

The College Insider Series

COLLEGE



ADMISSIONS



COVID-19 Edition

Look for this icon for information on how to navigate college planning during the pandemic.



The NHHEAF Network's
Center for College Planning (CCP)

Welcome!

Congratulations on beginning the college journey! As you begin the winding road to college, the Center for College Planning (CCP) is here for you. College admissions is going to look different this year because of COVID-19; and our programs and materials have changed to help you navigate this new terrain. Be it in-person or remote, the CCP remains dedicated to providing students and families with free and valuable information about the college planning process.

This College Insider is designed to demystify the college planning experience. Think of it as your textbook to College Planning 101 – here you will find chronological guidance on the steps of the college planning process. There are many College Guru Tips found throughout the Insider which provide expert advice from professionals in the field. And new this year, look for the **COVID-19 Logo and green text** that indicates information on COVID-19 and college planning.

Good luck and enjoy the journey,

The CCP College Gurus

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How We Can Help

Timeline:	What We Offer:
Freshman through Senior Year	School-Based College Planning and Financial Aid Presentations – FREE presentations for students and parents in 100% of the public high schools in NH on a variety of college topics Check with your school counseling office or nhheaf.org to see our calendar of when we are in your community.
Spring of Junior Year	Destination CollegeSM – FREE day of college planning workshops and college fair – for current high school juniors and families Saturday, March 20, 2021 Plymouth State University
Spring of Junior Year through Fall of Senior Year	College Counseling Appointment – Appointment with student and family to discuss college planning and the admission and financial aid processes
Summer Before Senior Year	Summer Boot Camp Workshops – Workshops for rising high school seniors focused on helping them write the college essay or start their Common Application
Fall of Senior Year	Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Filing Appointment – Appointment to help file this important federal financial aid form any time after October 1st of the year you need to file
Winter and Spring of Senior Year	Funding Options Appointment – Appointment to review financial aid award letter and discuss options to pay for college any time after a student receives their financial aid award

Planning for College



Start Planning for College Early

WORK HARD. CHALLENGE YOURSELF.

Some students believe that colleges only look at 11th and 12th grade work to determine college readiness. This is a myth. The work you do in 9th and 10th grade sets the tone for the courses your teachers and school counselors will recommend for you in future years. If you show your ability to take on a challenge, work hard, and be successful, more rigorous courses will be available to you in 11th and 12th grade. In addition, colleges review your high school transcript which includes all four years of high school. Many colleges look for trends in the student's work over time – so keep your grades strong and show consistent effort.

CAREER EXPLORATION

- **Do a job shadow, ELO, or internship.** Taking the time to learn about a career can both inspire you and let you know if you are on the right path. Add these experiences to your college résumé (see [page 14](#)).
- **Take a career assessment.** While no assessment can predict with 100% certainty which careers are perfect for you, questionnaires or surveys are a helpful way to research possibilities. Try an interest or skills assessment for **free** at [careeronestop.org](#) or [roadtripnation.com](#).



Didn't get to do your summer or school year ELO/internship? Set up a career interview with a professional in a field of your interest. HR departments can help match you with an employee who is willing to answer some questions. Ask them about the job and what they would want to see in a new hire!

College Guru's Suggested Timeline

ALL FOUR YEARS

- Take a challenging core course of study:** *If you undertake a rigorous core course of study and challenge yourself to do your best work during your high school career, you may enjoy a wider range of postsecondary options after graduation.*
 - Four years of English
 - At least three years of math (some majors have a minimum requirement of pre-calculus or calculus)
 - At least three years of a lab science
 - Three to four years of social studies
 - Two years of the same world language (some colleges require three consecutive years)
- Participate and get involved in school, community or work:** *Do things that foster your sense of community, responsibility, time management, and leadership to demonstrate these key aspects of your character.*

FRESHMAN & SOPHOMORE YEARS

- Begin exploring career and major options:** *Try job shadows, volunteer opportunities, informational interviews, and career assessments (see page 3 and 6).*
- Talk with your school counselor:** *Stay connected to your school staff and share your postsecondary goals to ensure you are on the correct academic path and meeting all college prep requirements.*
- Begin creating a college résumé:** *Create a format for your college résumé that you can continue to update as you engage in new activities (see sample on page 14).*
- Considering playing an NCAA sport in college?** *Begin researching NCAA guidelines and high school academic requirements to ensure your eligibility by visiting eligibilitycenter.org.*
- Begin preparing and studying for the PSAT or PreACT:** *The summer between 10th and 11th grade is a perfect time to start using FREE tools to prep for the practice versions of the SAT and ACT (see page 11).*

JUNIOR YEAR

Fall

- Attend a college fair:** *To see a list of both local and regional college fairs go to neacac.org.*
- Take the PSAT or PreACT:** *These are practice versions of the college entrance exams.*
- Continue studying for the spring SAT or ACT:** *If you do even 30 minutes of prep twice a week, you will be ready to face the test this spring (see page 11)!*

Winter

- Register for senior year courses:** *Remember colleges will see your senior year classes and grades.*
- Consider special academic programs to earn college credit while still in high school:** *Advanced Placement (AP), Running Start or e-Start, SNHU in the High School, etc.*

Spring

- Attend Destination College at Plymouth State University on Saturday, March 20th:** *For details about this FREE Center for College Planning event for high school juniors, go to destinationcollege.org.*
- Take the SAT or ACT:** *NH students take the SAT during the school day for free. Check to see if the colleges you're considering require SAT Subject Tests. Spring of junior year is a great time to take them, if necessary (see page 10).*
- Begin researching and developing a list of colleges you are interested in attending:** *You can utilize college search engines, visit campus websites, or take campus tours (see pages 3, 6-9, and 12-13).*
- Interested in Architecture, Art, Dance, Theater or Music?** *Inquire with each college to determine if a portfolio or audition is required. Both can be extensive, so the more time you have to prepare, the better (see page 16).*

Summer

- Visit college campuses:** Look for opportunities to get on different types of campuses; rural and urban, small, medium, and large. Get a feel for what you like and remain open to a variety of options (see pages 7 and 12-13).
- Begin a family conversation about a college budget and each family member's realistic ability to contribute financially:** Getting on the same page about what your family can afford can help you build your list of schools and ensure you have viable financial options to choose from in spring of senior year.
- Start working on your college essay:** Utilize the summer to get your thoughts organized and start your essay so you won't have to "cram" it all in during the fall (see page 20).
- Attend a College Boot Camp:** Many high schools offer a "boot camp" in the summer to get students started on the college application process. If your school does not offer one, consider attending one presented by the Center for College Planning (For more information contact the CCP at **888.747.2382, x119**).

SENIOR YEAR

Fall

- Narrow down your list of colleges:** Try using the 2-2-2 approach (see page 17).
- Retake the SAT or ACT:** You are responsible for sending your scores to ALL schools that require them. Go to **collegeboard.org** or **act.org** to learn how to send your scores.
- Get organized!** Create a list that includes important information for your colleges of choice. Include deadlines, financial aid requirements and forms needed (See our **College Application Checklist** on page 25).
- FAFSA online application and CSS Profile® become available October 1st:** If a FAFSA is required by your college of choice, you simply need to file by the college's specified deadline. To make an appointment for free assistance filing your FAFSA, contact the Center for College Planning at **888.747.2382, x119**.
- Work on college applications:** Colleges use many different online applications. Check with each of your colleges to determine which they use.

Winter

- Submit completed college applications:** Deadlines can vary. For a list of admission deadline options, see page 16.
- Apply for scholarships:** There are scholarships from national, regional, and local sources, but to receive any scholarship, you need to apply! (see page 23)
- College decision letters arrive:** Every college has their own "turn around" time from when you apply to when their decision is sent, but a realistic time frame is four to eight weeks from when you submit your application.

Spring

- Once you have been accepted, the college will send you a financial aid award:** For help interpreting your award, attend a **Paying for College 101** program at your high school or meet with a Center for College Planning Counselor by calling **888.747.2382, x119**.
- Compare awards and calculate your estimated loan debt:** Go to the "Student Loan Calculator" at **nhheaf.org** for help estimating your future loan payment(s).
- Make one last visit to your school of choice before sending your deposit:** Many colleges offer "admitted student days" where accepted students can visit the campus, meet faculty, and sample campus life one more time. If you can't visit, revisit the website and call admissions with any last minute questions.
- MAY 1st – National Candidate Reply Day:** Accepted students must send in their admission deposit by this deadline in order to secure their spot in the upcoming freshman class. Planning to live on campus? A housing deposit may also be due at this time.



It may be helpful to keep a "college only" calendar. This calendar can include all admission and financial aid deadlines, as well as required application components and SAT/ACT test dates.

Starting Your Search



Choosing a College Major

With over 1,800 college majors to choose from, choosing one can seem daunting. While a vast majority of college students change their major at least once, it is still important to have an idea of how your interests and talents translate into various programs of study. Here are a few steps to help you research and choose a college major:

Identify your favorite subjects from high school. Make a list of your favorite classes and classes in which you excelled. Next, consider what the classes you like have in common.

Consider your personality, values and motivations. Are you outgoing or reserved? Do you like working on abstract problems that require analytical thinking? Do you have strong communication skills? Do you prefer structured environments where you know precisely what is expected of you? Do you like to train or teach people? Do you enjoy helping others solve personal problems? Do you value humanitarian work or are you more salary-driven? Do you like working independently or as part of a team? The answers to these questions can help you to narrow down the programs that suit you best.

Examine and compare course requirements for different majors from different colleges. Most college websites include detailed information about programs of study. Many include curriculum and course requirements, career outcomes and statistics, and possible internship opportunities. This information might make a possible major or college stand out.



Try a free college search engine. Big Future (bigfuture.org) allows you to search for colleges by program or degree, location, size, and more.



Finding Your Ideal Campus

- TYPE OF INSTITUTION:** Is the school a college or a university, public or private, two-year, four-year, religious, military or technical? Does the campus focus on pre-professional programs, cooperatives, or liberal arts?
- SIZE:** How many students are full-time? How many commute? Are there resident graduate students? What is the average undergraduate class size?
- DEMOGRAPHICS:** What percentage of students are from New England? Is diversity embraced on the campus? What is the gender ratio?
- LOCATION:** Think about how access to a city could impact your experience. Is the campus urban, rural or somewhere in between with access to both? How far is the nearest internship, clinical affiliation, or volunteer site for your major?
- CURRICULUM:** Are there a variety of majors to choose from? Even if you've selected a major, will there be an opportunity to experience different types of elective courses?
- PROXIMITY TO HOME:** Do you want to stay close to your family and friends or would you be comfortable coming home only twice a year? How will the distance impact the cost of attendance?
- ACTIVITIES:** Does the campus offer sports, fine arts, or other extracurricular activities that are important to you? Is there easy access to off-campus programs?
- OUTCOMES:** What is the graduation rate? How many students with your intended major are employed within six months of graduation? What percentage of students successfully repay student loans? Visit nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator for answers to some of these questions.
- COSTS:** What are the billable costs (tuition, fees, room and board) as well as the indirect costs (books, transportation, supplies, etc.)? How could financial aid help you manage these costs?
- ADMISSIONS POLICY:** Is the school "need-blind" or "need-sensitive?" If a school is "need-blind" then it will make an admissions decision without regard to your family's ability to pay. If the school is "need-sensitive," your family's ability to pay is taken into consideration as part of the admissions process.



Academic Support Services

Although students work hard on “getting in” to college, the real work starts once you “get in”. Colleges offer a variety of services and resources to support student academic success. But just as no two colleges are alike, no two academic support programs are alike. Do research and make sure a school offers the support services you will need to be successful. Types of offerings may include:

- Drop-in or scheduled one-on-one subject matter tutoring
- Writing support centers
- Math support centers
- Study skills tips, tools or workshops

Special Campus Programs to Consider

- **Honors programs** – Colleges can invite students who meet certain academic criteria to enter an honors program. These programs offer a small cohort of students the opportunity to take accelerated and challenging classes. Other benefits can include priority registration, honors housing, and greater potential for research opportunities.
- **Internships** – The opportunity to gain professional experience while potentially earning academic credit. These are often unpaid and can range from one semester to an entire academic year.
- **Co-ops** – These programs allow students to alternate between traditional classes and workplace opportunity a semester at a time. Co-ops are related to the student's major and are often paid, and might extend the length of a bachelor's program.
- **Study Away** – Study away programs allow students to take classes in a different state or internationally. Colleges may also offer short-term travel programs during breaks. To learn more about international programs, visit ccisabroad.org.
- **Bachelors to Masters programs** – Upon graduation, these programs allow students to transition immediately from a bachelor's program to a graduate program. Bachelors to Masters programs can also shorten the total years a student needs to be in school, often called 3-2 or 3-3 programs. Such programs are most common in engineering, business, social work, education and nursing.
- **Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) programs** – ROTC prepares a college student to become an officer in the U.S. military after graduation. ROTC programs offer some scholarships but students compete nationally for this money.

Do You Have an IEP or a 504 Plan?

ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students with an IEP or 504 plan in high school face a new challenge when entering college, they must learn an entirely new system of educational laws and how to advocate for themselves. First and foremost, there are no IEP or 504 Plans in college. Rather, to receive accommodations in college, a student must initiate the accommodations request process by self-identifying with the college's Accessibility Services office and providing appropriate documentation. The specific reasonable accommodations are determined through an interactive process between the student and Accessibility Services.

Who should connect with Accessibility Services on a college campus?

Any student with learning differences, physical, medical, emotional or psychiatric disabilities who believes this disability could impact their ability to achieve their academic potential and maximize their educational experience.

Possible questions to ask Accessibility Services before choosing a college?

- What criteria or documentation is required to qualify for accommodations? If testing is needed, who will pay for it?
- What adaptive technologies are available, and who pays for it?
- What type of medical and psychiatric services are available on or near campus? Is there a limit to counseling/health visits per year?
- Does the college offer a transitional summer program to help new students acclimate to school?
- When is the best time for a student to start the accessibility services application process?

Do I have to disclose I have a disability on my application?

No, you do not have to disclose. However, if you feel it is part of your "story" and you want to share, you can disclose. Some students choose to disclose it either in their personal essay or short answer space on their admissions application.

Can a college deny my admission because I have a disability?

No. If you meet the requirements for admission, a college may not deny your admission simply because you have a disability.

Do I have to inform a college that I have a disability once I am admitted?

No. However, if you want the school to provide an accommodation, then yes! A student must identify to the accessibility services office as having a disability.

For more information, visit nclid.org.

SAT and ACT

Q: How do colleges use standardized admission tests?

A: In recruitment: Some colleges publish an average score range or scores of previously admitted students as a guide for prospective applicants.

In admission decisions: While colleges report using a combination of factors in determining admission including grades, course rigor, and recommendations, many colleges use SAT or ACT scores to help in the application review process.

In awarding scholarships: Some colleges use SAT or ACT test scores in combination with GPA and other factors to award their institutional merit aid. Search a college's website to understand how they use SAT or ACT scores in awarding scholarships.

Q: What does "Superscoring" mean?

A: "Superscoring" is the process some colleges use to consider SAT or ACT scores. Schools take the highest section scores across all the dates you took the SAT or ACT and add them together to give you the highest possible combined total score. Check with each college to learn their score policy.

Q: Do colleges have a preference for SAT vs. ACT? How do they compare scores from the two tests?

A: Colleges have no preference: Every college that accepts the SAT accepts the ACT and both tests are viewed equally. To compare the scores from the two tests so students can be evaluated fairly, colleges use a concordance table. Doing so allows a college to see what a particular score on the SAT is equal to on the ACT. To convert your test score, go to either collegeboard.org or act.org to use the conversion tools.

In their words: "Either is fine with us, and we don't have a feeling that either favors students with any particular profile."
- Marlyn McGrath-Lewis, Director of Admissions at Harvard College, *New York Times*.

Q: What does it mean if a college states they are "test optional?"

A: "Test optional" is just that – you decide whether you wish to submit your scores: There are more than 1,000 test-optional colleges in the U.S., and the trend is growing. For a full list, visit fairtest.org.

Q: If scores are not "required" but "optional," should I send my scores or not?

A: In their words: "It's simple. If you think your scores are an accurate representation of your ability, feel free to submit them. If you feel they are not, don't. You won't be penalized." - Wake Forest University



SAT Subject Tests: Some colleges require two or three SAT Subject Tests for admission. The subject tests fall into five general areas: English, history, mathematics, sciences, and languages. For more information on subject tests, visit collegeboard.org.

COVID-19 and Standardized Testing

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the way students across the United States could access standardized college admission testing (SAT & ACT). Canceled test dates, limited site or seat availability, and sudden site closures have become common. Though this may feel extremely stressful and frustrating, please don't panic. Colleges understand and are adjusting to this "new normal". Here is what you need to know:

What if I can't get a test date and never take the SAT or ACT this year?

Many colleges – including highly selective ones – have announced that they will be "test-optional" or "test-flexible" for this year's applicants (class of 2021). For an updated list go to [fairtest.org](https://www.fairtest.org) click on their link for "Colleges and Universities Temporarily Waiving ACT/SAT Requirements for 2020 Admissions Only".

I only took the SAT once! Do you need to take the SAT more than once to get a good score?

According to College Board: *Of the total number of students who took the SAT first as juniors and then retook it as seniors, 55% saw a marked improvement in their scores, 35% saw a drop in their scores and 10% saw no change.*

So yes, some students can see an increase in their scores, however, a larger factor in a score increase is time spent studying between tests (see below). So if you spend time studying before your one test date, you will set yourself up to get a solid score on your one and only test opportunity.

My SAT score is strong, with all these schools going "test optional" what should I do?

Send them! Just because a college has gone test optional, it doesn't mean they are 'test blind'. Favorable scores, if sent, will be viewed and noted to help paint the full academic picture of a student. For students who choose not to send scores, they are choosing to only highlight their GPA or rigor.

Preparing for Standardized Tests

Studying for the SAT makes a difference. A 2017 study of 250,000 students completed by The College Board found that studying for the SAT for **20 hours through Khan Academy** is associated with an **average score gain of 115 points**, nearly double the gain for students who do not use Khan Academy.



SAT STUDY GUIDE
[khanacademy.org](https://www.khanacademy.org)

- Sample questions - Free
- Phone App: "Daily Practice for the New SAT" - Free



ACT STUDY GUIDE
[act.org](https://www.act.org)

- Sample questions - Free
- Downloadable study guide - Free



Should I take the "optional" essay portion?

Many 4-year colleges no longer require the SAT Essay for admission; however, some still do. To see which colleges require the SAT Essay, go to collegeboard.org.

Taking the Tour

Schedule your visit. Visit at a time when there will be someone available to meet with you to give you a tour of campus.

Try the food and see a residence hall. Remember, the campus will be your second home. You want to make sure it's a good fit.

Collect materials. Pick up student newspapers and activity calendars to get a sense of what campus life is really like.

Reflect and write. Jot down a few notes to capture your impression of the campus immediately after the tour.

Questions to Ask Student Tour Guides and Other Current Students:

- Do many students go home on the weekend?
- What did you do last weekend on campus?
- What types of activities are you involved in on campus?
- How accessible are professors outside of class?
- What type of tutoring or support services are available on campus?

It's how you ask your questions that will be the difference between receiving a rehearsed answer and a helpful one!



COVID-19 & Virtual Campus Opportunities

COVID-19 has prevented many students from visiting college campuses in-person. However, colleges still want students to 'visit'. Colleges have embraced change and tapped into their creativity to provide new options for students to get to know their campuses.

VIRTUAL TOURS

Virtual tours allow families to save money and visit schools near and far. These are a great way to get a sense of the campus layout and 'visit' a few buildings, like the dining hall, the library, and residence halls. Use websites like campustours.com, youvisit.com, or a college's website to begin a campus tour from the comfort of your couch!

INFORMATION SESSIONS

Before COVID-19, colleges held regular in-person information sessions. Today, many of these sessions have moved to virtual platforms. This is a great way to hear about majors, special programs, admission requirements, and updates or changes to their admissions process due to COVID-19.

VIRTUAL STUDENT PANELS

These events can help you learn about a campus and its culture. Panels may focus on specific college departments, for example "meet the school of engineering faculty and students" or be more broad like "Ask a Student" panels. Both are great opportunities to converse with current students.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Nearly every college has an account on social media sites. Often student run, these accounts show happenings on campus and feature different information than what you might read on the college website.

Whether you meet in person at a college fair or virtually through an online event or one-on-one chat, take the opportunity to follow-up with an admission representative by mailing them a "thank-you" note. This helps them remember your meeting and will help you stand out amongst your peers for having excellent business etiquette!



Get to Know Your Admissions Representative

Who are admission representatives? They are the face of any college. They interact with prospective students to provide information about the college and programs of study, guide students through the application process, and evaluate students by reviewing applications for admission. And, they all want to work with students!

Why should I connect with an admissions representative? You will want to get on their radar and let them know you are interested in their school, while utilizing their expertise about their campus and its specific admission process. There are so many ways to get to know a campus, but they only have a few ways to get to know you. Take advantage of any face time (in person or virtual) you can get with a college admission representative to become the “face” of your own application.

Ways to Meet Your Admission Representative

<p>Attend a college fair – for a list of regional in-person or virtual college fairs, go to neacac.org</p>	<p>Visit the campus – meet with admissions when you are visiting the campus for a tour or event</p>	<p>Call or email – have a question about your major, internships, or the admissions process? Just ask!</p>	<p>Meet at your high school – ask your school counselor for dates and times colleges are visiting your high school</p>
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How do I find the NH admission representative for a particular college? Most colleges have a “meet the team” page on their admission webpage. Sometimes they identify what area of the country they cover. If the college website does not have this, simply call the admissions office and ask for the contact information of the admission representative for the NH territory.

When can I contact an admission representative? Anytime! Never hesitate to reach out to an admissions representative. Many students start making these connections junior year of high school while attending college fairs, during campus tours, or when the representatives visit their high school.

What questions should I ask? Any topic is fine, whether you want more information about a particular major, internship opportunities, or their perspective on the types of courses you should take senior year to be competitive at their school. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

1. Do you offer many courses in large lecture halls or in small classroom settings?
2. Do you require internships or co-ops? What types of opportunities are available for my major?
3. What information do you use to award scholarships? GPA? SAT or ACT? Both?
4. How easy is it to change my major? Can I enter undecided and then choose a major? What about changing to a more competitive major like nursing, engineering, physical therapy, or pharmacy?



“Demonstrated interest” is a term used to describe how interested an applicant is in enrolling in a particular college. A college can see this interest in a variety of ways: did the student take a tour, attend a virtual information session, or send an email to introduce themselves to their admission representative. It is important to note that demonstrated interest is a “soft” quality that does not replace academic qualifications. However, for very selective schools, demonstrated interest can be a factor in admissions, but will not carry more weight than GPA, the essay, or activities.



The College Résumé

Joe College

100 High School Lane
 New Hampshire 03000
 (603) 225-6612
 joecollege@nhheaf.org

PROFILE

Energetic, hard-working student skilled in computer software and art. Specific interest and knowledge in graphic design.

ACADEMICS

Any High School, Town, New Hampshire
 High School Diploma, expected June 2021
 • Top 20% of class
 • GPA: 3.2 (out of 4.0)
 • SAT: EBRW: 530, Math: 610
 • National Honor Society, 2018 - present

ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Varsity Baseball Team, 2017 – present
 Team Captain, 2020
 2016 State Championship Team Member
- Robotics Club, 2017 - present
 President, 2019 - 2020
 Coordinated 3rd Annual "Learn About Careers in Robotics" conference
- Student Council
 President, 2020 - 2021
 Coordinated Community Service Day

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Apple Store, Town, NH 2019 – present
 Genius at Genius Bar
- Greater Chamber of Commerce, Town, NH - 2019 - present
 Graphic Design Intern
 Creator, Online Graphics Library
- Animal Haven, Town, NH - 2017 – present
 Volunteer and annual Cleanup Day organizer
 Lead, Website Redesign Committee

The college résumé focuses on your academic achievements, extracurricular activities, and personal interests. Creating a résumé is your chance to list everything you have accomplished throughout your high school career. Keep in mind that while this résumé can supplement your application, you should still fill in everything that's required on the application itself, unless directed otherwise.

List your extracurricular, volunteer, and community activities.

Highlight experiences that relate to your intended major or reveal consistent work experience.

College Athletics

Incorporating college athletics into your college search adds an additional element when choosing the right college for you. Begin identifying college athletic programs in your sophomore or junior year of high school, adhering to all NCAA guidelines to ensure eligibility. Visit eligibilitycenter.org for all NCAA rules and regulations.

QUESTIONS TO ASK DURING RECRUITMENT:

- **What positions will I play on your team?** Understand that the coaching staff may decide to utilize your talents in a new position. What is the roster's depth chart at your possible positions?
- **Who currently plays in my position?** If there is a former All-American in the position, you may want to take that into consideration. When will he/she graduate? Will you realistically have the opportunity to play on this campus?
- **Will college coaches notice me?** Why wait for them to find you? Be proactive! Remember to fill out a student athlete information form on the college's athletic website, where offered.
- **What should I send to college coaches?**
 - High school transcript
 - Athletic résumé
 - Game or practice video (upon request)
 - Season schedule



Email us for a **FREE** copy of our Student Athlete Guide at collegeplanning@nhheaf.org.

OTHER FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN YOUR DECISION:

- **What are my responsibilities off the field?** Am I required to maintain a certain weight? Do I have to attend study hours? Will I participate in off-season training?
- **What are my personal goals?** Would I choose this campus if I were not playing a sport? Does the team have a successful history? Is the team well supported by the college and community?
- **What are my scholarship opportunities?** Are athletic scholarships available? Where do you stand on the recruiting list? Are you eligible for partial or full scholarships? Are there other financial aid options available for student-athletes?



In an effort to provide clarity to students and parents making decisions regarding the 2020-2021 academic year, the NCAA Eligibility Center is providing additional guidance for distance, e-learning or hybrid options made available by schools with NCAA-approved core courses. To learn more about the NCAA Eligibility Center COVID-19 Response go to eligibilitycenter.org.

Preparing to Apply

Types of Admission

Colleges typically provide prospective students with a few admissions options, each with its own deadline and requirements. Investigate each option offered by the colleges of your choice and choose which works best for you.

Early Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply early (usually between October 1 and December 1)• If accepted, student is OBLIGATED TO ATTEND	Early Action: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply early and find out admission status early• Student is not obligated to attend if accepted	Regular Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Meet fixed deadline to be considered for admission	Rolling Admission: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Applications reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis• Applications accepted until class has been filled
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Note: Certain majors within a college may have priority deadlines (ex. nursing).

PROS & CONS OF APPLYING EARLY DECISION (ED)

Pros

- ED applicants can demonstrate interest and enthusiasm to their top choice college.
- Statistics show that at some colleges, ED applicants are accepted at a higher rate than regular decision applicants. Example: In 2017, Harvard accepted 14.5% of ED applicants compared to 3.3% of regular decision applicants (*according to Wall Street Journal*).

Cons

- You will not have a chance to receive or compare financial aid offers from any other colleges.
- The ED applicant pool tends to include highly qualified applicants with strong transcripts and SAT or ACT scores available early in fall of senior year. Some students present as stronger applicants after retaking the SAT or ACT in the fall and sending in their first semester fall grades.

Auditions and Portfolios

AUDITION TIPS:

The process of applying to a performing arts program is often more extensive than for other academic programs. Remember that demonstrating your potential is often more important than your current technical expertise. Keep an open mind about any criticism received; constructive criticism provides an opportunity for improvement. Be certain to ask your high school teachers or professional instructors for additional guidance.

PORTFOLIO PRESENTATION TIPS:

- The requirements vary by school and program.
- Pay careful attention to the detailed instructions regarding portfolio submission for each college and provide EXACTLY what is asked.
- Digital submission of your portfolio is required by most college programs – even if you visit campus for an in-person review.
- Many schools use SlideRoom or similar apps for you to upload your work (be aware that there may be a cost for submission to each school).
- If you don't have as much experience in your area of interest, explore programs that place more emphasis on your grades than your portfolio.



National Portfolio Days: Experienced art college representatives will review your portfolio and offer presentation critique. Your portfolio can include finished pieces or works in progress.

Visit nationalportfolioday.org for a list of campuses hosting these free events.

The 2-2-2 Approach

PUTTING YOUR COLLEGE LIST TOGETHER

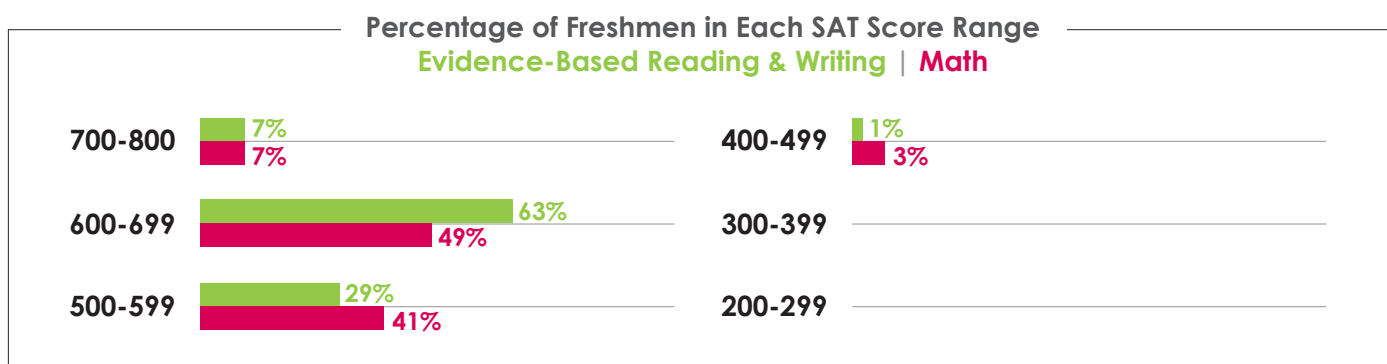
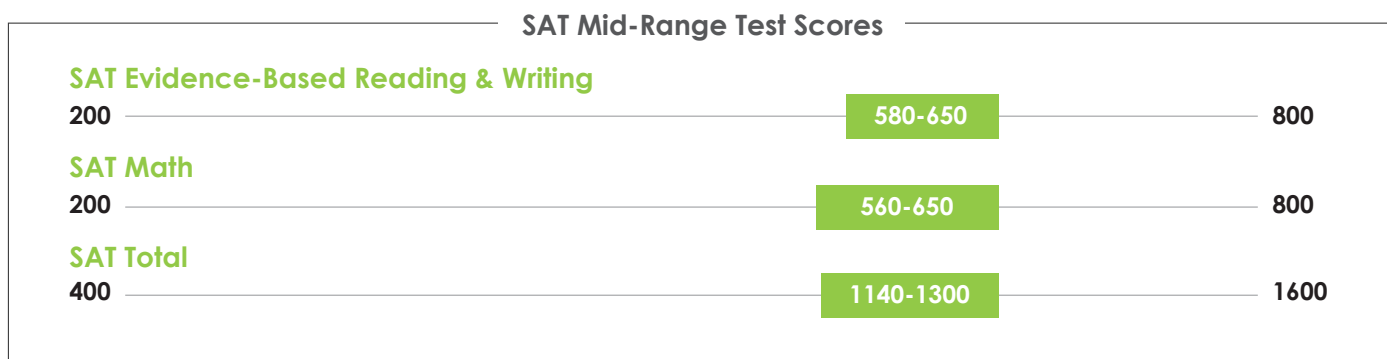
When you are choosing your list of colleges, we recommend that you select a diverse group of schools in an effort to have a balanced approach to your process. Typically we recommend applying to between six and eight colleges. In our office, we talk about the 2-2-2 approach. In this approach, we separate the schools into three categories – probable, target, and reach – and suggest finding two schools in each category.

Probable: Your cumulative GPA and SAT scores are higher than the average student admitted

Target: Your cumulative GPA and SAT scores are on par with the average student admitted

Reach: Your cumulative GPA and SAT scores are slightly below the average student admitted, but not so much lower that you do not think you could be accepted

Use charts like these, available on Bigfuture.org, to help you access if a school is a probable, target or reach.



Apply to at least one college that is financially affordable for your family in case the financial aid awards from other colleges do not provide enough aid to make it possible for you to attend. This college, known as a “financial safety” school, should be one that you like and would want to attend.



The Common App

WHAT IS THE COMMON APP?

The Common App is an online admission application that is accepted by over 900 colleges and universities. Participating schools accept the Common Application in place of their own institutional application. Students complete one form and send it to all their chosen participating colleges. Using this form is time-saving and simplifies the application process. The Common Application and a list of participating schools can be found at commonapp.org.

Notify your school counselor when applying online; they will assist you in forwarding your transcript and the necessary materials to the college. Most colleges will not consider your application complete until all pieces have been received.

To make the application process easier, have the following information in front of you when starting your application:

- ❑ **High school transcript** – official or unofficial for individual course and grade information
- ❑ **Activities list** - extra curricular, volunteer and work experience
- ❑ **SAT and/or ACT** - scores for each test, date(s) test were taken or will be taken
- ❑ **Parent/step-parent/legal guardian information** – including occupation, employment status, and education level. If applicable, which college(s) they attended and how many degrees they have earned.

ACTIVITY SECTION: TIPS

- Common App limits students to ten (10) activities.
- "Activities include arts, athletics, clubs, employment, personal commitments, volunteer opportunities and other pursuits." In other words, pretty much anything pursued outside the classroom qualifies as an activity. For example, having a part-time job or a family responsibility such as caring for a younger sibling is considered an activity on Common App.
- Quality over quantity. There is no judgment made about the number of activities you have. The college is simply trying to get an idea of what you are doing when you are not at school. Some students will participate in one activity (i.e. karate, dance etc.) multiple hours a week. While other students will participate in a variety of different activities throughout the school year but spend less time overall completing those activities.
- What if you have more than 10 activities to include? You will need to make a cut. Think strategically. If you are heavy in "Athletics" type activities, you may want to highlight other types of interests.

Were you practicing to perform in a play or concert, or was your sports season cut short or canceled? Don't worry about it! Everyone is in the same boat; don't forget to highlight the 'little' things that you may have done. Did you babysit for a neighbor once a week so they could go to work? Did you tutor a neighbor in Spanish or help 'home school' your younger siblings? Take this opportunity to highlight what you were able to do rather than focus on what you could not do!



COVID-19 and the College Application

Although this college application season may feel different, colleges will evaluate students based on the same criteria they have in the past with the same goal in mind. In the most basic terms, colleges read your application to see if you are a good fit (academically and socially) for their campus and vice versa, if they are a good fit for you. To determine that, colleges need to collect the same information they have in years past. So to both acknowledge the COVID-19 uniqueness to this year and still collect pertinent information, the over 900 colleges using the Common App have agreed to the following statement and plan put out by Common App:

"We (Common App) want to provide colleges with the information they need, with the goal of having students answer COVID-19 questions only once while using the rest of the application as they would have before to share their interests and perspectives beyond COVID-19."

This COVID-19 question allows for students to share any COVID-19 concerns while still providing the other college application information. It is important to note that this question is 100% optional and a student's application will not be negatively impacted if this question is left blank.

Students will be asked the following:

- Do you wish to share anything on this topic? Y/N
- If you answer YES to the above question, you will be given space to provide the following information: Community disruptions such as COVID-19 and natural disasters can have deep and long-lasting impacts. If you need it, this space is yours to describe those impacts. Colleges care about the effects on your health and well-being, safety, family circumstances, future plans, and education, including access to reliable technology and quiet study spaces. (250 word limit)

How Colleges Evaluate Applications

In the review of applicants, the focus is on your academic record (high school transcript) as demonstrated by performance, achievement, and rigor. While each college may have its own set of admissions criteria, many will also consider your college essay, extracurricular activities, standardized tests and letters of recommendation.

How do colleges know how to understand my high school transcript?

Every high school transcript is accompanied by a School Profile. This profile acts as a "decoder" of your transcript; it allows colleges to understand a specific high school's grade point system, weighting (or unweighting) system, rigor of courses offered, competency systems etc. Colleges have been reading transcripts from public schools, private schools, home school and even international schools for decades. They are very comfortable using school profiles to decode the information.



How will colleges see the changes my school made due to COVID-19? School counselors will have space on the Common App counselor forms to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on your school community. Such things they can note include:

- Grading scales and policies
- Instructional methods
- Testing requirements
- Graduation requirements
- Schedules and course offerings
- Your academic calendar

The College Essay

Who reads your college essay? Oftentimes, no more than one to three admission representatives read both your essay and application. It is not a large committee that will sit around “critiquing” your essay.

Who does not read your college essay? The dean, professors from your desired major, and English/creative writing professors will not read your essay. You do not need to be the best ‘creative writer’ nor do you have to impress the dean with how much you already know about your intended major.

How important is the college essay? As with most of the college application process, there is no absolute answer. Colleges may weigh aspects of the application package differently, but in very few cases will a student be accepted or rejected because of just the essay. Typically, the essay becomes most important for marginal candidates. While a fantastic essay cannot make up for poor high school grades, it can be a factor when an admission decision could go either way.

Do I choose the topic? While most colleges present students with a choice of topics, some will allow you to choose your own topic. What you choose to write about will reveal your creativity, personality, and value system to the admissions committee.

What are colleges looking for in a college admissions essay? Colleges are typically looking for four main elements:

- A sample of the applicant's writing ability
- To get a sense of “who” the student is as a person
- To see if the student would be a “good fit” for their college
- To assess the applicant's ability to think critically

Why is demonstrating critical thinking important? Demonstrating critical thinking can show a college that an applicant is ready to engage in a higher learning environment. No matter a student's intended major, every college student is expected to learn to think critically about the subjects they are studying, research they are conducting, and projects they are preparing.

How can I demonstrate critical thinking? No matter the topic you choose to write about, take time in your essay to show some analysis or understanding of the topic in a bigger sense. Have you learned a lesson, do you plan to act differently or make changes because of something you observed or experienced? Is what you have experienced similar to a bigger issue within society? Don't just TELL a story about an experience, but rather SHOW how you have learned from or thought critically about your experience.

Essay Tips

DO:

Engage the reader. Capture interest with a strong intro or unique perspective on an everyday topic or event.

Own it. Be authentic.

Tell a story. Rather than ‘list’ all your accomplishments, tell a story that illustrates one or two positive character traits or accomplishments.

Proofread. Give yourself time to ‘step away’ and come back and read it with fresh eyes.

DON'T:

Rely on a thesaurus. It is okay to demonstrate your use of language, but don't just ‘soup’ up words to impress if everyday language would sound more authentic.

Focus on the “Three D's.” Death, Divorce and Depression. If you do choose one of these topics, focus on how the events changed you or helped you grow.

Use slang. Do not use ‘text’ language (ex. lol, btw, or omg).

Offend the reader. It is okay to share your opinions, just be sure not to judge or disparage those who don't share your opinions.

Exploring Ways to Pay



Know the Cost of Applying to College

Applying to college can be costly, but having a good understanding of what money you will need and when you will need it can give you time to budget and save. Below is a list of different expenses associated with the college application process and when you may experience them.

STANDARDIZED TESTING EXPENSES *(Fall and/or spring junior year and fall senior year of high school)*

Both the SAT and the ACT have fees attached to registering and taking the test as well as sending scores to individual colleges.

SAT - \$52, with essay **\$68** (per test), **\$12** per each score report sent to a college*

ACT - \$55, with essay **\$70** (per test), **\$13** per each score report sent to a college*

COLLEGE VISITS & TOURS *(Spring junior and fall senior year of high school)*

Although touring a campus is “free,” if you need to travel any significant distance to visit the school, you may need to budget money to make the trip. Expenses can include gas, airfare, hotel stays, and eating multiple meals on the road.

COLLEGE APPLICATION FEES *(Fall or winter senior year of high school)*

Application fees are the cost to apply to a given school. These fees can range from **\$25 to \$100 per school**.* Some colleges offer fee waivers to students who use their institutional application or took a tour.

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION FEES *(Fall or winter senior year of high school)*

First, remember that the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is always just that: **FREE**. However, over 400 colleges in the country require an EXTRA financial aid form called the CSS Profile®. The CSS Profile® form is not free. To see a full list of schools requiring this form go to cssprofile.org.

CSS PROFILE® - \$25 for first school, **\$16** for each additional school*

ADMISSION DEPOSIT *(Spring senior year of high school)*

Once you have decided what college you will attend, you must pay a deposit to confirm your attendance and ‘save’ your space at the school; this is called an Admission Deposit*. The Admission Deposit can range from **\$100 to upwards of \$500**. This fee is due by **May 1st**.

**If securing your admission deposit will be difficult, contact the college’s admissions office immediately to see what they advise.*

HOUSING DEPOSIT *(Spring senior year of high school)*

If you are going to be living on campus at your college of choice, you will need to pay a deposit to ‘save’ your space with the housing department. **This fee is in addition to the admission deposit**. It is set by the school itself and can range from **\$100 to \$400**.

***Some fee waivers available for those who qualify for Free & Reduced Priced Lunch. Ask your counselor for details.**

Awarding Financial Aid

The financial aid process may seem complicated, but in its simplest form, it comes down to understanding five steps:

1. You must complete the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)** after October 1 for the next academic year. Check with each of the colleges to which you apply for specific deadlines. Be certain to ask if any other supplemental forms (such as the **CSS PROFILE® Application**) are required in addition to the FAFSA.
2. After completing the FAFSA, your information is submitted to the U.S. Department of Education. The Department calculates, based on a complex methodology, your ability to pay for the cost of attendance. Your ability to pay is called the **EXPECTED FAMILY CONTRIBUTION (EFC)**. The factors used in determining the EFC include: parent and student annual income and assets, family size, number of family members attending college, taxes paid, and more.
3. The Department of Education sends the FAFSA information, including the EFC, to every school you list on the FAFSA. The financial aid office subtracts your EFC from the **COST OF ATTENDANCE (COA)** to determine your eligibility for financial aid.
4. The financial aid office calculates, based on the campus' available resources, the amount of financial aid the institution is able to offer the family (*understand that just because a student is eligible for a certain amount of financial aid does not mean the student is guaranteed to receive that amount. The unmet need is called the GAP*).
5. The financial aid office sends the student an **AWARD** that details the amount of financial aid the college is able to offer the student. The aid is broken into four categories: loans, grants, scholarships, and work-study.



Public colleges receive some funding from the state whereas private colleges do not.

Private colleges typically have a higher price tag, but don't let that number dissuade you from applying as there may be grants and scholarships to help decrease the overall cost.

EXAMPLE A		EXAMPLE B	
Cost of Attendance	\$55,000	Cost of Attendance	\$33,000
- EFC	\$15,000	- EFC	\$15,000
= Eligibility for Aid	\$40,000	= Eligibility for Aid	\$18,000
- Aid Offered*	\$24,500	- Aid Offered*	\$9,500
= GAP	\$15,500	= GAP	\$8,500
* aid often includes federal student loans		* aid often includes federal student loans	

FILE YOUR FINANCIAL AID FORMS ONLINE:

FAFSA on the Web
studentaid.gov

CSS Profile® Online
cssprofile.org

GAP + EFC = the amount to be paid by the family in order to cover college expenses

Example A = \$30,500

Example B = \$23,500

Applying for Scholarships

It is estimated that \$7.4 billion in scholarships are available each year. Remember, every dollar you earn through scholarships is a dollar you do not have to borrow!



Start your scholarship search in the school counseling office at your high school.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL SOURCES

These scholarships often have local and regional residency requirements making a student's "pool of competition" smaller and chances of winning higher.

New Hampshire Charitable Foundation (nhcf.org) is the largest source of private scholarship aid in New Hampshire. They award over \$6 million in scholarships to New Hampshire students annually. The student does not need to attend a college in New Hampshire to receive a scholarship, but they do have to be a New Hampshire resident to apply for a scholarship. Each year approximately 1 in 5 applicants receive an award. Below are their programs and deadlines:

Statewide Student Aid Program

Enrolling in 4-year degree program (due April 2021)

Career Aid to Technical Students Program

Enrolling in 2-year degree program (due June 2021)

The Center for College Planning offers a database of scholarships for New Hampshire students. Check it out at: nhheaf.org/scholarship-search.asp.

NATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP SOURCES

These scholarships are available to students from all over the country making a student's "pool of competition" very large and chances of winning lower.

Fastweb.com – This free matching service for scholarships offers a database of over 3 billion in national scholarships.

Collegeboard.org – This national scholarship search engine can help you find scholarships and other financial aid from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly \$6 billion.

Scholarships.com – This database holds over 3.5 million national scholarships and provides nearly \$19 billion to help students pay for college. Download their app to track scholarships!

Scholarshipowl.com – This website streamlines the application process by having students complete one application. Once complete, the matching begins.

Scholarships360.org – Rather than a database of billions of scholarships, this site selects quality scholarship opportunities and profiles a select number of reputable scholarships.

iefa.org - Scholarship opportunities for international students.

For scholarship alerts and other college planning tips, follow The NHHEAF Network on Facebook and Twitter or subscribe to our FREE monthly e-newsletter, the Varsity Letter.

Ways to Reduce College Costs

BEFORE YOU GO

1. **Take running start courses.** Students have the opportunity to take community colleges courses for high school and college credit for a discounted rate. Also because of the state's scholarship program, students can take up to two STEM courses for free. Go to ccsnh.edu for more information.
2. **Start at a community college.** Consider starting at a community college and transfer earned credits to a participating 4-year college. Check out nhtransfer.org and dualnh.com for more information and options.
3. **Ask about health insurance.** Some colleges require students to have major medical insurance while attending their college. If the college has this requirement, they may also build in the cost for purchasing major medical insurance through their institution into the tuition bill. Check your bill closely, if you do not need health insurance, ask the college to waive this cost with proof of outside insurance.
4. **Consider return on investment.** Research the average salary for your desired profession and then look at the amount of debt you will be incurring at the schools you have chosen. Is there one school that will allow you a more comfortable loan repayment considering your future earning potential? To explore future career earnings, go to careeronestop.org.
5. **Work while going to college.** Do you want to work and go to school part-time? Some employers offer tuition reimbursement benefits for employees.

ONCE ON CAMPUS

1. **Rent or borrow textbooks.** From buying to renting, new or used, hard bound or e-books, explore all your textbook options and choose the best economical fit for you. Check out these great sites: chegg.com, amazon.com, and textbooks.com.
2. **Use the college library resources.** Often class textbooks are in the library's collection. Speak with a librarian to see if your required books are available.
3. **Apply to become a resident advisor/assistant (RA).** This is a student who is responsible for supervising and assisting other, typically younger, students who live in a residence hall. Many RAs are compensated with discounted or even free room and board.
4. **Choose the right meal plan.** There are several meal plans to choose from. Remember that if you do not eat the food, you do not get reimbursed. Choose the meal plan that is realistic for you.
5. **Leave your car at home.** Parking permits, gas, and car maintenance quickly add up. Need to get somewhere? Explore campus and public transportation options.
6. **Continue applying for scholarships once you are in college.** Check with the financial aid office or the office of your college major, often times there are college or major specific scholarships available.



TUITION BREAK FOR NEW ENGLAND RESIDENTS

Tuition discounts on over 800 undergraduate and graduate degree programs offered at 82 colleges and universities in New England. Through the New England Regional Student Program (NERSP), New England students pay a significantly reduced out-of-state tuition rate at New England public campuses when they enroll in certain academic programs not available at public colleges and universities in their home states. For more information, check out The New England Board of Higher Education online at nebhe.org.

Online Resources

COLLEGE SAVINGS, FINANCIAL AID, AND SCHOLARSHIPS

Financial Aid Forms

studentaid.gov - File the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

cssprofile.org - File the CSS Profile® financial aid form required by certain private colleges.

One-Stop Financial Aid Site

studentaid.gov – Learn about:

- Federal Direct & PLUS Loan programs
- Loan repayment and forgiveness options
- Your existing federal loan balance

Private Loan Programs

nhheaf.org/pdfs/handouts/Possible_Private_Loan_Programs.pdf - While it is recommended that you maximize federal loans first, this list provides private loan lenders and contact information.

College and Your Taxes

irs.gov/credits-deductions/individuals - Federal tax benefits for higher education.

Budgeting & Saving for College

savingforcollege.com - Provides objective information about Section 529 plans and Coverdell education savings plans.

nhjumpstart.org - Statewide organization offering resources to encourage personal financial literacy for young adults in the Granite State.

360financialliteracy.org - Helpful tools and tips to help on the path to financial stability.

NHHEAF CALCULATORS:

nhheaf.org/calculators.asp

College Cost • College Savings • Borrower Benefits Consolidation Calculator • College Loan Repayment FICO Score Estimator

ADMISSIONS & CAREER PLANNING

SAT & ACT Info

khanacademy.org - Official free SAT® test prep website.

collegeboard.org - Official website of the SAT Test.

act.org - Official website of the ACT Test.

fairtest.org - Lists all test-optional postsecondary schools

College Applications Online

commonapp.org - Official website for the Common Application used for over 900 institutions.

Career Surveys & Information

careeronestop.org - Sponsored by the US Dept. of Labor. Research salary information by occupation and location.

nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator - Sponsored by the US Dept. of Education to research colleges.

mynextmove.org - Sponsored by the US Dept. of Labor for career exploration tools, job analysis and questionnaires.

College Fairs & Events

neacac.org - Regional college fair dates, times, and locations.

nacacnet.org - National college fair dates, times and locations.

destinationcollege.org - NHHEAF's college convention for NH high school juniors & parents.

International Colleges

Canadian Schools

univcan.ca

campusstarter.com

educanada.ca

studyincanada.com

United Kingdom Schools

study-uk.britishcouncil.org

britishcouncil.us/study-uk

thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk

ucas.com/how-it-all-works/international

VISA Information

canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/services/study-canada

gov.uk/browse/visas-immigration/student-visas

College Application Checklist

	College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4	College 5	College 6
ADMISSIONS	Name of school					
	Do they use Common App, or their own app?					
	Do they require SAT or ACT scores?					
	Admission application deadline					
	Application fee					
FINANCIAL AID FORMS	Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Deadline					
	CSS Profile® needed? Deadline					
	Miscellaneous					



There are TWO major deadlines for each college. The admission deadline is for submitting your application to the college. The financial aid deadline is for submitting required financial aid forms. These two deadlines can be the same or different depending on the college. So always check both!



THE
NHHEAF
NETWORK



Thinking About College?

The NHHEAF Network's
Center for College Planning
is Proud to Bring New Hampshire
Free College Planning
Programming and Events

- **Workshops and College Planning Presentations**
- **Special Events Including Destination CollegeSM & Discover U**
- **Individual College Counseling Appointments**
- **Assistance with FAFSA Filing**
- **Monthly College Planning e-Newsletters**
- **Toll-Free College Planning Hotline**
- **Early College Awareness Programs Featuring our College Planning Bear Mascot**

