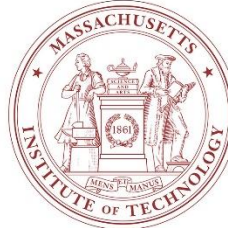


Vestal High School College Planner

March 2023



***A College Admissions and Application Guide for
Juniors and Seniors***



A Message from the Counseling and Guidance Department

Congratulations on your exciting new journey through the college selection process! This journey can be stressful and confusing for students and parents, but this planner is designed to help alleviate some those negative feelings and help you navigate these following months confidently.

We like to remind everyone who is involved in the college search that this is not a quick process. Choosing the right school and program can take a lot of time due to the many variables involved in the selection. Truly, this search has begun earlier than your Junior year; by expanding your knowledge through core classes and electives, as well as developing your educational and career goals since 9th grade. Please find time to work with your School Counselor who can help answer questions and provide tips and advice throughout each phase of the process. Although there are over 2,000 four-year schools and 2- year schools, you will only be attending one. This choice of attending one school should be well thought out and should take time to maximize your overall happiness in your decision.

Please use this book as a guide as you begin your search process. The Counseling and Guidance Department is here to assist you to make wise decisions and to find the school that is right for you.

Good luck and best wishes on your college search!

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“An investment in knowledge pays the best interest” – Benjamin Franklin

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Calendar Checklist: Junior Year

JANUARY

- Start prepping for the SAT or ACT. Use PSAT results as a helpful tool.
- Register for the SAT (www.collegeboard.org) or ACT (www.act.org) for the May or June test date.

FEBRUARY-APRIL

- Meet with your counselor for course selection for senior year. Make sure your classes are academically challenging.
- Participate in college field trips to SUNY Broome and Binghamton University
- Visit colleges during spring break.
- Participate in the Junior classroom lessons provided by the Counseling & Guidance Department.
- Attend Junior College Night at Vestal High School

MAY

- Request and review college emails and information received.
- Take the SAT.
- Call Admissions Offices to schedule tours, interviews, and information sessions.
- Contact athletic coaches if you are interested in playing sports.
- Begin the certification process with NCAA Eligibility Center (www.ncaa.org) if you are intending to participate in college athletics.
- Prepare a tentative list of schools to visit in the summer and fall and share it with your counselor.
- Prepare for the AP & IB exams

JUNE

- Prepare for finals and Regents exams
- Take the ACT, and/or SAT

JULY-AUGUST

- Review college websites
- Schedule interviews and tours
- Refine your list of colleges

Calendar Checklist: Senior Year

SEPTEMBER

- Continue research on colleges.
- Continue to make college visits, if possible, when classes are in session.
- Check testing dates and register for the SAT and ACT.
- Submit Reflection, Activity and Testing sheets to counselor.
- Review list of colleges visiting the Counseling and Guidance Office and meet with representatives.
- Ask teachers to write letters of recommendation on your behalf.
- Attend your Senior Interview with your School Counselor to check graduation credits, college plans and schedule.
- Review the Common Application and SUNY Application online.
- Attend Financial Aid Night at Vestal High School.

OCTOBER

- Attend the College Day Fair
- Submit Early Decision/Early Action applications
- Attend the SUNY Statewide Financial Aid workshop
- Complete Financial Aid application
- Take the ACT and/or SAT
- Begin working on college essay
- Begin checking scholarship information in the Counseling & Guidance Office

NOVEMBER

- Finalize list of colleges.
- Submit college applications through Common Application, SUNY Application, SUNY Broome, or individual school websites.
- Be sure to submit the College Application Checklist to the Counseling and Guidance Office.

DECEMBER

- Complete all applications with January deadlines two weeks prior to winter vacation.

JANUARY

- Remaining college applications are due
- Keep working in the classroom. Second semester grades get reported to colleges.
- Have SAT and/or ACT scores sent from the Testing Center directly to the colleges you are applying to, if required.
- Continue checking scholarship information in the Counseling and Guidance Office.

Calendar Checklist: Senior Year (cont.)

FEBRUARY

- Notify the Counseling and Guidance Office of any college acceptances and/or denials.
- Have mid-year grades sent to all colleges.

MARCH-APRIL

- Prepare for AP, IB, Regents, and final exams.
- Notify colleges to which you have been accepted, stating your intentions of attending or not attending.
- Attend Academic Awards Night if you have been invited.

MAY

- Notify the Counseling and Guidance Office of any scholarships, acceptances, or grants that you have received.
- Complete all forms mailed to you from the college you plan on attending.
- Take AP or IB exams.

JUNE-JULY

- Attend Honors Night if you have been invited
- Prepare for finals and Regents exams
- Have final transcripts sent to the college you will attend. Transcripts will not be ready until early July.
- Have final transcript sent to NCAA



College Entrance Testing

Spring of Junior year is the time to consider college entrance exam testing. There are two types of tests that are available to you: the SAT and the ACT. You should carefully evaluate whether to take one or both. The following pages give information about both tests. Counselors will review this information with juniors. Many colleges are going test optional. Please refer to the specific college website to find out what is required for the admissions process.

PSAT: The Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is taken in October of sophomore or junior year and is a practice test in preparation for the SAT. It is in a similar format as the SAT, but uses a different scoring system. This can be a useful tool as an indicator of future SAT scores. PSAT scores are not used by colleges as admission criteria, but one's score on the test does determine eligibility for participating in the National Merit Scholarship program. Results of the PSAT are broken down by sections to help students know how to prepare for the SAT.

SAT: The Scholastic Aptitude Test is given seven times a year, but most students take the Scholastic Aptitude Test twice. Juniors will take the SAT in the spring, usually in May. Seniors will usually test in October or November. The test is divided into two main parts: Evidence- Based Reading and Writing and Math. The score ranges from 200-800 for each section. The test is about three hours in length. Please visit the College Board website at www.collegeboard.org for further information.

SAT Subject Tests and Essay Discontinued

The CollegeBoard has officially decided to discontinue the Essay and SAT Subject Tests, below is their official statement:

-Writing remains essential to college readiness and the SAT will continue to measure writing and editing skills, but there are other ways for students to demonstrate their mastery of essay writing, and the SAT will continue to measure writing throughout the test. The tasks on the SAT Reading and Writing and Language sections are among the most effective and predictive parts of the SAT.

-We're reducing demands on students. The expanded reach of AP and its widespread availability means the Subject Tests are no longer necessary for students to show what they know.

College Entrance Testing (cont.)

ACT: American College Testing Program includes four curriculum-based tests that measure a student's educational development in English, Math, Reading, and Science reasoning. The ACT is an allowable alternative to the SAT. It is given five times during the year: October, December, February, April, and June. Most students will take the ACT in June of their junior year. The ACT has a 40-minute writing test as an optional component. Students may register to take the ACT with or without writing. The score ranges from 1-36 with an average score of 21 on each component. The total of the four sub-tests produces a composite score which is your ACT score. Please visit www.actstudent.org for further information.

AP Tests: Advanced Placement tests are designed for students who have completed college-level courses in high school. These tests typically take place in May each year. They are used in determining whether or not a student may gain credits at the college level. Most exams are three hours in length. AP test scores range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

IB Tests: Students enrolled in an International Baccalaureate course can take a written examination at the end of the course, typically in May. Scores range from 1 (lowest) to 7 (highest). Colleges may grant college credit based on a student's score. Colleges should be consulted to understand what will be accepted.

DID YOU KNOW?

Students can register to get the question of the day for SAT and /or ACT for extra test preparation!

Some colleges require you to submit your SAT score directly from College Board rather than on your transcript. Make sure you know the requirements for your college!

Preparing for the SAT/ACT

Standardized tests can be intimidating. SAT and ACT scores are important, but not nearly as important as many students think. Colleges use test scores differently, but no college makes admission decisions based solely on them.

A Proven Way to Boost Your Score

The best ways to prepare for the SAT or ACT is to study hard and read as much as you can. Reading is a great way to improve your score. Practicing writing is also important in your preparation.

Register Online for the SAT and/or ACT

To register online for the SAT and/or ACT, log on to www.collegeboard.org or www.actstudent.org. Please note that Vestal's High School Code is 335730. Remember to print off your admissions ticket to bring to your test site. Students will also need a picture ID to be admitted to the test.

Test-Taking Strategies

Test-taking strategies can be learned through practice. Some common strategies are:

- Sign up to receive the question of the day from SAT/ACT website.
- Take practice tests online or in books.
- After taking a practice test, look carefully at the explanations of the correct answers.
- If you find certain questions/topics stump you, get help from teachers in those areas.
- Participate in a review course.

The Big Day

The night before:

- Do set out everything you need (including your No. 2 pencils).
- Do go to bed early – you will think better if you are well-rested.

The morning of:

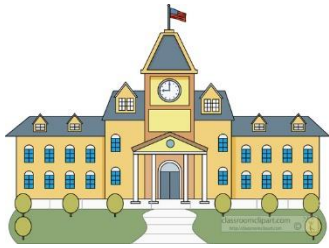
- Do plan to arrive at the testing center early.
- Do eat a good breakfast.
- Do bring a snack.
- Do remember to bring your admissions ticket and picture ID.
- Do bring a calculator

SAT Test Dates 2023

Test Date	Registration	Late
March 11	Feb 10	Feb 28
May 6	April 7	April 25
June 3	May 4	May 23

ACT Dates 2023

Test Date	Registration	Late
April 15	March 10	March 24
June 10	May 5	May 19



Types of Post-Secondary Choices

Four-year colleges are for students who wish to pursue a general academic program. Such a program lays the foundation for more advanced studies and professional work. Four-year colleges and universities offer bachelor's degrees in most areas.

- ***Private Colleges and Universities*** – are schools that are not funded by a state government. Private colleges include Harvard, Colgate, Syracuse and Bucknell. Admissions standards vary widely. Do not assume that private colleges cost more than state schools. While private colleges cost more on paper, some offer more financial aid than state schools.
- ***The State University of New York (SUNY) System*** – offers University Centers and University Colleges. *Centers* are four-year schools including Binghamton University, University at Albany, University of Buffalo and Stony Brook University. Admissions into the University Centers are competitive. They offer Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral degrees. *University Colleges* include schools such as Cortland, Oswego, Oneonta, and Geneseo. Admissions to these schools require a higher level of preparation and achievement at the high school level than the two-year colleges.

Career and technical colleges are for students with a clear-cut goal who would like to get into the job market quickly. Common fields include health care, computers, technology, auto mechanics, culinary arts, business and more. Because of the specialized nature of the majors, changing majors can be difficult or impossible without starting over. Financial aid is also sometimes limited at technical schools. Some technical colleges are: SUNY Delhi, SUNY Cobleskill and SUNY Alfred.

Community Colleges offer all high school graduates the opportunity for a college diploma. Community colleges offer a wide variety of programs that train students to work in specialized fields with a two-year Associate's degree. Students wishing to pursue a four-year degree will have the option to transfer. Most community colleges have "articulation agreements" with four-year colleges that help with the transfer process. Some students use their two years at a community college to improve their chances of getting into a more selective four-year college. Most community colleges are commuter schools. However, some do offer residential living. Some community colleges are SUNY Broome, Monroe Community College, and Tompkins-Cortland Community College.

Types of Post-Secondary Choices (cont.)

Service academies (U.S. Military, Naval, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Merchant Marines) offer four years of college education leading to a Bachelor of Science degree. Cadets and Midshipmen receive tuition, medical care, room and board, and a monthly stipend which pays for uniforms, books, and incidental expenses. Upon graduation, those commissioned are obligated for an active-duty period of at least five years. ROTC is another option. This is a four-year program that consists of two to five hours of weekly military instruction and some summer training periods.

Visual and performing arts students can consider conservatories or stand-alone art schools that offer an immersion-type experience for students. Large universities offer somewhat self-contained music or art schools within the larger university. Students should plan to prepare a portfolio or audition.

When deciding whether or not to pursue **intercollegiate athletics**, it is important to remember to choose the school for the academics, not for the sport. Students will need to decide what NCAA division would be appropriate. Students will need to follow NCAA rules and register with the Eligibility Center.

Students with learning disabilities are going on to higher education. Students or parents may have to supply evidence of their learning disability and what is needed to support it. Students may request to have their special education plans forwarded to the college. Most colleges have an office on the

campus to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities.

• • •

Did you know?

Vestal students from the Class of 2022 are attending Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Binghamton University, SUNY Oswego, Syracuse University, Cornell University, and SUNY Broome!

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Admission Factors: What Colleges Look for in a Student?

Colleges want students who will be successful at their universities. Many factors are considered to evaluate a student's application.

1. A high school curriculum that challenges the student. Students are encouraged to try challenging course work at the high school level. This could include Honors, Advanced Placement, and International Baccalaureate courses. Students should plan to take classes in English, Social Studies, Math, Science and Foreign Language. Most competitive colleges take the approach of, "What challenging courses were available to the student at his/her high school and did that student take advantage of those courses?"

- *Should I take challenging courses and receive lower grades or take less challenging courses and receive higher grades?* This is a very common question asked by families. Most admissions offices will respond by telling students to take the more challenging courses as long as they are not getting in over their head.
- *Do senior year courses count?* Yes, senior year courses will be evaluated by the admissions staff. Students may be asked to submit a mid-year report (report card from marking periods one and two) in addition to a final transcript.

2. Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend. Grades should show an upward trend over the years. However, slightly lower grades in more challenging courses are preferred to all A's in less challenging courses. A transcript is sent to each college when you first apply. A final transcript is sent in July to the college that you have deposited to.

- *Do colleges recalculate averages?* Yes, many colleges will recalculate your final average to include grades from English, social studies, math, science and foreign language. This usually results in a lower average.
- *What is class rank?* Vestal uses a weighted ranking system whereby the more challenging courses are given more points for the average.

<i>Regents Level</i>	<i>1.02</i>
<i>Accelerated/Honors Level</i>	<i>1.04</i>
<i>IB/AP/College Level</i>	<i>1.06</i>

What information is included on a high school transcript?

- Courses taken
- Final grades in each course
- Final exam grades
- Regents exam grades
- Type of diploma
- Weighted high school average
- Summer school courses and grades
- Class Rank
- N.H.S membership

Admission Factors: What Colleges Look for in a Student?

Thus, a 90 in a Regents course would be multiplied by 1.02 to get a ranking average of 91.8. Colleges have consistently stated that high schools that do not use a weighted ranking system put their students at a disadvantage.

- 3. Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT/ACT).** These should be consistent with high school performance. The Counseling and Guidance Office recommends that you send *all* of your test scores, since the colleges will only consider your best performance on each sub-test, but the choice is up to you.
 - Please be aware that some colleges, such as Binghamton University, require that you send your scores directly from the College Board or the ACT organization even if they appear on your transcript.
- 4. Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative.** Depth, not breadth, of experiences is most important. Colleges would like to see what activities and leadership roles students have participated in during high school. Students will have a chance to complete a Senior Activity Sheet and receive tips on creating a resume. Students can include: offices held, honors earned, significant travel, sports participation, and employment history.
- 5. Community service.** Students should be involved in activities where they can demonstrate their concern for other people and their community.
- 6. Personal statement that provides insight into the student's personality, values, and goals.** A personal statement, or essay, is often required as part of the application process. The essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. This is the best way for the college to get to know you as a person. Your essay should be well thought out and developed. It is recommended that an English teacher look over your essay to help with any revisions that need to be made.
- 7. Letters of recommendation from teachers and/or counselor.** Students should ask teachers and/or counselors early in the process for recommendations. Teachers who have had direct knowledge of the student's work should be considered.
 - Often times, it is helpful for students to share their goals and ambitions with the teacher or counselor which could be helpful in writing the letter of recommendation.

Admission Factors: What Colleges Look for in a Student?

8. **Letters of recommendation from adults who know you well.** Letters from coaches, other school staff personnel, employers or clergy members are valuable. However, recommendations from family members or friends are rarely given much weight.
9. **Anything else that might set you apart from the rest of the applicants.** Unusual talents or experiences can really help you stand out from the crowd. Overall, colleges are seeking students who will be active members of their campus.

Special Admissions Opportunity



The following are special admissions opportunities that students can take advantage of:

Educational Opportunity Program (EOP): This option is designed for motivated applicants from New York State who are ineligible for admissions under the traditional admissions standards due to educational and economic disadvantages, but demonstrate the potential for completing a college-level program.

EOP students receive individualized support, including tutoring as well as academic, career, and personal counseling, in order to ensure their academic success. EOP students also receive financial aid to help with the cost of room and board, tuition, books and personal expenses.

Eligibility is based on guidelines established by the State University of New York and the State Education Department.

Academic Year 2023-24

Household Size (including head of household)	Total Annual Income in Prev. Calendar Year
1	\$25,142
2	\$33,874
3	\$42,606
4	\$51,338
5	\$60,070
6	\$68,802
7	\$77,534

Special Admissions Opportunities (cont.)

EOP Financial Aid Eligibility Criteria: The table above lists financial guidelines for Educational Opportunity Program eligibility entering the fall 2018-2019 academic year. In order to be determined economically disadvantaged, a student's household income must not exceed the amount shown for its size in the applicable category or the student's circumstances must conform to one of the exceptions listed.

Services Provided by the Program can Include:

- Academic, financial, career or personal counseling including advice on entry or re-entry to secondary or post-secondary programs
- Career exploration
- Information on post-secondary education
- Exposure to college campus
- Information on student financial assistance
- Assistance in completing college admissions forms and financial aid applications
- Assistance in preparing for college entrance exams

Special Talent Admission: Some colleges recognize that achievements outside of traditional academic areas require exceptional commitment and may indicate further potential for success in college. Special talent admission considers applicants who demonstrate excellence in areas such as performing or visual arts, athletics, or writing.

Talent Search: The Educational Talent Search Project is a federally funded program designed to aid students from disadvantaged backgrounds that have the potential to succeed in higher education. To be eligible for these services, participants must meet the federal eligibility criteria. They must be first-generation college students, meet the income guidelines, or both. Please see your counselor for more information.



The College Athletic & Recruitment Process

www.ncaa.org

College Sports: Many high school athletes look forward to a continuation of their sports in college. Be sure to talk to your coach, your athletic director, and your counselor about college sports.



1. Search out the right academic program. Speak to your counselor to learn about what classes you should take to prepare for college and that will be accepted by the NCAA.
2. Find the best schools for you. Develop a list of schools that meet your academic, career, and personal requirements.
3. Prepare yourself for playing sports in college by preparing early. Apply to the Eligibility Center after your junior year of high school. Take the PSAT, SAT and/or ACT and have your scores sent to NCAA. Prepare a resume and interest letter for teams of the schools you may be interested in.

NCAA Eligibility Center: If you are planning to play Division I or II sports, it is your responsibility to make sure the Eligibility Center has the documents it needs to certify you. Students must:

- Complete the Student Release Form and bring it to the Counseling and Guidance Office to be sent to the Eligibility Center along with your transcript.

- Review with your counselor the NCAA List of Approved Core Courses.
- Record your PIN number so you can check your certification status.
- Send standardized test scores directly from the testing agency. Your final transcript will be sent to the Eligibility Center upon graduation.

Questions to Ask When Looking at Athletic Programs



- What position do you want me to play and how many others are you recruiting for the same position?
- How do practices coincide with the classes I will be taking?
- What is expected of the players in the off-season?
- What will happen to my scholarship if I am injured or ineligible to participate?
- Are there services or tutoring available if I am having academic difficulty or need extra help?
- Are all injuries handled by the team insurance?
- Does an athletic trainer travel with the team?
- What does a player's typical daily schedule look like?
- What is the general attitude of professors towards athletes?
- Are there mandatory study hours? If so, what are they?

The College Athletic & Recruitment Process (cont.)

Contacts and Visits: High school athletes are bound by NCAA Rules and Regulations as any college athlete. By not following the rules, you could jeopardize your athletic future. Please see your athletic director or counselor if you have further questions.

- A college coach can contact high school athletes *only after* their junior year. A contact is any face-to-face meeting involving even a simple “hello.”
- High school athletes can receive letters from college coaches *after September 1st* of their junior year.
- Contacts are prohibited with university boosters at any time.
- During your contact, *you may not* receive t-shirts, college mementos, or financial inducements to sign to a particular university.
- NCAA allows “prospective student-athletes” one expense-paid visit to five different universities.
- You may not receive an official visit until you provide the college authorities with an official high school transcript and a score from the PSAT, plus SAT or ACT taken on a national date.
- Each visit may not last more than 48 hours.
- You may visit any campus at any time beyond your five official visits if you pay all of the expenses for each visit.

Please visit www.ncaa.org for more information.

Questions to Ask Yourself During the Recruitment Process

- Would I attend this school if I had no intentions of competing?
- Do the coaches and players seem genuinely concerned about each student?
- Will I be successful at this school academically? Athletically? Personally?
- Do the coaches seem concerned about academics?
- How does this school compare to others I have visited?
- How would I feel if one or more of the coaches leaves? Would I still be happy with the school and my athletic participation?
- Does the school satisfy all of the criteria of my “want list”?



How to Begin Your Own College Process



The internet is the best way to begin your college search. You can start by checking any of the websites listed.

College Scorecard – (<https://collegescorecard.ed.gov>) College Scorecards in the U.S. Department of Education’s College Affordability and Transparency Center make it easier for you to search for a college that is a good fit for you. You can use the College Scorecard to find out more about a college’s affordability and value so you can make more informed decisions about which college to attend.

College Board Online – (www.collegeboard.org/bigfuture) connects you with a database of more than 3,500 two-year and four-year colleges. Choose from among 800 features to create a profile of your ideal college and get a list of colleges that fit your criteria.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid – (www.studentaid.gov) provides worksheets and helps with filling out this extremely important form. Students will also need to sign up for an FSA ID on the FAFSA website.

Fastweb – (www.fastweb.com) is one of the most comprehensive scholarship search websites available.

FinAid! – (www.finaid.org) offers financial aid information in regard to scholarships and different types of aid.

Peterson’s Educational Center – (www.petersons.com) has a vast amount of useful educational and career information.

QuestBridge– (www.questbridge.org) provides scholarships to high-achieving, low-income high schools students who are in pursuit of going to some of the country’s top colleges.



The Princeton Review – (www.princetonreview.com) allows students to search by a college’s name, region, state, size, and cost. The Princeton Review also offers its own rating of hundreds of colleges and SAT and ACT prep-courses. This site also provides advice on applying to colleges, interview tips, admissions secrets, and much more.

US News Education – (www.usnews.com) has annual rankings of America’s Best Colleges, tips for getting started, and choosing the right school. There is a step-by-step guide that will help you complete the entire admissions process.

Prioritize Your Needs: What Really Matters?

It is important to identify and clarify some factors that will help you understand the important characteristics of the schools you're looking at to help guide your college decisions.

Directions: Read each statement below and circle the appropriate number.

1 = Very Important 2 = Somewhat Important 3 = Not Important

How Much Does it Matter that the School...

1. Is strictly a four-year college?	1	2	3
2. Is located in or near a small town?	1	2	3
3. Is located near scenic beauty?	1	2	3
4. Is located close to family?	1	2	3
5. Is located in the Northeast?	1	2	3
6. Is located in or near a large city?	1	2	3
7. Is well-known?	1	2	3
8. Is highly selective?	1	2	3
9. Is co-ed?	1	2	3
10. Is one where friends are going to?	1	2	3
11. Is very competitive?	1	2	3
12. Has small classes?	1	2	3
13. Has an academic support system?	1	2	3
14. Has an active campus social life?	1	2	3
15. Offers intramural athletics?	1	2	3
16. Has numerous clubs/groups?	1	2	3
17. Has sororities and fraternities?	1	2	3
18. Is academically rigorous?	1	2	3
19. Offers internships?	1	2	3
20. Offers study abroad?	1	2	3
21. Offers a diverse student body?	1	2	3
22. Personal attention from professors?	1	2	3
23. Offers research opportunities?	1	2	3
24. Extensive library and laboratory resources?	1	2	3
25. Division I athletics?	1	2	3
26. Is on-campus housing guaranteed?	1	2	3
27. Are cars allowed on campus?	1	2	3
28. Are scholarships and financial aid available?	1	2	3
29. What job placement services are available?	1	2	3
30. Do employers recruit on campus?	1	2	3

Note the number of 1's you circled. These characteristics seem to be most important to you. It is possible to find everything you want in one campus.

When looking at colleges, many websites give you specific search criteria to narrow down your search to find students the best matches. Some examples include: Entrance Difficulty, Type of School, Enrollment Size, Campus Setting, Geographical Area, Housing, Student Body and Campus Life.

Questions to Ask College Representatives

Students often have the opportunity to meet with college representatives. These visits can be done on the college campus, during open houses, at Vestal High School, or during College Day at the Broome County Arena. Students should prepare a list of questions before meeting with a representative. Some basic questions are listed below:

Questions

- What are the strongest majors at your institution?
- When must I choose a major?
- What type of internships/co-ops are available?
- What type of high school classes are you looking for in an applicant?
- Are there programs for study-abroad?
- What types of extra-curricular activities are available?
- What are the application deadlines?
- How do I schedule an on-campus visit?
- Do you accept AP or IB credit?
- What percentage of a typical freshman class will actually graduate from your college?
- What's the average high school GPA of the entering freshman class?
- How do you assign faculty advisors?
- What additional academic services are available such as tutoring, career counseling, and study skills?
- How many students reside on campus?
- Do you guarantee housing for all four years?
- What do students do on the weekends?
- How are roommates selected?



College Campus Visit Checklist

It is always recommended that a student visit a college campus to get a sense of being able to see themselves as a student on that campus. Many colleges encourage students to attend Open Houses or to schedule their own appointment to visit. Some things to check out while on campus are:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campus tour | <input type="checkbox"/> Spend the night in a residence hall |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to professors | <input type="checkbox"/> Go to a campus activity or sports event |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to students | <input type="checkbox"/> Read the student newspaper |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sit in on a class of a subject that interests you | <input type="checkbox"/> Check out the bookstore |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Visit the library | <input type="checkbox"/> Talk to coaches of the sports you might be interested in |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eat in the cafeteria | |



Applying to College

Applying to colleges may seem overwhelming at first. We are providing information to help you ease the stress that this process can sometimes cause. Students should apply to a list of colleges that range in admissions selection criteria. You want to be sure that you are a candidate in at least several schools, so you can make an informed choice when accepting an admissions offer. There are several different types of applications that students may use. The preferred method of applying is using an online application.

APPLICATION TYPES:

Online Application – this is the online application that is school specific. Students may print these out from the school’s website if the school still has their own application.

Common Application- (www.commonapp.org) is the standard online application that is used by over 500 private and public colleges and universities. This web-based application allows students to apply to more than one college and only fill in one application. Recommendations and school reports can also be done online. Students can track their applications and when it has been downloaded by a particular college.

SUNY Application – (www.suny.edu/student) is an option for students who are applying only to SUNY Campuses. Student may apply to multiple campuses using one application. Students can also track their application to see where it is in the process. Most SUNY schools require students to fill out a supplemental application. Please refer to the SUNY website for additional information. SUNY’s preferred deadline is December 1st. We recommend that you work towards meeting this deadline.

Coalition for College – (www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org) is a newer online application for students. It has over 150 college and university options; these schools commit to being accessible to students of all backgrounds, affordable (students graduate with low student debt), and successful graduation (high graduation rates, including low income and underrepresented students).

**Students applying to SUNY Broome may want to apply directly to SUNY Broome using their campus’ free application at www.sunybroome.edu instead of the SUNY application*

PARTS OF THE APPLICATION:

- The actual application
- Student transcript and school profile
- A list of senior year courses
- Fall semester senior grades
- Counselor recommendation
- Teacher recommendation(s)
- Essay
- Student resume

Students must fill out an Application Checklist form. The form can be picked up in the Counseling & Guidance Office. This form allows us to keep backup information on all electronic and paper applications filed. An example is included on page 24 of this booklet.

Application Terms

The following definitions and explanations will serve as a good reference when working through the application process.

Rolling Admissions – Most colleges using rolling admissions will review applications as the files are completed and return decisions within a few weeks. Under this system, it is advantageous to apply early in the fall.

Early Decision (ED) – A plan under which a student applies to his/her first choice college in the fall of their senior year and agrees, by contract to enter that college if offered admission. Decisions are usually rendered in mid-December. Students may be accepted, rejected, or deferred under this plan. Typical deadline dates range from November 15th to December 15th. If you are accepted, you must withdraw all other college applications. *This option requires you to be very sure that this is the school you wish to attend. The only way to get out of attending is if you cannot afford to go.*

Early Action (EA) – A plan under which a student applies to the first choice college early in the fall of their senior year. Even though a decision is rendered early, a student is under no contractual agreement to attend the school.

Early Notification – Colleges may elect to have more than one regular notification date. Under an Early Notification Plan, applications filed by the early deadline will be processed and non-binding decisions rendered at an earlier date.

Deferred Admissions – Many colleges offer a student who has been admitted the opportunity to delay or defer enrollment for a year or a semester. Students who defer an offer of admission may choose to work for a while to earn money for college, travel, or pursue a special program. Deferred students cannot attend another college during this time off unless the college is notified in advance and agrees to this plan.

January Admissions – Colleges may admit freshmen to begin study in the middle of the academic year.

Processing Your Application

Whether you are applying online to colleges or through the mail, you need to notify the Counseling and Guidance Office so that we can send your transcript to the colleges. Each student must fill out a Counseling and Guidance Application Checklist for all of the schools to which they are applying and turn the form into our office. This is how we track the applications and assure that all materials are sent in. This document is provided on page 24.

Common Application, SENDedu, or SUNY Application Online: You can request that your counselor complete their portions online, as well. If you do request the counselor portion to be done online, you will still need to complete the above-mentioned checklist and turn it into the Counseling and Guidance Office.

You should give us at least one week to process your application. November and December are the busiest times, so you should give us two weeks to complete your applications during these months.

Please be aware of deadlines and give us sufficient time to complete your applications.

Some notes on the processing of applications:

- Applications are handled by date of receipt: first come, first served.
 - ***Exception: Early Decision applications are processed first because of early deadlines. You must inform us of Early Decision/Action applications.***
- The application is reviewed by your counselor for completeness and accuracy. Once the counselor signs off on it, the application materials are sent online or through the mail.
- We keep a record of the dates that the applications are received and the dates we forward our materials in case anyone needs verification.
- There is frequently a lag between the time we send online materials and the time the college website records and download the materials. If in doubt, call the colleges to check on the status of their website updates, since this is usually where the trouble is.

Financial Aid Information

The cost of attending college is high and many families struggle to afford it. Financial aid makes college a reality for many, if not most, students. Financial aid is money made available to families to help pay the cost of college. Financial aid is based on need.

To determine the amount of need, a college requires your family to submit several forms. The first of these is the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form**. There is no charge to fill out this application. It is the means of eligibility for all federal grants and loans and is required for all institutions. FAFSA forms are available online at www.studentaid.gov starting on October 1st of your senior year. They cannot be accessed before that date, although an estimator called the FAFSA4caster is available in the fall of the prior year. Financial information requested on this form comes from yours and your parents' income tax returns and financial statements. Prior to filing, the parent and the student will need to get an FSA ID from the same website.

The **CSS Profile** is required by many institutions and requests additional information. This form is used by private colleges who are using their own money for financial aid, in addition to federal and state money. There is a fee to receive the form and then a fee for each school you have the information sent to. It is recommended that you file electronically at www.collegeboard.org

The **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)** provides grants and loans to New York State residents who attend college in-state. There is a separate TAP application that can be accessed using the FAFSA online.

Many colleges may also have their own financial aid forms. Please be sure to review each college application to see if an additional form is necessary.

Financial Aid Terms:

Student Loans – The first money offered will be “self-help” money such as loans. Students apply for a loan and it is in the student’s name. Stafford loans are issued by the Federal Government, who pays the interest on the loan while the student is in school. Payment on these loans begins six months after leaving school.

Work Study – This is another “self-help” award. Jobs are available on campus for which the student is paid. Typically, the student works no more than 10 hours per week and is paid every two weeks or once a month. This is the only financial aid money the student actually sees. Most students use this money for spending money and for books.

Grants – Money awarded for higher education which does not have to be repaid.

Scholarships - Money awarded for achievement in academics, leadership, citizenship, and/or athletics. Money is usually applied to post-high school education. Check in the Counseling and Guidance Office for a list of local and national scholarships.

The Financial Aid Award Letter – The letter sent from the college or university’s Office of Student Financial Assistance indicating how much financial aid and the types of financial aid the student qualifies for during the academic year. These letters are sent in late March or early April.

VESTAL HIGH SCHOOL COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Please complete one checklist for each application

Vestal High School
205 Woodlawn Drive
Vestal, NY 13850
Ph: 607-757-2214
Fax: 607-757-2306

Counselor (check one): ☐ Ms. Leanne Schneider (lfschneider@vestal.k12.ny.us)
☐ Ms. Rebecca Martino (rmmartino@vestal.k12.ny.us)
☐ Ms. Christi Smith (chsmith@vestal.k12.ny.us)
☐ Ms. Katy Jablonowski (kejablonowski@vestal.k12.ny.us)
☐ Mr. Rob Malvasio (rsmalvasio@vestal.k12.ny.us)

VESTAL HIGH SCHOOL CODE
(ACT and SAT): 335730

Check One:

- ☐ Regular Decision
☐ Rolling Admission

STUDENT: _____

COLLEGE(S): _____

DUE DATE: _____



**ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE IN TWO WEEKS BEFORE ACTUAL DUE DATE TO
GUARANTEE TIMELY ARRIVAL AT THE COLLEGE**



☐ APPLICATION SUBMITTED ONLINE THROUGH THE COMMON APPLICATION, SUNY WEBSITE,
OR SENDedu

(no additional materials required – counselors will automatically submit transcript, school report, and a mid-year report)

☐ Student invited counselor via Common App website ☐ Student applied via SUNY website
☐ Student invited counselor via SENDedu website ☐ Student applied via SUNY-Broome website
☐ Student invited counselor via Coalition website

OR

☐ APPLICATION NOT SUBMITTED THROUGH COMMON APP, SUNY WEBSITE, SENDedu OR COALITION
(Did you proofread, sign, and check the waiver box?)

☐ Application submitted on (date) _____ Online? ☐ Paper (attached)? ☐
☐ Mid-Year Report Required (are your name and the name of the college included on the form??)
☐ Final Report Required (are your name and the name of the college included on the form??)

☐ STANDARDIZED TESTING INFORMATION (check all that apply)

☐ SAT/ACT Release Form is on file with Counseling and Guidance Department
☐ Planning to take another SAT/ACT that will need to be reported to this college
☐ SAT/ACT has been sent directly from College Board/ACT Organization (if required)

☐ FINANCIAL AID REQUIREMENTS (check college web site for current information)

☐ FAFSA ☐ CSS/Profile

☐ LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

☐ Counselor letter required
☐ The following teachers were either invited online or were given stamped envelopes
addressed to the college admissions office (if required):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

IMPORTANT!

Please keep up-to-date
on what **you** need to
send to colleges (late
SAT/ACT scores,
financial aid info) by
checking the college
websites and deadlines
regularly