

College Packet



Grade 12

College Checklist-Grade 12

	September
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using your packet and the information you received from college fairs and tours, finalize college searches and make a list of schools that you will send applications • Make an appointment to visit each of your top schools • Register for SAT by and/or ACT: You should take the SAT/ACT at least 2 times • Make final decision as to which colleges you will send applications (match, safety and reach schools). • Ask 2 teachers to write you a college recommendation letter
	October
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go on college visits, preferably when students are on campus • Meet with Miss Marianne to make sure you are taking the classes that fulfill the NYS graduation requirements • Meet with Miss Marianne for 12th grade Transition Meeting • Set up meetings or interviews in the Disability Service Center of each of your top schools • Decide if you are applying for any scholarships • Compose your resume (If you need assistance, you may ask for assistance from your English teacher or Miss Monica) • Take ACT • If not done so already, complete your ACCES-VR applications and contact your local district office. • If you are applying Early Action or Early Decision, you must submit your applications before November 1st! <i>(if you apply Early Action, all November activities must be completed before this due date as well)</i> • Write your college essay • You can submit your FAFSA for Financial Aid on October 1st. Keep in mind, you must send your FAFSA to each school that you apply
	November
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begin filling out applications • Focus on each college essay (You should edit your essay 2-3 times before completion) • Compile college applications, college essays, resumes, and recommendation letters. Make sure you have one of each for each school you are applying. PROOF READ EVERYTHING! Make sure you double check the requirements of each school and that you are sending them everything they ask for! • Submit a 'College Application Tracking Form' to Ms. Monica for EVERY application you send • Work on scholarship applications • Take SAT • Register for December ACT & SAT
	December

College Checklist-Grade 12

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit college applications. Bring each 'College Tracking Form' to your counselor. Go through each one and make sure everything necessary is sent in. Applications should be in before winter vacation! • Make a copy of each application to keep for yourself • Take the SAT
	January
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At this point, applications should be submitted • Submit scholarships • If you have not done so, submit your FAFSA application. Make sure you get PINs for both you and your parents • Be sure to note FAFSA deadlines for each school you have applied. Submit a FAFSA to each school you have applied.
	February
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact colleges/universities that you applied to and ensure that they have received your application • Send updated materials to colleges. EX: midyear reports, midterm grades etc. (Especially if you are waitlisted or deferred)
	March
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses from colleges will begin
	April
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During this month, you should hear from most of the colleges to which you applied • Check the acceptance deadline and date of deposit of EACH college that you have been accepted to • Make another visit to the college you are most considering • Make your final decision! • Send in your deposit
	May
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College decision should be made and deposit to this school should be sent in • Notify Ms. Monica which college you have chosen-a packet of school documentation will be sent to your chosen college/University • Make an appointment to meet with Disability Services to put your accommodations in place (you will need them for your placement test) • Write out thank you cards to teachers/staff who wrote recommendation letters
	June
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm dates of college orientation • Take your placement test (if necessary) • Use the college catalog to decide which courses you might like to take • GOOD LUCK IN COLLEGE!

College Application Tracking Form

This form must be completed for EACH college application that you submit. Please submit forms prior to the college application deadline (December 14th)

Student Section

Student Name: _____

College/University: _____

Type of Submission:

- Common Application
- Paper
- Online School Application

Type of Application:

- Early Action
- Early Decision
- Regular Decision
- Rolling

Application Deadline Date: _____

Teacher Rec #1 _____

Teacher Rec #2 _____

I understand that it is my responsibility to have my SAT/ACT scores sent to all colleges.

Student Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Counselor Section

Date Received from Student: _____

Counselor Recommendation: _____

Transcript: _____

Resume _____

College Essay _____

Cover Sheet _____

Notes:

College Comparison Worksheet

COLLEGE NAME			
Location —distance from home			
Size —enrollment —physical size of campus			
Environment —type of school (2- or 4-year) —school setting (urban, rural) —location & size of nearest city —co-ed, male, female —religious affiliation			
Admission Requirements —deadline —tests required —average test scores, GPA, rank —notification			
Academics —your major offered —special requirements —accreditation —student-faculty ratio —typical class size			
College Expenses —tuition, room and board —estimated total budget —application fee, deposits			
Financial Aid —deadline —required forms —percentage receiving aid —scholarships			
Housing —residence hall requirement —food plan			
Facilities —academic —recreational —other			
Activities —clubs, organizations —Greek life —athletics, intramurals —other			
Campus Visits —when —special opportunities			

— A LIST OF QUESTIONS TO USE WHEN RESEARCHING COLLEGES —

1. Is there a separate admissions process for students with disabilities?

2. What documentation is required?

3. How are accommodations determined?

4. What kind of support services are available for students with disabilities?

5. What kind of assistive technology is available on your campus?

6. Is there a separate LD program?

7. Are there selective criteria for admission to the LD program?

8. Is there a separate fee for enhanced LD services?

9. How many students with disabilities do you serve?

10. What is your retention rate for freshmen and for students with disabilities?

11. What is your graduation rate for all students and students with disabilities?

12. Does your institution offer remedial and/or developmental course credit toward graduation?

13. Does your institution offer substitutions for foreign language and/or math? If so, what documentation is required? What is the process?

14. Do you offer course waivers? If so, under what circumstances?

15. Do you have staff members trained in the area of disability?

16. What is the counselor/student ratio?

17. How long does a student have to wait to see a counselor?

18. How do you handle emergencies?

19. How are testing accommodations handled?

20. Where would I take a test? What if the exam is when your office is closed? Will I be able to test in a reduced distraction environment if I need it?

21. What services do you offer?

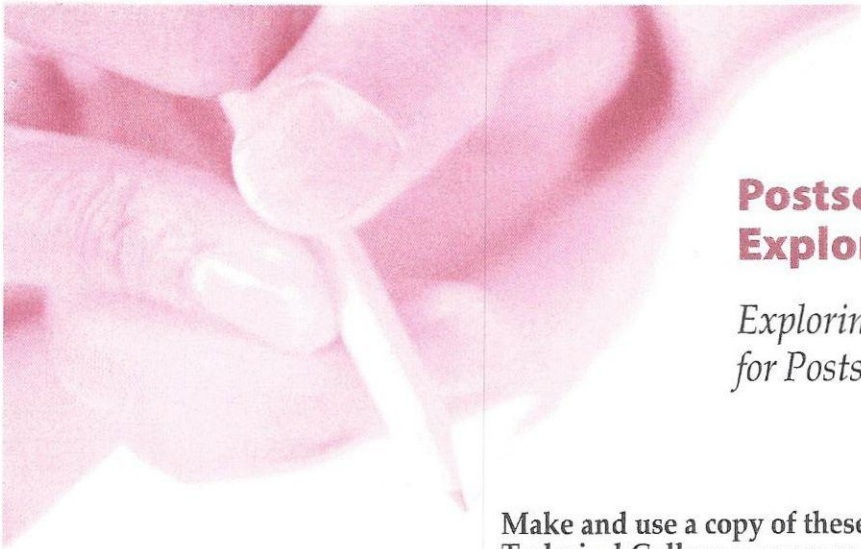
22. Do you offer tutoring? If so, is it offered by an LD specialist, faculty member, graduate assistant, peer tutor, or paraprofessional?

23. Are tutors trained to work with students with disabilities?

24. Is there a fee for tutoring?

25. Do you offer career-planning services?

26. Can graduates use career services?



Postsecondary Education Exploration Worksheet

*Exploring Choices, Selecting, and Applying
for Postsecondary Education*

Make and use a copy of these pages for each College/University or
Technical College you are considering.

Name of College/University or Technical College: _____

Internet Address: _____

Services, Programs, & Characteristics	Comments/Questions
CHARACTER AND SETTING	
Highly competitive academically	
Moderately competitive	
Not competitive	
Average class rank of current freshman class	
High school grade point average of incoming freshman class	
Average SAT/ACT score	
Size of the campus	
Size of the city/town	
Sororities/fraternities on campus	
Clubs or organizations of interest	
Sports activities (participant or spectator)	
GETTING THERE/GETTING AROUND	
Miles from home	
Car pools available	
Public transportation options	
Parking	
Access to buildings	
Effect of weather, construction, and other factors on mobility access	
Cafeteria/food availability	
Access to support/disability services	
Access to fitness facilities	
Access to computer labs	
Other	

Services, Programs, and Characteristics	Comments/Questions
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS	
Name of Entrance Exam required (ACT, SAT, etc.):	
Minimum score of:	
Acceptance of nonstandard administration of ACT/SAT	
Open admission/no admission requirements	
Waived ACT/SAT scores	
Class ranking based on high school grade point average	
Admissions interview	
Modified admission for students with disabilities	
Foreign language/math/other specific requirement	
Documentation of intelligence and achievement tests	
Recommendations from high school faculty	
MAJOR FIELD OF STUDY	
Availability of major in chosen career	
Full time years of study for a degree or certificate	
Part time years of study for a degree or certificate	
Requirements for admission into the program of study	
Requirements to remain in the program of study	
CLASSES	
Orientation classes	
Learning-strategies classes	
Study-skills classes	
Time-management classes	
Developmental-reading classes	
Basic English classes	
Basic mathematics classes	
Foreign language/math/other requirement waived	
Other	
FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS	
High tuition fees	
Moderate tuition fees	
Low tuition fees	
Scholarships available	
Financial aid available	
Work study jobs available	
Book or materials rental fees or costs to purchase	
Tutoring fees	
Room and board costs	
Costs for special services	

Services, Programs, and Characteristics	Comments/Questions
SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES	
Alternative test administration (computers, oral, other)	
Extended time for tests	
Flexible format for completing assignments	
Note-takers	
Readers	
Scribes/writers	
Taped textbooks and alternative formats for course materials	
Assistive technology available	
Computers available	
Study groups	
Subject matter tutoring	
Modified instruction	
Opportunities for counseling with support staff	
Peer support group	
Opportunities to receive diagnostic testing	
Development of educational plan	
Career placement services	
Interpreters	
Other	
COUNSELING SERVICES	
Student advisors	
Career counselors	
Financial advisors	
Personal counselors	
Health-care providers	
HOUSING	
Off-campus housing availability and affordability	
Residence halls and dining halls on campus	
Halls with no drinking or smoking	
Single-occupancy rooms	
Co-ed halls	
Male-/female-only halls	
Limited guest visitation	
Quiet floors for study	
Study rooms available	
Internet access in rooms	
Computers in residence hall	
Cooking facilities available	
Fitness/recreational equipment available	

Adapted from Weist-Webb, K. *Transition to Post-secondary Education: Strategies for Students With Disabilities*. Austin, TX: ProEd, 2000.

Applying To College

Requesting Applications & Literature: Many colleges have toll-free numbers you can call to request applications, catalogs, brochures, and financial aid guides. You may send postcards, a mass e-mail or even draft a letter requesting this information. Addresses & phone numbers can be obtained in many of the books available in the guidance office, library, or bookstore, or the Internet.

Reach, On-Target, Safe Schools: Typically, students will want to select several schools to apply to. We suggest finding at least two "safe" schools (which you can easily be accepted to), two "on-target" schools (which are looking for requirements similar to your qualifications), and two "reach" schools (which seem to be a little more competitive). Students should consider reach, on-target, and safe schools related to costs as well.

Choosing a Major: Although many colleges do not require that you to select a major until your sophomore or junior year of college, it is best to have an "idea" of what you'd like to study in college. Consider what you are good at, and what you enjoy. See your guidance counselor for specific career information.

Special Programs: Some colleges have special programs, such as "Honors Programs", "Scholars Programs", "General Studies Program", and programs for students with learning or physical disabilities. You may request that information from the school if you are interested. Some of these programs are highly competitive.

Special Talents: Many students have special talents in music, art, dance, drama, etc. If you are applying for a major in one of those areas, you will certainly need to schedule an audition or portfolio review. However, if you merely enjoy something as a hobby, you can send tapes or samples of your work to enhance your application.

College Athletics: If you are interested in playing sports in college, whether Division I, II, or III, it is very important that you let your guidance counselor and coach know. There are certain academic requirements you must fulfill. Guides to the NCAA Clearinghouse are available in the guidance office.

School Records: Transcripts & 2nd semester grades (if requested) will be sent to colleges by the guidance office.

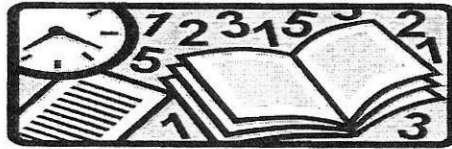
SATs/ACT: Upon your notification to the College Board and American College Testing Service they will send your scores directly to those colleges you applied to.

Activity Resume: This resume should list all activities you have been involved in throughout High School, including school activities and sports, or outside activities like religious organizations, service groups, volunteer work, summer activities, and employment. Also list any honors or special achievements you've earned.

College Essay / Personal Statement: Many schools ask that you write a short essay on a given topic or on any topic you choose. Schools are interested in finding out more about you – something your application may not tell them. Talk about your goals, values, ambitions, heroes, experiences, etc. Be honest, edit carefully, and have a teacher revise and review with you.

Letters of Recommendation: Most colleges require two or three letters of recommendation, from a Guidance Counselor, teacher, and/or volunteer leader or employer. They should know you well enough to write a strong letter about you. Give them a copy of your resume and essay for easy reference.

College Application Deadlines & Notifications



Deadlines

- ◆ **Regular Admissions:** Standard evaluation cycle that requires an applicant to submit their application by a particular deadline (usually by early to mid-January). The admissions team then evaluates all applicants at the same time and all students will be notified of the college's decision several months later (late March to early April).
- ◆ **Rolling Admissions:** Admissions policy that allows applicants to apply by a certain deadline in the winter or spring and to be reviewed and decided upon as they arrive in the admissions office. Students are usually notified of college's decision 4 to 8 weeks after receipt of the application. This admissions policy is typically used only at large public universities.
- ◆ **Early Decision:** If you have an absolute first choice college, you may want to consider applying "early decision". Early Decision allows you to apply early in the fall (deadline is usually November 1st or 15th) and receive an admissions decision early (usually by December). However, you will be applying under a binding contract, meaning that if you are accepted under this policy, you are bound to attend that school and retract all of your other applications. A student applying Early Decision to one school cannot apply early decision to any other school.
- ◆ **Early decision II:** Two rounds of Early Decision are conducted, one with applications due by early November and another with applications due by January. This is still a binding contract in which candidates are obligated to attend the school if accepted and applicants are notified within a month or two. Very few schools offer this admissions process.
- ◆ **Early Action:** Similar to Early Decision in that it allows a student to apply early and be notified of college's decision a few months later but it differs because it is not a binding contract. This means that you do not have to commit to that school right away...you can wait to see if you're accepted to any other schools first.

Notifications

- ◆ **Acceptance / Rejection:** Colleges will typically notify you of their decision by mail. You will have to decipher from the letters where you will ultimately choose to go and respond properly.
- ◆ **Wait-List:** If you've been wait-listed by a school, don't despair! Many schools will take students off their wait-list throughout the summer. Write to the admissions committee to let them know you're still interested...send an updated list of your accomplishments...send your most recent grades...ask a teacher to write a letter on your behalf – all of these tips can help.
- ◆ **Reply Date:** Students are required to give a response (will attend / will not attend) to colleges by a particular date. The majority of colleges will have a reply date after May 1st to give applicants time to hear from all the colleges they have applied to in order to make a final decision.

Interviews: Some colleges require interviewing students (usually by invitation only) to help make their decision. However, If you feel you are a strong candidate for a good interview, you can request one. See your counselor for great interview tips.

Community College: Myth vs. Reality

Myths abound when it comes to community college, but you can't know if it's right for you unless you have the facts. Do these misconceptions sound familiar?

I shouldn't go to community college unless I want a vo-tech career.

You can start out at a community college and end up in any career if, like many community college students, you transfer to a four-year college after graduation. In fact, one of the reasons community colleges were set up was to offer students an affordable way to earn a degree from a four-year college or university.

Nobody who is anybody goes to community college.

Plenty of famous people and high-achievers started out at community college. Here's a short list of stellar alum:

- Gwendolyn Brooks, Pulitzer prize-winning poet
- Eileen Collins, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) astronaut
- Joyce Luther Kennard, California Supreme Court justice
- Jeanne Kirkpatrick, former United Nations (UN) ambassador
- Jim Lehrer, news anchor
- Robert Moses, choreographer and dance company founder
- Sam Shepard, Pulitzer prize-winning playwright
- James Sinegal, CEO of Costco
- Maxwell Taylor, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

Community college is just high school with ashtrays.

Don't let the open-admissions policies of community colleges fool you. Community college is college. You'll be expected to perform at a high level, just as you would at any other college. The fact that anyone can attend doesn't mean that you won't find your studies challenging and enriching.

Community college is for older students and students who work full time.

Students 18 to 24 make up one of the largest groups on community college campuses. Sure, community colleges are flexible, making them attractive to older and working students, but this flexibility benefits younger students as well. You'll be able to take classes at night or during the day, and you can attend part time or full.

I can't get financial aid if I go to community college.

Even though tuition at community colleges is low, financial aid is available. The Federal Pell Grant, for example, is open to students attending any accredited post-secondary school. You can even qualify—for a smaller amount—if you go to school part time.

Activities Resume

Name
Address
City, State Zip Code
Home Phone, Cell Phone
Email address

Current Status

- Senior, Madison Park Technical Vocational High School
List your number of years here
- Other high schools you have attended in reverse order
Working from the present backwards

Leadership

- List any leadership positions and dates held; list most current first

Awards

- List any honors and recognitions you have received and dates received; most recent first

Extracurricular and Volunteer Activities

- List all activities in and out of school in which you are involved; give dates with most current first

Workshops Participated In

- GEAR UP, College Café, Emagine, etc.

Sports

All sports in and out of school; include dates putting most current first

Work Experience

Any jobs you have had for pay; give dates starting with most current

Guide compiled from:

http://www.quintcareers.com/college_activities.html

<http://www.fcps.k12.va.us/westspringfieldhs/forms/jrpacket.pdf>

Jibril Salaam

THE ESSAY

To give you an idea of what type of essays you'll have to write, here are a few sample essay questions taken from various college applications:

The Admissions Committee would like you to discuss those aspects of your life that may not be apparent from information provided on your application or high school transcript. Please attach an essay (200-500 words) on one of the following topics:

1. What you do when you are not in class or studying defines a part of who you are. Focus on the one activity that is most important to you. Tell us why it's important and discuss what you have gained from your involvement.
 2. We are a global community comprised of students of diverse talents, experiences, opinions, and cultural backgrounds. What would you as an individual bring to our campus community?
 3. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.
-
- a) What (who) is your favorite word / color / celebrity and why?
 - b) Step out the front door of your home and tell us what you would change about what you see?
 - c) In choosing a college, you are making one of the biggest decisions of your life. Tell us what you have learned about yourself or other people in the process.
 - d) What specific form of discrimination concerns you?
 - e) In reading your file, we try to get to know you as much as possible through what you submit to us. Please provide a statement on any topic of your choice that will increase our understanding of your unique experiences.
-

- Life is a process that challenges us to respond, grow, and change. Select an experience or event that has challenged you this past year, and describe its impact on you.
 - We learn who we are through relationships with others. Write about an individual who has had a significant influence on you.
 - We are a global community. Choose a national or international issue and describe its importance to you
 - Describe a character in fiction, an historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc.) that has had an influence on you and explain that influence.
-

1) You are hosting a brunch for historical, literary, or other disreputable persons (think: Mad Hatter's Tea Party). What is your menu? Who are your guests? In answering this question, imagine a scenario: We want some exposition, serious or silly, we would accept some dialogue, and we are willing to trust you to respond in such a way that your brain power, your imagination, your sense of taste, and your capacity to tell a story reveal something true about you.

2) Have you ever walked through the aisles of a warehouse store like Costco or Sam's Club and wondered who would buy a jar of mustard a foot and a half tall? We've bought it, but it didn't stop us from wondering about other things, like absurd eating contests, impulse buys, excess, unimagined uses for mustard, storage, preservatives, notions of bigness . . . and dozens of other ideas both silly and serious. Write an essay somehow inspired by super-huge mustard.

3) People often think of language as a connector, something that brings people together by helping them share experiences, feelings, ideas, etc. We, however, are interested in how language sets people apart. Start with the peculiarities of your own personal language—the voice you use when speaking most intimately to yourself, the vocabulary that spills out when you're startled, or special phrases and gestures that no one else seems to use or even understand—and tell us how your language makes you unique. You may want to think about subtle riffs or idiosyncrasies based on cadence, rhythm, rhyme, or (mis)pronunciation.

4) How do you feel about Wednesday?

Tip Sheet: An Admissions Dean Offers Advice on Writing a College Essay

By MARTHA C. MERRILL

Martha C. Merrill, the dean of admission and financial aid of Connecticut College, and a graduate of the class of 1984, encourages incoming high school seniors to begin contemplating their college essays this summer. She also offers perspective on what she looks for in an applicant's essay.

Prospective students will often ask me if a good essay will really get them accepted. The truth is that while no essay will make an unqualified student acceptable, a good essay can help a qualified applicant stand out from the competition. A good essay just might be what turns a "maybe" into a "yes."

The college application process takes time, preparation and creativity, which is a lot for any active senior to handle. Summer, however, typically offers about 10 weeks free of classes and homework and many of the other stresses that come with high school. The pressure of the looming college application deadline is still months away, which allows students the freedom to play around with different ideas, test different angles and solicit feedback from friends and family.

While there is no magic formula for the perfect admission essay, there are a few things prospective college students should know. Here are my Top Ten tips:

- **Write about yourself.** A great history paper on the Civil War might be very well written, but it doesn't tell me anything about the writer. Regardless of the topic, make sure you shine through your essay.
- **Use your own voice.** I can tell the difference between the voice of a 40-year-old and a high school senior.
- **Focus on one aspect of yourself.** If you try to cover too many topics in your essay, you'll end up with a resume of activities and attributes that doesn't tell me as much about you as an in-depth look at one project or passion.
- **Be genuine.** Don't try to impress me, because I've heard it all. Just tell me what is important to you.
- **Consider a mundane topic.** Sometimes it's the simple things in life that make the best essays. Some of my favorites have included essays that reflect on the daily subway ride to school, or what the family goldfish observed from the fishbowl perched on the family kitchen table. It doesn't have to be a life-changing event to be interesting and informative.
- **Don't rely on "how to" books.** Use them to get your creative juices flowing, but don't adhere too rigidly to their formulas, and definitely don't use their example topics. While there are always exceptions, the "what my room says about me" essay is way overdone.
- **Share your opinions, but avoid anything too risky or controversial.** Your essay will be read by a diverse group of individuals from a wide range of backgrounds, so try to appeal to the broadest audience possible.
- **Tell a good story.** Show me why you are compassionate; don't tell me you are. Show me that you have overcome great difficulty; don't start your essay with "I have overcome great difficulties."
- **Don't repeat what is already in your application.** If you go to a performing arts school and all of your extracurricular activities and awards relate to dance, don't write about how much you love dancing. Tell me something I couldn't know just from reading the other parts of your application.
- **Finally, don't forget about the supplements.** The supplement questions are very important – you should plan to spend as much time on them as you do on your essay. A well-written essay won't help if your supplement answers are sloppy and uninformative.

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY



Research the organization

- Learn background info about the organization offering the scholarship money and work it into the essay.



Begin with a hook

- Use strong, engaging words and draw in the reader, compelling them to want read until the end.

Never ignore word or character counts

- Do not write more than is requested, ever.



Always tell the truth

- Share with heart why the scholarship money is needed, without an over-the-top sob story.

Fully answer the question asked

- Partial or rambling answers are not impressive to scholarship judges.



Read winning essays

- Get a feel for what the judges are looking for in a winner. Previous winning essays are often published.

Proofread Proofread Proofread

- Have at least two pairs of eyes review the essay for grammar, spelling, content, readability, and completeness.



8 Tips for a Successful College Visit

By Allen Grove

College visits are important. Before you commit years of your life and thousands of dollars to a school, be sure you're choosing a place that is a good match for your personality and interests. You can't get the "feel" of a school from any guidebook, so be sure to visit the campus. Below are a few tips for getting the most out of your college visit . . .

1. Explore on Your Own

Of course you should take the official campus tour, but be sure to allow time to poke around on your own. The trained tour guides will show you a school's selling points. But the oldest and prettiest buildings don't give you the entire picture of a college, nor does the one dorm room that was manicured for visitors. Try to walk the extra mile and get the complete picture of the campus.

2. Read the Bulletin Boards

When you visit the student center, academic buildings and residence halls, take a few minutes to read the bulletin boards. They provide a quick and easy way to see what's happening on campus. The ads for lectures, clubs, recitals and plays can give you a good sense of the types of activities going on outside of the classrooms.

3. Eat in the Dining Hall

You can get a good feel for student life by eating in the dining hall. Try to sit with students if you can, but even if you're with your parents, you can observe the bustling activity around you. Do the students seem happy? stressed? sullen? Also, is the food good? Are there adequate healthy options? Many admissions offices will give prospective students coupons for free meals in the dining halls.

4. Visit a Class in Your Major

If you know what you want to study, a class visit makes a lot of sense. You'll get to observe other students in your field and see how engaged they are in classroom discussion. Try to stay after class for a few minutes and chat with the students to get their impressions of their professors and major. Be sure to call in advance to schedule a classroom visit -- most colleges don't allow visitors to drop in on class unannounced.

5. Schedule a Conference With a Professor

If you've decided on a possible major, arrange a conference with a professor in that field. This will give you an opportunity to see if the faculty's interests match your own. You can also ask about your major's graduation requirements, undergraduate research opportunities, and class sizes.

6. Talk to Lots of Students

Your campus tour guide has been trained to market the school. Try to hunt down students who aren't getting paid to woo you. These impromptu conversations can often provide you with information about college life that isn't part of the admissions script. Few university officials will tell you if their students spend all weekend drinking or studying, but a group of random students might.

7. Sleep Over

If it's at all possible, spend a night at the college. Most schools encourage overnight visits, and nothing will give you a better sense of student life than a night in a residence hall. Your student host can provide a wealth of information, and you're likely to chat with many other students on the hallway. You'll also get a good sense of the school's personality. What exactly are most of the students doing at 1:30 a.m.?

8. Take Pictures and Notes

If you're comparing several schools, be sure to document your visits. The details may seem distinct at the time of the visit, but by the third or fourth tour, schools will start to blur together in your mind. ~~Don't write down just facts and figures. Try to record your feelings during the visit -- you want to end up at a school that feels like home.~~

Accommodation Differences Between High School and College

In High School	In College
The school identifies students with disabilities.	The school protects a student's right to privacy and confidentiality.
The school district is responsible for evaluating and documenting the student's learning disability.	The student is responsible for providing current documentation of the disability to the college.
The school automatically incorporates accommodations into the student's daily schedule once a disability is documented.	The student must request accommodations each time they are needed.
The school modifies the educational programs.	The college makes reasonable adjustments in instructional programs which do not alter the essential content or requirements of a course or program.
Parents are advocates for their children	Students are their own advocates.
Special classes and placement must be available for students.	Colleges are not required to provide special classes or programs for students with disabilities.
Parents are notified and must give permission for any decisions regarding their son or daughter.	Parents are not notified of services their son or daughter requests unless the student grants permission for that information to be released.
An IEP meeting is held to determine placement and appropriate services.	Students work with college professionals and instructors to determine if and what services are appropriate.
The school provides assessment of disabilities.	The school provides access to testing services which are accessible to persons without disabilities.

Differences between High School and College Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Applicable Laws

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.D.E.A. (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)	A.D.A. (Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990)
Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973	Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973
I.D.E.A. is about SUCCESS	A.D.A. is about ACCESS

Required Documentation

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan and/or 504 Plan)	High School I.E.P. and 504 are not sufficient. Documentation guidelines specify information needed for each category of disability.
School provides evaluation at no cost to student	Student must get evaluation at own expense
Documentation focuses on determining whether student is eligible for services based on specific disability categories in I.D.E.A.	Documentation must provide information on specific functional limitations, and demonstrate the need for specific accommodations

Self-Advocacy

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Student is identified by the school and is supported by parents and teachers	Student must self-identify to the Office of Disability Services
Primary responsibility for arranging accommodations belongs to the school	Primary responsibility for self-advocacy and arranging accommodations belongs to the student
Teachers approach you if they believe you need assistance	Professors are usually open and helpful, but most expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance

Parental Role

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Parent has access to student records and can participate in the accommodation process	Parent does not have access to student records without student's written consent
Parent advocates for student	Student advocates for self

Instruction

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Teachers may modify curriculum and/or alter pace of assignments	Professors are not required to modify curriculum design or alter assignment deadlines
You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class	You are assigned substantial amounts of reading and writing which may not be directly addressed in class
You seldom need to read anything more than once, and sometimes listening in class is enough	You need to review class notes and text material regularly

Grades and Tests

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
I.E.P. or 504 plan may include modifications to test format and/or grading	Grading and test format changes (i.e. multiple choice vs. essay) are generally not available. Accommodations to HOW tests are given (extended time, test proctors) are available when supported by disability documentation.
Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material	Testing is usually infrequent and may be cumulative, covering large amounts of material
Makeup tests are often available	Makeup tests are seldom an option; if they are, you need to request them
Teachers often take time to remind you of assignments and due dates	Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus (outline); the syllabus spells out exactly what is expected of you, when it is due, and how you will be graded

Study Responsibilities

HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE
Tutoring and study support may be a service provided as part of an I.E.P. or 504 plan	Tutoring DOES NOT fall under Disability Services. Students with disabilities must seek out tutoring resources as they are available to all students.
Your time and assignments are structured by others	You manage your own time and complete assignments independently
You may study outside of class as little as 0 to 2 hours a week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation	You need to study at least 2 to 3 hours outside of class for each hour in class

Table 5-1. Commonly Requested Accommodations (1 of 4)

Request	Comments
Reduced course load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be a very appropriate accommodation, especially in students' first semester; it can help in the overall adjustment to the academic demands and new living environment. • Might be offered as a "more appropriate" accommodation to students who request extended deadlines for assignments. • If students with disabilities can't maintain their student insurance plan on a part-time schedule, Michelle's Law (2008) allows them to stay on their family's health insurance policy (a big concern for most families). • Students concerned about graduating on time can take classes during winter or summer breaks to maintain progress.
Notetaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleges may be particular about who gets this if they believe that the ability to decide what information in a lecture is the most salient and get it down on paper or in electronic form is a lifelong skill that students need to acquire. • Might only be offered to students with a significant disability or more than one disability that interferes with notetaking. • Many notetakers are student volunteers, not professionals or teachers, so note quality may vary. • Possible substitutions: digitally recording classes/lectures, notetaking workshops for students with disabilities. • If colleges are providing transcription for a student with a hearing impairment in the same class, they might also provide the transcript to other students with disabilities.
Private dorm room	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burden of proof that a single room is necessary to provide access is often a heavy one; many colleges hold that sharing a room during freshman year is an integral part of the college educational experience. • A number of schools consistently experience housing shortages, which can affect the availability of single rooms. • Students with serious physical disabilities might be accommodated with a double room for which they are not charged the single room premium if they need noisy, bulky medical equipment or frequent visits from an aide. • Students who ask for a single room so they can study in peace will likely instead be directed to the library or dorm quiet room. • Colleges might refuse single rooms for students with social difficulties because they want to prevent them from being at risk for further isolation.
Priority registration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for students with medications that have peak effectiveness at certain points during the day or whose meds may interfere with sleep if they take them late in the day in order to focus in night classes. • Also appropriate for students who need some time between classes because their disability or medications cause fatigue.
Copies of professors' notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DS cannot demand that professors turn over copies of their notes, which are considered intellectual property. • Some professors post their notes on the Internet. When they do, students are welcome to download them, but DS will not do it for them (though DS will show them how to do this the first time if they do not know how).

Table 5-1. Commonly Requested Accommodations (2 of 4)

Request	Comments
Flexibility in attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be appropriate for students who experience severe, acute episodes as a result of their psychological or medical disability. • If approved, students may have to follow some sort of protocol as a way of letting DS—and, by extension, their professors—know that they are experiencing a severe episode and are unable to attend classes. • Attendance policy is generally dictated by the professor and/or the department; even when students have very legitimate reasons for missing classes, the requirements for class attendance may be flexible only to a point. • Students unable to attend the required number of classes may have to withdraw or take an incomplete grade and retake the course in a subsequent semester.
Study guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not likely to be approved. • Students are expected to know how to go through their notes and readings, think about what their professors discussed in class, and figure out what they should study. • Although tutoring center staff might help students organize their notes, they are not responsible for putting together study guides. • Students may find it helpful to organize or join a study group to find out what other students think is likely to be on the exam, and they may get some information about topics to be covered on their exams by attending professors' office hours and asking questions.
Extended deadlines on assignments, projects, or papers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlikely to be approved. • Reduced course load may be offered as an alternative accommodation (students should consider asking for this instead of extensions). • Colleges will offer extensions to any student in a crisis (e.g., death of a parent), but many will refuse this as a blanket accommodation for disability. • Students with difficulty meeting deadlines should utilize technology, tutoring, and other relevant services to keep on top of deadlines. • Reason often cited for refusing this accommodation is that students then end up behind in their classes, and when new papers are assigned before the old ones are done students get overwhelmed and anxious. • DS may suggest that students seek help from the campus tutoring center to learn to manage time and deadlines.
Alternative assignments, reduced assignment length, reduced reading load	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unlikely to be approved. • Likely to be viewed as fundamentally altering college programs. • Students with difficulty completing assignments should utilize technology, tutoring and other relevant services to keep themselves performing at the level expected of them at college.

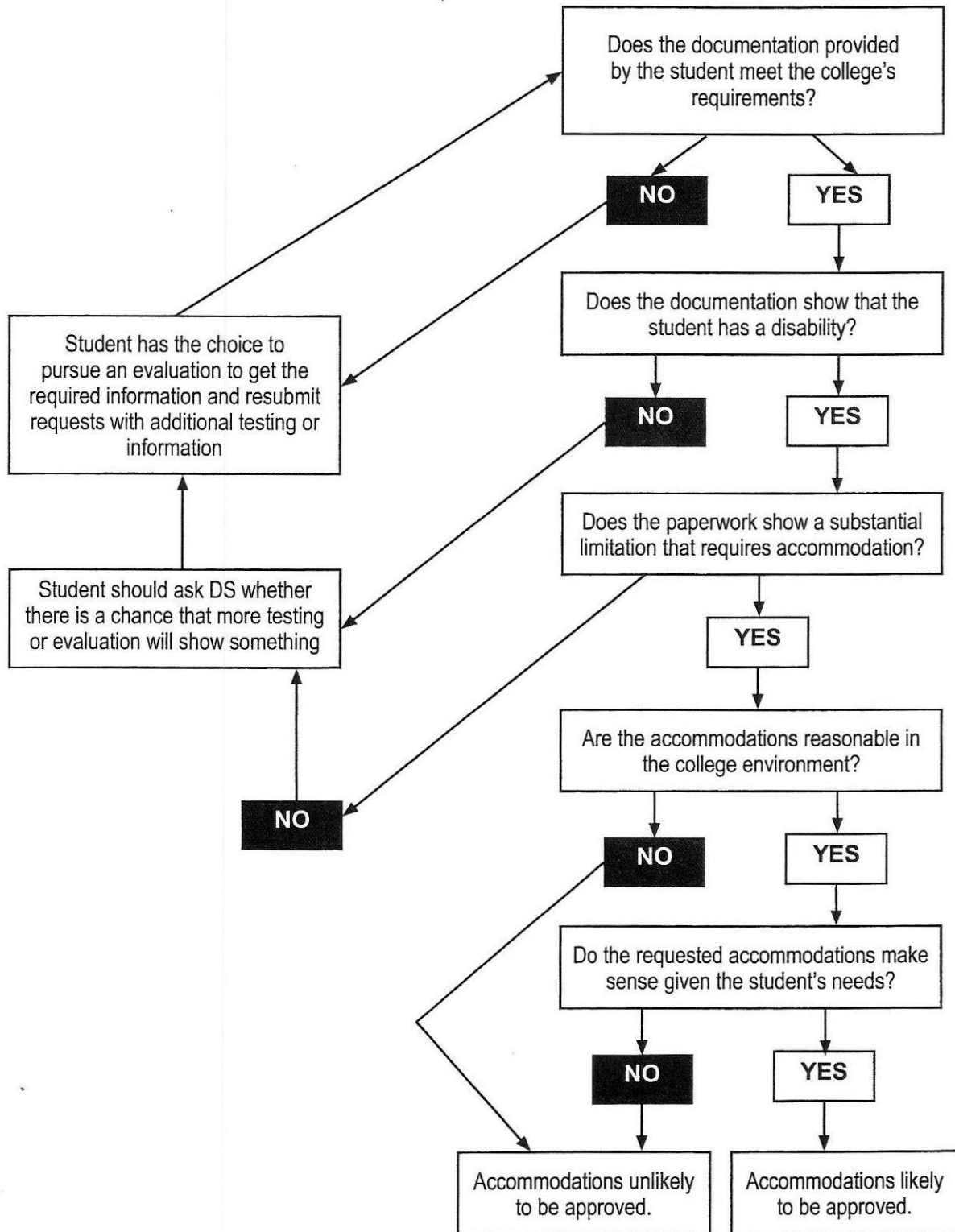
Table 5-1. Commonly Requested Accommodations (3 of 4)

Request	Comments
Assistance with assignments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help with editing, proofreading, and organizing is considered a personal service, which colleges don't have to offer. • Such help is typically offered through college tutoring centers—open to all students—but colleges don't have to go beyond this for students with disabilities. • Some schools may provide this sort of support outside of the usual tutorial supports—for a fee.
Alternative testing methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requests for multiple choice test instead of an essay or an essay instead of multiple choice test, open-book tests, word banks, oral instead of paper exams, and completing a project instead of an exam are likely to be viewed as fundamental alterations (<i>Wynne v. Tufts University</i>, 1991, 1992). • Colleges may reject because of concerns over fairness (e.g., student granted an essay exam instead of a multiple-choice exam later complains that his exam was harder than the one his classmates took).
Extended time on exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time and a half for exams is a commonly approved accommodation (although there's no science behind this timeframe). • Students should be specific in how much time they are requesting. (i.e., time and a half or double time); they should keep in mind what their requests will mean: for example, a 3-hour exam now becomes a 6-hour exam. Do they need/want this much time? • Students should not request "untimed" exams, as this is not reasonable (e.g., a student could demand a week for each exam). • If students need short breaks during testing instead of extended time actually working on exams, they should specify this in their request. • Students approved for this may have to take their exams in a separate location from their class, which means access to professors to ask questions may be sacrificed; they should ask about this on a case-by-case basis if they are concerned.
Reader for exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many colleges are moving toward using technology rather than human readers to accommodate students with print-related disabilities; students may be accommodated by taking exams on a computer that reads tests aloud to them. Using technology for exams promotes students' independence, cuts down on DS's personnel costs, and eliminates the worries associated with proctoring (i.e., answering more questions than the professor wants). • Students should ask for training on DS's scanners and text-to-speech software before their exams in order to be ready for their tests. • Students approved for this may have to take their exams in a separate location from their class, which means access to professors to ask questions may be sacrificed; they should ask about this on a case-by-case basis if they are concerned. • Students who want to demonstrate their knowledge of the college environment can ask for "a reader for exams or, if available, use of speech-to-text technology for exams."

Table 5-1. Commonly Requested Accommodations (4 of 4)

Request	Comments
Using a laptop for exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It may be difficult to prove that this is necessary to provide access, especially in classes where students take essay exams; colleges may require students to have a significant disability or a number of relevant disabilities. • Even when a laptop has been approved, students will likely have to use one supplied by DS (rather than their own), and it will be disconnected from the Internet. • Students who have specially adapted laptops because of their physical disabilities generally will be allowed to use their own laptops because it eliminates the need for accommodations such as a human scribe. • Students may instead be accommodated with a small keyboard that has an LCD screen that allows them to view a few words at a time as they type (e.g., Alphasmart). • Students who just need a spelling or grammar checker for exams should ask for this (and extended time to use it) instead of a laptop, as the less complicated request is more likely to be approved. • Students approved for this may have to take their exams in a separate location from their class, which means access to professors to ask questions may be sacrificed; they should ask about this on a case-by-case basis if they are concerned.
Using a calculator for exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not likely to be approved on tests or in classes evaluating calculation skill as it would represent a fundamental alteration. • May be allowed for all students—with or without disabilities—in certain math and science fields because the emphasis is on choosing and utilizing the correct formula, not calculation skill.
Reduced-distraction environment for exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A commonly approved accommodation. • Students should avoid asking for a distraction-free testing site, as this is impossible to create. • It is likely that another student may also be in the testing room, as well as a proctor (unless the testing room has cameras to check for cheating). • Students approved for this may have to take their exams in a separate location from their class, which means access to professors to ask questions may be sacrificed; they should ask about this on a case-by-case basis if they are concerned.
Scribes/speech-to-text technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most likely to be approved for students with physical impairments that limit use of their hands. • Speech-to-text technology may be appropriate substitution for a human scribe (except for students whose voices cannot be understood by such technology, as may happen with students with a severe stutter). • Students should ask for training on DS's speech-to-text software before their exams in order to be ready for their tests. • Proctors or scribes only record students' responses; they do not rephrase or change students' answers in any way. • Students who want to demonstrate their knowledge of the college environment can ask for "a scribe for exams" or, if available, use of text-to-speech technology for exams. • Students approved for this may have to take their exams in a separate location from their class, which means access to professors to ask questions may be sacrificed; they should ask about this on a case-by-case basis if they are concerned.

Figure 5.1 Accommodation Request Review



Financial Aid Basics

- **FAFSA** stands for “Free Application for Federal Student Aid.”
- The **FAFSA** is the form that the federal government uses to determine a student’s eligibility for federal aid, including grants, scholarships, work study and loans.
- The **FAFSA** becomes available October 1st of each year and students must apply annually. (You cannot complete a **FAFSA** before this date).
- Download or complete the **FAFSA** on the web at www.fafsa.ed.gov
- You must complete a **FAFSA** in order to receive any kind of financial aid.
- A **FAFSA** should be sent to each individual college/university
 - *Each college/university has its own deadline-check the dates on the school websites!!

FROM THE EDITORS OF
MONEY MAGAZINE



HOW TO GET THE MOST FINANCIAL AID FOR COLLEGE

Don't panic about those crazy high costs of attendance you see posted on college websites. Less than half of students actually pay those prices, because grants and scholarships cut their real costs by thousands of dollars. To make sure your family gets its fair share of financial aid, follow these nine key steps.

FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

SKIP EARLY DECISION

You can apply to just one college for early decision (ED), and you have to go there if you get in. ED improves your odds of acceptance but limits your ability to bargain for more aid. If you know you can afford your dream college, applying ED might be worth it. Otherwise, use non-binding early action (EA) or the regular process.

FIND A FINANCIAL "SAFETY SCHOOL"

Look for one or two good public colleges where you'll qualify for low, in-state tuition. Also pick two or more private colleges where you'd be in the top 25% of applicants and, therefore, a likely candidate for merit aid.

SET UP A BIDDING WAR

Apply to at least one college that competes directly with your dream school. If you get into both and the competitor offers you a more generous aid package, you'll have some bargaining power.

WINTER OF SENIOR YEAR

COMPLETE THE FAFSA

Even if you don't expect federal aid, fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), which is generally required for other scholarships from colleges or foundations.

KNOW WHAT TO LEAVE OUT

When you fill in your FAFSA, don't include your retirement savings, such as any money in a 401(k) plan, which aren't counted in aid formulas. Include your other savings and investments, but only as of that date. Spend down those accounts by paying off as many debts and prepaying as many bills as you can before you file.

TACKLE THE CSS TOO

The CSS/Financial Aid Profile is a supplementary aid application used by about 400 colleges and non-federal scholarship programs. It costs \$25 for your first school or program and \$16 for each additional one, so first check whether the institutions require it.

SPRING OF SENIOR YEAR

PRICE YOUR DEGREE

A degree from a \$30,000-a-year college you'll graduate from in four years will be cheaper than one from a \$27,000-a-year college that takes five years to finish. Ask each school what percentage of students in your expected major finish in four years.

LOOK BEYOND YEAR ONE

Many schools will renew your merit aid past freshman year only if you meet certain academic or other requirements. Know the rules going in. Given the difficulty that many freshmen have adjusting to college, even a minimum 2.75 GPA could prove to be a high bar.

APPEAL IF YOU NEED MORE

File a request for more need-based aid, officially called a "professional judgment review." Describe any major financial issues that weren't reflected in your FAFSA, such as recent medical expenses or a parent's job loss.



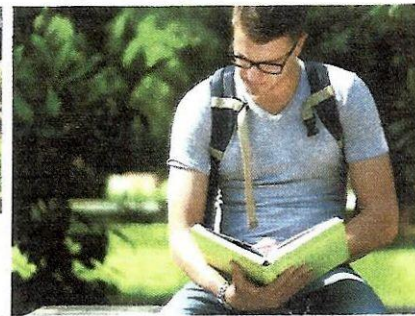
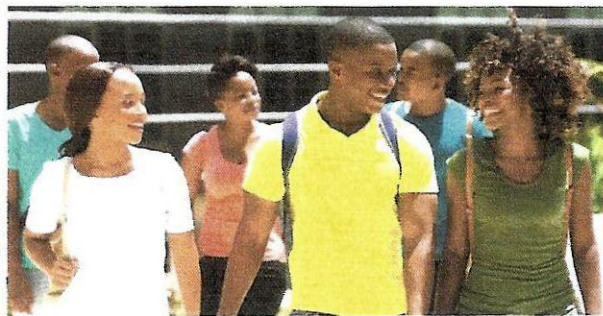
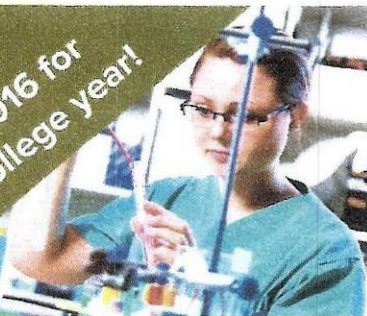
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FAFSA
available
October 2016 for
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How to Apply for Student Financial Aid

Financial aid comes primarily from the federal and state governments and your college.

Federal aid includes Pell Grants, Work-Study, Perkins Loans, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants, and federal student loans.

New York State financial aid includes the Tuition Assistance Program (TAP), Aid for Part-Time Study (APTS), scholarships and other numerous special awards.

Financial aid from colleges can be in the form of institutional grants, scholarships, work programs, or loans.

It all starts with completing the FAFSA – the Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

Before You Apply

Get Your FSA ID

- Both you and a parent need Federal Student Aid Identification Numbers (FSA IDs) to complete and electronically sign your FAFSA and other federal student aid documents.
- Visit fsaid.ed.gov to get your FSA ID.

**Get your
FAFSA ID
early!**

Gather these Materials

- Student's driver's license
- Student's Social Security number
- For both student and parents:
 - Income tax returns
 - W-2 forms and other records of money earned
 - Current bank statements
 - Records of other untaxed income, such as child support received, IRA/pension deductions, veteran's benefits, or military allowances
 - Records of investments: stocks, bonds, etc.

Get an Idea of Your Eligibility

Go to fafsa.ed.gov, click on "Thinking about College" and complete the online FAFSA4caster to see an estimate of your federal aid eligibility.

- Use the IRS Retrieval Tool through the online FAFSA to connect directly to the Internal Revenue Service for your tax data. Easy and efficient!
- If you have not yet completed your required taxes, you can estimate, using end-of-year pay stubs or W-2 forms, and make updates to your FAFSA later.
- If you completed a FAFSA in the previous year, you will receive a notice to go to your renewal FAFSA.

Important Reminders

- Find out the financial aid deadlines at your college, and be sure to meet them.
- Apply for financial aid every year. Financial aid programs change and your situation may change. Any change may affect your eligibility.
- Don't pay for financial aid information that you can get for free — see your counselor or college advisor, or visit hesc.ny.gov/myths.
- Attend financial aid workshops to learn more about aid programs and completing applications. Check with your high school counselor and visit StartHereGetThere.org in the fall for dates and locations.

**You must complete the FAFSA each year.
File early to meet deadlines!**

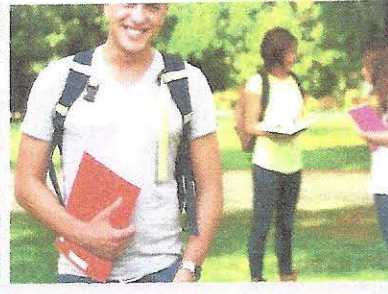
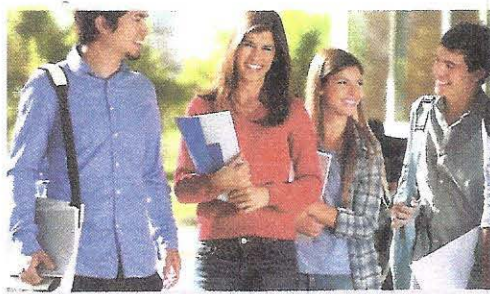
Complete the FAFSA

Go to hesc.ny.gov

- Visit "Pay/Apply for Aid – Start Here" at hesc.ny.gov for step-by-step assistance in completing the FAFSA.
- Follow the link to the FAFSA application and complete online. (You can opt to complete a paper FAFSA. Go to FAFSA.ed.gov and select "FAFSA Filing Options" to download an application.)



**Higher Education
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Apply for the New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)

- If you are a New York State resident and include a New York school on your FAFSA, you should also apply for New York State aid online by using the New York State resident link on the FAFSA Submission Confirmation page. If you don't already have a HescPIN, you will be prompted to establish one to complete your TAP application.
- Information from your FAFSA and your family's calculated New York State taxable income will be pre-filled on your TAP application. Review the application information, change any incorrect items, complete any missing items, then submit the form.
- If you are a New York State resident and have listed a New York school on the FAFSA, but did NOT complete a TAP application online, you will automatically receive a notice from HESC reminding you to do so.
- You must apply for TAP by completing the FAFSA every year. If you have received a renewal FAFSA and have not completed the TAP application, you will receive notification from HESC directing you on the next step of the application process.

Check hesc.ny.gov for the latest information about completing your FAFSA and TAP applications.

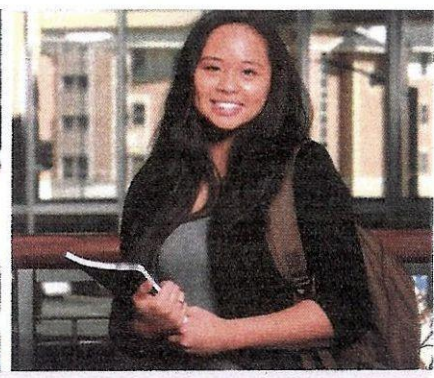
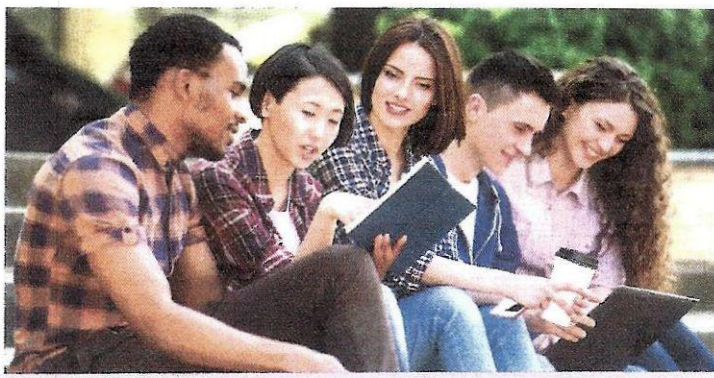
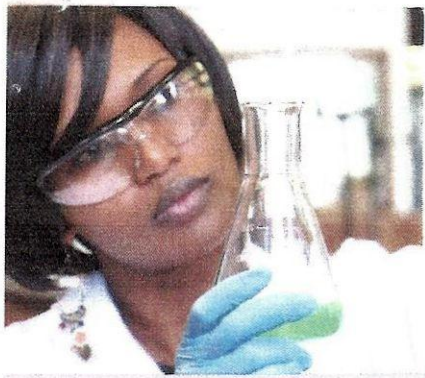
What's Next?

- Shortly after filing your FAFSA, you will receive an email notice that your FAFSA has been processed and your Student Aid Report (SAR) is available for review. You access your SAR by logging on to FAFSA.ed.gov with your FSA ID. If corrections are needed, follow the instructions carefully and correct any missing or inaccurate information.
- If you have applied for TAP, you will receive an email regarding your TAP application status.
- Be sure to respond to any questions or requests for more information by the deadline indicated or you could lose your eligibility for financial aid.
- The college financial aid office will provide you an award letter detailing the estimated aid you are eligible to receive based on your application. Accept or decline the offer of aid by the deadline. Supply any additional documents requested.
- If you decide to take a Federal Direct Student Loan, you must complete a master promissory note (MPN). Follow the instructions on your college award letter.
- You can check the status of your TAP grant at hesc.ny.gov.



**Higher Education
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99 Washington Avenue, Albany, NY 12255 • hesc.ny.gov
Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor



TAP

Helping New Yorkers Pay for College

The New York State Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) helps eligible New York residents attending in-state postsecondary institutions pay for tuition.

Part-time TAP helps eligible New York residents attending in-state, postsecondary institutions on a part-time basis pay for tuition. It is available for students who meet specific part-time eligibility requirements.

Because TAP is a grant, it does not have to be paid back.

Who Is Eligible?

To be eligible for TAP you must:

- Be a New York State resident attending an approved postsecondary institution in New York State.
- Meet income limits:
 - \$80,000 for dependent undergraduate students or independent students who are married and have tax dependents, or independent students who are unmarried and have tax dependents,
 - \$40,000 for married independent undergraduate students who have no other tax dependents,
 - \$10,000 for unmarried independent undergraduate students with no tax dependents.

Income amount is the combined family NYS taxable income plus any Federal, State, or local pension income and/or private pension and annuities excluded from New York State income tax.

What Are the Award Amounts?

Depending on the academic year in which you begin study, an annual TAP award can be up to \$5,165.

What Determines the Amount of the Award?

The award amount is determined by:

- Academic year in which first payment of TAP or any state award is received,
- Type of postsecondary institution and the tuition charged,

- Financial status (dependent or independent),
- Other family members enrolled in college.

Go to hesc.ny.gov for more eligibility information and to estimate your TAP award.

How Do You Apply?

- Complete Your Free Application for Federal Student Aid – the FAFSA – at FAFSA.ed.gov. You and your parent need a Federal Student Aid Identification Number (FSA ID) to complete and electronically sign the FAFSA. You may apply for the FSA ID in advance at fsaid.ed.gov.
- If you are a New York State resident applying to a college in New York State, follow the direct link from the FAFSA to the TAP application.
- If you missed the TAP link from the FAFSA, you will receive information from HESC to apply online.

**You must complete the FAFSA each year.
File early to meet deadlines!
Apply for TAP when you complete your FAFSA.**

Visit hesc.ny.gov/tap to learn more about TAP and hesc.ny.gov for more information about financial aid.



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