

# Junior STAR Conference



**2024-2025**

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# JUNIOR YEAR TIMELINE

## Important dates, events and reminders

### JANUARY 2025

2 Senior course info handed out

3 Registration deadline for  
February 8 ACT (optional)

10 Senior course info due

15-17 1st semester finals

20 ACT Prep course at OHS

#### **This month:**

- Review your high school coursework for senior year. Keep in mind that colleges look for the following:
  - **Rigorous coursework**
  - **Strong GPA**
  - **Competitive ACT score**
  - Involvement in extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, volunteer work, or church involvement
- Community involvement

### FEBRUARY 2025

8 ACT test date (optional)

#### **This month:**

- Prepare for the March 11 ACT
- If interested in the ROTC or military academies, contact your OHS counselor
- Visit Xello for career and college information (access through PowerSchool)
- Visit the Student Services page on the OHS website for up-to-date career and college information
- Use your practice ACT results from Sept. to help focus your studying
- Create an initial list of colleges to contact for additional information. Find colleges that meet your needs. Consider fields of study, cost, location & size

### MARCH 2025

1 ECCP/SCN/CNA/Youth

Apprenticeship applications due

4 Take the ASVAB if  
interested in the military

8 Registration deadline for the  
April 13 ACT (optional)

11 Required ACT+Writing at OHS

#### **This month:**

- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Contact colleges of interest for a scheduled visit. Visits during the school year allow you to see the campus in action
- Prepare for April ACT, if needed

### APRIL 2025

13 ACT test date (if needed)

#### **This month:**

- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Prepare for AP exams, if applicable
- Visit college campuses

### MAY 2025

1 Deadline to complete UW Direct  
Admit opt-in registration

3 Registration deadline for  
June 8 ACT, if needed

#### **This month:**

- Take AP exams, if applicable
- Update resume/portfolio. Record all accomplishments, involvements and work experience over past 3 years
- Prepare for the June ACT, if needed
- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Continue scheduling appointments to visit colleges (see handouts)

### JUNE 2025

7 Registration deadline for July 13  
ACT, if needed

8 ACT test date, if needed

#### **This month:**

- Volunteer or obtain a summer job that may be related to your career interests
- If possible, save money to pay for college costs
- Continue to visit colleges (see handouts)
- Research scholarships through the OHS newsletter, your school counselor, the district website, civic, community, and church organizations, and websites such as fastweb.com

### JULY 2025

13 ACT test date, if needed

31 UW Direct Admit offers begin  
arriving through student email

### AUGUST 2025

1 UW System begins accepting  
applications through traditional  
process

#### **This month:**

- Stay involved! Work, job shadow, continue to read a variety of books, and refresh your math skills
- Review career plans and the colleges you've looked at. Decide which colleges are a good match for you
- Research college websites that you have an interest in and review academic requirements needed for college programs
- Request college catalog and admissions information
- If you have not done so, visit your schools of interest
- Follow up on your "to do" list

# SENIOR YEAR TIMELINE

## Important dates, events and reminders

### SEPTEMBER 2025

**14** ACT test date (if needed)

**TBA** Attend Senior Student/  
Parent Night at OHS

#### **This month:**

- Meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Register for Oct. ACT, if needed
- Narrow college search to 3-5 schools
- Keep track of all college deadlines
- Pick up a Letter of Recommendation Request sheet *if* you need a "LOR"
- Begin submitting college admissions applications
- Apply for scholarship opportunities posted in Freddy's Footnotes and the OHS website
- Use assessment data results from junior year to guide studying

### OCTOBER 2025

**1** ECCP/SCN/CNA/Youth

Apprenticeship applications due

**26** ACT test date (if needed)

#### **This month:**

- **Register for a student and parent FSA ID** for the FAFSA ([fsaid.ed.gov](https://fsaid.ed.gov))
- Complete the Free Application For Student Aid ([FAFSA.ed.gov](https://fafsa.ed.gov)) by your college(s) deadline
- Continue to meet with admissions representatives visiting OHS
- Watch for scholarship opportunities posted in Freddy's Footnotes and OHS website

- Continue working on college applications. Have your teachers or counselor look over your college application essays
- Oct. through Dec.: Apply for and submit housing deposits at colleges that have accepted you
- Males who are 18 years old are required to register with Selective Service at [www.sss.gov](https://www.sss.gov).

### NOVEMBER 2025

#### **This month:**

- Register for 2026 AP testing
- Complete your college applications by Thanksgiving
- Attend College Goal Wisconsin for help on the FAFSA
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR) and report any errors
- Continue to work on scholarship essays and applications. Watch deadlines. Ask colleges about financial aid and scholarships
- Attend cap and gown meeting during school

### DECEMBER 2025

**14** ACT test date, if needed

#### **This month:**

- Continue to work on scholarships

### JANUARY 2026

#### **This month:**

- Attend the local scholarship meeting at OHS during school

### FEBRUARY 2026

**1** Register for college placement exam (if applicable)

#### **This month:**

- Be sure all necessary materials have been sent to your chosen colleges
- Don't get senioritis! Colleges **will** rescind admission for poor grades

### MARCH 2026

- Sign up for college registration/orientation
- File for tuition reciprocity if attending a MN school

### APRIL 2026

#### **This month:**

- Continue to work hard at keeping your grades up. Your last semester can make an impact on your GPA and class rank

### MAY 2026

**1** Deadline for enrollment deposit or commitment for most colleges

**1** Deadline to request housing deposit refunds from colleges you choose NOT to attend

**23** Graduation! (tentative date)

#### **This month:**

- Take AP exams
- Complete form to request final transcripts be sent to your college of choice
- Register for college orientation

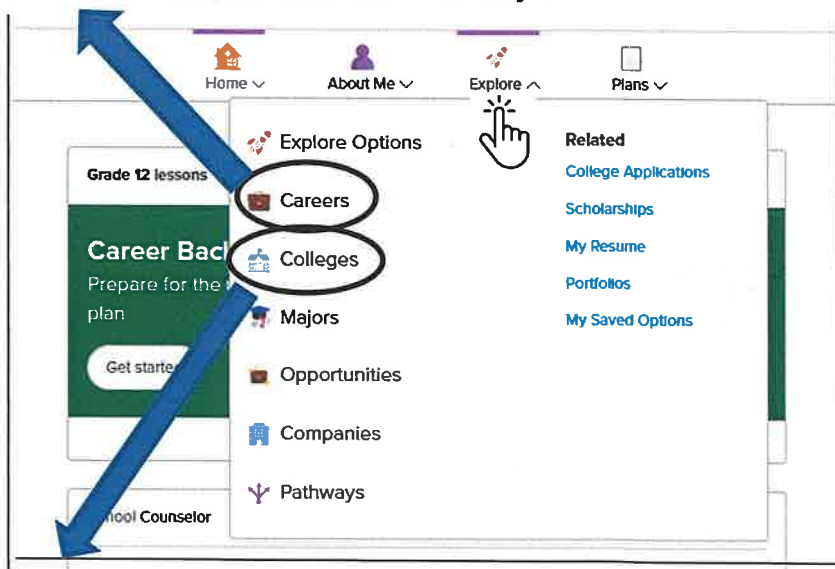


## Career & College Exploration

- Log in to your student PowerSchool Account
- Click on the “Applications” logo
- Click to enter Xello!



- Explore > Careers: (see “More Filters”)
  - Narrow by favorite school subjects
  - Narrow by clusters or groupings of careers (show “More Clusters”)
  - Narrow by demand for career
  - Explore the career options that match for you
  - In a career, select a “Related Major” to find “Schools that offer this major”



- Search for Colleges: (see “More Filters”)
  - Search by location; the entire United States or specific states
  - Search 4-year (Undergraduate) or technical (Career & Technical) colleges
  - Find a college with your career program (Areas of Study)
  - Enter as many search criteria as you like:
    - Location
    - Cost
    - Enrollment size
    - Community setting
    - Public or private
    - 2 or 4 year
    - Selectivity
    - Sports and activities



# Career & College Exploration Websites

Xello is an excellent program that we encourage students to use to explore careers and colleges. If students would like to try other websites, here are some options to try.

## Explore Career Opportunities

### Employment data

- ❖ <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/> Occupational Outlook Handbook
- ❖ <https://jobcenterofwisconsin.com/> Wisconsin employment data

### Career exploration inventories

- ❖ <https://www.careerfitter.com/> Work personality analysis
- ❖ <https://www.16personalities.com/> Myers Briggs personality test
- ❖ <https://www.truity.com/test/holland-code-career-test> Career interest inventory

### Job Boards

- ❖ <https://www.idealist.org/en> Explore social impact jobs
- ❖ <https://www.bigshoesnetwork.com/> WI, MN & Chicago jobs & internships

## Explore College Possibilities

### Regional college organizations and admission process

- ❖ <https://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/> Steps to follow to get into college
- ❖ <https://uwhelp.wisconsin.edu/> Search for WI 2 & 4-year public colleges
- ❖ <http://www.waicu.org/> Search for WI 4-year private colleges
- ❖ <https://www.wtcsystem.edu/> Search for WI technical colleges
- ❖ <https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/> Search for MN 2 and 4-year public colleges
- ❖ <https://www.mnprivatecolleges.org/> Search for MN 4-year private colleges

### Search for and compare colleges

- ❖ <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/> Search for & compare colleges on 1 scale!
- ❖ <https://www.mymajors.com/> Help find a major for you and colleges
- ❖ <https://universityhq.org/> Combines college rankings
- ❖ <https://www.campusreel.org/> Real students touring around their campus





# **Military & Military School Information**

Military opportunities include full-time duty in one of the five branches, delayed entry and part-time commitments in the National Guard or Reserves, and educational opportunities through military schools and ROTC. In addition to serving one's country and possibly making a career in the military, these experiences can offer the opportunity to see other parts of the world, learn an occupation, and earn the privilege of various monetary benefits towards a post-secondary education.

Many of the military branch recruiters visit OHS on a monthly basis, when school is in regular session. Parents are encouraged to be part of this decision-making process. Virtual visits are also available.

For further information on entrance requirements, education benefit packages and length of terms, contact:

<b>ARMY</b> <b>ARMY RESERVE</b> <b>ARMY NATIONAL GUARD</b>		1-888-550-ARMY 1-888-709-ARMY 1-800-GO-GUARD	goarmy.com goarmy.com/reserve nationalguard.com
<b>NAVY</b> <b>NAVY RESERVE</b>		1-800-USA-NAVY	navy.com navy.com/seatostars
<b>AIR FORCE</b> <b>AIR FORCE RESERVE</b> <b>AIR NATIONAL GUARD</b>		1-800-423-USAF 1-800-257-1212 1-200-TO-GO-ANG	airforce.com afreserve.com goang.com
<b>MARINE CORP</b> <b>MARINE CORP RESERVE</b>		1-800-MARINES	marines.com
<b>COAST GUARD</b> <b>COAST GUARD RESERVE</b>		1-877-NOW-USCG	gocoastguard.com
<b>SPACE FORCE</b>		1-800-525-0102	spaceforce.mil

## **Military Schooling and ROTC**

**Service Academies** - Military environment with a first-class education

- Fully-funded tuition
- Highly competitive
- Admission criteria includes academics, standardized test scores, athletics & extracurricular activities, leadership experience & community involvement, congressional letter of recommendation
- Graduates receive Bachelor of Science degree and commissioned as officers
- Obligated to service a minimum of five years post-graduation
- US Military Academy, US Naval Academy, US Air Force Academy, US Coast Guard Academy, US Merchant Marine Academy

**Senior Military Colleges** - Combination of higher education and military instruction

- Financial aid available

- All cadets participate in the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), but only those receiving ROTC scholarships are required to enter military service post-graduation
- Texas A&M University Corps of Cadets, Norwich University, Virginia Military Institute, The Citadel, Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets, University of North Georgia, Virginia Women's Institute for Leadership

**Maritime Academies** - Train shipboard officers for vessels used for shipping and transportation. The US Merchant Marine fleet are civilian-owned ships that carry cargo and passengers on behalf of the US.

- Merchant Marine is auxiliary to Navy in times of war
- Service commitment is not always required
- Massachusetts Maritime Academy, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, Maine Maritime Academy, California State University Maritime Academy, State University of New York Maritime College, Texas A&M Maritime Academy

**Reserve Officer Training Corp (ROTC)** - College program that prepares students to become officers in the military

- Offered at many colleges and universities across the US
- Study the major of your choosing
- Take additional courses in military science
- Receive leadership development, military skills and career training
- Educational funding in exchange for service commitment, as an officer, post-graduation




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## Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)

Students who are committed to serving our country in a military branch are required to take the ASVAB to determine eligibility for training programs. The ASVAB is a unique tool that helps measure specific aptitudes or talents that a student may or may not be aware of having.

**Students that are unsure about their future path may also take the ASVAB. Results can be helpful in making career decisions.** A military recruiter will not contact you unless you indicate an interest.

The ASVAB is given free of charge at OHS each year, or at a recruiting office throughout the year. **This year the test is the morning of Tuesday, October 22nd and March 4th. Students sign up in Student Services.** For ASVAB prep, see [march2success.com](http://march2success.com) or <http://www.military.com/join-armed-forces/asvab>.





# SAMPLE HS STUDENT RESUME

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## PERRY JAMESON

1515 Stanley Drive #62  
Hometown, WI 54202  
perry.jameson@dbplanet.com  
(608) 555-1938

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### OBJECTIVE

To obtain knowledge of the day-to-day workings of a communications, public relations or publishing firm through a part-time job or summer internship.

### EDUCATION

Hometown High School, Senior  
Graduation date: May 2025  
GPA: 3.85, top 5% of class

### RELEVANT HIGH SCHOOL STUDIES

Technical writing, advanced composition, debate, video production, college algebra, computer classes providing knowledge of word processing, desktop publishing, and web software.

### EXPERIENCE

#### Stock person, Hometown Grocery Store

- **Jan. 2021 – present.** Organize and maintain proper stock of grocery items

#### Newspaper Staff Member, Hometown High School

- **Aug. 2021 – present.** Features Editor of campus newspaper
- **Aug. 2021 – Aug. 2023.** Researched information for news articles using library and Web sources; composed and edited informational articles, columns, editorials, and advertising copy

### HONORS, AWARDS, AND MEMBERSHIPS

- **U.S. Media Association Scholarship recipient**  
Scholarship based on academic achievement, community service, and campus participation and leadership in high school communications projects and studies
- **President of high school chapter of Future Communicators of America (FCA), 2018 – present**  
Organize meetings, collaborate with members of the community, and travel to conferences.

### INVOLVEMENT

- **Hometown High School basketball team, 2021 – present**  
Team Captain, 2023
- **Volunteered at Neighbor's Day Clean-Up, May 2021**

January 20, 2025

Mr. Frank Richards, Publishing Manager  
Hometown Community Newspaper  
7738 West 80th Street  
Hometown, WI 54202

Dear Mr. Richards:

I am very interested in applying for the part-time Journalist position that is advertised on the Hometown Community Newspaper's website. I am currently the Features Editor of my high school newspaper, and would look forward to the new challenge offered by such a position.

In my current position as the Features Editor, the work experience I have gained has prepared me to be productive immediately. I would be able to use my skills and abilities to achieve great satisfaction and self-motivation while contributing to the success of the Hometown Community Newspaper.

I would like to request an interview to discuss my qualifications in detail and have enclosed my resume. I can be reached at the above address or by telephone (608) 555-1938. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Perry Jameson*  
Perry Jameson

Encl: Jameson Resume

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### Resume Writing Tips:

- A good resume is brief and concise, typed neatly with **no errors**. It must be easy to read.
- Limit yourself to one page only. As a rule, two page resumes are acceptable when you have over ten years of experience.
- Save your resume in Google Docs and print it on the best quality printer and paper available.
- Type or print it on 8" x 11" professional paper. Use 1" margins on both sides and ½ - 1" margins on the top and bottom of the page. Double space between each section of the resume.
- **Spelling must be accurate.** Use spell check.
- Use clear and concise statements describing your experiences. **Use proper grammar and punctuation.**
- Use a heading at the beginning of each section. Set it off by typing it in all caps or underlining the heading.
- Under the headings "Education" & "Experience," the most recent should be listed first.
- Have someone review your resume before you consider it a final version.
- When describing your experiences use **action verbs** that will stand out and tell the employer that you have really done something.

## Tips for a Successful Job Interview

The key to successful interviewing is to make a positive impression on a prospective employer to enhance your chances of getting the job.

**Clothing:** The most important rule is to dress appropriately for the position you are applying for. Applying for a part-time or summer non-professional job is a little different from applying for a full-time professional position. Dress should be neat and tidy – business casual is usually appropriate for a non-professional position (think of how most teachers dress for school). For example, khakis and a neatly tucked in polo shirt would work well. You should avoid extreme hairstyles, colors, shoes, jewelry, piercings, tattoos, makeup, and perfume. No jeans or shorts, no tank tops, crop tops or anything especially low cut (shirt or pants) or too short (skirt or blouse) - keeping everything professional is a must.

**Interview Questions:** It's important for job seekers to prepare for a job interview. Review typical interview questions and answers, and practice your responses before you go. Ask a family member, a friend, or your counselor to ask you some questions so you can practice your answers. Take the time to personalize your responses so they reflect you as a person, and as a candidate for employment. See About.com for common answers.

- Tell us about yourself
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Why are you looking for a job?
- Why are you interested in working for our company?
- What have you done in school to prepare for working at our company?
- Why should we hire you?
- What do you think it takes to be successful in this position?
- How would you describe your ability to work as a team member?
- What has been your most rewarding accomplishment
- What are your expectations for a wage?
- Tell me about a problem you recently handled
- Have you ever had difficulty with a supervisor or teacher? How did you handle that?



**Be Prepared:** Don't just show up for the interview. The more information you have prepared in advance, the better impression you will make on the interviewer. Take the time to prepare a resume and gather references before you start looking for a job. Bring the following with you to the interview:

- Completed job application (if the employer doesn't have it already)
- References
- Resume (if you have one)
- Notepad / pen with questions to ask employer written down

Know what days and hours you are available to work – the employer will ask. Flexibility is definitely an asset because the more time you are available, the easier it is for the employer to set a work schedule. Also know how you are going to get to and from work if you don't drive.

**Be Polite:** It's essential to have good manners when interviewing. Shake your interviewer's hand. Don't sit until you are invited to. Don't slouch in your chair. Don't use slang or swear. Be polite, positive, and professional throughout the interview. Do not use your electronic device at any point during the interview.

**Be on Time:** Arrive at the interview site 10 minutes early. If you're not sure where to go, get directions ahead of time. If you don't have a driver's license, make sure you have a ride.

**Go on Your Own:** If a parent/guardian/friend brings you to an interview, don't bring them into the building with you. It's important that you speak for yourself and connect with the interviewer without someone else's assistance.

**Send a Thank You Note:** Take a few minutes to thank the person who interviewed you. Send a paper note thanking the interviewer for taking the time to meet with you.



## Gap Year

### What is a gap year?

A gap year is a break typically taken between high school and college that might include travel, work, study, volunteering, or research. It can be a time for students to explore the world and gain valuable life skills and experience while transitioning into independence.

### What are some of the pros and cons?

#### Possible benefits

Break from schoolwork  
Opportunity to travel  
Gain real life skills  
Work on independence  
Earn money to pay for future education

#### Questions to consider

Will I go back to school if I take a break?  
Will I be safe if I go abroad?  
Am I ready for full-time work?  
How far away from my family can I live?  
Am I a good saver?

### What are some gap year options?

- **Work**
- **Civil service** in military or national service organization
- **Pursuing arts or athletics**
- **Travel the world** as a tourist
- **Organized gap year program**, abroad or domestic - Students are accepted into a program to travel, study, and/or volunteer. Some programs offer educational stipends after the experience

### Recommended reading by US News & World Report:

**The Complete Guide to the Gap Year: The Best Things to Do Between High School and College**, by Kristin M. White



## Gap Year Programs

\*Please note this is not an exhaustive list.

- **AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps**

- Full-time, 10 month, residential, national service program for 18-24 year olds
- Serve on teams to address needs related to natural and other disasters, infrastructure improvement, environmental stewardship and conservation, energy conservation, and urban and rural development
- <https://www.nationalservice.gov/>

- **CIEE Gap Year Abroad**

- One- or two-semester program, live with a host family, 11 countries to choose from
- Take classes with students from around the world, live with a native host family, and volunteer with local organizations and charities
- <https://www.ciee.org/gap-year-abroad/>

- **Youth With a Mission**

- Faith-based (Christian) with locations around the world to work with refugees
- Cost varies, usually around \$5,000 per year
- <http://www.ywam.org/>

- **Outward Bound**

- 30 - 85 day expedition based program
- Develops real-world decision making, group management and leadership skills
- Costs vary, scholarships & financial aid are available
- <https://www.outwardbound.org/>

- **Verto Education**

- Travel the world for 1 or 2 semesters while completing general education requirements
- Freshman year study abroad
- Credits awarded from Portland State University and pre-approved to transfer to partner institutions
- [www.vertoeducation.org](http://www.vertoeducation.org)



## ALL Juniors will take the ACT!

- Every Junior in Wisconsin will take the ACT plus writing this winter
- Onalaska High School's ACT will be on the morning of Tuesday March, 11, 2025
- This ACT administration is completely FREE!
- This ACT can count for college admissions, placement and scholarship programs
- Students will register for this ACT during school by creating a MyACT account
  - Students may select up to 4 colleges to send their scores to FOR FREE!
  - Colleges will only consider **the highest ACT score** reported
  - Students send scores after testing through their MyACT account for \$19 per report



## PREPARE:

- All OHS Juniors will prepare for the ACT during school, using their practice ACT results from September
- Continue to review your Practice ACT results to practice and identify areas to focus
- Use FREE websites to test yourself and get tutorials:
  - Take FREE practice activities, tutorials and tests using <https://onlineprep.act.org>
  - <https://www.march2success.com/> Create an account for free ACT prep.
  - <https://uniontestprep.com/act>
  - <https://pages.act.org/eBook-Stages-of-Taking-a-College-Entrance-Exam.html> Free e-book
- PAY FOR ACT prep options:
  - January 20, 2025 – No school day - Schoolhouse Tutoring ACT Prep - \$60 + optional \$20 book
  - Virtual - Six module - UW-L ACT Prep class \$199



## Test Day:

- Relax! Get plenty of rest and eat well the night before and morning of
  - Bring the following with you to your ACT test:
    - Yourself, well rested with a good breakfast wearing comfortable clothing
    - (Saturday National Test Dates) Your admission ticket including your picture
    - A picture ID
    - An approved calculator. Visit [actstudent.org](http://actstudent.org), click on the "Test Day" tab for calculator FAQ
    - If paper testing, several (NOT mechanical) sharpened #2 pencils and a watch
- **Do NOT bring your cell phone to the ACT Test! Using your phone at any time in any way during testing (even break) will invalidate your test!**
- As you get started, take a few deep breaths to calm yourself. Keep a positive attitude
- Listen carefully to all instructions and ask questions if you hear something you don't understand
- Pace yourself and occasionally check the time
- If you finish before time is up, reread the questions and check your answers
- Don't forget, answer every question. Even if you're guessing!

# More About the ACT...

## Options, Options, Optional:

- Many colleges are "Test optional" meaning they no longer require ACT or SAT test scores for applicants
- The UW System has announced an extension of their test optional policy through the class of 2026
- Students can register for the paper or computer version of the ACT on national test dates
- A strong ACT score can still help students with admissions, placement, scholarships and honors programs
- Students can indicate their preference for colleges to consider ACT score *OR* not consider their score on their college applications
- Students who have taken multiple ACT exams may request a "Superscore" in their MyACT account
- A superscore uses the highest subscores from each of a student's ACT administrations to recalculate the highest composite score possible
- Not all colleges accept superscores. Check with your colleges



## Other test dates:

- Students who are not satisfied with their ACT score can register for additional administrations on national ACT test dates
- The ACT costs \$69 or \$94 for the ACT plus writing. **Most colleges do not require the writing portion of the ACT**, or would accept a writing score from the March 11 ACT
- The following is the ACT schedule of exams and registration deadlines for this school year:

Test Date	Register By	Late Registration (Additional Fee)
September 14, 2024	August 9	August 25
October 26, 2024	September 20	October 7
December 14, 2024	November 8	November 22
February 8, 2025	January 3	January 20
<b>March 11, 2025</b>	<b>ALL Juniors required FREE - No registration required</b>	
April 5, 2025	February 28	March 16
<b>June 14, 2025 At OHS</b>	May 9	May 26
July 12, 2025	June 6	June 20



## The SAT

### A small number of Onalaska students will take the SAT each year as well:

- Certain colleges (East/West coast or selective) require the SAT instead of the ACT (*most take both*)
- SAT consists of :
  - The SAT tests; reading, writing (grammar) and math.
  - The essay portion and all SAT subject tests have been discontinued.
- Register for the SAT at: <https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat>
- Preparation options for the SAT is similar to the ACT (see the next page)

# Thinking of Being A Transfer Student?

*There may be many benefits to attending a 2-year college then transferring*



*...But there are some risks too*

## **Pros:**

- ✓ *Good value—save on tuition, live at home, keep current job*
- ✓ *Acclimate to college level courses with smaller class sizes*
- ✓ *A place to improve GPA and academic skills*
- ✓ *Explore career options while taking transferrable courses*



## **Cons:**

- Some degrees are best to enter right away (teacher, performing arts, global studies, international language/business and some health majors)
- Postponing decision making and “just taking generals” is not a plan
- Missed social connections at future college if not starting with everyone else
- Not all credits are guaranteed to transfer everywhere
- Transfer credit may be **elective credit** depending on your major at your transfer institution

***The more you communicate to each college about your goals, the more they can help you create a plan to achieve them!***

Transferology will help you check to see if your credits will transfer (in Wisconsin)!  
Visit: <https://www.wisconsin.edu/transfer/>





## HOW IS COLLEGE DIFFERENT FROM HIGH SCHOOL?

FOLLOWING THE RULES IN HIGH SCHOOL	CHOOSING RESPONSIBLY IN COLLEGE
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. High school is mandatory and usually free.</li> <li>2. You can count on parents and teachers to remind you of your responsibilities and to guide you in setting priorities.</li> <li>3. There is typically one set of requirements for students to graduate.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guiding principle: You will usually be told what to do and corrected if your behavior is out of line.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. College is voluntary and can be expensive.</li> <li>2. You must balance your responsibilities and set priorities.</li> <li>3. You will face moral and ethical decisions you have never faced before.</li> <li>4. Graduation requirements are complex and differ from year to year. You are expected to know how those apply to you.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guiding principle: You are expected to take responsibility for what you do and don't do, as well as the consequences of your decisions.</b></p>
GOING TO HIGH SCHOOL CLASSES	SUCCEEDING IN COLLEGE CLASSES
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classes generally have no more than 30 students.</li> <li>2. You may study outside class as little as 0-2 hrs. per week, and this may be mostly last-minute test preparation.</li> <li>3. Teachers lecture on all content on tests.</li> <li>4. Parents can check on and view grades.</li> <li>5. You are expected to read short assignments that are then discussed, and often re-taught, in class.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guiding principle: You will usually be told in class what you need to learn from assigned readings.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Classes may number 100 students or more.</li> <li>2. You need to study at least 2-3 hours outside of class for each hour in class.</li> <li>3. Some content on tests comes strictly from textbooks, not lectures.</li> <li>4. Parents cannot check on grades.</li> <li>5. Online classes can take more time than face-to-face classes.</li> <li>6. Must progress through a program with certain grades or you could lose financial aid.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guiding principle: It's up to you to read and understand the assigned material. Lectures and assignments proceed from the assumption you've already done so.</b></p>
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS	COLLEGE PROFESSORS
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Teachers remind you of incomplete work and check for all completed homework.</li> <li>2. Teachers are often available for conversation before, during, or after class and approach you if they believe you need assistance.</li> <li>3. Teachers provide you with information missed during an absence.</li> <li>4. Teachers present material to help you understand the textbook.</li> <li>5. Teachers often write information on the board to be copied in your notes.</li> <li>6. Teachers impart knowledge and facts, sometimes drawing direct connections and leading you through the thinking process.</li> <li>7. Teachers monitor attendance.</li> <li>8. Teachers remind you of assignments and due dates.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guiding principle: High school is a learning environment where you acquire facts and skills.</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professors may not always check homework, but they will assume you can perform the same tasks on tests. They may not remind you of incomplete work.</li> <li>2. Professors expect and want you to attend their office hours and expect you to initiate contact if you need assistance.</li> <li>3. Professors expect you to get missed information from other classmates.</li> <li>4. Professors may not follow the textbook.</li> <li>5. Professors may lecture nonstop, expecting you to identify important points for notes.</li> <li>6. Professors may not formally take attendance, but are still likely to know if you attended. You can be automatically dropped from classes for non-attendance.</li> <li>7. Professors expect you to read, save, and consult the course syllabus for all due dates and course requirements.</li> </ol> <p><b>Guiding principle: College is a learning environment where you take responsibility for thinking through and applying what you have learned.</b></p>

TESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL	TESTS IN COLLEGE
<p>1. Testing is frequent and covers small amounts of material. 2. Teachers frequently rearrange test dates to avoid conflicts with other school events.</p> <p><b>Guiding principles: Mastery is usually seen as the ability to reproduce what you were taught in the form in which it was presented to you, or to solve the kinds of problems you were shown.</b></p>	<p>1. Testing is usually infrequent and cumulative, covering large amounts of material. You need to organize the material and prepare. Some courses may have only 2-3 tests per semester. 2. Professors schedule tests without regard to the demands of other courses or outside activities.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle: Mastery is often seen as the ability to apply what you've learned to new situations or to solve new problems.</b></p>
GRADES IN HIGH SCHOOL	GRADES IN COLLEGE
<p>1. Consistent good homework grades may raise your overall grade when test scores are low. 2. Initial test grades, even if they are low, may not have an affect on your final grade. 3. You may graduate as long as you have passed all required courses with a grade of D- or higher.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle: Effort counts! Courses are usually structured to reward a "good-faith effort."</b></p>	<p>1. Grades on tests and major papers usually provide most of the course grade. 2. Watch out for first tests! These are usually "wake-up calls" to let you know what is expected, but they also may count for a substantial part of your course grade. 3. You may graduate only if your average meets the departmental standard. Some programs will drop students without a C average.</p> <p><b>Guiding principle: Results count! Though a "good-faith effort" is important in regard to the professor's willingness to help you achieve good results, it will not substitute for results on your final grade.</b></p>

#### HOW TO MAKE THE TRANSITION:

- Take control of your own education
- Get to know your professors; they are your single greatest resource
- Be assertive; seek help/tutoring when you need it; use tutoring, writing, and math labs on campus
- Take control of your time. Plan ahead to satisfy academic obligations and make room for everything else
- Stretch yourself; enroll in at least one course that really challenges you
- Make thoughtful decisions; don't take a course just to satisfy a requirement; don't drop courses too quickly. Consider how your courses can prepare you directly or indirectly for your future career
- Think beyond the moment! Set goals for the semester, the year, and your college career



# College Campus Visits

## You Won't Know Until You Go!

Exploring campuses is well worth your while. Visiting colleges is a great way to get a feel for what college is like. When the time comes, it can help you decide if a specific college is right for you.

The **spring of your junior year** is a great time to get started. Walking around campus while school is in session will give you a true sense of campus life. **OHS will allow every student one excused day from school for a college visit.** Ask your parent/guardian to notify the main office ahead of your visit and tell them you're going on a campus tour so it can be marked accordingly.

### Arrange a Visit:

All colleges have an **admissions office** that can help you plan your visit. You can plan **your own individual visit** to a college campus, or go during their **large group open house events**. Take these important first steps to schedule your visit:

- Contact the college admissions office through the college's website or by email or phone to get details and make a reservation
- Allow plenty of time in your schedule for tours, questions, and exploration of the campus and surrounding area

If you are unable to visit a school due to distance or scheduling constraints, go to the campus' website or use sites such as [campusreel.org](http://campusreel.org) to take a virtual tour.



### What to Expect:

Campus visits can range from a quick hour to an overnight stay, from a casual guided tour to a formal presentation. Be sure to ask how long the whole visit will take so you can be prepared. Most campus visits will include the following:

- An **informational session** – an admission representative talks to you or your group about the college before the campus tour
- A **campus tour** – these are usually led by current students. You'll see the main parts of the campus and have a chance to ask questions

These are other items to check off your to-do list!

### SHOULD DO:

- Attend a class
- Meet with an admissions officer
- Meet with a financial aid officer
- Eat in the dining hall

### CAN DO:

- Attend a club meeting, sports practice session, or sporting event
- Meet with a professor in your area of study
- Spend the night in a residence hall

### Get Ready:

Before your visit, you should get prepared.

- Explore the college's website and review any materials the college has sent you. This will help you come up with questions specific to that college
- Make a list of questions to ask both staff and students. You can use the College Comparison Worksheet in your STAR Conference folder as a starting point
- Get a map of the college campus and check where the admission office is. This will help ensure that you're on time for your visit

## Use the College Comparison

## Worksheet in your STAR

**Conference folder as a starting point for questions to ask.**

### Remember the Following:

Pack a notebook and take pictures so you can record your impressions. You'd be surprised at how easy it is to forget details after you've seen a few colleges.

- Take notes on your College Comparison Worksheet
- Ask to tour a freshman residence hall
- After the formal tour, explore the parts of campus they did not show you
- After checking out the campus, take time to explore nearby restaurants, movie theaters, malls, and even places for employment
- Note your overall impressions after each visit (the best/worst part about my visit was...)



## College Comparison Worksheet

College	Sample U.	College 1	College 2	College 3
<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance from home</li> </ul>	4 hours			
<b>Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community setting</li> <li>Size of nearest community</li> <li>Co-ed, male : female ratio</li> <li>Campus diversity</li> <li>Private or public (religious affiliation)</li> </ul>	In nature Nearest city is 20,000 ppl. 6:4,male Very diverse Private - none			
<b>Size</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College as a whole</li> <li>College major – cohort</li> </ul>	5,300 total 25 students			
<b>Campus Visit Impressions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physical; buildings &amp; grounds</li> <li>Faculty and staff</li> <li>Other students (dress, behavior, feel)</li> <li>Food quality, quantity and cost</li> <li>Overall (gut feeling) impression</li> </ul>	Well kept Energetic! Cool like me Yumm, but left hungry It'd be OK			
<b>Admissions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadlines</li> <li>"Average admitted student profile"               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GPA/Class rank</li> <li>ACT/SAT score</li> <li>Other factors</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	None Top 50% 21 ACT Flute players wanted!			
<b>Academics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Majors of interest offered</li> <li>Special admissions requirements</li> <li>Special graduation requirements</li> <li>Student/faculty ratio</li> <li>Typical class size</li> </ul>	All 3 interests Apply 2 <sup>nd</sup> year 2yrs Wrld Lang 12:1 24			
<b>College Expenses</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application fees, deposits</li> <li>Tuition, housing and meals</li> <li>Other expenses, books, travel, etc</li> </ul>	Free, \$100 \$45,000/yr! Book rental included			
<b>Financial Aid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadlines</li> <li>Additional required forms?</li> <li>College sponsored scholarship opportunities and deadlines</li> </ul>	December 1 No I get \$25,000! App due Feb 1			
<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residence hall requirements</li> <li>Residence hall options &amp; cost</li> <li>Co-ed rooms, floors, buildings</li> <li>Meal plans &amp; requirements</li> </ul>	Freshman year Co-ed suite style+\$500/yr Min. 7 meal plan			
<b>Student life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lively weekends or ghost town</li> <li>Recreational</li> <li>Clubs/organizations</li> <li>Greek life</li> <li>Intramurals</li> <li>Athletics</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	Fun weekends Rugby! Asian American Club Floor hockey! Have fencing!			
<b>Academic Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutoring services</li> <li>Advising</li> <li>Level of support vs my level of need</li> </ul>	For my major Same all 4 yrs Just right			
<b>Overall "Gut feeling" Rating</b>	6.8 / 10			

# Sample College Comparison Worksheet

College	Western Technical	UW - Madison	Northwestern (IL)
<b>Location</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distance from home</li> </ul>	10 minutes	2 hours	4.5 hours
<b>Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community setting</li> <li>Size of nearest community</li> <li>Co-ed, male : female ratio</li> <li>Campus diversity</li> </ul>	Med. city (La Crosse: 51, 834) La Crosse area: 135,000 45% male/55% female 12% diverse students	Large city (Madison: 255,214) Madison area: 568,593 51% female/49% male 26% diverse students	Large city (Evanston: 75,600) Chicago area: 9.5 million 50% female/50% male 44% diverse students
<b>Type of school</b>	Public, technical school	Public, in state, 4 year	Private, out of state, 4 year
<b>Size</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>College as a whole</li> <li>College major – cohort</li> </ul>	4,600 students Technical diploma, Associates degree, and transfer programs	44,411 students Undergraduate degrees and graduate degrees	22,019 students Undergraduate and graduate degrees
<b>Admission Requirements</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Average admitted student profile"</li> <li>GPA/Class rank</li> <li>ACT/SAT score</li> <li>Other factors</li> </ul>		Admitted student profile: GPA 3.8-4.0 ACT 28-32 (optional this year)	Admitted student profile: 90% of students in top 10% of their high school class ACT 33-35 (optional this year)
<b>Total Cost of Attendance (per year)</b>	\$4,636 (tuition and fees) \$13,038 (housing and meals, books/supplies, and other) <u>expenses</u> <b>\$17,674 (TOTAL COST)</b>	\$11,606 (tuition and fees) \$14,124 (housing and meals) \$1,100 (books/supplies) <u>\$3,178 (other expenses)</u> <b>\$30,008 (TOTAL COST)</b>	\$65,997 (tuition and fees) \$20,334 (housing and meals) \$1,686 (books/supplies) <u>\$3,273 (other expenses)</u> <b>\$91,290 (TOTAL COST)</b>
<b>Financial Aid</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Deadlines</li> <li>College sponsored scholarship opportunities and deadlines</li> </ul>	Eligible for federal and state grants	Eligible for federal and state grants	Eligible for federal grants Average freshman scholarship: \$31k-65k
<b>Housing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residence hall requirements</li> <li>Residence hall options &amp; cost</li> <li>Co-ed rooms, floors, buildings</li> <li>Meal plans &amp; requirements</li> </ul>	On-campus housing available for 200 students Apartment style Co-ed floors Meal plan req. for on campus	On-campus housing available Not required, 90% of freshmen choose to live on campus, apartments and traditional rooms available	On-campus housing available, 70% of all students live on campus, apartments and traditional rooms available
<b>Student life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lively weekends or ghost town</li> <li>Recreational</li> <li>Clubs/organizations</li> <li>Greek life</li> <li>Intramurals</li> <li>Athletics</li> <li>Other</li> </ul>	NJCAA Athletics Wellness Center Student Government Clubs and greek life Can be a part of UWL's Marching Band or Choir	NCAA Division 1 Athletics 23 Varsity teams 900 Student clubs 60 Greek life organizations Intramurals	NCAA Division 1 Athletics 19 Varsity teams 564 Student clubs 28 Greek life organizations Intramural and Club sports
<b>Academic Assistance</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tutoring services</li> <li>Advising</li> <li>Level of support vs my level of need</li> </ul>	Tutoring, Advising, Financial Aid assistance, Study rooms for group work in library	Tutoring and Learner Support Writing Center Academic Research	Peer tutoring, Advising, study groups, academic leadership development, mentoring, coaching, course support

## **Gear Up for College Applications...**

### **With Your Summer Homework!**

Make it easier to complete your college applications in the fall. Gather a list of the following during the *summer before your senior year*, so you can quickly and efficiently complete your applications.

- List of about 3 colleges where you plan to apply
  - Note the application deadlines for each
- List of teachers, counselor, coaches, etc. to ask for letters of recommendation (if needed)
- Complete your Letter of Recommendation Request Worksheet (in this packet, Google classroom, student services office) summarizing your:
  - Involvement - school/community activities including participation dates, leadership roles, community service, youth groups, clubs
  - Employment, including dates
  - Accomplishments - any academic, athletic, community recognition received
  - Any special circumstances you've overcome
- Research essay prompts for the applications you plan to complete (see below)
  - Draft your essay responses (see next page)
  - Have someone proofread your essays for content and grammar/punctuation, then make revisions
- Have access to your Social Security Number. Many colleges require your SSN to apply

### **College Application Essay Examples**

- (UW - all campuses) Each student is unique. Please tell us about the particular life experiences, talents, commitments, and/or interests you will bring to our campus.
- (UW - La Crosse) Please respond to ONE of the following: (1) Tell us about any circumstances that may have had an impact on your academic performance. OR (2) Tell us why you are interested in attending UW-La Crosse and what aspects of the campus are especially important to you.
- (UW - Madison) Tell us why you would like to attend the University of Wisconsin–Madison. In addition, please include why you are interested in studying the major(s) you have selected. If you selected undecided, please describe your areas of possible academic interest.
- If you had the opportunity to interview any prominent person - living or dead, or fictional - whom would you choose, and why?
- The lessons you take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Describe a topic or concept you find engaging that makes you lose track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Rank order your involvements (school activities, clubs, community organizations, work, family responsibilities) and explain why the most important activity is at the top of your list.

## College Application Guide

### ***Application Checklist***

- ✓ **Verify deadlines!**
- ✓ **General application:** Is all information accurate and complete? Don't leave questions blank unless the application allows it. Is your school part of a system? (Common Application, UW System, SendEDU)
- ✓ **Payment:** Have a credit or debit card handy
- ✓ **Transcripts:** Have them sent directly from Student Services. Even if a college says it's not required. They will need them eventually. Transcripts are not official unless sent from school.
- ✓ **Letters of recommendation (if needed):** Do you have the number of letters required? Check to see how they need to be submitted (online, sealed envelope etc)
- ✓ **ACT/SAT scores:** If you need to send test scores to additional schools, contact the testing company directly (actstudent.org).
- ✓ **Complete portfolio, interview, audition (if needed):** If any of these are optional, doing them gives you a leg up on the competition.

### ***Frequent Application Errors***

- "I'll wait to get a better score."** Submit your application even if you still plan to take the ACT, SAT, or another exam again.
- "I already ran spell check."** Words can be spelled correctly but used incorrectly. Ask a counselor, teacher, or family member to proofread the application to catch any errors or poor phrasing.
- "I can send my application as soon as I'm finished."** Before you click "send," double-check that you have included all necessary materials.
- "I assume this is right."** If you're confused by a question or any part of the application, ask someone. Visit your counselor's office or a call to the admissions office can save you from making an embarrassing error.

### ***Get Noticed: College or Scholarship Essay Tips***

- **Don't "recycle" essays without some tweaking** - An essay that sounds like it has been used before will blend in with everyone else's. If you copy and paste from a previous essay, be sure to change any identifying college information.
- **Captivate your audience** - Make your essay engaging and memorable. Include a quick, enticing intro; give the reader a reason to finish reading it. Let your personality shine. Use examples. The essay is your opportunity to show what makes you unique. Write something memorable in your own voice.
- **Be yourself** - Choose a topic that is meaningful to you. Use your own words. Show off a side of yourself that your application does not show. Don't simply write what you think the admissions office wants to hear.
- **Accentuate the positive** - When writing about a personal experience, emphasize how the experience changed you for the better or built your resilience.
- **Write in the active voice** - Doing so will make your essay more clear and concise.
- **Don't overextend** - Your essay isn't a term paper. Stay focused on your topic.
- **Ask other people for input** - Whether it's a teacher, counselor, friend, or parent, ask someone you respect for some candid feedback. Is it confusing? Boring? Avoid cliches ("I am a hard worker") or standard essay topics. Try to come up with something an admissions office hasn't seen a million times before.
- **Leave time for rewriting** - Look for weak or dull spots and spelling/grammatical errors. Never let your first draft be your final draft. DO NOT rely on spell check. It's a helpful tool, but ALWAYS have someone proofread for you.
- **Revise and reword** - Improve on your first draft through various rewrites. Read the essay aloud to find awkward sentences or problems. Don't just list your attributes; be specific and try to give examples.
- **Pursue perfection** - Have someone else look it over. Quadruple-check your spelling. Type your essay carefully.
- **Use care when writing about a delicate or controversial subject** - Religion, a bout with mental illness, or an issue with your boyfriend or girlfriend are all fine subjects for an essay. But, if you handle them wrong, you may present yourself in a negative light.
- **Do not write like you text** - An admissions office is not impressed by a smiley face or text slang 😊. Treat your application seriously. Seriously.





# College Admissions Lingo

**Rolling Admission:** Most colleges encourage early application, but do not have a hard deadline. They will continue admitting students until they meet their recruitment goals.

## All Colleges will send you one of the following decisions:

**Acceptance:** Celebrate! You've been accepted! Depending on how you applied, compare your (possible) other offers, decide which is best for you and commit by May 1. Be sure to read all materials/emails and follow direction carefully.

**Deferral:** Also referred to as "**Waitlist**", this means the college is not prepared to accept or deny your application. You can wait and see what happens, but you *should help yourself* by contacting the college (this means the student) and ask if there's anything more you can provide. Additional personal statements, letters of recommendation or updated grades or test scores can make a difference.

**Denial:** You have not been accepted. First, don't take it personally! Next, look at what other options you have. Consider this could be fate. Maybe you're meant to go to a different school and meet the love of your life? If you're not able to move on, you can always appeal, but if you can't share new information, you won't likely get a new decision. "I really want to go here," is not new information.

**Decision Plan:** Depending on the college, students are sometimes asked to choose the type of application they will submit to the college(s). Different decision options may give you a *slight* advantage in the admissions process, *but won't tip the scales significantly*.

**Regular Decision (RD):** Apply by a specified date and receive your decision in a time frame published by the college. Student chooses to commit to attend the college (or not) by May 1.

**Early Action (EA)** Apply by a specified date, earlier than Regular Decision, and receive your decision at an earlier date. Student chooses to commit to attend the college (or not) by May 1.

**Early Decision (ED)** Apply to only one school using this process by a specified date, earlier than student **must** commit to enrolling at this college and withdraw applications from all other colleges!

**Restrictive Early Action (REA)** Similar to Early Action, but the college you apply to using REA sets restrictions on the other types of admission decisions you may use (eg: you may not apply to any other college using Early Action or Early Decision). If admitted, you are not required to commit to the college. Student chooses to commit to attend the college (or not) by May 1. This option is offered by very few schools.



*Apply to over 1,100 colleges  
with just one application!*

Note: Not every college uses the  
Common Application!

App may take longer to complete than most college applications. If you are applying to many schools

To apply to college on the Common Application, start the following steps this summer:

1. Create your account on Commonapp.org. Create a username and password you won't forget!
2. Add colleges to your list. To find colleges that use Common Application visit [commonapp.org/search-colleges](https://commonapp.org/search-colleges).
3. Understand information on college-specific admissions requirements. Even though they use a "common application" schools will vary. Use the requirements tracking tools on the Common App. to help.
4. Gather information about yourself; your transcript, extracurricular activities, test scores, parent info (degrees, occupation, employer).
5. Start your application! Don't sweat it! You can go back and change anything you enter before you submit!
6. Submit your application!
  - Be sure to review responses and have your essays proofread!
  - Be sure you have not used the same essays for different prompts.
  - Provide names and emails of your counselor and people you need recommendations from (if you are using the Common App., Student Services will send your transcript electronically via the Common App.).
    - Find this section under My Colleges > select any of your institution > select Recommenders & FERPA. Enter your counselor's email.
  - Answer the "FERPA" question:
    - "Yes" to waive your right to see recommendations written for you (*most teachers will share it with you anyway!*)
    - "No" may make you appear distrustful of your recommenders, but it's up to you.
  - Pay the application fee (if any) online with a debit/credit card. Fee waivers are available for students in need.



# SENIOR YEAR - What you really need:

## Top 10 Senior Year Needs

A common question seniors ask school counselors in their last semester is “What do I need to graduate?” This can be translated to “What’s the bare minimum I have to do to crawl across the stage this May?”

We’d like to answer that question in advance with the top 10 things every senior needs in their last months of high school.

**10. A sense of accomplishment** – feeling you’ve completed something you’ve worked hard at for 4 years.

**9. Usually at least two classes each semester!** History from those who came before you show that lackadaisical study habits are hard to contain to just the ‘unimportant’ classes.

**8. Punctuality & attendance habits**, whether work, school or the military, everyone will expect you to be present and on time!

**7. Scholarship money!** A big factor in getting AND keeping scholarship money is what have you do over your *entire* senior year.

**6. Your admissions!** Those accepted to college can and do have their admissions revoked when final transcripts are sent at the end of the school year if 2<sup>nd</sup> semester grades are not consistent with other semesters.

**5. Your future!** Regardless of what you do after May 2025, a strong work ethic will be expected and will take you far! Consider signing up for a Youth Apprenticeship or Mentorship for additional relevance in your Senior year

**4. To enjoy your final months** of high school... instead of living with the anxiety of “will I make it or not?” while your classmates enjoy themselves with end of the year events.

**3. Realize 4<sup>th</sup> quarter is short** for seniors! Seniors finish 3 weeks earlier than they are accustomed to. Last minute efforts to earn the grades you want need to start early!

**2. To GRADUATE!** Every year there are good students who do not or barely pass their required courses because they assumed they could coast through the final quarter of high school.

**1. AN EDUCATION!** There’s a reason high school is 4 years rather than 3 ½! You still have some things to learn!





Fall 2024

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Thank you for your application for admission to the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. We were impressed with your application materials; however, we are not able to make an admission decision at this time and are placing you on our postpone list.

Students are not assigned a specific number when placed on the postpone list. The academic rigor of your course work, class rank, grades, ACT/SAT scores, involvement, and demonstrated leadership are some of the factors taken into consideration when reviewing postponed students. We review postponed applications in early December and will continue to review until we close admission. If you are admitted, we will send official notification of the change in your status. All postponed applicants will know of their status prior to May 1<sup>st</sup>.

In our review, we will consider any additional information that you submit to us. To initiate a second review, you are **strongly encouraged** to submit the following:

- first quarter senior year and/or seventh semester grades
- ACT or SAT scores (if not previously sent) or a higher composite score on the ACT or SAT (retaking the exam)
- 1 or 2 letters of recommendation (these can be sent to our office via mail or by emailing them to [admissions@uwlax.edu](mailto:admissions@uwlax.edu))
- documentation verifying the addition of courses to your senior year (including any college/university course work)

We understand that you are eager to know your admission status, so we will contact you as soon as an admissions decision has been made. The number of students we admit from our postpone list depends upon the number of applications we receive, the quality of the applicants, and the space available in our freshman class. If you have any questions regarding the status of your application, please contact us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Corey M. Sjoquist".

Corey M. Sjoquist  
Director of Admissions

# Guide to Letters of Recommendation

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Letters of recommendation may be required for:

- College applications
  - Scholarship applications
  - Job applications
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## **Complete** the Letter of Recommendation

Request sheet on the reverse side of this page. This is your opportunity to give those writing your letters the information they need about your accomplishments, activities, and goals. **Make a copy for each letter writer.**

## **Choose** the right people to write your letters.

They should be adults who know you well and can write a positive recommendation. Some good choices include teachers, school counselors, coaches, clergy, or supervisors. Do not choose parents or relatives.

## **Give** the letter writers plenty of time

(at least two weeks) to write your recommendation letter and let them know your deadline.

**Thank** your letter writers. Write a short note to show your appreciation.



## The Letter of Recommendation

Request sheet allows you to

give your letter writers a little

more information about

yourself:

- Your strengths
- Qualities that make you a good candidate for the school or scholarship
- Specific examples of how you have displayed those qualities

**AND** gives you the opportunity

to provide information about

your:

- Accomplishments
- Activities
- Goals

**Onalaska High School**  
**Letter of Recommendation Request & Student Information**

Attach additional sheet if necessary

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Needed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose of Letter:** (check one)    ☐ College application    ☐ Scholarship application    ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Letter to be addressed to:** Admissions Committee, Scholarship Committee, specific college(s), specific scholarship(s), or name/title

\_\_\_\_\_

**List your future goals (career/college/work):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Academic activities, leadership, awards & honors (please provide dates):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Extracurricular activities, leadership, awards & honors (please provide dates):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Community activities, volunteer experience and awards (please provide dates):**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Employment (please provide dates):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**What are 3-5 words you would use to describe yourself?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe any unusual circumstances that may affect your life (family, personal, financial, academic, COVID-related):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe your strengths, skills, attitudes or past experiences that might assist me in writing your letter:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# SHOW ME THE MONEY!

## Scholarships

### Local OHS Scholarships

One application for over 70 scholarships totaling \$750,000 for 85 different seniors! Applications available Jan. 2026.

### Community Scholarships

Local scholarships we are made aware of are posted on the school website & newsletter from Sept. to June. Parent employers may also sponsor scholarships.

### College Scholarships

After being admitted, students should contact their college to see what scholarships they are eligible for. The application for admission is sometimes the application for scholarships! About \$1 million awarded to OHS students last year!

### National Scholarships

Search websites like fastweb.com for nationwide scholarships

## Working & Saving

### Find a Job

Work while you're in school and pay off your tuition/loans as you go.

**Be careful not to work so many hours that you struggle to keep up with your classes!**

### Work Study

Work on campus to help pay for tuition.

### Live simply

Don't overspend on the things you don't need. Drive a used car, use an old TV & furniture, eat from your meal plan, have roommates, etc!

### Don't overuse a credit card!

You'll have to pay it back soon... plus interest!

## Need-Based Financial Aid

Over 90% of all financial assistance for students in the United States comes from federal financial aid!

### How to Apply for Need-Based Financial Aid:

1. Apply and be accepted to your college
2. October 1st, go to FAFSA.gov to start your financial aid application
  - a. Apply for an "FSA ID" at fsaid.ed.gov first
  - b. Try to complete your FAFSA by December 1st (deadlines vary)
3. Promptly submit any other documentation requested!
4. A Student Aid Report (SAR) will be emailed to you, letting you know the kind of assistance that you are eligible for.

### What Kind of Financial Aid Can I Get?

\$\$ Grants (Free money!)

\$\$ Work Study (earned by working on campus)

\$\$ Student loans (paid back after you graduate)

### How Need-Based Financial Aid Works:

Cost of Attendance

- Expected Family Contribution (EFC)

= Financial Need

### Example:

\$5,000 cost of College A

-\$3,100 EFC

= \$1,900 Financial Need

15,000 cost of College B

-\$3,100 EFC

= \$11,900 Financial Need

Visit <https://studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/> to calculate what your EFC might be.



## College Financials Comparison

Use this worksheet to calculate the costs of each school to get an accurate comparison.

	School 1:	School 2:	School 3:
<b>1. Cost Per Year</b>			
Tuition			
Required Fees +			
Room & Board (Housing & Meal Plan) +			
<b>A. Estimated Direct Costs =</b>			
<b>2. Financial Assistance per Year</b>			
Scholarships (Private and from the college)			
Federal Grants (PELL, SEOG) +			
State Grants +			
<b>B. Total Gift Aid =</b>			
Federal Direct Loan (Subsidized) +			
Federal Direct Loan (Unsubsidized) +			
Federal Perkins Loan +			
<b>C. Total Student Loans =</b>			
<b>3. Out of Pocket Costs per Year</b>			
A. Estimated Direct Costs			
B. Total Gift Aid -			
C. Total Student Loans -			
<b>TOTAL OUT OF POCKET COSTS =</b>			

# FAFSA

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

## How to Unlock Money for College



### WHAT IS FEDERAL STUDENT AID?

Federal student aid comes from the federal government. It is money that helps students pay for higher education expenses. Student and parent must submit a FAFSA to see if they qualify for aid.

The FAFSA provides access to:

- **Federal and state grants** - money for college that doesn't need to be repaid
- **Work study** - money **earned** to help cover college expenses
- **Federal student loans** - money that is borrowed for college that is **paid back later, sometimes with interest**

Federal student aid covers expenses like tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, and transportation.

To help you understand your options for paying for college, check out:

- FAFSA4caster
- StudentAid.gov

Help is available to complete the FAFSA:

- 1.800.4.FED.AID
- StudentAid.gov/fsaid
- FAFSA.gov
- StudentAid.gov
- OHS Student Services
- Your college financial aid office

### WHAT YOU NEED TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA:

- Social Security number
- Dates - birth, death, marriage, divorce
- Use the Data Retrieval Tool to save time in reporting tax info
- Most recent bank balances
- Amounts of any other income not reported on taxes
- Value of business or farm
- Value of any other assets like stocks, bonds and mutual funds



### WHO PROVIDES PARENT INFO ON THE FAFSA?

Both biological or adoptive parents, if they are living together, regardless of marital status or gender.

In the case of separation, divorce or parents who do not live together, provide parent info for:

- the parent who provided the most financial support
- If the parent who completes the FAFSA is remarried, you must also include step-parent information

## WHAT IS THE FEDERAL STUDENT AID PROCESS?

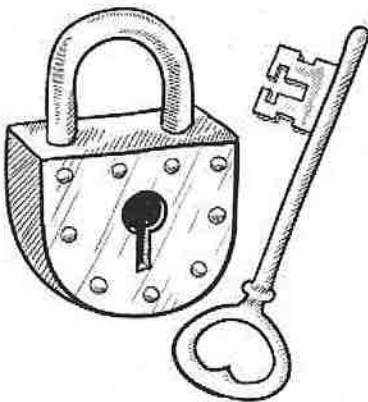
1. **Create a FAFSA ID.** Each student and parent/guardian must create a FSA ID, made of a username and password, to submit your FAFSA. Your FSA ID is used to confirm your identity and electronically sign your FAFSA. Go to [StudentAid.gov/fsaid](https://StudentAid.gov/fsaid) to complete this step.
2. **Complete the FAFSA.** Beginning October 1st of your senior year, you will submit a FAFSA at [FAFSA.gov](https://FAFSA.gov). You will report income and tax info from 2024. Colleges have different deadlines, so check with individual campuses. Using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool (IRS DRT) lets you electronically transfer your federal tax return info into your FAFSA.
  - o EASY: Transfer info with the click of a button
  - o FAST: Instantly retrieve your information
  - o ACCURATE: Correctly fill in your informationIn the finances section of the FAFSA, you will see a "Link to IRS" button if you are eligible to use this feature.
3. **Review your Student Aid Report (SAR).** After you apply, you will receive a SAR which contains the info reported on your FAFSA and your Expected Family contribution (EFC). The EFC is a number used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid. Review your SAR info to make sure it is correct. The college(s) you list on your FAFSA will get your SAR data electronically.

The college's financial aid office will contact you if additional documentation is needed to continue processing your FAFSA. This is called verification.

4. **Review your Award Notification.** Each college's financial aid office will send you an aid offer showing the amount and types of aid (from all sources) the college will offer. You can compare the aid offers you receive and use this in your decision-making process in selecting a college. You will need to accept or decline the aid that is offered.

Please contact the college(s) financial aid office if your family would like to explain any special circumstances that may affect your financial aid eligibility.

## WHEN SHOULD I COMPLETE THE FAFSA?



- Prior to starting the FAFSA, every student and parent need to create a FAFSA ID to fill out and electronically sign your FAFSA  
[StudentAid.gov/fsaid](https://StudentAid.gov/fsaid)
- Then beginning October 1st of your senior year, you can complete the FAFSA  
[FAFSA.gov](https://FAFSA.gov)
- Check each college's priority filing date and complete your FAFSA before the appropriate deadlines

## FAFSA HELP IS AVAILABLE!

- College Goal Wisconsin - Onalaska High School, October 2025
- Financial Aid Application help during Resource, November 2025



## Free Money for College - Scholarships

Increase the odds that you will be awarded a scholarship!

**Research the scholarship sponsor and personalize your answers.** A scholarship application often contains the sponsor's scholarship selection criteria, but dig deeper. Research the scholarship sponsor. Look for the organizer's mission statement, which you'll often find in the "About Us" section of their website.



**Get involved in your community.** Students who volunteer enjoy a huge advantage with scholarship sponsors. Scholarship sponsors are looking for a long-time commitment to volunteering, which makes sense as many scholarship providers are non-profits committed to helping others.

**Look professional.** Google your name to make sure you have a professional online presence. Remove any inappropriate material from Facebook or Instagram. DO NOT use something that sounds unprofessional as an email account name.

**Use a scholarship search engine.** Using scholarship search engines will make your job easier. Check out Fastweb.com, Scholarships.com, Careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch.

**Don't ignore optional questions.** When supplying your background on scholarship search engines, answer the optional questions. Addressing these questions can generate twice as many scholarship matches.

**Apply to many scholarships.** You can increase your chances of being awarded a scholarship if you apply for all of them for which you qualify. Use a calendar to track dates and deadlines.

**Avoid paying to apply for a scholarship.** In the financial aid and scholarship world, you should never have to pay to apply! Watch out for scam websites and check the Better Business Bureau if you're unsure of an organization.

**Be passionate.** When writing a scholarship essay, let your personal voice come through. Include details in your essay that help reveal who you are. Focus on a problem and how you solved it or overcame adversity.

**Think local.** Local scholarships are easier to win than national or regional ones, because the pool of candidates is smaller. The OHS Student Services website (OHS Scholarship Database), the OHS newsletter, and Freddy's Footnotes list local scholarships. Mrs. Hubbard will also give you a packet of additional local scholarship information in January of your senior year.



## A GUIDE TO FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION ON THE INTERNET

**SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH SERVICES (GENERAL)** - These sites contain, in whole or in part, "free" scholarship search services.

1. <http://www.fastweb.com>
2. <http://www.gocollege.com>
3. <http://www.scholarships.com>
4. <http://www.collegexpress.com>
5. <http://www.finaid.org/scholarships>
6. <http://www.collegescholarships.org>
7. <https://scholarshipamerica.org/what-we-do/students-parents/>
8. <https://www.goingmerry.com/>
9. <https://bold.org/scholarships/>
10. Xello - log into your account through PowerSchool

### SCHOLARSHIP SEARCH SERVICES (MINORITY)

1. <http://www.gmsp.org>
2. <http://www.collegefund.org> (Native American)
3. <http://www.finaid.org/otheraid/natamind.phtml> (Native American)
4. <https://uncf.org/scholarships> (African American)

**GENERAL FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION** - Browse through one or more of these sites to learn more about the financial aid application process, the different types of aid available and tips on how to find the right college.

1. <http://www.finaid.org> \*site contains a financial aid estimation calculator
2. <https://studentaid.gov/>
3. <http://www.nasfaa.org>
4. <http://www.mappingyourfuture.org>
5. <http://www.tuitionfundingsources.com>

**WISCONSIN FINANCIAL AID INFORMATION** - These sites contain information specific to Wisconsin programs and colleges. Most have links to other sites as well.

1. <http://www.heab.state.wi.us>
2. <http://www.wasfaa.net>
3. <http://www.edvest.com>

### BUCKY'S TUITION PROMISE & BADGER PROMISE - UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

1. <https://financialaid.wisc.edu/types-of-aid/tuition-promise> \*Freshman applicants
2. <https://www.mypromisetool.org/?state=Wisconsin>
3. <https://tec.education.wisc.edu/teacher-pledge/> \*For future educators attending UW Madison

**MILITARY AID OPPORTUNITIES/BENEFITS** - Visit these sites for specific information pertaining to veteran and veteran dependent educational programs.

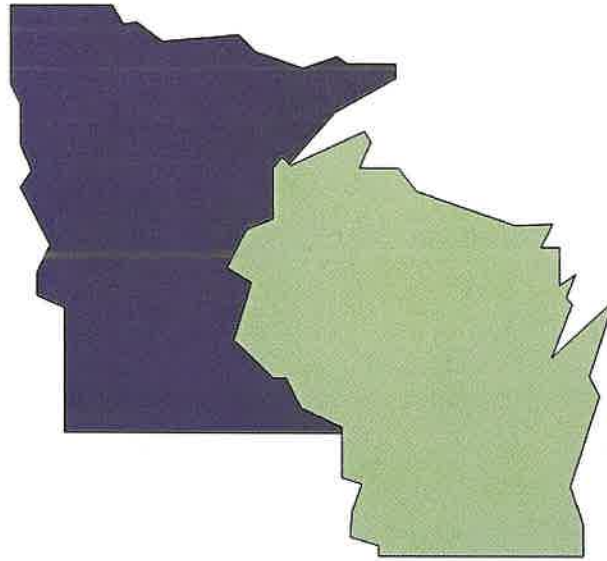
1. <http://www.finaid.org/military>
2. <http://www.myfuture.com/military/>
3. <http://www.sss.gov> (use this site to register with Selective Service)

**RESPONSIBLE BORROWING/MANAGING STUDENT LOAN DEBT** - These sites include information on borrower responsibilities, tips for saving money on loans and credit card information for students

1. <https://studentaid.gov/h/manage-loans>
2. <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/tips-managing-paying-student-loans>



# MINNESOTA – WISCONSIN RECIPROCITY BENEFITS



## **What is Wisconsin/Minnesota reciprocity?**

The MN-WI Tuition Reciprocity Program provides tuition reciprocity for Wisconsin residents who enroll in an eligible Minnesota public institution on a space available basis. Students who qualify pay for course work at in-state tuition rates.

## **How does a student receive MN-WI tuition reciprocity?**

A student *must* apply to HEAB and be approved to receive MN-WI tuition reciprocity. It is not automatic! Applications can be found at: <http://www.heab.state.wi.us/index.html>

## **When does a student need to re-apply for MN-WI reciprocity?**

If you continue to attend the same school in Minnesota, your reciprocity will be renewed. However, if you apply to a different school in Minnesota, you must submit a new reciprocity application to HEAB.

## **Is there a deadline for applying for MN-WI reciprocity?**

A MN-WI reciprocity application must be postmarked no later than the last day of scheduled classes of the first term for which a student expects to receive benefits under the agreement.

*Applications and information for reciprocity can be found at:*

<https://heab.state.wi.us/features/reciprocity.html>



# MSEP

## MIDWEST STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM

*A Midwestern Higher Education Compact Program*

### IT'S EASY TO SAVE MONEY ON OUT-OF-STATE TUITION

#### WHAT IS THE MSEP?

The Midwest Student Exchange Program (MSEP) is a tuition reduction program that makes attending out-of-state colleges and universities more affordable for non-resident students. By enrolling in MSEP at a participating institution, you will receive a reduced tuition rate—giving you a wider range of education options for your education dollars. Nearly one hundred colleges and universities in Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, and Wisconsin have opened their doors to each others' citizens by offering **REDUCED TUITION RATES**.



#### HOW DOES IT WORK?

Through the MSEP, public institutions agree to charge students **NO MORE THAN 150%** of the in-state resident tuition rate and private institutions offer a **10% REDUCTION** on their tuition rates. Institutions may limit MSEP to specific programs or degree levels. You must enroll as a non-resident student at a participating MSEP campus to receive the discount. Actual savings through the program will vary from institution to institution depending upon the tuition rates. **IT'S ALMOST LIKE GETTING FREE MONEY.**

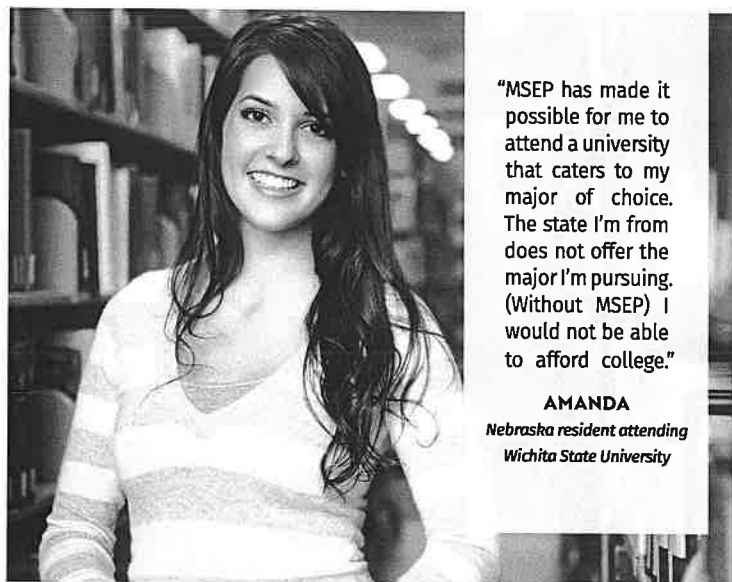
#### WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE?

*It's easy. Simply visit [MSEP.MHEC.ORG](http://MSEP.MHEC.ORG) to:*

1. Search for participating institutions and programs
2. Learn about campus enrollment requirements
3. Find campus-specific contact information
4. Learn more about this money-saving program

**MSEP.MHEC.ORG**

Questions? Contact us at  
612-677-2777 or [MSEP@MHEC.ORG](mailto:MSEP@MHEC.ORG).



"MSEP has made it possible for me to attend a university that caters to my major of choice. The state I'm from does not offer the major I'm pursuing. (Without MSEP) I would not be able to afford college."

**AMANDA**  
*Nebraska resident attending  
Wichita State University*

**WHY ARE YOU WAITING? START SAVING TODAY!**

