

College Planning

Glossary of Terms

(Helpful Tips Included!)

Academic Reference or Letter of Recommendation – A letter of reference written by a teacher in one of the core subject areas of math, science, English, foreign language or social sciences.

- Eleventh grade students should request letters of recommendations in spring of 11th grade, to allow teachers time to complete letters for the fall.
- It is wise to pick a teacher with whom you have a strong relationship, and/or teaches in the subject areas that you plan to pursue in college.

ACT (*American College Testing*) – A college entrance test that measures English, math, social studies and natural science skills, with an optional writing section. Colleges will accept either SATs or ACTs and like SATs, ACTs are taken in the Winter/Spring of junior year and fall of senior year. For more information or to register for testing, visit www.actstudent.org.

Admissions Counselor – A member of the college admissions office staff that advises and interviews prospective students.

AP (*Advanced Placement*) – College level courses offered to students. Students may take an AP exam after completing the required course to determine eligibility to possibly receive college credit at the college they attend. AP registration will take place through AMSA in March, not the College Board.

Barrons – The name of a publisher that indexes colleges according to degree of admissions competitiveness.

CEEB# – (AMSA's CEEB# is 221349). The College Entrance Examination Board maintains a numbered registry of high schools, colleges, college majors, scholarship programs and test centers. You will need this number for SATs and ACTs.

Class Rank – A numerical designation of where a specific student stands in relation to the total number of students in their class as determined by GPA (i.e. 182 out of 342).

- AMSA does not use class rank, but has the information if it is requested by a scholarship, college or summer program.

College Board – A not-for-profit membership association whose mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. College Board produces the PSAT, SAT and AP exams and the CSS/Financial Aid Profile. See www.collegeboard.org for more information and to register.

Common Application (Common App) – An internet based application that is utilized by a growing number of member colleges and universities. When available, the Common App is suggested.

CSS Profile – A financial aid form that is completed in the senior year and is required by some private colleges and universities. CSS Profile is accessed through College Board and a fee is required to submit the form to colleges.

Early Action – An application made to a college under an early deadline. It is non-binding, meaning that if accepted, the student is not bound to attend and may apply to other colleges if desired.

Early Action Restrictive – An application made to a college under early deadline. It is non-binding if a student is accepted. Students can apply to as many public or international colleges as they want, but they can only apply to one private college.

Early Decision – An application made to a college under an early deadline. It is binding, meaning that if accepted, the student is bound to attend that school and must withdraw all other applications.

FAFSA – (*Free Application for Federal Student Aid*) – A financial aid form that is required by most colleges and universities. It is accessed through the government's website at www.fafsa.ed.gov. There is no charge to submit this form to colleges.

Financial Aid – *There are several types of financial aid.*

Pell Grants – Federal funds that are free money. They do not have to be repaid.

Stafford Students Loans – Federal funds that need to be repaid by the student.

Work Study – Money that the student earns while being employed on campus.

PLUS Loans – Federal funds that are repaid by the parent.

GPA (*Grade Point Average*) - A quantitative average of a student's grades and course levels over their high school career. Weighted GPA takes into account the difficulty level of a course and gives a higher weight to Honors and AP courses. (At AMSA Honors has an added weight of .5 and AP has an added weight of 1.)

Junior Questionnaire – A questionnaire to be filled out by all 11th grade students prior to meeting with their Guidance Counselor for their Junior appointment during the spring of junior year. This personal information is invaluable to the counselors during the college application process.

John & Abigail Adams Scholarship – An award of free tuition to a Massachusetts public college or university based on MCAS scores. Students must score advanced on either math or English MCAS and either proficient or advanced in the other subject. Students must also have a

combined MCAS score that falls in the top 25% of your AMSA graduating class. Science scores are not counted in this scholarship.

Kaplan – A for-profit test preparation company. www.kaplan.com

Mid-Year Report – The counselor will provide an update of the student’s midyear grades and recalculated GPA to the colleges and universities a student has applied to.

Naviance – An internet based software program that is part of AMSA’s College and Career Planning Curriculum. It is utilized by students to better understand their learning style and personality type including strengths and challenges, to investigate career interests and options, and to aid in college planning.

NCAA Clearing House – An initial eligibility clearinghouse where student athletes must register if they wish to play sports at a Division I or II college or university. www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. It is best to research this opportunity in during your 11th grade school year.

Parent Brag Sheet – An internet based form that is completed by AMSA parents of 11th graders to give the student’s Guidance Counselor additional personal information regarding the student. This personal information is invaluable to counselors during the college application process. Parents will be asked to complete this form in the spring of 11th grade and can access the Parent Brag Sheet through their child’s Naviance account.

Petersons – An internet and print based college exploration and test preparation service. www.petersons.com

Princeton Review – An internet and print based college exploration and test preparation service. www.princetonreview.com

PSAT (Preliminary Scholastic Achievement Test) – A test usually taken in the fall of 10th and 11th grade that estimates future SAT results. The Score Report is helpful in identifying areas that may need further practice. When taken in the junior year, it is the qualifying exam for the National Merit Scholarship Program.

Resume – A written resume of a student’s extra-curricular activities including athletics, clubs, music and drama, school publications, student government, honors and awards, community service, research, internships and work experience. This resume is accessed through the student’s Naviance account and is invaluable to the counselor during the college application process. Students will need to complete this before their Junior Appointment.

Rolling Admissions – A college application process where there is no “hard” deadline date for accepting admissions applications (i.e. Jan 1st or March 15th). Applications are usually accepted until the freshmen class is full.

SAT (Scholastic Achievement Test) - A college entrance exam usually taken in the spring of junior year that is separated into reasoning and subject tests.

Reasoning Test – Measures critical reading, mathematical and writing abilities up through 3 years of high school.

Subject Test – Required by some colleges that may request a certain number of tests in specific areas of study. Students should check with colleges of interest to determine if subject tests are required for admission. For information on which subject tests are offered visit <http://sat.collegeboard.com/why-sat>

School Report – A form required by colleges as part of the application. The School Report will be filled out and submitted by the Guidance Counselor.

School Profile – A document, produced by individual high schools, that accompanies a student's transcript. It provides an overview of the community demographics, graduation requirements, mean SAT scores, AP course offerings and test scores, and courses of study offered. The school profile gives the admissions personnel a complete picture of the school and its students.

Scholarships – A grant in funds offered to a student by a college, business or organization. Students must apply for scholarships to receive them and are responsible for finding scholarship opportunities in their community. AMSA will have a list of available scholarships, but students are encouraged to look beyond the list. **It does not cost money to apply for a scholarship.** Beware that if money is requested, then the scholarship is a scam.

Stanley Z. Koplik Certificate of Mastery – An award of a tuition waiver to Massachusetts public colleges and universities based on MCAS performance and additional requirements as outlined in the program materials. www.mass.edu/osfa/programs/koplik.asp

TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) – An internet based exam required by many colleges as an admissions requirement for students who do not speak English as their primary language. www.ets.org/toefl

Transcript – An official document summarizing the courses taken while at AMSA and the grades received from grades 9 through 12.