

STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE

I

PSATs

Students take the PSAT's early in their junior year. This gives students practice for the SAT 1 and a chance at winning a National Merit Scholarship

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GRADES

For the majority of students, grades will be the single most important factor in the college process.

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ADVANCED PLACEMENT COURSES OR THE INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM

Because admissions officers look for evidence of academic rigor when examining your transcript, taking as many ADVANCED level courses such as AP/IB is advantageous. Plus, you can obtain college credit.

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EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Your extracurricular activities will figure prominently in college admissions. A sustained interest in one or two activities will be more impressive than superficial and sporadic participation in a multitude of clubs or organizations. Have fun.

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ACT/SAT1

Standardized test scores will be a very important factor. Contrary to what some people say, you should study for these tests. Take them in your junior year two to three times and then in the fall of your senior year if you are unhappy with your scores.

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SATII: SUBJECT TESTS

Many of the more competitive colleges require you to take as many as three subject tests (one of which is always writing)

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COLLEGE INFORMATION

Order brochures and applications or go on-line to gather as much information as you need.

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SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

College admissions officers want to see that you accomplished something during the summer. Find a job in which you demonstrate responsibility or perform volunteer service

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SELF-APPRAISAL

Before you visit or apply to colleges, take inventory of you academic and extracurricular achievements, your honors and awards, and your personal likes and interests. Be honest and set realistic goals for your future.

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COLLEGE SEARCH

After you self-appraisal, you will have a better idea about the type of college that suits you. Now determine which schools meet your personal criteria.

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COLLEGE VISITS

Visit each college to which you intend to apply. Talk to students, sit in on classes, visit the libraries and dining halls, and stay in a dorm.

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EARLY ACTION/DECISION

Students who are happy with their test scores, grades, and other achievements can apply for Early Decision or Early Action. If applying Early Decision then apply in October to one school and get a response in early December. Early Action has no risk involved and you can apply to other schools at the same time.

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ROLLING ADMISSIONS

At schools with rolling admissions, applications are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Send in your application as early as possible.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Most colleges require three recommendations from teachers and guidance counselor. Give them your resume, essays and other important information for easy reference to write accurate letters. Each college has specific requirements. Ask them.

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APPLICATION ESSAY

Use your application essay to illuminate your major accomplishments and activities. Compose several drafts. Be concise and precise. This can definitely influence the outcome of the admission decision.

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APPLICATIONS

Once you get your applications, make copies of them for practice purposes. Make a checklist, showing when and which documents are needed for each school. Order your transcripts early. Contact CEEB and have your SAT scores sent. Accuracy counts; recheck your facts and dates. Send away for applications far in advance of the due dates.

If applying on-line is an option – do so.

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FINANCIAL AID

You may be eligible for many types of financial aid based on your financial situation, grades, extracurricular activities, parental affiliations, and so on. You will, however, have to make an effort to secure aid. FAFSA and PROFILE forms are available in the fall.

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APPLICATION DEADLINES

Late applications are often stamped REJECT. Mark your calendar with all of your deadlines and check them frequently.

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INTERVIEWS

Your interview may be scheduled with a hometown alum. Your performance will improve with each interview, so plan your first-choice colleges interviews last. And send a thank-you to the interviewer.

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ACCEPTANCE

Congratulations! You have been accepted by a college of your choice. If you get acceptance letters from more than one college and you can't decide which to attend, visit those schools again. If you know now that you do not want to go to a college inform them as soon as possible.

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SECOND SEMESTER GRADES

Now that you have been accepted by a college of your choice, you are prone to *senioritis*. DON'T LET YOUR GRADES SLIP! Colleges will receive your second semester grades; students have had their acceptances revoked because of poor academic performance during the last half of the senior year. Beware of *senioritis*.

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WAIT-LIST

You've been wait-listed by a school you want to attend. Don't despair! Many schools take students off their waiting list as late as September 1. Write to the admissions committee telling them you are still interested in attending their school. Send an updated list of your activities and accomplishments and a copy of your spring semester grades when they are available. Ask teachers to submit a letter in support of your application.