you have a strong conviction.
- You are chosen to attend a conference on the problems and difficulties faced by youth in America. You are the sole student representative. What topic would you choose for your speech and why?
- An original essay, on any topic of your choice, will make your application more personal. Write about your life past and present or describe a significant experience. Be creative, witty, be serious, but most of all, be yourself. Our aim is to get to know you as well as possible.
- Briefly describe any scholastic distinctions you have achieved. Which one of these achievements are you most proud of?
- Where do you see yourself ten years after graduation?
- You have answered many questions on this form, all asked by someone else. If you were in a position to ask a provocative and revealing question of college applicants, what would that question be?
- Mount Holyoke College is often described as having a strong sense of community. Describe the generosity of mind and spirit you feel is required for participation in such a community. What should the individual be prepared to give up? What should she hope to gain?
- Please describe what makes you a unique individual and how these qualities can benefit the University of Connecticut community.
- Your personal values and strongly-held opinions are usually set at an early age. Describe how you have come to question some of these values and opinions. How did you change as a result of your shift in values?
- Describe the two or three inventions you think have made important differences in the course of human civilization and explain your choices. Then devise an invention you would like to see come into existence and explain why.

Other Possible Topics

- Unusual circumstances in your life
- Travel or living experiences in other countries

College Application Flow Chart



College Application Preparation Checklist

| | 1st Choice College | 2 nd Choice College | 3 rd Choice College |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| College name | | | |
| College address | | | |
| College phone # | | | |
| College website | | | |
| Date application requested | | | |
| Date of campus tour | | | |
| Date of information session | | | |
| Interview required? | | | |
| Date / time of campus interview | | | |
| Date / time of alumni interview | | | |
| Thank you note sent | | | |
| Early Decision / Action deadline | | | |
| Regular application deadline | | | |
| Financial Aid form(s) deadline | | | |
| Teacher recommendations requested | | | |
| Application essays written | | | |
| Application given to counselor | | | |
| SAT Reasoning Test scores sent | | | |
| SAT Subject Test scores sent | | | |
| A.P. scores sent | | | |

FINANCIAL AID

Rockville High School Financial Aid Evening

In November, the Rockville High School Guidance Department hosts a Financial Aid Evening where the following topics are discussed:

- Current issues in financial aid
- The purpose of financial aid
- Determining the cost of higher education
- Understanding “need analysis”
- How to apply for financial aid
- An explanation of financial aid programs
- How financial aid award decisions are made
- How to complete the need analysis documents (FAFSA and CSS/Profile)
- An explanation of the RHS local scholarship program

The exact date for this informative event is listed each fall in the monthly School Newsletter. Parents of seniors are strongly encouraged to attend this program. Parents of underclassmen are also welcome.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Initial-Eligibility Standards

Prospective collegiate student-athletes must register with the NCAA Eligibility Center during high school. The Eligibility Center evaluates a student's academic record to determine if they are eligible to participate at a Division I or Division II college as a freshman student-athlete. This is not necessary if you attend a Division III school. However, if you are not sure which division you will play in, it is recommended that you register. The Eligibility Center is not the NCAA, but an organization that performs services relative to initial eligibility for the NCAA.

Clearinghouse Registration

To register with the Eligibility Center, a student must complete and sign the Student Release Form (SRF) and send it to the Eligibility Center along with a \$50 registration fee. The SRF authorizes each high school the student has attended to send the Eligibility Center a transcript, test scores, proof of graduation, and other necessary academic information. It also authorizes the Eligibility Center to send the academic information to all colleges that request a student's eligibility status.

The preferred method is online registration. Visit the NCAA Eligibility Center online at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. Select "Prospective Student-Athletes" and then "US Students Register here" or "International Students Register Here." Complete the SRF online and include credit or debit card information to pay the \$50 fee. Print both Copy 1 and Copy 2 of the transcript release form, sign them and give both forms to the House Office secretary who will send an official transcript to the Eligibility Center. One will be mailed in June of the junior year, the other upon graduation.

Additional Clearinghouse information may be obtained from the following sources:

NCAA Eligibility Center
Certification Processing
P.O. Box 7136
Indianapolis, Indiana 46207-7136

Web address: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net

Clearinghouse customer service: Toll free 877-262-1492 (representatives are available from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Eastern Time, Monday through Friday)

UNITED STATES SERVICE ACADEMIES

Writing to the Academies

Students who are considering attending any of the service academies need to start their application process earlier than most students planning to attend a public or private college or university. Prospective students should write to the academy of interest to request a Pre-Candidate Questionnaire during the spring of their junior year.

Many of the academies have a “summer seminar” where prospective students can experience life at the academy for a week. This is an excellent experience for those planning to apply in the fall.

Students should contact the school’s admissions office via email in the early spring of their junior year.

- United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO – www.usafa.edu
- United States Coast Guard Academy, New London, CT – www.cga.edu
- United States Merchant Marine Academy, Kings Point, NY – www.usmma.edu
- United States Military Academy, West Point, NY – www.usma.edu
- United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD – www.usna.edu

ROTC Scholarships

The United States Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps all subsidize Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) scholarships for college students. ROTC scholarships pay for college tuition, textbooks, laboratory fees, and other purely educational expenses. Scholarship cadets also receive a tax-free subsistence allowance each month.

Scholarship students have a six-year military obligation – four years active duty and two years in the Reserves – following graduation from college.

Students interested in applying for ROTC scholarships should begin the application process during the spring of their junior year.

Information may be obtained from the following sources:

- U.S. Air Force ROTC - - 718-862-7974
- U.S. Army ROTC, 400 W. Middle Turnpike, Manchester, CT - 860-643-9462
- U.S. Marine Corps ROTC - 233 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT - 860-493-6592
- U.S. Navy ROTC – 233 Pearl Street, Hartford, CT - 860-493-6592

Service Academy Appointments

To be considered for an appointment to a service academy, an applicant must have a nomination from an authorized nominating source. The law pertaining to Congressional appointments for each of the United States service academies stipulates that “a Member of Congress is allowed a maximum of five persons at each Academy in any given year” (except for the Merchant Marine Academy and the Coast Guard Academy, explained below). This quota determines the number of vacancies for each entering class. Regulations governing the Academies stipulate that the prospective nominee must reside in the Congressional District of the nominating Congressman. Senators are also given nominating authority. While a Congressman nominates within their Congressional District, a Senator nominates applicants from their entire state.

Members of Congress may nominate applicants who meet the eligibility requirements established by law. The following requirements must be met by the applicant as of July 1 of the year of admission to an academy:

- Applicant must be at least 17 years old but not have passed their 23rd birthday;
- Applicant must be a United States citizen; and
- The applicant cannot be married, pregnant, or have any legal obligation to support children or other dependents.

Candidates are appointed to the Merchant Marine Academy on a state basis. Each year, Connecticut has five vacancies at the Academy and each Congressperson is entitled to submit the names of ten prospective candidates. Nominees then compete with the nominees of the rest of the Connecticut delegation for admittance.

The Coast Guard Academy does not require a Congressional nomination. Candidates are appointed on a competitive basis. To be eligible, the student must contact the Coast Guard Academy directly for an application.

Listed below is the information for Connecticut’s current Senators as well as the United States Representative for Vernon. Students interested in obtaining a Congressional nomination should contact the office of these representatives for additional information.

United States Senators

Senator Joseph I. Lieberman
Hart Senate Office Building, Room 502
Washington, DC 20510

Connecticut office: One Commercial Plaza, Fl 21, Hartford, CT 06103
Phone 860-240-3566

Senator Christopher J. Dodd
SR-448 Russell Building
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Connecticut office: 100 Great Meadow Road, Wethersfield, CT 06109
Phone 800-334-5341 (from within CT only) or 860-258-6940

First Connecticut Congressional District

Congressman John Larson
1005 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Connecticut office: 221 Main Street, 2nd floor, Hartford, CT 06106
Phone 860-278-8888
Fax 860-278-2111

Second Connecticut Congressional District
Congressman Joe Courtney
215 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Connecticut office: 2 Courthouse Square Fl. 5, Norwich, CT 06360
Phone 860-886-0139
Fax 860-886-2974

Format for Congressional Nomination Request to a Service Academy

This format is intended as a guide.

A separate letter must be sent to each Senator and Representative to whom you apply.

Request for Congressional Nomination to a Service Academy

Date: _____

The Honorable _____
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

or

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

I desire to attend the (Name of the Academy) and to be commissioned in the class entering in July, 20__.

The following data is furnished for your information:

Name: _____

Permanent address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Temporary address & phone number (if different): _____

Date of birth: _____

High school: _____

Social Security Number: _____

Names of parents: _____

I have/have not requested that a pre-candidate file be initiated for me at the Admissions office.

Sincerely,
(Your signature)