



## **College Counseling Office Policies & Procedures**

*A College Planning Guide for the  
Graduating Class*

**Wilbraham & Monson Academy**

423 Main Street, Wilbraham, MA 01095

413.596.6811

[www.wma.us](http://www.wma.us)

Wilbraham & Monson Academy is a transformational experience where students become challenge-seeking citizens and leaders of an evolving world.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>A. Statement of Understanding (Signature Required)</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>B. Contact Information</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>C. Important Reference Information</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>D. Useful Web Links</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>E. Philosophy</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>F. Expectations</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>G. Application Policies &amp; Procedures</b>	<b>7</b>
1. Workshops & College Counseling Meetings	7
2. Transcripts	7
3. College Application Limit	8
4. Completing College Applications	8
5. Teacher Recommendations	10
6. Secondary School Report	11
7. Midyear School Report	11
8. Final Report	11
9. Reporting Disciplinary Incidents to Colleges & Universities	11
10. Standardized Testing	13
11. Types of Applications	13
12. Demonstrating Interest	14
13. College Visits	15
14. Colleges Visiting WMA	16
15. Interviews	16
16. Financial Aid	17
17. College Decision	18
18. NCAA Eligibility Center	19
<b>H. College Application Checklist</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>A. Statement of Understanding (signature required)</b>	

I have read and understand the policies and procedures of the Wilbraham & Monson Academy College Counseling Office.

Student's Full Name (**Please Print**): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. Contact Information**

**John Boozang**  
Director of College Counseling

[jboozang@wma.us](mailto:jboozang@wma.us)  
413.596.9106  
[calendly.com/jboozang](https://calendly.com/jboozang)

**Maureen Kelly Chesky '02**  
Associate Director of College Counseling

[mkellychesky@wma.us](mailto:mkellychesky@wma.us)  
413.596.9105  
[calendly.com/mkellychesky](https://calendly.com/mkellychesky)

**Greg Walsh**  
Associate Director of College Counseling

[gwalsh@wma.us](mailto:gwalsh@wma.us)  
413.596.9172  
[calendly.com/gregoryfranciswalsh](https://calendly.com/gregoryfranciswalsh)

**Bill Wells**  
Associate Director of College Counseling

[bwells@wma.us](mailto:bwells@wma.us)  
413.596.9135

**Sandi Scott**  
Office Manager

[sscott@wma.us](mailto:sscott@wma.us)  
413.596.9102  
[calendly.com/sandiscott](https://calendly.com/sandiscott)

## C. Important Reference Information

**Address:**

Wilbraham & Monson Academy  
423 Main Street  
Wilbraham, MA 01095

**Phone:** 413.596.6811

**Fax:** 413.596.2448

**Website:**

<https://www.wma.us/>

**CEEB or High School Code:**

222400

## D. Useful Web Links

SCOIR

<https://app.scoir.com/signin>

- SCOIR is a dynamic and interactive college search, selection and application tool for students, parents and college counselors. Pronounced “score,” SCOIR is an Irish Gaelic verb that means to exit, retire or transition from one phase to another.

Common Application

<https://www.commonapp.org/>

ACT	<a href="https://www.act.org/">https://www.act.org/</a>
SAT	<a href="https://www.collegeboard.org/">https://www.collegeboard.org/</a>
NCAA Eligibility Center	<a href="https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/">https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/</a>

Financial Aid:

- U.S. Federal Financial aid <https://studentaid.gov/>
- Institutional Financial aid <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>
- Federal and Institutional aid <https://finaid.org>

Scholarships:

- <https://www.fastweb.com/>
- <https://www.scholarships.com/>
- <https://communityfoundation.org/students/scholarships/>

- Please refer to the Scholarships binder in Ms. Scott’s office in College Counseling for a complete list of available scholarship applications.

## E. Philosophy

Our primary goal is to thoughtfully and purposefully guide students in the college search, application and selection process. Utilizing a seminar format, individual meetings and various other counseling resources, we support our students in researching and identifying a range of colleges well suited to their interests, needs and

abilities. It is important to note that there is no singular “right” college for a student. A number of colleges will be wonderful matches, and our collective goal is to identify that group of “good fit” colleges for each student.

## F. Expectations

**It is expected that WMA students will:**

- Take an active and leading role in the entire search and application process
- Engage in genuine self-assessment and college research
- Pay attention to announcements, emails and meeting requirements with counselors

- Pay attention to deadlines throughout the college application process
- On a weekly basis and using SCOIR, review the schedule of college admission information sessions at WMA and attend those of interest
- Frequently check in with parents and reinforce partnership throughout the process
- Work cooperatively with faculty, counselors, coaches and parents to maximize opportunities

**It is expected that WMA parents will:**

- Continue to guide, support and trust your child
- Encourage your child to take the lead and to communicate their thoughts, feelings, concerns and preferences
- Keep the college counselor informed about any questions or concerns you may have so we can work together on behalf of your child
- Keep an open mind, in particular regarding what may define a “good” college in the context of overall fit for your child
- Encourage your child to be an effective self-advocate
- Attend live and virtual college counseling program events and scheduled meetings with the college counselor
- Read the weekly College Counseling bulletin emailed on Sunday evenings

**It is expected that WMA college counselors will:**

- Work collaboratively with all parties involved in the college process to ensure that each student is fully supported in the college search, application and decision process
- Provide timely information and updates about the college process.
- Provide students with a balanced list of good-fit options for prospective colleges and universities

- Actively engage in professional development and effectively communicate new trends, programs and insights, nationally and at individual colleges

## **G. Application Policies & Procedures**

### **1. Workshops & College Counseling Meetings**

Students are expected to attend workshops for the graduating class and individual sessions with their college counselor.

- Workshops and seminar classes for the graduating class will occur during the first half of the fall trimester, and dates will be announced prior to the start of the school year. During these meetings, important information about the college application process will be discussed.
- Seniors and PGs must meet with their college counselor for individual meetings a **minimum of three times** during the fall trimester. The first meeting must occur by October 1 at the latest.
- Seniors and PGs must meet with Ms. Scott at least once by Oct. 1 to discuss application procedures, confirm teacher recommenders, review transcripts and other graduating class requirements.

### **2. Transcripts**

Students who attended another high school before enrolling at Wilbraham & Monson Academy must submit a complete (and in the case of international students, translated) transcript from their previous high school to the College Counseling Office by the start of their Grade 12 or postgraduate year. For college application purposes, transcripts will be submitted on behalf of WMA applicants affirmatively; a specific request from a student to submit their transcript(s) is not required. Any transcript requests for purposes not associated with the college application process must be coordinated with the WMA Registrar by completing the transcript request form on the WMA website.

### **3. College Application Limit**

A comprehensive college search should yield a final list of 10 colleges or universities, and we strongly recommend a student submit a maximum of 10 applications which allows for a balanced and competitive list without becoming counterproductive. Because students can only attend one college, this policy encourages students and their families to thoughtfully evaluate institutions, prioritize what is most important in the college search, and then make informed decisions about which colleges will offer the best fit. It's important to note that applying to more than 10 schools can be overwhelming and may contribute to an inordinately high number of applications from WMA to an institution. This may adversely affect the chances of admission for all applicants.

If a student chooses to apply to more than 15 schools, a surcharge of \$25 will be assessed for each additional application.

#### **4. Completing College Applications**

- Students are responsible for completing their own college applications.
- There are two primary ways to apply to colleges:
  - A college's own online application
  - The Common Application: <https://www.commonapp.org/>
- Most colleges and universities to which WMA students apply utilize the Common Application; however, it is the student's responsibility to find out if the prospective college uses the Common Application or requires a specific application or another platform (e.g., the University of California application used for all UC campuses). If a college does use the Common Application, school-specific supplemental information may also be required, often including an additional essay. Again, it is the student's responsibility to determine each school's application requirements, including any supplement(s).
- All supporting documents including high school transcripts, teacher and counselor recommendation letters, and associated forms are sent to colleges and universities on the student's behalf through SCOIR. For application purposes, students do NOT need to request a transcript;



moving a college to the Applying or Applied column of the My Colleges list in SCOIR will alert a counselor and Ms. Scott that a transcript and/or other documents are required.

- Students must have their applications ready to submit **at least two weeks before** the college's or university's official deadline. Be mindful that deadlines for specific majors (e.g., nursing) and some scholarship programs are sometimes earlier than regular deadlines.

*Please note: Many application deadlines occur on Jan. 1 when WMA is on break. When this occurs, the student must be ready to apply two weeks before the beginning of WMA's vacation.*

- When an application is ready for submission, the student must meet with their college counselor to review the completed application in detail before its submission.
- The student will then schedule a meeting with Ms. Scott, who will review and submit the student's transcript, letters of recommendation and any other required documents electronically through SCOIR.
- If a college or university does not accept application materials electronically, the College Counseling Office will package all application materials and mail them to the institution.
- The student is responsible for paying all application fees and any required postage. Application fees can be paid online using a credit or debit card.

## **5. Teacher Recommendations**

- Most colleges require two teacher recommendations from either Grade 11 or Grade 12 teachers.
- Rarely is there a need to submit more than two letters of recommendation to a college. Students are responsible for coordinating the submission of any external recommendations.

- Students should confer with their counselor to determine which teachers would be best suited to serve as recommenders.
- At least four weeks prior to the first application deadline, a student is required to personally request a recommendation letter from their teacher. After the teacher agrees to write a recommendation, the student will add the teacher as a recommender in SCOIR by clicking the “Application Documents” tab of their “My Colleges” page and selecting “Request a Recommendation.” The student will then complete a Teacher Recommendation Survey and Counselor Recommendation Survey, accessed in the Surveys section by clicking the Me tab.
- Teachers will upload recommendation letters and forms to a student’s SCOIR according to the following deadlines:

<u>College Application Deadline</u>	<u>Recommendation Due Date</u>
Oct. 15	Oct. 1
Nov. 1 - 15	Oct. 20
Dec. 1 - 15	Nov. 20
Jan. 1 or after	Dec. 1

## **6. Secondary School Report**

- The Secondary School Report (SSR) is completed by the student's college counselor and will be completed and submitted electronically through SCOIR when a student applies.
- Similar to teacher recommendations, if any colleges do not accept supporting application material electronically, the student must give their college counselor a hard copy of any college-specific form.

## **7. Midyear School Report**

In January, the College Counseling Office submits Midyear Reports (MYR) to all colleges where students have active applications. The grades used for these reports are the first trimester (T1). Again, students do NOT need to request transcripts for the Midyear Report. Transcripts are sent affirmatively to the colleges on their college list.

## **8. Final Report**

Within two weeks of Commencement, a Final Report and a final transcript are sent to the college or university where the student has deposited and will matriculate. Transcripts are also sent to the NCAA for those students who will compete in Division I or II athletics. Students do NOT need to request these transcripts; they are sent affirmatively to the institutions.

## **9. Reporting Disciplinary Incidents to Colleges and Universities**

Wilbraham & Monson Academy's motto "Live Clean. Speak True. Work Hard. Play Fair." embodies the collective and noble values celebrated for generations within our WMA community. To act responsibly, with compassion and integrity are longstanding ideals that define our school, inspire decisions and interactions, and foster a heightened sense of purpose and character.

In this light and in compliance with the National Association for College Admission Counseling's Statement of Principles of Good Practice, we expect and urge our students to respond honestly when asked to disclose disciplinary incidents on their college applications. In addition, WMA may disclose the following disciplinary actions to colleges or other secondary schools: (i) an applicant's probation, suspension, removal, dismissal or expulsion resulting from the violation of a Major School Rule and (ii) any adverse change in a leadership position resulting from disciplinary measures. WMA will also inform colleges and other secondary schools about any material change in the student's academic standing or enrollment status, including withdrawal and/or a material change in the student's course load. WMA may report information regarding discipline or change in status even after an application has been submitted or the student has been accepted regardless of whether the college or other next school specifically requests such information. WMA encourages students to inform their colleges or other schools to which they have applied of any subsequent reportable

disciplinary actions or change in status and will give students a reasonable opportunity to share this information before WMA notifies the college(s) or next school.

If a reportable change occurs after applications have been submitted, the student is required to notify colleges or universities within two weeks of the date of the status change. In reporting changes, the student should confer with their college advisor to ensure that the effect and wording of the notification are appropriate.

Clearly, disciplinary matters are of concern to colleges and universities; however, our experience suggests that they understand that young people make mistakes and learn from them. Admission committees are generally more concerned with the manner in which students respond to any disciplinary measures than the actual transgression. A thoughtful, mature and articulate response to a discipline infraction can illustrate a student's accountability and growth as an individual.

## **10. Standardized Testing**

- Students are responsible for determining and understanding the testing requirements for each school to which they will apply.
- Although many colleges and universities have implemented test-optional policies, many institutions still require or welcome the SAT or the ACT.
- Students are responsible for submitting official standardized test scores to each school. Students send official scores through their online accounts directly from their individual testing agency accounts: College Board (<https://www.collegeboard.org/>), ACT (<https://www.act.org/>) and TOEFL - Test of English as a Foreign Language (<https://www.ets.org/toefl>). Note, colleges will only accept those scores submitted electronically through student accounts.
- Refer to <http://www.fairtest.org/> for a current list of test-optional colleges and universities

## 11. Types of Applications

- **Early Decision (ED):** Early Decision applications are **binding** and applicants are **required to enroll if accepted**. Students may not apply Early Decision to more than one college. If a student does apply ED, the college should be the student's first choice, and the decision must be discussed with their college counselor and their families. Most ED deadlines occur either Nov. 1 or Nov. 15 and students are typically notified of the college's decision in mid-December.
- **Early Action (EA):** Early Action applications are **not binding**. Like Early Decision, most Early Action deadlines are either Nov. 1 or Nov. 15 and students are typically notified of the college's decision in mid-December. Students can apply EA to more than one school, unless they apply under a Restricted Early Action (REA) or an Early Action Single Choice program.
- **Restricted Early Action (REA) or Early Action Single Choice:** Another non-binding application plan, students apply early, typically by Nov. 1 or 15, and are notified by mid-December. It is important to note the restriction under this program is that a student may not apply Early Decision to any school.
- **Rolling Admissions:** If a school offers Rolling Admission, it allows for a student's application to be reviewed shortly after it is submitted and an admission decision is released typically within three weeks. Students can optimize their chances of admission by applying early in the process.
- **Priority and Fast Applications:** Some colleges offer accelerated decisions to those students who apply within a certain time period. Applications received on or before the specified priority date will be reviewed first, and students can expect an earlier decision. Institutions may utilize this program to bolster applicant pools and often entice prospective applicants with preferential consideration for admission, housing and scholarships. Students who plan to submit a Priority or Fast Application should discuss any invitations to do so with their counselor.

- **Regular Decision:** This is the most common application type. Students apply to colleges according to their regular deadline, which is most often Jan. 1 or 15, and typically receive admission decisions from the college in late March or early April.

## 12. Demonstrating Interest

Many colleges and universities will consider a student's level of interest in their institution in the overall admission decision. In short, admission offices want to admit qualified students who want to be part of their communities. Many offices track applicant interest levels and place a premium on campus visits, perhaps interviews, attendance at regional information sessions or meeting with a college representative on the WMA campus. Other ways to demonstrate interest include internet inquiries, phone calls, communication with coaches, opening emails from colleges, virtual tours and information sessions, etc.

## 13. College Visits

- A campus visit is often the most effective tool in helping students determine if a prospective college or university may align with their search preferences or “fit” them. Visits can also be an integral way of demonstrating interest in a school. We strongly encourage students and families to visit campus during the summer months before their grade 12 year, if not before. For each visit, be sure to register for a tour and information session via the school's admission website.
- Students are entitled to three separate trips, any of which may require multiple days depending on the number of schools or distance traveled.
- At least three days before departure, a College Visit Request form and a detailed itinerary of the trip are required for consideration. The form provides the pertinent details of the college visit, including dates of travel and return, mode of transportation, etc., and must be signed by the student's advisor, coach, college counselor, the Dean of Students and each of the student's teachers. Visits that extend school breaks, including long weekends, may not be approved.

- Students will be excused from classes to visit college campuses in their graduating year. Most students will use their visit days in the fall term; however, some will reserve their days for the winter or spring.
  - Members of the graduating class may be excused from up to four days of school in the spring for planned college visits to high-interest schools that have offered admission.
  - Note that the four days cannot be consecutive; only two days may be consecutive. As an example, the consecutive days could be Monday and Tuesday, or Wednesday and Thursday, or Friday and Monday.
  - Official documentation confirming a visit is required from each school. College admission offices provide said documentation readily upon request, and it must be submitted to Ms. Chan in the Deans Office the morning after returning to campus.
  - Academic and athletic policies remain in place and any absences must be approved by teachers, coaches and others noted in the College Visit Request form.
  - Any campus visits are subject to final approval from the Deans Office and College Counseling and will be limited to those students in good academic and social standing.
- Students should discuss their visit plan with their college counselor.
- Campus visits for members of the grade 11 class will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

#### **14. Colleges Visiting WMA**

Admission representatives from more than 80 colleges and universities visit WMA each fall to conduct information sessions. This is a good opportunity to learn more about a particular institution and to meet a member of their admission team. Interested juniors and seniors are welcome to attend if they

notify their teacher a day in advance of any class absence. Students can sign up for any session via SCOIR.

## 15. Interviews

- **On-Campus Interviews:** Many schools, in particular smaller liberal arts colleges, offer applicants the option of on-campus interviews. If you are interested in pursuing an interview, please discuss this with your counselor. The College Counseling office conducts interview workshops, including mock interviews, for any interested students.
- **Alumni Interviews:** In lieu of and sometimes in addition to on-campus interviews, many schools offer alumni interviews. Some schools require alumni interviews as part of the application process. In these cases, the admission office or interviewer may contact the applicant after the application has been submitted to schedule the time and location of the interview. At other institutions, an applicant can request an alumni interview if he or she is unable to get to campus.
- With any interview, it is always advisable to follow up with a thank you note or email. Be sure to personalize your email by addressing it to the person with whom you met.

## 16. Financial Aid

Given the rising cost of education, finances are an increasingly significant part of college planning. Parents are encouraged to openly discuss with students the overall fiscal realities, which may include financial aid. There are two primary types of financial aid for undergraduate studies: need-based aid and merit-based aid.

In October of a student's graduating year of high school, families of U.S. citizens and permanent residents can apply for federal financial aid using the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) available at <https://studentaid.gov/>. There are three basic types of federal student financial aid: grants, work-study and loans. Grants are gifts and do not have to be repaid. Work-study is student assistance in the form of college employment to offset schooling costs. Loans enable students and parents to borrow funds to meet



educational costs; they are interest-bearing and typically offer extended payment terms.

At most private colleges and universities, domestic and international families can also apply for institutional financial aid by completing a CSS/Financial Aid Profile available at <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>. Note, that some institutions require their own profile form which can be downloaded from the tuition or financing pages of a school's website. Profile forms are available for filing as early as November. Merit-based aid can be offered by individual institutions to applicants with particular strengths.

It is important to note that most colleges and universities offer a Net Price or Net Tuition Calculator on the admission website pages to help families determine the level of financial aid they may qualify for. For specific financial aid questions, families are encouraged to connect with area college financial aid officers or those at specific schools, given their expertise in the areas of federal, state and institutional aid programs. Financial aid officers can also provide details about private and governmental loan programs available.

Families are urged to review financial aid and scholarship websites as useful resources. These include: <https://studentaid.gov/>, <https://finaid.org>, <https://www.fastweb.com/> and <https://www.scholarships.com/>.

At most U.S. colleges and universities, significant financial aid is typically not available to international students. Some of the most selective colleges offer need-based aid to international students while other schools may offer some merit-based grants. Any international students who will require financial aid should consult with their college counselor.

## 17. College Decision

Most Regular Decision or Early Action programs do not require students to accept or decline an offer of admission until the May 1 National Candidates Reply Date, leaving ample time for students to make informed decisions. When a student decides in favor of a college, he or she is required to submit any necessary enrollment forms, along with a security deposit of a specified amount. Please note that a student may deposit at **only one** institution. Depositing at more than one school is unethical, is not allowed and may jeopardize matriculation. If a student submits multiple enrollment deposits, the

College Counseling office will be required to alert the involved admission offices of the situation. Instructions for selecting and depositing at an institution are provided in the admission portal or page of a chosen school.

If a student has been placed on a waitlist at a higher preference school, they can deposit at only **one** of the schools offering admission pending a final decision from the waitlist institution. After depositing, the student **must** decline offers of admission from all other institutions. An example of appropriate wording in this regard can be found in the My Drive section of SCOIR.

## **18. NCAA Eligibility Center**

Student-athletes interested in participating in college athletics should inform their college counselor and familiarize themselves with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its eligibility mandates. Those aspiring to compete at the NCAA Division I or II level are required to create an NCAA Certification Account by the end of junior year at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/> for consideration of academic eligibility and amateur status. Specific eligibility requirements are clearly delineated on the NCAA website.

## **H. College Application Checklist for Members of the Graduating Class**

- Meet with your college counselor at least three times before your first application deadline. The first meeting will occur before Sept. 15.
- Meet with Ms. Scott at least once before Sept. 20.
- Finalize plans for college visits with your college counselor and attend information sessions with visiting admission representatives from colleges and universities of interest.
- Review your final list of colleges with your college counselor and family; the list should not exceed 10 colleges or universities. You're required to confirm your plan to apply to a specific school no less than a month before the application deadline.

- Fully research the application requirements at each school and be fully aware of deadlines, supplements, standardized testing and other requirements.
- Register for any fall or winter standardized test (SAT, ACT or TOEFL) in a timely manner.
- Ask teachers for recommendations at least four weeks before your earliest application deadline. Once a teacher agrees to write, provide all required forms, including the teacher recommendation survey.
- Submit a completed application at least two weeks before a college's deadline after meeting with your college counselor for a final review of your application and required documents.
- Submit official standardized testing scores to colleges as required through your account portal(s) prior to the application deadlines.
- If applying for need-based or merit-based aid, parents have submitted a complete FAFSA and CSS Profile by the noted deadlines.
- Discuss admission offers with your college counselor and family to make a thoughtful and informed decision about which school to attend.
- Deposit at one institution and send withdrawal emails to your remaining schools.