# TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.............................................................................................................3

SELECTING A COLLEGE..............................................................................................4  
  Resources in Career Center......................................................................................5  
  Colleges Whose Representatives Visit State College Area High School..................6  
  Making a College Comparison Chart......................................................................7-8

CORRESPONDING WITH A COLLEGE.........................................................................9  
  Sample Letter / Email Requesting Admissions Materials......................................10  
  Sample Letter Withdrawing an Application............................................................11  
  Sample Letter Regretting Acceptance....................................................................11

COMPLETING AN APPLICATION..................................................................................12

REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION FROM TEACHERS.................13  
  Counselor Letter of Recommendation................................................................14  
  Sample Student Resume..........................................................................................15

WRITING A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS ESSAY..............................................................16  
  Guidelines................................................................................................................16  
  A Sampling of College Application Essay Topics..................................................17  
  Sample Student Essays..........................................................................................17-20

ARRANGING YOUR COLLEGE VISIT.........................................................................21

INTERVIEWING AT A COLLEGE..................................................................................22  
  Designing an Interview Question.........................................................................23

FINANCING YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION...............................................................24  
  Major Sources of Financial Aid............................................................................24  
  Types of Financial Aid...........................................................................................25-28  
  Financial Aid Checklist/Timeline...........................................................................29-30  
  Financial Aid Websites..........................................................................................31  
  Financial Aid Worksheet.......................................................................................32

APPENDICES..................................................................................................................33  
  College Admissions Timeline for Juniors.............................................................34-35  
  College Admissions Timeline for Seniors.............................................................36-38  
  Military Academies – ROTC Information.............................................................39-40  
  Student Athlete Information..................................................................................40-43  
  Terms and Definitions............................................................................................44-48

REFERENCES..................................................................................................................49
INTRODUCTION

This booklet was prepared for students and their parents to assist them through the preliminary steps of the college admissions process. In it you will find both general guidelines for college planning as well as specific resources available to you at the State College Area High School North Counseling Center. Remember that admission procedures vary from college to college. Therefore, questions regarding procedures at a college should be addressed to that college’s admissions office.

Official information about your college applications is handled by the High School North Counseling Center located in room 505. The phone number for the North Counseling Center is 231-1130. All requests for official transcripts must be initiated in this office. The term Career Center refers specifically to the section of the Counseling Center which houses reference materials on college and career selections.

The authors wish to acknowledge North Counseling Center staff for their art work, Steve Guthoff and Jack McCurdy for editing, Cindy Way for her help with the sections Arranging Your College Visits and Interviewing At A College, Katie Tenny for information in ‘Corresponding With Colleges’, Dave Lintal and Chris Weakland for Student Athlete information, Polly McWilliams, Advanced Placement English teacher, for her students’ essays, and Linda Malgieri for formatting and editing this booklet.

This booklet was made possible through a mini-grant in 1986 from the Curriculum and Staff Development Office of the State College Area School District. This booklet is updated every year.

COUNSELORS FOR THE CLASS OF 2013

Steve Guthoff  A-K
Jack McCurdy  L-Z
SELECTING A COLLEGE

Gathering information about colleges should involve a methodical, planned search. Before making this decision, you should first review your interests, abilities, motivations, and personality. No one college is for everyone. You want to select a college that most appropriately meets your needs.

You may wish to seek comments, advice and/or supplemental information about colleges from school personnel, family, friends, neighbors, and persons working in the field of your career interest. Keep in mind that the opinions of others MUST be adapted to your plans and needs.

When selecting a college, think about the following areas:

**Entrance Requirements** - These may include the number of high school credits, scores on tests, such as the SAT’s, and possibly your performance during a college interview. Note that some colleges (or colleges with a university) have different high school requirements. For example, Penn State’s Eberly College of Science requires 1/2 unit of trigonometry in high school.

**Geographic Location**

**Cost** - When figuring total cost, include tuition, room & board, books, computers, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses such as clothing and entertainment.

**Majors Offered** - Does the school offer a broad liberal arts program where you may sample courses from a large number of fields? Does it offer specialized programs, or both?

**Type of College** - You may select from two-year schools, junior colleges, colleges, universities, and technical and trade schools. Within each category you will find both public and private schools.

**Coed vs. Single Sex**

**Campus Facilities**

**Campus Activities**

**Financial Aid**
RESOURCES IN CAREER CENTER

Many resources are available to you to help you make your college selection. Following you will find a list of the materials available in the Career Center and the school library, as well as a list of college representatives who visit the high school each year.

**Armed Service Material** – These books and pamphlets focus on all branches of the service, including ROTC information, military academy information, enlistment information, and the scholarships/programs offered by the military.

**College and Technical School Guides** – These guides present a comprehensive listing of accredited two and four-year colleges and technical schools. A brief description is provided and usually includes the address of the school, the enrollment, the type of school, admission selectivity, cost, campus life, majors offered, and other pertinent information.

**College Materials** – These contain applications and small brochures on many Pennsylvania colleges and out-of-state schools. Students may review the information in the Career Center.

**Common Application** – Many colleges encourage the use of the Common Application. This application is completed only once and uploaded to each college the student is applying to. This simplifies the application process. Over 400 colleges participate in this service. The application is also available online at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and can be submitted electronically. Paper applications are available in the North Counseling Office but web applications are recommended.

**Individual College and Technical School Catalogs** – These books, which are arranged alphabetically, focus on one college or technical school. They cover specific admissions requirements, financial aid, specific courses required, etc. A student may check these out overnight. If a student writes to a particular college and requests it, a catalog will be sent to the student’s home.

**Looking Ahead Brochure** – In late August, a brochure is sent to all parents/guardians of students in the 9th – 12th grades. This brochure informs students and parents about testing dates and deadlines, financial aid sessions, and college and trade school visitations. Advice about post-secondary planning and test descriptions are included.

**Penn State/Penn College Application Materials** – Penn State bulletins, applications, (provisional, non-degree, regular) and individual college majors and campus information are available in the Career Center; however, we encourage you to apply online.

**Scholarship Information** – General and college specific scholarship information is available in the Career Center including the State College Area High School Scholarship Booklet.

**Study Guides** – These guides focus on how to prepare for the SAT, SAT SUBJECT TESTS, ACT, ASVAB, and the Advanced Placement exams. These books may be used in the Career Center, and some of them are available for overnight loan through the school library.

**Trade and Technical Schools** – The career center offers pamphlets and school catalogs on many technical and trade schools.
COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES WHO VISITED
STATE COLLEGE AREA HIGH SCHOOL
DURING THE 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR

Alfred University
Bloomsburg University
Bucknell University
Bryn Athyn College
California University of PA
Carnegie Mellon University
Central Penn University
Clarion University of PA
Colgate University
Delaware Valley College
Eastern Mennonite University
Edinboro University of PA
Franklin & Marshall College
George Mason University
Gettysburg College
High Point University
Indiana University of PA
Ithaca College
Juniata College
Kenyon College
Lehigh University
Lock Haven University of PA
Lycoming College
Mansfield University of PA
Messiah College
Mt. Aloysius College
Penn State Schreyer Honors College
Pennsylvania College of Technology
Saint Francis University
Seton Hill University
Shippensburg University of PA
South Hills School of Business & Technology
US Army / ROTC
US Coast Guard Academy
US Marine Corps / ROTC
US Navy / ROTC
University of Alabama
University of Pittsburgh - Johnstown
Washington & Jefferson College
Wesleyan College
Westminster College
West Point Military Academy

• Parents and students are welcome at these visits.

• Students can be excused from class for these visits. Please obtain a pass from the Counseling Office.
MAKING A COLLEGE COMPARISON CHART

After you have narrowed your choices to a few schools, a chart can help you make a comparison among them. While most charts will contain the same items such as the tests the schools require, the application fees and the academic calendar, you should also include areas which are of special interest to you. For example, musicians may be particularly concerned with the quality and availability of practice rooms and will want to design a chart to include these areas. Adding a rating scale can also increase your ability to evaluate the differences among the colleges.

Following is a portion of the comparison chart that was used by State High football players. Other examples are available in commercial publications such as Peterson’s Guide to College Admissions, or can be found online at sites such as www.actstudent.org/pdf/comparison.

**State College Athletics Selection Guidelines** - Rate the items listed below on a 5 (highest) - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1 (lowest) basis in choosing the school which is “best” for you, after your visit! Choose the school where you can best achieve your academic, athletic, and social goals.

### ACADEMIC ITEMS TO CONSIDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General academic reputation of school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specific reputation of your major</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(student/teacher ratio; accreditation)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Degree of difficulty of school generally, your major specifically</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Support</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Library (academic facilities)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduation rate (general and athletes)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### ATHLETIC ITEMS TO CONSIDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Caliber, quality, reputation of school in your sport</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity to start by the sophomore year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media exposure (press, TV, radio)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Type/character of coach (years on the job)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Caliber of school and conference</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Quality of prevention and/or care of injuries</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Nature of scholarship (full/partial)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilities for your sport</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to play other sports</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>System used compatible to your abilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Red shirt policy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time commitment in-season/off-season</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# COLLEGE COMPARISON WORKSHEET

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA TO CONSIDER</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
<th>COLLEGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong> - distance from home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Size</strong> - enrollment, physical size of campus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Environment</strong> - type of school (2 yr., 4 yr.), school setting (urban, rural)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Admissions Requirements</strong> - deadline, tests required, GPA, rank, average test scores, special requirements, notification</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academics</strong> - accreditation, your major offered, student/faculty ratio, class size, special requirements</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>College Expenses</strong> - room/board, tuition, estimated budget, application fee, deposits</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Aid</strong> - required forms, deadlines, scholarships available</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Housing</strong> - types/size of rooms, residence hall requirements, availability, food plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Facilities</strong> - academic, recreational, medical, social, other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities</strong> - clubs, organizations, Greek life, athletics, intramurals, others</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Campus Visits</strong> - when, special opportunities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CORRESPONDING WITH A COLLEGE

There are numerous reasons why you may wish to correspond with a college. After you have narrowed your choices to a few schools that meet your criteria, you will want to contact those schools for catalogs and admissions materials. After you have submitted an application, you may have a question about its status or you may want to make sure all your materials have been received. Later, you may decide to withdraw your application or regret an acceptance.

Whenever you correspond with a college, remember to make your letter/message brief, clear and concise. Keep the language and terminology professional – not ‘text’ language. It is also important to use a professional email address. Using your school district address would be appropriate; however an email address like Sexygirl123@whatever.com is an example of an inappropriate email address. Begin by identifying yourself with your year in high school, and your relationship with the institution. (Example: new applicant, transfer student, admitted Fall 2011). Next you should briefly state your request. Conclude the letter by thanking the reader for giving your letter/message attention. Keep copies of your correspondence.

Following are four examples of the types of letters/emails you may have occasion to write.

SAMPLE LETTERS / EMAILS

You should use a formal email style for all communication with colleges or universities. The following email format is considered standard when communicating formally with an institution.

Subject Line
-Always include a subject line in your message.
-Make sure the subject line is meaningful and descriptive.
-Messages without subject lines are also more likely to be identified and tagged as SPAM or deleted before being read by the recipient.
   Example: “Early Decision Question” or “Application Inquiry”

Greeting
-Use a formal salutation at the start of your email.
Example: “To Whom It May Concern: (skip 2 lines) I am interested in your Education major, and would like more information.”
Format
- Use the inverted pyramid form of writing. Your most important statements should appear in the first few sentences of your email. Follow up with pertinent details.
- Keep paragraphs short and to the point. Cut out superfluous language.
  Example: I am writing
- If your email is lengthy, use subheadings.
  Example: “Questions about Course Offerings” or “Residential Life on Campus”
- Ask for action. Let your recipient know what you need.
  Example: Please send me your Course Handbook for the 2012-2013 school year.
- Use the spell check after you are done typing.
- Re-read your email one last time to check for spelling or grammatical errors.

Closing
- Use a formal salutation to close your email.
  Example: “Sincerely, (skip 2 lines) John Smith”

Creating an Electronic Signature
- A signature file can provide useful information such as a mailing and email address, phone/fax number, website address, or other contact information.
- Four or five lines are about the maximum. The signature appears at the end of your email message. Your signature file is your electronic business card.
  Example: John Smith
  100 Town Square (next line)
  State College, PA. 16803 (next line)
  jes01@scasd.org (next line)
  (814) 237-1000

To create your signature in Gmail, do the following:
1. Open Gmail
2. In the upper right hand corner you’ll see “settings.” Click to open.
3. About halfway down the page is the spot to create your signature.
4. In the signature box, type the text you want to include in your signature.
5. Make sure to click on “save changes” before you leave the page.

Body of Email: Samples

Sample 1
To: admissions@psu.edu
Subject: Requesting a College Visit

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a senior at State College Area High School in State College, Pennsylvania, and will graduate in June 2013. I am interested in scheduling a college visit in September. If possible, I would like to sit in on a class, meet with a professor in the Science Department, take a tour, and eat a meal in the cafeteria.

I appreciate your consideration of this email.
Sample 2
To: admissions@psu.edu
Subject: Requesting Learning Disability Admissions Materials

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a student with a learning disability and am completing my junior year at State College Area High School in State College, Pennsylvania. I expect to graduate in June 2013, and I am now beginning my college search.

I have heard that (name of college) has an excellent program for students with learning disabilities. Please send me any relevant information about this learning-disabled support program.

Thank you for any assistance you may able to give me.

Sample 3
To: admissions@psu.edu
Subject: Withdrawing an Application

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a senior at State College Area High School in State College, Pennsylvania. My application for admission to your school has been filed with you, but I need to withdraw my application at this time.

Please accept my sincere thanks for your consideration.

Sample 4
To: admissions@psu.edu
Subject: Regretting Acceptance

To Whom It May Concern:

On (date of acceptance), I received notification of my acceptance at (name of college). I am very grateful for your consideration. However, my college plans have changed, and I want to promptly inform you that I will not be attending (name of college).

Thank you for your kindness and assistance.
COMPLETING AN APPLICATION

Guidelines for Completing a College Application

I. Read the directions carefully before you begin the application. If possible, review the entire form before you begin to write. If possible, download the entire form. If you have any questions about the directions or the form itself, contact the admissions office or your high school counselor for clarification. If you can apply online, please do.

II. Most institutions prefer that you use their web application. If you use a paper application, please type it or make sure you print neatly and use blue or black ink.

III. Make sure you have spelled everything correctly.

IV. Don’t leave any blank spaces on the form. For questions that do not apply to you, fill in the blank with N/A (not applicable) or with a dash.

V. When you have completed your application, follow exactly the directions for submitting it with other required admissions materials. For Penn State applicants, this includes requesting an electronic transfer of your transcript from the North Counseling Center.

VI. For other college applications, make sure you submit your admissions application along with a stamped, addressed envelope to the Counseling Center at least 15 working days before the due date. The return address should be the school address (not your home address). The school address is 653 Westerly Parkway, State College, PA 16801. Use an 9" X 12" envelope and 4 first-class stamps. This enables the secretary to process your high school transcript and gives your counselor and/or teacher enough time to write a recommendation for you, if necessary.

VII. Make sure you receive a receipt when you request your official transcript from the Counseling Center.

VIII. And finally, don’t forget to ask permission from the people whose names you list as references.

IX. Print out copies of your applications.
REQUESTING LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION
FROM TEACHERS

Letters of recommendation are required by many schools as part of your admissions materials. The person writing the recommendation usually uploads the letters directly to the institution. By following these guidelines, you can ensure their timely submission.

I. Ask the individuals if they are willing to write a positive letter of recommendation for you before you list their names.

II. Be considerate by asking for the letter at least three weeks in advance of the day it is due.

III. Waive your right to read the letter.

IV. Supply each writer with specific information about your accomplishments, strengths, activities, and goals. Copies of the INFORMATION FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION on the following page are available in the Counseling Center for this purpose. You may use this form or develop a personal data sheet of your own.

V. If necessary, supply the writer with a stamped envelope addressed to the institution or tell the writer to submit the recommendation to the North Counseling Office.

VI. As the deadline approaches, check to make sure the letter has been sent.

VII. Be sure to thank the people who wrote the letters for you.
COUNSELOR LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Counselor Composite Recommendation
In order to write an in-depth recommendation, your counselor will need specific information about you. Please provide the information requested, in as much detail as possible, on a separate sheet of paper. If you have completed a resume, provide your counselor with a copy.

• Be sure to provide your name, telephone number, and e-mail address.

• Describe your educational, career, or personal goals.
  ✓ If you have decided on a major field of concentration in college or a particular job, please relate how you arrived at your choice.

• What extra curricular activities have been the most meaningful to you?
  ✓ Please describe what you did.
  ✓ How long you have been involved.
  ✓ Any leadership positions you held.
  ✓ What you have learned from the experience.
  ✓ What impact you had on the activity.

• Have you been involved in any community service projects?
  ✓ Please explain for whom and where the service was given.
  ✓ What you did.
  ✓ How many hours you volunteered.
  ✓ How long a time overall.
  ✓ What you have learned from the experience.

• Have you had a part time job or jobs?
  ✓ Provide the name(s) of the employer or company.
  ✓ Describe the work you did.
  ✓ Give the number of hours worked per week.
  ✓ Tell the length of time employed.
  ✓ Explain what you have learned from the experience.

• Select three adjectives that describe you as a student and a person.
  ✓ Consider identifying your most admirable qualities.
  ✓ Identify strengths and weaknesses, or your interests and abilities.
  ✓ What sets you apart from other students?
  ✓ Explain your descriptors by providing elaborate examples.

• Please describe any additional information you would like included in your letter such as:
  ✓ Summer enrichment activities
  ✓ Special accomplishments and awards earned
  ✓ Learning enrichment activities
  ✓ Travel experiences
  ✓ PSU or other courses
  ✓ Family size
  ✓ Cultural background
  ✓ Crisis or difficult situations
✓ Have you had any unusual circumstances that might have had an impact on your school achievement?

**SAMPLE STUDENT RESUME**

Some colleges request a student resume. Examples may be found on the web, or an example of one can be found below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Home Address/Telephone No.</th>
<th>School Address/Telephone No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cell Phone number</td>
<td>State College Area High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email address</td>
<td>653 Westerly Parkway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State College, PA 16801</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(814) 231-1130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further information contact:
(Put your Counselor’s name here.)

**Educational and Career Goals**

**Academic Records**

- **Grade Point Average**

**Aptitude Test Records**

- **PSAT**: Date __________ Score - Verbal ______ Math ______ Writing ______
- **SAT**: Date __________ Score - Verbal ______ Math ______ Writing ______
- **Date __________ Score - Verbal ______ Math ______ Writing ______**

**SAT SUBJ TESTS**: Date __________ Subject/Score ______ Date __________ Subject/Score ______

**ACT**: Date __________ Score - ______ Score - ______

**Academic Awards and Recognition**

- Samples - Power of the PAWS (citizenship award based on teacher recommendation)
- Any/all awards or recognitions, athletic and academic, received 9th - 12th grade

**Extracurricular Activities**

- Activity, dates and a brief explanation

**Supplemental Education Enrichment Experiences**

- Summer activities (Penn State courses, mentorships, etc.)
- Travel experiences
- Employment (paid or volunteer)
- Community activities (clubs, organizations, church)
- Hobbies

**Special Skills or Interests not Mentioned Elsewhere**
The college essay is an important part of many college applications. It gives the admissions offices an opportunity to know more about you, your values, your goals, and your writing skills.

An overriding concern of admissions offices is that students do not take the importance of their essay seriously enough. This lack of regard is evidenced in both the content and presentation of the essay. Student writers are often guilty of these faults:

1. Not answering the questions
2. Writing one essay and then trying to adapt it to fit the essay topics of different schools
3. Submitting essays containing spelling, punctuation, and usage errors
4. Not organizing an answer or failing to develop ideas
5. Using careless language or slang

By avoiding these common errors, you can complete the essay with confidence and enhance your chances for admission. The following materials will help you. They include a list of guidelines for writing your essay, a list of essay topics, and four sample essays.

GUIDELINES

START EARLY
ANSWER THE QUESTION
PROOFREAD YOUR ESSAY
BE NEAT
BE HONEST AND SINCERE
KEEP YOUR AUDIENCE IN MIND
GIVE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES
A SAMPLING OF COLLEGE APPLICATION ESSAY TOPICS

I. We’re interested in the kind of positive risk-taking energy you would bring to our University. Please describe a time when you found the courage to step outside your comfort zone to do something unexpected and completely unlike you. Why did you take this risk? What have you learned from the experience? Bucknell University

II. Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you. Common Application

III. Tell us about how you might like to make a positive impact in the world through your studies at Penn State. Your answer should relate to your intended area of study, or to a possible area, if you are undecided. Schreyer Honors College, Penn State

IV. Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you. Common Application

V. Imagine you’re on the Admissions or Scholarship Committee. Tell us something about yourself that isn’t apparent from your academic records – something that will give us insight about you as an individual and might help in the Committee’s decision. University of Pittsburgh

SAMPLE STUDENT ESSAYS

The following three (3) samples are copies of the original essays submitted by State College High School students.

I. Essay question: A personal experience that has a special meaning for you.

The fresh snow whined under my weight as I stepped from my home. The beauty of the transformed world mystified the eye as the first snow glimmered in the approaching dawn. I clung to everything, psychologically dulling the blades of an indifferent world and giving me a glimpse of perfection. Hearing the high-pitched whimper of my dog, however, quickly drew me from this world of enchantment. He was growing old and had fallen ill, thus increasing the importance of our ever-shorter morning jaunts. As the garage door slowly rose, I made out his waggling tail through the condensing air. I ducked beneath the door and unclipped the chain. Rusty quickly raised his aging body, snorting at the subtle smell of wood smoke on the frigid air. He trotted behind me, apparently free from any pain, as I ventured into the world set before us. Hopeful, I decided on a longer route than the previous morning due to the endless beauty surrounding me. We walked a trail I had walked countless times before, what at the time looked like heaven unfolding before us as I remembered the days I had spent in these
woods as a child. I wondered at the days long lost, the days of carefree childhood pleasures. Perhaps the most enjoyable years of my life were already past, remaining only in the memories of the friend I now walked with, the trees bowing about me, and mind I possess. The woods I had known as a child I had now come to rediscover with my most beloved friend. Three quarters of the way along our planned course our pace began to slow, as Rusty began to show signs of tiring. I encouraged him to continue, regretting my decision to take a longer route and pausing often allowing him to rest. Kneeling, I ran my hands through his coarse hair, reminiscing of earlier walks with this dog who had raised me from a toddler. Falling snowflakes whispered on times long past as I stared into his distressed brown eyes. I calmly rose and began to walk. Not hearing the familiar footsteps behind me, I turned to see Rusty lying in the glistening snow watching intently as I left. Quickly returning to him I slid my hands beneath the seventy-pound body of my beloved friend, and not even noticing the weight, I pulled his shivering body to mine and began to walk. As I stepped from the woods, he whined gently in disapproval of my carrying him, while longingly gazing into the heaven we had just emerged from. The young hemlocks were bowed with the weight of the snow in what almost seemed reverence. I prayed that he may recover, and yet perhaps in my heart I knew that this was to be one of the last walks I would ever take with the animal I loved more than almost anyone I have ever known.

This essay was written by Robert Helt, Class of 1994, a student of Polly McWilliams, English teacher.

II. Essay Question: Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, or risk you have taken.

Memoir to the Right, Straight on Since Born

I didn’t wear conventional clothing until I was six. Before then I had something else up my sleeves, namely a frayed green T-shirt with matching shorts and a feathered cap. When I was young, I was not Ryan Vlastelica; I was Peter Pan. But this was no typical game of pretend. For the longest time, I responded only to “Peter,” and addressed my family as their respective characters. My mom was Wendy, my dad John, my sister Michael. Captain Hook was a tree in my backyard. Our battles consisted of my whapping him with a Nerf sword. Whenever people saw me engaged in a struggle for good against an oak, they were moved to tears.

My tree house was Captain Hook’s pirate ship. I remember one time I was up at the mast, trying to build up the courage to fly to safety. Eventually I did, soaring majestically for three feet before falling majestically to the ground narrowly escaping Hook’s evil clutches. Another astounding victory for Peter Pan.

One day I was flying around my living room while my parents were deciding what to do that summer. “Peter,” they asked, “where would you like to go for vacation?” I didn’t even need to think about it. “Well, Wendy,” I said, delaying my flight for a while (I also liked to pretend I was United Airlines), “I would like to go to Neverland.”

They looked at me in such a way that I knew that from then on the rest of my flights would be canceled. I tried to ask if what they were implying was true, but couldn’t get the words out. I ran out to the backyard and hid in my tree house, which, I suddenly noticed, was actually a tree house. Eventually my mom came out to talk to me. She explained that there wasn’t a real Neverland, there was no Captain Hook, no crocodile
with a clock in its belly. “But the real world can be fun, too,” she assured me. I
heard the same thing again that Christmas, when I found out about Santa Claus. Learning
the truth about Peter was worse though; Santa couldn’t even fly on his own. I was
devastated to learn there was no Peter Pan. Not even my playing him anymore. Now I
was just Ryan, which wasn’t nearly as much fun, especially now that I had to grow up.

When my family moved to Hong Kong a few years later, I received more
assurances that I would have fun. “You’ll learn all about new cultures and people,” they
told me. Eventually, I did. I experienced places and people that not even Peter Pan
himself could compete with. And they were all real, not part of my imagination. And
through it all I learned who I really was: Ryan Vlastelica.
Growing up was the smartest thing I ever did.

This essay was written by Ryan Vlastelica, class of 2004, a student of Polly McWilliams, English
teacher.

III. Essay question: If you could choose one person, past or present, real-life or
fictional, as your college roommate next year, who would it be and why?

The Road to be Taken

”Maybe I could...”
“No, that doesn’t work. Trust me. I did it too.”
“Maybe I just shouldn’t study. I know the material and the professor is really nice.”
“Nope. Remember that French V test that you thought you knew. And remember that’s
probably why you didn’t do as well as you wanted in AP American History.”
“You know me too well.”
“I should; I am you.”

There is so much potential in the person with which one lives. I think I would like to
room with Shakespeare. Or maybe Emerson. Oh, wait, wait! I could room with Einstein!
Think of all the things I could learn from these people. But I bet a thousand people have
this idea. Look how smart I am, they must be saying. Look how impressed everyone must
be with my sophistication. It drives me crazy to see people show off their knowledge just
to impress others and sound intelligent. It’s easy to pick some historical figure and go on
for ages about the benefits of living with such a person. But I would like to choose
someone who could seriously help ME, not just anybody. So my choice is me. Yes I
would like to room with myself, but it must be in twenty years. My older self can teach
me in a way that no one else can.

Throughout life, one always encounters situations, which he or she wishes could be
redone. There is always that split second in which a failure could be made a success,
where that poor decision would have never been made. It’s impossible to see into the
future, so these mistakes are almost inevitable, or are they? If I could room with my older
self, I could avoid a lot of these troubles. Much like Mickey telling Rocky that he has the
pain and experience and knowledge to make him a great fighter, my older self has the
pain and experience and knowledge to make me a better student and person. He could
relate to me the best way to study for tests, prepare for laboratory exercises, and how to
present myself in a respectable manner. Without learning by stumbling, I could see my
mistakes before they happen. He would see my mistakes before I made them- because
they are the mistakes he made-and be able to tell me how he would have done things differently had he had the knowledge that he does now.

People tell me that we can only learn through failures. However these are the same people that also tell me “If I knew then what I know now...” True, it seems as though failure is a great way to learn. However, through the teachings of my older self, I would see and understand these potential failures, and make adjustments without having to face the consequences of the actual mistakes.

Don’t get me wrong, Shakespeare, Emerson, Einstein and the like would be great college roommates. However, while I would inevitably learn from them, it would be generic knowledge. These people can spit out extremely useful information that I could twist and from which I could learn, but it is essentially knowledge that I could obtain in a book. My older self knows how and what I think. He has made the mistakes that I would potentially make. He can make ME a better person. He has walked a mile in my shoes.

Written by Will Schmitt, Class of 2000, a student of Polly McWilliams, English teacher.
ARRANGING YOUR COLLEGE VISIT

Because it is difficult to get a complete picture of campus life from websites, college books, and catalogs, it is recommended that you visit any of your top schools which you are considering attending. The following are some guidelines for arranging a college visit.

1. Phone/email the college admissions office at least six to eight weeks ahead of your intended visit.

2. Request to visit the college during the week. Ask to observe a class and speak with a professor, if possible. If you visit in the summer, college life will be more relaxed and you may get more quality time with an admissions counselor.

3. When making your arrangements, state exactly what you wish to do. For example, say “I would like to speak with the field hockey coach.”

4. Make your own arrangements for your visit. Don’t have your parents do this for you.

5. Arrange for an interview. (See the following section for a discussion of college interviews.)

6. If possible, stay overnight in a dormitory and eat in the cafeteria.

7. If possible, plan to visit only one college per day. Keep a diary about your visits.

8. Take an unofficial copy of your high school transcript. This is valuable in any discussion with an admissions officer. An unofficial copy of your transcript may be obtained from the Counseling Center.

9. Always visit a dorm that is not part of the official tour.

10. If possible, talk with a student in the student union. Ask him/her -
   a) When you were a freshman, did you get the courses you wanted?
   b) How many professors do you know and how many know you?

11. Never go alone. If your parents cannot visit the school with you, go with a friend. It is always good to have a second opinion.

12. Scan the college newspapers and check the bulletin boards. They will give you another picture of life on campus.

13. When visiting, dress neatly and wear comfortable shoes.

14. When on campus, look for signs of crime prevention (alarm boxes, emergency
The college interview provides a first-hand opportunity for you to assess a college or university as well as a chance for the admissions personnel to get to know you.

Three different kinds of interviews may be available to you.

**Group** interviews are information-giving sessions where as many as 25 students and their parents gather for a question-and-answer period with a college representative. These sessions provide little individual contact but are helpful in providing a general overview of the institution.

**Alumni** interviews are personal interviews with local alumni who evaluate you and send their evaluation to the college. Often alumni interviews are a factor considered in the admissions process.

**Personal** interviews take place at the college or university between you and an admissions staff member and are sometimes part of the admissions process. These interviews are usually scheduled for a one-hour period with an admissions counselor.

???????????

Here are some common questions asked during a college interview.

Why are you interested in our particular college?

Where do you see yourself in ten (10) years?

How would your best friend describe you?

What are your personal strengths and weaknesses?

What is the most difficult thing you have ever done?

What is something you have done that has made you very proud?

What are your favorite subjects and why?

What are some things you really enjoy doing?

Note: Many questions may relate to your high school records/transcript. Be prepared to discuss them. You should request, from the Counseling Center, an **unofficial** copy of your transcript to take with you.
DESIGNING AN INTERVIEW QUESTION

One of the best ways you can prepare for your college interview is to design thoughtful questions in advance. A good question involves a personal statement, relevant facts about the institution, and a question on an important topic. The following model outlines three basic steps you can follow in designing good interview questions.

A. Make a statement about yourself, your interests, and your concerns. Example: “Art is a very strong interest of mine.”

B. Add relevant facts you know from your research about the college. Example: “I read about the extensive art history courses you offer.”

C. End with your question on a topic. Example: “Can you tell me more about the extracurricular activities or field work opportunities for art history majors?”

Avoid asking questions that are answered on the college website or in the college catalogs such as: “Do you offer chemistry as a major?”

IF YOU HAVE A PERSONAL INTERVIEW, MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR INTERVIEWER’S NAME AND SEND HIM/HER A THANK YOU NOTE.
FINANCING YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION

Post-secondary educational costs continue to rise every year, and the idea of financing a college education can be overwhelming. Any student who plans to continue his or her education after high school should know about financial aid.

First, let’s expose the most widely held myth about the financial aid process. Financial aid is not “just for poor people.” Because of the wide variety of federal, state and private programs available, family income alone will not automatically disqualify a student from receiving some type of assistance. The only way to determine whether or not you qualify for financial aid is to apply for it. Except in the most unusual situations, all students and their parents should fill out the application forms the college of their choice requires.

Using a standard set of formulas called Federal Methodology, your family’s financial situation is analyzed and a need analysis is done. Your financial need is calculated from this analysis. Financial need is the difference between what it will cost you to attend a college and the amount you and your family can afford to pay toward these costs.

How is this financial need figure determined? Your family’s financial situation is examined from information provided on one or more of the commonly used financial aid applications. The FAFSA on the web (FOTW) www.fafsa.ed.gov is the preferred, most popular method for submitting the FAFSA. Online applications are processed faster; are more accurate and are easier to correct. The FAFSA (FOTW) is used to apply for both Federal Student Aid and PA State Grant & Loan Programs. Also available is the CSS Profile, (www.college.collegeboard.com) which is required by some private colleges and universities in addition to the FAFSA. There is a cost for filing the CSS Profile and for each college listed on the Profile. The need analysis performed on this information takes into account such factors as family income, assets, number of dependents, medical expenses, and so forth. From the need analysis, your family contribution is determined. The family contribution is the amount of money your family is expected to contribute toward your education. The difference between that amount and the cost of the college you want to attend is your financial need.

MAJOR SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID

I. SCHOLARSHIPS: These are awards, which do not have to be repaid, and are generally awarded without regard to financial need.

II. GRANTS: These awards do not have to be repaid but are usually based on financial need.

III. LOANS: These must be repaid under the terms agreed upon when the loan is made.

IV. WORK STUDY: These programs offer the student paid employment at a college to help pay educational expenses. Financial need is considered in the awarding of
TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

I. SCHOLARSHIPS

A. Academic Merit Scholarships: These are usually awarded by the individual colleges to students with high academic achievement, SAT scores, or specific career plans. The financial aid office at your college should have information on these awards.

CAREFUL!!
If you receive an Academic Merit-based scholarship, ask if it is renewable and then inquire what GPA you need to maintain in order to renew it.

B. State College Area High School Year-End Scholarships and Awards: These are sponsored by local service clubs, businesses, individuals and alumni. A booklet describing these scholarships and how to apply for them is available in the Counseling Center after Spring Break.

C. Employers, Service Organizations, Unions, and Churches: These organizations often sponsor merit and/or financial need based awards. Check at your parents’ or your place of employment and with organizations to which they belong.

D. Military Scholarships: All branches of the Armed Services have ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) scholarships available. Each branch of the military also sponsors a service academy that provides academically talented students with a government-sponsored education. The military recruiters or your counselor can give you more information.

E. Athletic Scholarships: The admissions office at your college may refer you to the athletic staff members who recruit students for these scholarships. Your high school coach may also have information on these scholarships.

F. Special Talent or Activity Awards: Some schools and organizations offer scholarships for talent or achievement in art, music, drama and other areas. Check with your college financial aid office or your activity sponsor for more information.

G. Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR): Students with physical and/or mental handicaps or medical conditions that are a barrier to employment can receive scholarships for college or other employment training. The FAFSA must be filed. Contact the local OVR office for details at 1-800-442-6343, or talk with your current special education teacher and/or transition coordinator.

H. Veterans Administration Scholarships: Educational assistance programs are available to eligible children of deceased or disabled veterans. For more information contact the local VA Regional Office.
I. **Americorps (Pennsylvania Chapter):** This program is our domestic version of the Peace Corps. A student may apply for this program and receive up to a $5,500 education award. A student is obligated to serve full or part time over a 10 to 12 month period. For information go to [www.Americorps.gov](http://www.Americorps.gov) or call 1-800-942-2677.

J. **Post Secondary Education Gratuity Program (PEGP):** This program assists children of Pennsylvania police officers, firefighters, rescue and ambulance squad members, correction employees, National Guard members and certain other individuals on federal or active military duty who were residents of Pennsylvania and have died in the line of duty.

**II. GRANTS**

A. **PA State Grant:** Awarded on the basis of financial need. Maximum award for 2011-2012 was $4,348. The FAFSA application must be filed before May 1 for 4-year schools and by August 1 for trade, 2-year programs, and hospital schools of nursing. Part time students, taking 6-11 credits are eligible. The maximum award for 2010-2011 was $1,770. **DO NOT MISS THE DEADLINE.**

B. **PELL Grant:** A federal, need-based program using FAFSA. Maximum award for 2011-2012 was $5,550 per year. You may be a part-time or full-time student.

C. **Federal Supplemental Education Opportunity Grant:** (FSEOG): Reserved for students with **exceptional** financial need. The maximum SEOG is $4,000. The FAFSA/PELL grant application is used to apply for this grant.

D. **Institutional Grants:** These funds are provided by the individual colleges. Check with the financial aid office at your college for this type of grant and how to apply.

E. **PATH – The Partnerships for Access to Higher Education (PATH) Program** works directly with community based Pennsylvania organizations to add additional student aid funding in the area of scholarships. To receive PATH funding, students must be eligible for need based financial aid in the form of grants and loans. For more information go to [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org).

F. **Postsecondary Education Gratuity Program (PEGP):** This program assists children of PA police officers, firefighters, rescue and ambulance squad members, correction employees and National Guard members who died in the line of duty. For more information go to [www.pheaa.org](http://www.pheaa.org).

G. **The Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH):** Must have a high school GPA of 3.25 or score in the 75th percentile on at least one school admissions test. Must be willing to be a full time teacher for at least 4 years at a high need school in a specific field, e.g. mathematics. Apply through
the FAFSA and ask the college financial aid office where you plan to attend if you are eligible. Please note that PSU does not participate in this program. For additional information please go to www.fsa4counselors.ed.gov.

III. LOANS

A. Federal Direct Stafford Loan Program: First year undergraduates with documented financial need may borrow up to $3,500 per year from a participating financial institution. The student is the borrower, and it may be a subsidized loan if the student has financial need, otherwise it is unsubsidized. Also, students may borrow an additional $2,000 per year UNSUBSIDIZED, giving them total borrowing capacity of $5,500 their first year. These are long-term, low interest, fixed rate loans, with the interest paid by the federal government while the student is in school. The FAFSA is used to begin the application process.

B. Perkins Loans (Federal Program): This is a campus-based, federal loan program through which students are able to borrow a maximum of $5500 per year for four years for undergraduate study. Loans carry a low interest fixed rate, and repayment and interest do not begin until after a student leaves school. Contact the institution’s Financial Aid Office to see if they participate in the Perkins Loan Program.

C. Parent Loan for Undergraduate Students (PLUS): This program allows parents of dependent undergraduates to borrow to finance educational expenses. In most cases, payment must be made while the student is enrolled, and the first payment is due 60 days after the final disbursement is made. There is no federal interest subsidy or grace period. Contact the institution’s Financial Aid Office or visit their website to begin the application process.

D. Loan Forgiveness Programs: The following majors offer loan forgiveness programs: Agriculture Education including the family farm and veterinary medicine; Teacher Loan Forgiveness program. All of these programs require students to work in PA after they graduate for a specific period of time. For more information on these programs go to www.pheaa.org.

E. Alternative Loans: These are educational loans through private lending institutions. The college’s financial aid office can provide information on these products. Please note, effective July 1, 2010 all Federal student loans will be made directly through the U.S. Dept. of Education. Students and parents may apply for direct Stafford or Plus Loans through their school’s website or at www.studentloans.gov.

IV. WORK STUDY PROGRAMS

A. Federal Work Study (FWS): Awarded to students who demonstrate financial need. The federal program allows students to earn part of their college expenses through paid, hourly employment during the school year. Apply through the financial aid office at the college you plan to attend.

B. State Work Study Programs (SWSP): PHEAA pays a certain percentage of the
student’s wages for the hiring institution. Applications are available from PHEAA through its website www.pheaa.org or from the financial aid office. Students must demonstrate financial need.

C. Off-Campus Work Study Program: This is a cooperative effort among PHEAA, participating post-secondary institutions, and non-profit employers.

Student must be an eligible PA resident and be eligible for the Federal Work Study Program. Applications and information are available in the institution’s financial aid office.

V. TUITION ACCOUNT PROGRAMS

A. PA 529 (formerly called TAP): This program offered in Pennsylvania provides advance purchase of college tuition credits. It enables purchasers to “lock in” a price today for tomorrow’s tuition. Information and applications are available at www.makecollegepossible.com.

VI. TAX LAW INCENTIVES

A. Hope Scholarship Tax Credit and Lifetime Learning Tax Credit: Tax credits based upon tuition and fees paid to a college and university. Please talk to your CPA or tax preparer about these incentives. For more information refer to IRS Publication 970.

VII. DISCOUNTS FOR EMPLOYMENT

A. Many colleges offer tuition discounts to dependents of their employees. Check with the Employment Benefits or Human Resources Office to find out about these programs.

B. Upromise is a nationwide program that allows families to save for college by purchasing the products of participating manufacturers. Upon creating an account, individuals can register shopper’s club cards from grocery and pharmacy chains, and also register their credit cards. When they shop and use these cards, a portion of the purchase price of various products is credited to their account. The network of participating companies now includes thousands of manufacturers and retailers, meaning Upromise account holders can accumulate college savings nearly anywhere they shop. For more information, visit the website at www.upromise.com.
FINANCIAL AID CHECKLIST/TIMELINE

Most students finance their education through a combination of these sources. Begin planning early and investigate all possible sources of aid. The following checklist will be helpful.

SEPTEMBER THROUGH NOVEMBER

_____ Initiate the steps under the planning schedule for the senior year.
_____ Apply for FAFSA PIN numbers: one for the student and one for the parent.

DECEMBER

_____ Obtain a financial aid application from the colleges to which you are applying.
_____ Obtain the CSS Profile from the Counseling Center if required by the schools to which you are applying.
_____ Obtain a FAFSA application or FAFSA web worksheet from the Counseling Center.
_____ Obtain a copy of PAYING FOR POST SECONDARY EDUCATION from your high school counselor.
_____ Attend financial aid evening program.

JANUARY

_____ Fill out the CSS Profile and FAFSA applications.
_____ Check college deadline dates for financial aid applications.
_____ Search websites, files/books in the Career Center and the web for available scholarships.
_____ Attend financial aid evening program.
_____ Questions? Email or call our regional PHEAA administrator: Mr. Don Shade at dshade@pheaa.org (570-323-7001)

FEBRUARY

_____ Send electronically, or mail all your financial aid forms no later than the second week in February.
_____ Check places of employment for scholarships.
_____ Listen for local scholarship announcements.
_____ Check local newspapers for scholarship announcements.
_____ Search through the files/books in the Career Center and the web for other
scholarships.

_____ Look through the catalog of the college of your choice for additional financial aid.

**MARCH**

_____ Obtain a copy of the end-of-year scholarship booklet.

_____ Check the deadline for an academic scholarship at the college of your choice.

_____ Accept or reject the offer of financial aid by the stated deadline.

**APRIL THROUGH AUGUST**

_____ Meet the deadline for PHEAA four-year state grants (May 1).

_____ Work with your college financial aid office to apply for student and parent loans.


**SEPTEMBER**

_____ Make personal contact with the financial aid officer at your college.

_____ Visit the financial aid officer from time to time to inquire about additional opportunities.

---

**IMPORTANT TIPS**

APPLY ON-LINE, IT IS EASIER AND YOUR APPLICATION WILL BE PROCESSED WITHIN 72 HOURS OF RECEIVING IT.

SAVE COPIES OF ALL FINANCIAL AID FORMS, TAX AND SOCIAL SECURITY INFORMATION

ALWAYS FILE AFTER JANUARY 1ST

COLLEGE RECOMMENDED DEADLINE FOR MAXIMUM CONSIDERATION MAY BE DIFFERENT THAN PHEAA/FAFSA

Example: Penn State is March 1 and PHEAA is May 1
IMPORTANT WEB SITES

Comprehensive Scholarship Information
www.fastweb.com

Scholarship Information for Minority Students

The College Board
www.collegeboard.com
Access for CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE

FAFSA
www.fafsa.ed.gov
(If you file on the web – don’t forget the signature page – submit within 14 days)
or
(Establish a pin # and send your signature electronically)
www.pin.ed.gov

Pennsylvania Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (PASFAA)
www.pasfaa.org

Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency (PHEAA)
www.pheaa.org
www.educationplanner.org

Good financial aid website
www.finaid.org

Information about State College Area High School created for students by students
www.scasd.info

IMPORTANT TIPS

It is almost NEVER a good idea to borrow from insurance policies or retirement funds, to incur financial penalties on redeemed investments, or to take high interest cash advances on credit cards, just to come up with the money needed to pay for college costs. With so many other financing options available, it should not be necessary for the family to take these drastic measures if they plan ahead.
# Financial Aid Worksheet

Name of College: ___________________ ___________________ ______

## Cost of Attendance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuition and Fees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room and Board</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books and Supplies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Expenses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL COSTS</strong></td>
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</table>

## Financial Aid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pell Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHEAA Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>FSEOG Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Grants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td><strong>Total Gift Aid</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Perkins Loan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stafford Loan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Loans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Self Help</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL AID:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COST LESS AID:**

*This is the amount to be covered by the family through loans, savings, income, etc.*
DO NOT go to www.fafsa.com. It will cost you $79.99.

The correct website is www.fafsa.ed.gov.

APPENDICES

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TIMELINE FOR JUNIORS......................... 34 - 35
COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TIMELINE FOR SENIORS.......................... 36 - 38
MILITARY ACADEMY AND ROTC INFORMATION.......................... 39 - 40
STUDENT ATHLETE INFORMATION........................................... 40 - 43
TERMS AND DEFINITIONS...................................................... 44 - 48
COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TIMELINE FOR JUNIORS

SEPTEMBER

• Explore different kinds of higher education. The North Counseling Center has the following resources:
  a) Web based resources.
  b) Current college guides which describe colleges throughout the United States.
     EXAMPLES
     Peterson’s Guide to Four-Year Colleges
     Peterson’s Guide to Two-Year Colleges
     The College Handbook
     Profiles of American Colleges
  c) Individual college and technical school catalogs and armed service information.
  d) Computer programs that help you identify your aptitudes and interests, begin career planning and narrow your college choices.
  e) College representatives who visit throughout the school year (mostly in the fall).
• Begin to explore financial aid resources.
• Sign up for the PSAT in the North or South Counseling office.

OCTOBER

• Take the PSAT in October - this test is given only one (1) time per year - top PSAT scores qualify for National Merit Scholarships (NMSQT) only when taken as a junior
• Attend visits of college representatives - these visits are announced through the Counseling Center and advertised through the district’s web site.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER - JANUARY

• Register for the December ACT in early November
• Register and take the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational and Aptitude Battery) in early November
• After you receive your PSAT scores, make an appointment with your counselor to
  a) make preparations for taking the SAT and/or SAT SUBJECT TESTS
  b) review your past and present academic program
  c) plan your senior courses
  d) discuss your college plans

BRING YOUR PSAT SCORES/BOOKLET TO THE MEETING WITH YOUR COUNSELOR

• Take ACT in December, if appropriate
• Continue to explore college resources.

FEBRUARY
• Register for March SAT
• Begin application process for the service academies such as West Point

MARCH

• Register for April ACT early in March.
• Take SAT test, if appropriate.
• Register for May SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS tests - check to see if the colleges of your choice require SAT SUBJECT TESTS scores.
• Plan visits with your parents to colleges that interest you.
• Attend College Fairs.

APRIL

• Explore college websites. Begin to look at college applications; for example the Common Application.
• Register for June SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS.
• Take ACT in April if appropriate.
• Visit colleges.
• Have your parents go to www.fafsa4caster.gov to begin financial aid eligibility.

MAY

• Take SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if necessary.
• Make appointments at colleges for interviews.
• Register for June ACT in early May.
• Update your activities and awards list.

JUNE

• Take SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.
• Take ACT, if appropriate.
• Narrow college choices
  a) Visit colleges over the summer and in the fall.
  b) Review College Admissions Timeline for seniors.
  c) Plan to play Division I or II sports? Make sure you have registered with the NCAA Clearinghouse after junior year grades appear on your transcript.

JULY

• Update your resume and start assembling writing samples, portfolios, audition tapes, or other information you may use for your college applications.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,
MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR COUNSELOR
COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TIMELINE FOR SENIORS

AUGUST / SEPTEMBER

• Narrow college choices and begin to apply online.
• Complete a Penn State application online and come in to the North Counseling Office and request your transcript be sent to PSU.
• Attend meetings with college representatives.
• Register for October SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.
• Apply for ROTC scholarships.
• Identify two teachers who might be willing to write a positive college recommendation for you, if appropriate.
• Check to see if the colleges to which you are applying require both the SAT and SAT SUBJECT TESTS.
• Know your CEEB number – 394685.
• Know your high school address - 653 Westerly Parkway, State College, PA 16801.
• Explore financial aid resources.
• If you are male and 18 years old or turning 18 during your senior year, make sure you register with Selective Service at www.sss.gov.
• Visit colleges you are applying to.

OCTOBER

• Complete early decision college application - Be aware of deadlines.
• Register for December SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.
• Take ACT test, if appropriate.
• If necessary, ask two teachers to write recommendations for you - supply teachers with information about you, the college’s address, necessary forms, and have the teacher send a copy of the recommendation to the North Counseling secretary.
• Make sure that you request your transcript for each college you are applying to.
• Attend meetings with college admissions counselors.

NOVEMBER

• Meet deadline for early decision application.
• Take SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.
• Apply for ROTC scholarships.
• Register for December ACT test in early November.
• Apply to PSU by Nov. 30, if appropriate.
• Look for scholarship money – (refer to page 30).

DECEMBER

• Meet ROTC scholarship application deadline - first working day in December.
• Take ACT test, if appropriate.
• Take SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.
• Check college applications for January 1 deadlines - make sure these applications are complete and turned into the Counseling Center secretary in early December - don’t
forget your postage and envelopes.

• Make sure teachers and counselors have sent your college recommendations to the colleges which requested them - thank those people who have taken the time to write the recommendations for you.
• Download the FAFSA web worksheets - also available on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
• Register early in the month for the January SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.

JANUARY

• Complete all college applications - be careful with mid-January and February 1 deadlines.
• Talk to your parents about filing taxes as early as possible in order to complete the FAFSA form
• Take SAT or SAT SUBJECT TESTS, if appropriate.
• Have your parents fill out financial aid forms - find out recommended filing dates for each college you are applying to.
• Request mid-year grade report to be sent to the colleges you have applied to, if appropriate.

FEBRUARY

• Check college applications for February 1 and February 15 deadline dates.
• Request mid-year grade report to be sent to the colleges you have applied to, if appropriate.
• Submit financial aid forms.
• Check financial aid applications’ recommended filing dates.

MARCH

• Watch for local scholarship deadlines.
• Submit financial aid forms.
• Explore college scholarships offered by community, religious groups, businesses, and other organizations.
• Apply for local high school scholarships - applications are available in the Counseling Center.

NOTE - IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO APPLY TO SOME COLLEGES

APRIL

• Follow-up on college applications, if needed.
• Visit those schools you have not seen that have accepted you.
• Discuss your college acceptances with parents and your high school counselor.
• Keep applying for independent college scholarships.
• Once you have decided which college to attend, withdraw all other applications, and thank those colleges for considering your application.
• Penn State freshman testing.

MAY

• Finalize the contract with the college you will attend.
• If you have received no acceptances, investigate other schools which still have openings by talking with your high school counselor.
• Take AP tests if appropriate.
• Look for announcements of local scholarships.
• Receive financial aid announcements.
• Penn State freshman testing continues.

JUNE

• Celebrate high school graduation!
• If necessary, request that final grades and transcripts be sent to the college you plan to attend.
• Look at the college catalog or website and make a list of courses you would like to consider taking your freshman year.
• Penn State freshman testing continues.
MILITARY ACADEMIES

Any junior interested in the United States Military Academies should investigate the application procedures leading to acceptance. The application process begins in the spring of the junior year and terminates approximately November 15th. The process includes filling out and mailing the application forms, taking the necessary college admissions examinations and requesting that test scores be mailed to the appropriate program or institution. Deadline dates vary.

Competition is rigorous. Candidates for all but the Coast Guard Academy must have a nomination, usually from a member of Congress or the Vice President of the United States. Spring semester of the junior year is the recommended time to apply for a nomination, but later requests may be accepted. If you are interested in securing an appointment to one of the academies, you should write to your senators and representatives and to the academy of your choice for additional information.

SENATORS AND REPRESENTATIVES

Senator Robert Casey, Jr.
22 S. Third St. Suite 6A
Harrisburg, PA 17101
www.Casey.senate.gov
(717) 231-7540 / (866) 461-9159
Fax: (717) 231-7542

Congressman Glenn Thompson
3555 Benner Pike Suite 101
Bellefonte, PA 16823
www.thompson.house.gov
(814) 353-0215
Fax: (814) 353-0218

Senator Pat Toomey
B40 – B Dirksen Senate Building
Washington DC 20510
(202) 224-4254
www.Toomey.senate.gov
Fax: (202) 228-0284

MILITARY ACADEMY ADDRESSES

Director of Admissions and Registrar
U.S. Air Force Academy
HQ USA FA/RRS, 2304 Cadet Drive
Suite 200
USAF Academy, CO 80840-5025
www.academyadmissions.com
1-800-443-9266

Director of Admissions and Registrar
U.S. Military Academy
Building 606, Thayer Rd.
West Point, NY 10996
www.usma.edu
845-938-4041

U.S. Coast Guard Academy
31 Mohegan Avenue
New London, CT 06320-8103
Candidate Guidance Office
U.S. Naval Academy
117 Decatur Rd
Admissions Office
U.S. Merchant Marine Academy
300 Steamboat Road
RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC) PROGRAMS

ROTC PROGRAMS ON WEB

• Armed Forces – [www.rotc.military.com](http://www.rotc.military.com)

ROTC Scholarships are very competitive. They cover tuition, books, fees, and a small stipend for either one, two, three, or four years. Not all colleges offer ROTC.

STUDENT-ATHLETE INFORMATION

Participating in college athletics requires more than ability and desire: it necessitates planning. One needs to become aware of NCAA rules, recruiting regulations, and academic requirements. Additionally, one must make a realistic assessment of athletic skills. Your high school coach and guidance counselors are integral parts of the planning process. The following information is intended to assist you through the process of college selection.

College athletics are divided into Divisions I, II and III. Division I and II schools award athletic scholarships. The number of scholarships is determined by the NCAA and varies from sport to sport. Athletic scholarships are typically awarded for one year, renewable at the coach’s discretion.

If you are a Division I, II, or III athlete, be aware of NCAA recruiting guidelines and academic regulations.
NCAA DIVISION 1 FRESHMAN ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

A. Graduate from high school.
B. Successfully complete a core curriculum of at least 16 academic courses. The core curriculum must include at least 4 years of English, 3 years of math (including Algebra 1 and higher), 2 years of social science, 2 years in natural or physical science (including at least 1 lab class), 1 additional course in English, math, natural or physical science, and 4 additional academic courses in any of the above areas, or foreign language, philosophy, or nondoctrinal religions.
C. Have a core grade-point average (based on a maximum 4.0) and a combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections based on the NCAA Division I Qualifier Index - go to www.eligibilitycenter.org

In cooperation with the NCAA, State College Area High School maintains a list of core courses that meet NCAA guidelines. The NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse will certify your athletics eligibility for Division I and II.

NCAA DIVISION II FRESHMAN ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

A. Graduate from high school.
B. Have a GPA of 2.00 (based on a maximum of 4.0) in a successfully completed core curriculum of at least 14 academic courses. The core curriculum must include at least 3 years of English, 2 years of math, 2 years of social science, 2 years of natural or physical science (including at least 1 lab class), 2 additional courses in English, math, natural or physical science, and 3 additional courses in any of the above areas or foreign language, computer science, philosophy or nondoctrinal religions.
C. Have a 820 combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections or a 68 composite score on the ACT.

NCAA DIVISION III FRESHMAN ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

Division I and II requirements do not apply to Division III colleges, where eligibility for financial aid, practice, and competition is governed by institutional, conference, and other
NCAA regulations.

STUDENT / ATHLETE CHECKLIST

____ Keep an athletic resume, including lists of sports played, awards, etc.

____ Once you have colleges in mind, write/email the coaches and tell them of your interest. Include a State College Area High School sports schedule, if available.

____ Talk with your high school coach. Does he/she think you are a Division I, II, or III player? Ask for a letter of recommendation, request DVD/film clips when appropriate. Be certain they are aware of your interests and future plans.

____ Talk with recruiting coaches:
  • Will you make the team? If so, will you play?
  • How many athletes are you recruiting for this position?
  • What provisions are made for away games, tutoring, missed classes, etc.?
  • What percent of players graduate in 4 years? In 5 years?
  • If injured, will the scholarship be renewed?
  • How many hours a day are committed to the sport (both during the season and off-season)?
  • Find out if the coach is as dedicated to academic pursuit as he/she is to athletic accomplishments.
  • Find out the cost of attending.
STEPS TO REGISTER WITH THE NCAA CLEARINGHOUSE

STEP 1: It is recommended that the student athlete registers in his/her junior year, beginning in the month of May. To register the student athlete needs to apply online at: [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). After completing the Student Release form online and submitting it, the student must print out two Transcript Release forms.

STEP 2: After the student registration is complete you must go to the North Counseling Center and request that his/her transcripts be sent to the NCAA Clearninghouse. One will be sent with a final junior transcript and one will be sent with a final senior transcript. (If the student has attended more than one high school, each high school must receive a copy of the complete Student Release form. A transcript must be sent from each high school.)

STEP 3: All prospective student-athletes intending to enroll in an NCAA Division I or II institution for the first time on or after August 1, 2007 must complete the NCAA Amateurism Certification questionnaire.

STEP 4: Test scores must be reported directly from either ACT or SAT. They will no longer be accepted from the high school transcript. When registering to take the SAT’s or ACT’s you should include the NCAA as one of your free choices to where to send your scores. The code for the NCAA is 9999. If you did not do this, go online for SAT scores to [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) or for ACT scores to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) and send your scores directly to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

STEP 5: Upon completion of the junior year, the final junior transcript will be sent to the Clearinghouse. The student will receive an initial clearing statement from the Clearinghouse in the fall of the student’s senior year.

STEP 6: Before the end of the senior year, you must request the Final Amateurism Certification for each sport that you will participate in. Log back into your account at [www.eligibilitycenter.org](http://www.eligibilitycenter.org). Click on MY PLANNER. Then select the red “Request Final Amateurism” button and follow the instructions.

STEP 7: After graduation, the student’s final senior transcript with the exact date of graduation will be sent to the Clearinghouse from the high school. The student will then receive a final clearing statement from the Clearinghouse.

In completing the registration forms, the high school CEEB code is required. Our high school CEEB CODE is: 394685
TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

A.A. Associate of Arts - refers to a two-year college level program consisting of 60-70 hours of study.

ACT American College Test is an entrance exam for college. It yields four sub-scores: English, mathematics, social studies, and natural sciences.

ACTIVITIES are usually extracurricular activities, such as sports, music, clubs, fraternities and sororities.

AP Advanced Placement - refers to a college-level course taught in high school for which there is an AP examination that could give college credit and/or placement, based on performance on the test. English, American History, European History, biology, chemistry, physics, foreign language and mathematics are some of the tests.

AES American Education Services - provides general information about colleges and financial aid. The website is www.aesSuccess.org

ASVAB Armed Service Vocational Aptitude Battery - is a test offered and used by branches of the military and military academies.

B.A. Bachelor of Arts - is a four-year college level program consisting of a minimum of 120 semester hours.

B.S. Bachelor of Science - refers to a four-year college level program consisting of a minimum of 120 semester hours.

CANDIDATES REPLY DATE is the date, usually May 1, set by the college for the student to accept or reject admission.

CEEB College Entrance Examination Board - is a national non-profit organization that publishes tests for schools and colleges. CEEB scores these tests, reports results, and conducts research in educational areas. The State College Area High School code number is 394685.

COED involves both men and women in collegiate studies and activities.

COLLEGE CALENDAR under different calendar systems a college’s academic year may be divided into two, three, or four terms of study:
Semester: Two equal terms usually from September to June

Trimester: Three equal terms usually from September to June

Quarter: Four equal terms, usually from September to the next September. Often under this system a student completes a “year” of college by attending three of the four terms.

4-1-4: Three terms - first a four-month term, next a one-month term (sometimes called an “inter-session”), then a four-month term. The inter-session is often used for special study projects or independent study.

COLLEGE is an institution for higher education usually offering a specialized group of courses and awarding a degree.

COMPREHENSIVE FEE is a total cost for one year. It includes tuition, fees, room, and board. A comprehensive fee does not cover books, transportation, or personal expenses.

CREDIT HOUR a credit represents the work of at least 15 hours a semester. A typical academic course carries three credits and meets three hours per week (credit hours). A full-time student, on average, carries 12 to 16 credit hours a semester.

CSS PROFILE is an application form to establish need for financial aid. It is issued and evaluated by the data-processing facilities of the College Scholarship Service, a division of the College Board. Go to http://www.profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp.

DEFERRED ADMISSION is a situation in which accepted candidates ask the college to delay enrollment until a later date than originally planned. The applicant must ask for this delay.

EARLY ACTION is an admissions option allowing students to learn of the decision on their application before the standard April notification date. Early action is distinguished from early decision in that students are not required to accept admission or withdraw other applications.

EARLY DECISION an application to an institution that notifies the student prior to regularly scheduled acceptance dates. Candidates make it known that this school is their first choice. They agree to withdraw other applications, if accepted. This usually involves well-qualified students.
ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS
are those requirements that colleges expect an applicant to meet before college enrollment.

FAFSA
Free Application for Federal Student Aid - is an application form to establish need for financial aid for federal aid programs, including grants and loans. Fill out every year and for each child attending college. www.fafsa.ed.gov Please note: some schools require this to be considered for institutional scholarships.

FINANCIAL AID
financial assistance to meet the cost of attending college. Most aid is based upon need and involves an application procedure.

GPA
Grade Point Average - is a cumulative average of grades generally available at the end of each semester in grades 9, 10, 11, and 12.

GRADUATE WORK
refers to college level courses usually taken towards a master’s degree or a doctorate after one has received a B.S. or a B.A. degree.

GRANTS
are funds given for education and do not require repayment.

JUNIOR COLLEGES
are institutions for post-secondary studies that, after two years, usually award the associate degree. It is possible to transfer to a four-year college or university upon satisfactory performance.

LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGES
offer a wide variety of educational experiences in many cultural and scholarly areas. Although a field of emphasis is required, the broad background demonstrates the student’s willingness to learn in all areas. Doctors, lawyers, dentists, and many other professionals often begin their higher educational experience in liberal arts colleges.

LOANS
are funds actually loaned to students or parents for college expenses. Colleges make these available. Some federal and state guarantees are available to those who qualify. Many loans are low-interest bearing, and need not be paid back until six months after graduation.

MILITARY ACADEMIES
are federal, government-sponsored, academic institutions whose primary function is to train officers for the U.S. Armed Forces. Among these are the Naval Academy, West Point Military Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Coast Guard Academy.

NMSQT
National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test - this screening device for the National Merit Corporation is a part of the PSAT (see definition). In order to qualify, a student must take the PSAT/NMSQT one year prior to
graduation - typically junior year in high school.

PELL GRANT refers to a federally subsidized grant program. By filling out the FAFSA application, a student automatically is considered for a PELL Grant.

PHEAA Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency - a state agency that evaluates need and awards grants to college students.

PRIVATE refers to schools that derive their support from tuition, fees, and endowments. Some, but not all of these colleges have a higher tuition and overall costs than the public colleges.

PSAT Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test - this test is published, administered, scored, and interpreted by the College Board. It is designed to serve as a practice prior to the actual SAT and is administered in October.

PUBLIC means schools that are supported, at least in part, by public funds. In Pennsylvania, we have fourteen state universities, and four state-related institutions (Pennsylvania State University, University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, and Lincoln University).

ROLLING ADMISSIONS is a system by which a college evaluates applications as they are received and admits or rejects on the basis of the individual application.

ROOM & BOARD are charges for living accommodations and meals.

ROTC Reserve Officer Training Corps. These scholarships are very competitive. They cover tuition, books, fees, and a small stipend for either one, two, three, or four years. Not all colleges offer ROTC. Please go to www.rotc.military.com.

SAR is the Student Aid Report from FAFSA to the parent regarding financial aid eligibility.

SAT is the Scholastic Assessment Test. It is published, administered, and scored by the College Board. It is used as a supplementary screening device by many colleges. (This was the “original” nationwide screening device and is many times called “The College Boards”). This test yields a verbal, mathematics, and writing score.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS The Subject Tests are published, administered, and scored by the College Board. Individual subject areas are tested. These tests are required by some colleges for placement purposes and, in some cases, for admission.

SCHOLARSHIPS are awards to students to assist with college expenses. These awards do
not have to be paid back.

SECONDARY SCHOOL REPORT
a part of the college application process that your high school counselor fills out.

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
are educational institutions designed to teach highly technical, specialized material without necessarily requiring the other areas (humanities, language, etc.) for graduation.

TRADE/TECHNICAL SCHOOLS
are educational institutions designed to prepare a student for a specialized job. These schools generally award certificates, diploma, and/or associate degrees.

TRANSCRIPT
refers to a copy of a high school record showing courses taken, grades earned and credit value for each course.

TRANSFER
refers to that process by which a student moves from one institution to another before obtaining a degree. This could occur at the end of a term or a semester, the end of a year, or upon receipt of an associate degree to pursue the next higher degree.

TUITION
is the amount of money a school or college charges to help pay for instruction and other basic costs.

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAM
refers to college level courses leading towards a B.A., B.S., or A.A. degree.

UNIVERSITY

WEIGHTED GRADES
are earned in certain advanced high school courses. State High students are given one extra credit quality point per letter grade for those courses when GPA is computed.

WORK STUDY
is a program that offers the student paid employment at a college to help pay educational expenses. Financial need is considered in the awarding of
most work-study jobs and determined through the FAFSA.

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Austin, TX: Hunt Publishing Inc., 1988

Microsoft Office 2003; Outlook, Help

PHEAA Staff, Counselor Training Workshop Resource Manuel, Harrisburg, PA 2010

Schwartz, Mimi. How to Write College Application Essays
The college planning apps and resources that are available to today’s students offer a huge amount of convenience and access to information. Tablets and smart phones have become indispensable tools in our daily lives. On top of changing the way we think about gaming and communications, these technologies are advancing our capabilities when it comes to being a student and expanding our education.