

# **College Planning Guide**



## **Central Mountain High School**

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# Central Mountain High School

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# WHAT SHOULD I BE DOING?

## Junior Year Calendar

### SEPTEMBER

- Think about a possible major and where you might want to attend college; start researching possible schools
- Check to make sure you are taking all the high school courses required for admission to colleges you are interested in
- Make a testing plan for the PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test) and the SAT. The PSAT is only offered once per year and the registration deadline is usually very early in September for the October test.
- Join clubs, engage in community service activities, get involved and beef up that resume!

### OCTOBER

- Be aware of your high school rank and grade point average.
- Attend any college fairs or open houses in your area.
- Meet with college representatives when they visit your school.
- Share with your parents the information given to you by your school counselor

### NOVEMBER & DECEMBER

- Visit college websites. Spend some time reviewing the college materials available through the counseling office and/or college websites.

### JANUARY/FEBRUARY

- Select your senior year courses. Review your selections with your parents. Be sure to take academically challenging courses to best prepare yourself for college.
- Check with your counselor regarding dual-enrollment options for senior year.
- Register for the March SAT or the ACT.

### MARCH/APRIL

- Arrange a college visit with the admissions office at the colleges where you plan on applying. The college visit is very important in the college selection process.
- Study the practice tests for the ACT and SAT—they are very helpful in preparing you for these tests. Practice tests are available through CollegeBoard.org

### MAY & JUNE

- Take the ACT and/or the SAT.
- Visit colleges during the summer.

### JUNE & JULY

- Attend a summer program offered by a college

## **Senior Year Calendar**

### **SEPTEMBER**

- Be aware of your high school rank and grade point average.
- Review graduation, college, apprenticeship, and armed services admission requirements.
- Finalize the list of colleges to which you want to apply.
- Check admissions requirements to determine whether you should retake the ACT or SAT and the deadlines. If so, register immediately.
- Meet with college representatives when they visit our school.
- Arrange a college visit with the admissions office at the colleges where you are applying.

### **OCTOBER**

- Attend Financial Aid Night at CMHS.
- Complete the application forms for admission to colleges.
- Meet with college representatives when they visit your school.
- Complete Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [FAFSA](http://www.studentaid.gov) (www.studentaid.gov)
- Begin researching scholarship opportunities.
- Re-take ACT and/or SAT if you have registered to do so.

### **NOVEMBER**

- Continue to complete applications for colleges. Check deadlines!
- Research potential scholarships. Check deadlines!

### **DECEMBER**

- Review all admissions procedures with the colleges where you have applied. Check with the admissions office if you have any questions about your application.
- Research potential scholarships. Check deadlines!

### **JANUARY**

- Complete any pending applications.
- Direct financial aid questions to the financial aid office at the college where you have been admitted.
- Request that mid-year grades be sent to colleges that require them.
- Don't forget to apply for scholarships!

### **FEBRUARY**

- Complete and submit all scholarship applications.

### **MARCH & APRIL**

- Make admissions decisions and keep applying for those scholarships!
- Submit your application for the CMHS Local Senior Awards

### **MAY**

- Arrange with your high school to have your final transcript sent to the college to which you have accepted admission

# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING: SAT vs. ACT

The majority of Central Mountain High School students take the SAT when applying to college, but the ACT is also an option for you. With the recent revisions to the SAT, there are now not many differences between the SAT and ACT. Both are good options as you complete the college admissions process. Here's a more detailed breakdown of some of the potential differences:

|                                     | SAT                                                                                                                                  | ACT                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| How much does it cost?              | \$68 (2024-2025)<br>**Fee waivers are available if you qualify for free/reduced lunch – come to the guidance office to request one** | \$63<br>**Fee waivers are available if you qualify for free/reduced lunch – come to the guidance office to request one** |
| Where is it given?                  | Central Mountain High School (school-day testing only), Williamsport Area High School, Loyalsock, etc.                               | State College Area High School                                                                                           |
| What am I tested on?                | reading, writing & language and math                                                                                                 | English, math, reading, and science – and optional writing section                                                       |
| How long is the test?               | 2 hours 15 minutes                                                                                                                   | 2 hours 55 minutes + 40-minute essay (optional)                                                                          |
| How are the scores reported?        | Composite score range of 400–1600                                                                                                    | Composite score range of 1–36                                                                                            |
| Is there a penalty for guessing?    | No penalty for guessing                                                                                                              | No penalty for guessing                                                                                                  |
| What schools will accept my scores? | All U.S. colleges                                                                                                                    | All U.S. colleges                                                                                                        |
| How do I register?                  | <a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a>                                                                       | <a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a>                                                               |

## **When should I take the SAT (or ACT)?**

Students are encouraged to take the SAT/ACT during the spring of the junior year. Ideally, students will take the PSAT in October of their junior year and then use the results from the PSAT to help study for the SAT. PSAT results typically become available in December. The March SAT date is a good goal to set for yourself – by taking the SAT in March, you would then have time to take the SAT for a second time in June if you want to try to improve your scores. Some seniors also choose to take the SAT in October for a 2nd or 3rd time. See below for the test dates and registration deadlines for the SAT and the ACT – you need to plan ahead in order to avoid a late registration fee!

## **How do I register to take the SAT/ACT?**

Once you've decided to take the SAT and/or ACT, you'll need to register. The registration deadline for most test dates (SAT or ACT) is usually a month before the test date so be sure to register far enough in advance. Once you've registered, start to prepare!

Registration is online:

SAT: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

ACT: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

If you receive free or reduced lunch at school, you can get your registration fee paid for with a fee waiver. Come to the Student Services (guidance) office and let us know what date you want to take the test and we'll work on getting you a fee waiver. If you use a fee waiver, you will also have access to 4 college application fee waivers that you can use when applying to colleges.

## **How should I prepare for the SAT/ACT?**

A Personalized Study Plan just for you! College Board has partnered with Khan Academy to offer a free, personalized study plan for the SAT. If you took the PSAT (Preliminary SAT), you can share your test scores and get a personalized SAT study plan based on your PSAT results. If you didn't take the PSAT, you can take a few short quizzes and get a personalized study plan. To access/create your personalized study plan, visit [www.satpractice.org](http://www.satpractice.org).

## **Check Your Progress**

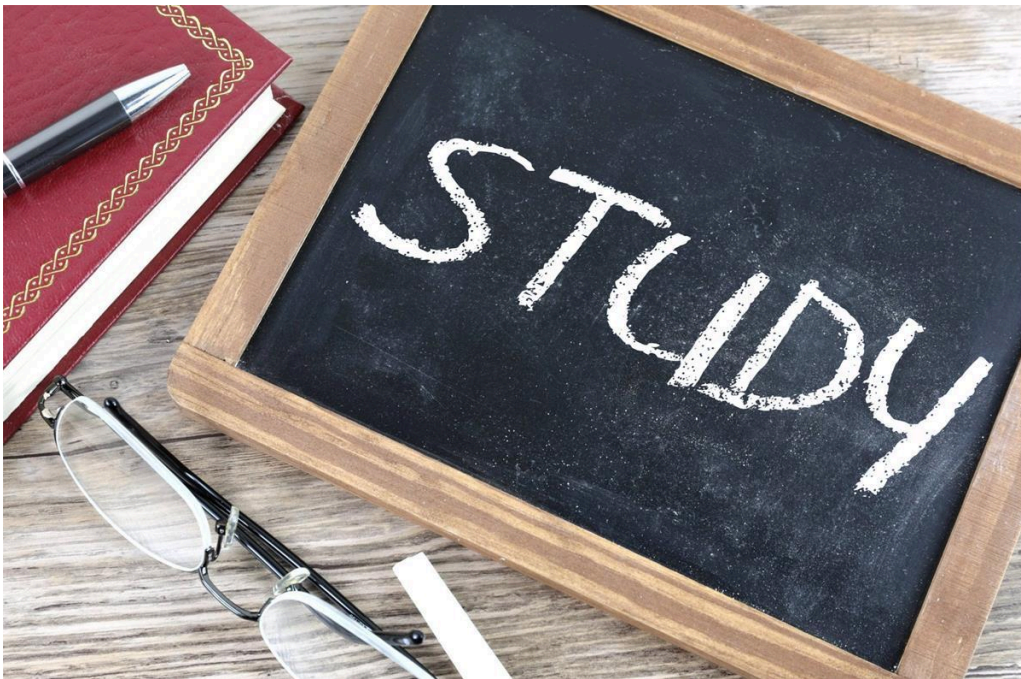
Once you've put in enough hours on Khan Academy and you've been answering a daily question, download and complete one of 8 (or all 8) full-length practice tests. You can score the test by hand or use the App to score your test. Access the practice tests here: [Full-Length SAT Suite Practice Tests](#).

## **Grab a Student Guide**

If you don't have immediate access to a computer or phone, stop in the Student Services (guidance) office for the SAT Student Guide. The guide includes information about the SAT, test-taking advice and tips, and an official practice test.

## **ACT Prep**

Much of the prep you have access to for the SAT would also be applicable for the ACT. However, if you want materials tailored specifically to the ACT, visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org). You can download a free study guide, access a question a day through the ACT Profile, and access practice for each test session. ACT offers an online personalized prep program as well, but for a cost. We also have a test prep book in the office that we can lend to you!



# **COLLEGE: THE PROCESS, COST and the SELECTION DECISION**

Choosing a college can and should be an exciting and challenging task. This guide is designed to help with the process and walk you through some important steps. These steps for college selection include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Complete the Career Planner and College Planner section of this book.
2. Collect information about the colleges you are interested in attending.
3. Record the information in the College Research Sheet.
4. Consider college costs and financial aid.
5. Apply to the colleges you would like to attend.

## **THE PROCESS**

Complete the Career Planner and College Planner found on page 10. Talk about your goals with parents/guardians, counselors or others who will support you in your efforts. Feel free to revise these sections as you go through the process of selecting your college and discovering what you want to do when you graduate from high school.

Collect information about the colleges you are interested in attending using a number of resources. The Internet is a great way to get information about the colleges you are considering, but it is only one resource available to you. Your school counseling office has information, guides and publications that can assist you. In addition, there are opportunities throughout the school year to meet with college representatives to visit and obtain more information on the schools you are considering.

Utilize the College Research Sheet found on page 12. Make copies of these sheets as needed. You will use these Research Sheets to determine which colleges you will apply to and, eventually, which college you will attend.

## CAREER PLANNER

Planning your career goals in advance will help you enter and succeed in a career.

My career goals are:

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My interest, skills and knowledge supporting my career goals are:

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Additional skills and knowledge I will need to fulfill my career goals are:

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I will obtain the additional skills and knowledge I need by taking part in the following educational activities:

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Extracurricular activities that could assist me in learning more about my chosen career include:

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## COLLEGE PLANNER

Planning your college goals to coincide with your career goals is critical to success.

In order to pursue my career, I will need a degree, certification and/or specialized training in:

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What factors in selecting a college are important to me?

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Two or four years: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of campus: \_\_\_\_\_

Size of classes: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Scholarships/aid: \_\_\_\_\_

Student life/activities: \_\_\_\_\_

Internet classes: \_\_\_\_\_

Transfer credits: \_\_\_\_\_

My reasons for attending college ranked in order from 1 to 10 (1 being most important):

I want to go: \_\_\_\_\_ Parents: \_\_\_\_\_

Friends: \_\_\_\_\_ Earn more \$: \_\_\_\_\_

Meet new people: \_\_\_\_\_ Athletics: \_\_\_\_\_

Get away from home: \_\_\_\_\_ Like school: \_\_\_\_\_

Develop a skill: \_\_\_\_\_ Fun: \_\_\_\_\_

I will look for more information about the following colleges:

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## TIPS FOR RESEARCHING COLLEGES

### Research Resources:

- Big Future (College Board):  
[BigFuture](#)
- [College Scorecard](#)
- Niche: [2025 Best Colleges in America - Niche](#)

### How to Schedule a College Visit?

- Visit the college's website – Admissions or call the Admissions Office
- Start with an Open House visit – colleges schedule specific dates and have a specific schedule of events planned.
- If you are trying to decide between a few schools, schedule an overnight visit with the Admissions Office.
- An Overnight Visit allows you to:
  - Interact with current students
  - Attend some classes
  - Experience dorm life
  - Eat the campus food

### Not sure what schools to visit?

Start with talking to an admissions rep at the high school. Several colleges make appointments at the high school and you can get some of your questions answered without leaving Clinton County!

Now schedule a college campus visit!

### The College Visit

Your visit to a campus is very important. It is a great way to determine if that college meets your needs and if it is the right fit for you.

### Before visiting a campus:

1. Contact the Admissions Office.
2. Prepare a list of questions.
3. Look through the website/read the literature you already have.

### During your campus visit:

1. Look at the academic areas. Are the classrooms adequate? Are the lab facilities in your major of interest up-to-date?
2. What is the typical class size?
3. Are the library facilities sufficient?
4. Does the college offer job placement services and career advising? What internship opportunities are there in my desired major?
5. What are the grading procedures and requirements?
6. Is the campus appealing? Clean and orderly?
7. What is the campus housing like?
8. What kinds of meal plans are available?
9. What student clubs or activities does the college have?
10. Do the athletic and recreational areas suit you?
11. Ask about campus safety and crime statistics.
12. Where are the graduates in your desired major currently working? Are they employed in their area of study?

# COLLEGE RESEARCH SHEET

*(make additional copies as needed)*

Name of School: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

## 1. Admissions:

Class Standing Requirement: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended Entrance Exam Scores: ACT \_\_\_\_\_ SAT \_\_\_\_\_

Application Deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Affiliations:

\_\_\_\_\_ Public \_\_\_\_\_ Private (religious emphasis)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Coed \_\_\_\_\_ All men  
\_\_\_\_\_ Private (no religious emphasis) \_\_\_\_\_ All women

## 3. Cost:

Tuition is based on credit hours and fees are additional. To calculate the tuition and fees you will need to factor in both. For example, assume the tuition is \$100/credit hour and the fee is \$50 per semester. If you are taking 12 credit hours you would pay \$1,250 per semester for tuition and fees.

Tuition & Fees/year \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00  
Room & Board/year \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00  
Books & Supplies \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00  
Transportation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00  
Miscellaneous \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00  
Total Cost/year \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

## 4. Size:

\_\_\_\_\_ Under 2,000 Students \_\_\_\_\_ Under 20,000 Students  
\_\_\_\_\_ Under 10,000 Students \_\_\_\_\_ Over 20,000 Students

## 5. Information on available majors:

My Possible Majors/Degrees Offered?

\_\_\_\_\_ YES NO  
\_\_\_\_\_ YES NO  
\_\_\_\_\_ YES NO

## 6. Will the school accept Dual Enrollment/Earned AP Credits? YES NO

# SELECTING & APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Applying to the colleges you would like to attend and waiting to be accepted is an exciting and nerve wracking time.

## **Key points to consider when applying are:**

- Some programs fill quickly, so apply as soon as possible
- Follow all the instructions on the application form carefully
- Understand the admission/testing requirements for each college
- Keep copies of all forms for your records
- Access & use your application fee waivers – these will be available to you if you used a fee waiver for the SAT
- Track your applications with the College Application Record

## **When applying, consider these options:**

- Early Decision: Typically have an early deadline (November) and requires a binding agreement from the student to attend that school if accepted
- Early Action: Students apply early and will receive an admissions decision early in the admission process, but are not committed to attending that school
- Regular Decision: Deadlines will vary by school, but there is a set date by which your application materials must be submitted. Admissions decisions will be received after the deadline.
- Rolling Admissions: Colleges accept applications during a large window and will review applications at specific points in that window and determine an admission decision for students rather than waiting for all applications to be received.

## COLLEGE APPLICATION RECORD

| COLLEGE | DATE APPLICATION<br>SUBMITTED SENT | DATE TRANSCRIPT<br>REQUESTED | DATE FAFSA<br>SUBMITTED |
|---------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
|         |                                    |                              |                         |
|         |                                    |                              |                         |
|         |                                    |                              |                         |
|         |                                    |                              |                         |
|         |                                    |                              |                         |

# SENDING YOUR TRANSCRIPT TO COLLEGES

As part of the college application process, colleges require that students submit their high school transcript. Some colleges are moving toward a self-reported academic record. Even if self-reporting is a component of the application, students will still need to submit an official high school transcript to verify high school graduation.

Students must fill out a transcript request form (found here): [Transcript Request Forms](#)  
*Both parent and student must sign the form.*

Return the form to Aleisha Jarrells, Student Services (Guidance) Secretary, at  
[ajarrells@kcsd.k12.pa.us](mailto:ajarrells@kcsd.k12.pa.us)

Students often find it helpful to review their transcript prior to filling out college applications. To obtain a copy of your transcript for yourself, use the same transcript request form and write “student copy” on it.

# THE COST

Considering the cost of college and how you will pay for it is critical. The cost of college includes:

- Tuition and fees
- Books and supplies
- Housing
- Food
- Transportation
- Activities
- Personal care
- Fun

There are several ways to pay for college including:

Family, financial aid, scholarships and employment.

Financial aid is money to help you pay for college. It includes grants, low-interest loans and part-time employment. Financial aid sources and regulations are changing.

Regardless of your situation you may be eligible for financial aid. To be eligible, you must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which can be found at [FAFSA® Application | Federal Student Aid](#)

Filing a FAFSA is required to be eligible for:

Federal Grants, State Grants,  
Work-Study Programs (DO NOT  
REQUIRE PAYBACK)  
Student Loans and Parent Loans  
(MUST BE PAID BACK)

**Attend Financial Aid Night for help in filling out the FAFSA!**

Scholarships and awards are offered by colleges, employers, civic groups, community and service organizations, churches and religious organizations, local businesses and other groups. Scholarships have a variety of requirements, submission deadlines and applications. Although your counseling office can assist you in locating many available scholarships, you should research all available sources.

Some free scholarship research sites:

- ☐ Going Merry: [goingmerry.com](http://goingmerry.com)
- ☐ Fastweb: [Fastweb](http://Fastweb)
- ☐ Big Future: [BigFuture](http://BigFuture)

Employment while in college is not uncommon. In addition to work-study programs which allow you to work at the college you attend, most colleges have a career services area which can help put you in touch with employers in the area.

College aid may come in the form of grants from some colleges. Application is made by filing the college's financial aid application. In addition to the above listed sources of aid, students may find assistance through the U.S. Military and through colleges that offer cooperative education. Cooperative education is a program where students work in business or industry every other semester. Contact the college admissions office for information for these programs.

# TIPS ON APPLYING FOR FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid can be used to cover many college expenses, including tuition, books and supplies. Your counselor will host a Financial Aid Night in October to assist you with filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Here are a few things to keep in mind when applying for financial aid.

1. Financial aid is offered to supplement what the family is able to pay for college costs. Students are also expected to save money to help with college expenses.
2. With one form, the FAFSA, you can apply for federal aid, state aid, and aid from the colleges you are considering, which can be found at [FAFSA® Application | Federal Student Aid](#)
3. A college financial aid application may be required in addition to the FAFSA. You should contact the college directly to determine their requirements.
4. When a student files a FAFSA, the family's income is analyzed and the student's need is determined.
5. Many families will be responsible for some, if not all, of the student's college expenses.
6. Students who are eligible for financial aid may be offered a combination of grants, loans and employment awards as the means of assistance in meeting their need.
7. Colleges will not award aid to a new student until they are admitted. Apply early to the college of your choice.

## FINANCIAL AID MADE EASY!

### **Before completing the FAFSA, gather this information:**

- Social Security Number
- Alien registration number
- Federal tax information or returns (you may be able to retrieve and transfer tax information into the form automatically using the Internal Revenue Service Data Retrieval Tool – built into the FAFSA).
- Records of untaxed income
- Cash, savings, and checking account balances
- Investments other than the home in which you live

### **Submit the FAFSA:**

- Electronic form – <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa> - EASIEST AND FASTEST method
- Mail-in application (download PDF at studentaid.gov)

# FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to plan what you need to do to apply for and receive financial aid. Duplicate this checklist for each school to which you are applying. Due to limited resources, student aid is often awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Many of these checklist items have deadline dates so you should indicate the date by which you will need to complete each item. Check off each Action Item as you complete it. You can get help for many of these Action Items from each college's web site or your school's counseling office.

| ✓ | DUE<br>DATE | Application processing action item FOR: _____<br>(school)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|---|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   |             | File your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible on or after December 1st. You may file the FAFSA electronically using FAFSA on the Web, which contains built-in edits to help prevent costly mistakes, at <a href="#">FAFSA® Application   Federal Student Aid</a>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|   |             | Apply for state financial aid before the application deadline and promptly reply to any requests for additional information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|   |             | Promptly respond to any school requests for additional information or documentation, such as copies of federal tax returns, verification worksheets, or other forms.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|   |             | Review your Student Aid Report (SAR), which is sent to you via e-mail or postal mail after you file the FAFSA, for accuracy. If necessary, correct inaccurate items on-line at <a href="#">FAFSA® Application   Federal Student Aid</a> or on the paper SAR, if you receive one.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|   |             | Investigate private sources of financial aid for college. Check with your school and local libraries, local businesses and civic organizations, and your parents' employer(s). Take advantage of free Internet scholarship search engines, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• finaid on the Web – <a href="http://www.finaid.org">www.finaid.org</a></li> <li>• The College Board – <a href="#">BigFuture</a></li> <li>• fastweb – <a href="http://www.fastweb.com">www.fastweb.com</a></li> <li>• Going Merry - <a href="http://www.goingmerry.com">www.goingmerry.com</a></li> </ul> |
|   |             | Complete and submit all institutional financial aid application materials before all deadlines.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

# COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

| COLLEGE | LOCATION | ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS | SIZE | OFFERS MY MAJOR | PUBLIC | PRIVATE | TOTAL ESTIMATED COST | TOTAL FINANCIAL AID |
|---------|----------|------------------------|------|-----------------|--------|---------|----------------------|---------------------|
|         |          |                        |      |                 |        |         |                      |                     |
|         |          |                        |      |                 |        |         |                      |                     |
|         |          |                        |      |                 |        |         |                      |                     |
|         |          |                        |      |                 |        |         |                      |                     |
|         |          |                        |      |                 |        |         |                      |                     |
|         |          |                        |      |                 |        |         |                      |                     |

## MAKING THE FINAL DECISION

If you are accepted by more than one college, you will have to decide which one to attend. This can be a difficult decision. **THINK ABOUT WHICH COLLEGE WILL BE BEST FOR YOUR CAREER PLANS.** Discuss your plans with your parents and counselor.

Review which college offers the best environment for your learning style.

Review which college had the characteristics which fit best with your priorities.

Determine which college offers you the best financial aid package.

Once you have made your final selection, return your acceptance letter. It is expected that you notify the other colleges of your decision not to attend.

Consider the following points carefully and consider them as guides for success in college.

1. Maintain good study habits.
2. Be prepared to put in many hours of studying.
3. Spend time on campus.
4. Become a part of the school community.
5. Do not procrastinate.
6. Develop self-reliance.
7. Seek help when it is needed – be your own advocate.
8. Keep pursuing your goals and plans.

# COLLEGE: THE APPLICATION

## CORRESPONDING WITH A COLLEGE

There are numerous reasons why you may wish to correspond with a college. After you have narrowed your choices to a few schools that meet your criteria, you may need to contact those schools with questions. After you have submitted an application, you may have a question about its status or you may want to make sure all your materials have been received. Later, you may decide to withdraw your application or regret an acceptance.

Whenever you correspond with a college, remember to make your message brief, clear and concise. Keep the language and terminology professional – not ‘text’ language. It is also important to use a professional email address. Do not use your school district address, however, an email address like [babygirl123@whatever.com](mailto:babygirl123@whatever.com) is an example of an inappropriate email address. Begin by identifying yourself with your year in high school, and your relationship with the institution. (Example: new applicant, transfer student, admitted Fall 2017). Next you should briefly state your request. Conclude the message by thanking the reader for giving your message attention. Keep copies of your correspondence.

Following are four examples of the types of correspondence you may have occasion to write.

### SAMPLE EMAILS

You should use a formal email style for all communication with colleges or universities. The following email format is considered standard when communicating formally with an institution.

#### **Subject Line**

- Always include a subject line in your message.
  - Make sure the subject line is meaningful and descriptive.
  - Messages without subject lines are also more likely to be identified and tagged as SPAM or deleted before being read by the recipient.
- Example: “Early Decision Question” or “Application Inquiry”

#### **Greeting**

- Use a formal salutation at the start of your email.
- Example: “To Whom It May Concern: *(skip 2 lines)* I am interested in your Education major, and would like more information.”

## **Format**

- Use the inverted pyramid form of writing. Your most important statements should appear in the first few sentences of your email. Follow up with pertinent details.
- Keep paragraphs short and to the point. Cut out superfluous language.

Example: I am writing

- If your email is lengthy, use subheadings.

Example: “Questions about Course Offerings” or “Residential Life on Campus”

- Ask for action. Let your recipient know what you need.

Example: Please send me your Course Handbook for the 2025-2026 school year.

- Use the spell check after you are done typing.
- Re-read your email one last time to check for spelling or grammatical errors.

## **Closing**

- Use a formal salutation to close your email.

Example: “Sincerely, *(skip 2 lines)* John Smith”

## **Creating an Electronic Signature**

- A signature file can provide useful information such as a mailing and email address, phone/fax number, website address, or other contact information.
- Four or five lines are about the maximum. The signature appears at the end of your email message. Your signature file is your electronic business card.

Example: John Smith

100 Town Square *(next line)*

Mill Hall, PA. 17751 *(next line)*

jes01@kcsd.k12.pa.us *(next line)*

(570) 000-0000

## **To create your signature in Gmail, do the following:**

1. Open Gmail
2. In the upper right hand corner you'll see “settings.” Click to open.
3. About halfway down the page is the spot to create your signature.
4. In the signature box, type the text you want to include in your signature.
5. Make sure to click on “save changes” before you leave the page.

## Body of Email: Samples

### Sample 1

To: admissions@lockhaven.edu

Subject: *Requesting a College Visit*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a senior at Central Mountain High School in Mill Hall, Pennsylvania, and will graduate in June 2023. I am interested in scheduling a college visit in September. If possible, I would like to sit in on a class, meet with a professor in the Science Department, take a tour, and eat a meal in the cafeteria.

I appreciate your consideration of this email.

### Sample 2

To: admissions@psu.edu

Subject: *Requesting Learning Disability Admissions Materials*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a student with a learning disability and am completing my junior year at Central Mountain High School in Mill Hall, Pennsylvania. I expect to graduate in June 2023, and I am now beginning my college search.

I have heard that (name of college) has an excellent program for students with learning disabilities. Please send me any relevant information about this learning-disabled support program.

Thank you for any assistance you may be able to give me.

### Sample 3

To: admissions@pct.edu

Subject: *Withdrawing an Application*

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a senior at Central Mountain High School in Mill Hall, Pennsylvania. My application for admission to your school has been filed with you, but I need to withdraw my application at this time.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your consideration.

# COMPLETING YOUR COLLEGE APPLICATION

## **Guidelines for Completing a College Application**

1. Read the directions carefully before you begin the application. If possible, review the entire form before you begin to write. If possible, download the entire form. If you have any questions about the directions or the form itself, contact the admissions office or your high school counselor for clarification. If you can apply online, please do.
2. Most institutions prefer that you use their web application, which may be the Common Application
3. Make sure you have spelled everything correctly.
4. Don't leave any blank spaces on the form. For questions that do not apply to you, fill in the blank with N/A (not applicable) or with a dash.
5. When you have completed your application, follow the directions for submitting it with other required admissions materials.
6. Request an official transcript for EVERY college you apply to by using this link [Transcripts - Central Mountain High School](#). Your application will be considered incomplete without your transcript.
7. And finally, don't forget to ask permission from the people whose names you list as references.
8. Print out copies of your applications.  
\*For college applications which need to be mailed, make sure you submit your admission applications along with a stamped, addressed envelope to the Student Services (Guidance) Secretary at least 15 school days before the due date. The return address should be the school address (not your home address). The school address is 64 Keystone Dr, Mill Hall, PA 17751. Use a 9" X 12" envelope and 4 first-class stamps. This enables the counseling staff to process your high school transcript and gives your counselor and/or teacher enough time to write a recommendation for you, if necessary.

## REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Letters of recommendation are required by many schools as part of your admissions materials. The person writing the recommendation usually uploads the letters directly to the institution. By following these guidelines, you can ensure their timely submission.

1. For a Counselor letter of recommendation, you must complete the [Student Data Sheet](#) and return it to your counselor **15 days prior to the due date**. This is very important because you want your counselor to have time to write a thoughtful and detailed letter of recommendation for you.
2. For a Teacher Letter of Recommendation, ask the individuals if they are willing to write a positive letter of recommendation for you before you list their names.
3. Be considerate by asking for the letter **at least 15 days** in advance of the day it is due.
4. *Waive your right* to read the letter.
5. Provide the teacher with the Teacher Evaluation Recommendation Form from your college application if there is one. Ask your teacher if they require any additional information from you in order to write the letter. Direct them to send the letter to the counseling office before the due date. If they are completing an online recommendation, ask them to send a copy of their recommendation to counseling as well.
6. Most letters of recommendation will be submitted online, however if necessary supply the writer with a stamped envelope addressed to the college's admissions office or have them sent to the Counseling Office to be mailed with your transcript.
7. As the deadline approaches, check to make sure the letter has been sent.
8. Be sure to thank the people who wrote the letters for you.

# SAMPLE STUDENT RESUME

Some colleges request a student resume. Examples may be found on the web, or an example of one can be found below:

## Home Address/Telephone No.

Cell Phone number

Email address

## School Address/Telephone No.

Central Mountain High School

64 Keystone Drive

Mill Hall, PA 17751

(570) 893-4900

For further information contact:

(Put your Counselor's name here.)

## Educational and Career Goals -

### Academic Records -

Grade Point Average:

### Aptitude Test Records -

PSAT: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score - Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_

SAT: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score - Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score - Verbal \_\_\_\_\_ Math \_\_\_\_\_ Writing \_\_\_\_\_

ACT: Date \_\_\_\_\_ Score - \_\_\_\_\_ Score - \_\_\_\_\_

### Academic Awards and Recognition -

Samples - High Honor Roll

Any/all awards or recognitions, athletic and academic, received 9th - 12th grade

Extracurricular Activities -

Activity, dates and a brief explanation

Supplemental Education Enrichment Experiences -

Summer activities (dual enrollment courses, mentorships, etc.)

Travel experiences

Employment (paid or volunteer)

Community activities (clubs, organizations, church)

Hobbies

Special Skills or Interests not Mentioned Elsewhere –

Date of Preparation -

# WRITING A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ESSAY

The college essay is an important part of many college applications. It gives the admissions offices an opportunity to know more about you, your values, your goals, and your writing skills.

An overriding concern of admissions offices is that students do not take the importance of their essay seriously enough. This lack of regard is evidenced in both the content and presentation of the essay. Student writers are often guilty of these faults:

1. Not answering the questions
2. Writing one essay and then trying to adapt it to fit the essay topics of different schools
3. Submitting essays containing spelling, punctuation, and usage errors
4. Not organizing an answer or failing to develop ideas
5. Using careless language or slang
6. Not presenting a clear sense of who you are within your essay.

By avoiding these common errors, you can complete the essay with confidence and enhance your chances for admission. The following materials will help you. They include a list of guidelines for writing your essay and a list of essay topics.

## **GUIDELINES**

- START EARLY
- ANSWER THE QUESTION
- PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAY
- BE NEAT
- BE HONEST AND SINCERE
- KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE IN MIND
- GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES

## **A SAMPLING OF COLLEGE APPLICATION**

### **ESSAY TOPICS**

1. We're interested in the kind of positive risk-taking energy you would bring to our University. Please describe a time when you found the courage to step outside your comfort zone to do something unexpected and completely unlike you. Why did you take this risk? What have you learned from the experience?

Bucknell University

2. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.

Common Application

3. Tell us about how you might like to make a positive impact in the world through your studies at Penn State. Your answer should relate to your intended area of study, or to a possible area, if you are undecided.

Schreyer Honors College, Penn State

4. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.

Common Application

5. Imagine you're on the Admissions or Scholarship Committee. Tell us something about yourself that isn't apparent from your academic records – something that will give us insight about you as an individual and might help in the Committee's decision.

University of Pittsburgh

# INTERVIEWING AT A COLLEGE

The college interview provides a first-hand opportunity for you to assess a college or university as well as a chance for the admissions personnel to get to know you.

**Three different kinds of interviews may be available to you.**

**Group** interviews are information-giving sessions where as many as 25 students and their parents gather for a question-and-answer period with a college representative. These sessions provide little individual contact but are helpful in providing a general overview of the institution.

**Alumni** interviews are personal interviews with local alumni who evaluate you and send their evaluation to the college. Often alumni interviews are a factor considered in the admissions process.

**Personal** interviews take place at the college or university between you and an admissions staff member and are sometimes part of the admissions process. These interviews are usually scheduled for a one-hour period with an admissions counselor.

## Interview Questions

**Here are some common questions asked during a college interview:**

- Why are you interested in our particular college?
- Where do you see yourself in ten (10) years?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?
- What is the most difficult thing you have ever done?
- What is something you have done that has made you very proud?
- What are your favorite subjects and why?
- What are some things you really enjoy doing?

Note: Many questions may relate to your high school records/transcript. Be prepared to discuss them. You should request, from the Counseling Center, an **unofficial** copy of your transcript to take with you.

## DESIGNING AN INTERVIEW QUESTION

One of the best ways you can prepare for your college interview is to design thoughtful questions in advance. A good question involves a personal statement, relevant facts about the institution, and a question on an important topic. The following model outlines three basic steps you can follow in designing good interview questions.

1. Make a statement about yourself, your interests, and your concerns.

Example: “Art is a very strong interest of mine.

2. Add relevant facts you know from your research about the college.

Example: “I read about the extensive art history courses you offer.”

3. End with your question on a topic.

Example: “Can you tell me more about the extracurricular activities or field work opportunities for art history majors?”

Avoid asking questions that are answered on the college website or in the college catalogs such as: “Do you offer chemistry as a major?”

IF YOU HAVE A PERSONAL INTERVIEW, MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR INTERVIEWER’S NAME AND SEND HIM/HER A THANK YOU NOTE.

# HOW ARE APPLICATIONS EVALUATED?

When admissions committees read their hundreds of applications each year, they are most often evaluating candidates through the following criteria:

- Overall GPA - your weighted cumulative GPA is on your transcript.
- Class Rank
- Course Selection Rigor - have you taken advantage of the AP/Advanced courses offered at your school?
- High School Profile - how does CMHS compare to other high schools in the state/country?
- Standardized Test Scores - SAT, ACT
- Letters of Recommendation - other's perspectives on your abilities and achievements both in and out of the classroom can lend to new point of view to admissions committees.
- Personal Essay/Statement - let your personality and passions shine!
- Extracurricular Activities - have you demonstrated leadership and/or in-depth experience in something outside of your academics?
- Potential for Success - at the school you are applying to.
- Interest & Knowledge of the College - with students applying to an average of 5-7 schools, colleges want to know if you really want to attend their school.
- Final Grades - don't get senioritis! Do your best to keep your grades up until you graduate. We unfortunately have seen offers of admission revoked due to dropping grades during the second semester of the senior year.

# HELPFUL LINKS TO WEBSITES

[FAFSA® Application | Federal Student Aid](#)

(Free Application for Federal Student Aid – FAFSA)

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

(SAT registration, SAT practice and more)

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

(ACT registration and practice)

[BigFuture](#)

Big Future (college search, career search and scholarship search)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)

(Scholarship search)

[www.goingmerry.com](http://www.goingmerry.com)

(Scholarship search)

[www.mysmartborrowing.org](http://www.mysmartborrowing.org)

(an interactive tool where you can create up to 4 different scenarios to see how your career and college choices may affect how much you pay for college)

[www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org)

(Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency)

[www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org)

(Register with the NCAA for college athletics)

[www.asvabprogram.com](http://www.asvabprogram.com)

(Information about the ASVAB – a military entrance exam – and their career exploration program)

[Transcripts - Central Mountain High School](#)

(Transcript request instructions and form)

[Student Services - Central Mountain High School](#)

(CMHS Student Services website)