

College 101

Admissions Success

Admissions Timeline for Seniors

As students begin the application process, the following timeline can keep them on track. Bear in mind this is a very general list.

September

- Obtain school applications.
- Make copies to use for rough drafts/practice.
- Decide who will write recommendations.
- Check with your guidance office about requesting transcripts.
- Mark your calendar with specific due dates for all the schools to which you will apply.

October

- Ask references for letters of recommendation.
- Begin filling out applications and working on essays.
- Submit Part 1 of the Common Application, if applicable.
- If you are applying for Early Decision, complete and submit the application. (November 1 is often the deadline.)
- Make copies for your records.

November ~ December ~ January

- Complete applications for normal admissions, either online or by mail. If submitting by mail, allow plenty of time for delays.
- If required by the school, apply for housing when you submit the application.

February ~ March

- Request that your guidance counselor send transcripts with first semester grades to your intended schools. Be sure to provide instructions and address information.
- If you have received no confirmation from your school, verify that the admissions office received all your documents.

April ~ May

Review your admissions information to ensure you have completed the application process. (For example, have you settled your housing and meal plan situation?)

- Register for the Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if needed.
- Request that your final transcript be sent to your school.

Application "To Do" List

A list of "To Do" items can help keep students organized.

- Determine what is required by each school (include the application fee and acceptable method of payment).
- Create a list of tasks associated with each school's requirements (e.g., obtaining the correct number of recommendations and writing required essays).
- Assign a beginning and ending date for each task.
- Check off tasks as completed.
- **Keep copies of everything submitted.**
- Organize information in a filing folder, box, or cabinet.

Application of Choice

Each college has a preferred application method. Basically, there are four types of applications:

1) Customized: Some schools have authorized forms that must be requested by telephone, mail, or from the school web site.

2) Common Application: Recommended form of 277 colleges and universities for admission to their undergraduate programs. Many of these institutions use the form exclusively. All give equal consideration to the Common Application and the college's own application.

View [contact information and requirements](#) for all Common App member colleges and universities.

3) Two-part Application: Some schools use a two-part application. Part I contains name and address information; Part II is sent after Part I is received. Contact the school to request this application. September is not too early to submit.

4) Online: Most schools have moved to the Web in handling applications. Encourage your students to use [College Answer's Online Application Search](#) when looking for school forms online.

SAT / ACT

Students can view their SAT score history on the Web. Visit [SAT Status](#) after 8 a.m. several weeks after you have taken the test. This free service requires a user name and password for access.

Request Test Scores

Besides the score reports student chose to send when registering for the standardized tests, scores to additional colleges and scholarship programs can be sent for a small fee.

- [SAT](#)
Educational Testing Service (ETS)
609-771-7600
- [ACT](#)
319-337-1313
319-337-1701 (TDD)

Guide for Parents

How to Help Without Hurting:

Things have certainly changed since you applied to college. College admissions is highly competitive, with most schools receiving many more applicants than they can accept. Since your son or daughter will soon be embarking on this difficult and stressful journey, it is only natural that you want to help. Here are a few things you can do as a parent:

Helping with the application form:

Since the application form is usually the last thing that gets done (often in the wee hours of the night), it is also where most of the carelessness occurs. Be a final proofreader of the application, checking for errors and ensuring that every blank is filled and every box checked.

Helping with the essay:

Although only about 500 to 800 words, the essay is the admissions officers' window into applicants' thoughts, hopes, and experiences. When editing the essays be careful to not inadvertently re-write them.

Helping with grades and coursework:

This is not a radical idea, but naturally the harder the courses and the higher your child's grades the better. In most cases, grades are more important than test scores in predicting a student's academic potential. Be supportive and encourage your son or daughter to take challenging courses, but avoid pushing your student to take classes that are too difficult.

Helping with test scores:

Your child will take an alphabet soup of standardized tests which may include the SAT I or ACT, SAT II Subject Tests, AP exams, and if he or she is not yet a senior, the PSAT. These tests allow colleges to compare students against similar criteria. While no one score guarantees admission or rejection, the one thing that is certain is that studying and preparing for the tests will improve your child's score.

Helping with the interview:

The interviews required by many schools can be downright frightening. Unlike the other components, they require interaction with real life admissions officers or alumni. Interview topics include everything from academic interests to current events. Help prepare your child by doing a mock interview. This is the best way to improve interview skills.

However you decide to help, give your student positive encouragement and even consider cutting him or her a little slack when it comes to chores during this busy time.

*By Gen and Kelly Tanabe
Founders of SuperCollege.com*