



College Counseling Manual

2022-2023 School Year

Please note that this Manual will be updated at regular intervals to reflect any changes in the guidelines provided by NACAC and the College Board.

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1. Introduction and Oxbridge Academy College Counseling Philosophy

The college admission process is just that, a process: of learning, of growing up, of self-discovery and, for families as well as students, of transition. Students are faced with life-changing choices and a wide array of opportunities and challenges, and they develop life skills and tools for decision making that will help them build independence with resourcefulness and joy. The Academic Advising, Student Services, and College Counseling (ASC) Department provides support, timely information, and guidance to Oxbridge students and their families throughout this process, from the moment a student enters Oxbridge until they graduate.

All Oxbridge students are assigned a college counselor when they enter the school. The counselor assists students in making appropriate academic choices, in planning their engagement in extracurricular activities, in researching appropriate colleges and postgraduation options, and in successfully completing the college application process.

Our goal is for Oxbridge students to apply to and matriculate at colleges and universities that will provide an excellent “fit” for them, considering academics, extracurricular activities, majors, career opportunities, location, and other important factors. In addition to a primary college counselor, every Oxbridge student also has the support of the Office Coordinator, who guides students regarding NCAA compliance, Dual Enrollment, Florida Bright Futures Eligibility (including maintaining records related to FL Bright Futures community service requirement fulfillment).

ASC college counselors adhere to the following principles as they advise students and parents:

- We provide students with information and guidance about their best options for college, considering each student’s individual academic and extracurricular achievements, interests, needs, career aspirations, and personal preferences.
- We work diligently to keep our knowledge of college admissions trends at the state and national levels current and to maintain relationships with our college admission colleagues.
- We strive to understand the nuances of college admission and to guide students throughout the process.

Most importantly, we believe that, as college counselors, we are advisors for students and families throughout the college admission process, while the driver of this process is the student. It is with this in mind that we have developed this manual. We hope that it can serve as a valuable resource for Oxbridge students, helping them to navigate the college admission process and to work effectively with their counselor as well as the ASC Office obtain the most favorable outcomes possible. **Students are responsible for following the policies and procedures described in this Manual.**

2. MaiaLearning.com

The ASC Department has recently adopted new online software to replace Naviance. This program, MaiaLearning, like Naviance, offers 24/7 access to important information regarding the college preparation and admissions process. It is available to all Oxbridge students from grades 9-12. Through their MaiaLearning Student accounts, students can:

- Take different college exploration and vocational interest tests to explore possible career paths, majors, and colleges.
- Research careers, majors, and colleges.
- Research Oxbridge-specific admission data to determine the level of selectivity of admissions at many different colleges.

In addition, **MaiaLearning is an essential tool for the following tasks:**

- A. Student Survey (CO2023) for 11th Grade College Counseling Family Meeting**– to be completed by Juniors before 11th Grade Family College Planning Meeting. Find it by going to your MaiaLearning account dashboard.
- B. Parent Survey (CO2023) for 11th Grade College Counseling Family Meeting** -(for parents of Juniors) – to be completed by at least one Parent before Junior Family College Planning Meeting. Parents can find this survey in their MaiaLearning account.
- C. Teacher Recommendations** – Several steps in Maia are due by March 1 of the junior year. Students must use their Maia Student account to invite teachers to upload college recommendation letters and forms, which are then sent by their college counselor to all colleges on the **Applying** list. Students complete, via Maia, in spring of junior year, a Teacher Brag Sheet for each teacher writing a recommendation for them.
- D. Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire** – complete by June 1 of junior year. The student's answers to these questions help counselors write letters of recommendation for them.
- E.** Starting August 1 of their senior year, students should **match the Common Application form with their MaiaLearning Account** (instructions appear in the next section).
- F. College counselors use the "Applying" list to send transcripts, teacher recommendations, and other information to colleges** and to track applications and application outcomes.

During Grade 12, students are responsible for keeping their “**Applying**” list up to date by:

- Adding all the colleges they plan to apply to on to the list *at least 30 days* before the college application deadline.
- Indicating the appropriate application plan and deadline under which they will apply.
- Indicating the admission outcome on the list within two or three days after hearing from a college.

Matching MaiaLearning and Common App accounts

The ASC Office Uses the **Applying** list on MaiaLearning to submit transcripts and letters of recommendation to colleges on a student’s behalf, so students must match their Maia account with their Common Application account. This ensures that any materials that are sent by counselors through Maia eDocs are paired with a student’s Common App applications. **Below are the steps to match accounts:**

1. **Log in to Maia Learning and select “Profile” at the top of any page.**
2. **Scroll to the bottom to find Connection Status, click to link your account.**
3. **You will be redirected to Common App, enter your Common App log in and password (if you do not have a Common App account yet you will need to create an account at www.commonapp.org before following these steps).**
4. **Your Maia status will change to “connected” and your CommonApp ID will show on your Maia profile page along with your FERPA Status and Fee Waiver Status.**

[Here is a video that shows how to match Common Application and Maia Accounts](#)
(goes through steps listed above).

College Lists in MaiaLearning

Students will see two lists in their Maia accounts, under “Universities” in the menu on the left-hand side of the page:

- a. **Considering** list, and
- b. **Applying** list.

The **Considering** list is a living, breathing document that students, families, and the student’s counselor can add to throughout the student’s four years at Oxbridge. If a student, family member, or counselor discovers a school that is of interest, they can add the school to the **Considering** list for future reference. There can be as many schools on the **Considering** list as a student wishes to add. While all parties can add schools to the “**Considering List**”, only the student can remove schools. Students will work solely with their **Considering** list from Grade 9 until the summer before Grade 12.

Moving Colleges from Considering List to Applying List

1. Please match your Common App and Maia accounts first! Instructions for this are on previous page.
2. Go to your **Considering** list and click the “Move to Applying” yellow boxes of schools you want to apply to.
3. Go to your **Applying** list and select the Application Type, Term, and Deadline for each college/university on the list. If you are applying to a specific program, indicate the program as well.

It is critical that your **Applying** list remains accurate and up to date. After August 1, as soon as you know you are going to apply to a school, and no later than 30 days before the deadline for which you are applying, you must add the school to your **Applying** list.

This guarantees that your college counselor has adequate time to prepare transcripts, teacher and counselor letters of recommendation, and any additional supporting materials prior to the deadline for which you are applying. If you wish to add a college to your **Applying** list, and it is less than 30 days before the application deadline, you must contact your college counselor to discuss this change to your list. Students cannot remove colleges from their **Applying** lists (only their counselor can).

PLEASE ADD COLLEGES TO YOUR **APPLYING** LIST AT
LEAST 30 DAYS BEFORE THE SELECTED APPLICATION
DEADLINES!

Balanced College Lists

When deciding which schools ultimately make it onto your **Applying** list, it is important that you ensure that your list is balanced with regard to the colleges' admission selectivity.

We recommend that students create a balanced college list by applying to

- at least two **likely (also referred to as safety)** schools - schools where a student is highly likely to be accepted based on grades, test scores, and other subjective application components.
- two or more **possible** schools (schools where, based on grades, test scores, and subjective components, the student may or may not be accepted).
- and one or more **reach** schools (schools where, based on grades, test scores, and subjective components, the student is more likely to be deferred or denied than accepted). Any college with an acceptance rate below 30% should be considered a **reach** school for any student.

3. Student Checklist by Grade

Grade 9:

1. Work on character and career assessments in Maia – in the left-hand menu on your dashboard.
2. Get involved! Find a sport, club, volunteer organization, hobby, etc. that you enjoy and participate regularly.
3. Engage with your teachers in class and beyond; the Oxbridge faculty is one of the best parts of an Oxbridge Academy experience!
4. Consider and submit course requests for sophomore year (in second semester). To maximize college options, pursue the highest level of rigor that is appropriate for you while also having balance for pursuing extracurriculars, having downtime, and maintaining personal wellness.
5. Attend a college visit or two at Oxbridge if you'd like.
6. Fill out community service log and submit a digital copy to mhammett@oapb.org.

Grade 10:

1. Work on character and career assessments in MaiaLearning – in the menu on left-hand side of your dashboard.
2. Stay involved in activities; don't hesitate to try a new activity! Seek leadership roles where appropriate.
3. Take a practice ACT and practice SAT in order to decide which test to focus on throughout the college admission process
4. Meet with your college counselor for family meeting in the spring.
5. Aspiring collegiate athletes: Meet with NCAA coordinator to ensure that student is on track to meet eligibility requirements.

6. Consider and submit course requests for junior year (second semester).
7. Attend college visits at Oxbridge
8. Fill out community service log and submit a digital copy to mhammett@oapb.org

Grade 11:

1. Work on character and career assessments in MaiaLearning – in the menu on left-hand side of your MaiaLearning dashboard.
2. Stay involved and take on leadership roles in activities
3. Take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall
4. Format first draft of extracurricular resume and turn in to your counselor
5. Prepare for and take first SAT or ACT in late fall or early spring
6. Complete Student Survey in Maia
7. Parents: Complete Parent Survey in Maia
8. Teacher recommendation requests (Spring)
9. Submit course requests for senior year
10. Create first draft of college essay and turn in to your counselor
11. Meet with your college counselor for family meeting in the spring
12. Continue taking SAT and/or ACT as needed
13. Attend college visits at Oxbridge
14. Visit college campuses
15. Aspiring collegiate athletes: create draft of athletic resume and share with counselor. Also, meet with NCAA coordinator.
16. Fill out community service log and submit a digital copy to mhammett@oapb.org.

Grade 12:

1. Finalize college application choices and add schools to **Applying** list on Maia
2. Stay involved and take on leadership roles in your activities
3. Complete additional standardized testing – SAT, ACT
4. Submit Bright Futures application
5. Work on and submit college applications by appropriate deadlines
6. Submit SSAR, SPARK and/or other additional forms, if applicable
7. Submit FAFSA, CSS Profile, and any other financial aid form requested by colleges by the designated deadlines, as necessary
8. Submit SAT and/or ACT scores to colleges that require them (or where you have specifically decided to apply with test scores)
9. **Once applications are submitted, regularly monitor each college's application portal or status page for next steps**
10. Apply for scholarships
11. Update Maia with the admissions decisions you receive, please!
12. Fill out community service logs by graduation day and submit a digital copy to mhammett@oapb.org

4. Researching Colleges

College Visits (Tours and Information Sessions)

College visits are an important way for prospective students to gain a sense of a college's academic offerings, physical campus, community, and culture. Start by visiting colleges or universities locally; if there's a college or university nearby that may be a prospect for your college list, check to see what their current visit policies are. If you can, go visit! Visiting a college—especially when students are on campus—can help clarify what you want and need in a college campus and community. **Ideally, you will sign up for both a tour and an information session on campus (usually one follows the other).** Virtual tours and information sessions are also helpful.

6 Ways to Make the Most of a College Visit

1. Eat in the dining hall
2. Read the student newspaper
3. Take pictures and notes; it's a good idea to finish up your notes later that evening to include other info you want to remember.
4. Take advantage of 'Recommended' Interviews – when a college offers and/or recommends on-campus interviews, schedule one! And then prepare for this interview. Search online for some great prep tips (College Essay Guy has some good ones on his website).
5. Walk near the front of your tour so that you'll have plenty of opportunities to chat with your tour guide, who is usually a current student at the school.
6. While you're on campus, ask questions! Here's [a list of questions](#) to ask during a campus visit.

Most schools are offering the following two types of online events; we suggest doing both an information session and a tour, whether it is on campus or virtual!

1) Virtual Information Session

- a. Usually lasts about 1 hour
- b. Includes information on different undergraduate schools *within* a college or university
- c. Includes description of application plans, deadlines and requirements
- d. May describe what they are "looking for" in applicants
- e. Many small and medium size colleges and universities are offering live sessions, which, in our experience, present a valuable opportunity to learn and have one's questions answered.
- f. Many colleges/universities offer Saturday morning sessions, which may present the easiest chance for students and parents to participate.
- g. **We encourage parents to join their students for these sessions in order to spark conversation at home following the session!**

2) Virtual Tour

- a. May be a video of a student actually walking around campus leading a tour (usually 1 hour if so)
- b. If it is a clickable tour online, may last 20-30 minutes.

An easy way to learn about virtual visit options at a college is to search online “visit [College x].” Additionally, here are some [links to registration for virtual info sessions and tours](#).

College is a large investment in your future; it is a good idea to do as much research as you can before you make this investment!

Suggestion: Add yourself to the *admissions* email list for colleges and universities in which you’re interested, because some colleges are offering additional types of information sessions or interviews, and email is *one* way that they let students know about these events. Tulane has added an interview option for seniors *before* they apply, for example – but slots seem to book up fast online.

Resources for College Research:

College Board Big Future

Website says “Planning for college doesn’t have to be stressful - our tools can help you find the right school for you. You can afford college – find out how to keep your costs low.”

College Express

A website that includes excellent lists of colleges with strength in particular majors. This website incorporates the lists from a well-known book, *The College Finder* by Dr. Steven Antonoff.

Fiske Guide to Colleges (book and online versions available)

We have several extra copies of this book in the college counseling office for use during students’ study halls. The Fiske Guide to Colleges is a great college guidebook that focuses mainly on selective and highly selective colleges. It is available on Amazon, in libraries and from other booksellers. We suggest getting the most current edition of this book, but of course the prior year’s edition is likely to be very helpful also. Online, interactive version of Fiske Guide [linked here – costs about \\$20](#).

Maia Learning

Your 24-7 college counselor.

Niche.com

Free, online resource/website. This site publishes and aggregates student reviews of thousands of colleges.

Colleges’ Websites

Colleges’ individual websites are the best place to learn about the school’s academic programs, and usually are a great place to get a list of extracurricular activities offered at that school.

YouTube and Instagram

Most colleges have their own YouTube channel with some excellent videos that can help students begin to get a sense of the culture and/or unique academic programs at that school. Look for a video on your specific interest! You may want to consider following colleges’ admissions accounts that interest you on Instagram or other social media sites.

5. Demonstrated Interest

Many colleges consider the level of interest that a student has demonstrated in their college in making admissions decisions. The colleges want to admit students who have a high level of interest in attending their college, so it is understandable that they would want to do this.

How do colleges measure students' demonstrated interest?

- 1) In the time of COVID-19, recorded online "clicks" are a primary way colleges measure interest. **Here are some ways to show your interest with clicks:**
 - a) Sign up for a virtual info session **and attend that virtual info session!**
 - b) Open the emails that a college sends to you.
 - c) Click on links in emails that a college sends to you.
 - d) Email admissions officer who covers PB County or South Florida at a given college when you have a specific question or request for information. Note: Do not ask a question that you can readily find the answer to on the internet.
 - e) Once you have applied to a school, log in to your admissions portal. This is helpful for two reasons – 1) you are responsible for confirming that the school has received all application materials, including transcript and letters of recommendation, and 2) the school may interpret your login as yet another sign of your interest.
- 2) Visit campus when possible and sign in with admissions office.
- 3) Interview with an alum or admissions team member when this opportunity exists (not all colleges offer interviews).
- 4) Attend a college's visit to Oxbridge (when offered)
- 5) Follow the school on social media. (Remember, your own social media settings should be private. Even when your account settings are "private," we suggest using much discretion in anything you choose to post to social media).

Note: Not all colleges and universities track demonstrated interest, but it may be in your best interest to assume that they do! Whether a college uses demonstrated interest in making admissions decisions be found by searching online "Common Data Set" and the school's name you are interested in; then, you would look for the chart of factors considered in admissions decisions. Students can speak with their college counselor if they have questions about whether a particular college does or does not track demonstrated interest.

6. College Representatives' Visits to Oxbridge Academy

Why are colleges' visits to our campus important?

College visits are wonderful opportunities for students to meet with admissions representatives from hundreds of colleges and universities around the world! Often, the representatives who meet with students at Oxbridge are the same representatives who read applications from Oxbridge students. Attending a college visit at Oxbridge allows students to learn about application deadlines, admissions statistics, academic offerings, and student life directly from a representative from a college or university's admissions office.

How to register for a live college visit at Oxbridge Academy (when these are being held, that is!):

1. Sign in to [MAIALearning](#)
2. On the left-side navigation menu, go to Events>Visits
3. Search for the university/visit by name in the top left search bar or sort visits alphabetically or by date (The default view will show all Upcoming Visits. You can use the Visit Type drop-down to show completed visits, or just visits you have signed up to attend.
4. Select the visit you'd like to attend, click the "Actions" column and select "Attend" to RSVP.
5. The visit will now show on your MAIALearning Calendar (click the calendar icon at the top of any MAIALearning page)
6. You will receive an email notification with an ICS invite that you can add to your personal calendar.
7. You will see a green checkmark in the Attending column on the University Visits page.

Registration for each college visit closes 72 hours before the visit. This is to allow the ASC Office time to plan for adequate seating for the visit and to notify the representative of how many students to expect. If you miss the registration deadline for a visit that you would like to attend, simply come and speak with your college counselor and they will make arrangements for you to attend a visit if it all possible.

To view a list of all current and past visits that you have signed up to attend, change the **Visit Type** filter to **Visits I'm Attending**.

Visits are only open to students with active enrollment.

Who can attend a college visit?

All students in grades 9-12 are welcome to attend college visits! We do ask that students register for any visit they would like to attend at least three days in advance (see steps to register above). Visits with college representatives at Oxbridge are open to students only.

7. Florida Colleges and Universities

There are 12 Florida state public universities, ranging from very small (New College of Florida with 808 undergraduate students) to very large (University of Central Florida with 69,525 total students). These are:

- Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University
- Florida Atlantic University
- Florida Gulf Coast University
- Florida International University
- Florida Polytechnic University
- Florida State University
- University of Central Florida
- New College of Florida
- University of North Florida
- University of South Florida
- University of Florida
- University of West Florida

Each school offers students unique opportunities and educational programs, and each has different application procedures, deadlines, and forms. **For example, several Florida state schools require the Self-reported Student Academic Record (SSAR). This self-reporting process is time-consuming but straightforward:** Students create an account with [SSAR](#) and use a copy of their transcript to enter courses, schedules, grades, and course type (AP, Honors, High Honors, College Preparatory, and other descriptions).

Following submission of a college application, students will link the SSAR to their applications, typically through their applicant portals – or as part of the application itself, depending on the university. Many schools in Florida require the SSAR. Please check your individual school to be sure you complete this step if it is required.

The following link is a great resource for information regarding FL public colleges and universities: <https://www.flbog.edu/universities/admissionstransfers/undergraduate-admissions/>

Here's a table we made to help you complete your list of courses on **SSAR**:

Oxbridge Courses	How to list/categorize these courses on SSAR (for FL Public Universities)
Honors Seminar	Honors
Honors	Honors
Regular	Regular
Independent Study, Teacher's Aide, Peer Tutoring/Writing Center	Regular

8. Common Application

Found at www.commonapp.org. The new version for each school year is released on or about 8/1 each year. Early August is thus a great time to fill out the Common Application.

Usually, any information on the Common App Tab of the Common App input by a student prior to 8/1 “rolls over” to the updated version once released, but you may want to confirm this before spending much time filling out Common App prior to August 1st.

We recommend working on your essays in separate documents, of course, prior to pasting them into Common Application. **Always paste the question you’re answering and word limit at the top of any essay document.**

Use your resume to complete Common Application activities section.

Here’s a table we made to help students enter their lists of courses on **Common Application**:

Oxbridge Courses	How to note Course “Level” in Education Section of Common Application
Honors Seminar	High Honors
Honors	Honors
Regular	College Prep
Independent Study, Teacher’s Aide, Peer Tutoring/Writing Center	Regular/Standard

9. Standardized Testing

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, most U.S. colleges have commenced or continued test-optional admissions policies, which means that a student can decide whether or not to submit standardized test scores to be considered as part of their college application.

Florida’s public colleges and universities DO NOT have a test-optional admissions policy, however. So, it is essential that students applying to these schools take and submit SAT or ACT scores.

The prevailing wisdom from the 2020-2021 school year is that students who have SAT or ACT scores that are in the middle 50% of a college’s test score range for accepted students, or scores that are above this range usually submit their scores for consideration. A list of test-optional schools can be found on the FairTest website: <https://www.fairtest.org/> *Please note that this list has been frequently updated amidst COVID-19.*

Here are links to the websites of the testing organizations:

ACT

SAT

Given that the SAT and ACT are different tests, many students prefer one test over the other. It usually makes sense to focus prep on one test or the other, rather than to try to prep for both tests.

Most students will take whichever test they choose more than once – two or three attempts at the test is a reasonable plan. Taking either test more than 3 times is not a great use of most students' time.

Timeline:

Spring of 10th grade: Take PSAT 10 and PreACT when possible (if not, a practice SAT and ACT).

Summer following 10th grade: It is common for students to begin prep for standardized tests in the summer following 10th grade.

October of 11th grade: Take PSAT/NMSQT

Beyond these “pre-testing” and prep suggestions, we frequently suggest two standardized testing schedules, depending on the rigor of a student's coursework at Oxbridge:

Accelerated testing schedule (for students in more rigorous classes, who have completed at least Algebra II by the end of 10th grade):

Take an ACT or SAT for the first time in August, September, or October of 11th grade. Take a second ACT or SAT in spring semester of 11th grade.

Some students will prep again in the summer following 11th grade and take the SAT or ACT in August, September, or October of 12th grade.

Alternate testing schedule (suggested for those students who will be best served by having completed a substantial portion of junior year classes before taking SAT or ACT):

Take an ACT or SAT for the first time in or immediately following spring semester of 11th grade.

Take a second ACT or SAT later that semester (May or June), or early in 12th grade (August, September, or October).

Students and parents are welcome to consult their college counselors to figure out a standardized testing plan that works for them.

Test Prep: The SAT Prep offered free of charge on Khan Academy has been shown to raise student scores by an average of 115 points with 20 hours of practice.

The ACT organization offers ACT Academy online as a free resource for students to

use for prep.

The ASC Office has experience with several tutoring companies; we are glad to share ideas for test prep providers directly with families so that they may decide whether one of these companies suits their student's/students' needs.

10. Teacher Recommendations

Teacher recommendations are an essential part of the college application process. It is beneficial for colleges to hear about a student's participation in the classroom, effort level on assignments, and interpersonal interactions with peers and faculty through the lens of a teacher who has taught the student and knows the student well. A push for this effort typically begins in the spring of the student's junior year when 11th Grade students will do as follows:

The recommendation request process includes several steps:

1. Politely ask (in person, when possible) two teachers from core academic subjects (English, math, science, social science, foreign language) if they would be willing to write a recommendation letter on your behalf.
2. Complete a **Teacher Recommendation Request** for each teacher on Maia. This is a critical step because only those students who have completed requests will appear on a teacher's Maia account.
 - a. Sign in to Maia
 - b. Click the **Universities** tab, then **Request Recs**
 - c. Download two Brag Sheets, complete one for each teacher, and save as a PDF file.
 - d. Select the name of the first teacher who has agreed to write a letter on your behalf, upload the brag sheet for that teacher, and select the due date as the last day of school
 - e. Include a personal note to thank the teacher!
 - f. Click the **Save** button
 - g. Repeat steps c-g for the second teacher who has agreed to write a letter on your behalf
3. Email your Extracurricular Resume to your two teacher recommenders. Your resume also helps your teachers best advocate for you in their letters of recommendation.
4. Finally, during the first few weeks of senior year, write a note (a hand-written card is a nice touch) to both of the teachers thanking them for the time and effort they put into writing your letter and helping you reach your college admissions goals.

[If you prefer video, here are the above steps demonstrated in a video.](#)

Please keep the following in mind as you request recommendations from your teachers:

- Colleges are looking for letters of recommendation from teachers who know students well and who have had them in their classes recently; therefore, students should, if at all possible, select teachers who taught them during junior year. **Note: The Common Application and most institutional applications require that recommenders be teachers of TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC SUBJECTS (teachers who taught students in English, math, science, history, or a foreign language). This means that art, music, debate, Model UN, yearbook, and P.E. teacher recommendations will not be accepted as academic recommendations at most colleges.**
- It is often better to ask the teacher whose class you worked extra hard in but from whom you received a “B” grade rather than the teacher of a class where you earned an “A” grade, but the teacher knows you put in little to no work.
- Give teachers plenty of time and be sure to follow the timeline provided for you by your counselor. Some teachers will have quotas for how many recommendation letters they are willing to write each year. This means that, even if you have done well in their class, if the teacher is already writing several other letters of recommendation, the teacher may tell you no. Therefore, the sooner this step is followed the better!
- Occasionally, a student may wish to include an additional letter of recommendation along with their application. Colleges have limited time to review a students’ applications, though, so we suggest consulting your Oxbridge college counselor regarding the decision to include an additional letter of recommendation, and the process for doing so.

11. Student Resumes (also known as Activities Resumes)


Creating a clear and descriptive resume is an essential and integral part of the college application process for the following reasons:

- a. Many popular U.S. colleges and universities are residential. Colleges want to know that students will contribute in diverse ways to the community, beyond the classroom.
- b. Almost all college application forms, including the common application form, require some sort of list of extracurricular activities. The resume helps students organize these activities and create short descriptions, which can then be copied and pasted onto the application form.
- c. Many colleges will allow students to upload their resume or send them via email attachment. This provides students an opportunity to showcase their talents, interests, and accomplishments and offer information that may not fit into the other parts of the application. **It is essential that any resume sent to colleges is well-presented and well-written.**

Below is the resume worksheet that we shared with juniors in November 2021:

Activities Resume Worksheet

Why create an Activities Resume now?

1. To help you prepare to complete activities section of college applications.
2. Some colleges will allow you to upload this resume document to your applications; having a working draft is one thing that is “done” or almost done on your checklist. 
3. To be able to assess your commitment to various activities so far in high school. If you're not pleased with what you have on your resume, you have time to add community service, bring initiative to your [club](#). Remember, the FL Bright Futures Scholarship Program requires community service.
4. Helps counselor and teachers get to know you as they prepare to write Letters of Recommendation. Remember, you will need one counselor recommendation and two core-teacher recommendations.

STEP 1:

Create an entry for each activity you have engaged in since the summer before your 9th grade year.

Please include the following information in your entries.

- ☐ Name of Specific Activity or Undertaking
- ☐ Your Title in Activity or Undertaking
- ☐ Grades and/or Summers Participated in this Activity or Undertaking
- ☐ Average Hours/Weeks and Average Weeks/Year Devoted to this Activity or Undertaking
- ☐ Your Responsibilities/Additional Details (be specific)

NOTE: Be mindful of the tense you use on your resume. If the activity is something you are still involved in, use the present tense. If the activity is something you no longer participate in use the past tense.

- Current involvement example of responsibilities:
 - **Work** with club members to identify volunteer opportunities.
 - Past involvement example of responsibilities:
 - **Worked** with club members to identify volunteer opportunities.

Example entries:

Gilman School Admissions - Tour Guide & Office Assistant
Grades 10, 11, 12 (3 hours/week, 36 weeks/year)

Guide students around the school and campus, share information about Gilman's academic and social life with prospective students, and organize admissions office marketing brochures for distribution to parent and student visitors.

Habitat for Humanity - *Vice President (12), Communications (11), Active Member (10)*
Grades 10, 11, 12 (2 hours/week, 36 weeks/year)

Assist club president in planning our annual Spring Break build trip, recruit members, relay our message to the Oxbridge community, and find local builds in which to participate. Market club's mission and events to greater school community, participate in regular house building and painting projects. Created the Oxbridge Habitat for Humanity Page on Facebook, which promotes our builds, trips, and excursions, and traveled to Homestead, Florida in March 2019, and March 2020 to take part in week-long neighborhood building project.

Step 2:

After creating all your entries, decide on your categories. Some commonly used categories are:

ATHLETICS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

CLUBS

HONORS SOCIETIES

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

WORK EXPERIENCE

HOME DUTIES

Step 3:

Put it all together:

- Put your name and address (address is optional) at the top of the page. You may list Oxbridge Academy and its address if you'd like.
- Add your entries, organizing them by categories
- Awards and athletic achievement can be included into the description portion of the appropriate entry.

Please do not include in your activities resume:

- Any information that will be available in your college application, such as your GPA, the courses you are taking, or references.
- A mission statement or objective.
- Middle school awards or activities. This document is for high school activities.

Sample Student Activities Resume:

John Z. Smith
Oxbridge Academy - Class of 2022

ATHLETICS

Oxbridge Academy Varsity Shuffleboard Team - *First Shuttle Pusher*

Grades 9, 10, 11 (30 hours/week, 48 weeks/year)

Starting player on team that won State Championship (9th grade), District Championship (10th grade), and District and Regional Championship (11th grade).

Quidditch Palm Beaches Travel Team - *Chief Seeker*

Grades 9, 10 (30 hours/week, 4 weeks/year)

MVP for the regional championship team. Started for the Quidditch International Competition in Dhaka, summer of 11th grade.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

All-People United Church - *Volunteer*

Summer before grade 11 (6 hours/week, 10 weeks/year)

Planned and implemented fund-raising activities. Gave out school uniforms to kids who were unable to afford them. Traveled to the Florida Keys in October 2019 to help with recovery with Hurricane XXX.

Young Volunteers of America - *Patrol Leader (11), Assistant Patrol Leader (10), Quartermaster Rank (9)*

Grades 9, 10, 11 (3 hours/week, 48 weeks/year)

Participate in multiple patrol events: archery, canoeing, fire building, flag-pole racing, chariot racing. Organize yearly community church cleanups, attend town meetings in local community, supervise cub scout events.

Awards: Won 1st place in numerous competitions and patrol activities.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Summer Sundae Shop - *Ice Cream Scooper, Cashier*

Summer before grade 9, 9, 10, 11 (5 hours/week, 50 weeks/year)

Scoop ice cream. Provide exceptional service for customers and collect money from them.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Bocconi Summer Institute, Milan, Italy - Student

Summer before 11th grade (40 hours/week, 3 weeks/year)

Won Best Student Award in Accounting and Global Taxes course, taught by the world-famous and illustrious professor, Dr. Benito Talini Grasso.

12. College Application Essays

Many colleges ask each applicant to submit at least one essay (a personal statement) as part of their application so that their admissions team can learn more about that student beyond her grades, test scores, hometown, and list of activities.

When you share your essay with a college, the admissions team is going to make two determinations:

1. Can this person write effectively?
2. Does this essay make me want to invite this person to join our campus community? (i.e. Are they interesting? Thoughtful? Self-aware?)

OVERVIEW:

A. PERSONAL STATEMENT

Most students will write one “personal statement” essay which will serve as their “main” Common Application essay and can also be submitted to many schools that do not accept the Common Application but do ask for a personal statement.

A great personal statement usually reveals some of a student’s VALUES, INTERESTS, and some INSIGHT into WHY an activity, routine, or event has been particularly meaningful to the student.

B. SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS

On the Common Application, many selective colleges ask students to answer a SUPPLEMENTAL essay question (or two, three, or more supplemental essays). These questions commonly include the following prompts:

“What attracts you to our college?”

“What are you interested in studying at our college?”

Or, a college may give students a prompt like the **following example** – an essay prompt used by Amherst College for the 2019-2020 admissions cycle:

Option A - Respond to *one* of the following quotations in an essay of not more than 300 words [Note: only one of the quotation options given is listed below]. It is not necessary to research, read, or refer to the texts from which these quotations are taken; we are looking for original, personal responses to these short excerpts. Remember that your essay should be personal in nature and not simply an argumentative essay.

“Rigorous reasoning is crucial in mathematics, and insight plays an important secondary role these days. In the natural sciences, I would say that the order of these two virtues is reversed. Rigor is, of course, very important. But the most important value is insight—insight into the workings of the world. It may be because there is another guarantor of correctness in the sciences, namely, the empirical evidence from observation and experiments.”

-Kannan Jagannathan, Professor of Physics, Amherst College

A college’s supplemental essays can be found through the Common Application website and are usually available on or about August 1. Students who are very successful in the college admissions process usually dedicate substantial time to writing supplemental essays in the month of August prior to their senior year.

Steps for Writing Personal Statement/Main Common Application Essay:

Step 1: Reading examples of great college application essays is a great first step towards writing your own personal statement/main Common App essay.

Here are some sample personal statements and other college application essay resources:

Essays that Worked (Hamilton College)

<https://www.hamilton.edu/admission/apply/college-essays-that-worked>

Essays that Worked (Johns Hopkins University)

<https://apply.jhu.edu/application-process/essays-that-worked/>

2019 NYTimes Selected Essays about work, money, social class and related topics:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/09/your-money/college-application-essaysmoney.html>

2018 NYTimes Selected Essays about work, money, social class and related topics:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/11/your-money/college-essay-topic-money-socialclass.html>

From College Essay Guy

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/common-app-essay-prompts#E>

Step 2: Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a helpful next step in writing the Personal Statement. Here are some brainstorming exercises developed by Ethan Sawyer, known as “College Essay Guy”: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/college-essay-topics-ideas>

[Gain inspiration from the “Inside the Yale Admissions Office” podcast](#)

Step 3: Draft your essay!

Step 4: Take a break from the essay, and then go back and re-read it, and make any edits that are appropriate. Consider reading your essay out loud during your editing process. You might pick up on revisions to be made when hearing it that you wouldn't otherwise notice.

Step 5: Share the essay with a trusted teacher, counselor, essay reader, or other adult in order to get their feedback.

Step 6: Make revisions based on Step 5 feedback, and then read the new draft. What is great? What should be changed?

Step 7: Repeat Step 5. Share this new draft with a trusted teacher, counselor, essay reader, or other adult in order to get their feedback.

Step 8: Make any new changes. Most great college essays have gone through at least 3 drafts/sets of revisions.

13. College Application Requirements and Deadlines

For an application file to be considered complete, a college or university must receive:

- ☐ **A completed application via the Common Application, Coalition Application, or a school-specific application. This application often includes one main essay and may include one or more supplemental essays. In addition, many colleges require additional information, such as the SSAR or SRAR.**
- ☐ **SAT score report (sent by the student via collegeboard.org website) or ACT score report, sent by the student via actstudent.org website. If standardized test scores are not required by a particular college in the admissions process, the student may choose whether to send or not send these scores, after discussion with college counselor. It is important to research the acceptance data of any test-optional schools to which students are applying. Do NOT send a score that is below the average and median scores reported by that school to any test-optional school.**
- ☐ **Official Oxbridge Academy transcript and transcript from any previous high schools**
- ☐ **Teacher recommendation letters and Common App Teacher Evaluation Forms**
- ☐ **Counselor recommendation letter and Common App Counselor Recommendation Form**

NOTE: Some colleges request additional information, such as the SSAR, SRAR, SPARK as well as the common application form. You are responsible for completing and submitting these forms by the designated deadlines! YOU are responsible for submitting the items in BOLD above, as well for researching the application and scholarship requirements for each college to which you are applying. Many colleges require additional information. The above list is a general checklist, and it is advisable to create your own spreadsheet to keep track of the application requirements for each college. Each student's college counselor will submit the above documents in black type for all colleges and universities that are on the student's **Applying** list.

Each college, university, or university system (such as the University of California system) uses different deadlines, and many offer different options to students, each of which have benefits and drawbacks. The most common deadlines are:

- **Regular Decision (RD):** This application deadline is usually the final one offered by the college. Applicants can submit under any application plan elsewhere and have no obligation to attend the school if they are accepted. Students will typically receive their admission decision several weeks to months after the application deadline, generally no later than April 1 of the year that the student will matriculate. Common RD deadlines are December 31, January 1, January 15, and February 1.
- **Early Decision (ED):** This application deadline is usually earlier than other application options, and colleges generally give students who apply ED a decision before students who apply RD. Students who apply ED to a college cannot apply to any other college ED but may apply to other colleges under other non-binding application plans. Once students are accepted ED, they are obligated to attend the school and must withdraw any applications that they have submitted elsewhere. Please note that many colleges who use the Common App indicate the following for ED: "If you are an ED candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid from the admitting Early Decision institution." Some schools offer two ED deadlines: Early Decision I and Early Decision II.
- **Early Action (EA):** This application deadline is usually earlier than other options and colleges generally give students who apply EA a decision before students who apply RD. Students applying EA may apply elsewhere to as many schools as they like under any application plan. Early action is non-binding; if a student is accepted EA, that student is not under any obligation to attend the school.

- **Rolling Admission:** Students can submit their application any time within the application period and will receive an admissions decision within a few weeks of whenever they submit their application. There is no obligation to attend the school, and students may apply wherever else under any application plan.
- **Priority Application Deadline or Date:** The date your application must be received by an admissions office in order to be given strongest consideration (which may relate to college admission, financial aid, student housing, or some combination of these). If a school where you are interested in attending lists a priority deadline, the ASC strongly encourages you to meet that deadline.
- **Restrictive Early Action (REA) / Single Choice Early Action (SCEA):** REA/SCEA application policies require students to submit their applications early and provides them with an admissions decision early, as well. This application option does not include a binding commitment to attend but does indicate the student's high level of interest in the college because the student is restricted from applying to other schools through Early Decision or Early Action plans (often with the exception of public universities such as the University of Florida).

It is strongly recommended that you schedule a time to meet with your Oxbridge Academy college counselor at the beginning of your senior year first to review your final list and discuss the benefits and drawbacks of each available deadline and again to review any completed applications prior to submission. A student's counselor can help the student check the application for errors or areas that can be improved.

Sending Standardized Test Scores to Colleges (SAT, ACT)

You are responsible for sending your SAT or ACT scores to all colleges to which you are applying (with the exception of any school that is test-optional, or which permits self-reported scores). Counselors cannot send standardized test scores on behalf of students – they must come directly from the testing agency.

You can log on to your ACT Student account at www.act.org or their College Board account www.collegeboard.org to view all prior test scores and select which score(s) you would like to send (NOTE: some colleges require that students send ALL their scores). If a student logs into their respective standardized test portal(s) and is unsure how to send scores to colleges after reviewing the directions on the website, the student is welcome to see their college counselor for assistance in completing the order.

To date, the SAT and ACT will send test scores FREE OF CHARGE to up to four (4) different institutions if the student requests the test scores to be sent prior to the test administration. When a student DOES NOT request to send test scores before ACT and SAT administration, each institution will charge a fee of approximately \$15 per school to which the test scores are to be sent. Please keep in mind that score reports can take around two weeks to be received by schools after being sent, so please plan accordingly.

14. Grade 11 Comprehensive College Counseling Checklist (for Success!)

- ☐ **Stay involved and take on leadership roles in activities**
- ☐ **Sign up for the PSAT NMSQT- held mid-October, sign-up in September**
- ☐ **Student Resume draft**
 - Please email your resume draft to your college counselor; we will be visiting junior English classes mid-November to go over instructions for doing this and resume samples.
- ☐ **Junior Survey –**
 - Details forthcoming!
 - This will help your school counselor get to know you.
 - Answer all questions completely and honestly, please. The more information that you give us, the more feedback we can provide you with regarding suggestions for building a college list and how to best “tell your story” on your applications.
 - *This survey is to be completed by student, not parent, please.*
- ☐ **Parent Questionnaire – due 5 days prior to 11th Grade Family College Counseling Meeting (see below)**
 - Details forthcoming!
- ☐ **Schedule and attend 11th Grade Family College Counseling Meeting**
 - These meetings will be held in late-January, February, and March. The Student Survey (student) and Parent Questionnaire must be completed in student’s Maia account 5 days prior to this meeting.
- ☐ **Teacher Recommendations – ask teachers by the first week of March**
 - You will ask two academic teachers from your junior year to write recommendations for you.
 - We will discuss this in more detail after winter break.
- ☐ **Common Application Essay – draft due the first week of May**
 - List of essay topics becomes available in February or March.
 - Please aim to finalize this essay before school starts in August.
 - We will discuss the topics and how to strategize once they are announced.
- ☐ **Register, Prepare for, and Take Standardized Tests**
 - We recommend taking either the ACT or the SAT twice during your 11th grade year.
 - **It is your responsibility to register and prepare for the ACT or the SAT.**
 - **Please find test dates and registration links at these websites:**
 - ACT www.act.org
 - SAT www.collegeboard.org

-
- ❑ **Student-athletes who are even thinking about competing in college should register with the NCAA!**
 - Make an appointment with Mrs. Hammett by contacting her at mhammett@oapb.org
- ❑ **Maia Career Readiness Curriculum – do a lesson/activity twice per month!**
 - Lessons are all listed on your Maia Student account. There are some EXCELLENT tools on Maia– please make use of this resource.
- ❑ **College Research – Twice a month, dedicate 1 or 2 hours to this.**
 - Use search tools on Maia to find colleges that fit your interests. For assistance in learning how to use these tools, ask your counselor.
 - Consider which aspects of a college/university are most important to you (including academic programs offered, cost, size, location and proximity to home, campus environment (college town, urban, suburban, rural), and selectivity.
 - Please add schools of interest to your “Considering” list in Maia.
 - Remember to include balance in your list (you may be interested in some highly selective colleges, but balance those by including some schools that are not such a “reach” for you).
- ❑ **College Recommendation Questionnaire – due first week of May**
 - The more thoughtfully and thoroughly you complete this, the better able your counselor will be to advocate for you in their letter of recommendation.
 - This form is to be filled out by the student. Parents should not complete this questionnaire for their student.
- ❑ **Finalize College List**
 - Aim to have a (mostly) finalized list of the colleges to which you are applying by mid-August, before or as you start school year..
 - You should spend the summer making decisions about where you will apply and finalizing your main college essay (personal statement).
 - Visit colleges when possible, continue online research, have conversations with parents/family, and keep in contact with your counselor. Link to virtual tour opportunities here: <https://tinyurl.com/visitvirtualOA>
 - Ideally, students apply to 8-10 schools, and certainly no more than thirteen. Remember to keep a balanced list.
- ❑ **Community Service**
 - Bright Futures (a Florida-based merit scholarship) requires community service hours.
 - Keep track of your hours through the [community service log](#)
 - If you are looking for community service opportunities please contact your counselor.

❑ Self-evaluation

- The 11th grade year is an important time to review your priorities, goals, strengths, weaknesses, interests, and academic achievements. Some important questions to ask yourself as you prepare to apply to college are:
- Where do I see myself in two years, in four years, in ten years?
- What are my favorite subjects?
- What are some careers that interest me?
- When do I feel the most engaged?
- What qualities am I looking for in a college or university?
- What can my family reasonably afford? How can I fill any gap between what I need and my family's resources?

15. Financial Aid

Financial aid can be divided into several types:

1) Gift aid - money you don't have to pay back. Gift aid can be merit-based or need-based and comes in the form of a scholarship or a grant. Sources of gift aid can be:

- The federal government (such as the Pell Grant)
- A state program (Bright Futures)
- A college or university
- A private organization
- An employer

2) Federal Work Study

- Government pays for a portion of the student's earnings
- Need-based eligibility required
- Students earn a paycheck
- Earnings do not count against the students' aid eligibility the following year
- Earnings can be used for any educational expense, not just tuition

3) Loans

Federal Loans

- Subsidized Loan (Student)
- Unsubsidized Loan (Student)
- PLUS Loan - Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students
- Consolidated Loans

Note: *Subsidized loans* are awarded as part of calculated need. Interest is paid by the federal government while student is in school. *Unsubsidized loans* are awarded over and above the student's calculated need. Interest must be paid by student while in school or capitalized at repayment.

To determine how much aid is needed, you must calculate the total **cost of attendance (COA)** for each college or university they apply to, and colleges and universities must calculate the estimated family contribution (EFC) for students who request need-based financial aid.

Links to financial aid tools and college cost estimators:

<https://myintuition.org/> <https://collegecost.ed.gov/net-price>
<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/tools-calculators#>

COA includes tuition as well as:

- Fees
- Room and Board
- Books
- Transportation

Colleges use two main forms to determine a student's EFC: the **FAFSA** (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the **CSS Profile**. Both forms help colleges determine a student's financial need through a simple formula:

The **FAFSA** is the only application needed to determine eligibility for federal aid and some state aid. It is free for all applicants. The form can be submitted starting October 1 in the year before college enrollment. The following information is requested on the FAFSA:

- SSN and Driver's License #
- Taxed Income (federal tax returns) for both students and parents
- Untaxed income, accounts, business and farm assets
- Household size/number of children in school
- IRS Data Retrieval to import your tax return data
- Prior Prior Year (PPY) Tax Data

The **CSS Profile** is administered by the College Board and is required by approximately 350 institutions, mainly private, in addition to the FAFSA. A fee is charged for submission of the Profile, although fee waivers are available for qualified students/families. This application is needed to determine eligibility for institutional funds in addition to the funds provided by the federal government. Data requested is more extensive than the FAFSA, including:

- Detailed income
- Home value and debt
- Family asset details, including losses
- Both custodial and noncustodial parent information

The State of Florida offers financial support for students. The best known is the **Bright Futures Scholarship**, a merit-based scholarship that is accepted by Florida public and private colleges and universities. Students **MUST APPLY** by submitting a Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) by the August 31 following the student's high school graduation. The application includes:

- Date of student's high school graduation
- Specific course work
- GPA
- SAT/ACT scores
- Service hour requirements

Mrs. Monica Hammett is available to discuss **Bright Futures eligibility requirements** at the student's and parent's convenience. Please schedule a time to meet with Mrs. Hammett using the "Appointments" link found under any college counselor's email signature or in Maia Student. Senior students are encouraged to apply after December 1st so that they can first take care of ALL the other requirements as outlined in this handbook.

Other Florida-based Financial Aid programs are:

- 1) Effective Access to Student Education Grant (EASE). The requirements for this non need-based grant are as follows:
 - Student must be a FL resident and US Citizen
 - Student must be enrolled at FL **private** college or university
- 2) Florida Student Access Grant (FSAG). The requirements for this need-based grant, which can be used at a private or public college or university in Florida, are as follows:
 - Student must be a FL Resident and US Citizen
 - Must complete FAFSA

Award: Minimum of \$200 to maximum set by FL legislature each year

Important links to access financial aid forms and resources:

- FAFSA www.fafsa.gov
- CSS Profile: <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>
- Florida pre-paid plans: myfloridaprepaid.com/prepaid-plans

In addition to the financial aid resources mentioned in this section, many colleges and universities offer institution-based merit scholarships for a wide range of skills, accomplishments, and characteristics. **It is the responsibility of each student to thoroughly research the financial aid requirements and merit scholarship opportunities available at colleges and universities.**

16. Notes for Aspiring College Student Athletes¹

Will my sport help me get into my dream college? If a coach comes to look at you, and if the coach decides that you are a strong candidate for their college team, then – *and only then* – can you assume that athletic talent may play a significant factor in getting into college. If you are not recruited by a coach, athletic ability will play no more (and no less) important a role in the admission decision than any other seriously pursued extracurricular activity, period. **Either way, the admission office will make the final decision, not the athletic department or coach.**²

The NCAA governs collegiate athletics and offers Divisions I, IA, II and III athletics. The NCAA guidelines for recruiting, as well as the NCAA Eligibility Center form required of all Division I, IA, and II student athletes, are available at <http://www.ncaa.org>. **You are responsible for knowing all recruiting rules that relate to you and your sport.**

How do I know if I could be a Division I athlete? Quite honestly, college coaches make the determination of who would be a good Division I athlete, not the student. Therefore, if sports will be an important part of your college life, you should have a good, serious talk **with your Oxbridge coaches (and, if relevant, your club coach) early on in this process**—definitely by your junior year—and again early in your senior year. The elite of the elite (those who will be offered the **very rare** “full ride”) may know by July before their senior year where they will be going to college. Other Division I (and often Division IA – Ivy League) athletes may not know for certain until the spring of their senior year where they will matriculate and play.³

What about Division III? If you want to play college athletics, it is critical to match your athletic ability with a college to which admission chances are realistic and at which making the team is likely. In their final analysis, Division I colleges seek only the most elite athletes. Division III colleges combine academic study and athletics in a more balanced fashion, as do Division IA schools. If you are recruited for athletics for a Division III school, you will not be eligible for athletic scholarships, but the interest of the coach could help give you a nudge in the admissions process.⁴

What is the NCAA Clearinghouse? How do I register? The NCAA Clearinghouse has an Eligibility Center, which was established to determine academic eligibility for student athletes in Divisions I and II. All students with an interest in Division I or II programs, and especially those interested in making official visits to colleges in the fall of senior year, should register online with the [NCAA Clearinghouse](#) **before leaving school at the end of junior year**. Ms. Monica Hammett assists students with this in our office: mhammett@oapb.org. If you have ever attended another high school besides Oxbridge Academy, you will have to pick up a form to be completed by that school as well. These forms are used to certify your academic eligibility according to the core set of courses

¹ Adapted from the following source: Tower Hill School (n.d.) *Athletics*. Tower Hill School. Retrieved May 3, 2022 from <https://www.towerhill.org/list-detail?pk=96954>

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

required by the Clearinghouse standards. The Clearinghouse has a formula that uses your test scores and then confirms that you have a corresponding minimum GPA for those scores as well as the right number of classes.⁵

Remember, it is important to talk to both your athletic coach and college counselor about your athletic goals if you aspire to participate in your sport in college. Coaches help by:

1. Guiding student athletes to consider colleges and/or which NCAA Division (I, II, III) may be best fit.
2. Suggesting tournaments and showcases for student to be seen by college coaches

College counselors help by integrating your goals and coaches' input on schools/division for college play into your college list.

For student athletes who have the potential to be contributors to college athletic teams—diligence, effort, and organization in communicating with college coaches is essential.

17. Senior Year Success

Successful students do these things during their senior year:

1. Successful seniors maintain a challenging course load throughout 12th grade.

- a. They don't drop classes that they "don't feel like taking" anymore – whether they've been accepted to the college of their dreams already or not.
- b. They continue to be committed to their classes even once they have been accepted to a college that excites them because they remember that this college has accepted them so based on its review of their 12th grade schedule, and the college's expectation that they will continue to work diligently and successfully in these classes.
- c. **Senior students** must notify colleges to which they have applied of any changes to their academic schedule for 12th grade. While occasional changes are needed in crisis or very specific situations, most changes to senior schedules are discouraged once a student has applied to colleges.

2. Successful seniors continue to work conscientiously to earn the best grades that they can.

- a. This means that successful students resist the temptation of "senioritis"

⁵ Ibid.

which refers to general laziness, less than careful academic work, and general disregard for one's responsibilities in school and otherwise.

- b. **The colleges where a student has been accepted will want to see that student's final high school transcript. It is essential to ensure that what they see is good news!**

3. Successful seniors consciously make good choices in life and online.

18. Choosing a College

Congratulations! All of your hard work has paid off, and now a choice (or choices) about where to attend college must be made. Here are three suggested steps to help with the decision:

Prioritize. What are your goals for the next four years? Correspondingly, what are the most important categories for to use to evaluate your college options? On the following page, please find a worksheet that includes the following four categories as helpful ones to use to compare colleges:

- 1) Academics
- 2) Cost and Financial Aid Information
- 3) Student Life and Extracurricular Activities
- iv Location and Distance from Home

Visit (or re-visit). Research the schools on your "short list" by talking to current students and recent grads. Admitted students' weekends are great times to see a school for a few reasons. One, there is usually an assortment of panels organized to showcase different aspects of the school including academic departments and student life. Second, students at the school are usually made aware that it is a prospective students' visit weekend—and may make a bit more time in their schedules to speak to prospective students and their families.

Follow up with colleges' financial aid offices if you wish to try to negotiate a financial aid award. This is done most often in cases where a student has received better financial aid offers from another college, financial circumstances have changed, or the financial aid award is insufficient.

Evaluate and compare the colleges on your final list. Use a word document, spreadsheet, or paper to compare colleges in categories that are important to you. The list from above (academics, financial info, student life, and location) offers a helpful framework for many students to compare colleges. If you want to add or delete categories from this list because that makes sense for you, go for it.

19. Appendix

Fee Waiver Information

For College Entrance Exams: ACT and SAT

If you qualify for a fee waiver, you should use it to register for either of these tests; there are advantages to registering for these tests utilizing fee waivers.

Benefits include the following, see websites provided for more details:

- Unlimited free ACT/SAT score reports to colleges where you apply.
- Unlimited free college applications through Common App and other [participating schools](#). ○ Access to additional test preparation or score interpretation materials to help improve your performance.

SAT fee waiver eligibility and benefits ○

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers>

ACT fee waiver eligibility and benefits ○

<https://www.act.org/content/dam/act/unsecured/documents/FeeWaiver.pdf>

If you believe you qualify for fee waivers, speak with your college counselor or Ms. Monica Hammett to request them.

For College Applications

[Common Application fee waiver](#) ○ [USDA Income Eligibility Guidelines](#) (one option for fee waiver eligibility)

[NACAC College Application Fee Waiver](#)

For Enrollment Deposit

[NACAC Enrollment Deposit Fee Waiver](#)

Oxbridge Academy Transcript Procedures

Transcripts are prepared by the Registrar office at the end of every semester. Accordingly, transcript discrepancies must be brought up with the Registrar office directly. However, the ASC office is always happy to advocate on behalf of students and parents as needed. There are two types of transcripts: 1) official and 2) unofficial.

By policy, an Oxbridge transcript lists only the courses that students have taken at Oxbridge and (if applicable) those courses taken through dual enrollment at Palm Beach State College or FLVS. Oxbridge transcripts do not list courses taken at other institutions including courses taken at another High School. Instead, the total number of “approved” transferred credits will be displayed under “Credits Earned” under the respective 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th Grad(s) and are included on the total count under the *Total Credits Earned* summary which is found at the bottom of the transcript.

At the beginning of each academic year, transcripts of enrolled students entering any grade (inclusive of transfer students), will initially only list the courses in progress. No grades will be displayed until the semester ends. Thereafter, semester grades (not quarter grades) are updated by the Registrar usually two weeks (*) after the end of

each semester. Accordingly, transcripts are updated twice per year, first when the first semester ends, and then again at the conclusion of the second semester,

After the Registrar releases semester grades (usually two weeks after the conclusion of each semester), all unofficial transcripts (not report cards) are uploaded onto MAIA Learning in order of priority as follows:

1. Seniors/Grade 12
2. Juniors/Grade 11
3. Sophomores/Grade 10
4. Freshman/Grade 9

() Exceptions to this priority upload will be made on a first come first served basis by making an online request [here](#) or by cutting and pasting the following link into a computer browser: <https://forms.gle/XdeSQBh66FXva6CB7>*

Students and parents have equal MaiaLearning access and are able to download the unofficial transcripts as follows:

Login MAIA Learning (Parent or Student account)

- Select **MAIA Drive** which is found listed almost at the bottom of the left column.
- The **UNOFFICIAL Transcripts** folder will be displayed
- Select the Drop-down arrow
- Download the desired transcript by selecting the ellipsis (...) located to the right side of the file selected.

Process to request official transcripts for 12th Grade/Senior students:

Students in 12th grade are required to complete a **Transcript Release Form**. This form complies with state requirements and authorizes the release of academic records to colleges.

B. Please download a copy of the **Transcript Release Form** by following these steps:

- Login **MAIA Learning** (Parent or Student account)
- Select **Resources** which is found listed at the bottom of the left column
- Select **School Resources**
- Download the Transcript Release Form OFFICIAL by clicking on the little cloud at the end of the name of the file.

C. Once the form has been downloaded, please fill out the form completely, and as indicated on the bottom of the form, please return it to the ASC office for processing.

Federal and State Law prohibits the release of pupil records without parent or adult student written authorization. Accordingly, all transcripts will be placed on hold and will not be released to colleges or universities until parents/students comply and return the original Transcript Release Form to this office.

Once this form has been returned, the ASC will submit all required academic records to the list of colleges listed on the student's MAIA Learning "Universities > Applying List" with regard to the colleges' application deadlines. Students can add colleges to their college lists and are responsible for doing so and for submitting applications on time. Colleges should be added to this list "Applying List" at least 30 calendar days prior to the application deadline.

Students in 12th grade do not need to submit a separate transcript request form for each college to which they are applying. We require the completion of one transcript authorization form and use that authorization to send transcripts to schools on the student's "Applying List" in MAIA Learning.

This is why it is so important that the application plan that you choose (i.e. early action, early decision, rolling, priority, REA, or regular decision) are accurately added to your **Applying** list.

For further information on the "application type" please see the "College Application Requirements and Deadlines" section of this manual.

Process to request official transcripts for 12th Grade Students/Parents for Scholarships:

Students who would like to apply for scholarships while in 12th grade are required to make an online request by clicking [here](https://forms.gle/XdeSQBh66FXva6CB7) or by cutting and pasting the following link into a computer browser: <https://forms.gle/XdeSQBh66FXva6CB7>

Due to a high number of last-minute requests, these requests are processed on a first come first served basis. Again, requests must be made 30 days before the deadline to ensure that transcripts are sent on time.

Process to request official transcripts for NAIA, Clearing House / NCAA Eligibility Center:

Students who have been invited for an official visit or those getting recruited must register with the NAIA, or the Clearing House / NCAA Eligibility Center for evaluation. Transcripts will be uploaded within 24 to 48 hours AFTER a student registers with each web portal. Accordingly, students are not required to request transcripts for this service.

Process to request official transcripts for Athletics (all grades):

Students who are being actively recruited by coaches may from time to time be asked to submit a transcript directly to the coach. If this is the case, students or parents may request an online transcript request by clicking [here](https://forms.gle/XdeSQBh66FXva6CB7) or by cutting and pasting the following link into a computer browser: <https://forms.gle/XdeSQBh66FXva6CB7>

Process to request official transcripts for 9th - 11th grade Students/Parents:

Students from time to time will consider attending a summer program which will require

the submission of a transcript to confirm and/or evaluate the academic standing of the student.

Accordingly, to maintain the integrity of the system, Official and Unofficial transcripts are sent directly to institutions from Oxbridge. Transcripts (including unofficial) are not provided to parents or students via email.

While most programs require a transcript to be physically mailed to the institutions, there are others that would require counselors to upload the transcript directly into their website. Whether a transcript is to be physically mailed or uploaded on a website, enrolled students or parents of enrolled students who would like to request a transcript for that purpose may request an online transcript request by clicking [here](#) or by cutting and pasting the following link into a computer browser:

<https://forms.gle/XdeSQBh66FXva6CB7>

NOTE: The registrar office has SEPARATE systems and procedures for the processing of transcripts usually associated with the transfer of a student into another high school.

Summer Checklist for Rising Seniors

- Keep doing virtual tours and information sessions for colleges on your list. This is important!! Put them on your calendar and follow through on your commitment to yourself. You might want to ask about the supplemental essay topics during these sessions to potentially get an early start on writing.
- Keep working on your personal statement! Set a July or early August due date for yourself if it's not already done. Your essay reader will be assigned to you on July 15th, please use this excellent resource to revise and refine your main and supplemental essays.
- Update your resume; having this updated will enable you to transfer entries to Common App activities section.
- Create a Common Application account (www.commonapp.org) in the first week of August is when the new version of the application is usually released.
- Fill out all the info that you can in the Common App (early August).
- Complete the SSAR if you're applying to any Florida state schools or other schools that require it- <https://ssar.selfreportedtranscript.com/Login.aspx> - there are some notes in our Manual (page 12) regarding this if you need help.
- Follow the colleges you're planning to apply to on [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/). Schools have been making important announcements on this platform and hosting some great sessions with students. So, this platform offers some more opportunities to learn about a school.
- Make a spreadsheet for yourself (in Excel or Google Sheets) with the following columns and fill it out! This will give you a chance to do some important research. Add other columns if you'd like!

<u>College</u>	<u>Application Deadlines</u>	<u>Major I'd Choose</u>	<u>Did Virtual Visit?</u>	<u>Essay Questions</u>	<u>Notes, Links, Etc.</u>

- Most school-specific essays are updated by early August. If you want to see what *last year's* essays were for a school on Common App, look [here](#). Sometimes, the essay topics stay the same, but not always.
- FairTest.org has a list of test-optional colleges. You should also check a particular school's admissions website also in case they've made a recent announcement re: this.
- Work on your *balanced* college list – see notes on pages 5 and 6 of this Manual regarding balanced college lists.

- Please complete the Counselor Recommendation Questionnaire in Maia “Surveys.” This is due May 16, 2022 and is vital to your counselor writing a strong and persuasive recommendation on your behalf.
- Have your parent sign and return to us via email the Transcript Release form that will be emailed to you by Mrs. Losada or your college counselor. Your counselor cannot send your transcript without this form signed! For most students, returning it before start of senior year works well – but if you have an earlier app deadline, we will need it then.
- If you are applying to any schools that require testing (ex. public FL colleges and universities), you must submit schools. Please sign up for July, August, September, or October testing to have time to send your scores to schools if you have not already tested.

Senior Fall College Application Checklist

- If you are applying to any schools that require testing (ex. public FL colleges and universities), you must submit schools. Please sign up for July, August, September, or October testing to have time to send your scores to schools if you have not already tested.
- Please submit your college applications carefully. It is your responsibility to meet all requirements that are part of the applications, and to do so on time (we suggest applying by any priority deadlines).
- **Please verify that all schools where you plan to apply are on your Maia "Applying" list (in Maia) at least 30 days before the deadline that you have selected.** This is the ONLY way that the ASC will be able to send documents to a college by the deadline. NOTE: If applying to a Common App school it must ALSO be listed under your "My Colleges" tab in Common App.
- Submit official SAT or ACT score report, if required, *to arrive by the college's application deadline you have selected. Some reports can take up to 2 weeks to arrive.*
- Check each college's application portal to keep track of documents received. Please note that this step is ongoing and note that there can be delays in portals showing documents that the school has already received.
- If a college's applicant portal shows that documents are missing (such as transcripts/letters of rec) first check Maia to be sure that school is on your "Applying" list and that under the column "Office Materials" it says, "Initial Materials Submitted."
 - If you can answer "yes" to both of these checks above, your next step should be calling or emailing the Office of Admissions for that school to report that your documents were sent; the cause may just be a lag in being reflected on the portal. If you do not see "Initial Materials Submitted," you can check in with your counselor – certain schools require different methods of counselor submissions that may not show on Maia.
- If invited to interview, accept **and prepare for** that interview. If schools have optional interviews, plan to sign up for interviewing as this can strengthen your application.
- **Be diligent about checking your email and responding to any emails that need your attention.**
 - **This is a very important step.** Throughout the college application process, and in college, you are very much responsible for what is emailed to you by colleges, and your parents will not be copied on it. Many of you are effective and timely email communicators (this does not go unnoticed or unappreciated ©), and others need to work on this, please!

- Keep working on your remaining applications; aim to complete them before the December holiday break when possible. You deserve the time off around the end of year holidays and your college counselors will be on their break also. If you applied ED, please consider in advance a scenario in which you are not accepted to that school, and work on those other schools' applications *before* you hear from your ED school in mid-December.
 - Reminder: Please add to your "Applying" list in Maia any applications with an early January deadline by December 1; this will allow our office time to process these materials before the holiday break.
 - As you receive admissions decisions (admit, deny, waitlist, defer...) please enter the results promptly in Maia. This data is vital for the college counseling program to continue to support future Oxbridge applicants.

Oxbridge Academy procedures for taking AP Exams

Oxbridge Academy students' college acceptances are a testament to the strength of Oxbridge's Honors and Honors Seminar classes. Oxbridge Academy does not offer AP classes, but nonetheless, a small number of students do request the opportunity to take AP Exams each year. Thus, Oxbridge has partnered with the College Board® to offer AP Exam administration annually. Accordingly, The CollegeBoard® AP exams are typically held and administered by Oxbridge during the first two weeks in May of each academic year.

Oxbridge adheres to the systematic approach as managed by the College Board® including the AP exam fee structure and corresponding exam schedule. The College Board® is continually evolving their practices for the benefit of all students and as such periodically publishes on their website a wealth of pertinent recommendations and/or instruction for exam preparation. Oxbridge supports and highly encourages proper preparation for each exam.

Therefore, if considering taking an AP Exam, students and families are encouraged to initially consult with their assigned Oxbridge Academy college counselor to effectively discuss academic goals that will enhance the student's profile when considering highly selective colleges. Students' college counselor will be happy to partner with them to effectively plan a success path.

For additional AP resources, annual updates and testing tips, please visit The College Board® website and download the [Bulletin for AP Students and Parents](#). For planning purposes, please note that the cost for each AP exam was \$94 in 2020 (student or family is responsible for paying this fee). Oxbridge Academy does not offer AP vouchers.

Students who are prepared to take an AP exam at Oxbridge are required to register to take the AP exam by submitting a registration/permission form. This form is updated every year following the College Board® fee and exam schedule.

AP registration/permission checklist:

- Speak with college counselor
- Request an AP registration/permission form from the ASC Office (asc@oapb.org)
- Submit payment to the Oxbridge Academy business office
- Submit the AP registration / permission form to the ASC Office prior to March 5 every year. If submitting after this date, the College Board® imposes a mandatory late fee of \$40 per exam.