

PROSPECTIVE
COLLEGE STUDENT
MANUAL

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FORWARD

For the majority of Notre Dame students, one of the most important tasks that will occur in the senior year is to apply to and be accepted by an institution of higher learning. It has been our experience that the earlier a student begins the process, the better the chance of getting accepted by the school or schools of the student's choice. The school counselor will discuss the application process with students, and this guide will help to summarize that meeting. If students later find that they have questions, it is **their** responsibility to see their counselor.

This booklet is intended as a planning guide for both the student and parent. The Counseling Department feels that it answers over ninety percent of the most commonly asked questions concerning the college and post-secondary school application process. It is not, however, a document that covers every possible contingency.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

OVERVIEW

The college website is the best source of information for learning more about that school's admission process, the application process, majors and academics, student life, the community, research, and athletics. The process of applying to college is an expensive, time-consuming, and complicated one. It is recommended that a student apply to several colleges (3 to 5) of different levels of selectivity. Students should plan to visit colleges to which they are seriously considering submitting an application to. The summer between the junior and senior year is an ideal time for these visitations, although the early fall of the senior year can also be used for campus visits. If it is not possible to visit a college, the student should at least explore any virtual opportunities to speak to admission representatives, and take a tour of the campus to obtain a sense of what the school is like and what it has to offer.

Students should apply to college as early as possible in their senior year. In most cases, each college will have an application deadline designed to fit that particular institution's needs. **DO NOT miss a college's deadline.** Deadlines are specific and have been set for a reason. **DO NOT MISS A DEADLINE!!**

The Counseling Department has found, however, that if a student applies to an institution early in their senior year, the student's chance for favorable consideration seems to increase. Therefore, the Counseling Department **strongly** encourages students to apply to their selected colleges no later than the Thanksgiving holiday of the senior year.

Please note most colleges requiring standardized test scores now require students to send their test scores directly from the testing company. Therefore, students should always take advantage of the four free listings included with the price of the SAT Reasoning Test, or the ACT Test.

Students should not wait to apply to a college because they have not taken the SAT or ACT test. Colleges realize that almost all seniors will take the SAT or ACT test in their senior year. The student merely has to indicate to the College Board or the American College Testing program which colleges should receive their respective scores. An application should never be delayed for this reason.

Each college determines what information it needs before it can make an informed decision on whether to admit or not admit a student. College 'A' may feel it needs less or more information than college 'B' – thus a different type of application is utilized by each college. It is the responsibility of the student to secure and complete an application from each school they plan on applying to. The Common Application is used by over 900 colleges and the Coalition Application is used by 135 colleges.

All applications will have a section for the student to complete, and a section for Notre Dame to complete. Students should complete and supply all information that calls for their name, address, birth date, names of parents or guardians, social security number, etc. They should **NOT** list any grades in the Grade Section or Class Record Sheet, unless they are asked to complete a student generated transcript (make sure you speak to your counselor before you start). **ALL APPLICATIONS WILL REQUIRE AN OFFICIAL SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT (see below)**. It is up to the discretion of the student to determine what type of application they will use.

KEY ADMISSION TERMINOLOGY

- **Early Decision**

This is an admission process by which a student may apply to his/her first choice college early in their senior year with notification of an acceptance or rejection in December.

Some colleges restrict Early Decision candidates to only one application. This means if you are an Early Decision applicant at such a school, you cannot apply for admission to any other college before you receive a reply from the school to which you have signed an Early Decision agreement. Some other colleges allow an applicant to file applications with other colleges but if the applicant, under Early Decision, is accepted, all applications to other colleges must be withdrawn.

- **Early Action**

This is a plan used by several competitive colleges which encourages applicants to submit their application early in the fall of senior year.

Consideration is based on all work completed through the end of junior year. It is similar to Early Decision; however, Early Action has two main differences:

1. If accepted, a student is free to apply to other colleges, and any deposits or fees required to hold a place in the class can be deferred to May 1st.
2. An applicant who is denied admission under Early Action in some cases may reapply for consideration under general application procedures. At this time additional test scores and senior grades can be submitted and in some cases the decision may be favorable.

- **Rolling Admissions**

Several colleges operate on a system whereby each applicant is notified of their acceptance or rejection as soon as the applicant's admission file is complete. Notification usually occurs four to six weeks after the application is received by the college and no further information is needed.

- **Regular Admissions**

Many colleges require applications to be submitted before a specific deadline date at which time the admissions committee begins considering the credentials of all applicants. Deadlines are as early as January 1st through February. Notification of a decision is usually on or about April 1st.

MORE IMPORTANT TERMS

- **Test Optional**

This policy leaves the decision up to you as to whether or not you want to send SAT or ACT scores to a school. In other words, SAT/ACT optional colleges do not require you to send your scores. Instead, you must decide whether or not your test results are an accurate representation of your academic ability and potential. This leaves you with more choice and control over how you present your strengths to admissions officers.

- **Test Flexible**

While test-flexible requires you to send test scores, it might allow for different options in place of the SAT or ACT. For example, some schools might waive their test requirements if you meet a minimum GPA or are applying to a specific program, while others might let you send AP scores in lieu of general SAT/ACT Scores, or SAT with essay, or ACT with writing. Test-flexible policies can vary from school to school.

- **Test Blind**

It does not want you to send any test at all. Hampshire College in Amherst, MA. According to the school's policy, Hampshire will reject any and all scores sent in.

Liberal Arts colleges are more likely to have test-optional policies.

Most prestigious universities (in the top 5) still require the SAT or ACT scores. This includes Ivy League schools like Harvard, Yale, and Princeton; University of California system schools like UC Berkeley and UCLA; and many other top private schools like Stanford and Duke.

Since admissions processes are complex and unique to each school it is your responsibility to thoroughly explore the policies of all of the colleges you are interested in, but don't limit yourself prematurely by ruling out the SAT or ACT; you want to keep your options open.

Check out colleges or universities that super score the SAT or ACT. It is important to note that although some schools may be test-optional or test-flexible they may require an SAT or ACT score report for scholarship consideration (especially merit based awards).

THE SPECIFICS

1. Complete the transcript request form on the Counseling Google site with a **\$5.00** transcript fee, for **each** completed application to the Counseling Office. This fee can be paid in cash or check, payable to ***Notre Dame High School***. It should be noted that the first three transcripts are free and each additional transcript is \$5.00. The student must complete their name along with the name and address of the college they are applying to. ***It is important to realize that all fees for tuition must be up-to-date at the time a transcript is requested. All requests for a transcript must be cleared through the Business Office. Therefore, to avoid delays in applying to colleges or for scholarships, parents need to be current with their tuition payments.***
2. The Counseling Office will then process the application. All sections the school is required to fill out will be completed, an official transcript will be generated, and the entire package will be sent to the college. Once the transcript request form is submitted, the Counseling Office will not hold an application for any reason. Applications will be processed and mailed in the order in which they are received.
3. ***Please note:*** Although most completed applications are processed within two weeks of receipt in the Counseling Office, students and parents must allow a minimum of ***fifteen school days*** between the time they submit a transcript request form to the Counseling Office, and the time the application is completed and sent.
4. Follow the above procedure in all cases ***unless*** a college specifically instructs the student to follow another program of action.

Note: Do not request a transcript until you have submitted your application to the college you are interested in attending, this is especially true when using an electronic application. If a transcript is sent and there is no file to send it to, your transcript will be disregarded and it may require you to request a second transcript to the same school, and may also result in a second file being created which will delay a response from the college or reflect incomplete applications.

COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATIONS

A college or university may ask for the student's counselor to complete a section of the application. The questions colleges ask can most often be answered from school records, student interviews, personal observations, teacher input and student resumes.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

If a college to which a student applies requires separate letters of recommendation from subject teachers, the student must ask the teachers if they would write a recommendation on their behalf. The student ***must provide the teacher*** with a copy of their resume. The teacher should be given any form the college provides for the recommendation. If there is no form, the teacher will use school stationary. If a college requires a teacher recommendation, understand that this is a letter from the teacher to the college concerning the teacher's assessment of the student's ability or performance in his/her content area.

Students using an electronic application will be asked to supply the teacher's email. Be sure to enter the email address correctly. Once the application is submitted the teacher will be asked to complete a recommendation online.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

On some select applications, students may encounter a section that asks for the school principal or "Headmaster" to complete a portion of the application. Please submit the application to the counseling administrative assistant in the usual manner. The counselor will obtain the proper endorsements if necessary.

In some rare cases, a college may also request a peer recommendation in addition to a teacher's recommendation. If this is required follow the same procedure you would use in asking for a teacher recommendation.

If there are any questions on the applicant's part they should always consult with their school counselor.

Remember, once you submit your application electronically you cannot bring it back or make changes. Be sure you have reviewed all of your answers and you have downloaded any and all supplemental forms required by the specific college to which you are applying.

ONLINE APPLICATIONS

The personal computer has made college information easily accessible to anyone who is interested in searching for college majors, admission requirements, scholarship information, and sources of financial aid.

Once connected to a host college, the opportunity may also be available to apply online, using the Common Application, the Coalition Application or the School's Application.

One drawback to electronic applications is that students who apply online often forget to inform the counseling office that they have applied to a college. As a result, the high school transcript may not be sent and students receive a letter informing them that their admission file is incomplete. Recommendation letters, teachers' checklist forms, writing samples, and essays may also be forgotten once the computer is turned off.

Any information that is forgotten delays the admission process for you and reflects negatively on your ability to follow the directions set by the college you are applying to.

Students who choose to apply online are recommended to:

- ✓ Notify the counseling office as soon as possible that you have applied online.
- ✓ Complete a transcript request and bring in the necessary fees.
- ✓ Alert the counseling office of any teacher recommendations/checklists that must be sent.
- ✓ Check with the college in about four weeks to make sure your application packet is complete.
- ✓ Make sure that you have met all the deadline dates set by the college for admission.

Note: If you choose to apply early decision online you will be required to complete a form that requires your signature, a parent's signature, and that of the school counselor to verify your knowledge of what early decision means and your responsibility in the process.

Note: When you submit your application online, a letter is often generated by the college saying your application is not complete because your transcript is missing. If this occurs, do not panic and bring the letter into the guidance office.

TRANSCRIPTS

When a student formally applies to a college, the college will require an **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT** of their high school grades. Notre Dame will allow each student to receive three transcripts for free and then will charge a \$5.00 fee for each additional transcript requested. The fee includes the cost of submitting an application and transcript to the college, the cost of sending the student's mid-year grades to every college to which the student has applied if needed, and the cost of mailing a student's final transcript and certification of graduation to the college the student has decided to attend. **Remember, all tuition payments must be up-to-date at the time an official transcript is requested!**

HIGH SCHOOL CODE

For identification purposes, the Educational Testing Service (ETS) has assigned every high school in the United States a different six digit code. The code identifies the high school to colleges, government agencies, and scholarship programs. This number may be alternatively referred to as the "High School Code," the "College Board Code", or the "ETS Code". College applications, SAT or ACT registration forms, scholarship applications, and financial aid forms usually ask for the student's school code as well.

The important point to remember is that no matter what it is called, it is still the same thing. Only **one** code number has been assigned to each high school, and the number for Notre Dame High School is **391148**.

FINANCIAL AID

Financial aid for post-secondary education is available from both the state and federal government. In order to be considered for these programs, students and their parents must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (**FAFSA**), and possibly a **CSS/Profile**. Students/Parents will be able to submit these forms as early as October 1st. Both Federal and State financial aid is dependent on Congress and the State Legislature passing revised funding legislation on a yearly basis.

Awards may also be available from specific colleges and from private scholarship programs. It is the student's responsibility to research the aid available from these sources.

The internet has various financial aid information available and interested parents can do searches on their own computer at home.

Additionally, the student should listen to announcements and check with the Counseling Department Assistant for information concerning local scholarship information.

Please note colleges may set their own deadlines for financial aid. Remember to meet the deadlines set by the college you plan to attend. A good rule for financial aid is to submit all financial aid documents by Valentine's Day, February 14th.

COLLEGE ATHLETICS

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) now requires that **ALL** students who plan to participate in **ANY** Division I or Division II college athletic program must register online with the **NCAA Eligibility Center** while the student is in high school. Failure to do so will mean that the student will not be **NCAA Certified**. If a student is not **NCAA Certified**, the student will be unable to receive any athletic scholarship money, and will be prohibited from playing college sports on the Division I or Division II level.

At this writing, student athletes who believe that they will play any **NCAA Division I or Division II sports must** follow the directions set by the NCAA. It is the **student's responsibility** to make sure they are properly registered with the **NCAA Eligibility Center**. All fees, except the cost of an official high school transcript, associated with the **NCAA Eligibility Center** are set and collected by the **NCAA**.

Register online at: <https://www.ncaa.org>

In addition, the student must inform the counseling office that they have registered. If a student attended another high school during 9th, 10th, or 11th grade an official high school transcript from each school attended must be forwarded to the Clearinghouse as well. Also, students who may have failed a subject and made up the work outside of Notre Dame must obtain verification of passing from the school or program where the subject was taken. Student athletes are responsible for contacting their previous schools or programs and request that their transcripts are mailed directly to the Eligibility Center.

SERVICE ACADEMIES

At each military service academy there is no tuition or room and board charge, and each student is paid a monthly stipend to cover uniforms, books, supplies, and other expenses. To be considered for acceptance, a student must meet rigorous academic and physical requirements, and secure an appointment to any academy from their U.S. Congressional Representative or U.S. Senator. Students, who attend a service academy and subsequently graduate, are required to serve a military commitment of at least six years.

Students interested in applying to a service academy, should write to the academy of choice, and check with their counselor in the spring of their junior year for information on how to begin the academy application process.

ROTC SCHOLARSHIPS

Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) Scholarships are available from each military branch of service. Exact amounts of an award vary from service to service, and from year to year. Acceptance of an ROTC scholarship commits the student to serve an active duty requirement, after graduation, in the branch of service that awarded the scholarship.

Both academy and ROTC representatives visit Notre Dame periodically and are the best source of information as to application requirements and procedures. Students are free to meet with them when they visit the school.

For more information contact any local recruiter or go online. These scholarship applications should be obtained prior to the start of senior year, and deadlines are as early as October of senior year.

THE COUNSELING DEPARTMENT

YOUR COUNSELOR

The Counseling Department will schedule every senior in the fall semester either individually or in small groups to discuss the college application process and career goals. Students should feel free to meet with their counselor at any time, and especially, if they have questions or do not understand something in relation to the college application or test registration process. However, it is best that the student make an appointment so that they are assured the counselor has not scheduled other students at that time.

Students are reminded that the most up-to-date information on a college can be found online at the college's website.

Sometimes parents would like to meet with their son's or daughter's counselor in order to help clarify the college application process. Parents are always welcome, but for their convenience, they are also asked to make an appointment. Appointments are generally scheduled between 8:30 AM and 2:00 PM on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursdays.

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS OFFICER VISITATIONS

Some colleges, trade schools, technical schools, and branches of the Armed Services send representatives to visit Notre Dame High School throughout the school year. Students should listen to daily announcements and/or visit the Counseling Office for an updated schedule. Students must sign-up with the Counseling Office, **at least 2 days in advance of the visit** to be able to meet with a representative. There will be **NO** exceptions to this rule. Students should be selective in how many schools they schedule. If a student signs-up for more than 4 visits, their privilege to leave class for this purpose may be rescinded. It is entirely up to a student's subject teachers to grant the student permission to leave class for this purpose. Students should never miss a test or quiz that is assigned. In the event of a test, the student should notify the counseling administrative assistant and materials from the specific school will be requested. Also if the student has specific questions, they will be addressed before the college representative leaves the office.

TESTING

GENERAL TEST INFORMATION

If a student decides to apply to a specific college, it is their responsibility to obtain the application materials. The student should determine which tests are required. Students are encouraged to go to www.collegeboard.org or www.actstudent.org for registration information, specific test information, and practice tests. The school counselor will remind seniors about registering for these tests early in their school year, but the responsibility for registering and sending their scores to the appropriate colleges rests with the student.

The **student** is responsible for registering for their tests. All students are encouraged to register online. A photograph of the student must be uploaded at the start of the registration process and will appear on their registration ticket when it is printed. Registering online will require the student to use a valid credit card for payment and their admission ticket will be downloaded immediately. Electronic registrations are recommended because test center confirmation is immediate. If a student decides to register by mail, it is their responsibility to **mail** a completed registration form along with the proper test fee to the test publisher by a specific date every time they wish to take a test. If a registration form is submitted after the deadline, a schedule of late registration fees takes effect. Late fees are added to the actual test fees required. Late fees are not necessary and the test registration process is operated and governed by the test publisher **not** the high school.

When a student mails a registration form to the test publisher, the student indicates that they want to take the test on a specific date and at a specific test center. **However**, the test publisher controls which students are assigned to any given test center. Normally, the registration forms first to reach the test publisher for each respective test date are given first assignment to a specific test center – until that test center reaches capacity. Therefore, there is no guarantee that a student will get the test center of their choice – especially if a student’s registration form is received late in any registration cycle. If a student does not get assigned to the test center of their choice, they are assigned to a test center that has space available and is geographically as close as possible to the test center the student selected. Phone registration is also available, but only after a student has taken the test once; and, at an additional cost. Therefore, electronic registrations should always be considered if the student has access to a home computer and the internet.

Please note: Late fees also affect electronic registrations and seating availability is on a first come basis.

PROPER IDENTIFICATION

When a student takes the **SAT Reasoning Test** or an **ACT Test** at any test center, they will need either a **PHOTO Driver's license**, a **Passport** or a **School Picture ID** to establish their identity. These forms of identification are the **only** ones that will **guarantee** that a student's identity will be formally established at any test center. These restrictions are designed to prevent an impostor from taking a test in place of the registered student. In addition the student's admission ticket which was either downloaded with the electronic registration or received in the mail must also be presented along with the photo ID.

THE SAT TEST

The large majority of colleges Notre Dame Students apply to require applicants to take the **Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)** of The College Board. Most colleges expect that an applicant will take the SAT Test in the spring of their junior year **and again** in the fall of the senior year. Depending on certain circumstances, it may be to the student's advantage to take the SAT twice in the spring of the junior year, and again in the fall of the senior year (most Notre Dame High School students pursue the second option).

Seniors who did not take their SAT Reasoning Test in their junior year should register to take the SAT in August, October, November, or December of their senior year.

Remember that Notre Dame's School Code is 391148.

SAT SUBJECT TESTS

SAT Subject Tests are no longer being administered by the College Board

ACT TEST

This is a test that has been developed as an alternative to the SAT Reasoning and SAT Subject Tests. **ACT** stands for the **American College Testing** program. Some colleges and universities, especially in the south and west, tend to favor the ACT but most colleges will accept either the SAT or ACT. As with SAT registrations, students are encouraged to register online, and also send their score reports to the colleges they plan to attend at this time.

Before registering for the ACT, students should check with their colleges to see if they require the test with the essay for admission. Seniors will have an opportunity to take the ACT in September, October and December.

Remember that Notre Dame's School Code is 391148.

GENERAL INFORMATION

PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN PA

Since competition at the universities that comprise the State System of Higher Education (Bloomsburg, Kutztown, East Stroudsburg, etc.), and the State Related Universities (The University of Pittsburgh, Temple University, Lincoln University, and Pennsylvania State University) has become **very** keen, it has become increasingly important that a student file applications to these schools as early as possible in their senior year.

If a student plans to apply for admission to Penn State, University Park, the student should apply in **SEPTEMBER** or **OCTOBER** of their senior year as Penn State now has a November 1 early action deadline. This **greatly** increases a student's chance for acceptance. The same application is used for all Penn State branches. It is also recommended that students submit applications to a Penn State branch by the end of November of their senior year. Penn State now uses specific deadline dates for all applicants. Penn State will accept their application, the Coalition Application and the Common Application.

Please note: Most colleges are receiving applications electronically. If you choose to apply online, you should download a copy of your application whenever possible, and you should always contact the school in about four weeks to make sure your application is complete. Also ***do not forget to alert the counseling office*** and complete your transcript request for any electronic application you submit.

It should also be noted that once you submit your application electronically a file is started for the applicant. A letter will usually follow indicating that the student's file is incomplete due to a missing transcript and/or letters of recommendation.

WITHDRAWING AN APPLICATION

SAMPLE LETTER

Sometimes circumstances intervene which make it necessary for a student to withdraw an application, even before he/she receives a decision from a college. Again, it is polite to inform the college of this intention.

Student's Name
Student's Address
Date

Director of Admissions
Name of College
Address of College
City, State, Zip

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a senior at Notre Dame High School in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania.

My application for admission to _____ (Name of College/University) has been filed with you. Since my plans for higher education have changed recently, I would like to withdraw my application for admission at this time.

Please accept my thanks for your assistance and consideration.

Sincerely,

(Your Signature Signed)

Your Name Printed or Typed