

# WINCHESTER HIGH SCHOOL POST SECONDARY PLANNING INFO

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## Table of Contents

Post Secondary Options	pages 2-3
College Admissions Testing	pages 4-6
MA State Colleges / Umass Minimum Admissions Requirements	pages 7-8
Naviance	page 9
Identifying Personal Priorities	page 10
Visiting Colleges	pages 11-12
College Representatives	page 13
Creating a Resume	page 14
Social Media	page 14
Student Athletes	page 14

The Winchester High School Guidance staff is here to help all students make a successful post-secondary transition. The following information is shared for the purpose of helping students and families gain a clear overview of their post-secondary options and the steps needed to pursue their future plans. Every student will move through this process at his or her own pace with the objective being that they will each develop their own individual goals.

## POST SECONDARY OPTIONS

### Four Year College/University

At most of the 1,500 four-year accredited colleges in the country, the difficulty of being admitted is governed by a simple principle of supply and demand. If a college has a large number of applicants but only has to accept a small number to fill its freshman class, the college can be highly selective. Conversely, if the college must take most of its applicants to fill the spaces available, the institution cannot be very selective.

A college's selectivity may not be important to you when you make your choice. In any case, the best college for you matches your desires, goals, objectives, abilities and development. Your high school curriculum is crucial as you focus on finding the best match in a college. It is also key to college admission departments when they evaluate candidates. Criteria for college admission vary greatly. However, **all colleges focus on the rigor and quality of your high school curriculum.**

Admission personnel judge "rigor" and "quality" by evaluating the importance of the academic subject matter in a course, the grades you make in those courses, and the level of difficulty of your courses.

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES

When you enroll at community college, you may choose to earn an associate degree and transfer after your first two years to a four-year institution, or you may choose a career program designed to prepare you for a job when you graduate.

### ARMED SERVICES

Opportunities in education and training are available for men and women in all branches of the Armed Forces. In peacetime, one of the major functions of the armed services is training. All branches of the services now prefer to take high school graduates for specialized training.

Training in the armed services can range from a few weeks to a year, depending upon the field of specialization. Some of the training is related completely to military service, but much of it is applicable to jobs in civilian life. Your options include the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, National Guard and U.S. Merchant Marine.

### ON-THE-JOB TRAINING BY BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

The amount of money spent by business and industry in training and educating employees exceeds that spent by all formal schools and colleges combined. At times the training lasts only a few days or a few weeks while some occupations might take a year with frequent retraining as the employee advances in the company. Companies will often finance all or part of the training for students who want to take job-related courses. As a result, increasing numbers of employees are working toward high school diplomas or college degrees with financial assistance from employers.

### PRIVATE VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

A number of privately-owned schools provide vocational training. Areas of specialization include broadcasting, fashion, cosmetology, medical and technical training, and many more. When choosing a private school, carefully check the school's credentials. Be sure that the school is licensed. Visit the school to check its facilities and equipment.

### **GAP YEAR**

Some students and their parents want to explore organized opportunities for personal growth and experience during an interim semester or year. Exciting and valuable programs are now well-established in the United States. They range widely in type and location and may include the following:

- internships in community, social service
- leadership training, outdoor education
- post-graduate year at preparatory school
- structured travel/education

## COLLEGE ADMISSIONS TESTING

Most four-year colleges (and some two-year colleges) require applicants to submit results of at least one admissions test. It is extremely important for students to check each college's specific testing requirements to be certain to take the right test for each college.

### Testing for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability for which you receive accommodations when taking school-based tests (through either a 504 Plan or an Individualized Educational Plan), you may wish to apply for accommodations when taking the SAT or ACT tests. You should see your guidance counselor as soon as possible since there is paperwork that must be submitted to the testing companies in order for your eligibility for accommodations to be determined. The paperwork must be submitted well in advance of your registration for any of the admissions tests, since **you may not receive accommodations on any tests until you have received approval in writing from the College Board or the ACT.** Receiving accommodations from one testing agency does not automatically grant them from the other. The existence of a 504 Plan or an IEP does not guarantee that you will be approved for accommodations on the SAT or ACT. You should be aware that certain accommodations may not be allowed on the national test dates, but may require you to take the test on a school day instead (called "School-based Testing".)

### "Test Optional" Colleges

A growing number of colleges and universities are making the submission of test scores optional. For these colleges, students may choose to be evaluated on the basis of their high school transcript, recommendations and possibly other required criteria, without sending any results of SAT or ACT scores. For a list of college and universities that are now "test optional" go to: [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org)

### SAT Testing

Each year, the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) has national test dates on Saturdays in October, November, December, January, March, May, June and August.

**SAT Reasoning Test:** consists of the following 2 sections:

**Math:** with and without a calculator; multiple-choice and student produced responses that test students on college-level Math through Algebra II. Scores: 200–800.

**Evidence Based Reading & Writing:** Reading and Writing combined. Reading (65 minutes); passage topics include US/World Literature, History/Social Studies and Sciences. Writing and Language focus on extended prose. Scores: 200–800.

**SAT Score Choice:** Students can choose which scores to send from each test sitting. Students cannot choose *individual* sections from SAT test sittings. We recommend that you send all scores as admission offices use only the highest score from each sitting when evaluating applications.

Visit [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) for a full list of SAT Program Test Dates

#### **How to Register for SAT Test:**

1. Register online at [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) (credit card required).
2. Fee waivers are available for families who meet certain income guidelines. See your guidance counselor for information.
3. Students who have been previously approved for accommodations by Collegeboard need to include their approval code on their registration every time they register. Students with documented disabilities can apply for accommodations through their guidance counselor or directly to Collegeboard. Applications must be submitted at least two months prior to the requested test date and are done prior to registering.

**Always enter CEEB Code 222-440 (Winchester High School) as a recipient of your scores**

### **ACT Testing**

The ACT is an assessment program that measures achievement in English, math, reading, and science reasoning. It is published by the American College Testing Company in Iowa and is now accepted instead of, or in addition to, the SAT by most colleges and universities. Students should decide whether to take the ACT Writing Test based on the admission policies of the colleges they are considering.

Taking the writing portion is up to the student depending on the schools they are applying to.

#### **Winchester High School is not a test center for the ACT.**

There are several test centers in the area at which WHS students may register to take the test. Visit [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for a complete list of area test centers.

Visit [www.act.org](http://www.act.org) for a full list of ACT Program Test Dates

#### **How to Register for ACT Tests:**

1. Register online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) (credit card required).
2. Students with documented disabilities who are seeking accommodations must apply for them when they register for testing. Your guidance counselor will process the request along with our Students with Disabilities Coordinator but students need to notify their counselor that they want to make the request (the school is not notified) and takes time to be reviewed so make sure to see them approximately two months prior to your requested test date.

Due to counselors not being available during the summer students seeking accommodations for a September test date MUST request them before the close of school.

**Always enter CEEB Code 222-440 (Winchester High School) as a recipient of your scores**

## MASSACHUSETTS STATE COLLEGES AND UMASS MINIMUM ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

The admissions standards for the state colleges and UMass emphasize a strong academic high school background so that students enter college ready to learn. These standards represent minimum requirements; meeting them does not guarantee admission, since campus officials consider a wide range of factors in admissions decisions. Students shall have fulfilled all requirements for the high school diploma or its equivalent upon enrollment. *It is important to note that admissions standards for the state's community colleges differ. Community colleges may admit any high school graduate or GED recipient.*

### ***Freshman Applicants***

The admissions standards for freshmen applicants have two main parts:

1. 16 required academic courses.
2. Minimum required grade point average (GPA) earned in college preparatory courses completed at the time of application. Applicants must also submit an SAT or ACT score.

*Academic Course Requirements:* Sixteen college preparatory courses distributed as follows are required. (A course is equivalent to one full school year of study. Courses count toward the distribution only if passed.)

- ◆ English 4 courses
- ◆ Mathematics 4 courses (Algebra I & II and Geometry or Trigonometry, or comparable coursework)
- ◆ Sciences 3 courses (with laboratory work)
- ◆ Social Sciences 2 courses (including 1 course in U.S. History)
- ◆ World Languages 2 courses (in a single language)
- ◆ Electives 2 courses (from the above subjects or from the Arts & Humanities or Computer Sciences)

### ***Minimum Required Grade Point Average (GPA)***

The GPA must be achieved based on all college preparatory courses completed at the time of application and should be weighted for accelerated (Honors or Advanced Placement) courses. The required minimum weighted high school GPA is 3.0 for the four-year public campuses.

### ***SAT Scores***

Applicants who meet the GPA requirement do not have to use the sliding scale for admission, but still must submit SAT or ACT test scores for consideration if they are applying to a state college or UMass within three years of high school graduation.

## **EXCEPTION ALLOWANCES**

### **English as a Second Language (ESL) Applicants**

Effective Fall 1999, English As a Second Language (ESL) applicants must complete the 16 required college preparatory courses with two exceptions:

1. ESL applicants may substitute up to two college preparatory electives for the two required foreign language courses and,



2. ESL applicants may substitute up to two years of college preparatory ESL English courses for college preparatory English courses, provided they achieve a rank of at least the 62nd percentile on the TOEFL or ELPT test. (This means a 550 on the paper TOEFL, 968 on the ELPT, or a 213 on the computerized TOEFL test.) *ESL exception applicants who meet minimum GPA*

To qualify for either of these exceptions ESL applicants must achieve the required minimum GPA in their college preparatory and substitute ESL courses. Applicants must submit in addition to the required TOEFL or ELPT, an SAT 1 or ACT test score; although no minimum SAT 1 or ACT score must be achieved.

***ESL exception applicants who do not meet minimum GPA:*** When the applicant's GPA is below the minimum required GPA, in addition to the required TOEFL or ELPT score, the sliding scale must be used to meet minimum admissions standards and an appropriate SAT-I or ACT test score must be achieved.

### **Learning Disabled Applicants**

Applicants with professionally diagnosed and documented learning disabilities (documentation must include diagnostic test results) are exempt from taking standardized tests for admission to any public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth. Such students, however, must complete 16 required academic courses with a minimum required GPA of 3.00 or present other evidence of the potential for academic success.

**An applicant may substitute two college preparatory electives for the two required foreign language courses only if the applicant has on file with the high school results of a psycho-educational evaluation completed within the past three years that provides a specific diagnosis of a learning disability and an inability to succeed in a foreign language.**

### ***Minimum Admissions Standards Do Not Preclude Higher Institutional Standards***

This policy frames minimum standards for admission to Massachusetts state colleges and UMass. Institutions are free to set higher standards and/or to impose additional requirements. Meeting minimum standards for admissibility does not guarantee admission for any applicant, since a wide range of factors is considered in admissions decisions. The final decision on accepting a student who meets minimum standards rests with the individual campus.

**Source:** *Admissions Standards for the Massachusetts State Colleges and University, Guide for High School Guidance Counselors*, MA Board of Higher Education

## NAVIANCE

<http://connection.naviance.com/winchester>

If you have not already done so, complete **Do What You Are!** in Naviance as suggested in your sophomore workshops. If you have misplaced your Naviance account information, please contact your Guidance Counselor.

### COLLEGE SEARCH

**College Match:** Identifies schools that have accepted students with academic profiles similar to your own.

**College Compare:** Allows you to select colleges and compare average SAT scores and GPA of students from your WHS that have been accepted to that particular college. School averages are displayed in green when your number is higher and in red when your number is lower. Your PSAT score, if available, has been converted to the equivalent SAT score and compared to the average single SAT score of an accepted student. The column labeled "Accept" shows the number of students accepted out of the number of students that applied.

**Advanced Search:** When using the *Advanced Search* toolbar in Naviance, you can select from categories such as school type, location, student body, admission, athletics, majors, costs, and special programs to help you begin your search. Once you have a list of colleges, you can compare those colleges to WHS historical admissions data.

**College Look Up:** Allows you to look up colleges by name. Once you have selected a school, you can use the tabs for information about majors, financial aid, student life, and admissions information. The **School Stats** tab provides the number of students applied and the outcome of their applications. The **Overlaps** tab lists schools with profiles similar to the school being viewed.

Use **Scattergrams** to compare yourself against WHS historical application data.

Guidance counselors do not have access to a student's Common App or Collegeboard accounts so make sure to enter all colleges that you may be considering in the "*Colleges I'm Thinking About*" section in your Naviance account, so that counselors can track your progress and offer advice. By listing schools you will also automatically receive notices if a school Representative is visiting WHS.

## IDENTIFYING PERSONAL PRIORITIES

“Going where they do not fit” is the number one mistake most college-bound students say they make. A third of all college students graduate from a school different from the one in which they started. Consider what is important to you now and try to anticipate the type of campus where you will stay to graduate. The worksheet below will help you and your parents identify priorities for the college search. Complete the Student Worksheet and ask your parents to complete the Parent Worksheet. Compare your ratings, discuss major issues and resolve differences before you begin your plan.

**Note to parents/guardians:** Remember to consider both your child’s goals and what is best for them. Use this section to show what considerations are important to you and discuss them with your child prior to their beginning their college search.

## STUDENT’S COLLEGE SELECTION WORKSHEET

What is important to you?  
Cost (stipulate range) . . .  
Distance from home . . .  
Location . . .  
Four-year college . . .  
Two-year college . . .  
Public . . .  
Private . . .  
Living arrangements . . .  
Size of enrollment . . .  
Athletics . . .  
SAT or ACT scores . . .  
Area of studies . . .  
Activities . . .  
Fraternity/Sorority Life . . .  
Reputation . . .  
Campus life . . .  
Safety . . .  
Potential student Loans/Debt...

## VISITING COLLEGES

The purpose of the college visit is usually twofold: to assess the campus or to interview with an admission officer. Each purpose requires a different approach. Visit the college website for campus tour and open house information. *You (the student) should call the Admissions office directly to schedule an interview.* If you visit on a school day, please refer to the WHS Attendance Policy and note that a letter from the college is needed to verify your participation in a campus tour, etc.

### Assessing the Campus

One of the most common misconceptions held by pre-college students is that there is an “ideal” college. This is not true; any of several colleges or universities may be right for you. On the college visit, the important discoveries are those characteristics and provisions that are most important to you. To best assess the atmosphere and offerings of a prospective college, visit the following places:

#### ◆ Library

Visit the campus library (or libraries). As a college student, you will spend significant time there, not just looking for reference materials, but studying. Look to see if there are students studying in the library. Is enough quiet space available? Determine whether the library is comfortable and up-to-date with books, periodicals and other reference materials.

#### ◆ Classes

Try to visit classes if you will be on campus for more than one day. Choose courses of interest that differ in level of difficulty, subject and size. Inform the professor that you will be visiting. Listening to professors and observing students can help you assess the campus.

#### ◆ Residence Halls

Ask to view student rooms and other living spaces. Can you picture yourself in the environment you see?

#### ◆ Student Union

Visit the union and other campus “hangouts.” Be prepared for a diverse atmosphere.

#### ◆ “Special” and “Custom” Campus Tours

You may want to take advantage of special weekend or single day programs offered by colleges to provide prospective students with an overview of classes, professors, activities and living situations. Make sure to mention these visits on the application for selective colleges, including the names of faculty and Admission personnel with whom you spoke.

### Interviews

Like a productive job interview, successful college interviews result from coming prepared.

- Be prepared to talk about yourself academically and socially. Admission officers or other interviewers will ask about course work, scholastic standing, co-curricular activities, and your personal life.

- Know your strengths and weaknesses and be ready to talk about what you value. The college interview is an opportunity for you to shine — especially if you have knowledge about the school.
- Do not waste time asking obvious questions which have answers contained in the college catalog (campus size, for example). Instead, ask questions that indicate maturity and thoughtfulness.
- Explain why you are eager to attend a particular school. Enthusiasm is contagious; almost any sincere interviewer will respond to genuine enthusiasm.
- Be articulate in expressing your ideas and talking about what motivates you. Do not pretend to be someone you are not. Manners and appearances also are important. Follow-up with a thank you note or email.

◆ Does the school support the athletic teams (whether they are good or not!)?

◆ What recreational activities are available on campus?

◆ How do you join a club or organization?

◆ What role do fraternities and sororities play on campus?

◆ What opportunities for internships exist?

## MEETING WITH COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVES

Representatives from nearly 100 colleges and universities visit WHS every fall. A complete listing of school visits is available in Naviance at the start of the school year and weekly schedules are shared on the morning announcements. These visits offer juniors and seniors an informal way to learn more about a school and ask questions prior to applying. Below is a general list of questions which students might find helpful when meeting or interviewing with college representatives.

### **Admissions**

What are the admission requirements?  
What qualities should prospective students have?  
Which standardized test scores do you require?  
What majors are offered? What's the most popular?  
Are interviews required? Do they offer interviews with local alumni?  
How can I arrange a campus visit?  
How long should I expect to wait for an answer once I submit my application?

### **Financial aid**

How much will it cost?  
What financial aid options are offered?  
What forms do I need to complete in addition to the FAFSA?  
When is your financial aid deadline?

### **Classroom**

What is the average class size?  
How accessible are professors outside of class?  
Will professors or graduate students teach my courses?  
When must I choose a major?  
What student services are offered (tutoring, career counseling, study workshops)?  
How are the libraries, computer labs?

### **Housing**

What type of housing is available?  
Is student housing guaranteed for four years?  
How are roommates selected?

### **Student life**

What special interest groups, activities, fraternities/sororities are available?  
What's it like on campus on the weekends?  
Are intramural, club, and varsity sports offered?

### **Just the facts**

What is the school known for?  
What are recent graduates doing now?  
How many freshmen return for their sophomore year?

## CREATE A RESUME

Every student's Naviance account includes a resume template which students can use to generate a resume. A resume is a summary of your educational and work experience and should highlight your scholastic honors, leadership positions and personal achievements during high school. All extra-curricular activities, community service and work experience should be included. Some competitive schools require students to submit a resume with their applications. Having a resume can be a useful tool not only for apply to schools but for applying for part-time work or volunteer opportunities.

Your resume should have three general sections.

1. Contact.
  - a. List all your contact information at the top of the page (name, address, telephone numbers, and e-mail address).
2. Education
  - a. High school name, address and phone number
  - b. Include any academic honors
3. Work Experience and/or ExtraCurriculars
  - a. Emphasize leadership positions with your extra-curricular activities affiliated with school or other organizations. Use action verbs to describe your responsibilities. Include the number of years you have participated in these activities.

Once you have established your Common App account in August you can use this information to help you complete several sections of your application.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

More and more schools and employers are using social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.) to explore potential candidates. Students should be very mindful of privacy settings for accounts and for what they post/share as those actions are seen as a reflection of their character and can have a negative impact on their applications.

All students should establish a professional email account which clearly states their name for use on all applications and communications with schools.

## STUDENT ATHLETES

All students who are considering playing a sport at a Division 1 or 2 school must register in advance with the NCAA ClearingHouse.

- NCAA ClearingHouse: [http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA\\_EMS/NCAA.jsp](http://web1.ncaa.org/ECWR2/NCAA_EMS/NCAA.jsp)
- Specific requirements for Division I & II are outlined on [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org)
- Students will request a transcript through their junior year through the ClearingHouse to begin the initial process of determining eligibility for NCAA athletics.