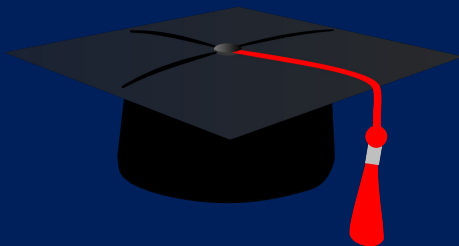




*Deerfield-Windsor School*  
**College Counseling  
Guidebook  
2026-2027**



*This guidebook is intended to provide general information about the college planning process.  
It is not financial, legal, or tax advice. Policies, programs, and award amounts are subject to change.  
Students and parents are encouraged to contact colleges and organizations directly to verify current information.*

# CONTENTS

COLLEGE COUNSELOR’S MESSAGE.....4

PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

DWS College Counseling Philosophy.....6

Ethics..... 7

High School Timelines..... 9

COLLEGE CREDIT

Dual Enrollment.....17

Advanced Placement.....21

CLEP.....23

THE COLLEGE SEARCH

Finding the Right Fit.....26

Scoir College Counseling Software.....27

College Visits.....28

The College Visit Form.....30

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

What Do Colleges Look For?.....33

The Application.....34

The College Essay.....37

Letters of Recommendation..... 38

SAT/ACT.....40

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Student Athletes..... 44

Arts Programs.....47

Service Academies.....48

FINANCIAL AID

Types of Financial Aid.....53

State Aid Scholarships.....56

DWS v. HOPE GPA.....59

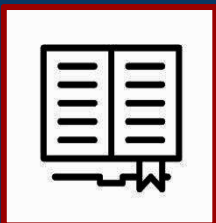
Where to Find Scholarships.....60

MAKING A FINAL DECISION

Waitlist..... 62

Transfer Pathways.....64

Tips on Making a Final Decision.....67

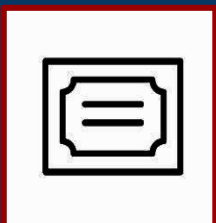


# COLLEGE COUNSELOR'S MESSAGE

Deerfield-Windsor School is a proud college preparatory school that strives to ensure that each and every one of our students is thoroughly prepared for a college education. While our teachers begin preparing students for this goal at the elementary level, the most intensive preparation occurs at the high school level.

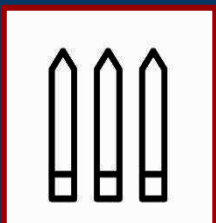


As Deerfield-Windsor's college counselor, I aim to help each student and their family navigate the college admissions process. In this process students often ask themselves "What do I want to study? Which college is right for me? How do I enhance my application? How will I afford it?" I am here to help you find the answers to these questions and so much more.



Deerfield-Windsor's College Counseling Office is a department that:

- maintains an open door policy for every DWS student
- holds regular class meetings throughout high school to prepare students for college, the admissions process, and beyond
- hosts admissions representatives from across the Southeast
- meets individually with upperclassmen and their families to craft a unique admissions plan for every student
- provides feedback and support on college essays, applications, college interviews, and application credentials
- communicates regularly about scholarships and opportunities to enhance student resumes
- advises on strategies for SAT/ACT test preparation
- shares information on the most current college admission trends



Throughout this process, know that I am here for you and your family. Please reach out at any time with any questions.

Warm regards,

**Anna Wilschetz**

College Counselor

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229.435.1301 ext. 295



# PREPARING FOR COLLEGE

# DEERFIELD-WINDSOR SCHOOL

## COLLEGE COUNSELING PHILOSOPHY

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### **I. Each student is unique.**

Therefore, we strive to help each student find the college or university that meets his or her needs and allows the individual student to be most successful.

### **II. The college search process should be student-driven.**

We want our students to become successful and competent adults in college and beyond. Therefore, we feel it is important for students to lead their own college searches in which parents and the counselor remain in supporting roles.

### **III. Parents are our partners.**

While the college search should be student-driven, we recognize that parents serve essential roles in our students' lives and are crucial throughout this process. Therefore, we hope to support our parents and answer any of their questions and concerns.

### **IV. We support all students and all families.**

Deerfield-Windsor School is proud to serve a wide range of students and families with varying aspirations and financial needs. Therefore, we provide abundant resources to support families as they navigate competitive admissions processes, discover unique scholarship opportunities, and comprehend complex financial aid information.



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# ETHICS

The Deerfield-Windsor college counseling department is committed to following the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC) [Guide to Ethical Practice in College Admission](#) and we have used this guide as the framework for the following policies.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Your college search is deeply personal. Therefore, the college counselor promises to maintain student confidentiality by not divulging your individual college application status, admission, enrollment, or financial aid and scholarship offers without your permission.

If you would like to share your journey with our broader school community, notify the college counselor and she will help you publicize your news and celebrate it! However, the counselor will also support you if you prefer to keep the process private and confidential.

## HONESTY

Honesty is at the core of college counseling. It is the counselor's responsibility to provide accurate and truthful information to students, parents, and colleges.

In addition, it is the student's responsibility to accurately represent themselves to colleges, scholarships, and any other pertinent organizations. This means that students should honestly answer all admissions questions including those regarding residency, disciplinary history, activities, honors, and

awards. The college counselor will advise you to always remain truthful throughout the admissions process. At no time should you attempt to falsify information or commit any other act of fraud.

If a student is found to be submitting false, plagiarized, or fraudulent statements, the college counselor may be bound to report this violation of Deerfield-Windsor School's honor code.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Students are responsible for adhering to each school's policy on the use of AI before using it in any way. Many schools have clear guidelines on its use. For example, Georgia Tech states:

*"...As with all other sources, you should not copy and paste content you did not create directly into your application. Instead, if you choose to utilize AI-based assistance while working on your writing submissions for Georgia Tech, we encourage you to take the same approach you would when collaborating with people. Use it to brainstorm, edit, and refine your ideas."*

## DOUBLE DEPOSITING

Students may be tempted to accept multiple admissions offers by putting down a deposit without fully intending to enroll. However, this practice of “double depositing” is considered unethical and is therefore highly discouraged.

*Why is double depositing considered unethical?*

- It is considered deceitful. Since a student knows they can't attend more than one college, it requires a student to potentially lie.
- It hurts other applicants. If colleges think a student is enrolling, they might not extend offers to waitlisted or deferred students. The student is then essentially taking someone else's spot. (And that other student might *\*REALLY\** want the spot, whereas a school could just be your backup.)
- It hurts future applicants. Colleges form a relationship with Deerfield-Windsor School and it hurts our reputation if colleges see DWS students enroll and then withdraw. This could lead a school to accept fewer of our students in the future.
- It takes advantage of students who can't afford multiple deposits. In fact, this practice leads colleges to increase their enrollment deposit amounts to discourage the practice but that can disadvantage students with fewer financial means.
- Some colleges will rescind admissions offers if they get wind of double depositing. (So you could lose your offer if caught double depositing.)

Therefore it is recommended that you wait to submit your intent to enroll until have fully decided to attend. If you have any questions about this, reach out to the college or university and let them know your intentions and ask whether you should submit a deposit. Clear communication is always an ethical practice and colleges can often assuage your fears and help you navigate this aspect of the decision making process.

However, please note that NACAC (the National Association for College Admission Counseling) does consider double depositing acceptable when you do so after being waitlisted by another college. (It is understandable that you would want to ensure enrollment at a backup while waiting on your dream school's waitlist.)

## EARLY DECISION

Students who choose to apply to a college “Early Decision” will be required to sign a contract that ensures they will abide by that school's Early Decision policies, including only submitting one Early Decision application.

Early Decision can give students a slight advantage in the college admissions process because school's know that an admittance will be a guaranteed enrollment. However, if students violate their Early Decision contract, trust is broken and the ED system no longer works.

## DECLINING ADMISSIONS OFFERS

Once you submit your enrollment deposit at a school, it is good practice to notify all other schools you were admitted to inform them that you are declining their offer of admission. This allows schools to accurately assess their enrollment numbers and it allows them to decide if they should accept more students from their waitlist.

## COLLEGES' RESPONSIBILITIES

Colleges and universities are also held to ethical standards. NACAC provides ethical guidelines that ask colleges and universities to:

- publicize comprehensive, accurate, and current information regarding deadlines, academic programs, factors considered in making admission decisions, cost of attendance, and institutional policies.
- NOT ask candidates, their counselors, their schools, or others to divulge or rank order students' college preferences.
- notify students before May 1st of pertinent admissions information including financial aid or scholarship offers, admission to honors and other special programs, and availability of housing.
- NOT require students to confirm enrollment before May 1st.
- state if the enrollment deposit is refundable or non-refundable.
- notify all waitlisted candidates of the final decision by August 1st.



# HIGH SCHOOL TIMELINES

While the application process traditionally begins when students enter their senior year, students should be working towards this goal throughout their school experience. Therefore, the Deerfield-Windsor College Counseling office has worked to provide the following timelines to guide students and their families from ninth-grade through graduation.

## RATIONALE

Please keep in mind that no two students are identical and, likewise, the college admissions is never the same for any two students. Therefore, do not expect to perfectly follow any of the timelines below. Instead, use them for guidance. Each timeline is a mixture of things all students should do and also includes specific things that could help some students.

If you have specific questions about what you can do to increase your admissions chances at a particular institution, ask the college counselor. She is here to help you determine your own individual timeline for your own individual admissions process.

## PURPOSE

Each year students and their parents will be given the timeline corresponding to the student's current grade level. Please reference this timeline throughout the year and see if you and your student are staying on track. All timelines are also provided on the pages that follow for interested families to explore what is to come in the college search process.

## QUOTE OF THE YEAR

### FRESHMAN YEAR:

*"Adventure is out there!" –Up*

### SOPHOMORE YEAR:

*"Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom." –Aristotle*

### JUNIOR YEAR:

*"There is no substitute for hard work."  
— Thomas Edison*

### SENIOR YEAR:

*"Starting strong is good. Finishing strong is epic." – Robin Sharma, author*



# College Counseling

## NINTH GRADE

Welcome to high school! This year you will learn more about yourself and it is important to find new strategies to face new challenges.

What do you do when you don't understand something? How do you study best? What long term goals do you have? What do you need to do today to help you prepare for tomorrow?

Begin exploring these questions and learn to use all the resources provided to you!

### TO-DO LIST:

- ☐ Explore your unique interests. Discover your passions and find ways to pursue them.
- ☐ Seek academic excellence! Your GPA begins now.
- ☐ Take the PSAT. This is a Deerfield-Windsor requirement for all freshmen, and it can help show your academic strengths and weaknesses.
- ☐ Begin navigating Scoir to explore schools and compare your PSAT scores and GPA to college requirements.
- ☐ Create a resume and save it to Scoir. Keep a list of activities, honors, special projects, etc.

- ☐ Use office hours to get to know your teachers and college counselor. (One day you may need them to write you a letter of recommendation!)

### SUMMER:

- ☐ Rest and recharge! Take a break and reward a year of hard work.
- ☐ Do something meaningful to you. Get a job; work at a summer camp; connect and volunteer with an organization; play sports; work on art or writing. Do what you are passionate about!
- ☐ Read some books! Reading for fun has been shown to be one of the best ways to boost standardized test scores and top colleges often ask about students' reading habits.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- ☐ Run the Net Price Calculators for a few different colleges to get a sense of how much college might cost. (These are available on each college's website.)
- ☐ If you haven't already done so, start saving for college. Even a small amount every month, compounded, will help.
- ☐ Encourage your child to explore their passions and interests. See if there are unique opportunities they can pursue to foster their passions.



# College Counseling

## TENTH GRADE

While college is still on the distant horizon, you can begin to think about where you would like to go and what you would like to do. Continue to work on building a strong academic foundation. Hard work in the classroom will help you achieve your college goals later.

### TO-DO LIST:

- ☐ Continue to try new things but begin to focus on things that are the most important to you.
- ☐ Re-evaluate how you study. Is it still effective? Sometimes new challenges require new approaches. If you don't know how to make those changes, meet with your teachers and counselors to ask for help.
- ☐ Take a look at your PSAT score and identify areas of strength and weakness.
- ☐ Ask the college counselor for help creating an SAT/ACT test prep plan if your score is below your individualized target.
- ☐ Use Scoir to explore colleges. You can also use it to compare your GPA and test scores to those of previously admitted students.
- ☐ Update your resume on Scoir.

### SUMMER:

- ☐ Relax, read a book, and focus on your health and wellness!
- ☐ Continue exploring your passions. Is there a way to build upon what you did last year? Colleges want to see your commitment and what makes you unique.
- ☐ Consider trying something new. Get a new job, travel to a new place, volunteer with a new organization, etc.
- ☐ Journal about your experiences. Keeping these reflections could help you write future admissions essays.

### TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- ☐ January 1st of your child's sophomore year (spring semester) begins the base year that colleges use to calculate a student's financial aid need for their first year of college. This base year runs from January of the student's sophomore year to December of their junior year.
- ☐ Encourage your student to stay focused on their academics and GPA.
- ☐ Continue supporting your students' interests and extracurriculars. Students should focus on depth rather than width by seeking intentional ways to develop their unique passions.



# College Counseling

## ELEVENTH GRADE

Junior year is a transitional year. It is the time when the college search process kicks into gear with individual meetings with the college counselor, standardized testing, college visits, etc. Grades matter and should be the primary focus of your time and energy.

However, this is also the fun time of the college process--exploring colleges, doing research, taking initial visits. Enjoy this time as you begin thinking about all the different possibilities and paths available.

### TO-DO LIST:

#### AUG-OCT

- ☐ Academics! This is your last full year of grades before college applications. Make them count!
- ☐ Think about two academic teachers who might write you a letter of recommendation. Then nurture those relationships.
- ☐ Meet with college representatives who come to campus. Demonstrate interest in a particular college or university by coming to interest meetings, getting on the mailing list, and establishing a personal relationship with our local admissions representative. These relationships often help students down the road.

- ☐ Consider a college tour this fall. (Waiting till spring can be tough due to the chaos of second semester and summer visits can be too quiet.)

#### NOV-DEC

- ☐ Complete a career interest assessment. This is a great self-assessment tool to help you think about what you might want to study.
- ☐ Either add to or begin making a list of potential colleges on Scoir.
- ☐ Sign up to take both the SAT and the ACT at least once each before your senior year. You can do this on campus or at another testing site in the community.

#### JAN-FEB

- ☐ Schedule an individualized college counseling meeting. This is a time in which you, your parents, and your college counselor will meet to make a plan for your college application process.
- ☐ After your meeting, verify that you have an appropriate list of potential colleges on SCOIR. This list should include Reach Schools (schools that might be tougher to get into), Target Schools (schools that your grades and test scores align with), and Likely Schools (schools that you should easily be accepted into).

## MAR-MAY

- ❑ Refocus on academics and finish strong! Your grades should be your primary focus.
- ❑ Plan your schedule for senior year and consider dual enrollment. Follow registration deadlines and instructions.
- ❑ Study for any AP exams! Don't waste the opportunity to earn college credit. This can save you time and money in college, allowing you to avoid taking boring required classes, graduate early, and/or add a minor/double major.

## SUMMER

- ❑ Take a breath and take a break. Enjoy some relaxation!
- ❑ Continue doing what you love. Consider leadership opportunities to demonstrate growth as you pursue these passions.
- ❑ Begin making your game plan for college applications. Which colleges will you apply to? Which ones do you still need to visit? When are the deadlines for applications/scholarships etc.?
- ❑ Consider visiting a college campus or two. Just be aware that campus is quieter in the summer so it won't tell you everything about campus life.
- ❑ Plan to retake the SAT and/or the ACT.
- ❑ If you are interested in pursuing college athletics, be sure to keep your coach and the college counselor informed. Then contact college coaches, identify yourself as a potential athlete, and request information.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

### **Scoir.com...** *College Management Software*

This tool will be used throughout your high school career to help you explore and discover potential colleges and track your applications throughout the admissions process.

### **Niche.com...** *College Rankings Website*

This website provides in-depth profiles on colleges across America with reviews and ratings. In addition, it provides powerful search and data tools, helping you find the right college for you.

### **CampusTours.com...** *Virtual College Tours*

This resource gives you the opportunity to explore college campuses across the country from your computer. Simply search for a school and explore campus through a virtual tour. Many include audio guides and more!

## TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- ❑ Begin the conversation with your teen about what you are willing/able to spend on college.
- ❑ Attend your child's individualized college counseling meeting. Connect with your child's college counselor and reach out with any questions you have.
- ❑ Consider taking your student on a college tour or two. This will help you lead discussions with your teen on what they're wanting from the college experience.
- ❑ Remind your student to register for the SAT or the ACT in the spring.
- ❑ Communicate with the college counselor about any of your questions or concerns.



# College Counseling

## TWELFTH GRADE

You made it! Now it's time to get to work applying to schools and finally deciding where you want to go.

Know that everyone's path is different and your college counselor is here to support you on your unique journey. Feeling overwhelmed? Talk to your college counselor. Have a question? Talk to your college counselor. Just want to chat? Talk to your college counselor. Your needs come first and your counselor is here to support you and your family as you make this decision.

### TO-DO LIST:

#### AUG-SEP

- ☐ Research schools and finalize your application list. Consider college visits and meet with admission representatives on campus.
- ☐ Finalize decisions about the timing of applications (Early Decision/Early Action/Rolling Admissions/Scholarship deadlines). Note all deadlines and plan accordingly.
- ☐ Register for Common App and take a look at the application requirements for any schools you are interested in.
- ☐ Explore the essay prompts for any applications you are considering. Begin to brainstorm and draft your ideas.

- ☐ Reach out to your college counselor and/or English teachers for help drafting or editing your college essays.
- ☐ Consider retaking either the SAT or the ACT. Remember that scores are important for both admissions and scholarships.
- ☐ Request transcripts and teacher/counselor recommendations. Remember that a three week notice is required for all letter of recommendation requests.
- ☐ Complete any Early Action or Early Decision applications before their deadlines.

#### OCT-DEC

- ☐ Complete your remaining applications. Ask for help as needed.
- ☐ Complete the FAFSA application shortly after it opens October 1st.
- ☐ Explore scholarship opportunities posted on the DWS Google Classroom page and search online for more.

#### JAN-MAR

- ☐ Remember that second semester grades can still impact admissions and/or financial aid. While you can breathe a little easier, stay on track!

- ❑ Demonstrate interest by maintaining contact with the admissions office of any universities you are the most passionate about.
- ❑ Schedule college interviews (if relevant for the schools you applied to) and request a mock interview through the college counselor so that you will be prepared.
- ❑ Keep checking college admissions portals, email, and your mailbox for admission decisions and info. Financial aid packages will be sent thereafter.

## APR-MAY

- ❑ Evaluate your financial aid offer and continue to pursue scholarships and other financial aid. Feel free to reach out to your college counselor for help or questions. Financial aid appeals are possible under certain circumstances.
- ❑ Look at schools again and make college visits to any finalists you are considering.
- ❑ Meet with the college counselor if you need help making any enrollment decisions.
- ❑ Decide whether to stay on any waitlist(s), if offered.
- ❑ May 1st is National College Decision Day for regular admissions. If you have not already done so, submit your deposit and confirm your place in the freshman class. Reach out to your college counselor if you need help processing this decision!

## TIPS FOR PARENTS:

- ❑ Follow up with your student and make sure they are staying on track of their to-do list. Please note any deadlines and provide reminders.
- ❑ Encourage your students to take advantage of available scholarships. Students must apply if they want to earn these funds!
- ❑ Begin the financial aid application process when the FAFSA is made available in October.
- ❑ Examine financial aid packages. Call the financial aid offices for answers about specific packages. The college counselor can help you navigate this process.
- ❑ Provide emotional support as needed and know that the college counselor is here to support you all as well.

## YOU DID IT!



# COLLEGE CREDIT



# DUAL ENROLLMENT

Deerfield-Windsor School offers a number of dual enrollment opportunities, allowing eligible students to begin earning college credit while still in high school. In doing so, students can experience the rigor of college-level coursework, position themselves for future transfer opportunities, and potentially reduce the time and cost required to complete a college degree.

## GEORGIA SOUTHWESTERN

Deerfield-Windsor School's primary dual enrollment partner is **Georgia Southwestern State University**. Eligible students must have a **minimum 3.0 GPA**, as determined by the University System of Georgia (USG), to qualify for participation. Eligible students may then complete dual enrollment coursework through GSW in Summer, Fall, or Spring terms.

## ALBANY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Beginning Summer 2026, Deerfield-Windsor students who do not meet GSW's dual enrollment admissions requirements may qualify for summer term dual enrollment through **Albany Technical College** with a **GPA of 2.0** or higher.

However, dual enrollment opportunities through Albany Technical College will be limited to **Summer Term C** to ensure coursework does not conflict with the DWS academic calendar. This structure is designed to expand access for students while also ensuring that participation does not negatively impact performance in a student's core DWS curriculum.

## ELIGIBILITY

Per GAFutures, dual enrollment is typically limited to juniors and seniors with a qualifying GPA. However, sophomores who meet this requirement and have a minimum **1200 SAT score** or minimum **26 ACT composite score** in a single national test administration, may apply.

Interested students must also meet [GAFutures citizenship, residency, and selective service requirements](#) to gain eligibility. In addition, students are responsible for meeting all DWS, GSW, Albany Tech, and GAFutures application requirements and deadlines. Failure to submit required materials by published deadlines may result in ineligibility for that term.

## FALL & SPRING TERMS

Deerfield-Windsor School typically recommends eligible juniors and sophomores wait until **Spring term** to add online dual enrollment coursework onto their academic load. This is to ensure their core curriculum doesn't suffer with the additional requirements of an

online college-level course. By Spring term, we have found students have more of a handle on the requirements of their core courses and are better able to determine if they can handle the additional requirements of an online class on top of their other commitments.

However, Deerfield-Windsor School offers a dedicated **GSW class period** to eligible DWS seniors who are enrolled in a **Fall** or **Spring term** dual enrollment course through Georgia Southwestern State University. This scheduled class period is designed to support students in successfully managing the increased expectations of college-level coursework while maintaining balance within their overall academic load.

(Please note that seniors must remain on campus during any assigned GSW class period. Four (4) unexcused absences will result in a loss of privileges for at least a nine-week period.)

## SUMMER TERM

All eligible students are welcome to enroll in dual enrollment for a summer term if they know they will be available with reliable access to WiFi throughout the entirety of the term. DWS recommends selecting a term that does NOT overlap with any major travel or other conflicts that could inhibit your ability to complete coursework on a computer connected to WiFi.

GSW offers four Summer Term options that do not typically conflict with the DWS academic calendar (**Summer Term 1 (June)**, **Summer Term 2 (July)**, **GSW Full Term Summer**, and **eCore**.)

As previously mentioned, eligible students may also enroll in **Summer Term C** coursework through Albany Technical College.

When enrolling, students are responsible for checking [GSW's Academic Calendar](#) or [Albany Tech's Academic Calendar](#) and confirming their availability during their selected term(s). Please note that course offerings are often severely limited during summer term.

All parents and students should note the DWS college counselor is out of the office and may be unable to respond in a timely manner during summer terms. This means summer coursework requires a good deal

of autonomy. Should issues arise, students are encouraged to email the college's dual enrollment coordinator and CC the DWS college counselor.

In addition, all enrolled DWS students will be added to a Google Classroom page that provides an abundance of information and support resources for students to complete their dual enrollment work independently during the summer months.

## COURSES OFFERED

A full list of course offerings are listed in [GAFutures' Dual Enrollment Course Directory](#). Students should explore available online courses and discuss their plans with the college counselor. However, please note that a dual enrollment course cannot replace a required course for graduation at DWS, nor can students duplicate a course offered at DWS without the prior approval of administration. If you have questions, please contact the college counselor.

In addition, certain English and Math courses may also require minimum SAT or ACT scores for placement:

- SAT 480 ERW / 510 Math
- ACT English OR Reading: 17 / SAT Math: 510

## CREDIT

Beginning Summer 2026, dual enrollment courses and grades will appear on a student's DWS transcript. However, these courses will be credited differently. For example, while GSW courses will be listed on a student's DWS transcript, Georgia Southwestern will be listed as the crediting institution and dual enrollment grades will not be factored into a student's DWS GPA.

As for HOPE eligibility, GAFutures will include dual enrollment courses in core subjects in a student's high school calculated HOPE GPA and will provide an additional weight of .5 for grades of B, C, and D. The hours will be considered part of the high school record and are therefore a part of initial eligibility for HOPE Scholarship.

However, students ineligible for HOPE at high school graduation cannot use dual enrollment coursework to gain HOPE eligibility later in college as dual enrollment hours are not included in the cumulative college calculated HOPE GPA and they do not count toward the 127 attempted or combined paid hours limit.

## AP FOR DUAL ENROLLMENT

In addition, DWS offers a select number of DWS courses for dual enrollment credit.

These courses currently include:

- AP Biology
- AP Literature and Composition
- AP Spanish Language and Culture
- AP U.S. History

While DWS students can register for dual enrollment in these particular AP classes during the **spring semester**, students should consult with the college counselor to determine if dual enrollment credit would be beneficial for their individual goals. While doing so typically means students can earn college credit regardless of their performance on the AP Exam, it also means their DWS second semester class average will appear on a college transcript.

And please note that not all colleges award this transfer credit. Like any transfer credit, it is up to the college's discretion. However, enrolling in dual enrollment is typically an effective strategy to earn UGA's required 30 credit hours for a future transfer. (While AP credit alone doesn't count towards the transfer requirement, dual enrollment credit does.)

## REGISTRATION

The steps below outline the process for enrolling in dual enrollment classes. While this gives you an overview, please note that the college counselor will guide you through each step in the process and deadlines will vary for summer, spring, or fall enrollment.

### 1. Apply to the College

Log into [GAFutures](#), locate the College Applications section, select either GSW or Albany Tech, and complete the application. Be sure to indicate you are applying as a dual enrollment student to waive the application fee. Students only need to apply to a college once and do not need to reapply for future semesters.

You can review what information is needed and what documents have been received by checking your status online with [GSW](#) or [Albany Tech](#). You may need to submit an additional [Proof of Lawful Presence](#). And be sure to check your email frequently.

### 2. Complete the Dual Enrollment Funding Application

Also in GAFutures, complete the required [Dual Enrollment Funding Application](#) and then, once completed, have a parent complete the [Parent Participation Agreement](#).

The Dual Enrollment Funding Application must be completed once per school year (Summer 2026-Spring 2027).

### 3. Choose A Dual Enrollment Course

Next, you should select a dual enrollment course. You can find a full list of potential courses in GAFutures' [Dual Enrollment Course Directory](#) or you can find a more succinct [list of recommended courses](#) here. However, you may choose to [meet with the college counselor](#) for additional help.

### 4. Sign the Dual Enrollment Contract

All students and at least one parent will be required to sign the DWS Dual Enrollment Contract each term.

### 5. Complete the Google Form

The college counselor will provide a required Google Form for students to complete. This form lists all required steps for students to verify completion and will ask students to list their preferred course.

### 6. Check your email frequently.

The DWS college counselor and the college Dual Enrollment Coordinator will communicate with you about any other required materials such as test scores, transcripts, and/or an eCore introduction quiz. Failure to check your email may demonstrate an inability to complete online coursework and you could lose your eligibility for dual enrollment.

### 7. Approval and Confirmation

Finally, the DWS college counselor must approve your dual enrollment registration.

Please remember that ALL dual enrollment requirements must be completed by the published deadlines. Students who fail to regularly check email and complete required steps by the stated deadlines will lose eligibility for dual enrollment.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In addition students and parents should note the following information:

- Each college holds a dual enrollment orientation session each semester for students. Students should receive orientation information via email after acceptance and are encouraged to participate.
- Males above the age of 18 must meet federal Selective Service registration requirements to receive dual enrollment funding at the end of the term.
- Dual enrollment students may be asked to submit immunization records. However, online students may submit an exemption.
- Eligible dual enrollment coursework must be completed prior to high school graduation. While DWS graduates may complete summer classes through GSW as college students, they are no longer considered dual enrollment students nor are they eligible for dual enrollment funding.

## SELF-PAY

While the State of Georgia fully funds the dual enrollment program, funding will not cover the following:

- A student repeating or retaking a course.
- Any classes for a student who has already withdrawn from dual enrollment courses two previous times.
- Students who have exceeded 30 semester hours of dual enrollment credit.

Dual enrollment students may self-pay for courses if they are no longer eligible for dual enrollment funding. However, self-pay students must also:

- Satisfy the Georgia Residency requirements.
- Complete a self-pay form with the help of the DWS college counselor.

## REGISTRATION DEADLINES

The registration and enrollment process typically begins 2-3 months before the start of a term and, while arduous, is entirely free. If a student is unsure whether dual enrollment is the right fit, they must still complete registration requirements prior to the published deadline to maintain eligibility. While students may drop from dual enrollment after registration, they cannot be added once the deadline has passed.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Many students and parents ask whether dual enrollment is the right choice for them. The answer varies from student to student and depends on individual goals, strengths, and learning preferences. As families consider dual enrollment, they should keep the following factors in mind:

- At Deerfield-Windsor School, AP courses are generally considered the most rigorous academic offerings available. Students whose primary goal is to pursue the highest level of academic rigor may be best served through AP coursework.
- Dual enrollment remains an effective means to add additional rigor to a student's schedule.
- Dual enrollment is strongly encouraged for students considering a potential transfer pathway to UGA. All UGA transfer applicants need 30 completed college credit hours by UGA's March transfer application deadline. This requirement means potential transfer students should plan to begin college with approximately 15 credit hours already earned.
- Dual enrollment courses available through Deerfield-Windsor School are offered exclusively online. Students should carefully consider whether they are comfortable learning in an online environment. Success in online courses often requires proficiency with technology, file management, document conversion, and a variety of online learning platforms.
- Dual enrollment requires a high degree of independence. Students are expected to manage their own coursework, monitor deadlines, communicate professionally with professors, and complete all requirements outlined in the course syllabus.
- Parents should be aware that the College Counselor does not receive formal grade reports except for midterm and final reporting periods.



# ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Deerfield-Windsor School is recognized as an AP Honor Roll Gold school and our AP coursework is considered the highest level of academic rigor offered. Students who pursue AP coursework are demonstrating a commitment to challenge themselves and to prepare seriously for college.

## WHAT IS AP?

Advanced Placement (AP) is a program developed and administered by the College Board that offers college-level courses and exams to high school students. AP courses are designed to mirror the rigor and depth of introductory college courses, challenging students to think critically, write with precision, and engage with complex material. Successfully completing AP coursework — and performing well on AP exams — signals to colleges that a student is prepared for the demands of higher education. Colleges take note of both the number of AP courses a student pursues and the grades and exam scores earned in those courses.

## AP HONOR ROLL

Deerfield-Windsor School's **AP Honor Roll Gold** status demonstrates our meaningful, broad, and strategic engagement with the AP program. This recognition reflects our strong participation in the AP program and our high pass rate, with multiple courses regularly seeing 100% of students earning qualifying scores. This honor is a testament to our commitment to college readiness and academic excellence.

In addition, we are proud to regularly produce numerous AP Scholars each year. Those who earn this recognition after junior year are recognized at graduation, though more qualify each year following the grading of senior AP exams post-graduation. **AP Scholar** is awarded to students who earn a score of 3 or higher on three or more AP exams. **AP Scholar with Honor** recognizes students who achieve an average score of at least 3.25 across all AP exams taken and earn scores of 3 or higher on four or more exams. **AP Scholar with Distinction** — the highest of the three designations — is awarded to students who achieve an average score of at least 3.5 across all AP exams and earn scores of 3 or higher on five or more exams.

## EXAMS & CREDIT

All students enrolled in an AP course at Deerfield-Windsor School are required to sit for the corresponding College Board AP exam, administered each May. Students who miss due to illness or some other unforeseen circumstance will be required to test on the makeup date for that exam. The cost per exam is approximately \$95. Unless otherwise instructed, parents will be billed directly for exam fees.

AP exams are scored on a scale of 1 to 5. Most colleges and universities grant course credit or advanced placement standing to students who earn scores of 3 or higher, though some may require a 4 or 5 to earn credit. This allows students to skip introductory college courses, lighten their course load, or even graduate early. On average, a qualifying score on an AP exam can earn a student between 3 and 8 college credits. However, some colleges grant 10 or more hours for high scores on certain tests. Specific credit policies vary by institution, so students are encouraged to research the [AP credit policies](#) of every college on their list before applying.

## SCORE REPORTING

The College Board maintains a complete score history, and [official score reports](#) must be requested and sent directly. AP scores are not automatically sent to colleges. Instead, students control what is reported and when.

Each year that students take AP exams, they may send **one free score report** to a college, university, or scholarship organization of their choice before College Board's June 20 deadline. Score reports include all AP scores on record — both current and prior years — so seniors are advised to take advantage of this opportunity to ensure their college receives a complete record in time for credit consideration. After all, admissions decisions have already been made so official score verification at this time is solely for the purpose of awarding credit. After June 20, score reports may still be sent for a \$15 fee per report.

Underclassmen generally do not need to send official score reports until senior year, when colleges will need them for credit evaluation. Instead, most applicants are given the option to self-report their AP scores on their college application. There is typically no requirement to report every score, and students may choose to omit results that do not reflect their best work.

That said, students should approach score reporting in college admissions thoughtfully. After all, a pattern of omissions — particularly when a student has emphasized rigorous AP coursework throughout their application — can create inconsistencies that admissions readers may notice. Some highly selective institutions also ask students to self-report all scores as a matter of academic integrity.

## IS AP RIGHT FOR YOU?

Choosing to pursue AP coursework is a meaningful decision — one that should be made thoughtfully for each potential course.

AP courses are designed to be demanding, and that rigor is reflected in how they are weighted. DWS applies a five-point weight to the semester average for each AP course, meaning a grade of 85 becomes an A- (90) on the transcript. This adjustment recognizes the additional challenge students take on and is not a guarantee of academic success. A low or moderate grade in an AP course, even with the weight applied, can do more harm than good on a transcript.

Students and parents should also recognize more AP courses is not always better. Colleges do not simply count the number of AP courses on a transcript — they look at the full picture. A student who takes three or four AP courses and excels in all of them is far more competitive than a student who takes six and struggles or performs moderately. Admissions officers are experienced readers; they can distinguish between a student who challenged themselves strategically and one who overextended. Grades matter. Trends matter. Balance matters.

The goal is to build a schedule that reflects genuine intellectual ambition while remaining sustainable and aligning with a student's interests and passions. Students should consider their existing commitments, learning style, and long-term goals when selecting AP courses — including where they hope to go and what they hope to study. Colleges increasingly evaluate applications through a major-conscious lens, meaning admissions officers consider whether a student's coursework reflects preparation and genuine curiosity in their intended field. A student pursuing engineering who has taken AP Calculus and AP Physics tells a coherent story. A student interested in public policy who has taken AP United States History, AP Government, and AP Seminar does the same. Not every student needs to take the same number of AP courses to be competitive — what matters is that the courses chosen are purposeful, pursued with full effort, and followed through with the corresponding exam in May.

Students may meet with the college counselor during course selection to make a personalized plan that accounts for their goals in college admissions.



# CLEP

Not every student needs to start from scratch. If a student has built real knowledge in a subject — through coursework, independent study, or lived experience — CLEP gives students a way to prove it, skip the introductory class, and earn college credit for what they already know.

## WHAT IS CLEP?

The College-Level Examination Program® (CLEP) is a national testing program administered by the College Board that allows students to earn college credit by passing standardized exams in specific subject areas. Rather than sitting through a semester of material students already know, they take a single exam — and if they score high enough, many colleges will award students credit as if they had completed the course.

There are currently [34 CLEP exams](#) available, spanning five subject areas: history and social sciences, composition and literature, science and mathematics, business, and world languages. Each exam is 90 minutes long and delivered on a computer at an authorized testing center.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

First, students should check their [intended college's CLEP policy](#). Not every institution accepts CLEP credit, and those that do set their own rules regarding which exams qualify, what minimum score is required, how many credits are awarded, and how the credit applies towards a given degree program.

Next, students should select their subject exam. The College Board's CLEP website lists all available exams along with study guides outlining what each one covers. Students should pick subjects where they already have strong foundational knowledge. These exams typically require substantial preparation far beyond a last minute study session.

Students are responsible for going to College Board's [CLEP website](#) to register themselves for all CLEP exams. While AP exams typically require students to complete a yearlong class and are administered by a student's high school in May, CLEP exams are administered year-round on a flexible schedule at independent testing centers. Each exam costs \$95, though many testing centers charge a small additional administration fee.

On exam day, students will have 90 minutes to complete a computer-delivered test. Most exams return an unofficial score immediately after students finish, with official scores sent directly to a student's designated institution. If students meet a school's required threshold (typically 50 out of 80), credit is awarded and no additional classroom time is required.

## HOW TO PREPARE

The College Board provides [free study materials](#), and commercial prep books are widely available. Students should plan for several weeks of focused review, particularly for subjects they haven't visited recently.

## DEERFIELD-WINDSOR CLEP PREP

Beginning Fall 2026, Deerfield-Windsor School will pilot a **Sociology in Cinema** elective that is intentionally aligned with College Board's Introductory Sociology CLEP exam. At the end of the course, students can choose to register themselves for the CLEP exam and attempt to earn college credit. However, taking the CLEP exam is entirely optional.

Students interested in attempting CLEP credit for any other Deerfield-Windsor course are encouraged to first consult with the teacher of that subject area. DWS curriculum alignment with CLEP exams varies. If students provide the teacher with the CLEP study guide for a particular exam, the teacher may be able to identify gaps and advise the student on what or how to review prior to taking the exam.

## WHO SHOULD CONSIDER CLEP?

CLEP is worth pursuing if a student demonstrates genuine mastery of a subject, the discipline to prepare independently, and a comfort level with high-stakes testing. It's a particularly strong option for students who want to place out of courses they've already mastered, or anyone looking to reduce tuition costs or accelerate their path to a degree.

That said, credit policies vary widely — some highly selective universities accept few or no CLEP credits, while other institutions are quite generous. It is advisable to confirm a school's policy before registering. At roughly \$95 per exam versus hundreds or thousands of dollars per college course, the savings can be substantial — provided students attend an institution that accepts the credit.

## POPULAR COLLEGES

# CLEP POLICIES

### OFFERS CLEP CREDIT:

Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College  
Columbus State University  
Florida State University  
Georgia College & State University  
Georgia Southern University  
Georgia Southwestern State University  
Georgia State University  
Kennesaw State University  
Mercer University  
Mississippi State University  
Morehouse College  
Samford University  
Spelman College  
Troy University  
University of Alabama  
University of Alabama at Birmingham  
University of Florida  
University of Mississippi  
Valdosta State University

### DOES NOT OFFER CLEP CREDIT:

Auburn University  
Georgia Institute of Technology  
University of Georgia

*\*NOTE: Students are required to verify any and all CLEP credit policies for any college or university they are considering.*

# THE COLLEGE SEARCH

# FINDING THE RIGHT FIT

## DISTANCE

How far are you willing to go?

How will you get home?

## COST

How much is tuition?  
Housing? Travel home?

Do they offer scholarships?

Will you need loans?  
How much debt will you incur?

## PROGRAM

What do you want to study?

How can this college help prepare you for your career?

## ENVIRONMENT

City or rural?  
HBCU?

Coed or single sex?  
Big school or small school?  
How is the campus atmosphere?

## ACTIVITIES

Do they offer what you are looking for?

Greek life? Division I sports?  
Religious organizations? Arts?  
Intramurals? ROTC? Study Abroad?



# SCOIR

All Deerfield-Windsor high school students have access to Scoir, a college counseling platform. This resource will be used throughout the college search process as it allows students and their parents to explore various colleges, examine admissions requirements, and manage essential admissions paperwork.

## ACCESS TO SCOIR

Each high school student will be registered for a [Scoir account](#) beginning in ninth grade. Parents can also register for a [Parent Account](#) so that they can explore all the tools and resources Scoir offers. It will be used throughout a student's high school career, though it will be used most frequently during the application process.

## COLLEGE SEARCH

Scoir allows students to easily search and discover colleges that match their preferences. For example, students can take the Find Your College Match quiz to be matched with colleges for their unique interests.

Students can also add any colleges they are considering to their My Colleges page. On this page they can also see colleges recommended to them by their parents and the college counselor.

As students explore colleges, they can sort colleges from "Suggested" to "Following" and to "Applied." This allows students to keep track of colleges and deadlines and easily communicate their plans.

## PrinciplesYou

Scoir has partnered with [PrinciplesYou](#) to offer students a free personality and career assessment. The entire assessment takes about 30 to 40 minutes and provides an analysis of students' thinking styles, tendencies and talents. In addition, the assessment helps students consider how these characteristics might benefit a future career.

While a career assessment like this is more helpful to some students than others, all juniors will have the opportunity to complete the PrinciplesYou assessment to help them consider potential majors and programs to aid their college search.

## APPLICATION MANAGEMENT

The college counselor will also use Scoir with students to track their admissions journey. Students will update Scoir periodically and necessary admissions paperwork will be submitted through the Scoir platform. While students can apply directly through Scoir for some colleges, students should discuss how they intend to apply with the college counselor.



# COLLEGE VISITS

College visits are a critical component of the college search process. While you may choose to apply to a college you haven't seen yet, it is quite risky to choose to attend a college without first visiting their campus. Go, visit, and try to picture yourself there.

## WHEN TO VISIT

Deerfield-Windsor School gives juniors and seniors **two excused absences** for college visits each year. Please note that unused days do NOT roll over to the following year so plan to use both during each year. You can use these visits for colleges you are considering or you can use these visits for college events after you've been admitted.

In addition, you want to think about the day of the week and the time of year that you would like to visit a college. When is the easiest time for you to get there? What do you hope to see/do on campus? When will campus feel alive and active?

**Summer:** Summers are a great time to plan longer trips to multiple colleges or to visit colleges far away. You won't miss school and you can make these trips a part of your vacation. However, you won't get the best idea of the campus atmosphere since most students are off-campus and college campuses generally feel "sleepier." These trips can still introduce you to schools you are considering and you can always plan to visit them again during fall or spring term.

**Fall:** Spirits are high during fall semester as campuses are filled with new freshman classes and events. If you visit then you might get a taste of the campus spirit as students hustle to class or a football game.

**Spring:** Like fall, spring semester is active on campus and can give you a good feel for that college's unique atmosphere. However, be aware that spring semester can be a difficult time to miss class at DWS since students already miss so many days for spring sports and extracurriculars. For whatever reason spring is far more chaotic and it is easier to fall behind on schoolwork even if it is an excused absence.

## PLANNING YOUR VISIT

A college's website is the best place to start. Just click on "admission" or "prospective students" and look for campus visit information. The college should provide information on tours, admission office hours, and even directions to campus. Some include names of nearby hotels which may offer a discount to the college's visitors. They will likely have you register in advance so that you can reserve a tour and they can plan for your arrival.

In addition you should think about what else you would like to do while you are on campus. Want to sit in on a class, attend a sports event, or conduct an admissions interview? If so, reach out to the admissions office beforehand.

## BEFORE YOU GO

First, notify the college counseling office of your planned visit at least ONE WEEK in advance. If you visit during the school year and plan to miss class, you are required to get paperwork from the college counseling office beforehand. This paperwork includes an **advance homework request sheet** that you will need all your teachers to complete at least 3 days in advance and a **college visit form** due when you return to campus. Please note that failure to complete and submit this form on your first day back at school will result in an unexcused absence and class penalties.

## DURING YOUR TOUR

Be sure to take your college visit form with you on your college visit. You are required to have a college representative complete part of the form. This form also has some tips on how to maximize your visit and the form has a section for you to complete. This is designed to help you reflect on what you did and did not like about your experience. This information is critical for you and helps the college counselor best understand what you are looking for.

## AFTER YOUR TOUR

When you return to campus you should immediately return your college visit form to the college counselor. This is required for you to have your absence excused. In addition, you can choose to meet with the college counselor to process your experience and discuss any next steps in the college search or application process.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Visiting a college campus is one way that students can **demonstrate interest** in a college or university. Some colleges (though not all) will consider demonstrated interest as they evaluate an application. Therefore, taking a campus tour can potentially strengthen your chances of admission!

## OTHER WAYS TO DEMONSTRATE INTEREST:

- Meet with college representatives when they visit DWS.
- Talk with a college representative at a college fair.
- Write a thank-you email after speaking with an admissions representative.
- Participate in an alumni interview if it is offered.
- Email your regional college admissions officer with specific questions about the school. Don't overdo this one, but an email or two can be helpful.
- Open emails from the school. Many email systems track whether applicants have opened emails sent by the college.
- Apply early. This shows you are serious and passionate about the opportunity.
- If there are financial restraints or other reasons why you cannot visit a college, feel free to reach out and explain these to a college representative so they know you are still very interested.



# College Counseling

## COLLEGE VISIT FORM

**INSTRUCTIONS:** Please take this form with you on your tour. At the start of your tour please complete the table below and have an admissions representative sign it. After you have their signature, you can then complete the rest of this form with your honest thoughts and reflections.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

College/University: \_\_\_\_\_

---THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY AN ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVE---

*I can verify that the student listed above visited this college/university on the date above.*

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Role at College/University: \_\_\_\_\_

---THIS SECTION TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT AFTER THE TOUR---

### **Optional TO-DO CHECKLIST:**

- ☐ Tour campus
- ☐ Talk to someone in the admissions office
- ☐ Eat in the cafeteria
- ☐ Pick up a copy of the campus newspaper
- ☐ Sit in a class
- ☐ Talk to professors
- ☐ Talk to students
- ☐ Visit student housing
- ☐ Explore the area around campus
- ☐ Eat at an off-campus hangout

### **Please rate your experience: 1=Low / 5=High**

Campus Life: 1 2 3 4 5 Surrounding Area: 1 2 3 4 5

Classes: 1 2 3 4 5 Facilities: 1 2 3 4 5

People: 1 2 3 4 5 Campus Food: 1 2 3 4 5

### **What do you like about campus or what you have learned/seen?**

### **What have been your least favorite parts of your visit? Why?**

## ADDITIONAL TIPS:

- ❑ Take the time to wander around on your own.
- ❑ Get physical copies of a course catalog, a campus map, and any literature about the academic programs or campus activities that interest you.
- ❑ Write down the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of anyone you might want to contact again.
- ❑ Take pictures! They can help you remember what you saw.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK:

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### FOR STUDENTS:

- What are the best reasons to go to this college?
- What's it like to go from high school to college?
- What do you do in your free time? On the weekends?
- What do you love about this college?
- What do you wish you could change about this college?
- Why did you choose this college?
- What is it like to live here?
- How safe do you feel on campus?

### FOR THE ADMISSIONS REPRESENTATIVES:

- How are freshmen advised?
- What academic support services are available?
- How difficult is it to get the classes I want to take?
- Do most students graduate in four years?
- What are housing options? (Single-sex, coed, theme housing, substance free, etc.)
- What are the strongest academic programs?
- What percentages of students get jobs upon graduation?
- Is there an honors program? If so, how do I apply for the program?
- How accessible is the faculty to students?

# APPLYING TO COLLEGE

# WHAT DO COLLEGES LOOK FOR?

## MOST IMPORTANT

HIGH

**GRADES**

All colleges want to see your academic performance. They may account for growth over time or class rigor, but they want to see how you handled the challenges in front of you.

HIGH

**CLASS RIGOR**

Colleges want to see if you pushed yourself. However, this is a careful balancing act. After all, you want to take challenging classes but not beyond your current abilities. Maintain those grades!

## INFLUENTIAL

MID

**SAT/ACT SCORE**

While a number of schools are test-optional, most universities still consider and utilize SAT/ACT scores to compare students from different schools.

MID

**EXTRACURRICULAR  
COMMITMENT**

What are your passions? Have you pursued them? How long did you commit to something? Have you shown leadership? This includes work experience, volunteering, school-related activities, and more.

MID

**LETTERS OF  
RECOMMENDATION**

These often tell an admissions officer what others think about you. Are you well-respected? Diligent? Personal and relatable?

MID

**ESSAY**

This is your opportunity to show more of your unique personality! It is important that you stand out and are memorable for the right reasons.

MID

**PERSONAL QUALITIES**

Some colleges look for signs of the following characteristics: curiosity, persistence, risk-taking, compassion, open-mindedness, social consciousness, creativity, collaboration, and cultural intelligence.

## SOMETIMES RELEVANT

LOW

**DEMONSTRATED  
INTEREST**

Some colleges want to see that you are passionate about their university. You can show this by taking a college visit, talking with admission officers, applying early decision, etc.

LOW

**LEGACY**

While many colleges no longer consider legacy, some still do in an effort to encourage alumni donations. In addition, many recognize that legacy students are often highly enthusiastic about the university.



# THE APPLICATION

When it comes time to apply to college, it can seem overwhelming. There seem to be countless terms and deadlines and every college seems to do things differently. Just know that the College Counseling Office is here to help you sift through it all. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to reach out!

## APPLICATION TYPES

**Rolling Admissions:** Rolling admissions programs read applications and make admission decisions in the order that they are received. Therefore, it is a good idea to apply early before too many spots are filled.

**Early Action (EA):** Early action programs allow students to apply mid-Fall and receive a decision as early as October (though exact deadlines/dates vary). However, admitted students are NOT required to attend and admitted students will have until May 1 to make a decision about enrollment. Students are also free to submit applications to other colleges and may apply to multiple Early Action, Rolling Admissions, or Regular Decision colleges.

Sometimes it can be helpful to apply Early Action if you are passionate about a particular college. Some colleges use it to gauge demonstrated interest which can increase your admissions chances. However, not all colleges use it this way so it can be worth talking to a college counselor for the most up-to-date guidance.

Students who apply Early Action can be admitted, denied, or deferred. A **deferral** means the college is still considering its final decision on your file. You were not chosen as part of the Early Action pool of applicants but you will still be considered alongside Regular Decision applicants. Perhaps the college wants to see your first semester senior year grades and/or to reassess your candidacy in the context of their entire applicant pool.

**Regular Decision (RD):** This is the standard application for most colleges. If you are applying regular decision, the deadline typically falls sometime between early December and late February. Students will typically receive decisions in March/April and will have until May 1st to respond.

**Early Decision (ED):** Early Decision programs are for students with serious interest in one particular college. If you choose this option you can only apply to ONE college for Early Decision. Early Decision deadlines generally fall in November, and decisions are typically released in December.

If admitted Early Decision, you agree to enroll at that institution and you must withdraw any applications submitted to any other institutions. You and your parents will be asked to sign a statement of intent that states you will attend that college/university regardless of the financial aid award. As mentioned, you cannot apply to multiple Early Decision colleges because they share their list of applicants with one another.

However, like Early Action, if you are deferred, your application will be reconsidered with Regular Decision applicants and you can apply anywhere else.

In addition, some colleges have created a second Early Decision II deadline later in the application cycle. Typically, these later Early Decision II application deadlines are not until January and decisions are released about a month later. If accepted Early Decision II, you are also obliged to attend and pay, regardless of the financial aid offer.

Applying Early Decision is a big commitment and should not be taken lightly. Applying early decision can increase your admission chances as it is the strongest way to show demonstrated interest. However, you can also lose the ability to weigh other opportunities.

**Restrictive Early Action:** This is sometimes referred to as Single Choice Early Action and it is an early application process used by some Ivy League universities. These applications require students apply by mid-November and students receive a decision by mid-December. While students are NOT allowed to apply to other Early Decision or Early Admissions programs, they can apply to other colleges through Regular Decision programs and students are not required to notify the college of their enrollment decision until May 1.

## DECISION TYPES

**Admitted:** Congratulations! You have been accepted to that college or university for the term you applied.

**Denied:** You were not accepted and they are no longer considering your application for that term.

**Deferred:** You applied Early Decision or Early Action and were not accepted during that round. However, your application will now be considered as part of Regular Decision admissions.

**Waitlisted:** You were not accepted with the first round of Regular Decision in March/April. However, you have been placed on a waiting list in case an opening becomes available. Colleges often maintain a waitlist in the event that they do not enroll enough students in their first-year class.

Usually a college that has not met its enrollment goals after May 1 will offer admission to students on its waitlist. However, by mid-June most colleges will officially deny any students remaining on their waitlists, although some may continue to admit students later in the summer. Keep in mind that being waitlisted is not a denial. Some colleges intentionally under-admit and plan to admit from their waitlists every year as an enrollment strategy.

## COMMON APP

The Common Application (informally known as the Common App) is an undergraduate college admission application accepted by nearly 700 member colleges and universities in 48 states and the District of Columbia, as well as Canada, China, and many European countries. Member colleges and universities that accept the Common App include over 100 public universities and over 250 institutions that do not require an application fee.

The Common App form can save students hours of work. You can complete the information on the form and submit it to any of the colleges or universities that accept the Common App. However, some colleges require an additional supplementary information consisting of school-specific questions and/or essays.

Given the number of colleges that use Common App, most DWS can expect to use it in the admissions process and all DWS students are encouraged to make an account.

However, students should NOT begin college specific portions of the Common App until the website updates on August 1st. This is when most college applications open and students can begin exploring the requirements for individual colleges. However, students should consult with the college counselor before deciding how to submit an application. While Common App provides convenience, there are occasionally benefits to submitting through a college's application portal.

## COLLEGE ESSAYS

If your application requests any written components then you should take the time and energy to prepare them appropriately. Please see the “College Essays” section of this guide for additional advice.

## HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

When a student applies to college, the college counselor will submit his or her official high school transcript on the student’s behalf. This transcript includes all high school courses taken, the semester/year-end grades earned in each course, a student’s cumulative weighted GPA and all documented volunteer hours. However, your DWS transcript will not report class rank nor test scores.

When colleges look at your transcript, they are looking at both GPA and course selection. While colleges want to see if you chose rigorous courses that challenged you, they also want to see that you were able to handle these challenges with strong grades. For these reasons it is important to be intentional about course selection throughout high school. The best advice is to look for ways to pursue rigor in the areas where you have both interest and aptitude without stretching yourself too thin. Don’t rush into classes you aren’t ready for. Colleges also love to see growth in grades and rigor over time so choose classes that will appropriately challenge you at the appropriate times in your high school career. Meet with the college counselor if you have questions about course selection at any point in high school.

In addition, it is important to note that many colleges recalculate a student’s GPA by subtracting or adding weight according to their own guidelines. This allows them to compare students fairly from different high schools. They realize an “A” at some schools is more easily attainable and they want to fairly acknowledge the rigor and challenge of the institution.

## STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES

Students are responsible for submitting their own test scores directly from [College Board](#) or [the ACT](#). Please see the “SAT/ACT” section of this guide for more advice.

## OTHER DOCUMENTATION

To help admissions officers better understand a student’s transcript, most colleges and universities also require a secondary school report. This report is

provided by the college counselor and includes a school profile that provides context for our school curriculum, course offerings, and community. For example, it informs schools how many AC/AP classes are offered so they can put your course selection and course rigor in perspective.

In addition, the college counselor will submit any other requested documentation, like letters of recommendation and your senior course schedule.

## INTERVIEWS

Some highly competitive universities request an interview as part of your application. In general, if a college offers you the opportunity to interview, you should make every effort to do so.

These interviews are usually conducted by an admission counselor or a trained alumni of the institution. Regardless of who conducts the interview, your answers in the interview provide an impression of you, and you should prepare adequately. Do not attempt to “wing it.” It will be obvious if you are underprepared and it will not help your admissions chances.

If you are serious about the university, it is important that you take the time to thoroughly prepare for the interview. Do extensive research on the university and plan your responses for anticipated questions. The college counselor can point you towards preparation resources and can also arrange a mock interview for you to practice. Please reach out to the college counselor if a college or university has requested an interview.



# THE COLLEGE ESSAY

While not every application requires an essay, many do. If your application does, use it as an opportunity to show off your best qualities and make an impact. After all, college essays offer something that grades, test scores, and lists of activities cannot show: your personality.

## PERSONAL STATEMENTS

If prompted, you should plan to draft a well-written personal statement that shows the college who you are and what you have to offer. Avoid cliché topics and edit your essay thoroughly. In fact, it is a good idea to pitch essay topics to the college counselor before you begin writing so that you can choose a topic that is genuinely unique and compelling. After all, a topic you think is unique could actually be extremely common to an admissions officer.

Once you have a topic planned, you can begin drafting your essay. Again, it is a good idea to consult with the college counselor as you work through this process. However, you can also consult your favorite English teacher or check out [CollegeEssayGuy.com](https://CollegeEssayGuy.com). Just be sure someone edits your essay before you submit!

## SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAYS

Many applications will also ask you to write supplemental essays addressing some of the following questions: Why this college? Why this major? What is a community you are a part of? What extracurricular has been the most impactful for you?

And occasionally there is a prompt designed to show the university a unique side of you. For example, the UGA 2023 supplemental essay asked:

*“The college admissions process can create anxiety. In an attempt to make it less stressful, please tell us an interesting or amusing story about yourself from your high school years that you have not already shared in your application.”*

Keep in mind that these supplemental essays should not repeat the main content of anything you have already written about in your personal statement. They are designed to show your personality and explore your passions in another unique way. And if an essay is marked as optional? DO IT ANYWAYS. This shows your commitment to the school and your desire to be admitted.

## ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Many colleges have publicized clear policies on student use of AI in admissions. Please see the “Ethics” section of this guidebook for guidance on its use and consult the college counselor if needed.



# LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Recommendations show something that grades and test scores cannot. They show colleges what other people think about you and give insight into your personality and strengths. Therefore, they can be critical in the admissions process.

## TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Like essays, not all colleges will require a letter of recommendation and the number of required recommendations can vary from application to application. Therefore, be sure you verify how many letters of recommendation you need before you ask someone to spend their time and energy writing you one!

**WHO TO ASK:** You should work with the college counselor to determine the exact number of teacher recommendations you will need for the colleges you are planning to apply to. However, once you have this information you can begin considering which teachers to ask. Think about which teacher is best suited to speak to your strengths as a student. Who has seen you grow? Who has cheered you on? Who have you connected with? Who has sparked your curiosity? Colleges typically prefer to hear from teachers who have taught you in the past two years. The college counselor can help you decide who would write the best letter for you. After all, not everyone is comfortable writing a letter and you want one that will make you shine.

**HOW TO ASK:** Once you and the college counselor have determined who to ask, it is time to ask! Most students should plan to request one at the start of senior year. You will need to get a **Teacher Recommendation Request Form** from the college counselor so that you can ask the teacher in-person. If they accept, you will also need to invite them through Scoir and you should be ready to provide the teacher with a copy of your resume if they ask for one.

Keep in mind that teachers are asked by numerous students for recommendations and many limit the number of recommendations they agree to write. Therefore, if you really want a recommendation from a particular teacher, do not delay! All recommenders should be asked at **LEAST** three weeks before any application deadline.

**THANK YOU NOTES:** Once a teacher has agreed to write you a letter, you should follow up with a handwritten thank-you note. These letters take time to write and teachers often use their personal time to complete them on your behalf. The college counselor can provide you with stationary to do so and you will give the note back to the college counselor to put in

the teacher's box. Please keep in mind this is REQUIRED and no letters will be sent with your documentation until you have written a thank you note.

**HOW TO FOLLOW UP:** While you will not be able to read these letters of recommendation, you can ask the college counselor if the letter has been written. If a teacher takes longer than two weeks to complete a letter, you can send a polite email reminder or ask the college counselor for advice.

## COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION

Many colleges and universities also require or request a counselor recommendation letter. While a teacher recommendation letter typically highlights your academic strengths, work ethic, and classroom participation, the counselor recommendation letter usually focuses on your personal qualities, character, and overall preparedness for college. This might include information about your extracurricular activities, leadership abilities, and community service or it could provide context about your background or circumstances that may have influenced your academic performance or personal development.

Before writing this letter, the college counselor will ask to meet with you one-on-one. In this meeting she will go over your resume and application materials to decide which attributes to highlight in your letter. You will get the chance to communicate your greatest strengths so that you can get the strongest letter possible.

In addition, you can ask important people in your life to complete a **Supplemental Rec Form (Green Sheet)**. This form is great for anyone who knows you really well but might not be writing you a letter of recommendation. This allows those closest to you to supply details or stories that would be fantastic in a letter of recommendation. Then the college counselor can reference those details and stories in her own letter.

## ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

While most colleges limit the number of recommendations they will accept, (usually one counselor recommendation and either one or two teacher recommendations), others allow an additional recommendation or two. If your application does allow for additional letters of recommendation, you should consult with the college counselor for advice on who

else to ask. This could be another teacher, a coach, a counselor, a school administrator, a pastor, or a boss who knows you in another context. If you have someone in mind, discuss your plan with the college counselor to ensure the best course of action.

Occasionally recommendations from family or friends who are alumni or donors for particular institutions can positively impact your admissions chances. However, you should discuss this possibility with the college counselor before pursuing this option. In reality, this strategy is less effective in admissions today as colleges strive to judge applicants on the merits of their application, not who they know.

## FERPA WAIVER

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regulates the privacy of student education records and gives you the right to review confidential letters of recommendation provided as part of that application. However, it is recommended that all students waive this right by completing the FERPA waiver.

This waiver gives up your right to read your letters of recommendation. This waiver is highly recommended by admissions professionals as it assures colleges that your letters are genuine and a true reflection of you. Colleges expect truthful letters of recommendation and are less likely to trust letters if they know you have read them and potentially influenced their writing. Instead of expecting to read these letters, just choose a recommender you trust to write you a good letter.

Please note that refusal to complete the FERPA waiver could prevent recommenders from writing for you and could also negatively impact your admissions chances at the colleges you apply to. (Colleges may wonder if you are attempting to influence your letters of recommendation.) For these reasons, it is recommended that you complete the waiver.



# SAT/ACT

While many colleges and universities are going test-optional, SAT and ACT scores are still highly utilized by the vast majority of American colleges and universities for both college admissions and scholarship opportunities. In fact, a point or two could mean thousands of dollars in tuition, so take these tests seriously!

## PSAT/NMSQT

The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) is a digital 2 hour 14 minute test that evaluates students in two scores: math and evidence-based reading and writing (ERW). At Deerfield-Windsor School all students in grades 9-11 take the test each October.

The PSAT is considered a practice test for the SAT and it can also be used for course placement in AC and AP courses at DWS. For juniors, the PSAT scores are also used to determine eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program. However, colleges do not see PSAT scores as part of a college application.

## THE ACT

The American College Testing (ACT) exam offers both a digital (less common) and a paper exam (more common). Some reputable test prep tutors [recommend students take the paper ACT](#).

The redesigned ACT consists of three required sections (English, Math, Reading) with an optional Science section and an optional Writing test (essay).

The ACT takes 2 hours 5 minutes without the essay or science section. For competitive admissions, it can be beneficial to initially take the Science section to see if it boosts a student's composite score. If it does not, students are encouraged to opt out of the Science section in future tests. As for the Writing test, very few colleges require or consider it. You can check each college's website for guidance in registering for writing.

For more information and to register for the test, go to [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

## THE SAT

The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a 2 hour 14 minute digital test that, like the PSAT, evaluates students in two scores: math and evidence-based reading and writing (ERW). For more information and to register, go to the College Board website [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

## FEE WAIVERS

Students with demonstrated financial need may qualify for SAT and ACT fee waivers. Fee waivers can cover the cost of test registration, score reports, college

application fees, and other application-related expenses, helping make the college admissions process more accessible.

Families who believe they may qualify should complete the [DWS Fee Waiver Eligibility Form](#). Our business office will review DWS tuition assistance documentation and other applicable information to verify eligibility. Qualification is generally based on participation in income-based assistance programs, family income guidelines, receipt of public benefits, or other documented financial hardship.

## TESTING ACCOMMODATIONS

Both the ACT and the College Board offer testing accommodations to students with demonstrated learning differences and/or medical conditions. However, the process for being approved for testing accommodations is different than the process for receiving learning support services at DWS. Anyone interested in testing accommodations for these admissions tests must first be approved by the ACT's Test Accessibility and Accommodations System (TAA) or College Board's Services for Students with Disabilities. Because the process can be lengthy and require additional documentation, you should plan to meet with a specialist in the **DWS Academic Support Center** as early as possible.

## TEST-OPTIONAL

For the past decade there has been a movement to diminish the importance of standardized testing in the admission process. As part of this movement, many universities have gone "test-optional" or "test-blind" and no longer require all applicants to submit their test scores. In fact, a complete list of colleges that are test-optional can be found at [Fairtest.org](https://www.fairtest.org).

However, going test-optional is not recommended for all and students should reach out to the college counselor before going test-optional. The college counselor can advise you on whether or not that is the best decision for your admissions process.

## WHICH TEST

Given the number of colleges that have reinstated standardized test requirements, being prepared to submit either an SAT and ACT remains advisable for admissions and/or scholarship consideration. Today colleges do not preference one test over another so students are advised to take initially take both.

The two tests differ meaningfully in style and structure so once students identify a strength, they are encouraged to focus test prep on their preferred test.

**ACT:** The ACT is considered more content-driven, with clearly defined sections and question types that follow predictable patterns. Many students and tutors believe this consistency makes it easier to identify weak areas and apply targeted strategies for improvement. The ACT is also a faster-paced test, with more questions in less time, so students who read and process information quickly tend to do well.

**SAT:** The SAT, by contrast, places greater emphasis on critical thinking, reasoning, and problem-solving. Students who naturally approach challenges analytically and enjoy working through multi-step questions often find the SAT to be a better fit. The SAT is less time-pressured, giving students more time per question — an advantage for those who work more carefully and deliberately. Additionally, the SAT allows a calculator on all math questions, whereas the ACT has a no-calculator section.

## WHEN TO TEST

Because students rarely know in advance which test will suit them better, it is strongly recommended that every student take both the SAT and the ACT for the first time before the end of their **junior year**. Sitting for both tests early provides an invaluable side-by-side comparison — not just of scores, but of comfort level and overall test-taking experience. Armed with that information, students can make an informed decision about which exam to focus on and, if needed, invest their remaining time and resources into raising that score before applications are due.

Some students may only take their preferred test once or twice. However, others may choose to test more in an effort to achieve a particular score. The college counselor can advise you on the best strategy for your individual circumstances.

## SUBMITTING TEST SCORES

Students should note that high schools are unable to submit standardized test scores on behalf of the student. Instead, it is the student's responsibility to request any relevant test scores from [Collegeboard](#) and/or the [ACT](#) and have them sent to the college directly. However, the college counselor can guide students through this process.

## SCHOOL DAY TESTING

Deerfield-Windsor School is proud to offer SAT and ACT testing opportunities on campus each year. Testing in a familiar environment — the same building, desks, and surroundings where students spend their school days — can be a genuine comfort, and some students perform their best in a setting where they already feel at ease. School day testing can also benefit those involved in competitive athletics, performing arts, or other activities that create busy weekends. Overall, school day testing eliminates logistical concerns like scheduling, transportations and navigating an unfamiliar location on an already high-stakes morning.

That said, school day testing is not the right fit for everyone. Testing in a familiar environment can be a double-edged sword — while some students find it reassuring, others find that it feels too routine, failing to signal to the brain that this is a high-stakes moment. Homework, upcoming classes, and extracurricular obligations can also crowd out adequate preparation in the days leading up to the test. On a Saturday off-campus test date, the test tends to be a student's sole priority for the day — making it easier to arrive rested, prepared, and mentally locked in.

It is also worth noting that on-campus dates are typically only offered twice per year. Most students benefit from testing more frequently and will likely need to seek out additional testing opportunities.

## WEEKEND TESTING

Weekend testing off-campus on a national Saturday test date is a straightforward and popular alternative. Common testing sites include nearby high schools, colleges, and universities, and both the SAT and ACT are offered at multiple locations in our region throughout the year.

For many students, Saturday testing is simply the better fit. Waking up with the test as the singular focus of the day — no classes before or after, no homework looming, no competing obligations — creates a clarity of purpose that is difficult to replicate on a school day. The departure from routine also signals to the brain that this is a high-stakes occasion worthy of serious preparation, making students more likely to arrive having gotten a full night's sleep, eaten a good breakfast, and spent the preceding days focused on review rather than juggling academic demands.

Weekend testing also provides a significantly wider range of dates throughout the year, giving students more control over when they test. This is especially valuable for students who want to test earlier in their junior year, retake the exam, or sit for both the SAT and ACT — goals that are difficult to accomplish through school day testing alone.

## REGISTRATION

Students and parents should look out for email communication regarding **School Day Testing** opportunities. The College Counselor and/or the DWS Testing Coordinator will reach out with registration information and deadlines.

To register for **Weekend Testing** on a national test date, students register directly through [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (for the SAT) or [ACT.org](http://ACT.org) (for the ACT). It is highly recommended that students register early — popular testing sites fill up quickly, and waiting until the deadline can mean limited location options, inconvenient test centers, or missing a preferred date entirely. Late registration is possible in some cases but comes with an additional fee and even fewer choices. Students should plan their full testing schedule well in advance — ideally at the start of junior year — so that preferred dates and locations can be secured without the added stress of a last-minute search.

## WHAT TO BRING

Requirements differ between the SAT and ACT, and students should always consult the official [College Board](http://CollegeBoard) and [ACT](http://ACT) websites for the most current and complete list before test day. At minimum, students must bring a **printed admission ticket** and an **acceptable photo ID** with a name that matches their registration. Failure to present either could result in being turned away.

And because the SAT is now fully digital, students are responsible for providing a fully charged [approved device](#) with the [Bluebook™ application](#) installed and exam setup completed. Students who do not prepare this ahead of time may be dismissed from their test site.

# **SPECIAL PROGRAMS**



# STUDENT ATHLETES

For student-athletes, the college recruitment process can open doors to both admissions and scholarships—but it requires early planning and active effort. From NCAA eligibility to contacting coaches, staying organized and informed can make all the difference. You will work extensively with the coach in your preferred sport, but the college counselor can support you along the way.

## WHERE TO BEGIN

The first step in the recruitment process is to talk with your coach to determine which competitive level might be the best fit for you. Your coach knows your abilities, understands the demands of your sport, and can help you realistically assess where you're most likely to succeed.

College athletics are organized by governing bodies — most commonly the [NCAA](#), [NAIA](#), and [NJCAA](#) — each of which oversees different divisions and schools. Once you have identified the competitive level that makes sense for you, it is important to understand that most require student athletes to register with an eligibility center. Don't hesitate to reach out to the college counselor for guidance—she can help you stay organized and on track throughout the process

## NCAA DIVISION I

This is the most competitive level, with intense training schedules, high expectations, and often full or partial athletic scholarships. These programs require a serious commitment—think of it like a full-time job on top of your academics.

The recruitment process here starts early—sometimes as early as freshman or sophomore year—and is very structured. Coaches often scout athletes through showcases, club teams, and national rankings.

D1 programs follow strict NCAA communication rules and usually require athletes to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center. To be eligible, athletes must meet specific academic standards, including a minimum 2.3 GPA in core courses—this is different from your overall DWS GPA.

## NCAA DIVISION II

Division II programs are still highly competitive and can be travel-intensive for larger conferences. However, they also have a bit more flexibility and balance between academics and athletics. Many D2 schools offer athletic scholarships, though often fewer than D1. And available scholarships typically cover a portion of costs rather than a full ride.

D2 recruitment often starts later than D1 and can feel more personal. Athletes are usually recruited through high school performance, camps, or by reaching out to

coaches. In addition, a 2.2 GPA in NCAA core courses is required—different from your DWS GPA.

### NCAA DIVISION III

Division III programs are more common at smaller liberal arts colleges. They do not offer athletic scholarships, but they often provide generous academic aid and emphasize a true student-athlete experience. Division III schools are great for students who love their sport but want a more balanced college life.

Recruiting is typically less intense and more student-driven—coaches often rely on emails, highlight videos, and campus visits. Athletes can start the conversation at almost any point in high school, and there's more flexibility in how and when recruiting happens.

It is also important to note that D3 schools set their own academic standards on campus and students should contact the school they plan to attend for information about its academic requirements.

### NAIA

NAIA schools are typically smaller private colleges that offer strong athletic programs and scholarships. Many NAIA teams compete at a level similar to NCAA Division II. However, competition travel typically stays regional, with lighter travel for most sports.

Recruitment is more flexible and often more personal than in the NCAA. Coaches can contact athletes at any time, and the process often moves quickly. Students must register with the NAIA Eligibility Center, which is generally simpler than the NCAA process.

For academic eligibility, an entering freshman becomes eligible immediately upon graduation by meeting one of the following:

- Final GPA of 2.3+  
OR
- Final GPA of 2.0+ with a minimum test score of 18 on the ACT or 970 on the SAT

### NJCAA

Many junior colleges offer two-year programs that can be a great stepping stone for student athletes who want to improve their academics, build their athletic resume, or gain more experience before transferring to a four-year school.

Recruitment tends to be more open and focused on potential. Coaches may recruit athletes who are late bloomers, overlooked by other programs, or seeking a fresh start. These programs may offer athletic scholarships or serve as a launching pad to NCAA or NAIA programs.

### WALK-ON ATHLETICS

Not every college athlete is recruited or offered a scholarship. Some students earn a spot on a team by becoming a walk-on and joining the college team without being officially recruited or receiving athletic scholarship money upfront.

Some students become **preferred walk-ons** meaning they were invited to join the team by the coach, because they narrowly missed the coach's criteria for limited scholarship offers. Often, this means a college coach will advocate for your college application, meaning it could help you gain admittance to a school where your academic profile might not otherwise meet their standard criteria. While this support might not be as strong as it is for scholarship athletes, it can still help.

Others make the team by trying out once they're already on campus. These opportunities are less predictable and more competitive. Coaches may have only a few spots—or none at all—but athletes with drive, talent, and a great attitude can still stand out.

If you are considering this pathway it is important to be realistic about your skill level and consider reaching out to coaches ahead of time to ask about opportunities.

### CLUB SPORTS

Club sports are student-organized teams that represent the college in competitions against other schools. These teams often hold tryouts, have regular practices, and may travel regionally or even nationally for games and tournaments. While club teams are typically not part of the official athletics department, they can be quite competitive and often feel similar to a varsity experience in terms of structure and time commitment. Some club teams have coaches (either volunteer or part-time), and most require players to pay dues or participate in fundraising efforts to cover expenses. For students who want a competitive outlet but don't want the full-time demands of varsity athletics, club sports can be a perfect fit.

## INTRAMURAL SPORTS

On the other hand, intramural sports are entirely recreational and take place within the student body. These leagues are casual, fun, and open to all skill levels—no tryouts required.

Students can join as part of a team or sign up individually and be placed on one. Games are usually held on campus in the evenings or on weekends, and the time commitment is low. There's no travel, no pressure, and no formal coaching—just an opportunity to play for the love of the game.

## NCAA ELIGIBILITY CENTER

Any student can begin the recruitment process by registering for a **free Profile Page account** through the NCAA. This is a good option if you are a younger student or not yet being actively recruited, or if you're unsure about which division you want to compete in. This is a great way to begin the process and keep track of your academic and athletic details. If you later get recruited or decide to compete in Division I or II, you can easily transition your Profile Page account into a full certification account.

If you plan to compete at a Division I or II school, you'll need an **Academic and Amateurism Certification account**. This account ensures that you meet the NCAA's academic and amateurism requirements. You must register for this account and complete any necessary payments (or apply for a fee waiver) before you go on official visits, sign for athletic aid, receive a scholarship, or begin competing at a Division I or II school. It's important to get this done early in the recruitment process.

If you later transfer from a non-NCAA school to a Division I or II school, you may only need an **Amateurism-Only Certification account**. If you think this might apply to you, check with the compliance office at the school you're transferring to, or contact the NCAA Eligibility Center directly for guidance. Each student-athlete's situation is unique, and requirements can vary depending on your previous academic history and athletic participation.

## RECRUITMENT ADVICE

With the increasing competitiveness of college athletics, it's important for potential recruits to start early and be proactive. Building genuine relationships with college coaches can make a big difference—this includes sending highlight film, attending camps, and following up regularly to express continued interest. At the same time, student-athletes should stay focused on academics, as eligibility and admissions often depend on strong grades and coursework.

Social media platforms like X, Instagram, and TikTok have also become key parts of the recruitment process. Many college coaches actively use these platforms to evaluate athletes. Posting updated film, athletic stats, and academic information can help you get noticed—just be sure to tag schools and coaches appropriately and keep your content professional and respectful. A careless post can close doors just as quickly as a great highlight can open them.

A great highlight video is often your first impression. Keep it short (3–5 minutes), start with your best plays, and clearly label your name, jersey number, and position. Make it easy for coaches to find what they're looking for. Post the video to YouTube or Hudl, then share it via email and social media.

Coaches are looking for more than talent—they want athletes who are coachable, dependable, and academically eligible. A solid GPA and good character can often be the difference-maker when opportunities are limited.

In addition, it can help to attend camps, showcases, and combines to give you direct exposure to college coaches and recruiters. Choose events where coaches from your target schools will be present. Even if you're not on their radar yet, performing well can get you there quickly.

While your college counselor can offer general guidance, your coach is typically more familiar with the recruiting landscape, including key timelines, talent pipelines, and programs that align with your ability and goals. Don't hesitate to ask for honest feedback about your strengths, weaknesses, and what it will take to compete at the next level.



# ARTS PROGRAMS

If you're considering a major in the arts—such as visual arts, music, theater, dance, film, or design—your college application process may look different from that of other students. Whether you're applying to a specialized arts college or a university with a strong arts department, it's essential to understand the extra steps and requirements involved.

## START EARLY

Arts programs often have additional components beyond the standard college application. These might include auditions, portfolio submissions, interviews, or pre-screening videos. So it is important that you begin preparing these materials months or even years in advance.

## RESEARCH THE PROGRAM

Each school has different expectations, requirements, and deadlines, so read carefully and create a timeline for each program on your list. It is also worth understanding the difference between a specialized arts conservatory — where virtually all coursework is arts-focused — and a university with a strong arts department, which offers more academic breadth alongside arts training. Neither is inherently better; the right fit depends on the student.

## PORTFOLIOS

If a program requires a portfolio, note that it will be one of the most critical parts of your application. Your artistic submission should showcase both your technical skill and your unique creative voice.

Ask a teacher or mentor for feedback as you prepare, and revise thoughtfully. Many students benefit from attending summer intensives, portfolio review days, or pre-college programs to strengthen their work and get expert input. Some programs, like SCAD, will provide feedback on portfolios before your final submission. Ask the college counselor for guidance on who to ask for help and feedback.

## AUDITIONS

For performing arts disciplines — music, theater, dance, and musical theater in particular — the audition is the centerpiece of your application. Auditions may be held in person on campus, conducted virtually, or submitted as a pre-recorded video. Many programs use a pre-screening process, meaning students must submit a video before being invited to a live audition. Preparation is everything — work closely with your private instructor or director to select appropriate repertoire or material, and practice performing under pressure well in advance of your audition date.



# SERVICE ACADEMIES

If you're interested in serving your country while earning a top-tier education, a U.S. Service Academy may be the right path. Admission is highly selective and requires academic excellence, leadership, physical fitness, and a strong commitment to military service. However, graduates receive a full scholarship and are commissioned as officers, with a mandatory service obligation.

## CONSIDER YOUR OPTIONS

There are five U.S. Service Academies, each offering a rigorous education, leadership training, and a direct path to becoming a commissioned officer in a branch of the U.S. military or maritime services. While they share many similarities, each academy has a distinct mission, culture, and career path. Understanding these differences can help you find the best fit for your goals and interests.

### WEST POINT

Located in West Point, New York, the U.S. Military Academy trains future officers for service in the U.S. Army. With a strong emphasis on leadership, discipline, and academic excellence—particularly in engineering and military science—West Point prepares cadets for a wide range of Army roles in combat arms, intelligence, logistics, engineering, and more. Graduates are commissioned as Second Lieutenants and begin active-duty service upon graduation.

### U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

The U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, prepares students—known as midshipmen—for

leadership roles in the U.S. Navy or Marine Corps. The curriculum emphasizes character, honor, and technical proficiency, especially in science and engineering. Graduates are commissioned as Ensigns in the Navy or Second Lieutenants in the Marine Corps and go on to serve in areas such as surface warfare, aviation, submarines, and ground combat.

### U.S. AIR FORCE ACADEMY

Located in Colorado Springs, Colorado, the U.S. Air Force Academy educates and trains future officers for both the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Force. Cadets receive a rigorous education focused on aerospace, engineering, and technology, while also developing as military leaders. Graduates are commissioned as Second Lieutenants and pursue careers in aviation, cyber operations, space systems, intelligence, and more.

### U.S. MERCHANT MARINE ACADEMY

Located in Kings Point, New York, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy trains students for leadership in both the military and maritime industry. Known for its rigorous academic program and global sea year

experience, the academy offers graduates multiple career paths. They may serve as licensed merchant mariners, join the commercial shipping industry, or accept commissions in the Navy Reserve or active-duty military, fulfilling service commitments in a variety of ways.

## U.S. COAST GUARD ACADEMY

The U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut, offers a unique military education focused on maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, and homeland security. Unlike the other academies, it does not require a congressional nomination. Cadets graduate as Ensigns in the Coast Guard and often move directly into operational leadership roles protecting U.S. waters and supporting national security missions.

## CONSIDER THE COMMITMENT

Attending a Service Academy isn't just about earning a prestigious, tuition-free education—it's a serious, long-term commitment to military service. Graduates typically serve at least five years of active duty as commissioned officers, leading others and taking on significant responsibility, often in high-pressure environments.

Life at an academy is highly structured and demanding. Your days will be filled with academic work, military training, physical fitness, and leadership development, all under strict discipline. Every day will test your endurance, focus, discipline, and resilience and it will require both physical and mental resilience.

Before applying, ask yourself:

- Am I ready to commit to years of military service after college, including potential deployments and sacrifices?
- Can I succeed in a disciplined, high-pressure environment that leaves little room for excuses?
- Do I have the physical and mental toughness to persevere through intense training and high expectations?
- Do I want to serve a mission larger than myself?

## START EARLY

The application process for Service Academies is complex and lengthy. Many begin preparing during their sophomore or early junior year so let the college counselor know early if this is something you are considering.

## RESUME

Service Academies seek students who excel across academics, leadership, athletics, and character. Your resume should tell a cohesive story of someone who is not only high-achieving, but also disciplined, driven, and ready to lead.

Strong academic performance is essential—top candidates challenge themselves with rigorous coursework in subjects like math, science, and English, and maintain high GPAs, often above a 4.20 weighted. Competitive SAT or ACT scores are also expected (1200+ SAT or 25+ ACT), with particular emphasis on math and reading comprehension.

Beyond the classroom, leadership is a major focus. The academies want to see students who have taken initiative and held positions of responsibility. What matters most is not the number of activities, but the depth of involvement and progression over time. Long-term commitment and rising to greater responsibility demonstrate the kind of leadership potential they're looking for in future officers.

Athletics also play a key role in a strong application. Service Academies require a high level of physical fitness, so they tend to favor students who have competed in varsity-level sports, ideally in physically demanding or team-oriented environments.

Equally important is a track record of service and character. Volunteering in your community, mentoring others, participating in faith-based outreach, or taking on caregiving responsibilities are all indicators of your commitment to serving others. These experiences help admissions officers understand who you are when no one's watching—and whether you embody the values of integrity, accountability, and selflessness that define military leadership.

If you've had exposure to military environments through programs like Civil Air Patrol, Sea Cadets, Boys or Girls State, or a Service Academy Summer Seminar, that can strengthen your application further.

These experiences not only reflect genuine interest but also help you confirm whether military life is the right path for you.

Plan to work closely with the college counselor when preparing your resume. Focus on clarity and relevance. Include specific accomplishments, leadership roles, and timeframes to give a clear picture of your impact.

## NOMINATIONS

With the exception of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, all Service Academies require a congressional or service-connected nomination. This is a separate application process that includes essays, interviews, and often additional letters of recommendation. You will want to work with the college counselor closely to ensure your essays and resume are polished and the counselor can help you prepare for any and all interviews.

Start by [identifying your Congressional district](#) to know your U.S. House Representative, and recognize your two U.S. Senators. You can apply for nominations from all three, increasing your chances.

Each Member of Congress is allowed to have up to five cadets or midshipmen at each Service Academy at any given time. Since there are four class years, this typically means they have one student per class and one or two open spots for new applicants each admissions cycle. For each open slot, a Member of Congress can nominate up to 10 candidates—so if there's one vacancy, they can submit 10 names; if there are two, up to 20. While receiving a nomination is essential to the admissions process, it does NOT guarantee admission, and because each office generally has only one available appointment slot, the competition is intense.

Additionally, you could consider applying for nominations from other eligible sources such as the Vice President's office and any military-connected nominations you qualify for (active duty military family or eligible retiree etc). However, these alternative nomination methods are relatively rare and highly competitive. They are limited in number and typically reserved for applicants with close military family ties or exceptional circumstances.

Each Member of Congress has their own nomination application process, complete with unique deadlines

and requirements—some as early as September of your senior year. Because of this variation, it's essential to start planning for nominations as early as the spring of your junior year. This gives you plenty of time to gather materials, prepare strong applications, and meet all deadlines without stress. Your college counselor can help you create a personalized timeline and keep you on track every step of the way.

The nominations process is highly competitive and personal, so to strengthen your application, attend informational sessions, meet-and-greets, and open houses hosted by your Congressional offices or local military recruiting offices to meet nomination officers, ask questions, and show genuine interest. You want them to know who you are beyond your application.

Maintain professional and respectful communication with nomination staff, following up with thank-you notes after interviews or meetings. Seek guidance from mentors, teachers, or coaches to help prepare for interviews and review your essays.

## PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

Admission to a Service Academy requires more than academic excellence—physical fitness and medical readiness are equally essential. Every applicant must complete two key components: the Candidate Fitness Assessment (CFA) and the Department of Defense Medical Examination Review Board (DoDMERB) medical screening.

The **Candidate Fitness Assessment** is a standardized physical test used to evaluate your strength, agility, speed, and endurance. It includes six events: basketball throw, pull-ups (or flexed-arm hang for some candidates), shuttle run, modified sit-ups, push-ups, and a one-mile run. The CFA is scored as a whole, and poor performance on one event can be offset by strength in others—though failing any single event may disqualify you. It's important to begin training early and take the test seriously, as physical fitness is central to both academy life and military service. Some students take the CFA multiple times to improve their scores before submitting.

In addition to the CFA, you'll also undergo a **DoDMERB medical exam**, which evaluates whether you meet the physical and medical standards required for military service. This includes vision and hearing tests, a medical history review, and a physical

examination. The process can take time, especially if waivers or additional evaluations are needed, so it's best to schedule your exam as early as possible—ideally during the summer or early fall of your senior year.

The academies are preparing future officers, so they expect incoming students to be physically fit, medically cleared, and ready to handle the rigors of military training. Staying active, training consistently, and addressing any potential medical concerns in advance will strengthen your application and prepare you for success.

### PROCESS TIMELINE:

*Please note this is a guideline and may not be exact. Consult each service academy and Member of Congress' website for precise deadlines.*

1. **Mar-April (Junior Year):** Submit preliminary applications to Service Academies
2. **June-Aug (Senior Year):** Complete your DoDMERB medical pre-screening
3. **Sep-Oct:** Submit nomination applications to your Members of Congress and any other nominating sources.
4. **Nov-Jan:** Attend nomination interviews with congressional offices and other nominating sources.
5. **Nov-Jan:** Complete the Candidate Fitness Assessment
6. **Nov-Jan:** Submit your full application directly to the service academies. Note: This includes your nomination, medical clearance, test scores, transcripts, essays, and letters of recommendation.
7. **Feb:** Receive nomination notifications from Members of Congress and other sources.
8. **Mar-April:** Receive official appointment offers from the Service Academies.

### TIPS:

- You'll be juggling applications to multiple academies, nominations, interviews, fitness tests, and medical exams—all with different timelines. Use a checklist or calendar to track every step, and work closely with your college counselor to stay on schedule.
- Several academies offer **Summer Seminars** for high school juniors. These programs give students a firsthand look at academy life and can strengthen your application. Spots are competitive, so apply in the spring of your junior year.
- Don't wait until senior year to get in shape. The CFA is challenging, and academy life is even more demanding. Regular physical training—running, strength, and endurance—will prepare you for both the application process and what comes after.
- Meeting the minimum requirements isn't enough. The academies are highly selective, and you'll be competing against top students nationwide. Strengthen every part of your application—academics, leadership, athletics, service, and character.
- Many nominating authorities require in-person interviews. Set up a practice interview with the college counselor so you can speak confidently about your goals, leadership experiences, and reasons for wanting to serve.
- Academy admissions officers and congressional staff are looking for future leaders with integrity and a genuine desire to serve. Be authentic in your essays and interviews. Know your "why"—and let it come through clearly.

# FINANCIAL AID



# TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

College can be expensive and many families rely on financial aid to help cover the costs. However, there are many different types of aid ranging from grants to loans. Some aid is offered to meet a family's financial need, while other aid is awarded on the basis of merit. Therefore, it is important to look into all of your options to see which aid you qualify for.

## FEE WAIVERS

Many institutions offer fee waivers to help eligible families during the college application process. This includes CollegeBoard, ACT, Common App, and many colleges and universities. However, waivers are restricted to families who meet specific eligibility requirements including:

- Enrolled in a program for the economically disadvantaged (for example, a federally funded program such as GEAR UP or Upward Bound). Note: If the student participates in a program, but is not economically disadvantaged, they are not eligible for a fee waiver.
- Resides in a foster home, is a ward of the state, or is homeless.
- Family receives low-income public assistance or lives in federally subsidized public housing.
- Family's total annual income is at or below USDA levels for free or reduced-price lunches.

If you believe you might be eligible, please complete the [DWS Fee Waiver Form](#) and contact the college counselor. Eligibility will be verified and the college counselor will discuss next steps.

## FAFSA

All students and their families are highly encouraged to complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\) form](#) if they plan to apply for any type of financial aid. The 2027-2028 FAFSA will be released **October 1, 2026** and should be completed shortly thereafter with tax information from the 2025 tax year. Please note that this form must be completed by students AND a parent/legal guardian, regardless of who will be paying for college. If you have additional questions, you can reach out to the college counselor who can help you navigate this process.

After completing the FAFSA, it is a good idea to reach out to the financial aid offices at the schools you are considering. After all, completing the FAFSA is not always enough to receive a student aid offer. At many institutions you will also need to complete the college's financial aid application requirements. Then the college will evaluate your FAFSA information and provide a student aid offer. This offer will detail the costs of attending the college for an academic year and it will include any grants, scholarships, work-study funds, or loans you're eligible to receive.

## GRANTS

Federal grants are a form of financial aid that does not have to be repaid and are awarded based on financial need as determined through the FAFSA.

One of the most common grants is the federal **Pell Grant**, with the maximum Pell Grant award for the 2026–27 award year being \$7,395. However, a student's actual award will vary based on financial need, cost of attendance, and enrollment status. There is no minimum GPA required to qualify for a Pell Grant as eligibility is based entirely on financial need. The Pell Grant is renewable each year as long as the student continues to demonstrate need and remains enrolled, up to a lifetime limit of 12 semesters.

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are a form of financial aid that does not have to be repaid. They may be awarded based on academic achievement, athletic ability, leadership, artistic talent, community service, financial need, or other criteria established by the sponsoring organization.

Common types of scholarships include:

- **Institutional Scholarships:** Awarded directly by colleges and universities.
- **Merit-Based Scholarships:** Awarded for academic achievement, leadership, talent, or other accomplishments.
- **Need-Based Scholarships:** Awarded based on a family's demonstrated financial need.
- **State Scholarships:** State-funded programs such as Georgia's HOPE and Zell Miller Scholarships.
- **Local Scholarships:** Awarded by local businesses, civic organizations, foundations, churches, and community groups.
- **Private Scholarships:** Awarded by corporations, nonprofit organizations, and private foundations.
- **Athletic Scholarships:** Awarded by colleges to recruited student-athletes.
- **Niche Scholarships:** Awarded to students who meet specific eligibility criteria related to their interests, activities, affiliations, intended major, or other unique characteristics.

Applying broadly across multiple scholarship categories can increase a student's opportunities for financial assistance. Students are encouraged to

frequently reference scholarship lists and opportunities provided by the college counselor throughout the year.

## WORK-STUDY

The Federal Work-study program provide part-time employment for students to help pay for their education. Students can work on campus or off campus and earn money to pay for their educational expenses. The amount of funding you receive depends on your financial need (as determined by the FAFSA), the amount of funding your school receives, and when you apply.

Once you've been awarded work-study funding, you can search for a job on or off-campus through your school's financial aid office. Jobs are typically part-time and can include work in the library, administrative offices, or community service organizations. You'll earn an hourly wage that is at least equal to the federal minimum wage. However, the total amount you can earn is determined by your work-study award, the number of hours you work, and your hourly wage. You can use this money to pay for college expenses such as tuition, fees, books, and living expenses.

## LOANS

Loans are financial aid that must be paid back with interest. Unlike grants and scholarships, loans create debt — so it's important to understand what you're agreeing to before you sign.

There are two broad types of college student loans: federal and private.

**FEDERAL LOANS:** Federal loans are offered by the U.S. government. They typically carry lower interest rates than private loans and come with stronger borrower protections, including options to adjust your monthly payment based on your income after graduation. However, it's important to note that not all federal loans are eligible for all repayment plans, and plans are subject to change. For example, the SAVE Plan — a popular income-driven repayment option — was eliminated in 2026 and replaced with a new option called the Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP). For example, the SAVE Plan — a popular income-driven repayment option — was eliminated in 2026 and replaced with a new option called the Repayment Assistance Plan (RAP). Students and parents taking on federal loans should plan to stay informed about

repayment options throughout the life of the loan. For most families, federal loans should be the first — and ideally only — borrowing option explored. There are three common types:

- **Direct Subsidized Loans** are available to undergraduate students who demonstrate financial need. The government pays the interest on these loans while students are enrolled at least half-time, which means the balance doesn't grow while students are in school. These are the most favorable federal loans available.
- **Direct Unsubsidized Loans** are available to undergraduate and graduate students regardless of financial need. Interest begins accumulating immediately — including while students are still in school — so the balance students owe at graduation will be higher than what students originally borrowed if they don't make interest payments along the way. Annual borrowing limits for undergraduates are modest by design: dependent first-year students may borrow up to \$5,500, rising to \$7,500 by junior year, with a lifetime cap of \$31,000 for dependent students. These limits exist across all four years of college, so these federal loans alone will rarely cover the full cost of attendance without additional financial aid.
- **Parent PLUS Loans** are federal loans taken out by a parent — not the student — to help cover costs that other aid doesn't meet. Parents, rather than students, are responsible for repayment. Starting Fall 2026, Parent PLUS Loans have new borrowing caps: \$20,000 per year per student, with a lifetime limit of \$65,000 per student.

**PRIVATE LOANS:** Private loans are offered by banks, credit unions, and other lenders. They can have fixed or variable interest rates set by the lender based on the borrower's creditworthiness, and they may allow students and parents to borrow amounts beyond federal loan limits.

While federal loans are generally the better starting point for most students, offering more flexible repayment options, lower interest rates, and stronger

borrower protections, private loans serve an important role. If you have exhausted all federal loan options and still need additional funding, private loans can be a viable alternative — though interest rates, repayment terms, and borrower protections vary significantly by lender and are worth comparing carefully before committing.

## **BORROWING WISELY**

A commonly cited rule of thumb among financial aid experts is to not to borrow more in total loans than a student expects to earn in their first year after graduation. A student planning to enter a field with a \$40,000 starting salary who borrows \$60,000 in loans will face significant financial strain. Before borrowing, research typical starting salaries in your intended field and use that as a reality check on how much debt is manageable.

If you have questions about loans and your specific situation, your college's financial aid office is your best resource. Families are also highly encouraged to consult with a financial advisor for personalized guidance.



# STATE AID SCHOLARSHIPS

The state of Georgia provides a generous scholarship program for Georgia residents consisting of the HOPE, Zell Miller, and DREAMS Scholarships. This program helps many Georgia students avoid student loans and graduate debt-free if they attend a college or university in the state of Georgia.

## GAFUTURES

HOPE, Zell Miller, and DREAMS Scholarships are administered by the Georgia Student Finance Commission (GSFC) and its student-facing platform, [GAFutures](#), which students can use to track eligibility, manage applications, and access financial assistance information. Beginning sophomore year, students are encouraged to log in to GAFutures regularly to monitor their HOPE GPA eligibility status.

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Students can establish eligibility for HOPE, Zell Miller, and DREAMS by completing the [FAFSA](#) (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). However, because the FAFSA must be completed annually, failing to renew it each year could put scholarship eligibility at risk.

To protect HOPE and Zell Miller eligibility throughout a student's college career, students and parents are also strongly encouraged to complete the [GSFAPP](#) (Georgia State Financial Application). Unlike the FAFSA, the GSFAPP only needs to be completed once

and is valid for up to 10 years. This means HOPE and Zell Miller aid will not lapse simply because a student forgot to renew a FAFSA in a future year. The GSFAPP can also be completed easily in under 5 minutes, making it a simple but important step for any student considering an in-state college or university.

Students interested in DREAMS, however, must complete the FAFSA every year — even if they used the GSFAPP for HOPE and Zell Miller. Because DREAMS is need-based, the FAFSA is required annually to determine eligibility. Students who skip the FAFSA — even those who believe they may not qualify for need-based aid — could miss out on DREAMS funding they are entitled to receive.

## HOPE GPA

It is important to note that HOPE and Zell Miller eligibility is based on a four-year HOPE GPA that can differ from a student's DWS GPA. Eligibility is determined upon graduation, meaning a student's senior year grades are critical to guaranteeing eligibility for both HOPE and Zell Miller.

Unlike a student's DWS GPA, the high school HOPE GPA calculation only includes core academic courses including English, mathematics, science, social studies, and foreign language. However, Senate Bill 556, signed into law in May 2026, expanded the HOPE GPA calculation to include advanced fine arts courses with a standardized end-of-course assessment written and graded by a third party. Students who take qualifying courses such as **AP Drawing** or **AP 2-D Art & Design** will have those grades factored into their HOPE eligibility, just like other advanced academic coursework.

## HOPE SCHOLARSHIP

The **HOPE Scholarship** pays a percentage of tuition at public universities in Georgia and a portion of tuition at eligible private colleges and universities in Georgia. The percentage covered is determined annually by the Georgia legislature and can vary from year to year, so families should check current award amounts at [GAFutures](#) rather than assuming a fixed dollar amount.

While the scholarship is primarily designed for students completing undergraduate degrees, some students may begin utilizing the scholarship for graduate level coursework. Starting July 1, 2026, students with unused HOPE eligibility who earn a bachelor's degree and begin a graduate program within 18 months may be able to apply remaining HOPE funds toward graduate study. However, students who participated in state-funded dual enrollment in high school should be aware that those hours may reduce the number of HOPE-eligible hours available for graduate study under this new provision.

To be eligible for the HOPE Scholarship, students must meet the following requirements:

- Be a legal resident of Georgia
- Graduate with a minimum **3.0 HOPE GPA**
- Have completed the FAFSA or the GSFAPP
- Be enrolled in an eligible college or university in Georgia
- Maintain a minimum 3.0 GPA in college

## ZELL MILLER SCHOLARSHIP

Though the State of Georgia has increased the value of the HOPE Scholarship in recent years, students who qualify for the **Zell Miller Scholarship** receive even greater financial support—covering 100% of standard tuition at eligible public colleges and universities in Georgia. Because of this significant benefit, students

who are close to qualifying are strongly encouraged to aim for Zell Miller eligibility.

To qualify for the Zell Miller Scholarship, students must meet the following criteria:

- Be a legal resident of Georgia
- Graduate with a minimum **3.7 HOPE GPA**
- Have completed the FAFSA or the GSFAPP
- Be enrolled in an eligible college or university in Georgia
- Score at least a 1200\* on the SAT or a 25\* on the ACT in a single test sitting
- Maintain a minimum 3.3 GPA in college

\*It's important to note that GAFutures does not accept superscored SAT or ACT results for Zell Miller eligibility. Only the highest composite score from one test date is considered. Students may continue retaking the SAT or ACT through their senior year, as long as they meet the required score before graduation.

## DREAMS SCHOLARSHIP

The (Dedicating Resources to Educationally Advance More Students) **DREAMS Scholarship** is Georgia's newest and largest need-based college financial aid program, signed into law in May 2026. Unlike HOPE and Zell Miller, which are merit-based awards, DREAMS is designed to help students who demonstrate financial need, and grades are NOT a factor in eligibility.

DREAMS is available to any eligible undergraduate student — not just incoming freshmen — meaning current college students may also qualify beginning with the 2026-2027 academic year.

To be eligible for the DREAMS Scholarship, a student must:

- Be a legal resident of Georgia
- Complete the FAFSA
- Be pursuing an undergraduate degree at a USG or TCSG institution
- Be enrolled at least half-time (6+ semester hours)
- Not yet have earned a bachelor's or first professional degree
- Demonstrate unmet financial need
- Maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA in college

Eligible students may receive up to \$3,000 per academic year, though no student may receive more than his or her actual unmet financial need. Students may receive DREAMS funding for a maximum of 8 semesters or 12 quarters.

Because DREAMS is designed to fill the gap that remains after other aid has been applied, it works hand in hand with HOPE and Zell Miller rather than replacing them. A student attending a public Georgia university who qualifies for Pell, HOPE, and DREAMS, for example, could potentially all of their tuition covered through the combination of these awards. Students are strongly encouraged to think of these programs together when building a college financial plan.

### MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY IN COLLEGE

Earning initial eligibility for any of these scholarships does not automatically guarantee students these funds throughout college. For HOPE and Zell Miller, the Georgia Student Finance Commission evaluates eligibility at periodic credit-hour checkpoints during college.

The [HOPE Scholarship](#) requires a minimum 3.0 calculated HOPE GPA at each checkpoint to maintain eligibility while the [Zell Miller Scholarship](#) requires a minimum 3.3 calculated HOPE GPA. Additional information on these checkpoints can be found on the GAFutures website.

To continue receiving the **DREAMS Scholarship**, students must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA and satisfactory academic progress in accordance with the same standards used for federal financial aid. DREAMS students are also required to complete a financial literacy course and remain engaged in paid or unpaid work at least part-time. (This work requirement can be satisfied through traditional employment, an internship or externship, volunteer work, or military service.)

All three state aid scholarships are typically applied directly to the student's college account by the financial aid office, reducing the tuition bill. This means eligible students are still responsible for housing, meals, fees, books, and other expenses unless they have additional scholarships or grants.

### GAINING HOPE ELIGIBILITY IN COLLEGE

Students who didn't qualify for the HOPE Scholarship after high school — or lost it during college — may have an opportunity to gain or regain eligibility in college.

Students can gain HOPE eligibility after completing 30 semester (or 45 quarter) credit hours of college coursework, as long as students have at least a 3.0 HOPE GPA and meet all other eligibility requirements. Students who don't qualify at that checkpoint, will have another chance after 60 semester (or 90 quarter) attempted hours.

Students who previously had HOPE but lost it, can regain it one time at a credit-hour checkpoint — either at 30, 60, or 90 attempted semester hours (or the equivalent in quarter hours) — provided the student's college HOPE GPA is back at 3.0 or higher. However, if a student loses HOPE a second time, they are no longer eligible to regain it.

Please explore the [GAFutures website](#) for additional explanations regarding HOPE eligibility and checkpoints in college.

# DWS v. HOPE GPA

|                                              | DWS GPA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | HOPE GPA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----|------|----|------|---|------|----|------|----|------|---|------|----|------|----|------|---|------|----|------|---|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|----------------|---|------|---|------|---|------|---|------|
| What grades are included in the calculation? | All grades earned during the students 9th through 12th grade years are calculated EXCEPT for physical education, study hall, and office assistants.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Only grades earned during the student’s 9th through 12th grade years in the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, social studies and foreign language. (AP Art will be considered, effective May 2026.)<br><br>Core subjects can include academic electives IF they are coded in these core subjects according to the Georgia Department of Education’s (GA DoE) guidelines. |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| How is this GPA calculated?                  | <p>The GPA is calculated using a 4.0 scale.</p> <p>In addition, the DWS GPA accounts for +/- grades and awards quality points accordingly.</p> <table><tr><th>Grade</th><th>Quality Points</th></tr><tr><td>A++</td><td>4.67</td></tr><tr><td>A+</td><td>4.33</td></tr><tr><td>A</td><td>4.00</td></tr><tr><td>A-</td><td>3.67</td></tr><tr><td>B+</td><td>3.33</td></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>3.00</td></tr><tr><td>B-</td><td>2.67</td></tr><tr><td>C+</td><td>2.33</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>2.00</td></tr><tr><td>C-</td><td>1.67</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>0.00</td></tr></table> | Grade                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Quality Points | A++ | 4.67 | A+ | 4.33 | A | 4.00 | A- | 3.67 | B+ | 3.33 | B | 3.00 | B- | 2.67 | C+ | 2.33 | C | 2.00 | C- | 1.67 | F | 0.00 | <p>The GPA is calculated using a 4.0 scale.</p> <p>However, there is no recognition of +/- grades and instead +/- grades are equated to the corresponding letter grade.</p> <table><tr><th>Grade</th><th>Quality Points</th></tr><tr><td>A</td><td>4.00</td></tr><tr><td>B</td><td>3.00</td></tr><tr><td>C</td><td>2.00</td></tr><tr><td>F</td><td>0.00</td></tr></table> | Grade | Quality Points | A | 4.00 | B | 3.00 | C | 2.00 | F | 0.00 |
| Grade                                        | Quality Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| A++                                          | 4.67                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| A+                                           | 4.33                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| A                                            | 4.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| A-                                           | 3.67                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| B+                                           | 3.33                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| B                                            | 3.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| B-                                           | 2.67                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| C+                                           | 2.33                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| C                                            | 2.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| C-                                           | 1.67                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| F                                            | 0.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| Grade                                        | Quality Points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| A                                            | 4.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| B                                            | 3.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| C                                            | 2.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| F                                            | 0.00                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| What about weights for advanced coursework?  | <p>An additional quality point (1.0) is awarded for completion of an Advanced Placement (AP) course.<br/>(Example: A “B” in an AP class will be calculated as a 4.00.)</p> <p>An additional half quality point (0.5) is awarded for completion of an accelerated (AC) course.<br/>(Example: A “B” in an AC class will be calculated as a 3.50.)</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <p>An additional half quality point (0.5) is added to Advanced Placement (AP) and Dual Enrollment grades of B,C,D, and F only. (No class can earn above 4.0.)<br/>(Example: A “B” in an AP class will be calculated as a 3.50.)</p> <p>Accelerated (AC) classes do not get any additional weight.<br/>(Example: A “B” in an AC class will remain a 3.00.)</p>                          |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |
| What if I failed a class?                    | The DWS GPA calculation will count all attempts of the same course, if taken more than once.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | The High School HOPE Scholarship GPA calculation will count all attempts of the same course, if taken more than once.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                |     |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |    |      |   |      |    |      |   |      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |       |                |   |      |   |      |   |      |   |      |



# WHERE TO FIND SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships can be a great way to help pay for the rising costs of college. There are many scholarships available, and students should take advantage of all the resources available to them to find them.

## SEARCH ENGINES

Many begin their search for scholarships online. There are many scholarship search engines available online, such as [Fastweb](#), [Scholarships.com](#), and [Cappex](#). These websites allow students to create a profile and search for scholarships that match their qualifications and interests.

In addition, the college counselor keeps a list of popular scholarships that include both local and national scholarship opportunities. Students are often recommended to start here as this list includes scholarships that other DWS students have earned and it is regularly updated with deadlines and application information.

## LOCAL SCHOLARSHIPS

Listen up for local scholarships in the community. The college counselor will regularly inform students of many of these opportunities. However, if students stumble across an opportunity on their own, they should inform the college counselor so that it can be shared with other DWS students in the future. This helps us maintain opportunities for future students.

Keep in mind that many local organizations such as community foundations, civic groups, and businesses offer scholarships that our students have found great success with in the past. These scholarships may generally be smaller in amount, but they can add up and help reduce the overall cost of college.

## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

Once you have been accepted into a college or university, you can also reach out to their financial aid office. Many colleges and universities have scholarships available specifically for their students. These scholarships may be based on academic performance, financial need, or other criteria.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU WIN A SCHOLARSHIP

Congratulations! Celebrate this accomplishment and make sure you complete any necessary follow up paperwork to ensure you receive your scholarship. And be sure to notify the college counselor so that this information can be accurately logged in school records tracking award amounts and accomplishments. And this could help future students learn about the opportunity.

# MAKING A DECISION



# THE WAITLIST

When you finally hear back from a college's admissions office, you often expect a definitive answer: acceptance or rejection. However, some students are informed that they are in the in-between: the waitlist. Getting waitlisted from a college can be a stressful experience, but it's important to remember that it's not the end of the road.

First of all, remember that being waitlisted from a college does not mean you are not qualified or deserving of admission. It simply means that the college has more qualified applicants than they have space for at the moment. If fewer students accept their offers than the college planned for, the admissions department will begin sending out acceptances to students on their waitlist.

By following these steps and staying positive, you can increase your chances of being admitted off the waitlist or finding success at another college.

## STEP 1: ACCEPT A SPOT ON THE WAITLIST

If you are interested in attending the college, you should formally accept a spot on the waitlist as soon as possible. This will ensure that you remain in consideration for admission.

## STEP 2: EVALUATE YOUR OPTIONS

Be aware that the waitlist is unpredictable and do not count on an acceptance. If you are waitlisted from your first choice, you need to decide on your

second-choice option from the schools you have been accepted to. And if you haven't heard back from the waitlist college by May 1st, you will need to go ahead and submit a deposit to your backup school to secure your spot. This will ensure that you have a college to attend if you are not admitted off the waitlist.

## STEP 3: FOLLOW UP

Reach out to the admissions office to express your continued interest in attending the college and ask about the waitlist process. You can also ask about the likelihood of being admitted off the waitlist and what the timeline for that process looks like.

You may be able to submit additional materials to strengthen your application, such as an updated transcript or resume, additional test scores, or a letter of continued interest. Check with the admissions office to see if this is an option and what materials they would like to see. Keep your college counselor informed so that she can help you gather any additional paperwork and help you navigate this process.

#### **STEP 4: WAIT PATIENTLY**

Be patient while waiting for a decision from the college. Admissions offices may not know how many spots will open up on the waitlist until AFTER the May 1st decision deadline and some students don't hear a definitive answer until July. In the meantime, focus on finishing your senior year strong and preparing for college, regardless of where you end up attending.

#### **STEP 5: MAKE YOUR DECISION**

You may have to decide if your second choice school will be a better option than staying on the waitlist as long as possible. Some schools will notify you in May or June if your application has ultimately been rejected while others may not finish notifying waitlisted candidates until July.

Would you rather hold out hope of getting accepted? Or would you rather move forward with the school that accepted you? Then you can solidify your housing, find a roommate, attend orientation, and get excited about another great option. The choice is yours! Know that the college counselor is here to support you as you navigate these choices.





# TRANSFER PATHWAYS

Not being admitted to a first-choice school is disappointing, but it does not have to be the end of the road. For students whose dream school remains a goal, transferring after one or two years at another institution remains a great alternative.

## TRANSFER ADMISSIONS

College admissions offices evaluate transfer applicants very differently than they evaluate high school seniors. High school GPA, class rank, extracurriculars, and standardized test scores typically matter very little or not at all. Instead, transfer admissions decisions focus on college GPA, completed credit hours, intended major, and the rigor and relevance of coursework already taken. Understanding each target school's specific requirements and preferences early — ideally before a student even begins their first semester of college — is what separates students who transfer successfully from those who are caught off guard.

## CHOOSING A STARTING COLLEGE

Students planning to transfer should choose their initial college with that goal in mind. While most accredited colleges and universities can serve as a launching pad, some offer distinct structural advantages.

Certain schools have formal pathway programs that create a more direct or preferential route to a partner institution. For example, Florida State University's ASPIRE - TSC2FSU program provides a seamless

transfer experience for students who earn an Associate in Arts degree at Tallahassee State College before pursuing a bachelor's degree at FSU. This program offers one-on-one advising, FSU-specific academic maps for each major, and opportunities to engage with FSU students and faculty on the FSU campus while still enrolled at TSC.

Even without a formalized pathway program, geography often plays a role in students' decisions. Some students choose an institution near their target university so they can acclimate to the college town, build connections, and develop familiarity with the campus culture before they officially arrive. The University of North Georgia's Oconee Campus, located in Watkinsville just minutes south of Athens, has long served as a common launching point for students planning to transfer to UGA.

While this strategy works well academically, it comes with a social trade-off worth considering honestly. Students at nearby feeder schools sometimes describe the experience as watching college life from the outside — close enough to see everything, but not yet part of it. Attending sporting events, social

gatherings, or even just spending time in their dream school's college town can make the wait feel longer rather than shorter, as though standing outside a party you haven't been invited to yet.

For this reason, many students find it more fulfilling to choose a starting college they could genuinely see themselves attending for all four years — not just a temporary stop. A school with its own vibrant campus culture, Greek life, athletics, student organizations, and social scene allows students to be fully present and invested rather than in a holding pattern. Done right, this approach means that if the transfer plan changes — grades fall short, the target school loses its appeal, or a student simply falls in love with where they are — there is no fallback scenario to lament. There is only the next chapter.

Regardless, any student actively considering a transfer path should choose an institution where they feel confident they can perform at a high level and, ideally, do so affordably.

The goal at the first institution is simple: earn strong grades in challenging, transferable coursework that aligns with the intended major at the target school. Strong performance from day one is essential — there is no "warm-up" semester.

## TRANSFER RESOURCES

Students considering any transfer path should research the pre-transfer advising resources available at their target college and meet with an academic advisor at their starting college as early as possible. Students must strategically map out which courses will transfer and apply toward their intended degree program. The DWS college counselor is also available to help students think through their transfer strategy and navigate dual enrollment course selection or initial course selection for their freshman year.

## UGA TRANSFER

The University of Georgia is one of the most sought-after transfer destinations for Georgia students, and for good reason. As one of the nation's top public research universities, UGA combines a strong academic reputation, an unmatched collegiate atmosphere in Athens, and exceptional value for in-state students — including eligibility for HOPE and Zell Miller scholarship funds, which may continue to apply for qualifying transfer students.

UGA evaluates transfer applicants primarily on college GPA and the number of transferable credit hours completed at the time of application. Students with **30 to 59 completed transfer hours** are typically considered with a **minimum 3.50 GPA**, while students with **60 or more completed hours** are typically considered with a **minimum 3.20 GPA**.

UGA's transfer hour calculation, however, is more specific than many students expect. AP credits only count toward the threshold if they appear on a college transcript with a course designation and credit hours clearly identified, and CLEP credit is not accepted under any circumstances. Because all credit hours must be completed before the March application deadline, dual enrollment coursework is typically the most reliable way for high school students to build the required 30 credits in time.

Beyond GPA and hours, UGA emphasizes that the most important factor in transfer consideration is how well a student has prepared for their intended major. Coursework directly related to the target program — and strong grades in those courses especially — carries significant weight. Students should also be aware that some high-demand majors at UGA carry their own specific prerequisites and review processes, and researching those requirements well before applying is essential. Students whose GPA falls in a secondary range — 3.30 to 3.49 with 30 to 59 hours, or 3.00 to 3.19 with 60 or more hours — may still be considered through a more detailed review of their purpose statement, grade trends, and coursework alignment with their intended major.

All GPA and credit thresholds are minimums for consideration, not guarantees. Transfer admission to UGA is made on a space-available basis, and in practice the bar is meaningfully higher than the stated floor. For Fall 2025, the average GPA among admitted transfer students was **3.71**. Demand is growing as well: for Fall 2026, approximately 4,600 students applied — more than 20% more than the prior year — and UGA offered only admission to roughly 2,900 of them. Therefore, students should be prepared with strong alternatives if their UGA transfer plans do not succeed.

## GA TECH TRANSFER

The Georgia Institute of Technology is one of the most prestigious public engineering and technology universities in the country and, like UGA, offers an exceptional value for in-state students. Transfer students make up roughly 20% of Georgia Tech's undergraduate enrollment, and the university actively supports multiple structured pathways designed to help students get there.

Transfer admission to Georgia Tech is competitive but more accessible than freshman admission. In 2025, 6,383 students applied for transfer admission and 1,365 enrolled, with Georgia residents admitted at a 30% rate compared to 17% for non-Georgia applicants. The average GPA among enrolled transfer students was **3.78**, and the average number of completed credit hours at the time of enrollment was 49. Importantly, 71% of incoming transfer students applied as part of a formal transfer pathway program — a figure that underscores just how central these programs are to a successful Georgia Tech transfer strategy.

GPA requirements at Georgia Tech vary by college. The minimum GPA requirement is **3.3** for College of Computing and College of Engineering applicants, and **3.0** for the College of Design, College of Sciences, Ivan Allen College of Liberal Arts, and Scheller College of Business applicants. Engineering applicants should also be aware of an additional math and lab science GPA component: students pursuing high-demand engineering majors such as Aerospace, Biomedical, Mechanical, Electrical, Computer, Industrial, and Chemical & Biomolecular must meet the **3.3** minimum in both cumulative GPA and combined math/lab science GPA. As with UGA, these are floors rather than targets — the average overall GPA for Georgia Tech's 2025 transfer class was **3.7**.

To be considered as a transfer applicant, students must have completed a minimum of **30 semester credit hours** before their term's course requirements deadline. However, dual enrollment and AP credit do not count for most transfer pathways. In addition, Georgia Tech places significant weight on preparation for the intended major. Completing the specific course requirements for the target major by the application deadline is required, not optional, and students with Georgia Tech in mind should map out those requirements before their first college semester begins.

The most reliable route to Georgia Tech for a student who was not admitted as a freshman is one of Georgia Tech's formal transfer pathway programs. Given that nearly three in four enrolled transfer students come through a pathway, students serious about Georgia Tech should identify and commit to a program early rather than attempting a general transfer without one.

**The Regents' Engineering Pathway (REP) Program**, established in 1986, allows students to complete 30 or more credit hours of engineering coursework at a participating University System of Georgia institution before transferring to Georgia Tech. REP students must earn a cumulative GPA of 3.3 or higher along with a combined math/lab science GPA of 3.3 or higher.

**The Dual Degree Engineering Program** offers a longer but distinctive path: students spend three years at a partner institution and two years at Georgia Tech, ultimately earning bachelor's degrees from both schools. This option suits students who want the full experience of a smaller college while still earning a Georgia Tech degree.

Additional pathway programs — including the Arts and Sciences Pathway, First Generation Pathway, and more — are available for students pursuing non-engineering colleges at Tech. Each has its own GPA requirements and deadlines, and students should review them carefully at [admission.gatech.edu](https://admission.gatech.edu).



# MAKING A FINAL DECISION

Once you know where you have been accepted, it becomes time to commit. Students are generally expected to commit by May 1st though some schools offer priority housing to students who commit sooner. However, this is a big decision and you can only commit to one school. Therefore, it is important that you take your time and are certain!

First of all, know there is no one single “right” answer. This is not a test. This is a choice and the right answer will vary from person-to-person depending on each person’s priorities.

However, it is a good idea to make sure you have considered all the factors that go into this decision. When you take a campus tour, you may “fall in love” with a university but, this feeling or emotion shouldn’t be the only factor you consider. View your choice in college like a relationship. You don’t just want to “love” it. You also need to make sure your college is a going to be a healthy fit for you.

As you assess all of your options, you should consider the following criteria:

## ACADEMIC

Does this school offer the program you are interested in? Will it adequately prepare you for your future career path? Will this academic program allow you to graduate in 4 years or less? Will they accept your AP credit or dual enrollment credit? Can you add a minor

or double major if you choose? Do they have other equally compelling programs if you choose to change your major later? If you don’t know what you want to study, do they have resources to help you explore potential career paths? If you need learning support resources, will they work with you? Do they have adequate networking opportunities to help you find a job when you graduate?

Remember that the primary purpose of college is to prepare you for a future career so make sure your choice in school can check that box!

## CAMPUS CULTURE

Does this school offer the social opportunities that will help you plug in and connect? Will you find personal satisfaction in this community?

Think about what these social opportunities might look like for you. Do you want Greek Life? Religious organizations? Close-knit learning communities? Division I athletics? Intramural sports? Other specialized interest groups?

Also think about other aspects of college culture like size and location. Will you get overwhelmed being just a number on a large campus or one of many in a giant lecture hall? Will a small school have enough social opportunities for you to find your niche? Will the surrounding area provide more opportunities for you (be it a big city with entertainment or a rural area with hikes and nature)? If your university connected you with a job after graduation, would you be satisfied staying in that area?

## FINANCES

This is one of the largest financial decisions of your life. Will you graduate debt-free? If not, how long will it take you to pay off any debt? If you do take on debt, will your future career provide a substantial salary that will allow you to pay off this debt quickly? Will you have to get a masters or doctorate for your field of study? And if so, how much more debt will this incur?

As much as we might not want finances to limit our opportunities, this is an important consideration. If you go into major debt for a 4-year experience, how will it affect the rest of your life? That said, be sure you have explored all possible ways to reduce any debt to free up your options.

## COMMITTING

Once you have evaluated all of these factors, you can come to a decision! This should be your final decision so make sure you have made up your mind. (Withdrawing a deposit after the fact negatively impacts our school's reputation with a university and could make it harder for future students to gain admittance.)

So once you have decided you will submit your enrollment deposit, notify the college counselor, and begin preparing for your future!

