

Grapeland ISD
Post Secondary Guide
2018-2019



GRAPELAND HIGH SCHOOL
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

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OPTIONS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL



POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

Colleges offer a four-year program in the arts and sciences usually leading to a Bachelor of Arts (BA) or a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree in a major field of study such as English, chemistry, business, etc. These schools are usually, but not always, the small liberal arts “regular decision” schools. Colleges may also offer degrees in preprofessional areas such as law, theology and medicine which then require that a student continue with advanced study in a graduate school or a medical school. Students could also move on to a university to obtain a masters or doctorate degree.

Universities offer both four-year undergraduate degrees and graduate study. After earning a bachelor’s degree, students may continue their education either at this school or at another by seeking a masters degree and then a doctorate if desired. These schools are usually, but not always, larger public schools, i.e. “University of....”

Junior colleges or Two Year Colleges offer a two-year degree which is the equivalent of the first two years of the regular college program. Students may then transfer to a four year school, usually as a junior.

Community Colleges or Technical Schools offer two kinds of programs: “college transfer” and “career.” Students in the “college transfer” program will take traditional freshman and sophomore college courses and then transfer to a four-year school. This can be a good option as community colleges cost much less than four-year colleges, thus saving money for the first two years. Students in the “career” track study specialized areas such as computers, real estate, nursing, etc.

Specialized Schools offer programs in areas such as hair styling, music, computers, graphics, etc. Students do not receive the liberal arts part of a college curriculum but are trained for a specific career.

Military Academies offer a four year course of study leading to a bachelor’s degree and a commission as an officer in the military. See more information about this later in this handbook under “Military Option.”

Military Service in any branch offers a wide variety of training opportunities for qualified persons both while in the service and after the service obligation is completed.

Apprenticeship Training is where an employer agrees to teach someone the skills necessary for a certain job and to give on-the-job experience. This program may or may not require related technical instruction at a school. At the end of the apprentice period the trainee becomes a journeyman or a qualified craftsman. Examples of careers in this area are: electrician, plumber, construction, etc.

Work—Employment

COLLEGE

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COLLEGE SEARCH

“College: A match to be made, not a prize to be won.” That simple adage will be an excellent guide as you move through the college application process. Finding the right fit for you is what is important.

Where do you start?

- Talk with your family. Have discussions as to what will be feasible options for you.
- Do not eliminate colleges at the beginning of the process based on money. You want to have options as to cost, but apply to schools that you feel are a good fit and see what financial aid packages they offer to help you attend their school.
- Take the ACT + Writing and/or the SAT Reasoning tests and start exploring colleges to find ones that will provide you the education appropriate for your needs.
- There are over 4,000 colleges/universities. You will not be able to explore each and every one but using this guide will help you narrow that down and find a good match.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CALENDAR JUNIOR YEAR

December

PSAT results along with the actual test book are distributed prior to winter break. Use this information to evaluate what you need to work on to score your best on the SAT this spring.

The correct answer will be on the results sheet along with an access code (upper right-hand corner) that lets you get on-line and receive further information about your results.

Research possible college choices – start this if you have not already done so. This is the perfect time to start asking questions about the college process.

January

All students should take the ACT / SAT in the spring with additional benefits if taken in January and/or May.

February

All students should take the ACT + writing this spring in addition to the SAT. All colleges will accept either and there is not any way to accurately predict which test will be best for which student.

April – May

Some select out-of-state schools will want you to take one or more SAT subject tests as part of the admissions process. Look at taking a subject test or tests in June, if needed, while the material is still fresh in your mind. Register now for those.

Take AP tests for any AP course. Registration for AP tests is done at the end of March. Listen to the announcements for the exact dates.

June – August

Visit college campuses

If you are considering playing Division I or II sports in college, register with the NCAA Clearinghouse at www.eligibilitycenter.org.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS CALENDAR

SENIOR YEAR

Check for scholarships at school(s) in which you are interested.

Register for the October ACT/SAT if you need to improve your scores for admission and/or scholarships.

Attend college open houses at their campuses when possible.

October

You and parent get a P.I.N. number for filling out the FAFSA at www.pin.ed.gov

November

Many college applications to selective schools are due in early December. If that application requires a counselor letter of recommendation, the Counselor Recommendation form must be turned in to your counselor two weeks prior to the date needed.

December

Look for chances to talk to college students home for the holidays, especially if they attend a school in which you are interested.

January

FAFSA is available January 1; complete it at www.fafsa.ed.gov. Make sure you use this website because others that end in .com will charge money for this freeservice.

February – March

Many local scholarships are available at this time. Check with churches, civics groups, places of employment, etc.

April

Most regular decision college admission letters will arrive.

May

Reply to college acceptance letters no later than May

Let all the colleges that accepted you know whether or not you will be attending. If your first choice college places you on their waiting list, do not lose all hope. Some students are admitted at a later date from waiting lists.

Take AP tests for any AP course. Scores on the test range from 1–5. A score of 3 or higher will earn a student college credit at many universities. University websites will often list the scores that they will accept to award college credit.

June – July

You will send one final transcript to a college – the one you will attend. Once requested, these will be mailed to your school of choice following the completion of the school year .

Register for classes – many schools will have you do that on-line, some will have summer orientation programs for you to attend and others will have you register in the fall.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TERMINOLOGY

Rolling Admission - Applications are processed as they are received and students are notified of admission status within 2-3 weeks. While deadlines for most of these schools may extend well in to the spring or the summer it is important to make sure that a student has at least applied by the school's financial aid deadline. Schools in this category in Texas will use the ApplyTexas application described later in this handbook with schools outside of Texas usually having their own application. Most of these applications including the ApplyTexas application are available starting August 1.

Regular Decision - Applications are to be filed by a set deadline. These deadlines typically run from November 1 through January 1 with a few as late as March 1.

Decisions from these colleges are mailed to applicants by a set date, usually April 1. Students must respond back to each college to which they were accepted by May 1 as to whether or not they will be coming in the fall. Most schools in this category will use the Common Application described later in this handbook. The Common Application is not available until August 1.

Early Decision - This is a binding contract. Only one such application may be pending. If accepted, a student must attend that school. Because of the obligation to attend if accepted, this option is not a very common one for most students, as a student is obligating himself prior to knowing about financial aid and potential scholarships.

Early Action - Unlike Early Decision, this process is not binding and thus is a very common approach to applying to schools that employ this method. Many Regular Decision schools will have this as an option. It is the same process with the same results it is just that student finds out a decision by winter break instead of waiting until April 1. The deadline for Early Action applications is typically November 1. Students may apply to one or several schools using Early Action.

Restricted Early Action - This is the same as Early Action except that the student may apply to only one Early Action school (similar to Early Decision except that this process is not binding). Very few schools use this. At the time of this printing, Yale, Stanford, Princeton, Harvard and Boston College are the only schools using this method. The following chart is to summarize the various options described above. Be sure to check with each school to which you are applying to confirm their deadlines.

STEPS IN THE COLLEGE PROCESS

Take Entrance Exams

Take both the SAT and ACT in the spring of your junior year. There is not any way to predict which test will be best for a particular student. You may retake one or both again in your senior year. Schools will use only the highest score you receive. Always send all scores when you take a test. Some schools will “superscore” meaning they use your best score for each section from multiple tests to compile a new total. Others will superscore for scholarships only, and some will use the highest score on an individual section for a scholarship even if they don’t use that test administration for admission purposes.

Gather Information

By the middle of summer prior to the senior year, students should have gathered information about several colleges. Factors to consider include: private vs. public, housing, scholarships, financial aid, extracurricular activities, general atmosphere of the school, degree programs, and entrance requirements. Factors that a college admissions office may consider in evaluating an applicant include: high school curriculum, grades, admission test scores, rank, essay, recommendations, interview, community service, work, summer activities, school involvement and leadership.

Narrow Your Choices

By the beginning of the senior year, students should know what schools to which they are applying; this usually includes a **Dream School** (a reach), a **Good Bet School** (good school/good match), and a **Safety Net School** (sure thing). It is important to consider the degree of difficulty in getting in to a particular school. Do not apply to only “DreamSchools”; it is important to have other options in case a dream school does not work out. A basic checklist for college selection is:

- Does the college offer the program I want to study?
- Do I have a good chance to be admitted?
- Can my family manage the costs?
- Is the location an acceptable distance from home?

Apply for Admission

The process of applying for admission varies from one college to another. It is your responsibility to know the steps and deadlines. At a minimum, applying means sending an application form, high school transcript and entrance exam scores to the college. You may apply even if you do not have an entrance exam score; it may be sent later. Schools may also request recommendations, a resume, an essay, an interview, etc. Know what is required and be prepared well before any deadlines.

Apply for Money

Over 90% of financial aid comes from either the federal government or from the school you will be attending. Fill out the FAFSA in January to access money from the government. Get on a school’s website to see what they have available; some will have financial aid deadlines in the fall.

ACT / SAT

When you apply for either the ACT or the SAT, you must indicate your high school code. **Grapeland High School Code: 442960.** This has to be on the registration form in order for your high school to receive your scores and include them on your transcript. It is strongly recommended that students take both the ACT and SAT. Many colleges will accept either and use a conversion chart to compare the two test score results.

ACT

Scoring

Students and colleges will still receive your ACT score based upon the 1-36 point scale for the ACT whether or not you take the writing test. If you also take the writing test, it will be reported as a separate score on a 1-12 scale but on the same score report form. There is no deduction for wrong answers (no penalty for guessing).

When to Take

The April and June tests offer the Test Information Release (TIF) (an additional \$18) which, in addition to your scores, will provide you with the questions and answers from the test which can be used for future preparation.

How to Register

Go to www.actstudent.org.

SAT

What is Tested

The SAT tests include Critical Reading, Math and Writing. Unlike the ACT, the writing test is not optional. The writing test has a 35 minute multiple choice test on grammar usage and word choice questions and a 25 minute essay. The SAT Critical Reading test has eliminated analogies and added short reading passages. The SAT Math test has eliminated quantitative comparison questions but will now go through Algebra II instead of just through Algebra 1.

Scoring

All three tests are scored on 200-800 scale with a top score of 2400, though many colleges still just look at the Critical Writing and Math parts which would have a top score of 1600. There is a correction factor of $\frac{1}{4}$ a point for each wrong answer.

When to Take

The January and May tests offer their "Question & Answer" services (an additional \$18) which will send you the questions/answers for this test to help you study if you retake the test. If you need to take a subject area test for college admissions (small group of selective schools) the best time is June, right when you have completed the courses the tests will assess.

How to Register

Go to www.collegeboard.org.

ACT / SAT TESTING DATES – DEADLINES

Most schools will accept either the ACT or the SAT. It is advisable to take both, regardless of where you are applying. Students will often do better on one test rather than the other and there is no way to predict which will be better for an individual student.

If a student takes the ACT and/or the SAT more than once, colleges/universities will use the highest score for admission purposes. A student who scores similarly on a couple of different administrations will probably not score much differently on the next test session unless something has happened in the meantime, i.e. another semester of school, working through one of the study guides, etc.

ACT & SAT Test Dates (2018-2019)

ACT			SAT		
ACT Test Date	Registration Deadline	Scores Back Date	SAT Test Date	Registration Deadline	Scores Back Date
September 8, 2018	Aug. 10	Sept. 18*	August 25, 2018	July 27	Sept. 7
October 27, 2018	Sept. 28	Nov. 6*	October 6, 2018	Sept. 7	Oct. 19
December 8, 2018	Nov. 2	Dec. 18*	November 3, 2018	Oct. 5	Nov. 16
February 9, 2019	Jan. 11	Feb. 19*	December 1, 2018	Nov. 2	Dec. 14
April 13, 2019	Mar. 8	Apr. 23*	March 9, 2019	Feb. 8	Mar. 22
June 8, 2019	May 3	Jun. 18*	May 4, 2019	Apr. 5	May 17
July 13, 2019	Jun. 14	Jul. 23*	June 1, 2019	May 3	Jul. 10

**anticipated dates*

FINDING COLLEGE INFORMATION

College Representative Visits

Some colleges will visit your campus on recruiting trips. These visits are an important way for you to discover information about a college and to establish a connection with someone at that campus. It is extremely important that you present yourself in a manner that reflects well upon you. A favorable impression can be very advantageous in the college admissions process.

Important Points:

Keep track of the colleges' scheduled visits.

The visits are for you to learn about the school and to demonstrate interest. Gather some information about the school prior to the visit, and ask a question showing that knowledge, i.e., "I've heard good things about your business school. What kind of internships do you have available?"

If the school is one in which you have particular interest, make sure you introduce yourself and thank the representative for coming.

Internet

All colleges will have a website. Many sites are collegename.edu. Look for information on undergraduate or freshman admissions. They will have information about their deadlines, financial aid and how to contact them regarding a campus visit.

College Fairs

In the fall college fairs are held. Many colleges from throughout the country are represented at these events. This is a great opportunity to pick up materials about those colleges. The person representing each school will be either an alumnus of the school or an admissions representative from the school.

Campus Visits

When possible, visit a college prior to accepting its offer to attend. A college may look good on paper but may or may not have the same feel when you are on campus. See the next page for additional information regarding college visits.

CAMPUS VISITS

When possible, visit the campuses in which you are interested. The feel of a campus may be different than the impression you have from talking to a representative and reading about it. It is very important to at least visit a school before accepting the offer of admission. When you visit a college, take notes on your impressions immediately after the visit. Do not let weather conditions on the day of your visit affect your judgment. Pay attention to your feelings about the campus, but also do not judge the college solely on the basis of your visit, remember the information you found before your visit.

Before you go, pick up permission slip from Mrs. Watson and get all of your teachers to sign and get a college representative to sign on the day you visit. Call the admissions office to arrange a campus tour, an interview (if available), and maybe an overnight stay. An overnight stay can be very beneficial in getting a feel for the campus. Get detailed directions to the campus and to the specific building where you will meet for the tour.

While there, take the tour, but also visit several classes and meet some professors from an area in which you are interested (the admissions office will be able to set that up for you).

Also visit the student center, library, computer centers, academic support center, etc., if not included on your tour. Most importantly, talk to as many students as possible. Get their opinions on campus life, classes, activities, what they like/dislike about the school.

Choosing a college is a big decision. Gather as much information as possible. The following are possible areas through which to evaluate a school. Decide which are important to you prior to your visit(s) and make sure that you get answers and/or information about those items.

Retention – freshman orientation programs, percent of freshman returning for sophomore year

Diversity – diversity of the campus, what cross-cultural experiences are available

Technology – connections available in the dorms, what computer labs do they have

Academic Challenge – do students get to leave their “comfort zone”

Active Learning – when are majors selected, what internships are available

Student-Faculty Interaction – availability of faculty, opportunities for research with faculty, average class size of freshman classes

Campus Environment – what do students like about the campus, public transportation, academic support, weekend activities

Out-of-Class Experience – community service, leadership opportunities, study abroad, student organizations

Post-College – career placement assistance, job placement percentages, will this school help you get to where you want to be

Housing Facilities

1. What percentage students live on campus? What percentage of the students stay on campus over the weekends?
2. What types of housing are available? Can the students cook in the residence halls? Do students who live on campus have to purchase a meal plan?
3. How are roommates selected? Can a student change if he/she is not compatible with the roommate?
4. Are the residence halls coed or single sex? What rules do you have regarding visitation?
5. Are residence halls quiet enough so that students can study in their rooms, or do they usually study in the library?
6. Are freshmen required to live on campus? Are residence halls available to students after their freshmen year?

Student Services

1. Are there counseling facilities on campus? Can a student go to an office or center to receive counseling for educational or personal problems? Does the faculty make itself available to students for consultation and guidance?
2. What facilities do you have for career guidance? Must students seek career guidance or is it a part of the educational program?
3. Are students given any assistance finding jobs in their fields of interest? What type of jobs are available on campus for students?
4. How much assistance is given to students in finding jobs upon graduation?
5. What are your graduation and retention rate? What percentage of last year's graduating class was successful in obtaining jobs related to their major fields of study?
6. What percentage of students go on to graduate school? Approximately how many students each year go on to medical/dental/law school, etc.? What is their acceptance rate into the graduate program?
7. If the college/university is associated with a religious denomination, are members of other denominations required to attend classes in religion of any kind?
8. Are there religious groups on campus? Are there places of worship on campus or nearby?

COLLEGE COMPARISONS

There are many sources of information that can help you explore potential colleges. Some of these may include: internet, college view books, college representatives, school counselor, parents, students, alumni, and professionals in field. As you collect information, you may find yourself accumulating random notes and piles of information. To make your comparison easy, you may want to use the "College Comparisons Worksheet" below .

College Name

Size/Location

- distance from home
- enrollment
- physical size of campus

Environment

- type of school (2 or 4 year)
- school setting (urban, rural)
- location and size of nearest city
- co-ed, male, female,
- religious affiliation

Admissions Requirements

- deadline
- tests required, including Writing Test
- average test scores, GPA, rank
- notification

Academics

- your major offered
- special requirements
- accreditation

Facilities

- academic
- recreational
- other

Activities

- clubs, organizations
- Greek life
- athletics, intramurals
- other

Campus Visits

- when
- special opportunities

Campus Visit Score Card

Copy 'n' carry
this score
card for each
college you
visit!

College Name: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Visit Checklist

Here are some ways to round out your visit. The main thing is to explore and get a sense of what it would be like to attend.

- Take a campus tour.
- Take pictures.
- Eat in the cafeteria.
- Pick up an application.
- Pick up financial aid forms.
- Look at bulletin boards for day-to-day life.
- Check out a real dorm room.
- Read student newspapers.
- Sit in on a class or two.
- Talk to a professor in a subject of interest.
- Talk to a coach in your sport.
- Walk around town.
- Go to a campus event—game, concert.
- Ask current students what they love/hate about the college.

Contacts

Write down the names of anyone you want to remember or contact later—admissions and financial aid staff, professors, coaches, or students.

name: _____
 contact: _____
 name: _____
 contact: _____
 name: _____
 contact: _____
 name: _____
 contact: _____
 name: _____
 contact: _____



College Search Online

- Get maps and directions.
- Create a college list and save these campus notes online.
- Look up the latest college info.
- See if you're on track to get in.
- Compare colleges side by side.
- Get deadline reminders.
- Find more college matches.

bigfuture.org/college-search

Campus Ratings

Rate these areas from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Jot down your impressions—things you like or don't like, things you want to remember.

Campus

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Dorms

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Classes/Academics

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Library

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Food

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Fitness Center

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Social Life

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Overall Feel

① ② ③ ④ ⑤

Other Notes: Can you picture yourself here?

APPLYING TO COLLEGE

The best thing to remember is to **Beat Deadlines, not Meet Them**. There is not any forgiveness in the college application process for those who do not meet deadlines. If you are not an organized person, become one!

Strategy

Apply to schools of varying selectivity. Do not put all your energy and efforts in to one level of school. Give yourself some options when it comes time to make a decision.

Consider applying early if applying to selective schools. By applying early, you will have a decision on that school or schools in December.

Applications – Even if something says a part of an application is optional, it is not—do it all. Choose applications in the follow order:

CommonApp.org – Over 450 schools nationwide (including Austin College, Rice, SMU, Southwestern, TCU and Trinity College in Texas) use this one application. You complete this one application and send it to any school that uses the Common Application. Schools that accept the Common Application do not give preference to this form or their own.

ApplyTexas.org - 35 public universities in Texas use this one application. Each school may have different supplements and/or scholarships that you will also complete. Three ApplyTexas schools also use the Common Application (TCU, SMU, and U of Dallas). For those schools, consider using the Common Application, as letters of recommendation cannot be sent through the ApplyTexas website.

School Application – Applications for schools that do not use the Common Application or the ApplyTexas are typically on the school's website where you may fill them out and submit them electronically.

Tips

Colleges may take 3-4 weeks to process your application. Do not be alarmed if their “status check” does not show them receiving your information immediately as they get thousands of pieces of information and update the “status check” manually.

Check your e-mail. Many schools will use e-mail to inform you if parts to your application are missing and will also communicate other needed information. Use the same e-mail for all applications and check it regularly.

Develop a resume. If you do not have a resume, create one. This will be helpful whenever you fill out college and scholarship applications.

Keep a copy of everything. On occasion, a school may lose part of what you have submitted. Also, you may be able to duplicate portions of one application to another.

The following are commonly asked questions about the college application process.

How do I know which schools will award credit for AP scores?

It varies widely as awarding of credit is up to each individual college/university. As an example, a 3 on an AP exam may be awarded credit at one institution while a 5 may be used only for placement purposes at another. Also, awarding of credit may depend on whether that test is part of a student's major, as some majors require students to take their courses to ensure a good foundation. To see college policies for AP exams go to:

www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy.

When are a student's GPA updated?

The Director of Student Service office updates the cumulative GPA in May and January and for seniors final update is at the end of the 5th 6 weeks.

What is meant by Automatic Acceptance?

There are two types. Many universities have minimum GPA / SAT or ACT scores by which students are automatically admitted. The second type is the state of Texas law requiring public universities to admit any student who graduates in the top 10% of his/her class with the one exception described in the next section. Below is the official statement for this second type:

Why does the University of Texas at Austin use the top 7% instead of top 10%?

State law allows a university to cap automatic acceptances at 75% of the incoming class. At this time, the University of Texas at Austin is the only school that needs to lower its automatic acceptance percentage to accomplish this and they have determined that capping at 7% for the University of Texas at Austin's freshman class of 2013-2014 will meet this goal.

When is the final ranking computed?

The final ranking is made at the end of the fifth six-weeks of the senior year.

How is a transcript ordered?

Students order college application official transcripts through the Director of Student Service office.

Should a student take the SAT or the ACT?

It is recommended that a student take both. There is no way to predict which test would be best for a particular student. Take both, see how you score and then if you want to retest, concentrate on the one on which you scored the best. Colleges have a comparison chart for the two tests and will use the best test scores for admission purposes.

What do colleges want to see in essays?

This is a chance for a student to let a college know him/her in a more personal way. Write about yourself in your own voice. If you write about an event or personal experience, be sure that you spend most of your essay on what you did as a result of that. Colleges want to see how you might have reacted, grown, etc. An essay is a chance for a college to get a good feel for the student. Have others review it for grammar, sentence structure, etc., but make sure it is still written in your voice. Also, make sure you give good thought to any other essay/short answer questions that may be on an application. Colleges know the time students spend on the main essay and look at the others to see if they are done well also.

What is FAFSA?

FAFSA is the acronym for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. College financial aid offices use the information provided through this application to determine a student's eligibility for federal financial aid such as Pell Grants, Work Study and Loans. The application is available at <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/> in January of the senior year. Be sure to use that site as other similar looking sites charge a fee for the same thing that can be done here for free.

Where can money be found to help fund college?

90% of the money to help a student attend college is either the result of filling out the FAFSA or money that is available from the school a student attends. So, priority one is to research college scholarships and fill out the FAFSA when it becomes available.

What is the Common Application?

It is an application for college that is accepted by over 400 colleges/universities. The website is www.commonapp.org. Students fill out one application that can be sent to each of the colleges. Most colleges will have a supplement they want in addition but for any schools that accept this it can be a great time saver.

What is Apply Texas?

It is the same thing as the Common Application except that it is for Texas schools. Most Texas schools accept the Apply Texas application. It is at www.applytexas.org.

How many college applications are recommended?

There is not a recommended number. Many students have one school in mind that has automatic acceptance guidelines; they know they meet these and apply early in the fall and are done. Others have several in which they are interested and will apply to those and wait for the results. The most important thing is to research schools and find ones that are a good fit.

Why does a college's status check show items haven't been sent in when they have?

When materials are sent to a college either by a student or by your school they usually take two to three weeks before the schools "status check" is updated. If, after that time period, they still don't show as being received, send an email to the admissions representative as a double check. Also, sometimes a student receives an email or notice from a school stating that there are missing items shortly after you know they have been sent. Again, it can take two to three weeks for their various systems to be aligned.

When should a student take the SAT and/or ACT?

A student may take them at any time, but usually students take them early in the spring of their junior year. This allows time to re-take them again later in the spring if a student feels he/she could score better. For most colleges, students can retest again in the fall of their senior year, but be sure and check with the schools of interest for the last test administration date they will accept.

Is it okay to take the SAT or the ACT more than once?

Yes, colleges will use the best test score that a student has whether that is the first test they took or any one after that.

Should a student send all of their test scores or select which ones to send?

The best advice is to send all of a student's scores with the one exception discussed in the next section. As mentioned above, a college will only use the best score a student has. Colleges look for ways to help students gain admittance rather than reasons not to admit. Most schools will use a student's best scores from one sitting. However, there are some schools who will "superscore," meaning that they will look for the best score on each portion of a test from multiple sittings. Also, some schools, while they don't superscore for admissions, may for scholarships. Another possibility is that a university or a college within the university will use one sitting for admissions and then for a particular scholarship look for the best score on one portion of an exam. Thus, with all the different methods schools use, it is best to send all scores. College representatives have assured us on multiple occasions that sending all scores will not disadvantage a student in the admissions process.

What are SAT/ACT Optional Schools?

Some schools are making the SAT/ACT test optional for admissions. For those schools, students may be better advised to wait until they receive their scores to decide whether to send them for admission purposes. Review college websites to see if colleges offer this option.

What if test scores arrive before the application?

An application file is begun when the first piece of the application arrives whether it is test scores or the actual application. The college will not review the file until it is complete.

When should a student apply to college?

It is recommended that students complete their research by the beginning of the senior year and be prepared to apply in the fall. Double check college websites to review their application deadlines.

Is it important to complete the "optional" part of a college application?

"Optional" is not optional. Any time that word is seen, automatically change that in your mind to "mandatory." Colleges feel that if a student is truly interested in attending their school a student will complete the entire application neatly and with evident care.

How many teacher recommendations are needed and who should write them?

Colleges will vary in this regard. Most large public universities do not request any as they have too many applications to evaluate. When needed, colleges want to have a junior year teacher from the four basics or foreign language write the recommendation. This is because they have the most current knowledge of you, your work and your growth during a school year.

If a student is applying to multiple schools, will the teacher send the recommendation letter to all schools?

Yes, the student should give a list of colleges to the teacher indicating where they need to be sent along with the college deadlines. If the school is not a CommonApp school and the letter must be mailed, the student must supply addressed, stamped envelopes .

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

APPLICATIONS

First, list your schools you are applying to. There are three types of applications to four-year schools.

Common Application (www.commonapp.org)

ApplyTexas (www.ApplyTexas.org) – use this for any Texas school that does not accept the Common Application.

School's own application – for any other school

Applications to two-year schools are usually done on-line at their website, some may use ApplyTexas

TRANSCRIPTS

Official transcripts for colleges may be requested in your campus Director of Student Service office. A final transcript should be requested at end of the year to be sent to your college/university.

SAT/ACT SCORES

You must send those scores if you did not have them sent to the school when you took the test; they are not on your transcript. Go to www.collegeboard.org to order SAT scores and to www.actstudent.org for ACT scores.

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Colleges that accept the Common Application and some that have their own application will want letters of recommendation, but ApplyTexas schools do not. If you are not sure, see your counselor. If you need a letter, do the following:

Teacher Letter – Allow teachers a minimum of two weeks to write a recommendation. Use the same teacher when recommendations are needed for different schools. Most but not all will have a Teacher Evaluation form they want completed with the letter. Each teacher will have his/her own method to complete what you need. See that teacher early and have what is requested to that teacher in a timely manner.

Counselor Letter - Allow a minimum of two weeks prior to your first deadline. Complete the Recommendation Letter Request form if your campus utilizes a form.

POST-HIGH SCHOOL INTERNET SITES

COLLEGE INFORMATION

Comprehensive Information

www.texascollegeandcareer.org/ – great site for college information
www.collegedata.com – great site for college information
www.ucan-network.org – a great source for enrollment, student body statistics on most schools
www.collegeresults.org – retention and graduation rates for all schools compiled by the U.S. Dept. of Ed.
www.petersons.com – has the most detailed college search engine
www.princetonreview.com
www.students.gov – Also information about internships, fellowships, and military and government links

College Links

www.ctcl.com – Links to the small liberal arts colleges in the book 40 Colleges That Change Lives [http://](http://www.ctcl.com)
www.everychanceeverytexan.org/about/scholars/ - Texas colleges and financial aid
www.campustours.com – virtual tours for many campuses plus links to their websites

College Applications

www.commonapp.org – The Common Application on line, do the on-line version, not the downloadable one.
www.applytexas.org – Common application for public Texas schools, also the scholarship application

Entrance Exams / AP Exams

www.collegeboard.com – SAT registration and information, AP Information, college search for mid-SAT ranges and AP scores accepted.
www.actstudent.org – ACT registration and information
www.collegeboard.com/satskillsinsight - Great tool to help you become familiar with the SAT, free
www.INeedAPencil.com – Free on-line SAT test preparation, 60 lessons and two full-length tests

Other

www.usnews.com – College rankings, select the Education button
www.eligibilitycenter.org – Athletes must register here in fall of senior year to be recruited
www.nacacnet.org –college fairs, college space availability listings in the spring, see “student resources” tab
www.essayedge.com/college/essayadvice/samples - Many examples of good college entrance essays

FINANCIAL AID

www.pin.ed.gov – Get your PIN (student and parent) to fill out the FAFSA online
www.fafsa.ed.gov – FAFSA online, basis for all federal financial aid
www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov – Fill out basic form; see the government’s estimated family contribution for college
www.meritaid.com – Scholarships by school; can look at specific schools or do a search by your criteria
www.fastweb.com - Scholarship search engine, deadlines may be incorrect so look at each scholarship
www.financialaidtips.com – Scholarship search engine, newsletter, sign up for scholarship of the day info.
www.nul.org/scholarships.html - The Nat’l Urban League has put together a large listing of scholarship links
www.collegenet.com/mach25 - Scholarship search engine; can do keyword searches for specific interests
<http://www.blackexcel.org/200-Scholarships.html> - Listing of minority scholarships
www.finaid.org - Excellent site answering questions about financial aid
www.studentaid.ed.gov - Information about US Government funds for college

JOBS/CAREERS

<http://www.bls.gov/oco> - Occupational Outlook Handbook online which includes job descriptions, working conditions, training and required education and earnings
<http://online.onetcenter.org> - Career exploration: comprehensive information on skills, abilities, knowledge, work activities and interests associated with occupations.

FINANCIAL AID TERMINOLOGY

Award Letter – Colleges will send each accepted student a letter detailing the financial aid package that they can provide to help you attend college. Review such letters carefully. Two different schools may offer the same amount of money but one may have a lot more loans than another. You do not have to accept the money that is offered if you do not want to (loans, work-study, etc.). Each school will have instructions for how to decline any of the money that is awarded to you.

FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid – This form is the basis for all federal aid (Pell Grants, Work-Study, and Stafford Loans). It should be filled out in January of a student's senior year. Be sure and use the website www.fafsa.ed.gov. Other websites that look a lot like this will charge money for this free application, so use this one only.

SAR – Student Aid Report – a report summarizing the information you submitted through the FAFSA. When a student receives this, it must be checked over for any submission errors that may be noted. A student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) will be printed on the document.

CSS Profile – A financial aid application that is required in addition to the FAFSA by some select schools. Register for it in November; fill out in January if you will be applying to a school that requires the CSS. If doing the CSS Profile, do it before completing the FAFSA, as most of the information may be copied onto the FAFSA form but not the other way around.

EFC – Expected Family Contribution – the amount of money a family is expected to contribute to a student's education based upon information submitted through the FAFSA.

Cost of Attendance – The total cost to attend school for one year. This usually includes tuition, fees, room, board, books, supplies, travel and personal expenses. This will vary from school to school.

Need Analysis – The process of determining the demonstrated need of an applicant for financial aid

Financial Need – The difference between the cost of a school and the amount you and your family are expected to contribute (the difference between Cost of Attendance and EFC).

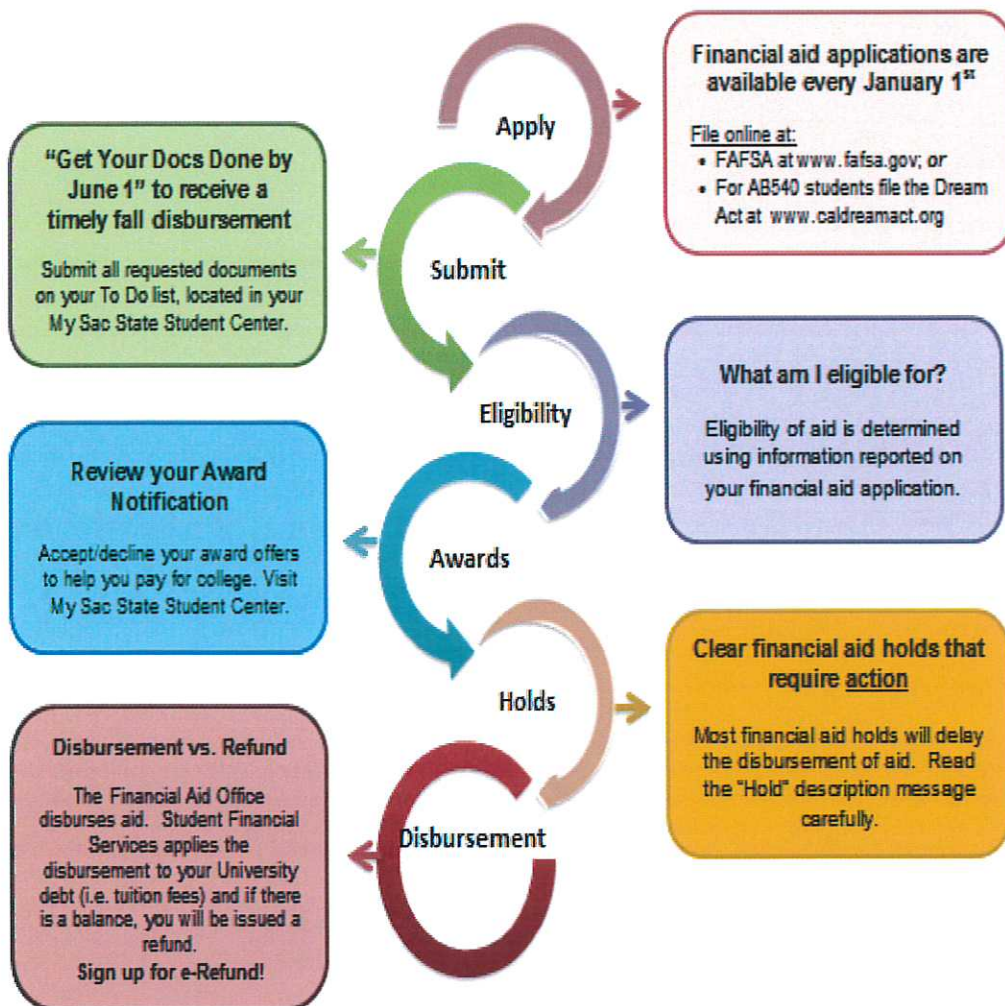
Pell Grant – from federal government through the FAFSA, does not need to be repaid. Money is sent to the institution a student attends to be credited against expenses that are incurred.

Stafford Loan – federal loan through the FAFSA and must be paid back. A subsidized loan means the government pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school; an unsubsidized loan means the interest accrues while the student is in school. Both loans must be paid back over time, usually starting about six months after graduation from college. A good place to find lenders and compare rates on Stafford Loans is www.simpletuition.com. Additional lenders may be found at www.finaid.org/loans/educationlenders.phtml. To see what your postgraduate payments will look like, go to www.finaid.org.

Work-Study – eligibility is determined through the FAFSA. If eligible, a student has a job on campus that is paid for by the federal government.

Undergraduate Student – Student that is enrolled in a postsecondary institution who has not earned a first degree (this would include all graduating high school students).

Steps to Financial Aid



What's so great about doing FAFSA online?

The *Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA™)* is available to fill out online at www.fafsa.gov. The site is known as *FAFSA on the Web™*. You should use *FAFSA on the Web* instead of a paper FAFSA because:

It's quick.

- You'll get your results as much as three weeks faster than someone who uses the paper FAFSA. Speed is important when schools are awarding limited financial aid resources.
- You have instant access to an estimated Expected Family Contribution and estimates of how much federal aid you might receive.

It's easy.

- *FAFSA on the Web* has detailed help screens for every question.
- You can get live, private online help from a customer service representative.
- Based on your answers to certain questions, *FAFSA on the Web* skips lots of questions that don't apply to you. If you fill out the paper FAFSA, you'll have to read all those questions and figure out whether they are relevant to you.

It's accurate.

- *FAFSA on the Web* notices when you've supplied answers that contradict each other, and it gives you the chance to correct your mistakes before submitting the information.
- Because of the online help and the fact that *FAFSA on the Web* checks for contradictory answers, your online application is less likely than a paper FAFSA to be delayed by the need for corrections.

It's safe.

- *FAFSA on the Web* uses encryption, which means the information you send to the site is turned into code so that anyone attempting to access your information will not be able to read it.

Okay, I believe you! What do I do now?

- Get a personal identification number called a PIN at www.pin.ed.gov.
- Find out what documents you need using the checklist in "What Information Do I Need When I Fill Out the FAFSA?" at www.studentaid.ed.gov/pubs.
- Fill out the *FAFSA on the Web Worksheet* at www.studentaid.ed.gov/worksheet (this step is optional; the worksheet was designed for students who feel more comfortable filling something out on paper before going online to enter their application information).
- Fill out the FAFSA at www.fafsa.gov.
- Keep an eye on your e-mail inbox for a response and further instructions.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND YOU

Ten Steps to Success

Scholarships offer money you don't have to pay back. Thousands of scholarships are awarded each year by colleges, organizations, corporations, clubs, churches, and individuals. Call the financial aid office at the school you plan to attend.

More than 90% of scholarships and financial aid come directly from the college. While there are a great number of scholarships available, they are difficult to get because so many of them have specific eligibility requirements and deadlines. Listed scholarships will tell you what audience they are targeting.

You should use the "free" scholarship search engines available on the internet. In addition, talk to the director of the activities, such as band, dance, art, etc in which you are involved. They may know of scholarship opportunities at various colleges and universities through their associations with fellow directors. When looking for scholarships, keep the following in mind:

1. The process requires time, work, and dedication on the part of students and parents. Successful investigation of scholarships requires an on-going, yearlong commitment with critical attention to deadlines. Contact the financial aid officer of the college being considered and request information concerning scholarships and financial aid.
2. Start early. Now is the time to begin and continue your scholarship search. Many scholarships have fall deadlines and require specific steps to be taken to meet eligibility requirements.
3. Use the Internet to search for scholarships. See below for a list of scholarship search engines.
4. Check out your campus scholarship websites as well as the Klein ISD College Knowledge webpage.
5. Listen carefully to announcements made on the public address system. Share this information with parents and investigate applicable scholarships noting deadlines for application and specific procedures.
6. Investigate scholarships via printed books and publications in the school library, public library, Guidance Office, and community bookstores.
7. Apply for local scholarships. These are generally for smaller amount (i.e., \$100 to \$1,000). However, since the competition is not as great, they can be easier to obtain.
8. Network—check the scholarship opportunities with your community organizations, church, and your place of employment, clubs, and private groups.
9. Private colleges are often more generous in awarding scholarships. Do not rule out a private school until you have considered its scholarship opportunities and overall scholarship and financial aid package.
10. Pay particular attention to deadlines. Scholarship opportunities become available throughout a student's senior year, and deadlines are sometimes only weeks after being publicized.

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

There are some things students can do throughout their high school years to put themselves in a more competitive position to receive scholarships. It is important for students to document activities and experiences through a resume which will enhance senior college and scholarship applications. Here are some suggestions:

- Start to develop your academic resume.
- Follow the directions on the application very carefully. Type-written applications are strongly encouraged! Be neat, grammatically correct, concise, and make sure all application materials are included. Just as important, remember that the committee can only evaluate you based on what you include in the application. This is not the time to be modest. Please “toot your horn, boast, and sell yourself!”
- Continue to be involved or get involved in school, community and church activities. Talk to your counselor if you need ideas.
- Volunteer and give back your community!
- Participate in leadership conferences or workshops.
- Get to know your counselor and at least a couple teachers on a more personal level. These are the important people who could write your recommendations and the more they know about what makes you a unique individual, the better the recommendation they will be able to write.
- Begin to formulate different essays about your goals, both educationally and career. Hot topics for scholarship application essays include:
 - “How will your presence enrich our campus community?”
 - “Tell us what you would like us to know about you besides gpa and test scores.”
 - “What are your educational and career goals?”
 - “Discuss an activity/experience that had a significant impact in your life.”

TUITION EXEMPTION PROGRAMS

The State of Texas has several programs to help students pay for college tuition and/or fees. The following is a list of Texas programs that provide exemption from tuition and/or fee charges for certain students attending Texas colleges and universities.

Read these carefully to see if you qualify for any exemptions.

Valedictorian

- Provides fee tuition to certain students who are the highest-ranking student in their high school graduation class
- Program Benefit-Two semesters of free tuition

Blind

- Provides fee tuition and fees to certain students who are legally blind.
- Program benefit-Free tuition and fees for life

Foster Care and Adopted Children Foster Children

- Provides free tuition and fees to certain students who were once in a foster care under the conservatorship of the Texas Department of Protective Services on or after the day preceding students 14th birthday, if student eligible for adoption on or after that day, or day student graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma.

Adopted Children

- Program Benefit-Free tuition and fees for life
- Students through the Texas Department of Protective Services were adopted Deaf
- Provides free tuition and fees to certain students who meet the state definition of being deaf.
- Program Benefit-Free tuition and fees for life.

Children of Deceased or disabled Firemen, Peace Officers, Game Wardens, and Employees Correctional Facilities

- Provides free tuition and fees to certain students whose parent was killed or disabled in the line of duty while employed as a Firemen, Peace Officer, and Game Warden or as an Employee of a Correctional Institution.

Program Benefit – 150 hours free tuition; reduced fees.

For more detailed information visit www.collegeforalltexas.com

TYPES OF SCHOLARSHIPS

These vary in amount and are awarded on the basis of achievement, talent, and personal qualities. Scholarships are gifts and do not have to be repaid. Grade point average, SAT/ACT scores, extra curricular activities, community service and financial need determine the majority of scholarship winners. Basically there are five kinds of scholarships:

1. Academic- Generally based on a student's cumulative grade-point average for grades 9-12, but college entrance exam scores can be combined with GPA or used alone to determine scholarship eligibility. The college offers most of the academic scholarships. You must apply through the college.
2. Talent – Art, music, drama, etc. An audition, performance competition, or portfolio probably will be required. The individual department of the college issues talent scholarships.
3. Athletic – The high school coach and the college generally confer about students who are candidates for athletic scholarships.
4. ROTC – See Army Recruiter
5. Miscellaneous – Memorial scholarships, trust funds, community organizations, honorary (no financial aid), professional organizations, employees, unions, and such.

Tips for applying for Scholarships/Fellowships:

- Find out about Scholarship programs; check books, websites and pamphlets on scholarships and financial aid.
- Speak to your high school counselor about the availability of scholarships
- Every college has its own scholarship program. Obtain an application from each school you are considering attending, fill out neatly and carefully, and return within the set time limit.
- Take the SAT or ACT ☐ Explore a variety of possibilities: For example, place of employment – do they offer any scholarships?

TEXAS UNIFORM ADMISSIONS CODE

Top students are now eligible for automatic admission to any public university in Texas.

Under House Bill 588 passed by the 75th Legislature in 1997, students who are in the top 10 percent of their graduating class are eligible for automatic admission to any public university in Texas. Some institutions also automatically admit students who are in the top 25 percent of their class.

To be eligible for automatic admission, a student must: Graduate in the top percent of his/her class at a public or private high school in Texas, or graduate in the top 10 percent of a high school operated by the U.S. Department of Defense and be a Texas resident or eligible to pay resident tuition;

- Enroll in college no more than two years after graduating from high school; and
- Submit an application to a Texas public university for admission before the institution's application deadline. Since deadlines vary, please check with the specific university to verify the application deadline.
- You are admitted to the university, but not necessarily the major of your choice. Once a student is admitted, a university may review a student's high school records to determine if the student is prepared for college-level course work. A student who needs additional preparation may be required to take a developmental, enrichment, or orientation course during the semester prior to the first semester of college.

What if you are not in the top 10 percent? You should be aware that students who ARE NOT in the top 10 percent of their class may also be favorably considered for college admission under other criteria.

University admissions officers may also consider a student's academic record, socio-economic background, performance on standardized tests, such as the SAT or ACT, community activities, and proficiency in more than one language.

Each university is required to publish in its catalog the alternate factors it considers in making admission decisions. Consult the university you are interested in for details about admissions criteria for students who are not in the top 10 percent. Top 10% rule does not apply to the University of Texas at Austin.

TRADE AND TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

TRADE OR TECHNICAL SCHOOL

Students who do not desire to pursue a four-year program leading to a college degree can obtain a marketable skill in two years or less. Before you sign up for a trade, technical, or correspondence course, define your goals.

Do you want to learn a skill, prepare for a test, great a job, or get a license or certification?

How to Choose a School

- The best way to check out a school is to visit it yourself.
- Choose a day when classes are in session.
- Talk to students to see if they are happy with their training.
- Look around at the buildings and equipment to see how they compare with the catalog description.
- If possible, talk to graduates to see what they think of the school.
- Trade and technical schools emphasize placement of their graduates.
- Because the reputation of a good placement rate is essential for a school to thrive year after year, be sure to obtain information about the placement rate.
- Ask prospective employers you might want to work for, what they think about the school. Call recent graduates about what they think about the school.
- Call the agency that licenses or accredits the school to see if it meets required standards.
- Call the Better Business Bureau to find out if there have been any complaints about the school.

Admission Requirements

The first requirement for admission to most schools is a desire to learn. Generally, accredit private, trade, technical schools, and junior colleges require a high school diploma. Some schools require certain placement tests given on their own campuses as a screening process for specific programs. Check requirements of the school you plan to attend. Remember. . .

Check with El Paso Community College to see if they offer training in the field you are interested in.

- List of Trade Schools Computer Labs, Inc.
- Computer Career Center
- Western Technical Institute
- Southwest Career College
- Life Ambulance EMS Academy
- Kaplan College
- Center for Employment Training
- Tri-State Cosmetology Institute
- International Business College

WORK OPTION

THE WORK OPTION

At some point, almost everyone ends up in the workplace. No matter when you plan to receive that first full-time paycheck, there are some things you will need to do to prepare yourself for the world of work. As you progress through high school, take courses that will prepare you for college as well as a career. It is a good idea to take college preparatory courses even if you are not planning on attending college right away because getting a good education always pays off no matter what you decide to do. Work training and work experience in high school will also pay off when attempting to seek employment after high school.

There are five steps in preparing for a career or for college followed by a career:

Take an aptitude test – There are great resources on-line. The ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is another good test that can help with understanding your aptitudes and possible careers.

Research various careers – Career books in the library as well as internet websites are great resources for learning about careers. The “Jobs/Careers” section of the “Post-High School Internet Sites” sheet earlier in this handbook has several web sites that you should explore. Job shadow when you get the chance to see first-hand what a job is really like. Do volunteer work in an area of interest to see if that occupation fits your talents and interests.

Network – Become familiar with people in the industry of interest to you. This can happen through research listed above, contacts through family and friends, and actual job experience.

Create a portfolio – Have on hand information that will help when seeking employment. This should include items such as a resume, writing samples, transcript, letters of recommendation and portfolio of work that you have done.

Apply – Once you have an occupation in mind, set up interviews and fill out applications while still in school. Have a plan set for after graduation

Writing a letter to apply for a job

- Address it personally to a person (not “To Whom It May Concern”)
- Be brief
- Introduce yourself to the reader
- Indicate the position for which you are applying
- Mention how you found out about the position (friend, newspaper, etc.)
- Include something about yourself that will arouse interest about your experience and accomplishments
- Request an interview
- Sign and date

The Interview

- Arrive early
- Look your best and dress professionally
- Be yourself – you are both deciding if you and the job are a good match
- Speak up and furnish the interviewer with information needed to make an informed decision
- Practice with a friend by going over the following common questions:
 - Tell me a little bit about yourself
 - Are you at your best when working alone or in a group
 - What are your career goals
 - What are your questions for me (always have some, show some knowledge of the position)

MILITARY OPTION

THE MILITARY OPTION

The military is an option for a career and/or money for college. Thoroughly research the branches of the military in which you are most interested. Request brochures, talk to recruiters, and visit with family and friends with experience in the military.

Recruiter Information

Air Force

12300 North Fwy
Houston, TX 77037
281-872-5438
<http://www.airforce.com/>

Army

27732 State Hwy 249
Tomball, Texas 77375
281-516-7847
<http://www.goarmy.com/>

National Guard

17175 Tomball Pkwy
Houston, Texas
281- 469-64239
www.nationalguard.com

Marine Corps

27746 State Hwy 249
Tomball, Texas 77375
281-516-1744
<http://www.marines.com/>

Navy

17776 State Hwy 249
Houston, Texas 77064
281-469-2590
www.navy.com/

U.S. Service Academies

The service academies are four-year degree programs followed by a commitment of service. Acceptance to a service academy requires a congressional or executive nomination by one of your U.S. Senators or Representatives or the Vice President. Children of career or retired military personnel may seek a nomination through the Office of the President. You are encouraged to pursue any and all of the avenues to increase your chances of securing a nomination. Generally, the timeline to apply to an academy starts in the spring of your junior year. If you are interested in an appointment and have not begun process you need to begin immediately.

CAREERS

There are many jobs that do not require a college degree. Some require on-the-job training, apprenticeship programs or a relatively small amount of training. However, keep in mind the following statistics from the U.S. Commerce Department.

Degree	Lifetime Earnings
High School	\$1.2 million (\$26,000 a year for 45 years)
College Degree	\$2.1 million
Master's Degree	\$2.5 million
Doctoral Degree	\$3.4 million
Professional Degree	\$4.4 million

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics lists the following careers as some of those that earn above average wages with a small amount of training – from just a few weeks to one year. The wages listed are the median amounts earned May, 2009.

Hourly Professions

\$25.39 Aircraft Mechanics
\$17.03 Auto Mechanics
\$18.26 Automobile Body Repair
\$18.98 Carpenters
\$19.27 Chefs / Head Cooks
\$16.71 Welders
\$22.68 Electricians
\$21.66 Firefighters
\$12.27 Plumbers and Pipe Fitters
\$26.71 Telecommunications Equipment Installers/Repairers
\$18.14 Truck Drivers
\$17.90 Carpet and Tile Setters
\$21.12 Rail Transportation Workers
\$22.47 Brick Masons and Stonemasons
\$17.88 Drywall Installers

Salaried Professions – *Some in this group are salaried plus a commission.*

\$35,590 Appliance Repair
\$24,780 Bank Tellers
\$27,070 Cosmetologists
\$44,010 Executive Secretaries / Administrative Assistants
\$51,400 Food Service Managers
\$50,080 Paralegals
\$48,940 Postal Service Workers
\$55,180 Police Officers
\$53,100 Real Estate Agents