

WHAT COLLEGES LOOK FOR

Most colleges are very clear in their admissions requirements. You will have to research individual schools for their particular requirements, but the following are generally considered in the admissions decision:

- 4 years of high school courses including scholastic average and grades (GPA) and type/difficulty of courses taken
- Test scores from SAT/ACT and Regents exams
- Teacher and counselor recommendations
- Participation in school and extracurricular activities, community service, and part-time work

GRADES AND COURSES IN HIGH SCHOOL ARE MOST IMPORTANT

Your high school transcript will be one of the most important factors in whether you will be admitted to a particular college or university. Good grades in all your courses throughout high school show that you are willing to work hard and have an interest in a variety of subjects.

A poor grade or two in high school does not necessarily mean that you will not be admitted to a selective college. If your grades improve, even late in high school, most colleges will notice.

Colleges do consider the diversity and difficulty of courses. Success in tougher courses (AP) suggests you will do well in college.

Most colleges prefer that students take four years of math and four years of science and three years of a foreign language.

Common high school prerequisites for many colleges include successful completion of Trigonometry, Biology, and Chemistry. Also, some require Pre-calculus and Physics.

CRITERIA FOR COLLEGE ADMITTANCE

Grades and Courses

The quality of work a student has done in high school is the single most important factor in college acceptance. Colleges are interested in grades earned, the level of courses taken, the variety of courses taken and the trend that the grades indicate.

Class Rank

Class rank is your academic record compared to the other members of your class. Final weighted grades in all courses are used to determine class rank. Class rank is

computed at the end of 11th grade and is included on each student's permanent record and after the 1st semester of the 12th grade year.

Standardized Test Scores

Your college admissions testing scores (SAT I or ACT), course grades and other information in your academic record help college admissions personnel evaluate how prepared you are for college level work. Since course and grading standards vary from school to school, scores on standardized tests, help colleges compare the ability of students from different schools.

Some colleges require SAT II tests which measure your knowledge of particular subjects and your ability to apply knowledge. Check the requirements of the colleges where you might apply before deciding which tests to take.

Recommendations

Many colleges require a written recommendation by your school counselor. They may additionally require one or two recommendations by a classroom teacher, coach, administrator, employer, or other significant adult. Choose adults willing to write a recommendation for you. Be sure to give the person at least two weeks advanced notice. A recommendation can help enhance your chances of admission.

Activities and Special Talent

Although your academic credentials are the primary factors in determining your admission, your record of involvement in activities can be significant as a supporting credential. The activity record is a listing of all your clubs, sports, awards, and jobs. Colleges want to know, for example, if you have been a school leader, or if you have been working twenty hours per week after school. They are not looking for a long list, but rather the level of involvement and accomplishment in the activities that interest you. Special talents such as musical or athletic skills, dramatic or artistic interests, work with publications or managerial accomplishments are important factors. Admissions officers agree that talent in a particular area shows evidence of a person's depth of interest, or his initiative, and ultimately, of his achievement.

Essay and/or Interview

Many colleges may require essays and/or interviews. Seek help from knowledgeable adults to prepare for these.