

COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCEDURE

PREPARING YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATIONS FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL

This booklet provides the step-by-step procedure for completing your college applications. The process will go smoothly if you read and follow these directions.

How do you obtain an application for college?

1. Apply online: directly at the university's website, www.commonapp.org, or www.eduinonline.com (if applicable). Be sure to print any supplemental forms and provide them to teachers and/or the counseling office at the appropriate time. Also, print your confirmation page/email when your application is complete.
2. Write or call the college for an application, or download one as soon as possible. Websites, addresses, and telephone numbers are available from directories, catalogs, and School Counseling office resource books.
3. Maryland State Colleges, Universities, and Community College applications are located in the School Counseling Reading Room on the shelf to the left of the door. All private and other out-of-state college applications must be obtained by the student.

How do you complete the college application packet?

1. Each application has the directions for completion somewhere on the document.
2. Most of the application is to be filled out by the applicant. In the event that your application has a portion which is addressed to the principal or secondary school counselor, it is **Your Responsibility** to bring that portion to the School Counseling Office for completion. Follow the directions which are outlined in the following sections.
3. Prepare your part of the application form **completely, accurately, and neatly**. Remember to include your letters of recommendation, your Activity Log, and the application fee (the application fee is non-refundable). Be sure to complete all required signatures. Mail your application packet in sufficient time so that it is received before the application deadline date. Call a week or so after the application has been mailed to make sure it has been received.

How do you obtain a copy of your academic record or transcript?

The transcript is the part of your college application which is a copy of your scholastic record starting with grade 9 to the present.

1. In order to obtain your transcript, you must fill out a Transcript Request Form. Your parent(s) must sign this release unless your age is 18 or older. This is a federal law. The form is found in the School Counseling Office. Requests for hand delivery of official transcripts will not be honored.
2. The portions of the application packet which should be brought to the School Counseling Secretary should include:
 - a. The completed transcript request form with a parent's signature. Be sure to designate where the transcript is to be mailed.
 - b. The portion of the application which is to be completed by the Principal or school counselor. (In most cases, this is a separate sheet. In the event that it is attached to the application, a photocopy will be made for the counselor to complete and the application will be returned to you for mailing).
 - c. The School Counseling Recommendation Request Form and an Activity Log which your counselor will use to write your letter of recommendation. They will be kept on file; however, it may be wise to make copies for your own records. Both forms are located in the School Counseling Office.
 - d. A stamped envelope addressed to the college or university. Do not include your return address on the envelope as we will use the school's return address. Be sure there is sufficient postage to ensure delivery as the school cannot add postage for you.

Be sure the packet is complete. **DO NOT** bring in an application without the transcript release form, an envelope with two stamps addressed to each college, and any materials the counselor will need to complete along with your Activity Log and Counselor Recommendation Request form (if a recommendation from the counselor is required).

The School Counseling Secretary will photocopy your transcript, attach all materials you have presented, and give the package to the counselor for completion and final review before mailing. The counselor has **TEN (10) school days** to complete the package before it is mailed. Please watch your deadline dates.

NOTICE OF DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER 1st / DECEMBER 1st APPLICATIONS:

Due to the large number of requests for transcripts and recommendation letters needed to meet the November 1st and December 1st deadlines, **students must submit all requests to the School Counseling Office by October 1 for November 1 deadlines, and November 1 for December 1 deadlines. Any requests received between November 1st and December 1st will be processed within 10 school days after December 1.**

Notes of Importance:

- a. At mid-year, your grades are automatically sent to all the colleges that you are still considering. You do not have to make a separate request.
- b. After you graduate, one final transcript will be sent to the college of your choice. Your counselor will obtain the above information in May by requesting that you fill out a form indicating your decision.
- c. Three transcripts will be sent free of charge; however, any beyond that number will cost \$2.00 each.
- d. Please observe all deadline dates. We process hundreds of applications. ****Please allow TEN (10) school days for transcript requests and recommendation letters to be processed.**

What are the types of financial aid?

Grants or scholarships – This type of aid does not have to be repaid. Grants usually are awarded on the basis of need alone, while scholarship recipients may have to meet other criteria such as academic achievement.

Loans - These usually have lower interest rates than commercial loans, but must be repaid generally after you have graduated or left college.

Student employment or work aid - This may mean a job that the college located for you or employment you found on your own.

How do you apply for financial aid?

1. When you write or e-mail the admissions office of each college for an application, ask specifically about financial aid in your letter. Request any necessary forms and directions, and request literature on any scholarships which may be available. Read the scholarship section carefully and follow the directions.
2. Make sure you know what form(s) you have to file and follow the guidelines given by the college.
3. **By December**, go to <http://pin.ed.gov> to request a PIN that you'll need for your next step (see below).
4. As early as possible after January 1, 2010, complete and mail the Federal Application for Student Aid Form (FAFSA). The FAFSA can be completed on-line using the website www.fafsa.ed.gov. The State of Maryland's deadline is **March 31**.
5. The CSS/PROFILE will be used by the colleges, universities, and scholarship programs that award non-federal funds. The earlier you register the PROFILE the better. As soon as you are sure about the schools to which you are applying, you should complete your PROFILE registration form and mail it to CSS. PROFILE provides, in one comprehensive packet, the forms and questions that must be completed

to apply for private aid at each of the schools that use the PROFILE Service. They may be mailed as early as September 15, 2009. In summary, all colleges require the FAFSA, some colleges and universities also require the CSS/PROFILE which should be mailed four to six weeks before the earliest school or scholarship deadline. PROFILE Registration Forms are available in the School Counseling Office.

6. A financial aid workshop will be offered at Franklin High School in late November/early December to answer questions about the financial aid process and the various forms.
7. If the colleges to which you are applying have their own aid applications, complete them as early as possible. Meet college deadlines.
8. Check with your counselor, school library, or public library for books, articles, and leaflets about financial aid. You may pick up some leads on student aid programs for which you are qualified because of your:
 - ◆ academic achievement
 - ◆ volunteerism
 - ◆ religious affiliation
 - ◆ ethnic or racial heritage
 - ◆ community activities
 - ◆ organization memberships
 - ◆ artistic talents, athletic ability, or other special skills
 - ◆ career plans or proposed field of study
 - ◆ parents, employers, and organizational affiliations
9. Parents, employers, or the Armed Forces may provide leads, too. The Armed Forces have many programs which include providing federal monies for education.
10. If the college of your choice and your parents can't meet the expenses for your college tuition, you may have to borrow. Educate yourself about loans.
11. Local scholarship applications will be available through the School Counseling Office in February, 2010. These are one-time awards. The awards will be made at the annual Awards Assembly in the school auditorium prior to graduation.
12. Maryland State Scholarship information will be available in the School Counseling Office in December. Instructions will be given at that time.
13. Colleges make awards of federal monies based upon completion of the appropriate federal aid form(s) that are filed by your parents in January. Non-federal monies are distributed by the CSS/PROFILE FORMS which are available in the School Counseling Office and need to be mailed ASAP.

APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

How to apply: A checklist

- ◆ Start the process early. Learn all you can about financial aid. Investigate every source.
- ◆ Request admission and financial aid information from the colleges you are considering.

- ◆ Know what applications you have to file and when you have to file them.
- ◆ Apply for admission and financial aid. Give yourself plenty of time to complete and mail the application before the earliest deadline.
- ◆ Determine if the college or university you are seeking requires the PROFILE. If it does, complete the PROFILE Form as soon as possible (at least 6 weeks before the scholarship or financial deadline).
- ◆ Complete the FAFSA form accurately and legibly. Mail it (completing it on-line is recommended) **as soon as possible** after January 1, 2010.
- ◆ Enclose the correct processing fee.
- ◆ If the colleges to which you are applying have their own separate financial aid applications, complete them as early as possible.
- ◆ Respond promptly to requests for additional information.
- ◆ Keep copies of all your documents.
- ◆ Ask questions. If you need help locating sources of aid--ask. If you don't understand something---ask. Asking questions will not make you seem stupid; not asking a question that is important could cost you money.

How do you send your college entrance exam scores to colleges?

1. When you take your SAT/ACT, designate colleges that you want to receive your scores. Results are to be **SENT DIRECTLY** from the testing service to the colleges you list.
2. Our school code for SAT and ACT is **210-870**.
3. Additional score reports can be requested directly from the testing service used.

How do you request a letter of recommendation?

If letters of recommendation are requested, use the Recommendation Request Form and attach an Activity Log to each request. Both forms are available in the School Counseling Office. Allow teachers sufficient time (at least 10 days) to complete a recommendation on your behalf. Do not expect teachers to drop everything because your deadline is the next day. Remember that teachers are *not required* to write recommendations. Please remember to thank them for their time.

Visiting Colleges and Universities

It is important for students to visit college and university campuses prior to applying for admission. Up to 3 excused absences are allowed for this purpose. Students should bring a note to Mrs. Brashears in the main office 48 hours prior to the planned college visit. The note should include the following:

- ◆ The name of the college or university
- ◆ The date(s) of the proposed absence
- ◆ The signature of a parent or guardian

College Visitation at Franklin High School

Various college and university representatives visit Franklin High School during the fall semester. Check the senior newsletter for dates and times. In order to attend a scheduled seminar, students must sign up in the School Counseling Office and acquire a special pass. It is the student's responsibility to see that the pass is signed by the excusing teacher at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. A sample pass follows:

SCHOOL COUNSELING COLLEGE PASS

STUDENT _____

DATE _____ PERIOD _____

COLLEGE _____

Students MUST sign up in the School Counseling Office 24 hours in advance.

Students are required to make up all missed work.

Teacher Approval
24 Hours in Advance

Writing the Essay

For many students, writing a college application essay is the most nerve-wracking part of the whole admissions process. On a single sheet of paper, you may have to strike just the right balance between ambition, wit, and creativity.

In spite of the high anxiety generated by the essay assignment, directors of admission at several local colleges and universities claim that essays rarely have the power to make or break an applicant.

The essay serves as the vehicle to give the college admission officer some insight into the applicant's personality. Please see attachment for helpful hints on writing your college essay.

How important is the Interview?

The college interview may or may not be a significant factor for admission at the college of your choice.

All colleges do not work the same. There may even be different admission requirements for different schools within a university. Both the college and the student need to do a good job of exploring each other.

Dr. Frank Burnett, Executive Director of NACAC (National Association of College Admission Counselors), advises students to ask the colleges in which they are interested how they prioritize the following factors that influence the admission decision:

1. Academic achievement: Grade point average and the level of courses taken.
2. Test scores: SAT and/or ACT, depending on the school.
3. Essay or writing sample: This element seems to be gaining importance in the admission process.
4. Interview: Some smaller schools may use them as recruitment tools. The exact weight of the interview varies from school to school.

If an interview is requested, by all means be well prepared. Interviewing is a learned skill. Get a book from the library on the interview process and brush up on the skills of a winning interview.

STUDENTS' RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES **IN THE COLLEGE ADMISSIONS PROCESS**

Several important rights and responsibilities rest squarely with students. It is important that students and their parents understand these rights and live up to their responsibilities. The National Association of College Admissions Counselors has developed a statement that summarizes your rights and responsibilities.

Students' Rights include:

1. Receiving full information from colleges and universities about their admissions, financial aid, and scholarship policies.
2. Not responding to an offer of admission and/or financial aid until you have heard from all colleges and universities to which you have applied or by the May 1 deadline, whichever comes earlier. (It may be necessary to request an extension in writing.)

Students' Responsibilities include:

1. Making sure you understand the admissions, financial aid, and scholarship policies of the colleges and universities where you plan to apply. This includes being aware of deadlines, restrictions, etc.
2. Completing and submitting all materials that are required for application and meeting all deadlines.
3. Following the application procedures of your high school.
4. Notifying each college or university that admits you whether you are accepting or rejecting their offer. You should make these notifications as soon as you have heard from all the colleges where you applied or by May 1, whichever is earlier.
5. Confirming your intention to enroll and submitting a deposit to only one college or university by its required notification date, usually May 1.

SAMPLE LETTER
(can also be modified to an e-mail format)

Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Date

Director of Admissions
Name of College
Address
City, State, Zip Code

To the Director of Admissions:

I am a senior at Franklin High School in Reisterstown, Maryland, and I am interested in knowing more about your school. I would appreciate it if you would send me the following information:

- ◆ a general bulletin explaining entrance requirements, college costs, course offerings, and facilities available
- ◆ an application for admission
- ◆ financial aid information
- ◆ information related to (your special interests such as academic majors and extra curricular activities)

Sincerely,

(Your signature)
(Your name typed or printed)

Helpful Hints in Choosing a College

You want to select the college that will best satisfy your needs, interests, lifestyle, and personal and professional goals. A good "match" between you and your college will be the key to your success and happiness over the next four years. To help you make that difficult final decision, the following "helpful hints" may assist you in determining which college is right for you.

1. Visit Every College

Visit (or revisit) every college you are considering preferably during a week when classes are in session. We recommend that you tour the campus, attend one or two classes, meet with the faculty in the department which interests you, eat in the dining hall, and, perhaps most importantly, talk with current students. Students are the best sources of information about the college; they will talk honestly and knowledgeably about the social life, academic program, atmosphere on campus, dorm life, and other topics that are important to you. If possible, plan to spend one night in a college dormitory. The overnight visit will enable you to chat informally with students, get the "feel" of the campus, and "sample" life as a student. The Admissions Office at most colleges will arrange an overnight visit for you, either before or after acceptance. Remember that you are not just choosing a place to go to school; you are also choosing a home for the next four years. This "home" must satisfy your personal as well as academic needs. It should be a place where you feel comfortable, relaxed, involved, and challenged.

2. Consider Actual Cost Rather Than "Sticker Price."

Unfortunately, some students base their college choice on the "sticker price" - the full cost for tuition, fees, room and board - rather than on the *actual* cost of attending. Most colleges offer significant amounts of financial aid, including non-repayable grants, to students with demonstrated need. In addition, colleges frequently offer installment payment plans, low interest loans, academic scholarships, jobs on campus, and other forms of aid to students, irrespective of need. Aid is also available from other sources, including community groups and the state. When all forms of aid are considered, a college education, either private or public, can be surprisingly affordable. Apply for aid (even if you don't think you qualify) and consider *actual* cost when making your final decision.

3. Contact An Enrolled Student

Try to contact a student from your high school or home town who is enrolled at each college you are considering. If you don't know anyone at a particular college, ask the Admissions Office to provide you with the name, address, and phone number of a student you could contact. Write or call the student and ask those "tough" questions you've been holding back - questions about campus life, difficulty of courses, dorm life, relations between students and professors, and general satisfaction of students with the college. Remember, no question is dumb if the answer is important to you.

4. Get Answers to Key Questions

You may have key questions which would be better answered by individuals at the college other than current students. Some questions might include:

- Does the college have an active Career Center to help me prepare for a successful job search after graduation?
- What percentage of graduates are accepted to graduate, medical, or law school?
- What help is available if I have difficulty with English, math, or another subject?
- Will I have ready access to computers and other equipment on campus?
- What is the typical class size, and how much individual attention will I receive?
- What intramural or inter-college sports are available?
- What percentage of the students engage in athletics?
- What is the "atmosphere" on campus? friendly? relaxed? competitive? pressured?
- What is the faculty like? caring? friendly? aloof? rigid?
- Do professors or graduate students teach freshman courses?

Of course, your questions and concerns may be different from those listed above, but be sure that all of your questions are answered fully before making your final decision. The Admissions Office and other college offices will, in most cases, be happy to provide you with the information you want.

5. Trust Your Instincts

Selecting a college may be one of the first major decisions which you have had to make. It is important for you to make an "informed decision." You will also find, however, that your ultimate choice will be partially emotional, based on a feeling about where you will best fit in and be most happy. Even among colleges which are similar in size, quality, and academic offerings, each is unique in atmosphere, student makeup, and general "feel." In the final analysis, one college will most likely "feel right" to you. You will be able to easily imagine yourself being a student there. ***Go with your instincts.***

6. Check And Stick To Deadlines

While most reputable colleges subscribe to the May 1st Candidates' Reply Date for students to make their final commitment to a college, some colleges, assign dorm rooms in the order that the reservation deposits are received. *If you know you want to attend a particular college and have a specific dorm preference, you may wish to consider indicating your intention to enroll prior to May 1st.* Remember, however, that May 1st is officially the date when a decision must be made. Do not let colleges press you for a "premature" decision. Act only when you are comfortable with your decision.

Best of luck with your final decision. Our wish is for you to choose a college that best meets your academic and personal needs.

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Writing Your College Essay

Introduction

If you are like most students, you see the college essay as another hurdle you must jump on the way to being accepted to the college of your choice. In fact, the essay is not a hurdle but *a rare opportunity*; it's a chance for you to "talk" directly to the college's admissions committee and to help them "see" you as a thinking and feeling person, rather than simply a set of impersonal statistics. Except for the interview, it is your only chance to share your thoughts, insights, and opinions; to highlight your accomplishments; and to convey your maturity and outlook on life. If you see the college essay in this way - as an opportunity - then it is clearly worth the effort to put some extra time, thought, and energy into writing it.

Purpose Of The Essay

The college essay is extremely important for two major reasons:

1. It enables the college admissions office to evaluate your communication skills. Through your essay they can assess the clarity of your thinking and your ability to convey your thoughts in written form.
2. It enables the college admissions office to learn more about you as a person, beyond what grades and SAT scores convey. A well-written essay can speak worlds about your attitudes, feelings, personal qualities, imagination, and creativity. For the admissions staff, it adds another important piece to the puzzle because it distinguishes you as an individual, different from any other student who is applying.

Choosing a Topic

The choice of a topic is frequently not an issue, because many colleges and universities will either give you a topic to write about or present several rather specific topics from which you must choose. Other colleges may simply "suggest" broad general topics or give you total freedom to write about something that interests or concerns you. Regardless of whether you must respond to a prescribed topic or come up with your own, here are a few general hints about the most effective way to approach your topic:

- Narrow your topic and try to be as specific and illustrative as possible.
- Relatedly, the easiest topic to write about is yourself. No one knows more about you than you. Since one important purpose of the essay is self-revelation, it is no place to be shy or modest, although you should not exaggerate. If you chose to write about yourself, remember that little incidents and facts are often the most revealing of character and outlook.
- Do not be afraid to write about something you think is a little different. A unique topic or approach is often refreshing to a college admissions officer who has been reading applications all day. Further, an unusual off-beat essay is an excellent way to show your creativity.

Preparing to Write

Before actually sitting down to write a first draft of your essay, spend some time organizing your thoughts. Develop a framework for your essay so it will have a smooth and logical progression from

one idea or incident to the next. Consider your purpose in writing, what you want to convey, and the tone that you think is most appropriate for the topic. Decide on a style that is comfortable for you, not one that you think the college admission committee prefers. Finally, remember that organizing your thoughts and deciding your framework does not mean you must be overly rigid at the start; leave the room for flexibility and creativity as you actually begin writing.

Writing the Essay

You do not have to get it right the first time! Instead, write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on content - communicating your thoughts. Then set it aside for a day or two, reread it with a fresh perspective, and make any necessary changes. This is also the point at which you should consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling, and tone. Once you have rewritten your first draft, you may wish to try it out on your family, friends, English teacher, or school counselor. While the final product and final "voice" should be yours, they may be able to offer helpful suggestions for technical or other improvements.

Do's and Don'ts

Within this general outline for actually writing the essay there are some "do's" and "don'ts" which I would like to highlight:

Do's

- Do think "small" and write about something you know about.
- Do reveal yourself in your writing.
- Do show rather than tell. By giving examples and illustrating your topic, you help bring it to life.
- Do write in your own "voice" and style.

Don'ts

- Don't write what you think others want to read.
- Don't exaggerate or write to impress
- Don't use flowery, inflated, or pretentious styles.
- Don't neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
- Don't ramble - say what you have to say and conclude.

Your college essay, along with your high school record, standardized test scores, and extracurricular involvement, will provide the basis upon which the college makes its admissions decision. A thoughtful, well-written essay can affect, in a very positive way, that final decision. Keep this in mind and take full advantage of the opportunity which the college essay affords you.

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