

Where Should I Begin?

Admissions Test Requirements

1. First, if you are pursuing a college prep diploma and you think you want to attend a four year college as a freshman next year if you haven't taken the ACT or SAT, you need to do that this fall as soon as possible. Or if you have taken one or more of these and you are not satisfied with your scores, you need to retake at least one of them. It takes 5-6 weeks for your scores to be sent to the colleges of your choice and in most cases your application will not be considered complete until these have arrived at the college admission offices. Register to take either/both the SAT or ACT before you proceed further.

2. If you think you want to attend a two year traditional college or a technical college next year, you need to research the junior, two-year, community or technical colleges that interest you to determine what the test requirements are for each. In some cases they allow alternative testing options such as College Placement Exams, the Compass, or the ASSET. If they allow alternative testing contact the college to determine when and how that is done. If they require the SAT or ACT, register for one/both of these before you proceed further. However, if you are attending local two year institutions, particularly if you haven't finished Algebra 2B yet, you may wish to wait until December or January to take these. It usually isn't necessary to apply quite as early to two year institutions as compared to four year ones. Regardless of when you choose to take the SAT or ACT, get the dates down and be certain to apply by the deadline so you will not have to pay a late fee.

3. If you take the SAT or ACT, be certain to use our school code 113160 and to use your option to have your scores sent to the colleges of your choice. While we will be happy to include them if we have them when you request a transcript, most colleges want the official scores sent directly from the companies.

Researching Colleges and Scholarships

1. The next steps must be considered research from a "two-prong" approach if you want A.) Admission to College and B.) Hope to Receive Scholarships. Some of this you will complete throughout the fall, and other parts you will continue throughout the spring. It is like having an unpaid part-time job to do this. It takes time and it isn't easy.

2. **Get ready** for your research by finding an old expandable folder, notebook, or perhaps a wall calendar. If you use the expandable folder or notebook make some dividers using old folders or dividers, one for each month October- June. If you use the wall calendar, don't put it on the wall, but use it as a type of filing system.

3. As you find colleges that interest you or scholarship information for which you may be eligible, you will need to download applications and deadlines, and file in your folder, notebook, or calendar by the deadlines they are due. Note whether the deadline is to be postmarked or received there. Note everything that is needed for the application to be considered complete (i.e. transcript, test scores, sometimes essay, teacher recommendation, counselor report, or immunizations). While on each college website, after researching admissions requirements also spend time there researching scholarships under Financial Aid or Scholarship links.

A. Researching Your College

1. First go to Gacollege411 and create an account if you do not already have one. Put your password somewhere safe so you can find it later. Begin your college research by using <http://gacollege411> to link to colleges, both private and public within the state of Georgia. Out-of-state colleges can be researched by going to their websites directly.
2. Spend some time looking at majors offered, size, admissions requirements or current student profile, tuition and other costs, room and board availability, freshmen programs, activities, and other items of interest. Think about the size of the school, how close or far away it is, what the average class size is, etc. If you know what major you would like to pursue, look for answers to questions that are pertinent to those programs such as: 1) What kinds of jobs have students graduating from here that have majored in "Geology" been able to get? 2) Is the teaching program accredited? 3) What opportunities for clinical experience are there for nursing? 4) How hard is it to get into the Art program, or the "School of Journalism," or the "School of Business?"
3. Try to be honest with yourself about why a certain college appeals to you. Ask yourself questions like: 1) Am I choosing this college for me or because my parents went to this college? 2) Am I choosing this college because I think I have to go somewhere that is well known, or has a certain prestige factor? 3) Am I choosing this college because my boy or girlfriend will be there? 4) Am I choosing this college because they have big intercollegiate games? 5) Am I choosing this college because I want to live in a city?
4. If you know what major interest you or you have toyed around with some possible majors, try to be honest with yourself and ask questions like: 1) Do I want to be an engineer because I know what they do, how they use science and math every day, and I like that sort of thing? or Do I want to be an engineer because it sounds cool, my dad thinks I need to go into that although I don't know what it is, or I want to make a lot of money? 2) I like things in the health world, but I can't see myself being a doctor or a nurse, so what else is out there in the health care field? 3) I would like to major in interior design, but does that mean I will have to live in a big city or will there be opportunities in my little small town? 4) What do people with a degree in Sociology actually do for a job?
5. Look at what you want to major in and the school you want to attend and try to ask yourself these questions: 1) If I don't get scholarships at this school, and borrow money to go there, will my job based on what I want to major in, likely be one that I can make enough money to pay off my student loans in a reasonable time or will I be loan poor forever. 2) Will I have to work 30-40 hours a week to be able to go to this school? If so, will I have time to enjoy the activities I want to participate in when I chose to go there? Is there another school where I can afford to go so that I can work 10-20 hours a week and enjoy more things that are going on at the school? 3) While I may have always wanted to go to this certain out of state college, would it be more sensible for me cost wise to go to a Georgia school on HOPE and perhaps later go to my favorite place for a Masters or advanced degree? 4) If I do go to an out-of-state college, what will the transportation cost for home visits be?
6. Then research answers to some other questions such as: 1) Are freshmen required to live on campus or can they bring their vehicles? 2) What is parking like, (how far away from dorm, an additional fee?/ alternative transportation?), 3) How are students advised and how do they register? 4) Is there a student center and what is it like? 5) Is there a learning center or a place to get tutoring help? 6) What are the clubs on campus? Are there intramurals? 7) What intercollegiate teams are there? 8) Is there a gym or work out facility for all students?
7. Most very undecided college prep students apply to 4-8 colleges unless it is decided that they will be attending a local junior college the first year or more. Some students have one favorite place that they know to be their first choice and two-three viable

second choices. Others have one that is their all time favorite, but money will be the determining factor if they are accepted as to whether they will be able to attend or not. It isn't advisable for any student only to "put their eggs in one basket." On the other hand, strong students that really have their hearts set on that "one place" just shouldn't assume that there is "no way." Basically, you have to "put yourself out there with all of your credentials" and see what happens. If accepted, communicate with the financial aid office of the college, let them know your wishes, apply for any financial aid and scholarships they recommend, and then "wait and see" however, seriously pursue other schools of interests and scholarships in the meantime.

8. Remember that colleges usually have admissions fees that must accompany the applications. These can add up. Narrow your choices accordingly.

9. Download applications of the colleges on your final list. While on those websites, download scholarship applications as well. Make note of the deadlines they are due, supporting documentation required, and file them in your notebook, folder, or calendar file by the month they are due.

10. Occasionally private colleges or exclusive ones will ask students to complete a financial aid form in the fall even though they also want them to complete the FAFSA that comes out in January. Sometimes it is a "home made" document from the institution. In some cases, they require something called the PROFILE. It is a type of financial aid reporting form that is processed for a fee by a company that reports the information to the college earlier than the FAFSA information comes out. Most colleges do not ask for it and unless required or suggested by a college, is not likely something in which to invest.

B. Researching for Scholarships

Colleges

1. Some of the best scholarship money comes from the colleges themselves. They often have endowments that fund these. Occasionally, when an admissions office sees a promising student's application, they automatically send the student scholarship information, however, that is not always the case. Thus the "two prong approach" previously mentioned. When you research your colleges of interest, spend some time also looking at the financial aid and scholarship opportunities on their websites. Many schools have separate applications to apply for scholarships there. A student should not apply for a scholarship at the college without first having applied for admission to the college.

2. Ask the Financial Aid office of the college if there are other scholarships that you can apply for that are not on the website. Tell them what you want to major in and ask them if there are special scholarships for those majors. For instance if you are a fine arts major, there may be auditions for scholarships, or portfolio requirements. In some cases they may have engineering money, or forgivable loans for certain fields. Ask about service or leadership scholarships.

3. Download college scholarship applications, make note of dates due, supporting documentation required, and file them in your notebook, folder or calendar by month due. As a rule college scholarship applications have earlier due dates rather than later scholarship deadlines.

Other Scholarships Sources that might be available that we may but are not likely to hear about

1. Free services such as Fastweb.com.

2. General Web Search for Scholarships

3. Corporate Scholarships like Coca-Cola, Best Buy, etc.

4. Company Scholarships where your parents work- Sometimes they have scholarship opportunities for dependents of their workers sponsored by those companies.

5. Civic or professional organizations in which your parents are members.
6. Professional Organizations on base/ Education Office on base may have scholarship opportunities/ Even the Commissary has been known to have one.
7. Alumni Associations of the College 1) you wish to attend whether your parents attended there or not, or 2) your parents attended and you also wish to go
8. Professional Organizations that involve the field you wish to go into. This includes student organizations like FFA, etc.
9. Military Organizations -Scholarships for dependents of certain organizations, specific assignments, (i.e. Submarine, etc.)
10. Businesses, banks, etc. that you or your parents frequent...(i.e. Federal Credit Union, etc.)
11. Essay contests
12. Download any applications or contact information, make note of due dates, and required supporting documentation. File in folder, notebook or calendar by month.

Scholarship Opportunities that are reported WRHS

1. There is no rhyme or reason to the scholarships opportunities that are sent to the high school counselors' office. However, information on any that come will be sent out to the Senior AO teachers on Tuesdays throughout the year. They literally "dribble in" during the year. Sometimes colleges send their scholarship information, but more often not, so the counselor's office is not the best source for those. The colleges, their websites, and their financial aid offices are the best source for those.

2. Many students erroneously think they simply have to make an appointment with the counselor, get a handful of scholarship applications tailored specifically for them, and that have pretty sure payoffs, walk out, fill them out one afternoon, and pretty much expect to get them. Truthfully, the process of getting free money, scholarship money, is messy, with gaps and no assurances, requiring a lot of research, a lot of work, often not yielding a lot of payoff unless a student has exemplary grades in very, very rigorous courses AND high SAT/ACT scores, or the student has a very special talent or ability. Yet no student will get scholarships unless they apply for them.

2. Occasionally some scholarships from some of the sources in the next category above dribble in to WRHS. These may be from a couple of base professional organizations, but not all of them. They may come from one or two Alumni college organizations, but there are many more out there. Certain civic organizations may let us know about their scholarships, but not all. Certain clubs and businesses may, but not all. In reality, we get relatively little compared to what is really out there, but what we have, we tell seniors about.

3. As the scholarships come in, the counselor will send out a short description to the Senior AO teachers to announce on Tuesdays. Then a student worker prepares a file of the information on each scholarship for a folder that is kept in the filing cabinet in the Office Career Center Conference Room on A Hall. Seniors may look through the file folders in the Career Center Conference Room for additional information before or after school, or whenever their teachers allow them to visit the Career Center.

4. If scholarship applications are sent for a specific scholarship, copies are prepared and placed in the file folder that is in the Career Center. If there are no applications sent, but contact information or internet links are listed, copies of that information will be available. For those, students will have to utilize the contact information to request the applications.

5. Students may take any application or information sheet applicable to them from the

files. They should take that home and file by month due in the calendar file, notebook, or folder.

Now that I have some of these college applications and scholarship applications downloaded, printed, or collected and filed in my calendar, notebook or folder, what is next?

1. Remember that researching scholarships is ongoing throughout the year, so the calendar file will be added to accordingly as you continue to research.
2. Look at all of the applications that are due for the month, prioritize them, note any supporting documentation that is required. Begin working on them every week. 1) For instance if you have to submit a transcript with them, be certain to request those any Monday-Wednesday by signing the clipboard at the front office counter. Pick them up the following Thursday from Mrs. Gore. Each cost \$2.00. Leave sealed so they will be considered official. 2) If a teacher or counselor recommendation is required, ask them at least two weeks in advance, and give them any necessary forms AND a copy of a Senior Information Sheet or resume. If they are to be in a sealed envelope with their names signed across the back, let them know. Ask them personally. Do not e-mail them or ask your parents to do it. When you ask them, ask them to please keep a copy of the recommendation on their computers or to give you extra copies if they prefer, to use with other scholarship/college applications 3) If an application requires immunizations, usually the colleges want you to have your immunizations listed on their own specific forms, however, if not, you may request a copy of yours from Mrs. Gore when you request transcripts.
3. Do not ask a teacher, counselor, or Mrs. Gore, to do something in less than a week. They have many, many other tasks to accomplish. All people want to help you, but you have to be fair with them. Remember the statement, "A failure on your part to plan does not constitute an emergency on their parts."
4. Watch for holidays or breaks and back up your request for items above accordingly. For instance, many college deadlines are January 1 and the school isn't open then. If you need a transcript for that due date, you should request it the Monday-Wednesday before Christmas Holidays. If you need a teacher or counselor recommendation for a date that occurs during a holiday, ask at least a week or two before. Remember that on occasion we have professional days when you have an additional holiday, however, we are typically in meetings or classes all day, and not available to work on these items.
5. Counselor Reports, School Reports, or School Profiles- Treat these like Counselor Recommendations. Often there is a spot, perhaps a question that is asked; something like, "Do you have other remarks that you would like to make on behalf of this student?" I do not like to leave this blank. I want in fact to write a short recommendation for you. It shows that 1) you are worth their consideration and 2) that I care. However, in order to do this, the first time, I need two weeks and a Senior Information Sheet or a Resume. After the first one, because I keep it on my computer, a week is enough time.
6. Generally, it is not wise to send supporting documentation with an application unless asked. Most often if it isn't required, it will be thrown away. There may be an occasional exception to this, but there needs to be an unusual situation or circumstance to which there is a need for attention. For instance, if your grades were horrible in the 9th and 10th grades due to some illness, personal crisis, etc., it may be worthwhile for you to submit something to explain the circumstances. Also, if an application requires two teacher recommendations, don't send three.
7. Buy yourself some envelopes that are at least a little larger than regular business sized envelopes. Think "packet" when sending any college application or large

scholarship application. Although you may apply online for some of these, print out the first page or confirmation page at least. Mail page with the supporting documentation that is required. That alerts the college or organization that an electronic file is already open to which this additional documentation relates. Remember to leave any recommendations or transcripts sealed for them to be considered official. Look over the requirements for the application, determine that you have all of the necessary supporting documentation, place all of it in the bigger envelope, secure enough postage, and mail.

8. Watch out for deadlines-Some have to be postmarked by that date....Others have to be received by a certain date. Overnight mail, etc., is very expensive. Remember that for an application to be complete, often everything has to be in by the deadline, even test scores. You can rush some test scores, certain months, however, they still take about 3 weeks to arrive. It also cost extra to do this.