

Hanover High School

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The College Application Process

Class of 2027

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The college process has multiple steps and many moving parts; but it does not need to be stressful. There are colleges for everyone if you apply to the right schools.

It is our hope that you will find this packet helpful; however, *it is not meant to replace frequent visits to see your counselor.* We encourage you to meet and discuss any questions you or your parents may have.

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Philosophy of Post High School Planning

Whatever kind of college education you plan to pursue, this booklet has been prepared to help students and families navigate the process of researching and applying to college; as well as acquiring financial aid assistance.

The role of the HHS Counseling Department is to organize and help facilitate the process of planning for an appropriate next step beyond Hanover High School.

It is the student's responsibility to begin the process in a timely fashion. It is important to pay careful attention to individual college's testing and application requirements. The college process has many steps, and it is important to work in conjunction with your school counselor.

Some Things Colleges Look For . . .

Transcript — Your transcript shows the quality of work you have done, and the level of courses you have taken; this is the most important part of the application.

GPA — Your GPA is calculated based on semester grades; by the time you apply to college, your cumulative GPA is based on 6 semesters (your **first** three years of high school). Colleges will still see your grades from senior year **and** your final transcript. Only letter grades from HHS and HACTC are included in the GPA calculation.

Test Scores — Some colleges require the SAT or ACT. It is up to you to check college websites for up-to-date testing information and requirements. *There are many colleges that require no standardized tests (see fairtest.org for a complete list) but starting with the class of 2025, more colleges have started going back to requiring standardized tests. You should be checking the admissions pages on the websites of any colleges you're interested in attending to find out their test policy.*

Co-curricular Activities — Colleges are not looking for a long list of activities (more does not equal better); they would prefer in-depth participation and leadership in a few. Colleges want to know that you have some interests, and that you demonstrate initiative, curiosity, and motivation beyond your studies.

Recommendations — Teacher recommendations are an integral part of the application process. Ideally, you will ask a teacher who can speak to your skills and abilities within the context of their class. Most colleges want to see letters written by teachers you have had during junior/senior year.

The Essay — Most colleges require an essay ([click here for The Common App essay prompts](#)). The essay is a very important part of the application; and in most cases, is very carefully read. It should be well-thought-out, well-written, and proofread.

Demonstrated Interest — Demonstrated interest is the degree to which you show a college that you are sincerely interested in coming to their school. Colleges gauge your interest through fairly ordinary behaviors. Making an official campus visit through the admission office is one of the most valuable ways to show your interest. Attending a college fair or an admission presentation at your high school or in your community has similar value to visiting the campus. How colleges actually use the quantified data about

your level of interest varies significantly from college to college. Not all colleges incorporate this type of information into their admission decision-making process.

Terminology

Early Decision — This admissions decision is binding. Essentially, you are agreeing to attend that college if it accepts you. You can apply to other colleges in the regular decision process if you apply early decision; however, you are expected to withdraw your other applications if you are accepted early decision.

Early Decision II — Essentially the same as early decision; the same binding rules apply. Early Decision II has a later application deadline and admissions decision date.

Early Action — An early deadline that is *not* binding (if you are admitted, you are not required to attend).

Restrictive Early Action — Non-binding Early Action; except students agree not to apply Early Action to other private colleges.

Rolling Admission — Colleges/universities that offer this type of admission evaluate applications as they arrive, and decisions are made shortly afterwards (usually in two months or less). Slots tend to be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Deferred — There is a difference between a deferral and being placed on a waitlist. If your application is deferred, it means that you haven't been accepted *yet*; but you *could* be; your application will be moved from Early Decision or Early Action to the Regular Decision pool. If you are deferred, you have also been freed from any obligation to attend the school if accepted, and you can apply to other schools in regular decision as you wish.

Choice School — Also known as a safety school; a college or university where you clearly meet the admission requirements (minimum GPA, test scores, etc.). It is important that your choice school(s) is one that you would want to attend, should you not get admitted to other colleges on your application list.

Target School — A school that meets all of your criteria for admissions, and that you would also really like to attend.

Reach School — A college or university that you have a chance of getting into; but your GPA, test scores, etc., may be on the low end of the school's profile.

Unpredictable School — Colleges with acceptance rates of 15% or lower are extremely competitive for *any* student, no matter how strong grades and test scores are.

Common Application — The Common Application is an undergraduate college admission application that students may use to apply to any of the nearly 800 member colleges and universities; a broad and diverse group of public, private, large, small, religious, and secular schools -- ranging in geographic location from across the United States and around the world. Click [here](#) to create an account.

SCOIR — During 9th grade, counselors go into PE classes, and students are set up with their SCOIR accounts; at a later date, parents are also electronically invited to set up accounts. *"Scoir is cloud-based software that connects students, families, high schools, and colleges for a better admissions experience."* Scoir can be used to generate a list of colleges students are interested in (parents and counselors can also "suggest" schools a student may be interested in). During senior year, Scoir is where students manage teacher recommendations, and add the colleges they're applying to so counselors can manage and send school-based documents. Students and parents each have their own logins, but student/parent accounts are linked. Accounts can be accessed [here](#).

Gap-Year Programs — Semester or year-long programs designed for high school graduates who wish to defer enrollment in college while engaging in meaningful activities (such as academic programs, structured travel, community service, etc.).

Financial Aid Resources

The FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Each college has different deadlines for filing the FAFSA. It can be accessed [here](#), but please note that the earliest it will be available is October 1st (for the following school year). Many private colleges also require the CSS profile, please check each college website for specific financial aid information. A more comprehensive financial aid resource guide will go out to families in the fall of senior year.

Other helpful links:

[VSAC](#) — (Vermont residents) Vermont Student Assistance Corporation

[Granite Edvance](#) — (New Hampshire Residents) Granite Edvance

[CSS Profile](#) — This is required by many private institutions. CSS profile enables colleges and universities to see a true picture of a family's financial need and supports the mission of making college more affordable.

Testing

At this point, you should have a CollegeBoard account. This is where PSAT, SAT, and AP scores will be warehoused. **You (students) are responsible for managing this login, and will use it to send scores to colleges during their senior year.** Click [here](#) to access your CollegeBoard account.

. . . if you elect to take the ACT in addition to the SAT, you will need an ACT account. **Students are responsible for managing this login, and will use it to send scores to colleges during their senior year.** Click [here](#) to create or access your ACT account.

Click [here](#) for additional College Board information.

Click [here](#) for additional ACT information.

Junior Spring Checklist

- ☐ Finalize your SAT and/or ACT testing plan.
- ☐ Continue doing virtual visits and schedule any in-person college visits you can do over the summer.
- ☐ Before you leave for the summer, ask one or two teachers (**in person**) about writing a letter of recommendation for you.
- ☐ After you have asked teachers **in person**, invite teacher recommenders **electronically** in Scoir; click [here](#) for instructions.
- ☐ Complete your counselor form (in Scoir). In addition to in-person meetings with your counselor, this survey is essential as your counselor writes your recommendation letter to colleges. To locate your form, login to SCOIR and click "My Assignments." Your

counselor's form will appear below. Click and complete! **The deadline to complete your survey is June 15.**

☐ **Students and parents** must electronically complete the FERPA waiver in SCOIR before we can process your transcript requests.

☐ (Over the summer) Create a Common App account. Click [here](#) to create or access your Common App account.

☐ Check out this [CollegeBoard Action Plan](#), a checklist and calendar for students and parents.

College Checklist for fall of senior year

☐ Meet with your counselor.

☐ Meet with your counselor, again.

☐ Create a calendar of deadlines.

☐ Sign up for college representative visits.

☐ Invite teacher recommenders *electronically* in Scoir; click [here](#) for instructions.

☐ Add your colleges to the "Applying" column in Scoir.

☐ **Students and parents** must electronically complete the FERPA waiver in Scoir before we can process your transcript requests.

☐ Complete applications (including essays and supplements, if applicable).

☐ Make sure your list of schools in Scoir matches your list of schools in Common App.

☐ Send SAT/ACT scores to schools (via your College Board or ACT account).

☐ Begin filling out FAFSA/CSS Profile (The application did not open until December this year for FAFSA. The CSS profile opens October 1st).

Helpful Websites

[Scoir](#)

[Common Application](#)

[College Essay Guy](#)

[CollegeBoard \(SAT\)](#)

[ACT](#)

[Fairtest \(colleges not requiring SAT or ACT\)](#)

[NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse](#)
(college athletes D1 and D2)

[Financial Aid](#)

[New Hampshire Financial Aid resource](#)

[Vermont Financial Aid resource](#)

[CSS Profile](#)

Scholarship Opportunities:

[FastWeb](#)

[Going Merry](#)

[StudentScholarships.org](#)

. . . do you have *any* questions? Contact your counselor!