# Sun Valley High School
# Post-Secondary Planning Guide

Welcome to planning the next steps in your future! We hope this guide will help answer many of the questions you have whether you are planning to enroll in a 4 year college, community college, a vocational program, or enter the military. We will cover all of these options and the necessary steps to take for admission and more.

Let's start with planning for college! There are more than 5,000 colleges and universities in the United States, not to mention universities in Canada and abroad, from which to develop a list of appropriate matches. Sun Valley High School's Counseling Department stands ready to guide you through the college admissions maze, ready to talk with you about your choices and concerns as we work together in the months ahead. We hope you will utilize this comprehensive guide throughout your admission process. Done well, the process of applying to colleges and universities will teach you a lot about yourself and the values you have acquired at Sun Valley. It may even provide a bit of fun as you make your way toward the next step in your educational career.

The college process is one of self-discovery, when students take stock of their ambitions, strengths, and challenges as they begin to build a list of college choices. Students are responsible for signing up for college representative visits, contacting colleges to set up an admissions tour, signing up for appropriate tests by the deadlines, and putting the necessary energy into all aspects of the application process.

Counselors and students use one-on-one meetings and an online research tool, Schoolinks, as an important means to communicate--deadlines and calendar items, college lists, college visits, transcript requests, recommendation requests and test scores.

It is our sincere hope that the college counseling experience will be a positive and growth-enhancing one for all parties concerned. We in the Counseling Office look forward to sharing the journey with you!



Sun Valley High School

# What Colleges Look for in Students

College admissions offices attempt to fill each class with diverse, creative, capable and ambitious students that will embody the school's philosophy and be a contributing member to the school and its community. Students want to show admissions officers what makes them stand out from the crowd. Several factors colleges will look at when considering potential applicants:

1. **High School GPA and Class Rank (Decile)** – colleges will review your high school transcript which shows your GPA and rigor of courses. Colleges will also review your decile rank provided by your counselor. Your GPA shows how successful you were in the area of academics and your decile shows how much competition you faced with grades as compared to your peers.

2. **AP and Honors Classes** – if these courses are the right fit for you, colleges will want to see that you challenged yourself academically. This helps them understand how well you handled the course load and is a good predictor of how you will do in college.

3. **Standardized Test Scores** – while some colleges require SAT or ACT scores, many are test optional. It's important to find out from the colleges you plan to apply to what their admission criteria is for standardized testing. Please consult your counselor to determine if testing is needed.

4. **Challenging Extracurricular Activities** - colleges want students who stretch themselves beyond the classroom. The activities you choose tell them about your personality, interests, and values.

5. **Volunteer and Work Experience -** any additional experience you have shows leadership and commitment and an interest in the community, which will be beneficial to your application. Be sure to include any companies or organizations you worked/volunteered your responsibilities.

6. **A Well Written Essay -** admissions officers are looking for an essay that shows who you truly are and what makes you interesting. They are looking for a personal connection in your essay, rather than reciting all of your accomplishments. Stick with the essay prompt and make sure you include why you want to attend a particular school.

7. **Quality Recommendation Letters -** be sure to ask for a recommendation letter from people who know you well, can speak to your talents and abilities in the classroom, or are able to speak to why you are a good candidate for a particular school. It's best to ask people at the end of your Junior year to provide you a letter of recommendation, so they will have ample time to write it for you.

# What the Military looks for in Students

There are three requirements for U.S Military service: The ASVAB exam, a physical exam and a mental health assessment.

**Standardized Test Scores** –The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is a multiple choice test, administered by the United States Military Entrance Processing Command, used to determine qualification for enlistment in the United States Armed Forces. The ASVAB tests are designed to measure aptitudes in four domains: Verbal, Math, Science & Technical, and Spatial. The results are scored with each branch having a minimum grade as an entrance requirement. **Current Passing Score with a HS Diploma**:

- Air Force-36
- Army- 31
- Coast Guard - 40
- Marines Corps- 31
- National Guard- 31
- Navy-35

Scores on all of the ASVAB tests are used to determine the best job for you in the Military.

**Physical Exam:** Students must have the ability to pass a physical fitness exam (requirements vary based on each branch, and can be found at their website or through consulting with a recruiter.

**Mental Health Assessment:** Students must be identified as meeting the mental health assessment baselines in order to continue with the enlisting process.

Similar to college representative visits, recruitment officers visit Sun Valley to set up informational sessions and/or meet with individuals. Students are encouraged to speak with a recruiter if they have an interest in joining the Military. Contact information for local offices can be found below.

# Local Recruitment Offices

**U.S. Air Force**
43 South 69th Street
Upper Darby, PA 19082
215-360-5117

AND

720 E. Market Street
West Chester, PA  19380
Cell:  610-389-9072

**U.S Army**
US Army Recruiting Station
720 E Market St. Suite 140 West Chester, PA 19380
610.696.4014
https://www.goarmy.com/learn.html

**US Coast Guard**
Recruiting Office
183 Franklin Mills Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19154
215-632-0568

**Pennsylvania National Guard (Army National Guard)**
Military Recruiting Office
1046 Belvoir Road Plymouth Meeting, PA 19462
267.664.6446
https://www.nationalguard.com/eligibility

**U.S Marine Corps**
U.S Marine Corps Recruiting Sub-Station Delaware County
720 E Market Street
West Chester, PA 19380
https://www.marines.com/being-a-marine/life-in-the-corps/physical-fitness.html

**U.S Navy**
Navy Recruiting Station Upper Darby
6800 Market Street #3 Upper Darby, PA 19082
610.334.0252
https://www.navy.com/joining-the-navy/get-started

# What Trade & Technical Schools look for in Students

**Academic Records-** Schools pay special attention to attendance, discipline, and course credits.

**Standardized Test Scores-** Acceptance scores vary based on institutional preference. Some schools require placement testing or SAT exams for admissions, while others do not require testing. Please see each trade/technical school's admission criteria to determine if standardized testing is required.

**Trade and Technical School curriculum vary with some institutions requiring trade learning combined with traditional college classes, while others strictly focus on a combination of trade learning.**

**Local Trade & Technical Schools**

**Automotive Training Center**
Exton Campus
114 Pickering Way, Exton, PA 19341
888.321.8992

**Pennsylvania Institute of Technology**
800 Manchester Avenue
Media, PA 19063-4089
610.892.1500

**Pennsylvania College of Technology**
One College Avenue
Williamsport, PA 17701
570.320.2400

**Thaddeus-Stevens College of Technology**
750 E King St
Lancaster, PA 17602
717.584.8163

**Universal Technical Institute**
750 Pennsylvania Drive
Exton, Pennsylvania 19341
610.458.5595

**Williamson College of the Trades**
106 S. New Middletown Road
Media, PA 19063
610.566.1776

# Post-Secondary Planning Timeline

## Ninth Grade Students

- Believe it or not, it's not too early to begin planning for college! Make sure you are enrolled in the right level courses for you. Be sure you are enrolled in courses that will challenge you.
- Work to your potential! The grades you earn in 9th grade will be on your transcript when you apply to college and essentially make up 1/3 of the grades colleges will see when you apply to college at the start of your senior year. Your final grades from 9th grade determine your initial GPA for high school. It's easier to maintain a strong GPA than to try to bring up a low GPA. Start with strong grades in high school, so you have no regrets come your senior year.
- You will have the opportunity to take the PSAT for the first time. You should try your best and review your results when you get your scores back.
- Explore your interests and possible careers. Make the most out of your Careers class where you will complete various inventories that assess your interests, abilities, values, and match them to possible career choices.
- Talk to your parents about planning for college expenses. Begin a savings plan if you don't yet have one.
- Utilize Schoolinks to look up information about colleges. Attend local college fairs if you are able to begin asking questions and to get to know more about various schools/programs.
- Look for summer opportunities. Try to find a job or volunteer with an organization that meets your academic or career interests.

*Words of Advice:*

College admissions offices see your 9th courses as the blueprint of your high school experience. They are looking for a solid foundation of learning that you can build toward college. Be sure to be prepared for class, complete your homework, review for tests several days before an exam, dedicate time to study for exams. The vast majority of your grades in high school are based on exam scores, so your ability to show what you know is crucial to maintaining strong grades!

# Post-Secondary Planning Timeline

## Tenth Grade Students:

- Focus on academics and stay on top of your work. Find a way that you can organize yourself and your assignments (keep a planner, put your assignments in an electronic calendar, etc). Study for tests several days before the exam.
- Get extra help with schoolwork if you need it. Stay after school with your teacher or talk to your school counselor about meeting with a National Honor Society tutor.
- Students will have the opportunity to take the PSAT as a practice test.
- Students who have an interest in the military should sign up to take the ASVAB exam. This exam is used as an entrance test for the military.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities whether it's in school or activities you participate in outside of school.
- Volunteer in the community. You will be affecting the lives of others more than you know and you will feel great about making an impact on someone else's life. Keep track of your community service hours by starting a Google doc, so when it comes time to apply for college you will have a list of all your hours. If you need help finding volunteer opportunities, see your school counselor or Mrs. Grady if you want to become a Vanguard Volunteer.
- Start looking online to research schools you may be interested in after graduation (four year colleges, community college, trade schools). Make a list of schools you may want to visit.
- Students who are interested in the Delaware County Career and Technical School for their Junior and Senior year, will need to attend the assembly held at Sun Valley. Students should talk to their counselor if they are interested in visiting a particular program.
- Discuss with your teachers what level courses they feel are best for you next year. If you know what type of field you would like to pursue after graduation, choose electives that most closely fit that field.
- Over the summer, consider visiting schools you may be interested in. It's a great time to start college visits. You can also consider getting a part-time summer job.

*Words of Advice*:

The good news is post-secondary programs pay attention to your life outside the classroom. Yes, academics come first, but your activities reveal a great deal about you; how you have made a meaningful contribution to your school; what your non-academic interests are; whether you can maintain a long term commitment; whether you can manage your time and priorities. Schools are not interested in seeing you "do it all". They are looking for quality, not quantity.

# Post-Secondary Planning Timeline

## Eleventh Grade Students:

*Fall:*

- Be prepared for an important academic year, get off to a good start and maintain a commitment for the entire year. Post-secondary programs look for an upward trend in grades and/or course rigor.
- Update your resume in Schoolinks
- Students will have the opportunity to take the PSAT, which is a National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMSQT) for Juniors.
- Students who have an interest in the military should sign up to take the ASVAB exam. This exam is used as an entrance test for the military.
- Think about post-secondary programs and what characteristics are most important to you.
- Schedule visits to schools that interest you. Juniors get two college visits per year that are excused on a school day. Be sure to pick up a form in the Counseling office prior to leaving for the visit.
- Attend post-secondary presentations with representatives that visit Sun Valley. Visits are posted in Schoolinks and students can sign up in Schoolinks a min. of 8 hours prior to the visit.
- Determine if you will take the SAT or ACT your Junior year. Not all colleges require these exams. Please be sure to see if the colleges you are considering require these exams or not. A good website for test optional schools is: https://www.fairtest.org/university/optional

*Winter:*

- Complete the Recommendation Letter Brag Sheet in Schoolinks as teachers and counselors will use this information when writing letters of recommendation for you.
- Review your PSAT results. Link your PSAT score results to your Khan Academy account for free SAT/ACT test prep/review. (See Counseling website for instructions on how to do this).
- Attend Junior Planning Night with your parent/guardian for information for Senior year.
- Register for SAT and/or ACT exams for the spring.
- Update Schoolinks list(s) with colleges that interest you.
- Attend local college fairs.
    - NACAC National College Fair (National Association for College Admission Counseling)

- PACAC College Fairs (Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling)

*Spring:*

- Set up a Junior Planning Meeting with your counselor.
- Complete your SAT and/or ACT exams.
- If possible, visit colleges during spring break. Bring a college visit form that has good questions on it to ask college representatives. Take notes during your visit. Make a pro's and con's list after about that individual school for your future reference.
- Plan your essays/start rough drafts.
- Review the colleges' admission requirements for letters of recommendation. If they are needed, ask a teacher(s) for a letter of recommendation(s) prior to leaving for summer and put those requests in Schoolinks. Choose a teacher that knows you well from your high school career, preferably a teacher you had Junior year who can speak to your recent academic abilities.
- Select a senior schedule that prepares you for success in college, send a positive message to a post-secondary school, and is as rigorous as possible.
- Study hard for finals and/or AP exams. This shows your willingness to work hard all year.

*Summer:*

- Arrange summer visitations to post-secondary schools.
- Create your Common App account if applying to college. The application opens August 1st.
- Make final decisions on what schools you are applying to in the fall.

Words of Advice:

If recommended, Advanced Placement (AP) classes give you the chance to try college level work and gain valuable experience. If you get qualifying grades on the AP exam, there are colleges that may give you college credit or other advantages for your efforts. Review individual colleges' requirements and policies on AP testing.

# Junior Year Checklist

**September-December**

- ❏ Make sure courses are on track for college admission
- ❏ Add a preliminary list of post HS options to Schoolinks (Colleges I'm Thinking About - 10-20 schools)
- ❏ Develop/update your resume in Schoolinks
- ❏ Consider signing up for clubs or sports to fill in any gaps in resume
- ❏ Take the PSAT
- ❏ Sun Valley will be hosting a College and Career Fair on Monday, September, 28th at 5:30PM in the gym/cafe. Come meet representatives to help with your post-secondary planning.
- ❏ Sign up for College/Trade/Military Rep visits in Schoolinks
- ❏ Secure a job or career opportunity through volunteer work

**January- February**

- ❏ Align your senior schedule with your college and career goals
- ❏ Consult with counselor whether the SAT, ACT, or ASVAB is most appropriate
- ❏ Register for the SAT, ACT, or ASVAB

**March-May**

- ❏ Continue researching colleges, universities, and other post HS institutions
- ❏ Refine your list of schools you are interested in (about 10-15 schools)
- ❏ Plan visits to post secondary campuses you may be interested in
- ❏ Brainstorm a list of teachers, employers, and other adults you plan to ask for letters of recommendations (about 1-2 tentative options)

**June- August**

- ❏ Continue researching and visiting colleges, universities, and post HS institutions
- ❏ Take a look at college applications, many open during the beginning of August
- ❏ Request letters of recommendations in Schoolinks (if requesting from a teacher be sure to ask them personally prior to requesting in Schoolinks).
- ❏ Begin to brainstorm and plan for college essays
- ❏ Investigate if your post HS options require the Common Application

# SAT vs. ACT

| SAT Exam | ACT Exam |
|---|---|
| 2 hours, 14 minutes | 2 hours, 55 minutes<br>(+ 40 minute optional essay) |
| Sections:<br>Math (2)<br>Combined Reading & Writing (2) | Sections:<br>English<br>Math<br>Reading<br>Optional Science & Writing |
| Scores: 400-1600 | Scores: 1-36 |
| Total questions: 98 | Total questions: 215 |

# Test Registration Information

***Sun Valley CEEB Code:391572***

To register for the SAT, go to www.collegeboard.org

To register for the ACT, go to www.act.org

Be sure to use your FULL LEGAL name when registering and creating an account (i.e. Michael L. Smith, not Mike Smith).

Students need a current valid ID on test day (valid driver's license, valid passport, school ID).

If your child doesn't have one of these forms of identification for the SAT exam, they should see the Counseling Office so they can get a Student ID form issued to them to use on test day. Please allow 2-3 days notice if requesting a Student ID form.

*A student's name on their ID MUST match the name on his/her registration form for the SAT or ACT. If the names don't match, your child won't be able to gain admission to the test session. These are strict rules put out by both testing companies.

**Please use the links below for accessing SAT/ACT Prep Materials:**

SAT Prep & Materials

Daily Practice App for SAT testing

Take free practice tests for the PSAT

Free practice SAT tests

Free test prep resources for the ACT

SAT/ACT Concordance Table

# COMPARING SAT TO ACT SCORES

Some students will take both the SAT and ACT exams and then review which test they did better on. To compare the scores of both tests, students should use the ACT/SAT Concordance Table. The test a student performs better on is the test he/she would be recommended to retake if testing again. Colleges equally take scores from either test company. One is not preferred over another.

Not sure which test is best for you or if you should take both? Take a brief assessment to help you decide at Kaptest.com. We also recommend you discuss with your counselor if you are unsure which exam to take.

# What is Superscoring?

Superscoring is when colleges take the best test scores from a section(s) over multiple sittings. For example, Johnny takes the SAT in March of his Junior year and scores a 610 on his critical reading and a 550 on math for a total score of 1160. He takes the test again in August of his senior year and scores a 570 in critical reading and 590 in math for an identical score of 1160. Johnny scored no better the second time around, right? Wrong. For schools that superscore, they combine the best critical reading and math score. For Johnny, he will have a 610 on critical reading + 590 on math = 1200 total score making him a more competitive candidate for admission or merit based aid.

# Sending SAT or ACT test scores to Colleges:

Students who need **official** SAT or ACT test scores sent to colleges must request them directly from www.collegeboard.org or from www.act.org. The first four score reports have no cost when requested at the time of testing registration. Additional reports that need to be sent do have a fee. **Unofficial** scores can be sent to colleges from the Counseling Office. Students should check with the schools they are applying to and determine which type of score report their school requires.

# NCAA AND THE COLLEGE BOUND ATHLETE!

[Access the full NCAA guide here.]

## DIVISION I ACADEMIC STANDARDS

**Division I schools** require college-bound student-athletes to meet academic standards for NCAA-approved core courses and **core-course GPA**. To be eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship in your first full-time year at a Division I school, you must meet all of the following requirements:

1. Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:

| ENGLISH | MATH (Algebra I or higher) | SCIENCE (Including one year of lab, if offered) | ADDITIONAL (English, math or science) | SOCIAL SCIENCE | ADDITIONAL COURSES (Any area listed to the left, world language or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 years | 3 years | 2 years | 1 year | 2 years | 4 years |

2. Complete 10 of your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits, including seven in English, math or science, before the start of the seventh semester. Once you begin your seventh semester, any course that is needed to meet the 10/7 requirement cannot be replaced or repeated.

Semester 1 | Semester 2 | Semester 3 | Semester 4 | Semester 5 | Semester 6 | Semester 7 | Semester 8

10/7 requirement: 10 of your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits must be completed before the start of your seventh semester, including seven in English, math or science.

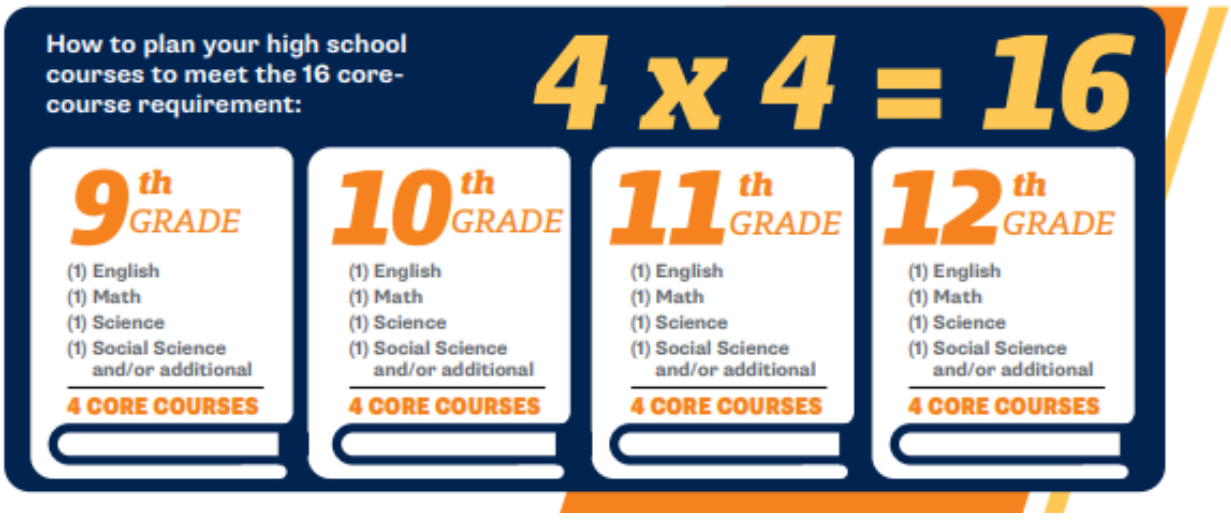
The Eligibility Center will use the best combination of core courses to meet the 10/7 requirement. Courses can be repeated or replaced if they are not needed to meet the 10/7 requirement.

» Students with solely international academic credentials (including Canada) are not required to meet the 10/7 requirement.

3. Complete your 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in eight academic semesters or four consecutive academic years from the start of ninth grade. If you graduate from high school early, you still must meet core-course requirements.

4. Earn a minimum 2.3 core-course GPA.

5. Submit your final transcript with proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center.



## ACADEMIC CERTIFICATION DECISIONS

For Academic and Amateurism Certification accounts, an academic certification will be conducted to determine if you meet Division I academic standards. Academic certifications are required for all college-bound student-athletes planning to compete at a Division I school. (An amateurism certification is also required, and is included as part of an Academic and Amateurism Certification account; see page 28.) The following items are required to complete your academic certification:

- Official transcripts from ***all*** high schools attended.
- Final official transcript with proof of graduation.
- No open academic tasks in your NCAA Eligibility Center Certification account (see page 13).
- Be on a Division I school's institutional request list.

Being placed on a Division I institutional request list means you are being recruited and notifies the Eligibility Center to complete an academic evaluation for you after all of your required documents have been submitted.

If you are being recruited by a Division I school, below are the most common decisions you may receive once a certification has been completed.

### EARLY ACADEMIC QUALIFIER

If you meet specific criteria after six semesters of high school, you may be deemed an early academic qualifier for Division I and may practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of full-time enrollment. To be an early academic qualifier, you will need:

- A core-course GPA of 3.0 or higher in a minimum of 14 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:
  - Three years of English.
  - Two years of math.
  - Two years of science.
  - Two additional years of English, math or science.
  - Five additional core courses in any area.

A final high school transcript must be submitted to the Eligibility Center after high school graduation for all early academic qualifiers.

### QUALIFIER

You may practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division I school.

### ACADEMIC REDSHIRT

You may practice during your first regular academic term and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of full-time enrollment but may NOT compete during your first year of enrollment. You must pass either eight quarter or nine semester hours to practice in the next term.

### NONQUALIFIER

You will not be able to practice, compete or receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of enrollment at a Division I school.

## WHAT IF I DON'T GRADUATE ON TIME?

In Division I, if you do not graduate on time (in four years/eight semesters), the Eligibility Center will still use your grades and coursework for the first four years/eight semesters for your certification. You will still need to provide proof of graduation (once you graduate) and you may not use any coursework taken after your high school graduation toward your certification.

## WHAT IF I DON'T MEET DIVISION I STANDARDS?

If you have not met all of the Division I academic standards, you may not compete in your first year at a Division I school.

However, if you qualify as an academic redshirt, you may practice during your first term in college and receive an athletics scholarship for the entire year.

To qualify as an academic redshirt, you must:

- Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits.
- Earn a minimum 2.0 core-course GPA.
- Submit your final transcript with proof of graduation to the Eligibility Center.

# DIVISION II ACADEMIC STANDARDS

**Division II schools** require college-bound student-athletes to meet academic standards for NCAA-approved core courses and **core-course GPA**. To be eligible to practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship in your first full-time year at a Division II school, you must meet *all* of the following requirements:

NCAA DIVISION II MAKE IT YOURS

1. Earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:

| ENGLISH | MATH (Algebra I or higher) | SCIENCE (Including one year of lab, if offered) | ADDITIONAL (English, math or science) | SOCIAL SCIENCE | ADDITIONAL COURSES (Any area listed to the left, world language or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 years | 2 years | 2 years | 3 years | 2 years | 4 years |

2. Earn a minimum 2.2 core-course GPA (minimum 2.2).

3. Submit your final transcript with proof of graduation to the NCAA Eligibility Center.

Student-athletes enrolling at an NCAA member school Aug. 1, 2021, or later who do not meet Division II qualifier standards will be deemed partial qualifiers. All Division II partial qualifiers may practice and receive an athletics scholarship, but may NOT compete, during their first year of full-time enrollment at a Division II school.



## ACADEMIC CERTIFICATION DECISIONS

For Academic and Amateurism Certification accounts, an academic certification will be conducted to determine if you meet Division II academic standards. Academic certifications are required for all college-bound student-athletes planning to compete at a Division II school. (An amateurism certification is required, and is included as part of an Academic and Amateurism Certification account as well as an Amateurism-Only Certification; see page 28.) The following items are required to complete your academic certification:

- Official transcripts from ***all*** high schools attended.
- Final **official transcript** with proof of graduation.
- No open academic tasks in your NCAA Eligibility Center Certification account (see page 13).
- Be on a Division II school's **institutional request list.**

Being placed on a Division II school's **institutional request list** means you are being recruited and notifies the Eligibility Center to complete an academic evaluation for you after all of your required documents have been submitted.

If you are being recruited by a **Division II school**, below are the most common decisions you may receive once a certification has been completed.

### EARLY ACADEMIC QUALIFIER

If you meet specific criteria after six semesters of high school, you may be deemed an early academic qualifier for Division II and may practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of full-time enrollment. To be an early academic qualifier, you will need:

- A **core-course GPA** of 2.5 or higher in a minimum of 14 NCAA-approved core-course credits in the following areas:
  - Three years of English.
  - Three years of math.
  - Two years of science.
  - Six additional core courses in any area.

A final high school transcript must be submitted to the Eligibility Center after high school graduation for all early academic qualifiers.

### QUALIFIER

You may practice, compete and receive an athletics scholarship during your first year of full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division II school.

### PARTIAL QUALIFIER

You may practice and receive an athletics scholarship, but may NOT compete, during your first year of full-time enrollment at an NCAA Division II school.

## WHAT IF I DON'T MEET DIVISION II STANDARDS?

If you have not met all of the Division II academic standards, you may not compete in your first year at a Division II school. However, you will be deemed a partial qualifier. All Division II partial qualifiers may practice and receive an athletics scholarship, but may NOT compete, during their first year of full-time enrollment at a Division II school.

## CORE-COURSE TIMELINE

If you plan to compete at a Division II school, you must earn 16 NCAA-approved core-course credits after starting freshman/ninth year and before your first full-time college enrollment.

## COURSES TAKEN AFTER HIGH SCHOOL

For Division II, you may use an unlimited number of core courses completed after graduation (summer or academic year) and before enrolling full time at any college or university. You may complete the core course(s) at a location other than the high school from which you graduated. A college course taken after high school graduation may be used toward your initial eligibility and awarded 0.5 credits from your college transcript (unless awarded one full credit on your home high school transcript). It must appear on your home high school transcript with grade and credit.

# Financial Assistance: Speak the Language

When it comes to money, you do not need any misunderstandings. To help you navigate the waters of paying for college, here is a list of commonly used terms and what they mean.

**Award Letter:** Official notification of the type and amount of financial aid a college is offering you.

**Demonstrated Need:** The difference between what your family can contribute toward college expenses and the actual cost of attending college.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** How much money you and your family are expected to contribute toward college expenses. EFC is based on your FAFSA application and a calculation by the federal government.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**: The federal application every student must submit in order to be eligible for federal financial aid. For more information and to complete the FAFSA visit www.fafsa.gov

**Grants:** Money for college that does not have to be repaid. Most grants are need-based and are awarded by the state or federal government.

**Institutional Aid (or Campus-Based Aid):** Financial assistance given by a college, typically either need-based or merit-based aid.

**Loans**: Money given to a student that must be paid back. There are several types of loans, including low to zero interest student loans given out by the federal government, like the Perkins and Stafford loans. These are the best options, since you do not have to pay back the money until you graduate. Private loans, offered through banks and credit unions, typically have higher interest rates.

**Merit Aid:** Financial aid awarded to you from a college based on your individual achievements and talents. For a full listing of what is available, visit www.meritaid.com.

**Need-Based Aid:** Financial aid given based on the ability of you and your family to pay for college. Scholarship: Money for college that does not have to be paid back. Usually awarded based on specific criteria, such as your academic performance, extracurricular activities, ethnic heritage or religious affiliation. Scholarships may be awarded by colleges, private groups or states.

**Student Aid Report (SAR)**: After you file the FAFSA, you will receive a SAR stating your EFC (expected family contribution) and eligibility for financial aid. This report is also sent to the colleges you indicate on the FAFSA.

**Student Loan:** Financial aid that must be repaid. Student loan programs are available through the federal government and private lenders.

**Work-Study:** Financial aid given in exchange for work (typically at a job on campus). To qualify for the Federal Work Study (FWS) program, you must complete the FAFSA.

# Financial Aid

To be considered for federal financial aid, you must submit a completed FAFSA on time. Additionally, most states, colleges and universities use the FAFSA to award other types of aid, including state-and-college-sponsored financial aid such as grants, loans, and work-study programs.

There are many forms of financial assistance available. The most basic financial assistance offered at all colleges is need-based. Need-based financial assistance is given to families who demonstrate financial eligibility using nationally standardized needs-analysis forms, such as the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile. Demonstration of financial eligibility is determined through detailed review of a family's net assets, salary, investment income, liabilities, home equity, and other factors.

Some colleges also offer merit-based assistance. Such financial assistance comes in the form of scholarships for students who have achieved superior levels of academic excellence or offer some special talent in the performing arts or athletics. Please note that while all of the most-highly competitive colleges and universities offer need-based assistance, only a handful offer any merit-based aid.

For students who have applied for need- based financial aid, most colleges will notify students of their aid package shortly after their offer of admission. If a student has submitted required documents, such as the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the Profile forms, on time, college financial aid offices are usually able to notify students of their aid award prior to the May 1 deadline for accepting an admission offer.

Upon receipt of their financial aid package, students and families should thoroughly read **all** of the information that has been included in their aid award. Families who have questions about award packages should contact the college's financial aid office **as soon as possible**. Aid officers are available to help families make sense of their packages and financing options. When contacting aid offices, be patient – many other families are also seeking to clarify their packages in the next three weeks, before the May 1 deadline.

Grants and scholarships are a preferred method of financing your education because they typically do not have to be repaid (although some may require a service commitment after you graduate in exchange for helping to finance your education). Grants are almost always awarded on the basis of financial need. Scholarships, on the other hand, can be awarded based on need, academic merit, academic concentration, interests, or a host of other criteria.

Please follow the link to view the 2025 Financial Aid Webinar from PHEAA representative Fran McKeown

# Scholarship Sites

- www.fastweb.com Excellent private scholarship/grant search vehicle, students must create user ID and profile.., request scholarship applications electronically
- www.fafsa.gov Submit the FAFSA via the web, avoiding complications with the mail, and potentially filling out forms incorrectly.
- www.finaid.org The "ultimate" guide to financial aid resources, links to any and all financial aid sites.., easily navigated and sorted into a list of financial aid topics.
- VISIT OUR COUNSELING WEBSITE FOR MANY MORE….

# Important Websites

- **Sun Valley Counseling Website (use the drop down bar to access various information)**
- **Common App**
- **Schoolinks**
- **CollegeBoard**
- **ACT**
- **SAT/ACT Optional Colleges**
- **Colleges that Superscore the SAT**
- **Colleges that Superscore the ACT**
- **FAFSA**
- **PACAC College Fairs // NACAC College Fairs**
- **PHEAA (Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency)**
- **NCAA Clearinghouse**
- **Federal Student Aid Estimator**

# Junior/Senior Year Web Links

**GENERAL INFORMATION ON PREPARING FOR POST-SECONDARY PLANNING:**

Recording of Junior Parent Night Planning Webinar

Junior Parent Night Presentation Slides (Class of 2026-will be updated)

**COMMON APPLICATION INFORMATION:**

Common App Guide for First-time applicants

Common App Essay Question Prompts

Writing Requirements by College for Common App