Philosophy

“Applying to college is a process of decision-making. Although I would not agree with those who say that where you go to college is the most important decision you will ever make, I would agree it is one of the most important...Applying to college, as well as being an exercise in learning how to make decisions, is an important process of self-realization – a period of learning about oneself.”

Frank C. Leana, Getting Into College

The college admissions process presents many challenges and can seem, at times, to be complex, confusing, and frustrating; it can also be interesting, rewarding, and exhilarating—all at the same time. Whether you hope to attend a four-year college immediately or are considering one of many other options (several will be discussed in this handbook), the goal for the process and for the College Counseling Staff is to help you find the match that best suits your needs.

As you progress through the various stages of the college search and admissions process, you will need to assess your strengths, weaknesses, needs, and values. If you use this self-knowledge well, you will make better choices in considering your future plans. The goal of this process should be to find a university that best meets your personal needs and provides an academic and personal environment in which you can grow. It is important to not think of college admissions as a game—it is not. This experience is an opportunity for you to find your match with an institution that will best serve you now and later in life.

While you are taking control of this process, MBA’s College Counseling Staff is here to help you in a number of ways: to help you understand the admissions process, to accurately evaluate your achievements and aspirations, to assist in the gathering of information about schools, and, finally, to help you to make an informed and not arbitrary choice. We do not have magic wands or possess special powers to “get you into college”—that is your job. Our job is to help you to do your best during every phase of this endeavor. It is your responsibility to make sure that your counselor is apprised of your plans and goals and notified of any changes when they occur. The pressures surrounding this choice due to college rating systems, the media, financial issues, test anxiety, and the general uncertainty that you feel as you think about your future are hard to avoid. It can be managed, however, if you communicate openly and often with your parents and counselor. Consistent communication is the key and will help you achieve the best results.

Mr. Klausner, Mrs. Maddux, and Ms. Raines, as well as the faculty and staff of Montgomery Bell Academy, wish you only the best as you progress towards graduation. We look forward to assisting you in any way that we can.

The College Counseling Office

The College Counseling Staff is available to answer questions from students and parents. The choices you make regarding the classes you take, clubs, athletics, and non-school related activities throughout your high school experience will all eventually have an impact on your college selection process.
The college search will begin in earnest in the second part of your junior year. Group meetings for parents and students will help to answer general questions about academic, extracurricular and testing issues. Following the January group program, juniors will meet individually with college counselors. This meeting will include a review of the Junior Questionnaire, serve as an initial means for the student and counselors to become better acquainted, and provide direction in starting the college search. Later in the spring parents may schedule a meeting with the college counselor to review these same issues. **Open communication between the parents, student, and college counselor is the only way to ensure a thorough, logical college search.** Juniors are required to meet with two different college counselors in the spring of their junior year. Subsequent meetings can also be scheduled as needed during the summer and senior year.

Throughout the college search process, the College Counseling Staff will be keeping parents and students informed in many ways. As questions arise, however, **this handbook should always be your first point of reference.** You should review it carefully and keep it handy for easy access at various points in the process. The *College Planning Timeline* and *Testing Schedule* will help you to plan your year and meet important deadlines. Updated information and reminders of deadlines may also be sent to students as needed. It is important for students to check with the College Counseling Staff regularly for any last minute information. Evening workshops will also be available to parents and students during junior and senior years to address specific concerns about the process such as financial aid and essay writing. Meetings with the entire class will also be held as needed.

As seniors begin to apply to colleges in the fall, the College Counseling Staff is responsible for sending student information to each college and university where the student has filed an application. This information, sent with the college’s *Secondary School Report Form*, includes the student transcript, a comprehensive letter of recommendation and an MBA School Profile which includes grade distribution information. Several steps must be followed to be sure that this will occur:

- Students must schedule an individual meeting with their counselor early in the senior year to review their transcript.

- **A Common Application Secondary School Report Form must be filed in the College Counseling Office by mid August (at the latest).**

- The MBA letter of recommendation will be written by your counselor and will be comprehensive. Information for this letter will come from many sources including your teachers, coaches, advisors, and your permanent record. Please note that the most important source of information for this will be from **the student**. The Junior Questionnaire, completed before the first student/counselor meeting, provides vital information about you and your goals. Be sure to complete this form carefully and thoughtfully.

- Parents and peers also provide vital information for these letters by completing the *Parent Recommendation* forms for use by the counselor. This form should be completed and submitted no later than September of the student’s senior year.

*Any College or University to which a student submits an application must be added to the college application list and students must request a transcript in order to generate an application packet. Students must complete the Secondary School Report Form from*
the Common Application and put the College/University on the Common Application for a school packet (school report form, transcript, and letters of recommendation) to be sent to the College/University. **It is the responsibility of the STUDENT to be sure that the other application materials (the personal section, SAT or ACT score) are sent to the colleges by the deadline of each individual school.**

**IMPORTANT APPLICATION DEADLINES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application Plan</th>
<th>MBA Deadline</th>
<th>College Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Early Decision I/Action</td>
<td>October 1</td>
<td>Nov 1 - Dec 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular Decision/ED II</td>
<td>December 1</td>
<td>Jan-Feb</td>
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<td>Rolling/Priority</td>
<td>2 wks prior to desired postmark or by December 1</td>
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**The College Counseling Resource Center** is filled with valuable information that will help you throughout your search. Be sure to visit the CCRC regularly as updated information about scholarships and schools arrives on a daily basis throughout the year. Here is a partial list of what you can find in the CCRC:

- College/University Catalogues
- Viewbooks
- Copies of The Common Application
- Computers linked to the Net
- Information on specific programs or departments at certain schools
- Standardized test information booklets and registration bulletins
- Standardized test practice materials
- Financial Aid information
- Scholarship information
- Applications for some schools

We encourage students to utilize the web sites of colleges and universities. These sites usually include viewbooks, catalogues, applications (electronic or those that can be downloaded and printed), and information about financial aid, specific programs, and special opportunities. There are web sites that are also helpful for finding scholarship programs or searching for colleges. A list of some of these sites can be found elsewhere in the Guidebook.

Please remember that the print materials in the resource center are for everyone. After using any of this information, kindly **return it to where you found it** so that others may use it too. If you want to borrow materials overnight or over the weekend, you must sign them out with the office manager. It is your responsibility to return them **promptly** to the office manager when you are finished with them.

**College Planning Timeline**

**What You Have Done and What You Will Do**

College planning actually begins with course selection. Each student is encouraged to take courses that are best suited to the individual’s abilities and achievement. College admissions offices repeatedly say that the level of challenge seen in the course load and the grades earned are the most important information used to make
admissions decisions. It is important to talk with your advisors as you progress through MBA to be sure that you are taking the right courses at the right degree of rigor for you.

**Freshman Year**

**September** Get your year off to a great start by keeping yourself organized, seeing teachers for extra help as soon as any problems arise, and by realizing that grades earned in the freshman year really do matter to colleges.

Try a new sport, join a new club or activity, look for community service opportunities, or volunteer to serve on a class committee.

**October** PSAT – Though they are just for practice, the Preliminary SAT is something to be taken seriously. Results can point to both areas of strength and to those that may need some attention.

**February** Students meet with their academic advisors to plan courses for next year. Teachers recommend students for honors sections based upon performance to date. Choose rigor whenever possible.

**May** Begin to study for final examinations early in the month. Review and correct all past tests and quizzes. Organize a “study group” and challenge each other with subject-specific trivia.

**Summer** Use the summer to hone your artistic, athletic, and leadership skills. Make reading for pleasure a part of your daily routine.

**Sophomore Year**

**September** Avoid the “Sophomore Slump” by getting off to a great start. Worry as much about getting good grades throughout the year as you do about getting your driver’s license.

**October** PSAT – The Preliminary SAT scores give a “snapshot” of a student’s tested ability, and can point to areas in English and mathematics where further review may be helpful.

**February** Students meet with their academic advisors to plan courses for next year. Schedules should include as much challenge as appropriate, and elective courses should be chosen from areas of interest. Speak with a college counselor if you have any questions about what to take.

**May** Attend the National College Fair at the Nashville Convention Center. This annual event brings many college and university admissions officers to town and provides an initial opportunity for students and families to gather information about a variety of schools. Check the MBA Calendar for the specific day and time.

Begin to study for final examinations early in the month. Go to extra help sessions as often as possible.
June  Offered on the first Saturday in June the SAT I (reasoning test) & SAT II (subject tests) are key components of the college application process. Sophomores do not normally take the SAT I at this time, but some SAT II Subject Tests in areas like chemistry or foreign language (following the third year level) may be appropriate.

MBA and Harpeth Hall offer annual, joint college tours to various regions of the country. Not designed to identify “first choice” colleges, these trips provide an opportunity to see a range of differing types of colleges and universities. Details and reservation forms are sent in December.

Summer is a great time to work, volunteer, or travel; these experiences can help students to learn about possible career paths, potential areas of study for college majors, or simply more about themselves. Visits to colleges can help to assess preferences for size, type, location, and culture.

Junior Year

September – November, attend as many college admissions representative meetings as you can. Sign-up in the Counseling Office in advance.

In October, take the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT—required of all juniors).

Take the SAT Reasoning Test for the first time in December or January. Note: if you decide to deviate from the testing calendar in any way, please discuss with a college counselor first!

Attend the College Night for Juniors and Their Parents in January.

A panel of Deans and Directors of Admission from schools across the country will present information and answer questions about the college application process on Thursday, January 27 at 7:00 p.m. in the Frances Bond Davis Theatre at Harpeth Hall.

Take the ACT in December, February, April or June as some students perform better on this college admission test than they do on the SAT.

Check Family Connection and the College Counseling Office bulletin board for announcements about evening meetings hosted by colleges, scholarship opportunities, summer programs, college fairs in the area, etc.

Starting in February students will begin to have individual meetings with Mrs. Maddux, Mr. Klausner and Ms. Raines. Your first individual meeting occurs before spring break. Be sure to complete Junior Questionnaire on Family Connection before this meeting.

The NACAC College Fair will be held at the Convention Center in May. Do a little research before you go and make the most of this opportunity to meet with college representatives!
Spring Break is the perfect opportunity to visit a few colleges. Try to make a varied list to learn about different types of institutions. Your counselor will help.

Begin to collect (and read) college materials sent to you and invest a little time in developing a good filing system for it all. Try to look over as much as you can, even if you have never heard of the college or university before or if it is in a region that you never seriously considered—it could be a good match!

Family meetings will be held with your counselor during April and May to discuss colleges that you will visit over the summer, strategies, your senior year plans, etc.

Retake the SAT Reasoning Test on the first Saturday of May.

On the first Saturday of June, take the SAT Reasoning Test or up to 3 SAT Subject Tests; one in math and two more in either your best subjects or in whatever is required by your universities—talk to your counselor and teachers!

Think of summer activities that will help strengthen your resume while you explore areas of interest—internships (paid or unpaid), Exchange Programs, Wilson Summer Language Grants, Governor’s School, college/university summer programs, community service, research projects, travel, and working (either full or part-time) can all help you learn about yourself and fine-tune your goals.

Talk to two teachers before the end of May to ask them to write recommendations for you in the fall.

Attend the college application workshop on May 26

**Summer before Senior Year**

Visit as many colleges and universities as possible. If available, have interviews, take a tour, schedule to meet with a coach, attend information sessions, and ask questions.

Continue to collect and study college/university literature. Be sure that you are on the mailing list at all of the colleges that interest you.

Continue to use online tools to research schools, take virtual tours (if you can’t visit them in person), and request literature.

Start to seriously evaluate the places on your list as you visit and, if necessary, revise the list. Don’t feel the need to have a “favorite” or “first choice,” but do note trends or characteristics shared by the schools that you like.

Start to think about and gather any supplementary or supporting materials that you would like to send to colleges (creative writing samples, an art portfolio, etc.).

Start thinking about (perhaps even begin writing) the personal essays that you will be sending to colleges.

Complete your Activities Resume which you will include with each of your applications.
Encourage your parents to complete the Parent Recommendation on Family Connection.

**Senior Year**

**During August/September:**

Make an appointment with your counselor for an individual meeting to review further possible testing, discuss college lists, and update the information that will be included in the school’s recommendation and transcript.

Parents and students attend the *College Information Night for Seniors.*

Attend the workshop on Financial Aid to learn more about the process of applying for Financial Aid. We will send out information regarding this program session through email.

Attend sessions led by college admissions representatives in the College Counseling Office. The schedule of visiting schools will be updated daily so check Family Connections or the daily announcements for the most current information.

Continue to receive college information, especially application forms, and plan a schedule for completion.

**During October:**

**October 1st** is the deadline by when you must let your counselor know that you will be applying to a college as an Early Decision/Action applicant and for giving *Secondary School Reports* and the *Request to Process Application* forms to your counselor FOR EARLY DECISION/EARLY ACTION INSTITUTIONS. We cannot otherwise guarantee that MBA’s information will be processed by the due date if you miss the deadline.

**Students are responsible for having their test scores sent to colleges**—this is the time to contact the College Board (www.collegeboard.com) or the ACT (www.act.org).

Continue to meet with college representatives visiting Montgomery Bell Academy; attend evening information meetings for specific schools (at local hotels and schools), process applications, and visit campuses personally.

A *Workshop* will be offered this month during the PSAT administration.

Fill out *PROFILE Registration Forms* if applying for financial aid (forms will be in the College Counseling Office by late September). Deadlines will vary by institution—check the literature!

**During November:**

November 1-15 are the common deadline(s) used by colleges for Early Decision and Early Action applications.

Continue to meet with college representatives as they visit our campus.
During December:

**December 1st** is the deadline for putting all of your college and universities on Family Connection FOR ALL NON-EARLY INSTITUTIONS, REGARDLESS OF APPLICATION DEADLINE. We cannot otherwise guarantee that MBA’s information will be processed by the due date if you miss this deadline.

December 1-15 are more Early Decision/Early Action college application deadlines

By early December, all seniors should have the majority of their part of the application materials in the mail (a.k.a., Form I, or Personal Information forms).

Remember that **students are responsible for having their test scores sent to colleges**— you must contact the College Board now ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)) or the ACT ([www.act.org](http://www.act.org)) to have your scores sent.

Visitations by college admissions representatives to our campus will, for the most part, end by December. This is the time, however, to seek out former MBA students who might be home over the winter break to talk to them about their college experiences. They are the experts!

During January, February, March, April, May and June:

Most application deadlines are in January and February. Watch these deadlines carefully—it is your responsibility to meet these deadlines!

**ASAP after January 1—Financial Aid Forms due.** These include PROFILE, FAFSA, and individual institutional forms. (Deadline for most colleges is February 15).

MLK Day and Presidents’ Day are days when Montgomery Bell Academy is closed for a long weekend but many colleges are open.

Spring Break is another great opportunity to visit colleges.

The majority of colleges will mail their final decisions to students in mid-March and early April.

**May 1**—students must decide which college to attend and mail the deposit and enrollment card (ONE COLLEGE ONLY!) by this date. Response to other college acceptances is appropriate as well.

Advanced Placement exams administered in mid-May.

Wait-list decisions are rendered by colleges in May and early June.

Commencement
Testing information and terms

PSAT/NMSQT - The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a practice version of the SAT Reasoning Test and can be used to predict performance on the SAT. It is also used as a way of competing for National Merit Scholarships. The three sections (critical reading, math, and writing) are scored from 20 to 80 and are considered equal in value when determining the selection index for National Merit Scholars. All 8th – 11th grade MBA students take this exam in October, but only juniors are eligible to qualify for National Merit Scholarship consideration.

SAT Reasoning Test - The Scholastic Assessment Test is an assessment of the critical reading, math, and writing abilities generally associated with academic performance in college. It lasts for 3 hours and 35 minutes and consists of multiple choice questions, student produced responses, and an essay. Scores are reported on a scale from 200 to 800 on each section.

SAT Subject Tests - tests that measure knowledge or skills in specific subjects. They are available in Literature, US History, World History, Mathematics (Levels I and II, which allow for the use of a calculator), Languages (Reading Only: French, German, Latin, Spanish, Modern Hebrew, Italian; Reading AND Listening: Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Korean, and Spanish) Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Each of these tests is an hour long and up to three can be taken on one test date. Scores are reported on a scale of 200 to 800. Please note: Languages with Reading and Listening are available in November only. See your teacher to discuss this option.

ACT - The American College Test is an alternative to the SAT Reasoning Test. It is also accepted by some colleges and universities in lieu of the SAT Subject Tests. Like the SAT, the ACT is a standardized test made up of different subject sections (English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and an optional Writing section). Because these topics are slightly different than topics on the SAT, some students prefer the ACT.

AP - Advanced Placement exams are given each year in May to students who have done the equivalent of college level work in a class while in secondary school. Scores are reported on a scale of 1 to 5 and, depending on the score and the college, may earn the student credit upon enrollment. They can also help you with admission to selective schools. Tests are available in American History, European History, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, English (Language and Literature), Physics, Studio Art, Economics, and Psychology.

How To Apply for the Tests – We encourage you to register online to take the SAT (www.collegeboard.com) or the ACT (www.act.org) as scores are made available to students earlier that way. Paper applications are also available in the College Counseling Office.

Test Centers – Montgomery Bell Academy is not a test center for the SAT or ACT. Students need to register to take the SAT and ACT at other local schools. It is a good idea to register early to secure a spot at your first choice test center. The school code number is 431-710.
How to Report Scores to Colleges - When you register for the SAT or ACT, you will have the opportunity to list up to four colleges (by code number) which you would like to receive your scores free of charge. There is a fee for sending additional score reports or for requesting scores to be sent after you have taken the tests. Visit www.collegeboard.com or www.act.org to send your scores. **It is your responsibility to request that scores be sent to any and all colleges to which you are applying—MBA does not report test scores on your transcript.**

Which Scores are Used - Most colleges use your highest scores from each section. In the case of the SAT Reasoning Test, they usually look at the highest critical reading, the highest math, and the highest writing scores, regardless of when the tests were taken. Many colleges also require two or three SAT Subject Tests. The ACT is accepted in place of the SAT Reasoning Test sometimes accepted in place of the SAT Subject Tests—read your college literature for the requirements of the schools on your list!

Testing Schedule

SAT I and II Subject Test Dates

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>'10 Test Dates</th>
<th>Registration Due</th>
<th>Late Registration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 6</td>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>October 22</td>
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<td>December 4</td>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>November 19</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>December 23</td>
<td>January 7</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12 (SAT I only)*</td>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>February 25</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 7</td>
<td>April 8</td>
<td>April 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 4</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>May 20</td>
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ACT Test Dates

<table>
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<tr>
<th>'10 Test Dates</th>
<th>Registration Due</th>
<th>Late Registration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 23</td>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>October 1</td>
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<td>December 11</td>
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<td>April 9</td>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>March 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 11</td>
<td>May 6</td>
<td>May 20</td>
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* SAT ONLY

Websites to register:
ACT - http://actstudent.org/regist/elecreg.html

Where Should I Apply?

As you begin to think about colleges, keep in mind that there is no one “perfect” college, and a college does not have value simply because it has a “name,” is a school to which all of your friends are applying, or appears on a magazine’s “Top Ten List.” Your college search is just that—yours. You will need to take some time to think about your goals, talents, accomplishments, and interests before even beginning to evaluate a school to determine if it is right for you. Also remember that
there will be many institutions (and possibly several alternatives to traditional college admission) to help you to reach your goals. Do not feel that there is only one way to proceed after high school or one college that will make you happy. Keep an open mind.

Conversations with your friends, teachers, parents, and counselor will all help you to work on your list of options, but it is important to remember that most of the work is up to you. Self-evaluation is vital if this is to be a successful search—and will help you to answer many of those college application questions later. Here are some things to consider in order to get started:

**Your Interests, Abilities, and Ambitions:**

- What kind of person are you? What kind of person would you like to become?
- What are your personal strengths and qualities? How independent, creative, motivated are you? What are your values? How do you get along with others, both peers and adults?
- How would your teachers describe you? How do you describe yourself?
- What are your weaknesses? Strengths?
- How do you define success?
- What have you enjoyed most during your years at MBA?
- What makes you unique?

**Your Education:**

- What kind of academic record do you have? Do you work up to or beyond your ability? Participate in class? Work well independently?
- What are your academic interests? Favorite classes? Least favorite?
- What would you choose to learn or study on your own?
- Are you already thinking of a definite profession or career? Why?
- What degree of academic challenge is best for you?
- How would you describe MBA? Has it prepared you for college?
- Is your academic record an accurate measure of your ability? Why or why not?

**Your Activities and Interests:**

- What activities do you most enjoy outside of the classroom?
- What activities do you want to pursue in college? Do they require a particular location? Program? Kinds of weather?
- How would you describe your role at MBA or in the larger community?

**The World Around You:**

- Has your environment influenced your way of thinking?
- What do your parents and friends expect of you?
- What viewpoints have influenced you the most?
- What kinds of surroundings are essential to your well being?

**Your College Preferences: Size, Programs, Location, Atmosphere**

As you look at this list, some of these areas will be more important to you than others. Some may not matter to you at all. It should be clear to you after completing your
self-evaluation, though, that many of these criteria must be considered as you research institutions. Keep track of the data that is important to you for each school and find a way to keep this information organized for easy reference. Be as thorough as possible—it will help you later in the process.

**Student Enrollment**
- **Enrollment:** Total number of undergraduate students. Freshman class size.
- **Retention:** % of freshmen who return for their sophomore year and % that graduate
- **Background:** Male/female ratio. % commuter/residential. Geographic origin. % minority.

**Location and Surroundings**
- **Location:** Geographic region. Distance from home. Travel costs and convenience.
- **Setting:** Urban/rural, weather, nearest city. Recreational opportunities.
- **Facilities:** Library, laboratories, computers, study and practice rooms, sports facilities, student center.

**College Type & Philosophy**
- **Type:** 2/4 year, church affiliated, public/private, college/university.
- **Purpose:** Liberal arts. Pre-professional for business, education, engineering, fine arts, etc.
- **Degrees offered**
- **Philosophy:** Traditional/progressive. Deeply scholarly/career-oriented
- **Calendar:** Semester/trimester/quarter/module Interterm program Acceleration

**Curriculum**
- **Academic requirements:** Required freshman courses or curriculum/distribution
requirements in curricular areas/elective curriculum.

**Academic offerings:**
- Majors offered in your areas of interest. Breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest.
- Interdisciplinary courses and majors.
- Strong departments.

**Independent Study:**
- Individual tutorials. Seminars.
- Research opportunities.

**Special Study Programs:**

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

**Course Descriptions:**
- Sequential/open order.
- Introduction/advanced/specialized courses. Courses for majors/non-majors. Number of courses required for majors.

**Admissions**

**Deadlines:**

**Appl. Requirements:**

**SAT/ACT Tests Required:**
- Which SAT Subject Tests. SAT/ACT optional?

**Admissions Selectivity:**
- % applicants offered admission.
- Barron's rating of most competitive/highly competitive/competitive. Average SAT/ACT scores/# of freshmen ranked in top 10% of high school class.
- Freshman class profile.

**Academic Environment**

**Faculty:**
Faculty-Student: Faculty-student ratio. Advising. Class size. Average # of classes under 20 students/over 50 students. Opportunities for discussion/student presentation/exchange of ideas.

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

Intellectual Vitality: Student attitude toward learning. Flexibility/Structure for study. Exchange of ideas. Interest in political, social, or world issues.

Career Preparation: Pre-professional programs. Career advising and information programs. % who go on to graduate school. Graduate school and job placement.

**Campus & Student Life**

Types of students: Diversity and tolerance of differences. Typical/off-beat student. Importance of money/material possessions/social appearances.


Campus Activities: Activities related to your interests. Emphasis on social life, fraternities, sports or other dominating interests. Clubs and organizations traditional/creative/competitive/issue-oriented. Presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community. Focus of social life on campus/fraternities/community/other.

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

Family Resources: What can your family pay towards college expenses? Your earnings and savings?

Financial Aid: Based on need/merit/or funds available. Loan and work study expectations. % students receiving aid. Range of awards. Average award.

Application: CSS/state/college forms. Deadlines.

[Reprinted from A College Admission Workbook, Wesleyan University Office of Admissions]

**Doing the Research**

“It is unwise to rely on a single source of information. Rather you should seek out various sources, always keeping in mind the old fable about the six blind philosophers, each of whom, upon touching a different part of the elephant, described the animal he thought it to be. Together, they described six quite different animals. So too is the same university likely to be quite different perceived by its various constituents.”

Stanford University, letter to prospective students

After you have thought about who you are as an individual and a student, and identified the characteristics that are important to you at a college or university, you will need to begin to evaluate schools to find those that appear to be a match. Since this is such an important decision you do not want to simply rely on word of mouth. Gathering as much information as possible, from a wide variety of sources, is the only way to accurately evaluate an institution. Keep in mind, too, that this is your college search. Do not rely on your parents, counselor, neighbors, or friends to name the “right” schools for you—you should be the person doing this very important research!

**General Resources**

**Reference books** are available in libraries and bookstores. Here are some of the resources you can find in the College Counseling Resource Center:

- College Prowler
- The Fiske Guide to Colleges
- The Princeton Review’s Best 351 Colleges
- The K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Disabilities or A.D.D.
- Barron’s Profiles of American Colleges
- Rugg’s Recommendations on Colleges
- Peterson’s Four-Year Colleges
- Guide to Colleges for African American Students
- The Performing Art Major’s College Guide
- The Student Athlete’s Guide to College
- The National Directory of College Athletics
- The Directory of Canadian Colleges
- The College Finder
- Rock Hard Apps
A Note about College Guides: It is important to remember that there are many more guides, lists, and rating books or magazines on the market, with varying degrees of accuracy and reliability. Before you buy any of these resources (or believe their evaluations) be aware of the background and intent of the publisher, editor, or author, and the usefulness of the information. Be very skeptical of ranks assigned to a college or university—the quality of an institution depends on how it best serves your educational goals, not arbitrary criteria for a ranked list. Comparing several texts that describe a school (the factual listings in Barron’s Profiles, Peterson’s Guide, and The College Handbook to the more descriptive listings of The Fiske Guide and The Yale Insiders Guide) can give you a better overall view.

College literature generally begins to arrive in mass quantities to the homes of students beginning in April of the junior year. Colleges buy names and addresses of students who indicate an interest in receiving this information when taking the PSAT and meet specific criteria as determined by the school. This “search” literature is another good source of information for your research, if you remember that this type of information is used as a marketing tool; while truthful, all college “search” materials are designed to grab your interest and present the college/university in the best possible light. Be thorough and use other resources before passing judgment on any institution. And, when you find a school that looks interesting to you, be sure to return any enclosed reply card. Schools will generally not continue to mail to those that are not interested in learning more.

When you know that you have interest in a particular school or program, e-mail, write or call the admissions office to get on the mailing list (if you have not returned the “search” card, that is). Addresses and phone numbers (generally toll-free) can be found in any of the guidebooks; e-mail addresses are easily accessed via the web page of the individual schools. If you do not have the web address for a school, use Family Connection to link to the college website. You should be on the mailing list of colleges or universities that you may apply to by the end of your junior year.

Other sources of information are readily available and easy to access using the World Wide Web. Using your computer, simply type keywords like college, financial aid or admissions to find general information.

Here are some other helpful sites that you might want to visit:

**Early Planning**
Plan for College: [www.collegeboard.org/plan](http://www.collegeboard.org/plan)

**General Information**
College Board Online: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
College Night: [www.collegenight.com](http://www.collegenight.com)
Princeton Review: [www.review.com](http://www.review.com)

**Career Planning**
Career Resource Center: [www.careers.org](http://www.careers.org)

**College Search**
Search for colleges using MBA specific admissions history:
[http://connection.naviance.com/shadyside](http://connection.naviance.com/shadyside)
College Board College Search:  [www.collegeboard.com/search](http://www.collegeboard.com/search)
College Net:  [www.collegenet.com](http://www.collegenet.com)
CollegeView:  [www.collegeview.com](http://www.collegeview.com)
Peterson’s CollegeQuest:  [www.collegequest.com](http://www.collegequest.com)
Princeton Review:  [www.review.com](http://www.review.com)

**Testing**
College Board Online:  [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
ACT:  [www.act.org](http://www.act.org)
TOEFL:  [www.toefl.org](http://www.toefl.org)
Kaplan Educational Centers:  [www.kaplan.com](http://www.kaplan.com)
Princeton Review:  [www.review.com](http://www.review.com)
Test Prep:  [http://www.testprep.com](http://www.testprep.com)

**Online Admissions Applications**
The Common Application:  [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
UCAS system:  [http://www.ucas.ac.uk/](http://www.ucas.ac.uk/) (UK Colleges)
Universal application:  [https://www.universalcollegeapp.com/](https://www.universalcollegeapp.com/)
Univ of California system:
[http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/undergrad_adm/apply_to_uc.html](http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/undergrad_adm/apply_to_uc.html)
California State University system:  [http://www.csumentor.edu/](http://www.csumentor.edu/)

**Financial Aid**
College Board Online:  [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) Guidance information, scholarship search, financial aid and loan calculators, college cost information and calculators, PROFILE financial aid application.
FastWeb Scholarship Search:  [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com)
US Department of Education's Student Guide to Financial Aid:
FAFSA on the Web:  [www.fafsa.ed.gov/](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/)
Sallie Mae’s Financial Aid Page:  [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com)
Free Scholarship Searches:

**Art**
Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design:  [www.aicad.org/](http://www.aicad.org/)
National Portfolio Day Association:  [www.npda.org](http://www.npda.org)
National Association for the Arts Accreditation:  [www.arts-accredit.org/](http://www.arts-accredit.org/)
**Athletics**
NCAA Guide for the Student Athlete: [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)
NCAA Clearinghouse: [www.ncaaclearinghouse.net](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.net)
National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics: [www.naia.org/](http://www.naia.org/)
Info on Div III athletics: [www.collegestudentathletes.com](http://www.collegestudentathletes.com)

**Military**
Army ROTC: [www.rotc.monroe.army.mil/](http://www.rotc.monroe.army.mil/)
Navy ROTC: [www.navy.com](http://www.navy.com)

**Summer Programs**
Summer Discovery: [www.summerfun.com/](http://www.summerfun.com/)

**Interim Year**
Taking Time Out: [www.timeoutassociates.com](http://www.timeoutassociates.com)
Rotary International: [www.rotary.org](http://www.rotary.org)
National Outdoor Leadership School: [www.nols.edu/](http://www.nols.edu/)

**Study Abroad**
Study Abroad Programs Directory: [www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)
United Kingdom: [www.ucas.co.uk/](http://www.ucas.co.uk/)
Oxford University: [www.ox.ac.uk/](http://www.ox.ac.uk/)

**International Students**
Students International: [www.studint.net](http://www.studint.net)

**Graduate Programs**
Medical Schools and Combined BA/MD Programs: [www.aamc.org](http://www.aamc.org)

**Meeting with college representatives at MBA** is a great way to gather more detailed information about colleges and to demonstrate your interest! Each year admission officers from a vast number of colleges and universities visit our campus. The times and dates of these visits are listed on the daily announcements and on Family Connection. We urge you to sign up for visits on Family Connection. We try to schedule these meetings during the 9:40 break time, but if a college representative cannot come at this time seniors may be excused from class in order to talk with a representative from a college in which they are seriously interested after getting permission from their teacher. Be sure to make up work missed promptly.

The visiting representatives are very eager to talk with you about the schools they represent. This may be your first personal contact with a college so be prepared to make a positive impression. The meetings are informal group sessions which always include a chance for you to ask any questions you may have. Think about what you learned about yourself and your goals during the self-evaluation process and come prepared to ask about the things that matter to you.
The Campus Visit

The campus visit is one of the most important parts of the college selection process, and it will probably have the greatest impact on your choice of a college. Unless a visit is not possible, you should never choose a college without first spending some time on the campus.

You will want to begin visiting colleges the spring of and the summer following your junior year. Although regular classes are not in session over the summer, you can more easily obtain a personal interview during this time. Also, you can get a general sense of the environment and the facilities. You can always return for a fall visit if you feel you need to meet more students and visit classes.

Always call in advance to make an appointment when planning a college trip. Try not to visit too many colleges on one day—they will all begin to blend together. Ideally you should see two schools (at most) per day. When you call or e-mail the admissions office to schedule your visit, ask about the tour schedule, if an information session is available, and if they offer individual interviews. Many schools offer all three and, on average, each option lasts for about an hour. A few schools now offer all of this on Saturdays (especially in the fall) as well as the more standard weekday option.

It is helpful to take notes about your college visits during and immediately after your visit. These notes will be helpful to you in distinguishing between colleges and universities later in the process and in writing the “Why are you interested in ___ college” essay questions. Remember to get the names and email addresses or phone numbers for anyone you meet and send them a thank you note when you get home.

Plan to visit a variety of different types of colleges and universities; this should help you clarify your thoughts in the decision-making process. As a junior, you are allowed to miss two days of school in the spring for college visits. It is important to plan these visits well in advance, being sure to pick up The MBA College Visit Permission Form For Seniors signed by your parents, a college counselor, and all your teachers. Turn in this form to the college counseling office manager before you leave for one of your 3 excused college visit days.

Campus tours are a great place to start your visit. Be sure to ask the student guide (or other students you meet) as many questions as possible. The students themselves are the best source of candid information about a college. Keep detailed notes about the tour (a good use of time while in the car on the way to the next campus) and your reactions to it. You will be glad to have these notes several weeks later when your memory of each place begins to fade.

Some of the questions worth asking are:

- Actually how large are all of your classes?
- Who teaches you in these courses?
- What are the lab sections like? Who teaches them?
• What are the library hours? Are you able to get the books you need when you want them?

• Does the library have an open-stack, free-access collection, or must a librarian or aide get the books for you?

• Who grades your examinations?

• Do students seem to work primarily for grades around here?

• Have you been in any faculty homes since you’ve been here?

• Can you tell me anything first-hand about the department where I wish to major?

• What is the hottest issue in local campus politics?

• How about the big issues in national or international politics?

• Does student interest in religious questions have much vitality?

• Where do the offbeat students hang out? What do you think of them?

• Any chance of attending a class after the tour?

• Has anyone on the faculty written an exciting book in the last two years?

• How does the administration feel about student government?

• Where can I find some back copies of the campus newspaper?

• What do you think is the greatest shortcoming of this college?

• What do you think is the most distinctive aspect of your education here?

• I have a few hours; where would you suggest I go next?

• If you could attend another college now, where would you go?

[Reprinted from Choosing a College, John C. Hoy]

A note about tours: Keep in mind that the tourguide is only one voice in a much larger community and will be giving opinions about the school that are different from those of others. Asking the same types of questions of as many different people affiliated with the community as possible will give you a clearer picture of the “real” institution.

Personal interviews on the college campus are another excellent way for you to learn more about a college. You need to make appointments as early as possible (a good 2-4 weeks ahead of time), and remember that weekend interviews in the fall will fill-up even faster than during the week. Interviews are easily scheduled by phone or e-mail, and the phone numbers and e-mail addresses are easily accessible via the college web site or on Family Connection.
The interview can serve several purposes, depending on the college or university. Some schools offer evaluative interviews, which is much like a job interview in format; you will be asked many questions about your background, interests, and plans, and then be given a little time at the end to ask your questions about the institution. A report of this interview is written afterwards and is put in your official file to be used as a part of your application. Other schools offer informational interviews, where you are given the full interview time to ask all of your questions but no information about you is requested or noted for future use. Still other schools use a combination of these two styles.

Not everyone can be granted a personal interview, even at those schools that have a liberal interview schedule. Most schools will state that the interview is now "highly recommended" instead of being "required," meaning that the lack of an interview report in the applicant file will not be held against the student in the decision process. Even so, it is important to take advantage of this opportunity if it exists. The personal contact with an admissions officer, who may be sitting on the committee that will decide your candidacy, should not be taken lightly. The ability to attach a name with a face and personality adds a human element to the application reading and decision making process, and can affect their overall impression of you.

That said, do not feel that the interview will be an overly stressful experience. Try to think of it as a conversation with a purpose. You want to share important information about you with the college and learn about how the college would “fit” with you and your plans. It will be very helpful for you to prepare for this in advance, if for no other reason than to feel more confident going into the interview. Be ready to talk about who you are. Your strengths, weaknesses, interests, goals—all of the things you have already thought about during your self-evaluation! Read all that you can about the college before your scheduled interview time. If possible, have the tour before the interview since tours generally answer the basic questions and can generate even better ones to ask in the interview. Have questions in mind to ask your interviewer that are specific to your interests and concerns.

Each interviewer has an individual style but, in general, the interview will begin with one or two open-ended questions to get the conversation started. Here are some examples of common questions:

- Why did you decide to attend MBA? Has it been a good match? Why or why not? What do you like about it? What would you change?
- What classes have you enjoyed so far? What would you never take again, if given that choice? Why?
- What do you do with your non-class time? Sports, clubs, other activities? What is the most important? Why? Do you want to do this in college?
- Where do you see yourself in 6 years from now?
- Tell me about your family. Do they support your plans? How would they describe you to me?
- What are the “hot topics” on the MBA campus?

You may be asked questions that cover almost any topic—academics, activities, community service, books, movies, politics, etc. A little thought about these topics beforehand will make you feel better about the process and, hopefully, make it a more enjoyable experience. Be open about yourself. Do not be afraid of sounding boastful (you are
supposed to highlight your strengths) or, worse, make the mistake of giving the answer you think the interviewer wants to hear—it will be obvious if you are not speaking candidly. Listen carefully to the questions asked before answering. Take time to collect your thoughts before answering if you need to. There is nothing wrong with silence, especially if the alternative is, “um,” “ya know,” or “like.” If you do not know an answer it is fine to say so—do not make something up.

Finally, arrive on time (early, if you can), dress appropriately, make eye contact, shake the interviewer’s hand at the beginning and end of your meeting, and, when you get home, write a thank you note to your interviewer for the time that they spent with you. It is not only polite but another opportunity for them to see your name and think of you—which could help your candidacy.

If you cannot interview on campus, most schools will be able to help you schedule a meeting with an alumnus/a in the Nashville area. These interviews are just as important and effective as those on campus (most will send a report about your conversation back to the admissions office for your file), and alumni/ae can be a valuable source of information about the school.

**Group information sessions** are offered at many schools, especially the large places, with groups ranging from 5 to 400. This session is usually a general presentation about the school followed with questions from the audience. Do not hesitate to ask any questions that you may have based on the literature or tour. Listen carefully to those of others, too, as they might cover important information that you have not thought about yet.

**Other sources of information** worth accessing while on the campus also exist. Visit a class (lists are usually available at the admissions office) for a subject that interests you, and watch carefully to see what type of learning is going on. Look up a former MBA student that is currently attending the school and ask them all of the questions you would ask the tourguide (and see if there are any interesting differences). Have lunch in the student union or in a dining hall and listen to the other students—or join them at their table and ask them questions. Ask the admissions office for contacts in certain departments that interest you (many have lists of faculty and students who are interested in e-mail contacts from prospective students). Speak to a coach or a player from your team of interest. Visit the bookstore and see what non-academic texts are 'best sellers' on that campus.

**What are Colleges looking for?**

Most colleges evaluate applicants with two things in mind. Academically they want to admit the students who can handle the level of rigor found in their communities and enjoy the type and style of education provided. Non-academic factors are important as well, as all institutions want as interesting, diverse, and fun community as possible. Each applicant is rated in both of these areas, though the academic evaluation is the more important of the two.

**Academic Criteria:**

**Demonstrated Academic Achievement** Your high school transcript is usually the most important piece of the application. Grades in the five “solids” (English, math, science,
social sciences, and foreign language) are closely considered. Are there trends? Strengths? Weaknesses? Other areas of the curriculum are also considered.

**Quality of Courses** Have you met the minimum course requirements of the college? Exceeded them? Challenged yourself given the curriculum available at MBA? Even in areas that are not your strongest subjects? Taken advanced or Advanced Placement courses?

**Testing** Your SAT scores, supported by your Subject Test scores and/or ACT scores, have been verified as a reliable predictor of college success when evaluated with high school grades. Are they consistent with the average of those at the college? Are they consistent with your academic performance?

**Teacher Recommendations** Two academic letters, from teachers that have taught you in the junior year, are generally required. The teachers should be chosen carefully and be those who know you at your best. Do you participate in class? Complete work on time? Ask for help if needed? Show interest in the subject? In learning?

**Demonstrated Motivation** Do your records/recommendations show your motivation for a particular course of study? In learning?

**School Attended** Applicants are evaluated within the context of their school environment. How well have MBA graduates done while at that college? At schools across the country?

**Non-Academic Criteria:**

**Your Activities and Interests** What have been your primary involvements at MBA or in the larger community? What talent(s) will you bring to the college community? Remember that two or three well-developed interests are preferable to a scattering of partially pursued clubs and activities, especially if you wait until senior year to join.

**Evidence of Leadership in Activities**

**School Recommendation** We will send one comprehensive letter of recommendation to each school that you apply to; this letter covers your academic and non-academic interests, ability, and motivation.

**Outside Recommendation** This can be helpful if the writer knows you well and can relate information about you which is not provided by us. Think about a manager at your part-time job, your minister, rabbi, or priest, or your supervisor at a community service placement. Letters from powerful alumni which recommend your family or parents are generally not helpful—do not send them unless the letter can discuss you and your talents.

**Personal Part of Application** The essay is very, very important! Can you express yourself well in writing? Does the story tell the reader something about you that is unique and not otherwise obvious in the application? Do not put these off until the last minute.

**Personal Interview** At the most selective colleges the interview on campus or with a local alumnus/alumna can be significant.
Unique Talent  Every admissions committee seeks out uniqueness in your admissions credentials; any different or exciting consideration which sets you apart from the other candidates may produce a favorable decision for you. Good colleges want interesting students: outstanding musicians, writers, actors, athletes, editors, photographers, etc. *Colleges are seeking a well-rounded class more than well-rounded individuals.*

Children of Alumni/ae You will receive careful attention at most colleges and at least can expect to get a "second look."

Demonstrated Interest Some colleges consider the ways that you have demonstrated interest in their college (ie. a visit to the college, a meeting with a representative from the college at MBA, attendance at a local program, etc...) when they review applications because studies have proven that students who demonstrate interest in a college are more likely to enroll.

**Applications: General Information**

After completing your self-evaluation, researching colleges that meet your needs, and making a list of schools that interest you, you are ready to make the final list of schools to which you will apply. There is no magic number for this list but, on average, students at MBA apply to 5-10 schools that offer a wide range of selectivity. You should plan to apply to two or three schools in each category: Reach, Realistic, and Safe Target. **EVERY college to which you apply should be a college that you would love to attend; try to make a list of 5-10 ‘first choice’ colleges!** We encourage you to always apply to your dream school, no matter how unrealistic that may be!

**Reaches** – schools that are extremely selective or that typically admit students with higher grades and scores than you have or schools that accept a very small percentage of their applicant pool. You should have about 2-3 schools on your list that may fit in this category.

**Realistic** – Schools that admit students with grades and scores that are about the same as yours. Approximately 3-4 schools on your list should fit this definition.

**Safe Targets** – schools that have admissions statistics that show it is highly likely or definite that you will be admitted. This is often the most difficult part of the list so be sure to devote time to researching this group. You want to really like these schools (as much as the ‘reaches’) and not just put a school on the list because you think you can get in. A good question to ask yourself is “If this is my only acceptance in April, will I be happy to go there?” If the answer is no, keep researching! You should have 2-3 schools on your list that fit in this category.

It is important to have a clear understanding of what the standards for admissions are at the various colleges/universities that you are interested in. Because of the nature of the admissions process, it is often difficult to predict admission outcomes. The number of applicants and the quality of the applicant pool vary each year, and each school is truly attempting to select a student body with diverse talents, interests, and backgrounds.
Obtaining Applications:

The Common Application is a great resource! Approximately 300 different schools accept the common application; we encourage you to use this form if you are applying to more than one college which subscribes to it. Doing one Common Application and sending it directly to schools online. Just remember to keep hard copies of your applications and to note whether your colleges have confirmed receipt of them, usually via your email address.

Electronic applications are available at most schools. Colleges that do not use the Common app now allow you to (and prefer that you) apply online directly through their websites. Be sure to first print out a copy of the application for review prior to sending it over the wire. Be sure to print out a copy of the completed application, too, in case all or part of the application gets lost during transmission. You want to take note of how the college or university asks you to submit the school information portions of your application.

Types of Colleges and Universities and Application Procedures:

Public Colleges and Universities: The applications for these institutions are very straightforward. These forms will require personal information, an official test score report, a list of high school courses taken, and grades for these courses. Some schools require an official high school transcript attached to this application. Others require you to fill out a report of your high school coursework (see the individual application for details). Some require a short essay. Admission to many public institutions is granted using a numerical formula of G.P.A. and SAT/ACT score results. If a school that you are considering uses this type of formula, they are usually very open about the admission criteria. Please remember, though, that admissions standards for in-state applicants are usually very different than those for out-of-state applicants. Be sure to ask for the appropriate guidelines when doing your research.

Community Colleges: Applications for these are very similar, though usually less extensive than applications to public universities. Most community colleges are on a ‘rolling’ admission plan but do enforce a cut-off date (usually during the summer prior to fall term). Check with the school for appropriate deadlines.

Private or Independent Colleges: Applications to these institutions are usually the most detailed.

Application plans:

It is important to pay very close attention to the type of application plan that a private college utilizes:

Early Decision is a plan that allows students to apply in November (usually between the 1st and 15th) for a December 15th notification of the admission decision. This plan best serves students who know early in their senior year that a particular school is their first choice and think that their academic and extracurricular record is adequate to present to schools at the time of the early deadline. These students should have very strong academic credentials.
from the sophomore and junior year and be satisfied with their SAT/ACT test results from the junior year (October test results may be considered but a student should have taken at least one SAT Reasoning Test or ACT, and at least three SAT Subject Tests, depending on admissions requirements, before deciding to apply). You can only apply to one college or university under an Early Decision plan, and you must withdraw all other applications to other colleges if you are offered admission under this plan. You are morally obligated (and legally bound by your signature of acceptance of the Early Decision policy) to attend that college if accepted. Those who are not admitted will then have time to meet January deadlines at other institutions.

**Early Action** is similar to Early Decision, but students who are accepted under this plan are not obligated to attend and do not have to make their final decision for enrollment until May 1\textsuperscript{st}. There is generally not a limit to the number of applications you can file under the Early Action plan.

**Single Choice Early Action** is the same as Early Action, but students are not permitted to apply to any other university under an early action/decision plan.

**Rolling Decision** is a plan where the admissions office will begin evaluation of the applicant as soon as the applicant file is complete. Decisions are usually received by the applicant 2 to 4 weeks after the completed application is received. Schools with rolling admissions do not have a fixed deadline or response mail date. Therefore, it is a good idea to send the forms in as soon as you feel confident in the credentials you are providing (i.e., after first term if you want the admissions committee to see more recent grades, or after a fall SAT or ACT test date). Completing your application earlier, prior to November 30\textsuperscript{th}, is highly recommended. Admitted applicants under this plan usually have until May 1 to make a commitment.

Regardless of which form of application or the plan you choose, it is a good idea to make a copy of the blank application before completing it (in case mistakes are made) and to make a copy after it is completed (in case it gets lost in the mail). When completing non-electronic applications, type or print neatly in black ink—either is fine, so long as the admissions committee can read what you write easily. Proofread your application carefully before mailing and be sure to sign the application and enclose the application fee.

For all colleges, either mail or send your application electronically, including all supplemental materials, directly to the colleges. The make certain that the college/university is listed on your application list on Family Connection and indicate that you are requesting a transcript so that we know to send your school information to the school. **We will not know to send your official transcript to the school unless you do this!**

**The Secondary School Report Form:**

Most applications will have a secondary school report form, also referred to as the “Counselor’s Report,” or the “School Report.” This is a set of materials sent by your counselor directly to the colleges. Fill out the top part of this form with your name and address and bring it to the College Counseling Office. We will keep it on file for you.

The Secondary School Report Form packet sent to schools will include:
1. Transcript (including courses, grades, and any special information)

2. Counselor and teacher recommendations

3. A Montgomery Bell Academy profile and Grade Distribution (description of MBA, information on test score averages for your class, where previous MBA grads have gone to college, and a comprehensive grade distribution used in lieu of class rank).

**The Mid-Year Grade Report Form:**

Most colleges and universities require mid-year grades from your senior year. The MBA College Counseling Staff will automatically send your first semester grades in support of your applications as soon as they become available. We send this information under separate cover and do not need the Mid-Year Grade Report Form included with your application.

**Letters of Recommendation:**

Most selective colleges require that you obtain at least one (usually two) recommendation(s) from faculty members, and they usually provide forms for this purpose. It is most important that you choose the teachers whom you believe know you best and whom you’ve had during your *Junior Year*. There are a few colleges that specify that the recommendations come from a math/science teacher and an English/humanities teacher.

- Before you finish your junior year, ask your teacher if he/she will write a recommendation for you being sure to ask well in advance of any due date. Plan to do this when you both have a few minutes to talk—you need to have a *conversation* about your request that covers the reasons for your request, details about the number of letters needed, due dates, etc. This conversation can make a big difference in their willingness to write a letter for you.

- Once a teacher has agreed to write a letter of recommendation for you, fill out the Request for College recommendation form and give a copy to the teacher. Remember to let the Office Manager know which teachers have agreed to write your letter of recommendation.

- Inform the teacher of any special circumstances if there are any—e.g., early decision, special scholarship.

- When you have heard from a college, please notify the teacher of the action taken and *thank him/her for writing the recommendation*. This is a courtesy which should not be overlooked.

You will need to be prepared for and accepting of a negative reply to your request from a teacher. They may not feel that they know you well enough to represent you adequately, or feel uncomfortable writing a letter, or simply do not have the time. Regardless of the reason, respect their decision and judgment, and approach another teacher with your request (yet another reason to begin this process early—it could take time to get the required number of letters).
The Personal Part of the Application:

Filling in the biographical information requested on the application should be the least of your worries, but please remember that NEATNESS AND CLARITY are very important. Type or print legibly in black ink. You should photocopy the application first and practice filling in your information on the copy. When you have completed the final product, photocopy the entire application in case your application is misplaced or lost.

The Essay:

By the time that you apply to college, there are many factors in your record that have already been determined: grades, test scores, etc. The personal essay, however, is something over which you still have total control. Do not underestimate its importance! Remember that selective colleges receive thousands of applications from which they will select a small percentage to offer admission. The essay is one of only two chances that you have to directly “speak” to the admissions committee about who you are (the interview is the other) and help them to understand what makes you unique. Think carefully about the question and devote a lot of time to formulating your essay.

Here are some tips to keep in mind when writing the personal essay:

• Decide what to emphasize about yourself—special interests, a distinctive character trait or detail from your background, a particular goal you have in mind, or some accomplishment.

• Think of yourself as someone else you are meeting. Does the essay make you care about the person and want to meet him/her?

• Don’t necessarily reach for the unusual or the bizarre. Some students feel they must write about a dramatic event or try to be funny. It is actually more interesting to see what significance you see in ordinary occurrences—a trip, an idea, an observation you have made in class, a person, a change in your environment, or a change in you. Does your essay sound genuine?

• Your spell-checker is a great tool—use it!

• When you have said what you planned on saying, stop writing. Longer is not better in a college essay, especially when your reader is facing hundreds of other pieces of paper to read in one day.

• Do not reword the Brown essay to make it fit the Harvard essay topic. They will notice.

• If given an optional essay topic, do it. It is another opportunity to tell them who you are.

• Have someone proof your essay before sending it in. Feedback is essential to refine your writing and to spot common spelling or grammatical errors. Remember, though, the following advice from Fred Hargadon, former Dean of Admissions at Princeton, “But I can’t emphasize enough (well, maybe I can) that the style, flavor, and substance of
your essay (in fact, your entire application) should smell authentic.” In other words, admissions officers can tell if an essay has been reworked by others to the point of no longer representing your thoughts and feelings.

Sample Essay Questions:

1. It is our aim to get to know you as well as possible through this application. With this in mind, please describe in detail some special interest, experience, achievement, or anything else you would like us to know about you. Essays on a personal, local, or national issue that is of a particular concern to you are also welcome. Feel free to submit tapes of musical performances, photographs of or examples of artwork, examples of writing, or other examples of your creative work.

2. PERSONAL STATEMENT (Common Application)
This personal statement helps us become acquainted with you in ways different from courses, grades, test scores, and other objective data. It enables you to demonstrate your ability to organize thoughts and express yourself. Please write an essay about one of the topics listed below. You may attach extra pages (same size, please) if your essay exceeds the limits of this page.

   1) Evaluate a significant experience or achievement that has special meaning to you.

   2) Discuss some issue of personal, local, or national concern and its importance to you.

   3) Indicate a person who has had a significant influence on you, and describe that influence.

3. Imagine that you are the editor of a major national newsmagazine. What would you choose as the cover story for the issue that would be on the newsstand on January 1, 2009? Why did you make this choice? What would be the essence of this story?

4. Describe a situation in which your values or beliefs were questioned by someone you respect. How was it resolved?

5. You have answered many questions on this form, all asked by someone else. If you yourself were in a position to ask a thought-provoking and revealing question of college applicants, what would that question be?

Now that you have asked your ideal question, answer it.

6. Please answer one of the following (Guideline - 250 words or less)
   a. Which book or books have affected you the most and why?
   b. Discuss the academic experience (course, paper, project) that has meant the most to you.
   c. Describe a scientific problem, research project, or academic issue in any field of study which you would like to pursue in college or later.
7. Write an essay on a topic that allows us to learn more about you, your interests, your values, and/or your goals. You may choose to write about a personal trait, an interest or hobby, an experience that has deeply affected you, a person whom you admire, or what you hope to be doing five or ten years from now.

8. If you were to serve a one-year apprenticeship to any real or fictional person in the past or present, whom would you choose? What would you want to gain from the experience?

9. Please describe a special interest, experience or accomplishment that helped you more clearly define a value that you hold.

10. Write a brief statement describing the one or two non-academic activities you would most like to pursue in college.

11. If you could travel through time and interview any historical figure, whom would you choose and what would you ask?

**REMEMBER:** Admissions officers are not looking for one “right” answer to any of these questions. They are trying to evaluate your thinking and writing abilities. They want to read what you think is important enough to write about.

**Test Scores:**

An important part of the application process is having your official test scores sent directly from the College Board or ACT. When you register to take the SAT, you may have your scores sent for free to up to four colleges. If you did not list any colleges when you registered, you may call the College Board or access your College Board account online and request that scores be sent for an additional fee. Do not worry about having your scores sent to the colleges until you are registering for your final SAT; for most of you this will be November of your senior year. The College Board Score choice option will also allow you to strategically send certain scores to colleges. Please consult with your counselor about which scores will most appropriate to send to each school. To read more about score choice, please consult the College Board website at http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/score_choice.html

If you are applying EA or ED, you will have to send in your scores earlier. The ACT allows you to send your scores to four schools for free when you register for a test. Make sure that you allow at least four weeks for schools to receive official test scores.

**Supplementary Information:**

**Supplemental Personal Statements** are not just space fillers on an application. If you have unusual or specific circumstances that have affected your high school career, or if you have been suspended or expelled from school for any reason, you will want to prepare an additional essay that discusses the situation from your point of view. You should not use this extra statement to simply make excuses. Instead, you should focus on outcomes and personal realizations—what made the situation important and how you learned from the experience.

**Samples of Individual Work**, including portfolios, tapes of musical performances, videos of dance or theater productions, and creative writing samples are all fine to send with your
college application. Be sure to review proper procedures and guidelines with the admissions office of each college before sending anything (portfolios may only be accepted on CD-rom, as an example, instead of slides). Ask your teachers for assistance (well in advance!) in organizing your material. Warning: do not send “stuff” just to fill out an application. Only send things that you think will help the admissions committee get a better understanding of you and your talents.

A Graded Paper from an English or history class is often required as part of the application to selective colleges. Save your best work from your junior year and first-term senior year classes in case they are needed for schools on your list. Make a copy of them for your own file as most of these originals cannot be returned.

A Few More Words about Applications:

Changes to the List of Schools receiving applications must be discussed with your counselor and teachers, especially if you change your mind about an application after you have move that school to your application list.

Withdrawing Applications is required only if you have been admitted to a college or university under an Early Decision Plan. If you decide to withdraw your application to any college for any reason, please notify your counselor immediately.

Missing Pieces/Forms in your application file at a college or university is not a reason to panic. The admissions offices are receiving thousands of pieces of mail each day during the weeks surrounding the application deadlines and it usually takes days to process all of these forms. Before doing anything, take a deep breath and think:

• Is the notification you have received dated close to the date when you sent your forms? If so, chances are that your forms and the college’s notification letter simply crossed in the mail. Wait a few business days after the receipt of the letter before calling to verify that the pieces have actually been received. This will give them time to process and file the pieces to give you an accurate answer (if they are in a pile on a desk, they might not be able to answer, or may give the wrong information again!). If they tell you that they still do not have the missing information when you call, send another copy of it immediately. Ask if a fax of the missing item would be helpful while waiting for the original to arrive in the mail.

• Is the piece that is missing a teacher letter of recommendation? If so, first check with the teacher(s) who wrote on your behalf to see if the recommendation has been mailed to that school. If it has, call the admissions office after a few days to see if it has since been filed with your other application materials. If it has been lost in the mail, provide another addressed and stamped envelope to your teacher and request that she/he send another copy. If the teacher tells you that the letter has not been sent, politely ask the teacher to fax the letter as soon as it is ready, being sure to follow-up with an original, signed copy sent in the mail. You, obviously, will have to provide the teacher with the fax number.

• Is the missing information something that was sent from the College Counseling Office (Counselors Report, transcript, or recommendation)? If so, contact your counselor immediately. More often than not, the information has arrived but has not yet been entered into the computer system at the college. If this information was lost in the mail
or misplaced in the college admissions office, another transcript packet can easily be sent. Regardless of the situation, the first thing you should do is notify your counselor.

**Financial Aid**

There are basically two types of financial aid available for higher education. *Need based aid* is money awarded to students and families who cannot otherwise afford to pay the cost of college or university expenses. *Merit aid* is money awarded based solely on academic performance or a special talent, regardless of demonstrated need. Most aid awarded is based on the demonstrated need of the family. Competitive scholarships are still available but vary from college to college. Check in the catalogs, financial aid brochures, college web pages, and reference books for more information on merit scholarships at colleges in which you are interested.

It is important to remember that applying for financial aid is a separate process from applying for admission. Decisions are generally made in separate offices and often independent of each other (it is possible to be admitted but receive no aid, even with demonstrated need). The standards of family income and the levels of eligibility change annually, but the basic parameters of financial aid remain the same. Thoroughly research the availability of aid for your family. If you are in doubt about your eligibility, it is a good idea to apply anyway. You never know what you might be eligible to receive.

**The Process:** Your demonstrated financial need is determined basically by subtracting your “expected family contribution”, as determined by the federal government, from the “total cost of attending” a college. The “cost of attending” includes fees for tuition, books and supplies, room and board, personal expenses, and transportation to and from the campus. This cost varies widely from college to college, and can even vary within an institution depending on your major, how far you have to travel to reach the school and the number of courses you take. The “expected family contribution” is the amount of funds parents or guardians and the student can contribute annually and is based on income and assets as determined by filing the financial aid forms.

**The Forms:**

*The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)* is required by ALL students who are planning to apply for any type of federal or state aid, including loans. This is a short (4 page) form that is available each year from the US Government in November and you can access it online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov). Paper copies of the FAFSA form can be downloaded and printed from [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org). You should plan to complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after (but never before) January 1st. Most colleges have February deadlines for receipt of this financial aid information. After completing this form you will mail or send it electronically to a national processing center, which will then provide appropriate information to financial aid offices at colleges and universities for evaluating students for need-based aid. IMPORTANT NOTE: The FAFSA is required to receive the TN Hope Scholarship!!
CSS/Financial Aid Profile (The PROFILE) is an additional financial aid application that is required by more than 400 private colleges to determine your eligibility for their own institutional aid. You must first register for the PROFILE, indicating the colleges and universities to which you plan to submit financial information. After your initial registration, you will receive your personalized form with many more detailed questions than those found on the FAFSA. Remember, you must first register for the profile in order to receive the correct, customized PROFILE application. Registration can begin as early as October 1st. Registration information will be available in the College Counseling office in the fall. You can also access registration materials online at www.collegeboard.com and pay by credit card (fees include a $9.00 registration charge plus a fee of $16.00 for each college you designate on your registration form).

College Financial Aid Forms are required by many colleges and universities in addition to the above mentioned forms. Complete these forms separately and mail in time to meet designated deadlines. Pay attention to information listed on the form that is required to complete your application; they may ask you for a copy of your tax returns or other documents.

Note to Early Applicants: If you apply to a college Early Decision or Early Action you will need to check with the college to learn what special financial aid process you need to follow. Most schools will request that you mail a copy of your and your parent's signed tax returns from the previous year in order to receive an estimated financial aid award with your acceptance letter. If your school requires the PROFILE you will need to register with PROFILE before October 15th and submit your completed PROFILE, using estimated figures from the previous year's tax return, by your college's November deadline. Revise your estimated figures when you officially file the PROFILE later in the process. Your final/official aid award will not be sent until spring, after you have submitted the FAFSA, PROFILE and all other required forms. There may be a difference in these two packages, as one (the earlier) is based on an estimate and the second is the official.

Other Sources of Financial Aid are available from many foundations, corporations, trusts, non-profit organizations and the like. Each will have its own application and requirements. The College Counseling Office often receives information about scholarships, so be sure to check the SSA College Counseling web site regularly. Other free scholarship information is available online at www.fastweb.com and www.finaid.org. Reference books are also available about financial aid sources (check in the KCCC and your local public library). Don’t Miss Out is an excellent book that discusses the financial aid process in great detail and lists extensive aid sources. It can be found in most bookstores.

Warning: be very wary of organizations that charge you a fee to research financial aid and scholarship opportunities for you. Most of this information is available for free via the above mentioned sources and many of these organizations are nothing more than a scam. Helpful scam information can be found at http://www.finaid.org/scholarships/scams.phtml.

Types of Financial Aid

After filing all of the required forms, each college will do a “need analysis” for you that will determine your “Expected Family Contribution” for the coming year. This amount is
subtracted from the cost of attendance and the difference is your “demonstrated need”. Colleges will then build a financial aid package to meet as much of your demonstrated need, hopefully 100%, as possible. This package may have several kinds of aid:

**Gift Aid** is scholarship or grant money awarded directly from the college or university, and does not have to be paid back.

**Self-Help Aid**, which is usually federal or college-sponsored, can consist of low interest loans repayable after graduation, and

**A Work Study Job** on campus, usually no more than 10 hours per week, that helps a student to earn money for their personal expenses.

The amount of each of these components will vary by college but will often meet the full demonstrated need. If you do not know if the school can meet your full demonstrated need, **ask** or read the literature.

There are several financial aid programs which may be a part of your financial aid package if you are eligible:

- **Federal Pell Grants** are awarded on the basis of extreme need.
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG)**.
- **Federal Work/Study (FWS)** are on-campus jobs that let you earn money to cover part of your college expenses.
- **Federal Perkins Loans**
- **Federal Subsidized and Unsubsidized Stafford Loans** are the largest of the government-backed education loan programs and are administered by a variety of banks and commercial lending institutions. You must complete a Stafford Loan Application which is available at most banks. You are responsible for locating a lending institution willing to loan you the money and the application must be signed by the college aid administrator to verify that you are enrolled or have accepted the offer of admission. Listings of recommended lenders can be found at www.finaid.org

After receiving your financial aid award you may have questions. Do not hesitate to contact the financial aid office directly to discuss your file. The counselors are there to help you understand your package and your financial aid options. Be sure to ask about tuition payment programs if you think that those would be helpful to you. Most colleges will include this information with the aid award letter but, if you do not see this information, **ask**. Finally, if you have questions or need help as you are completing the application, call 1-800-4-FED-AID for assistance, or visit [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov). The web site [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org) also provides much information, helpful links and a “calculator” for computing your expected family contribution.

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**After the Acceptance Is Received**

By April you will have been accepted to a college and, most likely, more than one college. You and your family now have to make the final choice of where you will enroll. You will want to review all of the research materials that you accumulated during your initial search.
and review the important qualities of each school. It is a good idea to try to visit (or revisit) college campuses of those that you are most serious about. If you have proceeded thoughtfully throughout the process until now this final choice will be easier for you and your family.

Please remember: **All college acceptances are provisional until the final transcript is sent to the school which you plan to attend!!!** This transcript is sent after graduation. “Senioritis” is not acceptable to colleges, and seniors who think that the admission letter is the end of the process are in for a rude awakening. **It is not unusual for colleges to change decisions upon receipt of weak final senior grades, either making admission provisional or changing the decision from accept to reject outright.** Continue to do your best work in all of your classes and study for your finals. These grades are very important.

**To make a final choice when you cannot decide**, it is a good idea to:
- talk with your parents and discuss the merits of each school,
- review your research materials for details about each school that you may have forgotten,
- talk to your college counselor,
- visit each campus, if possible, even if you have been there before,
- talk with current students on each campus either by phone or email (the admissions office will be glad to help you find someone with similar interests if you do not know a current student),
- talk with alumni from each school, and
- talk with your teachers and coaches about each school.

This is the time to be honest with yourself and to evaluate each school realistically. Do not be swayed by the perceived prestige of certain schools. What is most important is the match you see with a particular school, not if it wins a popularity contest. You are the one who will be living there for the next four years.

**After you have made your choice** you will need to:

- Notify one college of your decision to attend, usually by sending the enrollment card and an enrollment deposit and fees. **You can only deposit at one school! To do otherwise is considered by the colleges to be highly unethical.** These are due by May 1. Carefully check your acceptance letter for any special fees or requirements.
- At state universities you will need to sign up for housing immediately, since on-campus housing is often not guaranteed. For private colleges or universities, you will need to send the appropriate housing forms on or before the deadline.
- Tell your counselor of your final choice so that a final transcript can be mailed to that institution. **Only one final transcript will be sent per student.**
- Notify all other colleges and universities that offered you admission of your decision to go elsewhere. A phone call may be acceptable but written confirmation is the most acceptable format.

**Deferred entrance** is becoming more common at colleges and universities. If you wish to delay your entry at a college or university after receiving your admission letter, you will need to contact the admissions office immediately to learn what they require of you in order
to hold your place on campus until the following fall. In general you will need to send the enrollment card and enrollment deposit along with a letter explaining what you plan to do with your time away. Be specific about the amount of time you wish to delay your entry and about your plans. As a rule deferral requests are granted when the student has a plan in place for educational development that does not include enrollment in another school or classes for course credit.

If you are receiving financial aid, it is important to find out if the aid package will be available to you when you enroll after your deferral. Also, if you are going to enroll in the following fall semester, you will need to ask about any reapplication procedures for financial aid for the next year.

If the deferral is approved it is important to keep the college updated on your activities and location during the time away. The college may need to contact you throughout the year with housing and health forms, financial aid information, etc., so it is important that they know how to contact you. Keep a list of all important deadlines, important phone numbers and email addresses with you wherever you spend your deferral so that you do not miss anything and jeopardize your enrollment.

**Glossary of Terms in the College Admissions Process**

**ACT**
The American College Test is an alternative to the SAT Reasoning and Subject Tests and is accepted by most colleges and universities in lieu of the SAT’s. Like the SAT, the ACT is a standardized test made up of different subject sections (English, Math, Reading, Science Reasoning, and an optional Writing section). Because these topics are slightly different than topics on the SAT, some students prefer it.

**AP**
Advanced Placement exams are given each year in May to students who have done the equivalent of college level work in a class while in secondary school. Scores are reported on a scale of 1 to 5 and, depending on their score and the college, the student may earn credit upon enrollment. Tests are available in American History, European History, Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science, English (Language and Literature), Physics, Studio Art, Economics, and Psychology.

**Candidate Notification Date**
The date by which a college notifies a student of the admission decision. The common notification date, used by most colleges, is April 1.

**Candidate Reply Date**
The date by which a student must notify the college of his/her enrollment intent, May 1.

**CSS**
College Scholarship Service.

**Early Action**
A plan under which a student applies to a college early in the fall, usually by November 1st of the senior year. Students are notified about decisions in December. Unlike Early Decision, EA applicants do not need to decide if they wish to accept the offer of admission until May 1. EA applicants
can be denied admission outright and are not automatically deferred for later consideration. It is a rigorously competitive program, intended only for the most highly qualified students.

**Early Decision**  
A plan under which a student applies to the college of his/her choice, early in the fall, usually by November 1 of the senior year. The student agrees by contract to enroll at that college if offered admission. Students are notified of decisions in December. Most schools admit, deny or defer (consider the candidate along with the regular decision candidates) applicants from the early decision pool. Under the ED plan, a student can apply to *only one* college since, if admitted, the student agrees to enroll at the school. ED applicants are judged on the basis of their junior year classes, grades, and test scores.

**ETS**  
Educational Testing Service, a non-profit agency employed by the College Board to produce its tests.

**FAFSA**  
Free Application for Federal Student Aid, used to determine eligibility for federal and state aid.

**GPA**  
Grade Point Average.

**CSS PROFILE**  
A financial aid application form required by over 400 private colleges to determine eligibility for institutional aid.

**PSAT/NMSQT**  
The Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a multiple-choice test of the verbal, written, and mathematical abilities generally associated with academic performance in college. The test contains five sections, each separately timed: two verbal, two mathematical, and one writing. The test results are scored on a scale of 20 to 80. The three sections (verbal, math, and writing) are considered equal in value when determining the selection index for National Merit Scholars. *Only juniors are eligible to qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program.*

**Rolling Admission**  
Student is notified of college’s decision within 4 to 6 weeks after receipt of the application materials by the admissions office. Student does not need to notify college or university of the final enrollment decision until May 1.

**SAT**  
*Reasoning Test* is another developmental test, like the PSAT, only more detailed. It lasts for 3 hours and 35 minutes and has critical reading, math, and a writing section. Scores are reported on a scale from 200 to 800 on each section.  

*Subject Tests* measure knowledge or skills in specific subject areas. They are available in Writing, Literature, Mathematics (Levels I and II, which allow for the use of a calculator), French, German, Latin, Spanish, American History, World History, Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. Each of these tests is an hour long and up to three can be taken on one test date. Scores are reported on a scale of 200 to 800.
| **Single Choice** | Is the same as Early Action, but students are not permitted to apply to any other university under an early action/decision plan. |
| **Early Action** | |

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Information and Instructions Prior to Registration Day

Common Application

• Sign onto www.commonapp.org and create an account
• Once you have created your username and password on commonapp.org sign onto Family Connection
• Click on “My colleges”
• Click on “Yes, I DO waive my right to access, and I understand I will never see this recommendation
• Click on “I authorize all secondary schools I’ve attended to release all requested records and authorize review of my application for the admission process indicated on my Common Application recommendation forms
• Enter your Common application username
• Enter your Common application password
• Confirm your password
• Open the attached Common Application Secondary School Report Form. The form has been filled out with John Doe’s information. Please change the following fields:
   Legal Name
   Birth date
   Social Security #
   Address
   First Semester Courses
   Second Semester Courses (if necessary)
• Print, sign and date the form
• Fax me a copy at 369-5376 or after you sign the form email me a scanned version
• All of the above MUST BE COMPLETED NO LATER THAN AUGUST 12TH

School Specific Secondary School Report Form

• If the school you are applying to does not use the commonapp and a secondary school report form (also called “counselor report, transcript release form”) is required please complete and bring a copy to the college counseling office manager.
• NOTE:
   Be sure to fill out the applicant section
   Make sure to sign the form if a signature is required
   If the waive your rights question to access information is on form be sure to check “Yes” and sign
• DO NOT use pencils (use black ink if specified on form)
• DO NOT cross out your answers (use white out if necessary)

Miscellaneous

• You MUST have your first senior college counseling meeting by SEPTEMBER 30th
• It is very important that you remember that students MUST send their own test scores from Collegeboard or ACT to the schools they are applying
• The SAT has a new score reporting policy. The link that explains the changes is http://professionals.collegeboard.com/testing/sat-reasoning/scores/policy
• The commonapp and most colleges/universities strongly encourage you to consider applying online. It's quick, easy, and secure.
WRITING THE COLLEGE ESSAY

PURPOSE OF THE ESSAY

Your GPA, SAT Reasoning Test, SAT Subject Test or ACT scores are all important to a college admissions officer in assessing your academic abilities. But they are all numbers; they have no personality. What can make your application really stand apart from the others are your personal essays. Essays provide the admissions officer reading your application with a means to look beyond the numbers and to see you as a person. A well-written essay should convey your thoughts, attitudes, personal qualities, imagination, and sense of humor or creativity. The essay should let the admissions officer know WHO YOU ARE.

WRITING THE ESSAY

Give yourself plenty of time to write your essay; you do not have to get it right the first time. Write the first draft of your essay with the main focus on content. Only be concerned with getting your thoughts down on paper in a loose paragraph form. Then, set it aside for a day or two, rereading it later with a fresh perspective, making any necessary changes. At that point you can begin to consider matters of organization, style, grammar, spelling and tone. Once you have the first draft you may wish to try it out on family, friends or an English teacher. They may be able to offer helpful suggestions for improvement, but the final product needs to be yours—don’t let a helpful editor remove your voice from the page. The key to success with writing an essay is giving yourself enough time to really do some thinking, writing, editing, and more thinking. The more time you give yourself for your essay and the more you work on the essay, the better it will be.

DO’S

➢ Do think “small” and write about something about which you know.
➢ Do reveal yourself in your writing
➢ Do show rather than tell. By giving examples and illustrating your topic, you help to bring it to life for the reader.
➢ Do write in your own “voice” and style.
➢ Do tell the truth.
➢ Do write an engaging/unique introduction—an interesting opening line or paragraph makes them want to read the rest.
➢ Do highlight experiences that demonstrate your intellectual vitality or the way that your mind works.

DON’TS

➢ Don’t write what you think the admission staff wants to read.
➢ Don’t exaggerate or write to impress.
➢ Don’t use a flowery, inflated or pretentious style.
➢ Don’t neglect the technical part of your essay (grammar, spelling, sentence structure).
➢ Don’t ramble—say what you want to say and conclude.
➢ Don’t try to cover everything. Highlight your traits and qualities by telling one specific experience.
➢ Don’t focus on someone else, think only a tragic story is compelling or write about a sports injury or recovery unless it is a truly unique story.
CHOOSING A TOPIC

The topic is often not in question, as many colleges or universities will give you a topic to write about or list several topics from which you can choose. Still other colleges may suggest broad subjects that allow you to write about something that interests you or is of concern to you. If you are using the Common Application, you may even write about a topic of your choice.

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF...

The most common prompt, especially when only one essay is required, lets you decide how you want to describe yourself. It may be phrased in various ways. Here are some samples of questions from past years:

“In reading your application we want to get to know you as well as we can. We ask that you use this opportunity to tell us something more about yourself that would help us towards getting a sense of who you are, how you think, and what issues and ideas interest you most.” (Brown)

“Tell us one story about yourself that would best provide us, either directly or indirectly, with an insight into the kind of person you are…The possibilities are unlimited (well, almost so). You choose. Just relax and write it. Remember, the Gettysburg Address was only 272 words.” (Princeton)

TELL US ABOUT AN INTEREST OR IDEA...

Some colleges focus their essay questions on your academic and extracurricular interests, or pose certain subjects to challenge your thinking:

“Given the scope of the world’s problems, from political conflict and environmental decay to drug use, disease, and poverty, it may seem that we can not reasonably expect solutions. Choose an instance that proves to you that change in the status quo is possible.” (Amherst)

“Science and technology seem to give with one hand even as they take away with the other; we receive benefits that other generations hardly dared hope for, but all too often at the cost of dangers they never had to fear. Use your own acquaintance with modern advances to discuss a particular instance of balancing of advantages and disadvantages.” (Bryn Mawr)

“What particular book, play, film, dance performance, musical composition, or piece of visual art has affected you deeply in the past three years? Describe your reaction. If you choose a book, please select one that you have read outside your high school curriculum.” (Amherst)

“Discuss something you have read that has special significance to you.” (Bryn Mawr)

“Consult the Bryn Mawr/Haverford course listings in the prospectus. Choose one or two courses you would like to take and why.” (Bryn Mawr)

Sometimes the quotation or statement is provided to stimulate ideas:

“Discuss the following quotation from Shakespeare’s As You Like It: ‘Sweet are the uses of adversity.’” (Colby)

“To learn to think is to learn to question. Discuss a matter you once thought you knew ‘for sure,’ that you have since learned to question.” (Bryn Mawr)

Common Application Essay Questions:

“Evaluate a significant experience, achievement, risk you have taken, or ethical dilemma you have faced and its impact on you.”

“Discuss some issue of personal, local, national, or international concern and its importance to you.”
“Indicate a person who has had a significant influence and describe that influence.”

“Describe a character in fiction, a historical figure, or a creative work (as in art, music, science, etc) that has had an influence on you, and explain that influence.”

“A range of academic interests, personal perspectives, and life experiences adds much to the educational mix. Given your personal background, describe an experience that illustrates what you would bring to the diversity in a college community, or an encounter that demonstrated the importance of diversity to you.”

“Topic of your choice.”

**AS YOU START**

- Make a list of qualities you think that are unique about you.
- Think about why your friends, teachers, teammates, etc. like you.
- Reflect upon your special talents and interests and the ways you have used these to strengthen the MBA or Nashville community.
- Research the college/university to determine why you are interested in this college or university—this is really important for the Why are you applying to X college question.

**YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY CHECKLIST**

- Did I answer the question?
- Is the essay interesting?
- Will it stand out because it shows who I really am?
- Is it about something important to me?
  - Do I show that I can ‘think’?
- Do I get every bit out of an issue, story, and experience?
- Is my presentation logical?
- Do I support my contentions?
- Is there a good transition between separate ideas?
- Is all the information relevant rather than just related?
- Is everything stated as clearly and effectively as possible?
- Did I make a conclusion rather than end with a summary?

Remember… every question (even short ones) matter!!!!!!!!!!
How to Create an Activities Resume

The goal of an activities resume is to highlight your strengths and inform colleges about your accomplishments and special talents. This is your opportunity to showcase your talents so USE IT!

Getting Started
To begin, make a list of all of your activities. This should include summer activities, work experiences, sports achievements, volunteer experiences and community service, and any other educational experiences you have had outside of MBA.

After you have compiled the list, arrange these activities in similar groups. Now put the list in order of importance or significance. That order may be different for each student depending on which particular skills you would like to highlight!

Now define your role in the various organizations/activities. If it is an activity that is unique or if its purpose or mission is unclear, write a description of that organization. If you tackled any special projects or accomplished specific goals, describe the requirements of those projects.

Have someone look over your descriptions to see if they are clearly stated.

Format
Since your goal is to quickly inform the reader about your interests, choose a format that flows:

   Different Styles
   Traditional resume format
   Organized by date/class year
   Organized by category
   Theater or portfolio style
   Application style

Hints
Be honest and use language to present your information in the most positive light possible. Use active words for activities in which you are still involved. Edit!
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Hogan Tyler Jones  
234 Spring Milky Way  
Brentwood, Tennessee 37027  
D.O.B May 2, 1991

**Education**
Montgomery Bell Academy, 2004 – present

**Honors and Awards**
Junior Honor Society - 9, 10, 11, 12  
P.M. Estes Scholarship Award – 10, Given to two students in each grade of the high school who best exhibit leadership in school and community, have exemplary qualities of character and personal commitment, and show a positive influence on their peers. These students also exhibit a high level of academic, athletic, and community involvement. (description provided by Montgomery Bell Academy) This award included a check for $1000.  
John Moorhead Dobson Memorial Award for best sports article - 11  
Spanish Honor Society – 9, 10, 11, 12  
Montgomery Bell Academy Archives Magazine (winter 2008 edition) - 11, $100 award for best non-fiction.

**Activities / Athletics**
Honor Council – 9, 10, 11, 12  
Honor Council - Vice President - 12  
Basketball - 9, 10, 11, 12  
“Bell Ringer” School Newspaper Writer - 9, 10, 11, 12  
“Bell Ringer” School Newspaper Sports Editor - 11, 12  
Special Olympics Volunteer – 9, 10, 11, 12  
Special Olympics Chairman – 12  
Second Harvest Food Bank Chairman – 12 (school wide food drive to help feed Nashville’s hungry)  
Peer Tutor– 10 (tutored 7th grader in Introduction to Physical Science)  
Baseball Club Vice President - 11-12  
Volunteer for Barack Obama’s presidential campaign - 11

**Other Educational Experiences**
Intern with Nashville Predators Hockey team public relations department – 11, 12 (as an intern I helped with game day promotions and had a Predators game article published on the Nashville Predators website)

**Jobs / Employment**
Law Clerk at office of Att. Glenn R. Funk - 11, 12. Summer employment for approximately 600 hours over two years.  
Lawn Care for Dr. Catherine Graham - 11, 12 (two hours per week)  
First Presbyterian Church Recreation Department – 10, 11, 12 worked as basketball referee (hours varied)
James “Jimmy” Smyth

2499 Soccer Center Rd  ♦  Nashville, TN 37215  ♦  GentlemanScholarAthlete@gmail.com  ♦  DOB 02/28/91  ♦  SSN 148-84-8144

Academic Honors & Awards
Montgomery Bell Academy
Aug’06- May ’10
- Honor Roll grades 9-12
- Junior Honor Society, recognizing early Academic Achievement at MBA, grade 9
- National Merit Semifinalist, 2009
- AP Scholar, 2008 - 2009 (5 on US History and Modern European; 4 on Latin Vergil)
- 7 Total AP Courses; 9 Total Honors Courses
- Selected to attended the Winchester International Symposium as the MBA Representative, ’09-’10

Debate & Argumentation
MBA Quiz Bowl Team
‘09 – ‘10
Founding member
- Winner, Quiz Bowl vs. Harpeth Hall, ‘09
- Member, ’09 – ’10; practices for 2-3 hours for several weeks in the winter

MBA Debate Team
Aug ’06 - present
Co-Captain
- Researched and practiced after school 3 – 4 hours per day, 5 days a week
- Prepared instruction for and delivered lectures and lessons to beginning debaters on debate argumentation, speaking, and current events
- first or second place team finishes at Wake Forest University, NC ’09; Georgetown University Round Robin invitational, DC ’09; Georgetown Day School Tournament, ’09; Vestavia Hills, ’09
- Elimination Round debates at Samford, ’07; Westminster, ’07; Wake Forest University, ’08 and ’09; St. Mark’s Heart of Texas Invitational, ’08 and ’09; Georgetown Day School, ’09; University of Michigan, ’08; The Blake School, ’08; Lexington High School, ’09; University of Georgia, ’09.
- Top ten individual speaker finishes at Wake Forest, ’08 and ’09; Lexington High School, ’09; Georgia, ’09 ; Georgetown University Round Robin, ’09 ; and Georgetown Day School, ’09
- Twice qualified for the Tournament of Champions – ’08 and ’09
- Winner, the Ridgeway Scholarship for Best Junior Debater, Montgomery Bell Academy ’09
- Member, MBA Football and Basketball Team, 9th Grade; Pursued debate full-time, 10-12th

Dartmouth Debate Institute
July-August, ’09
- Four week program, attended classes and practices for 16 hours a day; selected for top lab of 20 students out of a pool of 300 applicants.
- Intensive research and study on US social service programs, current political climate surrounding health care, US hegemony and international relations theory.
- Semifinalist, Dartmouth Debate Institute Tournament
- 1st Speaker, Dartmouth Debate Institute Tournament

Georgetown Debate Seminar
June-July, ’09
- 2.5 week program, attended classes, discussions, and practice debates for 16 hours a day
- A select debate camp for the top 20 senior debaters in the country
• Visited the Center for Strategic International Studies to discuss international issues; received a lecture from an attorney who won a Supreme Court case; also researched state social service policy and the role of the free market in social service reform

**Michigan Debate Institute**  
June-August, ’08  
• 7 week program, attended 3 hour classes 2 times a day; researched for four hours every day  
• Researched the renewable portfolio standard and space-based solar power as well as other possible ramifications to alternative energy incentives

**Northwestern Debate Institute**  
July-August, ’07  
• 4 week program, 3 hour classes 2 times a day; researched for four hours every day  
• Researched the spending climate in Washington and U.S. public health policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa

**MBA Mock Trial**  
’07-present  
• Team Captain/Student Director, ’08-present, organizing 2 hour practice twice a week for 6-8 weeks  
• Most Valuable Participant, ’08-’09  
• 3rd in Nashville Metro Championships, ’09  
• 1st in Nashville Metro Championships, ’08  
• 4th in Tennessee State Championships, ’08

**Work Experience**

**Federal Judge Todd Campbell**  
Summer 2009  
*Intern*  
• Researched several cases for Judge Campbell – including reading briefs, finding historical examples, etc  
• Worked on cases ranging from Nazi war crimes to jail sanitation situations  
• Watched and directly observed trial cases and accumulated information on others  
• Specifically, spent majority of time researching a case related to art stolen by the Nazi regime during World War II

**State Senator Joe Haynes**  
Summer 2009  
*Intern*  
• Observed and helped the Senator during the crucial last week of the Session by taking notes, organizing files and researching parts of potential legislation  
• Discussed and aided the Senator in support of gun control and other issues

**Alan Coverstone School Board Political Campaign**  
2008  
*Campaign Yard Sign Chair*  
• Worked on the School Board Campaign team for MBA’s Academic Dean, Alan Coverstone  
• Yard Sign Chair – organized and placed in voters yards the majority of campaign signs  
• Participated in phone banks calling voters and other office activities for four hours, three afternoons a week during the summer and every Saturday possible during the Winter and Spring of ’08

**Hampton Avenue Basketball Camp**  
Summers ’07 – ’10  
*Founder & Co-Counselor*  
• Founded a basketball camp for K – 4th graders. Enrollment has risen every year, peaking at 30 children this summer  
• Coordinated marketing through an extensive sign and e-mail campaign to encourage enrollment
• Created curriculum/activities to keep the children engaged and focused on basketball for the entire day.
Phillip P. Berg

12645 Sassy Lane ♦ Nashville, TN 37205 ♦ PhilBerg@gmail.com ♦ DOB 9/1/1990

Academic Honors & Awards

Montgomery Bell Academy
Aug’ 06- May ‘10

Totomoi Induction: an honorary fraternity to recognize outstanding leadership in academic achievement, athletics, service to the school, community service, and overall contributions to the school. The society inducted five members total for the junior class.

• National Latin Exam Gold Medal Finalist, grades 8-9
• National Spanish Exam Gold Medal Finalist, grades 10-11
• Excellence in Chamber and Orchestral Music, grades 9-11
• 8 Total AP Courses; 7 Honors Total Honors Courses

Music and Performance

MBA Chamber Orchestra Program
Aug’ 04-present
Judge/principal cellist.

• Chamber Groups and coachings each year including piano cello duet, individual voice, string quartet, cello quintet, and clarinet quartet
• Founded jury program in which all students required to perform semester exams for panel of judges; Judge for other students’ juries
• 6 concerts each year including chamber orchestra and solo performances

Myra Jackson Scholarship Program (Vanderbilt Blair School of Music)
Aug’ 07-present

• Full Scholarship program (about $4500 a semester) in which students are required to take music theory and history courses, participate in chamber groups, attend Curb Youth Symphony and take private lessons (all of which are paid for)
• Music History (’07-’09), Music Theory (’07-’10)
• Chamber Groups: Oboe Quartet (’07-’08), Piano Cello Duet (’07-’08), Piano Quartet (’08-’09) Cello Quintet (’08-09), String Quartet (’09-present)
• Curb Youth Symphony: Principal cellist, Treasurer, Secretary, President of Orchestra
• Private Lessons: Julia Tanner (’05-’07) Kirsten Cassel (’07-present) Felix Wang (’07-’09)
• McCrory Summer Study Scholarships (each summer ’06-’09)

Nashville Music Competitions:
’06-present
• Curb Youth Symphony Concerto Competition: Honorable Mention, 1st Runner-Up,
• NAMTA Strings Competition: 1st place, 2nd place
• MTNA Strings Competition: 2nd place, Honorable Mention

Sewanee Summer Music Festival:
Summer ’05-’06
• Excellence in chamber playing
• Principal Cellist of Young Artist Orchestra
• Private Lessons: Paul York

Rocky Mountain Summer Conservatory:
Summers ’06-09
• Private Lessons: Felix Wang (2 summers); Paul Bjella: (final summer)
• 1st cellist cello quintet, 2 string quartets, piano quartet, string trio
• Named best precollege solo cellist

Extra Curricular/Athletic Involvement
Asian Cultural Club
Aug ’08-present
President/Founder
- Student run club emphasizing eastern culture and influences often comparing to American culture
- Regular meetings held every three weeks during school, open to all MBA students and faculty
- Focuses efforts on international service projects often with organizations like the World Hunger Organization

Multi-Cultural Alliance
’09-present
President/Founder
- Organization dedicated to issues of diversity and discrimination
- City-wide Diversity Summit: broad forum for schools in the district of Nashville both private and public hosted at MBA, provided open forum for discussion and presenting solutions to problems of discrimination
- Collaboration from leaders and teachers of Asian Cultural Club, African American Studies Club, Jewish Advisory Group, Arabic Studies Club, among others

African-American Studies Club
Aug ’07-present
- Group dedicated to discussing issues of blacks in American context
- Targets civil rights movement and contemporary racial tensions

Jewish Advisory Group
’07-present
- Group dedicated to discussion of Jews in America
- Focuses on issues of religion in America, with comparison to mainstream Christian culture

Bell Ringer Newspaper
Aug ’06-present
Entertainment Editor/Writer
- Student-run Publication and official newspaper of MBA
- Gather writers, assign articles, present new ideas and formats for paper

Archives Publications
Aug ’07-present
Editor/Judge
- Student-run creative writing publication, two issues published a year
- Awards money to those pieces that win first place in a number of categories including poetry, visual art, and non-fiction

Varsity Swim Team
Aug ’06-present
- Competitive Swim Team
- State Cuts made each year in the 100 Back and 100 Free

Model United Nations
Aug ’07-’09
- State-wide event held to mimic the United Nations and such processes of legislation

Service
Martin Luther King Walk
Mar ’08, Mar ‘09
- Walk organized and dedicated to the memory of MLK Jr. and all of his work

Day of the Dead Festival
Oct ’08, Oct ‘09
- Hispanic Festival from 10-5, volunteer work by MBA students with children and information stations

Soup Kitchen
Aug ’08-’09
- Meets to feed homeless Tennesseans on Saturdays from 8-12
Chamber Players
Aug '07-'09
  • MBA musician group that goes about Nashville performing concerts for retirement homes

Earthquake Relief Fund
Aug '08-'09
  • Number of sales and tournaments held by Asian Cultural Club to raise money for ruined schools in China