



# COLLEGE HANDBOOK

SCHOOL YEAR 2025-26

**HOTCHKISS**

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The Hotchkiss School does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of age, gender, religion, race, color, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, disability, or national or ancestral origin in the administration of its educational policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other School-administered programs, or in the administration of its hiring and employment practices.

# Mission

The Hotchkiss School considers the college search process to be an integral part of a Hotchkiss education. Through student-centered advising, the College Advising Office fosters independence and critical thinking, and supports students as they take the lead in their college journey. We teach students how to develop a range of options for life after Hotchkiss, prepare authentic applications that represent their values and talents, and thoughtfully select the path that suits them best. We are guided in our work by the School's commitment to developing a lifelong love of learning, responsible citizenship, and personal integrity in each student.

The College Advising Office represents Hotchkiss and articulates the School's mission and values to colleges so that they will understand the Hotchkiss student experience. In turn, the office represents the college admission landscape to the various constituencies of the Hotchkiss community.

## **STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...**

- Upholding Hotchkiss's expectations of personal character, honesty, and integrity throughout the process.
- Engaging in self-reflection to identify personal and educational goals.
- Being honest and aspiring for authenticity in all communications and applications.
- Communicating on a regular basis with their college advisors.
- Establishing a plan of appropriate communication with their families.
- Maintaining an accurate college application list on Maia Learning.
- Meeting deadlines set forth by the College Advising Office and by colleges and universities.
- Investigating and adhering to specific admission requirements and deadlines (standardized testing, curricular and otherwise) of each institution to which they apply.
- Submitting all application materials and standardized test scores (where appropriate) to each college or university where they are applying.
- Considering experiential learning opportunities, including a gap year, that could complement their college education.
- Maintaining a healthy approach to the commitments and responsibilities of their lives, both college-related and beyond.
- Creating a climate of support and open-mindedness among their peers.

## **THE COLLEGE ADVISING OFFICE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR...**

- Advising with the highest ethical and professional standards consistent with Hotchkiss's expectations of personal character, honesty, and integrity.
- Protecting privacy and holding information in confidence.
- Being supportive of the School, the class, and each student.
- Representing and supporting Hotchkiss and its students with integrity in all communications with colleges.
- Staying abreast of current trends within college admission.
- Being attuned to pedagogical issues regarding adolescent development.
- Providing access to information and educational opportunities to students of all backgrounds.
- Encouraging students and families to explore the range of excellent educational opportunities nationally and internationally.
- Encouraging students to be careful researchers of the diverse admission requirements, policies, and procedures of individual colleges and universities.
- Creating an open and positive atmosphere that encourages students, faculty, and parents to take advantage of the resources available to them.
- Understanding and responding appropriately to the individual needs of our students in a way that promotes self-sufficiency and confidence.
- Providing appropriate support of student writing and applications while empowering students to develop their own voices and make their own choices.
- Promoting experiential learning opportunities, including a gap year, which could complement students' college educations.
- Submitting transcripts, Hotchkiss recommendations, and secondary school materials to each college or university reflected on a student's Maia Learning list.
- Communicating with and being accessible to parents throughout the college search.

## **PARENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR...**

- Upholding Hotchkiss's expectations of personal character, honesty, and integrity throughout the process.
- Recognizing the value of the broad educational opportunities, nationally and internationally.
- Acknowledging that students are works in progress and that this search will evolve as they grow and learn about themselves.
- Encouraging independence and individual growth.
- Letting students lead the process while providing appropriate support.
- Providing the College Advising Office with relevant information, context, and insights about their children.
- Helping students accept outcomes by promoting, modeling, and encouraging resilience.

## **STATEMENT ON INDEPENDENT COLLEGE CONSULTANTS**

The increased complexity and pressure surrounding college admission may lead some families to consider hiring an independent college counselor or educational consultant outside the Hotchkiss community. While families are not prevented from doing so, we do not believe there is a need for it at Hotchkiss. The professional experience and training of the College Advising team ensure that every student receives personalized, thorough, and accurate guidance throughout the college search and application journey.

From Prep year onward, students and families benefit from the College Advising Office's comprehensive programming, clear communications, and extensive resources. Our advisors are well-prepared to counsel students with a wide range of goals, interests, and circumstances, including recruited athletes, students exploring international universities, those pursuing gap years, aspiring artists in the visual and performing arts, students with learning differences, and those with financial need. Building a strong relationship with one's assigned college advisor is essential, as advisors serve as both guides and advocates, most importantly by writing letters of recommendation that accompany each application.

It is also important to recognize the unique advantages Hotchkiss advisors bring. Independent consultants do not have access to the data-driven insights and historical knowledge that inform our counseling, nor do they enjoy the same professional connections with college admission offices, which allow us to ask questions and advocate effectively on behalf of students. Families who choose to work with an independent consultant are strongly encouraged to ensure that the consultant belongs to a recognized professional association, such as the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), the Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA), or the Higher Education Consultants Association (HECA). We also ask that families notify the College Advising Office if they are working with an independent consultant so we can coordinate efforts and streamline the process.

# Self-Evaluation

## QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE YOURSELF

As you begin your college search journey these questions can help you focus college selection and admission where it belongs — on you as an individual. You may feel embarrassed or self-conscious when you first consider these questions. However, an honest and thoughtful self-reflection can reveal what you should look for in colleges and prepare you for statements you will be asked to make about yourself in essays and interviews when you apply to college. If you are willing to look seriously at yourself, you can find colleges that are right for you and present yourself effectively to them.

## YOUR GOALS AND VALUES

1. What aspects of your high school years have you enjoyed the most? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently?
2. What values are most important to you? What do you care most about? What ideas occupy most of your energy, effort, and thoughts?
3. How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
4. What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you most like to change about yourself?
5. Is there anything you have ever secretly wanted to do or be? If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year?
6. What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

## YOUR EDUCATION

7. What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed most? Which courses have been most difficult for you?
8. What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? (Consider interests pursued beyond class assignments: topics chosen for research papers, lab reports, independent projects; independent reading; school activities; job or volunteer work.) What do your choices show about your interests and the way you like to learn?
9. How do you learn best? What methods of teaching and style of teaching engage your interest and effort the most?
10. How much do you genuinely like to read, discuss issues, and exchange ideas? What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years?
11. What is the greatest intellectual risk you have taken? Do you have an intellectual passion?
12. How well has Hotchkiss prepared you for college? In what areas of skill or knowledge do you feel confident for college study? Are there any areas where you feel inadequately prepared?
13. Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability and potential? What do you consider the best measures of your potential for college work?

## **YOUR ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS**

14. What activities do you most enjoy outside of the daily routine of school and other responsibilities? Which activities have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
15. How would others describe your role in your school or home community? What do you consider your most significant contribution?

## **THE WORLD AROUND YOU**

16. How would you describe your school, family, and hometown? How has your environment influenced your way of thinking? How have your interests and abilities been acknowledged or limited by your school and home?
17. What do your parents and friends expect of you? How have their expectations influenced the goals and standards you set for yourself? What pressures have you felt to conform?
18. Have you ever encountered people who thought and acted differently from the way you did? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?

## **YOUR PERSONALITY AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS**

19. How would people who know you well describe you: Your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? Would you agree with their assessments? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
20. Which relationships are most important to you and why? Describe the people whom you consider your best friends? Your best critics? Your best advocates? In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
21. How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions you have made recently? How much do you rely on direction, advice, or guidance from others? Have you ever chosen anything because it was new or interesting?

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU EVALUATE YOUR COLLEGE PREFERENCES**

1. What satisfactions and frustrations do you expect to encounter in college? What are you looking forward to? What worries you most? What do you hope to gain from college? What is the overriding consideration in your choice of college?
2. Why do you want an education? Why are you going to college?
3. How do you want to grow and change in the next few years? What kind of environment would stimulate or inhibit the growth you would like to see?
4. Which interests do you want to pursue in college? Do your interests require any special facilities, programs, or opportunities? Consider all of your interests in terms of fields of study, activities, community and cultural opportunities.
5. What degree of academic challenge is best for you? What balance of study, activities, and social life suits you the best? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues, and discussion? Do you want an academic program where you must work and think hard, or one where you can make respectable grades without knocking yourself out? How important is it to you to perform at the top of your class, or would you be satisfied to be in the middle or bottom of your college class? How well do you respond to academic pressure and competition from others?
6. How would you feel about going to a college where you were rarely told what to do, and where there are few requirements outside of your major? How much structure and direction do you need?
7. How would you enjoy living in a different part of the country or the world? How often do you want to be able to go home? What kind of change in your lifestyle and perspective might be exciting or distressing and overwhelming?
8. What kind of surroundings are essential to your well-being? Are there certain places, activities, locations (rural, suburban, urban), weather, or pace of life that make you happy? Do you prefer a fast-paced environment where something is happening most of the time, or an organized environment where you can join a wide variety of planned activities, or a more serene and relaxed environment where you can go your own way?
9. How would you feel about going to a college where the other students were quite different from you? How would you react? Would you find it an exciting or intimidating environment? Would you prefer to be with people who share your viewpoints and lifestyles, or who challenge you and make you question your values?
10. How free do you feel to make your own college decisions? Do you and your parents agree about your plans for college? How important to you are the opinions of your parents and friends or the considerations of familiarity, prestige, or reputation in your community?

# College Selection Criteria

## STUDENT ENROLLMENT

**Enrollment:** Total % undergraduate students. First-year class size.

**Retention:** % of first-year students who return for the second year.

**Background:** Male/female ratio. % commuter/resident. Geographic origin. % underrepresented students. % receiving financial aid.

## LOCATION AND SURROUNDINGS

**Location:** Geographic region. Distance from home. Travel costs and convenience.

**Setting:** Urban/rural. Weather. Nearest city or countryside. Recreational opportunities.

**Facilities:** Library. Laboratories. Studies and practice rooms. Student Center. Athletic/Fitness Center.

## COLLEGE TYPE AND PHILOSOPHY

**Type:** 2/4 year. Public/private/religiously affiliated. College/university.

**Purpose:** Liberal arts. Pre-professional for business, education, engineering, fine arts, etc. Technical or vocational institute. Degrees offered (B.A., B.S., B.F.A., etc.).

**Philosophy:** Traditional/progressive. Deeply scholarly/career-oriented.

**Calendar:** Semester/trimester/quarter/module. Inter-term program.

## CURRICULUM

**Academic Requirements:** Proportion of study to general education/concentration/electives. Required first-year courses or curriculum/distribution requirements in curricular areas/elective curriculum. Open versus core curriculum.

**Academic Offerings:** Majors offered in your areas of interest. Breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest. Interdisciplinary courses and majors. Ability to design own major.

**Experiential Learning:** Individual tutorials. Seminars. Research opportunities. Special study programs. Field work. Internships. Exchange programs. Foreign study. Joint degree programs. Cooperative work/study plan. Pre-professional programs.

**Standards Accreditation:** Degree requirements. Grading system. Grading/distribution. Honor system.

## ADMISSIONS

**Deadlines:** Application. Notification of decision. Reply to offer of admission.

**Application:** Requirements. Fee. Information forms. Specific high school courses. Common Application or school specific application. Secondary school report. Supplements. Recommendations. Interview.

**SAT/ACT:** ED, EDII, EA, REA. Importance of testing. Test-optional. Test-flexible. Test-blind.

**Admission Selectivity:** % of applicants offered admission. Average SAT/ACT scores of first-year applicants. % of applicants ranked in top 10% of high school class. First-year class profile.

## ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

**Faculty:** % with Ph.D.s. Origin of degrees earned. Original faculty research/scholarship. Teaching course load. Expectations for teaching/scholarship/advising and other college service. Emphasis on undergraduate teaching and learning. Diversity of faculty.

**Faculty-Student Relationships:** Faculty-student ratio. Accessibility for conferences, assistance. Departmental clubs, colloquia, committees with student representatives. Average class size. Classes under 20 students, over 50 students. Opportunities for discussion/student presentation/exchange of ideas. Opportunities for research with professors.

**Academic Demands:** Workload. Course expectations. Type of assignments. Academic pressure or competition.

**Intellectual Vitality:** Student attitude toward learning. Flexibility/structure for study. Interest in political, social, or world issues.

**Career Preparation:** Career advising and information programs. % who go on to graduate school. Job placement.

## CAMPUS AND STUDENT LIFE

**Types of Students:** Diversity and acceptance of differences. Importance of money/material possessions/social appearances.

**Community Type:** Homogeneous. Pluralistic. Cohesive. Fragmented. School spirit. Controversial campus issues. Liberal/restrictive social regulations.

**Living Arrangements:** Predominantly large dorms/housing clusters/small houses. Availability of single rooms/doubles/suites/multiple rooms. Greek life and Greek housing. Housing based on academic or co-curricular interests. System of housing. Allocation/roommate selection. Centralized/decentralized dining. Alternative dining programs.

**Campus Activities:** Related to your interests. Emphasis on social life, Greek life, sports, or other dominant interests. Clubs and organizations. Presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community.

## COSTS AND FINANCIAL AID

**Costs:** Minimum-maximum total costs per year. Student budget for tuition and fees/room and board/books and personal expenses/travel costs. Admission and enrollment fees.

**Family Resources:** What can your family pay toward college expenses? Your earnings and savings.

**Awards:** % of students receiving aid. Range of awards. Average award. No loan program or loans included as part of financial aid package.

**Financial Aid:** Based on need/merit/or funds available. Loan and job expectations. Results of financial aid calculators.

**Application:** FAFSA/CSS/state/college forms required. Deadlines.

# College Admission Factors

At the most selective colleges, applications often outnumber available places. Hence, as a practical necessity, you must consider the relative selectivity of colleges as you make your plans. What factors are most significant in admissions? While colleges differ considerably in how much weight they attach to various factors, the following list (in approximate order of importance) should give you a sense of the chief factors that are most important to admission officers.

- 1. Academic Achievement for the Four High School Years.** Grades are important, and colleges will look closely at your transcript to assess your success in your courses. Some consideration will be given to the rigor of your course load in evaluating your performance, with the most selective colleges expecting students to succeed in the most challenging curriculum. A positive trend in grades is also considered. Improvement in the senior year mitigates, but does not erase a poor record in the first three years.
- 2. Course Selection.** College admission officers generally look first to the candidate's course selection throughout high school. Colleges seek students who have taken advantage of the many curricular opportunities at Hotchkiss. Recently, some of the most competitive colleges have focused increasingly on the student's background in what are often described as "core courses." These colleges encourage students to exceed the Hotchkiss diploma requirements in science, humanities and social sciences, math, and classical and modern languages. Students are encouraged to discuss their senior-year schedules with their academic advisor and college advisor.
- 3. Test Scores.** If standardized testing is required, colleges accept either the SAT or ACT. Individual testing plans should be discussed with your college advisor. Please visit: [www.hotchkiss.org/academics/college-advising/standardized-tests](http://www.hotchkiss.org/academics/college-advising/standardized-tests) for more information.
- 4. Recommendations.** You will ask individual teachers to write on your behalf. Additionally, your college advisor will submit a counselor recommendation letter. Colleges are interested in how those who have taught you and know you well evaluate you as a student and as a person, especially considering demonstrations of intellectual curiosity, motivation, engagement with material, and participation in class.
- 5. Athletics and Extracurricular Activities.** The emphasis here is on quality rather than quantity. Talent and genuine contributions to a team or an activity are important. Excellence, leadership, and consistent dedication to a passion are highly valued.
- 6. Personal Essays.** Colleges look closely at the student's part of the application, particularly at the quality of the essays. The quality of your application is the one aspect of this process over which you have complete control; take advantage of the opportunity to help yourself.

7. **Intangible “Hooks.”** Occasionally, a student will have what is known as a “hook factor” at one or a number of the schools to which they are applying. These include legacy status, development interest, diversity interest, socioeconomic status, significant research and talent in an academic area, athletic recruitment, and artistic talent. Without strong achievement and testing, “hooks” have little impact on the admissions process. Only the admission committee at a particular school can assess the candidacy of a student and the relative importance of those “hooks” at their own school. Connections that you may have may be useful in the process, but they cannot determine admission any more than other singular aspects of your file.
8. **Financial Need.** Some schools are need-blind in making admissions decisions, while others factor in your ability to pay in making a decision. When researching colleges, inquire whether the college is “need-aware” in making its decisions.
9. **Demonstrated Interest.** Many small, liberal arts colleges and smaller, private universities factor in whether you have visited campus and met representatives at college fairs and other admissions events. Expressions of interest can enhance the evaluation of your application, while a lack of express interest can have a negative impact. Many colleges still offer virtual information sessions, tours, etc. Engaging virtually is one way to demonstrate interest.

Two additional factors that are very important are your personal interviews (especially where these interviews are evaluative) and your professional background, experiences, and aptitude (if you are applying to a career program like business, engineering, computer science, or architecture). In such cases, the colleges will want to know how serious you are about your program choice, and they will seek to understand why you wish to pursue a particular program.

# Upper-Mid Year Timeline

## FALL SEMESTER

**College Nights:** Upper mids may attend a series of “mini-fair” college nights held on various evenings in the fall. College representatives from 30-50 colleges per night visit and tour Hotchkiss, eat dinner with the college advisors, and then hear from faculty and students about Hotchkiss programs and initiatives. Students have the opportunity to meet the representatives in the Main Building classrooms for informal sessions of questions and answers.

**PSATs:** All upper mids are recommended to take PSATs. PSATs are essentially a practice round for the SATs and a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program competition. The PSAT is offered in mid-October each year.

## SPRING SEMESTER

**Upper-Mid Questionnaires:** During the semester, students will be asked to fill out a questionnaire designed to help them in their self-assessments, to guide them in their analysis of different types of schools, and to provide our office with important personal information.

One of the most beneficial aspects of the college process for students is the opportunity to evaluate themselves. In reviewing what they have accomplished, both academically and non-academically, students often gain greater insight into the kind of community that would best suit their needs as they continue their studies.

**College Advisor Assignment:** Midway through upper-mid year, students are assigned a college advisor by the College Office. Requests for specific college advisors are not considered as the office works collaboratively with all students.

**Meetings with Advisors:** Upper mids should plan to meet one-on-one with their college advisor three to four times throughout the second semester. Students should also feel free to stop in and ask any questions they have at any time and need not schedule an appointment for a quick question.

**Upper-Mid College Forum:** In the middle of January, the College Advising Office holds a kickoff event for upper mids and their families. The half-day program consists of a series of panels run in tandem by the college advisors and several visiting admissions representatives. The program introduces many of the issues involved in the college search and application process. Families receive detailed information about this program in the fall.

**Spring Break:** The March vacation provides an ideal opportunity to see a variety of colleges and universities at a time when there are likely to be students on campus. Students can begin to assess what is available and what appeals to them. Not all colleges offer interviews to eleventh graders at this time, but group information sessions and tours can be very helpful. Visits to schools that represent a range of program, size, location, culture, and selectivity can help students clarify their preferences. Most colleges also offer robust virtual visit options.

**Spring College Fair for all Upper Mids:** An evening college fair in mid-April with approximately 120 colleges and universities represented.

**Common Application and Essay Workshops:** In the late spring, the College Office holds multiple workshops introducing students to the Common Application and providing exercises to brainstorm college essay topics.

**Teacher Recommendation Letters:** College advisors work with upper mids at the end of the spring semester to determine which two teachers to ask for college recommendations. Students will speak with their teachers prior to the end of the school year and enter their recommendations into Maia Learning.

## **SUMMER ASSIGNMENTS**

**Register for fall SATs and ACT:** If students are interested in taking SATs or ACTs in the fall, they may register throughout the summer (online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) and [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)).

**Common Application:** The summer months are a good time to put the finishing touches on the Common Application. It is available at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Many schools accept the Common Application. Completing the Common Application in the summer will help students manage all of their academic and extracurricular demands of the fall semester of senior year. Students should draft their Common Application personal statement and share it with their college advisor by early September. Students should also work on drafts of school-specific supplemental essays.

# Senior Year Timeline

The fall semester of the senior year is the busiest time of the college selection process. We recommend that each senior make it an absolute priority to see their college advisor within the first two weeks of school. Throughout the months of September and October, we hope to meet with each senior at least twice.

## COLLEGES VISITING HOTCHKISS

The College Office sometimes schedules times during the class day when college admissions officers are on campus to speak to interested students. Seniors should make every effort to see these representatives during their free periods. When this is not possible, seniors must notify their teachers in advance of the class (24-hour advance notice) to be excused for part or all of a class period to go to the college meeting. As usual, students are responsible for assignments due and for making up missed work. Upper mids are encouraged to attend if they have a free period at the meeting time.

## SCHEDULE REGULAR MEETINGS WITH YOUR COLLEGE ADVISOR TO:

- Narrow down the college list paying attention to balance.
- Continue to work on the Common Application and essays.
- Discuss current course schedule and set goals for the semester.
- Discuss additional testing needs.
- Revise, expand, and edit college essays. In addition to the ongoing help and suggestions on essays that we offer our students, the English Department is an excellent resource for advice on the writing and editing of essays. Please remember that it is each student's responsibility to write and edit their essay.
- Discuss early application options if appropriate. The decision to apply to college early is unique to each individual and should be weighed carefully against each individual's goals and expectations. In the case of an early application, students will be required to complete the application as soon as possible (the middle of October for a November 1 deadline and the beginning of November for a November 15 deadline).
- Discuss having score reports sent from testing agency to colleges. **Hotchkiss does not report test scores to colleges.**

**Thanksgiving vacation:** This week of vacation is a boon for college-bound seniors. It is undistracted time that should be devoted to wrapping up applications. The more a student completes during this vacation, the better. The December break is not the ideal time to be completing applications. Applications completed over the December break are often rushed and done without proper care.

- University of California system applications must be submitted by November 30.
- Mid-December: Some colleges notify early applicants of decisions, typically for Early Decision.
- Early application candidates who have been notified of a decision should meet with their college advisor to discuss the next steps.
- Students complete remaining regular decision application.

### **DEADLINES AND DECISIONS**

Most regular decision applications are due between December 31 and February 15. It is the student's responsibility to know those deadlines.

# Filling Out the Applications

The student application is your opportunity to tell the colleges about yourself. All applications ask for personal information, family and educational backgrounds, standardized test information, your extracurricular interests, and work and summer experiences. All applications will have at least one essay that typically asks questions that allow you to tell the reader something they might not already have learned from the rest of your application.

Students generally find that the earlier they begin gathering the necessary information, the more complete their applications become. It is critical that you think about answering the questions fully and truthfully as well as making sure that once the application is complete, it tells the reader everything that you want that person to know.

Remember when you write the essays that they are not “stand-alone” pieces, but offer a greater insight into something that is important to you. They should say something about you, say something from your point of view, and say it in your voice. The college advisors are eager resources to help and support you as you gather your application information and think about all you want to say. We can also help as you draft essays and will happily give you feedback about them. Again, the sooner you start on these, the better!

## Important Tips:

- **Start early.** Gather personal data and draft several essays well in advance of filling out the application.
- Use the **Common Application**, and be certain to check your colleges’ websites or the Common Application website ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)) for additional application requirements (supplements). Many colleges that utilize the Common Application also require college-specific supplement forms. Do as much of the Common Application and individual college supplements as possible over the summer months.
- **Complete a rough draft of each application.** Think carefully about what you want to say about yourself, both academically and in terms of the extracurricular activities that you pursue. Your part of the application is your opportunity to tell your own story and express your genuine self.
- **Have at least one other person look over your application before you send it.** Save your completed application as a PDF before you send it. Submit the applications well before the deadlines. With advance planning, you need not resort to having to complete them and submit them at the last minute.

**After Submission:** Once applications are submitted, students enter a lengthy waiting period. It is important for students to remember that the process is not yet finished. They still need to concentrate on their studies, and interestingly, many students find that this is the time when they most enjoy their work and actually find they do better without the pressure of the college process.

**Checking Application Status:** Colleges often will email applicants with a confirmation of receipt of their application and login credentials for an applicant portal to check on the status of application materials. As long as the student has listed their application in Maia Learning, the College Advising Office will submit the student’s transcripts and recommendation letters. These documents are submitted electronically to all colleges listed in Maia Learning. When something turns up missing, students should work with their college advisor to have materials resubmitted. As long as steps are taken to provide missing application materials in a timely manner, students will not be penalized in the admission process.

**Decision Letters:** Throughout late February to the end of March, college admissions will arrive. This is a time of mixed emotions for all students. The more students focus on their own choices and try not to generalize about “everyone else,” the more likely they are to weather this period with the least amount of stress. **Students should avoid “publicizing” their admission decisions on social media.** Contrary to popular belief, the College Office does not know the final decision on an application until the student tells us or until we receive an official letter from the college or university. Students are responsible for reporting the colleges’ decisions to the College Office. Students receive help throughout the process by many people, both on- and off-campus. We hope they can be mindful of this, and keep in touch with teachers, friends, or advisors who help them with their applications or write on their behalf. These people are often very curious about the outcome of the process, **and students should remember to thank these people as well as to tell them about the colleges’ decisions.**

**May Notification Date:** May 1 is the universal deadline by which students need to have sent a deposit to the school of their choice. Students must decide on one school only to send a deposit. The practice of double-depositing is contrary to the ethical standards of the National Association of College Admission Counseling. Most colleges retain the right to withdraw an acceptance if they find out that a student has made a deposit at more than one school. Following these national policies, Hotchkiss will send out only one official transcript after a student has graduated.

**Waitlists:** Many students will receive waitlist offers from colleges, accompanied by directions to a website through which students indicate their desire to remain on the waitlist. Colleges look forward to turning to their waitlists because it gives them a chance to “round out” the class in many different ways. In most cases, nothing will happen with a waitlist until after May 1, when colleges know how many of their accepted applicants plan to attend their school. Sometimes these waitlists extend into July. How schools handle waitlists varies from school to school and from year to year.

**January Admission:** Sometimes schools offer admission for the second semester. This can be an ideal opportunity for students who are accustomed to being away from home. There are a number of options for students to work, travel, or study in another setting for a semester before settling back into academic life. The College Office can act as a resource for some opportunities, and can refer interested students to a variety of options.

# Athletic Recruiting

**Contacting Coaches:** It is the students' responsibility to contact coaches at schools of interest for them. **As early as the fall of upper-mid year, students can draft a letter of introduction to send to college coaches.** These letters should include information about the student's academic and personal background in addition to any relevant athletic information. College advisors will happily review these letters with students. The College Office has sample letters to college coaches which can be provided to students.

**NCAA Eligibility Center:** Students hoping to compete at the Division I or II levels must be deemed eligible by the NCAA Eligibility Center. Students should go online to NCAA Eligibility Center website for more information and forms:

<https://www.ncsasports.org/ncaa-eligibility-center/eligibility-requirements>

Students should also be aware of certain practical considerations. For example, student-athletes interested in playing interscholastic sports at any Division I or Division II college or university must meet the NCAA initial eligibility requirements. In order to be eligible to play interscholastic sports at Division I or II schools, student-athletes must have earned credits in certain core course areas.

## **NCAA DIVISION I INITIAL-ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS**

1. Complete 16 core courses;
  - **Ten of the 16 core courses must be completed before the seventh semester (senior year) of high school.**
  - Seven of the 10 core courses must be English, math or science.
2. Have a minimum core-course **GPA of 2.300**;
  - Grades earned in the 10 required courses required before the senior year are "locked in" for purposes of GPA calculation.
  - A repeat of one of the "locked in" courses will not be used to improve the GPA if taken after the seventh semester begins.
3. Meet the competition sliding scale requirement of GPA and ACT/SAT score (this is a new scale with increased GPA/test score requirements); and
4. Graduate from high school.

**Postgraduate students, please note:** According to the NCAA guidelines, "In Division I, it is not permissible to substitute the grades earned in postgraduate high-school work in place of grades attained before graduation. You cannot repeat a course in postgraduate high-school work." While such additional coursework cannot be used to gain eligibility, new standardized test scores can be utilized to enhance a prospective recruit's NCAA eligibility profile.

**Repeated Grades:** NCAA Division I eligibility is based on the first four years of high school. Therefore, students who repeat a grade in high school need to be aware that only their grades and courses through the upper-mid year will be used by the NCAA to determine a student's eligibility. If you repeated a year of high school and wish to play Division I sports, consult with your advisor immediately.

If a student has **repeated a course**, the NCAA will only count one of them towards eligibility. When repeating a course, students should consult their advisor or the Academic Office.

**Some other thoughts:** It is important to remember that **admission committees, not college coaches, make admission decisions.** While most coaches are clear with students about the admission process, students must understand what coaches are saying and about what they are hearing. Students are well advised to keep a journal of any communications/contact they have with coaches so that the college advisors can help interpret messages and work with college admission officers.

Remember: NCAA eligibility is a baseline. Most colleges expect you to achieve (and take additional courses) beyond NCAA minimum standards.

# International Students

**What is the definition of an international student in the admissions process?** An international student is defined as an applicant who is not a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident/green card holder.

**How does being an international applicant affect the admissions process?** Most American colleges and universities aim to “build a class” comprised of diverse talents, cultures, and interests, in addition to satisfying certain institutional needs. This goal includes national and international geographic diversity. As a result, colleges seek to have representation among a range of countries and continents. Hence, applicants from countries that are well represented in the applicant pool may face stiffer competition in terms of admission, while applicants from less represented geographic areas may be more prominent in the applicant pool.

**What are some issues that international students should consider in deciding where to apply?** Like domestic students, international students often have fixed ideas about what are “good” or “acceptable” schools. International students should consider that there are over 2,500 colleges and universities in the United States that provide a rich and broad array of academic and intellectual opportunities. To the extent that international students are open to exploring a wide range of American liberal arts colleges and universities, the more likely they are to have strong post-secondary options at the conclusion of the process.

**What are some of the procedural pieces of the college process that are unique to international students?** Most colleges ask international students to include an *affidavit of support* and a *certification of finances* as part of their applications. An affidavit of support is a legal document signed by a parent or guardian stating that he or she will be responsible for all tuition, room and board, and other fees for the four years of college. A certification of finances is a certified document from that person’s bank that reflects that the parent or guardian has the requisite funds to pay for four years of college. Students can find the International Student Certification of Finances Guidelines on most college websites.

Required by many colleges, the TOEFL is used to evaluate the English proficiency of people whose native language is not English. The TOEFL is administered in the United States by computer at testing centers across the country. Because many of the test centers are at least one hour from Hotchkiss, we encourage students to take this test at home during the summer before their senior year. Students can also take this test during vacations or on a weekend to New York or Boston. Students should consider taking the Duolingo English Test, an online assessment. Go to: [www.englishtest.duolingo.com](http://www.englishtest.duolingo.com) to access the test and see the range of schools that accept it.

**What about financial aid for international students?** International students who are applying for aid should be aware that many colleges do not offer need-based aid for non-U.S. citizens or non-permanent residents. Other schools have limited need-based funds for international students. At many schools, financial need increases selectivity and can limit where a student applies. When international students apply to schools with limited need-based funds for international students, they must understand that there are not enough dollars to meet the full need of every admissible international applicant with financial need. As a result, colleges often have to select the most academically talented and geographically attractive applicants for admission among the qualified students who need financial aid. While many international students with financial need have been successful in securing financial aid, it is important that international students seeking need-based aid discuss financial aid with their college advisors.

Financial aid at many schools is based solely on family income and assets. Colleges will ask international students and their families to provide current information about income and assets. Many schools ask students to complete the **CSS Profile for International Students**. Students must contact the financial aid offices at the schools to which they apply in order to understand the specific forms that need to be completed.

# Testing Information

Please visit [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) and [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) for the most current testing dates and to register for the ACT and SAT tests.

Students are encouraged to take the SAT or ACT. Individual testing plans are created with a student's college advisor.

Please note the SAT no longer has a writing section. While the ACT offers an optional writing section, students are encouraged to take the ACT without writing as most colleges do not require it.

## IMPORTANT DATA FOR FILLING OUT REGISTRATION FORMS

- Your name and address should be exactly the same on all registration forms.
- You should use your Social Security number if you have one; it is used for identification purposes.
- Always use “11 Interlaken Road, Lakeville, CT 06039-2141” as your address when filling out registration forms.

## THE MAJOR TYPES OF TESTS

1. **PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test):** Given in October to high school sophomores and juniors (lower and upper mids). Useful as an indicator of SAT scores and/or test practice. The basis of some merit scholarships. Source of some college mailings.
2. **SAT:** Comprised of two sections: 1. Reading & Writing and 2. Math.
3. **ACT (American College Testing Program/ACT Test Program):** Comprised of three required sections—English, Math, and Reading—as well as two optional sections, Science and Writing.

## TEST PREP

**To help prepare students for the college admission process, Hotchkiss administers most standardized tests throughout the academic year.** Individual testing plans should be discussed with the student's college advisor. It is important to remember, however, that testing is merely one factor that colleges consider when evaluating a student for admissions. Most colleges look first at a student's course selection, followed by their academic achievement in those courses.

**The Hotchkiss School believes that the best preparation for the ACT and the SAT is a broad and deep education.** Given this belief and the rigor of the Hotchkiss curriculum, the School recommends that students focus their energy and precious time during the school year on their course work.

At the same time, the School recognizes that in the months leading up to the ACT and SAT students benefit from instruction on test-taking strategies, from diagnosing their strengths and weaknesses in critical reading, writing, and math, and from taking practice exams. The School provides two services to help students in these areas.

The School subscribes to **Methodize**, an online, self-paced test prep program for the ACT and SAT. To Access Methodize:

- To log in visit: <https://methodize.methodlearning.com/join/ik8ewex>.
- Fill in the form, using your Hotchkiss email address, and when asked for username and password, using your Hotchkiss login.
- After completing the registration successfully, you will receive a welcome email message from Methodize.

For those preferring directed review, the School contracts outside test preparation companies (High-End Test Prep for the SAT and Summit for the ACT) to provide interested students with 10 hours of SAT or ACT instruction and practice during the spring of their upper-mid year. Information about the dates and cost of these sessions is sent electronically with grades to the parents of upper-mid students at the end of the first semester. The School is not affiliated with any other test preparation companies and is not in a position to recommend the services rendered by such groups. Further questions about registration for the ACT, SAT, or the test preparation services offered by the School should be directed to Laurie Grusauski, the School's testing coordinator at [lgrusauski@hotchkiss.org](mailto:lgrusauski@hotchkiss.org).

## REMINDERS ABOUT TEST TAKING

- Check each college for its policies about ACT/SAT and the last date that test results are accepted.
- Allow six weeks: 1) to register — the registration deadline is about six weeks before the test date; 2) to report scores — it takes six weeks from the test date for colleges to receive your test results.
- You must instruct, and pay for the College Board or the ACT to send your test scores directly to each college you wish to receive your results. There is a charge for each score report.

**Extended Time Testing** Students who receive extended time accommodations should consult with the TLC about eligibility for such testing. Application for extended time must be made to the College Board or ACT. Registration for the tests is still completed online.

# United Kingdom Universities

Most UK universities require students to apply using the Universities & Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) forms ([ucas.com](https://ucas.com)), which is similar to the Common Application. The UCAS application is available online, and students are permitted to apply to up to five universities on UCAS. It is important to review each individual university application form and deadline. As some schools in the UK system (St Andrews) use a “rolling admissions” process, we recommend students submit applications materials as early as possible. We recommend that students should apply to UK universities by **October 15**.

## STUDENT EVALUATION

UK universities typically assess students based on their standardized testing. U.S. applicants should expect to submit the SAT or ACT and up to five AP exams (depending on particular universities’ course requirements).

## APPLYING TO ALL UK UNIVERSITIES, INCLUDING OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE

1. By early August before senior year: select the schools (maximum five) to which you intend to apply.
2. Select a course (major) at each school.
3. Visit the web page on each school’s website for your course to determine:
  - a. Qualifications: How many APs, SATs and ACTs are required? Minimum scores, etc.? Some schools like London School of Economics require up to five AP Exams in specific disciplines.
  - b. Whether there is a required exam. Examples: LNAT for law, BMAT for medicine, HAT for History. Registration deadlines for these tests **may be as early as late August or early September**.
  - c. Register for any required exams. Deadlines for some exams are in early September and the latest deadline is October 15, **but register early!**
  - d. Some courses have UCAS deadlines earlier than applicants to most of the other courses. For example, medicine at all universities has an October 15 deadline. You are well advised to apply to all schools and courses by October 15.
  - e. Check to see if any schools have any written requirements. Some courses require the submission of papers or require a written test if you are offered an interview.

- f. Mid-September: Write your personal statement and share with your college advisor and a teacher. The personal statement should discuss your refined interest in pursuing a particular course and why it interests you. Your statement should reflect a depth of understanding of the field, and you should be prepared to discuss scholarship in the field that informs your interest.
- g. Early October: Complete and submit the UCAS. See college advisor for Buzzword.

### **U.S. QUALIFICATIONS FOR OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE**

Successful candidates would typically have SAT scores of at least 750 in Reading and Writing and Mathematics, or an ACT with a score of at least 34 out of 36. Oxford and Cambridge also expect Grades of 5 in three or more Advanced Placement tests in appropriate subjects. Additionally, students applying to specific courses of study may have to take a written exam or submit written work for evaluation.

**Note: when completing the UCAS, students must list all AP and ACT/SAT scores.**

# Responsibilities and Policies

The purpose of this section is to explain some of the policies of the College Office as well as to clarify the division of responsibility between student and advisor in the college process. As you can imagine, there is much detail work throughout the process; your awareness of some of those details is very important. As you read the following, please remember that our philosophic premise rests on the belief that the college process should be a part of the student's educational experience. All of us who work in the College Office at Hotchkiss are teachers at heart — we want to help students learn. We believe that a part of this education involves encouraging students to take on a significant measure of responsibility and accountability in the college process.

## **SOME COMMENTS ON THE COLLEGE PROCESS**

Our first task in September of senior year is to meet with each student in order to complete the list of colleges to which he or she plans to apply. We support students enthusiastically in all their applications, but the admissions committees make the decisions based on conditions that can change from year to year.

Throughout the fall, we write the counselor recommendation letter on behalf of each student. The purpose of these statements is to provide a context and perspective on each student's career at Hotchkiss. The summary statement is primarily a factual account of a student's experience here, and each one is a positive and supportive document. These are confidential documents intended for the exclusive use of the college admission offices.

When the time comes to make applications, the College Office will process each student's secondary school report and mid-year school report. The forms for these reports are included in the College Office's submission of material to colleges via Maia Learning. Once the student notifies us of the colleges to which he or she will apply, it is our responsibility to get that information to the respective college admission offices.

We also do not act as a clearinghouse for the student's part of the applications. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that they have sent all applications to college admission offices before the applicable deadline. A well-edited college admission essay makes the most positive statement on the student's behalf.

After college applications are filed, we continue to support each application with as much enthusiasm as possible. Whether through phone calls or additional letters, we provide this support to any college admission office open to such discussion.

## COLLEGE OFFICE POLICIES

**Off-Campus College Days:** In general, students should make college visits during vacation periods. The following is the policy regarding college days for seniors.

- Seniors will be allowed three days for college visits during the school year.
- During the first semester, college days can be used to visit campuses as a prospective student while during the second semester, college days are limited to colleges where a student has been admitted.
- College days will be granted only with the approval of the College Office. Parents must request an absence through Orah.
- Students admitted under a binding early decision plan are expected to limit the number of college days.
- A student who is having academic, disciplinary, or attendance difficulty will NOT be permitted a college day, except under extraordinary circumstances as approved by the College Office and the dean of the senior class.
- The School will consider requests from seniors for (additional) college days after consultation with the student's class dean and the College Office.

**Reporting Discipline to Colleges:** Many college supplements ask students to report various disciplinary matters. The questions vary by college. Students are expected to disclose general probations, suspensions, and dismissals in responding to these questions.

This expectation includes updating colleges about disciplinary matters after applications are submitted and up until matriculating at an institution after Hotchkiss's graduation. The college advisors provide support to students as they develop their written disciplinary statements.

The College Office will also report general probations, suspensions, and dismissals and details of the underlying disciplinary matter to colleges if the college asks about discipline on an application or makes an inquiry to the School. The College Office will report on disciplinary matters up until a student's matriculation at the next school. When a student on warning is subsequently placed on probation, both the probation and the previous warning will be disclosed to colleges by the College Office when the past warning contributed to the decision to place the student on probation. The dean of student life, acting on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee, will convey to the student and the College Office when a past warning has contributed to a student being placed on probation.

In addition to reporting discipline, the College Office reports changes in status to colleges, including withdrawals from Hotchkiss that occur after applications have been submitted. When the College Office is obligated to report discipline or a change in status to colleges, students are strongly encouraged to disclose these matters to colleges prior to the College Office doing so. Such a proactive approach by the student exhibits maturity, integrity, and accountability.

**Dropping or Changing Courses:** If senior student drops a course before its conclusion, but after informing the colleges of the enrollment in that course, we expect students to notify the colleges of that change. Our office will contact the colleges regarding this change following the student's notification. Students are expected to notify the colleges if they withdraw (or are withdrawn) from a significant extracurricular activity after informing a college of that involvement. Hotchkiss will also inform the colleges to which the student has applied of any such change.

**Medical Leaves of Absence:** A student's need for a medical leave of absence can have implications for the college process. Depending on the length of the leave and the reasons for the leave, it may be important for colleges to have some information concerning that leave. We encourage the student to discuss the situation with each college directly. College advisors work closely with the students and their families in these situations.

**Learning Differences:** The College Office does not report information about a student's learning differences. If the student feels that a college should be informed about a diagnosed learning difference that may have affected or impacted his/her academic performance, that student should consult his/her college advisor about the best way to disclose such information to colleges.

# Financial Aid

Financial aid for higher education comes primarily in three forms: **grants, loans, and work-study**. Today most colleges package all three of these forms of aid in one award. This allows the aid to be distributed to a greater number of families. **Grants** represent aid that you do not have to pay back. **Loans** represent borrowed money that you must repay with interest. Educational loans come from a variety of sources: the federal government, your individual state government, and banks and other financial institutions. **Work-study** gives students the opportunity to work while in school. The college will assist a student in finding a job, usually right on campus.

Parents and students should utilize the **net price calculators** on each colleges' financial aid pages. This tool is the best way to estimate the amount of aid that you will receive from a particular college.

**Need-Based Financial Aid:** Students applying for financial aid should be aware of the required forms and necessary deadlines associated with the process. While there is a standard form that all colleges and universities require (FAFSA), students applying for financial aid should ask each and every school to which they are applying for any information related to financial aid. In some cases, colleges require applicants to fill out their own institutional forms as well as the standard forms required by the federal government. Many private colleges use a form called the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Financial Aid PROFILE.

Once you have determined that you will be applying for any or all forms of aid, you must complete the **FAFSA** — Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The FAFSA is available online at [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov). As the title of the form implies, there is no fee required in processing this form.

**Prior-Prior:** Students and families will report income information from two years prior, which in the case for the Class of 2027, is 2025 income information, which is two tax years before (hence, “prior-prior”) the beginning of the year the student enters college. This policy change is designed to help families by bringing more certainty to the process and eliminating the need to estimate the previous years' income and tax information in January of the admissions cycle (usually before the W-2s and various tax information is in hand for many students and families).

**Other Forms of Aid:** The **FAFSA** and the **PROFILE** will, if you are eligible, include you for aid from the most prolific sources in the country: the federal and state governments. In addition to this type of need-based aid, there are other ways and means of finding and earning financial assistance. Merit-based financial aid is the other major form of aid distributed to college students. These funds are awarded to students based on a specific talent, skill, interest, or program of study. Check with the college admissions offices for these types of awards. They usually have printed information regarding merit-based awards. Recruited athletes at the Division I and II levels should inquire with the coaches working with them.

**Financial Aid References:** You need to be your own best advocate when applying for financial aid, and you must educate yourself as to what forms of aid are out there. Please feel free to use these sources:

[www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) (Good place to start regarding general financial aid information)

[www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov)

[www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) (Free scholarship search engine)

[www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com) (Information on various loan programs)

# Off-Campus Educational Opportunities

Each year, several Hotchkiss students elect to attend an off-campus program for either one semester or one year. What do colleges think of these programs? College admission officers know that participants are proven risk-takers who have responded well to the combined challenges of a rigorous academic program and life in a different culture. The decision about whether or not to pursue one of these options should be made with the student's faculty advisor.

Each program offers an on-site component of college counseling; however, students should plan college visits and research accordingly, depending on the time frame during which they will be away from Hotchkiss. If, for example, students are away for their senior year at School Year Abroad, college advising and visits should take place prior to departure from the States.

In each situation, students have access to standardized testing, and the College Office maintains thorough contact with students while they are away, encouraging them to complete questionnaires and maintain ongoing dialogue (albeit at a distance) with their college advisor.

## OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS UPPER-MID AND SENIOR YEAR

Below are Hotchkiss approved off campus programs:

- **Maine Coast Semester:** [mainecoastsemester.chewonki.org](http://mainecoastsemester.chewonki.org)
- **School Year Abroad:** [www.sya.org](http://www.sya.org)
- **The Island School:** [www.islandschool.org](http://www.islandschool.org)
- **High Mountain Institute Semester Program:** [www.hminet.org](http://www.hminet.org)

## GAP YEAR: A LEARNING ODYSSEY

Many students eagerly explore the possibility of taking a gap year between their Hotchkiss graduation and college in order to undertake experiential and educational opportunities in the United States or abroad. This experience gives students a culminating experience at the end of their Hotchkiss education. Inspired by their experiences at Hotchkiss, students might choose to serve in a community, take on an internship, or even participate in an academic program abroad. Whether exploring a new interest or building on ignited passions, students can use the gap year creatively, to shape their future academic experiences and to enrich the depth of their learning.

Gap year participants speak enthusiastically about the many benefits they have gained through their experiences. Here are a few of them:

- The maturity and confidence that come from a year of living independently;
- Renewed enthusiasm for academic challenges and an eagerness to begin college;
- The ability to quickly navigate the transition to their college community and take advantage of opportunities in and out of the classroom from the very beginning;
- An unequaled exposure to career possibilities as well as other cultures, people, and languages;
- And, a greater appreciation and more nuanced knowledge of the world.

For all these reasons, and in support of Hotchkiss's commitment to responsible global citizenship, the School encourages its graduates to consider a gap year. We see it as an important steppingstone to becoming compassionate, motivated, global citizens. Students who choose to take gap years receive the gift of time – especially, time for personal growth and discovery. The learning that takes place in this year differs from a traditional academic experience, but in planning and living gap years, students acquire invaluable skills for lifelong learning.

### **GAP YEAR ADVISING**

As students begin planning their year, they learn how to set increasingly specific goals and how to meet them successfully. Students start the planning process by meeting with their college advisor to begin exploring the possibilities. Once students have identified their goals, we look either to existing programs or develop an individualized opportunity. Students can meet with their college advisors and Mr. Ross throughout the year to explore potential opportunities. Students (and their parents) can review and assess potential opportunities before selecting a gap year program or opportunity. Students and their parents are ultimately responsible for ensuring the safety and suitability of a specific gap year placement.

There is no rigid formula for the gap year. Each plan is uniquely designed based on the student's designated criteria. Whether students immerse themselves through language study, homestays, academic programs or service, or build their years around major adventures or internships, planning starts with identifying one or two goals to anchor the year. The list of options includes low cost programs or stipend earning positions.

Hotchkiss will do its best to research organizations and programs available to our students. It is however, the student and family's responsibility to make decisions about what types of experiences are best suited to their needs and goals.

## GAP YEARS AND COLLEGE ADMISSION

Colleges are very supportive of the gap year because they find that when students return to academic life, they do so with renewed energy, enthusiasm, and focus. Typically, students complete the college application process during their senior year and then apply for a deferral from the college they select. Most colleges will grant deferrals as long as the student can provide a clear, thoughtful, and specific plan for the gap year. Unless there is a specific deferral application, most colleges ask that students write a letter to the dean of admissions at the school where they have deposited to request a deferral. Colleges have deadlines to receive these requests, usually sometime in late spring, but colleges generally prefer that students send in these requests as soon as possible after being admitted.

If students decide to apply to other colleges during a gap year, they will need to adhere to those colleges' policies regarding the deferral. College deferral policies usually state that the student cannot apply to or enroll full time at other academic institutions while they have a deferral. Under most policies students who wish to reapply to schools during their gap year should expect to withdraw their deferrals prior to submitting other applications. Colleges have welcomed students to reapply if they remain interested in the original school. If colleges' deferral policies are vague about applying to other colleges, the College Office requires that the students notify the colleges where they have deferred of their applications elsewhere. This must be done before the college office sends transcripts to other schools. During the gap year, the College Office will work with students to send transcripts, secondary school reports, and recommendations to colleges when appropriate. In these situations, we request that the student provide the College Advising Office with a copy of the terms of the deferral.

# Glossary

**ACT (American College Test):** The ACT is divided in the required sections, which test skills in the following areas: English, Math, and Reading. There are also two optional sections for Writing and Science.

**College Board Advanced Placement:** Hotchkiss no longer offers AP courses. Students should not take AP exams unless they are considering international universities. In that case, students should speak with the testing coordinator, the College Office, and the department head of the related academic subject.

**CSS PROFILE (College Scholarship Service PROFILE):** While FAFSA helps schools distribute financial aid, the PROFILE is designed to assist schools in distributing their own private funds. The earlier one registers for the PROFILE the better. Registration begins September 15. Please be aware that there are fees involved.

**Early Action:** Non-binding early application, generally due by November 1 or 15 with decision notification in mid-December to mid-February. Students admitted under this application can make applications to other colleges under the regular decision plan. Note that some schools offer Restrictive Early Action or Single-Choice Early Action plans which include specific restrictions regarding applying early to other institutions. Students should consult with their college advisor to learn the differences between EA, REA, and SCEA policies.

**Early Decision II:** Binding application usually due at the same time as regular decision applications, typically January 1. Colleges notify students in late January or February. If admitted, a student must attend that school. Students must submit all other applications at the same time. ED II allows consideration of the student's first-semester report.

**FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid):** This application must be completed for consideration of any kind of financial aid. Information about the federal financial aid process and the FAFSA form itself can also be accessed online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). As the title of the form implies, there is no fee required in processing this form.

**PSAT (Preliminary SAT):** Given in October of the upper-mid year. Registration is handled by the School. Scores are used for National Merit Scholarship Qualification (referred to as NMSQT) and for student and counselor only. These scores may help to predict future SAT scores. PSAT scores are not sent to colleges.

**Rolling Admission:** Under this application procedure, students are informed of the college's decision three to four weeks after the application is completed. With this type of application, the earlier the application is filed, the better. In other words, the later the application is sent, the more selective the school becomes. Many state universities use this procedure.

**SAT:** Standardized exam broken into two sections: Math and Reading & Writing.

**TOEFL:** Test of English as a Foreign Language. This test is often required for international students or those for whom English is not a first language. Students should consider taking the **Duolingo English Test**, and online assesment. Go to: [englishtest.duolingo.com](https://englishtest.duolingo.com) to access the test and see the range of schools that accept it.

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