

Otsego HIGH SCHOOL

COLLEGE BOUND

SENIORS



If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Metzger by phone 419-823-4381 ext. 2143 or by email ametzger@otsegoknights.org.

Senior Planning Timeline

Please use this as a guide as you go through your senior year.

Senior Year

- When senior males turn 18, they must register with Selective Service. Visit www.sss.gov to register! If you fail to register, you will not be eligible for Financial Aid.

September

- Finalize your list of reasonable choices. Include at least one “long shot”, one “target”, and one “safe” school. Your first choice might very well be a school to which you are a likely candidate for admission. However, each one of you should include at least one safe choice on your list of colleges.
- Once you have narrowed your list of colleges to a recommended maximum of six, you should begin applying. Most colleges prefer students to apply online.
- Attend meetings with college representatives who visit HHS. Keep in mind that the representatives who visit us will more than likely be the ones to present your case to the admissions team at their college: **MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION!**
- Register for the September/October ACT or November SAT if you have not taken the test or want to retest. Obtain packets in Guidance or register on-line.
- Begin work on application essays. Most senior English classes include work on an essay.
- Remember that the grades you make this semester will be an important ingredient in the way college admissions committees view your academic seriousness. Your first semester grades will be the last ones they see before deciding whether to admit you to their school.
- Decide how you will actually apply: paper application, or applying online at the school’s website. Also consider using the common application which will save you time. Just make sure your school accepts the common application. **-For more information go to www.commonapp.org**
- Keep your commitment to take challenging courses! Your senior year matters!

October

- October 1st 2025, FAFSA application will go live.
- Complete and file your FAFSA as soon as possible. Aid is distributed on a first come, first served basis. FAFSA’s website is <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>.
- The FAFSA is the federal financial form, needed for both public and private schools, and the Profile is for private schools only
- Please do not push deadlines. It is to your advantage to file your application early. Most colleges admit that early applications automatically receive more attention because they demonstrate the student’s sincere interest in a school.
- Early decision deadlines and scholarship deadlines may be as early as October 15. Do not allow lack of planning on your part to create an emergency on our part. Submit your Transcript Requests two weeks before the deadline.
- The college to which you are applying may require official copies of your test scores. Some schools require test scores submitted directly from ACT/SAT. Check the websites of the colleges to see what they require.
- Notify your counselor if you would like to be nominated for a scholarship at the colleges you are applying.
- Complete a Transcript Request form for each application you submit. Your transcript includes ACT and SAT scores, classes you’ve taken and your grades; when your counselor sends in your transcript, they will also attach your current schedule.

November

- Use your college visiting days well. HHS allows a maximum of 2 days which will be counted against your exemption, but will be excused if pre-approved. Request the visit day by filling out the College Visitation Form at least five days beforehand and bring a letter from the college for proof of your visit.
- Teacher Recommendations - If the colleges to which you are applying require a recommendation from a teacher, choose and ask a teacher who you feel knows you the best and will represent you well. Give your teacher a filled out Letter of Recommendation Form, which are available in the guidance office. **ALLOW AT LEAST 2 WEEKS TO COMPLETE A RECOMMENDATION.** If the teacher needs to send the letter directly to an institution, provide an addressed and stamped envelope with the appropriate corresponding forms.
- This will be your last chance to sign up for and take the SAT or ACT in this year's admission pool.

December

- This will be the last month you can take the ACT/SAT for college applications and scholarship applications. Testing after this month will not guarantee your scores are available for most deadlines.
- All college applications and transcript requests which need to be sent out before winter break are due in the guidance office two weeks before we leave for break. Applications that have a February 1 deadline should also be processed in December.
- Since we do not return until January, all Transcript Requests submitted after the deadline will be sent out in late January. Please remember that Counselor Reports will be processed in the order they are received...not in the order of urgency for you.
- If you expect your counselor to write an effective recommendation for you, then allow sufficient time to process your recommendation.
- Ace your mid-year exams—they matter!
- Request Mid-Year transcripts to be mailed to the colleges to which you are applying.
- Don't ask to drop challenging courses. Colleges could withdraw their offer!

January

- Continue applying and looking for scholarships!

February

- If you haven't already done so, visit schools to which you applied.
- Wait.

March -- SPRING BREAK --- ENJOY!

April

- By April 15, you should hear from all colleges. Use the two weeks before May 1 to make your final decision.
- Register for Advanced Placement exams if necessary.
- Notify all colleges which have accepted you of your final decision.
- Notify colleges who have put you on their waiting list if you wish to remain on it.
- Don't develop Senioritis! All college acceptances are conditional pending receipt of final grades in June.

May

- Reply to the college you choose. Do not place a deposit with more than one college: it is unethical and you can be dropped by both colleges if discovered.

- Fill out a Final Transcript Request for the college you will attend. You must make this request in writing to release your transcript.

College Entrance Tests

Some Colleges are continuing to go test optional. Please check with the schools you are applying to for this information.

There are two college entrance tests; the ACT and the SAT. Though many institutions will accept the results of either test, Ohio colleges generally request the ACT. Some institutions may use test results for proper placement of students in English and Math courses.

Students planning on attending college should take either the ACT or SAT before January of their senior year. Many students will take the test more than once. It is not unusual for test scores to increase the second time taken.

A student should prepare in advance to take an entrance test. There are practice test booklets available in the counselor's office, and there is also online preparation through the test website. You will also be able to find numerous books and computer programs to buy in order to help prepare further. A student is also able to take Test Preparation Classes through Kaplan or through Sylvan Learning Center; contact one of these companies or ask your counselor for further information about these resources.

You are highly encouraged to register for these tests online either at actstudent.org (ACT) or sat.collegeboard.org (SAT). When filling out the application for both the ACT and the SAT, you are required to put the high school code (or the CEEB code). The code for Otsego is **365-075**. Memorize this code, as it will be used very frequently when filling out applications and scholarships.

ACT Test

The ACT consists of four tests: English, Reading, Math, and Science Reasoning. Students are given a score for each test, with scores ranging from 1 to 36. These scores are then averaged to a Composite Score. The national average Composite Score is 21. ACT also has an optional 30-minute Writing Test; it is recommended that all students take the Writing at least once. All of the ACT questions are multiple choice and there is no penalty for guessing; therefore a student should answer every question. Calculators are allowed to be used.

The cost for the ACT (without Writing and Science) is \$ 68.00; ACT plus Writing is an additional \$25.00 dollars and ACT plus Science is an additional \$4.00 dollars..A student should be registered five to six weeks prior to the test date. ACT fee waivers are also available; if you are on free and reduced lunch, you could be eligible for a fee waiver.

ACT will now provide an automatically calculated ACT Superscore to all students who have taken the ACT more than once from September 2016 to current day.

For information on ACT test prep tools, go to www.act.org/theact/testprep

To sign up for the ACT, go to www.actstudent.org

ACT Testing Dates 2025-2026:

<https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>

SAT Test

The SAT tests the skills you're learning in school: reading, math and evidence based reading and writing. Your knowledge and skills in these subjects are important for success in college and throughout your life.

- The **reading** section tests the understanding of passages from U.S. and World Literature, History/Social Studies, and Sciences.
- The **writing** section tests the "Expression of Ideas" and "Standard English Conventions" through passages relating to Careers, History/Social Studies, Humanities, and Science.
- The **mathematics** section includes questions on arithmetic operations, algebra, geometry, statistics, probability and real-world problem solving.

With the SAT, there is no penalty for guessing. Calculator use is allowed on 37 questions; not permitted for 20 questions. You can register for the test online, as well as take practice tests, look at practice questions, and get information about the test structure, at <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/registration>

A student should be registered for the SAT five to six weeks prior to the test date.

SAT also has Subject Tests that are required by some colleges; check with the college you are applying to make sure you have taken the correct entrance exam (i.e. ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject test).

SAT Testing Dates 2025-2026:

https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/sat/dates-deadlines?ef_id=Cj0KCQjw9JLHBhC-ARIsAK4Phcp2hhim_FViZTccHrTshN6xL9qUYCKLh4t5On46egHULhvZF1R5lLwaAjwZEALw_wcB:G:s&s_kwcid=AL!4330!3!686690547297!e!!g!!sat%20test%20date%20and%20locations!20919058790!166014077988&gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20919058790&gbraid=0AAAAAD-SkkzOlmbS_kugbcGgTcXcNp34S&gclid=Cj0KCQjw9JLHBhC-ARIsAK4Phcp2hhim_FViZTccHrTshN6xL9qUYCKLh4t5On46egHULhvZF1R5lLwaAjwZEALw_wcB

Please visit the following website for more information on the new SAT and test prep tools

www.kaptest.com/sat/kaplan-sat-prep/2016-sat-test-changes

College Selection Process

Before you start researching colleges, you should make a list of characteristics you think you want in a school. Some characteristics to consider:

Academic Program (2 year, 4 year, Vocational)

Affiliation (Public vs. Private)

Size of the College

Community (Rural vs. City) & Location (Distance from home)

Campus Housing (Dorm, Off Campus, Live at Home)

Student Body (Coed vs. All Male/Female)

Admissions, Cost, Financial Aid

Supportive Services (Counseling, Med Center)

Activities, Social Clubs, & Athletics

Religious Affiliation, Ethnic Composition

Areas of Study, Course Offerings, & Facilities

Academic Rigor & Graduation/Retention Rates

Choosing a Major

A major is the area that you will study in most depth in college. You will take up to two-thirds of your classes in that subject. Most colleges do not require a student to declare a major until the end of their sophomore year. You can change your major, however, be cautioned that this could involve the risk of taking additional classes to satisfy the major requirements, which may cost additional time and money. Consider the following when choosing a major:

Look at your interests-career and otherwise.

Talk to people that you know that work in the field you are thinking of choosing. Come to the Guidance Office to look at the "Book of Majors" to help you decide.

Look in local newspapers at classified ads; look to see which jobs sound interesting and which pay the salary you would like to earn.

Research different career websites:

- Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>
- Mapping Your Future: <http://mappingyourfuture.org/>
- College Search: <http://www.cappex.com/>
- Campus Career Center (look for internships & jobs): <http://www.campuscareercenter.com/>
- Career Planning through the ACT: <http://www.actstudent.org/career/>

What Colleges Look For

Academic Record-Difficulty of courses taken

Standardized Tests

Grades & Class Rank

Out of Class Activities (Jobs, Volunteer Work)

Recommendations

College Interviews (Some colleges)

Filling Out a College Application

Freshman applications can be filled out any time after your Junior year. Colleges strongly recommend that students apply early (some as early as or earlier than Thanksgiving). In order to be considered for acceptance, scholarships, financial aid, and housing, applications need to be filled out by March. However, this does not mean that you can slack off and wait until April to fill out applications! Not only are they time consuming, but financial aid and housing is usually based on a first-come first-serve basis; meaning, if all of the housing has been taken by other freshman that applied early, you may not be able to start on time or get enough aid to cover the costs. Moral is: DON'T WAIT! College requirements often vary so always read and comply with those specific requirements.

In general, the following are basic materials needed to complete an application:

- A completed application & any required application fee
- An official copy of your high school transcript, including class rank & GPA
- An official record of your ACT/SAT scores (sent directly from ACT or SAT)
- Other items that may be required (recommendations, essays, & financial aid forms)

Applications DO's & DON'T's

DO

- Read applications & directions carefully
- Make sure to include any extra paperwork that may be needed/requested
- Fill out your own application

DON'T

- If you fill out a paper application, do not use white-out, cross anything out, or use pencil
- Don't leave anything blank (if you have questions, ask)
- Don't be unclear or vague (answer q's specifically)

-Apply online to avoid mistakes (you can save and edit)

-Don't put it off! Do it early!

Most schools require/prefer that you apply online

-Be truthful & don't exaggerate

-Be thorough & on time

-If someone is writing a recommendation for you, give that person at least two weeks before it is due

College Visitations

Please make sure to check with each college about their current policy and procedures on College visits.

Visiting a college campus is a very important step in choosing a college. You can't actually experience a college through brochures and smiling admission reps, so schedule a tour! Seniors are allowed two excused absences per year for college visitations.

Before visiting a college, call the Admissions Office at least one week prior to the visit to schedule an appointment/tour. Try not to visit two colleges in one day; the information may run together. During your visit, you will have the opportunity to:

- Speak to an admission counselor about admission procedures & programs of study (majors)
- Take a campus tour (preferably with a current college student & when classes are in session)
- Speak to a faculty member regarding an academic program that interests you
- Eat lunch in a campus dining hall (sampling food you may be eating for the next few years is a good idea)
- Get a general feel for the campus atmosphere (what students & faculty are like, residence halls, libraries/computer facilities)
- Ask questions that concern you & find out general information (admission process, financial aid, scholarships, housing, etc.)

Questions to Ask When Considering/Visiting a College:

-How many students attend? Do most students live on campus?

-What academic programs is the college most known for?

-How many students are in one class? How many total students are in the Freshman class?

-Do faculty teach all the classes? or graduate assistants?

-Am I required to live on campus? What are campus policies regarding housing? How are roommates assigned? Ask to see a residence hall room.

-What types of student activities, organizations, and athletics are available?

-What is the surrounding neighborhood like? How is security? Ask for crime statistics.

-Can I have a car on campus? Where do I park?

-How is the food?

-Is there a health clinic on campus?

-Is there a hospital nearby?...bank?...churches?...grocery stores?...etc.?

-Is tutoring available?

-What are the campus rules about visitation?

-How much is the enrollment deposit?...is it refundable if I change my mind?

College Information & Scholarship Websites

- FAFSA: <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> - File your federal aid form electronically.
- FastWeb: <http://www.fastweb.com/> - Download applications & send them via email; apply for scholarships by completing a profile to see all of the scholarships that are best for you
- Peterson's Education Center: <http://www.petersons.com/> - Peterson's publications offer some of the most comprehensive information available to students about all aspects of preparation for higher education.
- Princeton Review: <http://www.princetonreview.com/> - General information on admission & financial aid.
- Transfer.org – Course Applicability System (CAS); provides information on how specific coursework will transfer and apply towards another degree at another university
- GoCollege: <http://www.gocollege.com/> - Comprehensive resource covering college admissions, financial aid, educational options, and surviving college.
- College Net: <http://www.collegenet.com> - Download applications & send them via email; also provides a scholarship search.
- Supercollege.com: How to get into & pay for the college of your dreams; scholarship search & tips/strategies.
- Mapping Your Future: www.mappingyourfuture.org – College planning, career options, & financial strategies
- CollegeConfidential: <http://www.collegeconfidential.com/> - provides College Admissions, School Search, and Financial Aid Resources to students and parents, from Ivy League to State Colleges.
- CollegeScholarships.com: Offers free college scholarship searches and information on financial aid, and provides tips on taking the ACT & SAT.
- FinAid: <http://www.finaid.org/> - A student guide to financial aid, information on scholarships as well as a comparison of loans available.
- Sallie Mae: <https://www.salliemae.com/> - The nation's leading provider for college loans.
- Hispanic Scholarship Fund: <http://hsf.net/> - Scholarship program for Hispanic high school seniors.
- www.scholarships.com
- www.studentscholarshipsearch.com
- www.gocollege.com
- www.collegedata.com/cs/search/scholar/scholarsearchtmpl.jhtml
- bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search
- www.finaid.org
- www.scholarships4students.com
- <http://www.college-scholarships.com/schools/ohio/>

Scholarships

You have probably heard people say that there are “millions of scholarship dollars that go unclaimed each year.” You have also probably heard parents who have told you that their student has a 3.7+ GPA and cannot get a scholarship. Both are true. The fact is, there are thousands of scholarships, however, most of these scholarships have very specific eligibility criteria, and when it comes to academic scholarships, students generally need to have an outstanding GPA, high test scores, excellent recommendations, and be involved in extracurricular/community activities.

- Even though searching and applying for scholarships can be a lengthy process, students and parents who are willing to invest the time and energy may find that their efforts pay off handsomely. When searching, keep the following in mind:
- Start early-finding & applying takes time, energy, & persistence
- Private colleges often are more generous in awarding scholarships, thus making them more competitive in price
- Be aware of deadlines & be organized (make copies of everything)
- Network-tell everyone that you are looking
- Search websites, books, etc. with scholarship information
- Be aware of scams! Six warning signs of scams:
 - “This scholarship is guaranteed or your money back.”
 - “The scholarship service will do all the work.”

- “The scholarship will cost some money.”
- “You can’t get this information anywhere else.”
- “You are a finalist-in a contest you never entered.” Or “You have been selected by a national foundation to receive a scholarship.”
- “The scholarship service needs your credit card or checking account number in advance.”

To Sum it All Up: Do’s & Don’ts

DO: Attend College Fairs, use college source books, and take advantage of college-related Web sources to learn about as many colleges and universities as you can.

DO: Develop a set of criteria (entrance requirements, reputation/ranking, location, costs, majors, etc.) for developing your list of colleges.

DON’T: Wait until the last minute to begin the application process; the earlier you start, the better you’ll be. And do read the application instructions carefully to be certain you are following directions including everything each college requests.

DO: Research each college or university to determine entrance requirements, fees, and due dates for applications.

DO: Make campus visits to colleges that most interest you.

DO: Keep track of all the deadlines for each college or university-and **do** be sure to get your applications in before those deadlines.

DON’T: Allow yourself to fall into the dreaded senior slump. Many colleges will ask to see at least some of your senior grades before making an admissions decision-and some may wait on the decision until they see all of your grades.

Good luck and if you have any questions, ask! That is what your counselor, your teachers, as well as college admission reps are here for!

