

# Road Map



Find your path to college, university or trade school.  
You decide the right way for you.

**2016 - 2017**

# Guiding Maine Students

**M**AINE COLLEGE ACCESS NETWORK (MaineCAN) is a community of college access professionals dedicated to postsecondary success for all Maine students. Our vision is that every Maine student has the knowledge and resources needed to attain the postsecondary education they desire, helping them contribute to the Maine economy.

The Road Map is designed to support students and families as they prepare for education after high school. This resource will guide students as they map out a plan to achieve their goals for life after high school, and provides information to help navigate the process.

We are thankful for the support from the Finance Authority of Maine and GEAR UP Maine for making this publication available for free to all Maine students and families. We hope you find the information beneficial. If you have questions, please reach out to us.



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*The factual references in this publication are believed to be accurate as of this printing, but legislative and regulatory changes, as well as new developments, may render such information outdated or inaccurate. This publication is intended to be employed as a general guide for the reader. It is not the type of professional legal, accounting, tax, investment or similar advice on which the reader should place primary reliance before making a final decision. The reader should, when necessary, seek appropriate professional services in these areas. The reader should also understand that there are differences of opinion among commentators on the subjects covered in this publication, and the reader is advised to consult multiple sources on these topics. All comments received will be considered in future revisions of this publication.  
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# Why Continue Your Education?

## Knowledge

Continuing your education will increase your knowledge, skills, and opportunities. You'll gain skills you'll use for the rest of your life, no matter what career you choose. Continuing education after high school is more important now than ever. Today, most good jobs require more than a high school diploma. Businesses want to hire people who are eager to learn and have good problem-solving skills.

## Job Security

The more education you have, the more likely it is that you will always have a job. It is estimated that by the year 2028, there will be 19 million more jobs for educated workers than there are qualified people to fill them.

## Love of Learning

Continued learning contributes to your quality of life! This is often cited as the best reason to invest in your education.

## Money

Every bit of education you get after high school increases the chance that you'll earn a good-paying job. Most college graduates earn more money during their working years than people who stop their education at high school.

## Opportunity

Education beyond high school gives you a lot of benefits, including meeting new people, taking part in new opportunities to explore your interests, and experiencing success.

## Why Now?

Right now, it's probably hard to imagine where you'll be in a year or two, much less 10, 20, 30, or 40 years from now. Where do you expect to be and what do you want out of life? By attending college immediately after high school, you get a head start on answering those important questions.

## Why Should I Pursue Higher Education?

While the primary reason students attend college is to prepare for their future profession, there are many additional reasons for attending:

- Discover and explore new interests
- Increase employment opportunities
- Meet new people
- Explore new places
- Earn more money

## Numbers Don't Lie!

Studies show that bachelor's degree holders can expect to earn over \$1 million more in their lifetime than high school graduates, and those with a doctorate can expect to earn over \$2 million more than high school graduates.

Source - *Lifetime Earnings: College Graduates Still Earn More*. National Association of College and University Business Officers, 18 Oct. 2012.

## You Can Afford College!

Start saving as soon as possible. College tuition costs vary greatly, but don't be frightened by the "sticker price." Financial aid, scholarships, grants, and loans are available to help make college more affordable. You and your family can choose the college that is the best fit for you, academically and financially. An investment in higher education will pay off – the best jobs and salaries go to those with a college degree.

# Discovering Your Strengths

## Choosing a college major

Before you begin to delve deeply into your college search, there are some key things to consider. Be sure to think about what's most important to you. After all, this is about YOUR future! Taking the time to learn more about yourself can help you discover a college major that will be rewarding both academically and professionally after you graduate and head out into the world.

Throughout your initial search stages, ask yourself some important baseline questions. Find the common thread in your answers to help you decide which colleges will have a major that fits your likes and strengths.

- Reflect on your high school career to date and what has made you most successful.
- What are your interests, abilities, aptitudes, likes, and dislikes?
- What classes are your favorites?
- What classes have you been most successful in?

## Finding the Best Fit

Once you've narrowed down your interests, determine the type of college culture that will be the best fit for you.

- Do you prefer small classes or do you thrive in a lecture-based learning setting?
- Do you prefer deadline-driven assignments?
- Do you work best individually or would you prefer to take part in many group presentations?

If possible, visit a variety of different schools so you can get a sense of what type of campus feels right for you. Experiencing options firsthand is the best way to know for sure. It is also highly recommended that you check out the websites of the colleges you are considering. Many school sites have virtual campus tours, student-created videos, and blogs to help you get a sense of the college culture.

**DISCOVER HOW** your strengths can translate into possible college majors and career fields by creating a free account on ACT Profile at [www.actprofile.org](http://www.actprofile.org)

Now take a moment to fill out the College Fit Test on page 10.  
It will help you narrow down your college search.



# Navigating the Road Ahead

## Map your future

### High School Goals - Every Year

- Take challenging classes in core academic subjects.

Most colleges require:

- 4 years of English
- 3 years of math
- 3 years of science
- At least 3 years of social science
- And many require at least 2 years of a foreign language

- Keep a calendar with important dates/reminders and deadlines.
- Become involved in school and community-based activities that interest you. Working or volunteering can help you get hands-on resume-building experience. Be sure to make note of your activities in terms of the dates you participated, your supervisor's name, and the activities you were involved in so that you can include this information in your college resume. Keeping track along the way is much easier than trying to remember these details later on down the road.

## ROAD TRIP TIP

### Career Exploration

ACT Profile can help you plan for your future with interest assessments, career guidance tools, and the ability to search for education options based on your specific areas of interest. Visit [www.actprofile.org](http://www.actprofile.org) to begin exploring.

### Sophomore Year

- Focus on your interests and see if you can find any community service or extracurricular activities that showcase them. Explore possible careers based on your interests. The ACT Profile ([www.actprofile.org](http://www.actprofile.org)) can help align student interests to help form a plan for after high school. Students will answer questions to best determine their interests, abilities, and values and ACT Profile will match them with an interactive career graph to show students the best career matches based on their self-assessment results.
- Talk with your counselor to go over your goals. Be sure you are on the path to success and fulfilling college course requirements.
- Take the PSAT in preparation for the SAT, or the PLAN in preparation for the ACT.
- Focus on your classes and maintaining a good GPA.
- Look for resume-boosting summer opportunities – camps, jobs, classes, volunteer work.
- Start making a list of colleges that interest you. It's never too early to visit schools.
- Attend a college planning and/or financial aid night at your school. Check with your school counselor to find out when these will be hosted.

Ready to start searching for schools? You can search for colleges online at [www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org).

### Junior Year

#### September/October

- Attend a college fair in your area. You can find a listing at [www.neacac.org](http://www.neacac.org).
- Take the PSAT in preparation for the SAT, or the PLAN, which is a prep test for the ACT.

#### November/December

- Start your college search. Talk with your school counselor. Your counselor can help you narrow down your choices and provide insight about potential schools.

## January/February

- Start prepping for the SAT or ACT to be taken this spring. See the schedule of test dates on **page 16** and be sure to register before the deadline to avoid additional fees.

## March/April

- School vacations and long weekends are a great time to start visiting schools. The College Fit Test on page 10 can help you narrow down the type of school that will be the best match for you.
- Gather information from colleges. Request brochures and catalogs and attend college fairs.
- Visit colleges and talk with college students.
- Talk with your parents and high school counselor about colleges that interest you.
- Research college costs and use the Net Price Calculator (NPC) tool for the schools that interest you. Each school website has its own NPC, which can usually be found in the financial aid section. The NPC will provide you an estimated financial aid award for that school based on your family's financial circumstances.
- Attend a college planning and/or financial aid night at your school. Check with your school counselor to find out when these will be hosted.

## May/June

- Take the SAT or ACT, as well as the SAT Subject Tests.
- Attend a college fair in your area. You can find a listing at [www.neacac.org](http://www.neacac.org).
- Meet with your school counselor. Review your senior year schedule and be sure to take some challenging courses. Also, review your plan for applying to colleges and financial aid.
- Create your FSA ID at [fsaid.ed.gov](http://fsaid.ed.gov). The FSA ID is a username and password you will need to access U.S. Department of Education websites, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Usually one parent will also need an FSA ID to sign your FAFSA.

## July/August

- Use your summer vacation to explore any opportunities for volunteering, internships, or summer classes. Seek ways to be a well-rounded student.
- Visit colleges. Take campus tours and, at colleges you're serious about, explore the possibility of scheduling an interview with an admissions counselor.
- Initiate conversations with your family about financing your college education. Which colleges are financially feasible? Which ones do you really want to attend?
- Request information from your colleges of interest. Keep a calendar of application deadlines. If you are planning on applying Early Decision or Early Action to a particular college, these deadlines will likely be in early fall.



# Navigating the Road Ahead

## Map your future

### Senior Year

#### September

- Meet with your counselor and begin putting together your application materials (e.g. essay, resume, and a list of extracurricular activities).
- Narrow your list of colleges to between 6 and 8. Review this list with your counselor and parents. Be sure you have a well-rounded list including both financial and academic back-up schools.
- Research financial aid and application deadlines. Use the College Application Checklist on page 22 to organize and track application and financial aid deadlines.
- Prepare to file your FAFSA. Gather information, including copies of tax returns and other financial statements.
- If either you or your parent doesn't have an FSA ID, create one at [fsaid.ed.gov](http://fsaid.ed.gov). The FSA ID is a username and password you will need to access the U.S. Department of Education website, including the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

#### October

- File your FAFSA at [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov)! The FAFSA is now available starting on October 1.
- If you need help with your FAFSA, attend a FAFSA In-Person Help Session. A list of sessions can be found at [www.FAMEmaine.com](http://www.FAMEmaine.com) in the Filing Your FAFSA section.
- File the CSS Financial Aid Profile, if required by your college(s).
- Retake the SAT and/or ACT if needed. Be sure to have your scores sent to the colleges you are applying to.

### ROAD TRIP TIP - PAYING FOR COLLEGE

When comparing award letters, first subtract grants and scholarships (money that doesn't have to be repaid) from the cost of the school. This is referred to as the "net price" and will allow you to get an apples-to-apples comparison of the actual cost.

- Begin the Common Application online at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). If the school(s) you are applying to do not accept the Common Application, fill out the individual application from the admissions website.

#### November

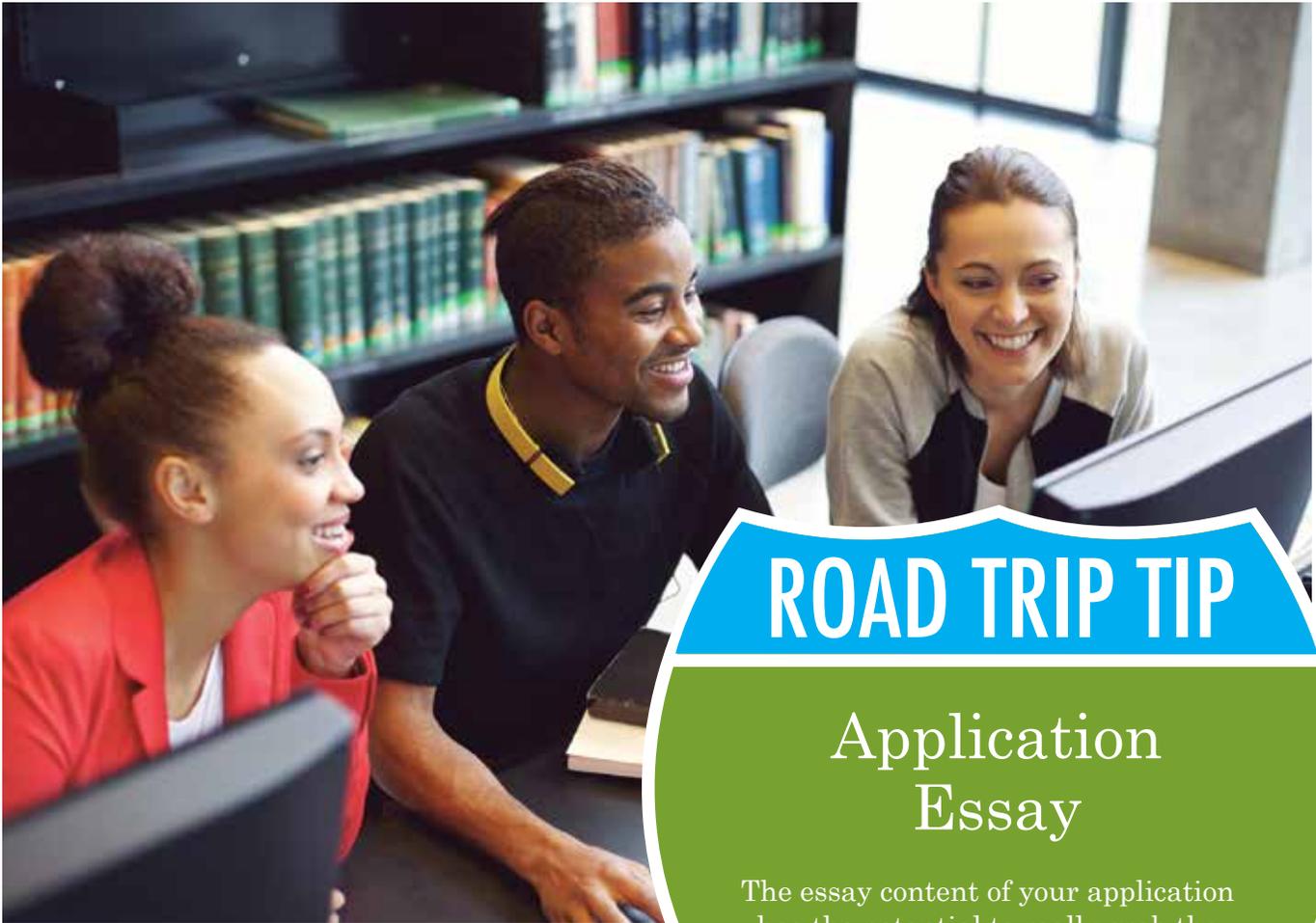
- Finalize your college essay and be sure you have selected and spoken with the individuals that you want to provide recommendations for you.

#### December/January

- Find scholarships! National scholarships can be found at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). Local scholarships may also be found on the Maine Community Foundation website at [www.mainecef.org](http://www.mainecef.org) or through the Finance Authority of Maine at [www.famemaine.com](http://www.famemaine.com). Submit all scholarship applications and required materials before the deadlines.
- Complete college applications before or during your winter break. Most regular college application deadlines are between January 1 and February 15.

### ROAD TRIP TIP - CAUTION!

You should never have to pay to complete or submit your FAFSA! When applying, be sure to log on to [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov).



## ROAD TRIP TIP

### Application Essay

The essay content of your application has the potential to really grab the reader and make a strong impression, so be sure to plan enough time to do this section well and make yours memorable!

#### January/February

- Follow up with your counselor and recommendation writer(s) to be sure materials are sent to the colleges to which you've applied.
- Make sure the financial aid office(s) have all of the documents they need to award your financial aid.

#### March

- Decision letters from colleges should be arriving by mid-March.

#### April

- Compare your financial aid awards from the colleges where you have been accepted.
- Visit the schools again if you are having a tough time deciding which to attend. Many schools will have Accepted Student Open Houses that you can attend.

#### May

- Typically by May 1 you must send a deposit to the school you choose. However, different schools have different deadlines, so be sure you know the date of this important deadline at your school of choice.
- It is common courtesy to inform the other colleges of your acceptance or rejection of offers of admission or financial aid.

Have you completed your checklists?  
If so, congratulate yourself for a job well done!

# College Fit Test

## Where do you want to live, work, and play for the next two to four years?

Taking the time to think about college characteristics that might be best for you will go a long way towards helping you find the right fit. Use your answers to guide you in your college search and be sure to check out the College Navigator online search tool available on [www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator](http://www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator).

### What type of school do you want to attend?

- 2-year community college     4-year college or university     Public     Private

### What size college would you like?

- Large (over 10,000)     Medium (3,000 - 10,000)     Small (under 3,000)

### What setting do you prefer?

- Urban     Suburban     Rural

### Geographic Location

- Northeast     Southeast     South     Midwest  
 Southwest     Northwest     Canada

### Are there specific types of study options you would like available?

- Honors program     Distance learning     Study abroad     ROTC

### How selective do you want the college to be?

- Most selective (<25% admitted)     Very selective (25-50% admitted)  
 Somewhat selective (50-75% admitted)     Least selective (>75% admitted)

### What off-campus opportunities are important to you?

- Public transportation     Outdoor activities     Volunteering     Nightlife

### Is there a particular sport or activity that you want to participate in?

- No     Yes    List \_\_\_\_\_

### Is there a particular religious affiliation you would like the school to have?

- No     Yes    List \_\_\_\_\_

**Net Price Calculator** is a tool that provides an estimate of what a particular college will cost YOU! Net Price Calculator is student and school specific and calculates net price – the difference between the published price (full cost) and any grants or scholarships that you may be eligible to receive. Some of the most expensive schools offer the largest grants and scholarships, making them more affordable than you may think. Each school is required to have this tool on their website and it can typically be found on the school's financial aid page.

$$\text{Cost} - \text{Scholarships and Grants} = \text{Net Cost to You}$$

# College Comparison

## Finding the best school for you

Use the criteria below to help you compare your top colleges. Then use the blank rows to add additional key characteristics of a school that are important to you.

College Name				
Location				
Size				
Net price estimate				
Average amount in loans				
Percent admitted				
Application deadline				
Standardized test requirements				
4-year graduation				

# Letters of Recommendation

Letters of recommendation are an important piece of your application materials. Most colleges require at least one, some require more. Typically a college will let you choose who you will have write your recommendation, but be sure to check any specific requirements (e.g. English teacher, community leader).

## Choose Wisely

These recommendations are strongly considered and reviewed by an admissions officer. They show how others view you in a variety of settings. Choose someone who knows you well and who can speak well about you. The following individuals may make a strong recommendation writer:

Teachers	School Counselors	Work Supervisors
Coaches	Activity Advisors	Community Leaders

## ROAD TRIP TIP

**You should always follow up with a thank you note to all of your reference writers.**

## You May Not Get to Review

Don't expect to be able to view the recommendations that have been written about you. Some colleges prefer to have them come directly from the author to the school or have it arrive in a sealed envelope as part of your application packet. Your reference writer may be happy to share what they wrote, but some may find that it's awkward to do so. There may be an option to waive your right to view the recommendation letters. Waiving your right gives more credibility to your reference as it shows your faith in their assessment of you.

## Consider Providing Guidelines

It is OK, and sometimes suggested, to give your recommendation writer a guideline on what you prefer they focus on. There may be specific strengths or characteristics of yours that you believe will be an asset at a particular college. Feel free to provide a personal "info sheet" to your reference writer. This can be in the form of a resume, an activity listing sheet or a short paragraph. This can help guide individuals to form a stronger letter of support for you.

Be sure you give plenty of time for your references to prepare their letters. A good rule of thumb is to allow two weeks.

## ROAD TRIP TIP

### Recommendations

You may also need recommendations if you are applying for scholarships. Keep this in mind when making requests.

Explaining upfront your needs for both will not only save you time and effort, your recommendation writers will appreciate not having to duplicate their efforts.

# Your College Resume

The college resume, much like a professional resume, provides a chance for you to highlight your skills and accomplishments. It is very important in the college application process in that it provides the admissions counselor a one-page summary of your best work and activities. Even though you have included a resume with your application and much of the information included is the same, you will still be required to fill out all sections of the application.

## Format Example and Tips

**Profile** - Give a quick synopsis of yourself including specific interests that relate to your college aspirations.

**Activities & Accomplishments** - Briefly showcase your academic honors and extracurricular activities. Include any clubs, sports, and volunteer work.

**Career Development** - List any paid or unpaid work and/or internships.

Don't be afraid to market yourself. If you don't, who will?

**JANE DOE**  
Motivated student with a special interest in helping others. I am most specifically interested in social work.

**ACADEMICS**  
Your High School, Your Town, Maine  
Will earn High School Diploma, June 2017

- Top 10% of class
- GPA: 3.75 out of 4.0
- SAT: CR: 620, Math: 590, Writing: 610

**ACTIVITIES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS:**

- National Honor Society, Vice President, 2016-2017
- Varsity Soccer Team, 2014-present  
Team Captain, 2016  
Helped lead team to state championship, 2014
- Big Brothers, Big Sisters Volunteer, 2014-present  
Mentor, role model and friend  
Helped organize annual holiday party
- Spanish Club, 2014-present  
President, 2015  
Organized annual fundraiser for our trip to Spain
- Teens Who Care award recipient, 2014
- Junior Achievement Career Exploration Program, 2015  
Assisted in coordinating this yearly event to showcase career options

**WORK EXPERIENCE:**

- Local Ice Cream Shop, 2014-present  
Developed leadership and customer service skills
- Internship with area social worker, 2015

**HOBBIES:**

**SKILLS**

- Accounts management
- Bookkeeping
- Excellent team player
- Excellent written and verbal skills
- Time management

**LANGUAGES**

- French
- English

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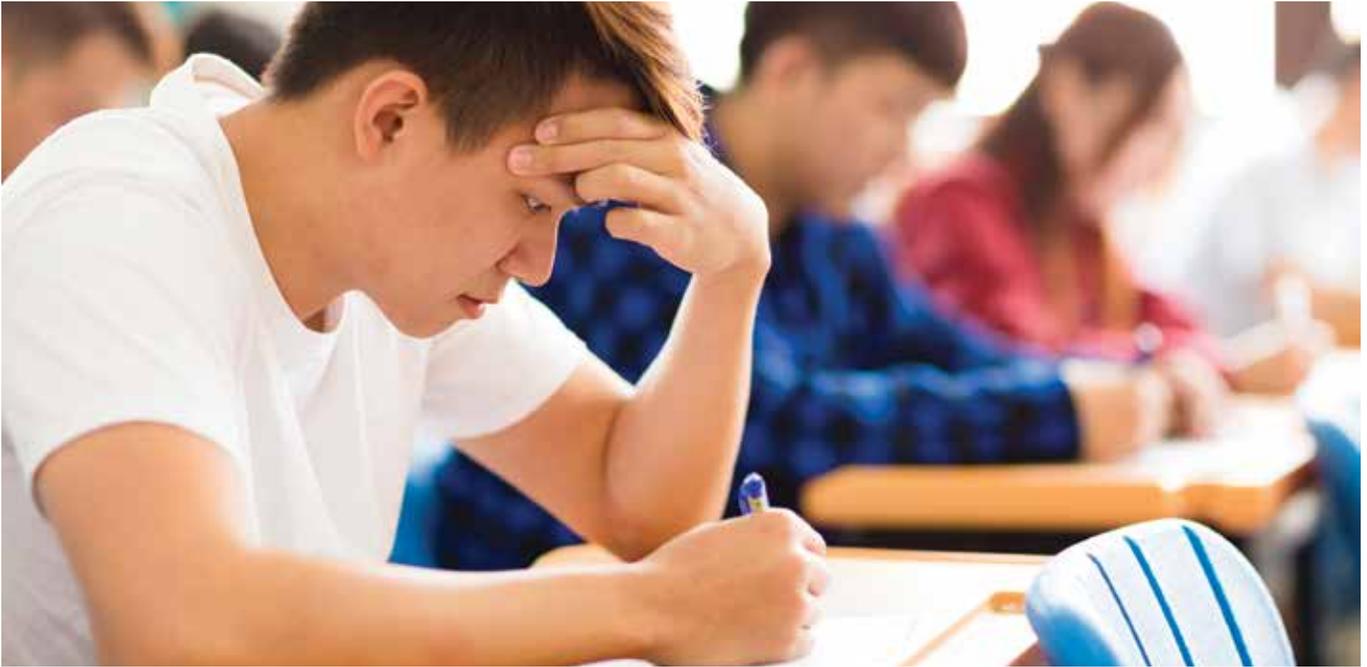
# Standardized Tests / Changes to the SAT

The SAT that is now administered to all students has a different format than tests taken prior to March 2016.

The following chart highlights some of the key changes that students will see on the redesigned SAT.

Redesigned SAT	
<b>Total Testing Time</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 hours, plus additional 50 minutes for the optional essay</li> </ul>
<b>Components</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence-Based Reading and Writing               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Reading Test</li> <li>◦ Writing and Language Test</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Math</li> <li>• Essay (Optional)</li> </ul>
<b>Important Features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on reasoning alongside a clearer, stronger focus on the knowledge, skills, and understandings most important for college and career readiness and success</li> <li>• Greater emphasis on the meaning of words in extended contexts and on how word choice shapes meaning, tone, and impact</li> <li>• Scoring based on number of correct answers (no deduction for incorrect or blank responses)</li> </ul>
<b>Essay</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Optional - given at the end of the SAT</li> <li>• Postsecondary institutions determine whether they will require the essay for admission</li> <li>• 50 minutes to write the essay</li> <li>• Tests reading, analysis, and writing skills; students produce a written analysis of a provided source text</li> </ul>
<b>Score Reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall scale ranging from 400 to 1600</li> <li>• Scale ranging from 200 to 800 for both Evidence-Based Reading and Writing and Math</li> <li>• Essay results of 2 to 8 on each of three traits for essay reported separately</li> </ul>





# The SAT vs. ACT

The SAT and ACT are two different college entrance exams. Both are nationally administered and are used to help colleges evaluate applicants. With the redesign of the SAT, the two tests now have more similarities than differences. Most colleges will accept either test equally. Here are a few things that set them apart:

- The SAT does not have a science section; the ACT has a science section.
- The essays are different. Both tests have an optional essay, however the ACT asks you to come up with your own argument and support it. The new SAT provides you with an argument and asks you to evaluate it.
- The SAT has a few fill-in-the-blank math problems, and half of the math problems do not allow calculator use. ACT lets you use a calculator on all its math problems and all answers are multiple choice.
- The SAT gives you more time per problem as compared to the ACT.
- The SAT costs \$43.00 without the essay and \$54.50 with the essay. The ACT costs \$39.50 without the essay and \$56.50 with the essay. Please note that for current juniors, the SAT test fee is covered by the Maine Department of Education.

Aside from these differences, the tests are similar. Both tests take three to four hours to complete and both test your knowledge of math, English grammar, and reading comprehension. Score comparison charts are available on both the ACT website and the College Board website.

## How Important Are Standardized Tests?

A college's admission decision will not rely solely on your SAT or ACT scores. Colleges look at many different factors, including your transcript, extracurricular activities, recommendations, and essay. They want indicators of your college success and some will use the SAT or ACT to determine this, but it is only one part of the application process. Alternatively, many schools no longer require standardized tests for admission or may require a supplement in their place. Research your options at [www.fairtest.org](http://www.fairtest.org).

## SAT Test Dates and Deadlines

Test Date	Registration Deadline
October 1, 2016	September 1, 2016
November 5, 2016	October 7, 2016
December 3, 2016	November 3, 2016
January 21, 2017	December 21, 2016
March 11, 2017	February 10, 2017
May 6, 2017	April 7, 2017
June 3, 2017	May 9, 2017

## ACT Test Dates and Deadlines

Test Date	Registration Deadline
September 10, 2016	August 5, 2016
October 22, 2016	September 16, 2016
December 10, 2016	November 4, 2016
February 11, 2017	January 6, 2017
April 8, 2017	March 3, 2017
June 10, 2017	May 5, 2017

## Test-Taking Tips

### Be Equipped

The night before, gather everything you'll need: admission ticket, photo ID, pencils, calculator, and a watch. Leave your phone behind. There are strict policies against having your cell phone in a testing room. Consider bringing water and a snack. It takes hours to take the test. You don't want to be distracted by thirst or hunger.

### Be Comfortable

Be sure to get a good night's sleep before the test. This will help you awake feeling fresh and clear-minded. Dress in comfortable layers so you can easily adjust if the room is hot or cold.

### Arrive Early

Give yourself plenty of time to travel to the test center (doing a dry run the day before is a good idea if testing in an unfamiliar place). Arrive early so that you can get yourself relaxed and acquainted to your surroundings.

### It's OK to Guess

If you don't know the answer, do your best to guess aggressively. Eliminate the choices you know are wrong, and then make an educated guess from the remaining options. On both the ACT and SAT, students are not penalized for guessing. Only the correct answers count toward their score, so it is better to guess than leave a question blank.

### Make Your Written Response Stand Out

Make your response as powerful and impressive as possible. Use paragraphs to keep it organized and orderly. Using a conversational tone and including personal examples will help convey your message in a compelling way. If you have bad penmanship, write as clearly as possible. You don't want to lose points because your writing couldn't be understood.

# The College Essay

## Follow these tips to help you complete your college essay

### Start Early

The more time you have, the less likely you'll stress out. Be sure to give yourself plenty of time to give your essay the best effort you can.

### Be Yourself

Take a moment to think about what interests you, what you love to talk about, what makes you sit up and take notice if it's mentioned in class or on TV. Then write about it. One of the biggest mistakes students make is writing what they think others want to hear, rather than about an issue, event, or person that really had significance for them. An essay like that is not just boring to write, it's boring to read.

### Take a Risk

Some risks can pay off. Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing. You want your essay to stand out. Beware though, things you believe are risky or funny may be offensive to someone else. Be sure to run your idea by your school counselor or another adult.

## HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TO WRITE ABOUT?

Most colleges will present you with a topic or a choice of topics and some will allow you to choose your own. Choose wisely, as what you ultimately decide to write about will become a reflection of your creativity, personality and beliefs.

### Keep in Focus

Develop your essay question carefully and jot down a few ideas. Then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to the main theme throughout the essay. You don't have to list all your achievements; that is what the rest of the application is for. Use the essay in a creative way to help the admissions officers get to know you as a person.

### Get a Second Set of Eyes

Finally, you're ready to send your essay. Not so fast! Be sure to ask someone to read it so they can offer feedback and proofread for any errors that can creep in as you write or edit.

### Be Accurate

Applying online may feel like you're sending email, but you're not. An Oregon director of admissions warns against using informal email language, incorrect capitalization or abbreviations such as BTW or "thanx," which are not appropriate to a formal document. Make sure your online essay represents the best of you.

### Don't Expect Too Much From an Essay

The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered. The essay can sometimes make a difference in being admitted, but it is only one piece of your admission package. Admissions officers look at the whole package: your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. As with all sections of your application, make your essay as well-written as you can, but don't put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.

## Common Application essay topics

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
- Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma, or anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution. Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community or family.

# Tour Prospective Colleges...

## Visit Colleges in Person Whenever Possible

Even with the wide availability of websites and online tours, it is still important to visit as many college campuses as you can. Marketing materials are nice, but actually walking around the campus can give you the best sense of whether or not you think you will fit in with a particular college community.

If possible, have a meal in the dining hall or stay over in a dorm. Some schools will offer this option, or you could stay with a friend who already attends your school of interest. When you visit, check out not only the campus, but the surrounding area too. You want to make sure you will feel comfortable in your college community.

## Take a Guided Tour

Contact the admissions office to schedule a guided tour. These are often led by current or past students who can provide insight into the culture of the college. Be sure to ask questions. Their experience can be extremely valuable.

## Don't Be Shy

If possible, speak with students and professors in the major you are considering. Don't be afraid to say how interested you are in a school. Colleges like to admit students who want to enroll there. Asking questions shows that you are interested in the college, so compile a list of questions about the college itself and/or your desired major.

## Take Notes & Send Notes of Thanks

Write down your thoughts of the college while they are still fresh in your mind, especially if you are visiting several schools. Whatever you decide about a particular college, send the admissions officer, as well as any professors you meet, a note of thanks for their time.

## ROAD TRIP TIP -

A good campus visit takes two to four hours, including time to get a sense of the surrounding town or area. Don't try to visit more than two schools in one day.

## ROAD TRIP TIP - TOUR QUESTIONS TO ASK

### Your Student Tour Guide...

- What is the transition like from high school to college?
- How would you rate campus safety?
- How do you like the food and residence halls?
- How would you describe your personal experience at this school?
- Why did you choose this school?

### Your Admissions Rep...

- How large are typical freshman classes?
- What unique programs are incorporated into your school's curriculum?
- What is the school culture like?
- What do students like most about this college/university?
- What academic and career services are available to students?

# Campus Visit Note Sheet

College Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_

## To-Do's

Here are some suggested activities to do when you get on campus that will help you get a sense for the school.

- Take pictures
- Eat in the cafeteria
- See a dorm room
- Sit in on a class
- Talk with a professor
- Go to a campus event
- Check out the student newspaper
- Talk with current students about the school

## Ratings and Notes

Take notes on your thoughts on these areas of campus. Rate them from 1 (dislike) to 5 (like) so that you'll have something to reference when remembering your visit.

Campus	Rating:
<hr/>	
Dorms	Rating:
<hr/>	
Academics	Rating:
<hr/>	
Food	Rating:
<hr/>	
Fitness Center	Rating:
<hr/>	
Extracurricular Activities	Rating:
<hr/>	
Overall Feel	Rating:

# Next Stop... / The Application Process

## Types of Admission

When it comes to applying to college, there are various types of admission, often with different deadlines that you will need to pay attention to.

### Early Decision

This is an admission policy set forth by the college asking you to apply early and in return you will receive an earlier decision. It is imperative to note that, if you are accepted, **YOU ARE OBLIGATED TO ATTEND.**

You can only apply to one school Early Decision and, if accepted, you must withdraw any applications at all other schools. Please be sure to read the Early Decision policy at the school to which you are applying.

### Early Action

This allows you to apply under an earlier deadline and be notified earlier, but does not obligate you to attend a school if you are accepted. Unless you apply under Single-Choice or Restrictive Early Action, you can apply to more than one school through their Early Action deadline.

### Single-Choice Early Action

This program only allows you to apply to one school through their Early Action deadline. However, like other Early Action deadlines, if accepted you are not obligated to attend.

### Regular Decision

This has a standard deadline and standard notification period.

### Rolling Admission

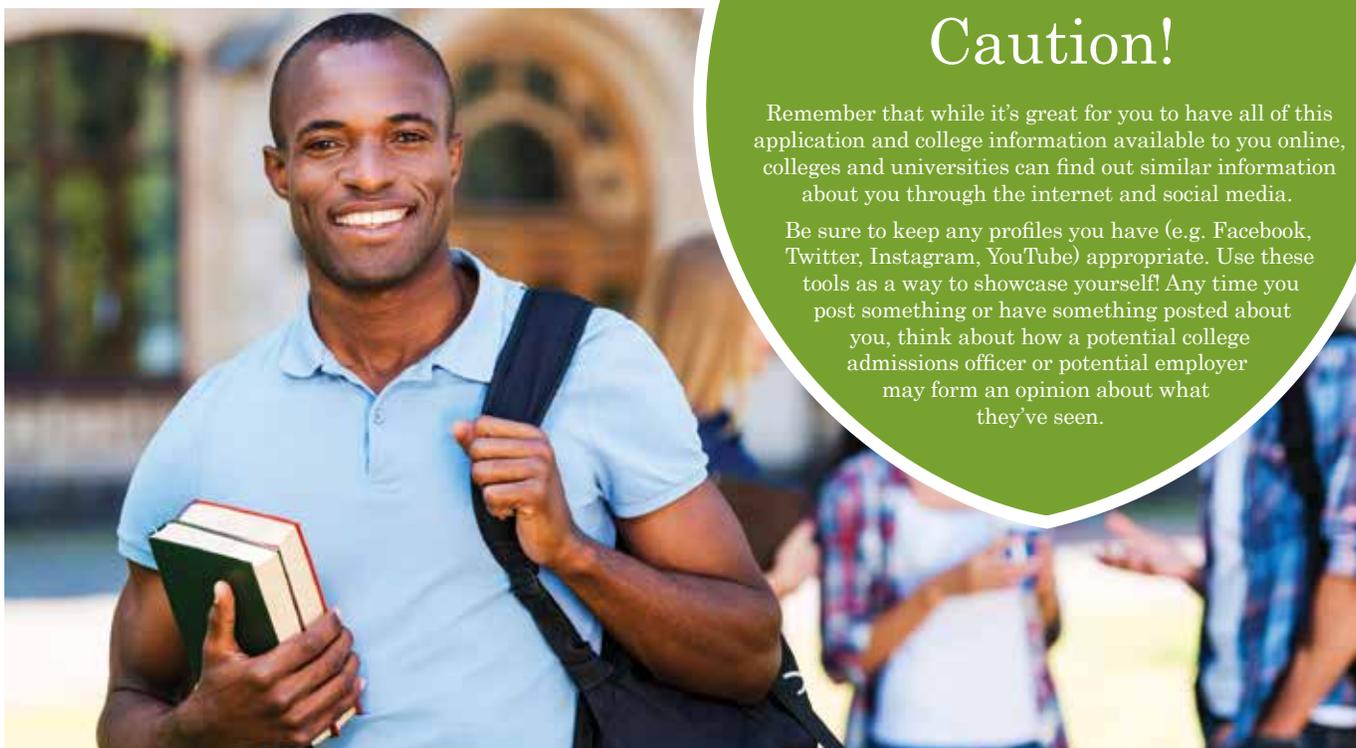
While Rolling Admission has no set deadline, and students can apply throughout the year, the school will review applications and fill spots on a first-come, first-served basis. Sometimes schools have priority deadlines, meaning that applications submitted after the priority deadline will be considered, but the ones submitted before take priority. Be sure to check with the admissions department for more information.

## ROAD TRIP TIP

### Caution!

Remember that while it's great for you to have all of this application and college information available to you online, colleges and universities can find out similar information about you through the internet and social media.

Be sure to keep any profiles you have (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube) appropriate. Use these tools as a way to showcase yourself! Any time you post something or have something posted about you, think about how a potential college admissions officer or potential employer may form an opinion about what they've seen.



# Online Application Sources

## The Common Application

The Common Application is an online application accepted by over 500 institutions. These schools will accept the Common Application in place of their own at no penalty to the student. The Common Application saves students a great deal of time by allowing students to fill the form out once and send it to all of the colleges to which they apply. The process is simple, however, students will want to pay close attention and check if a college requires an additional supplement, also available through the Common Application. For more information, please visit [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).

## Online Applications

While online applications are convenient and help save money on printing and postage, don't forget to be diligent about grammar and spelling! Be sure to have someone proofread your application and essay before you submit them. Also, be sure to let your guidance counselor know when you have applied so that they can send your transcript and any supporting documents to the college.



## ROAD TRIP TIP - THE 2-2-2 APPROACH

Applying to college can be costly. Application fees add up. Consider narrowing down your choices to just 6 schools, and then you will only need to submit 6 applications.

Consider the 2-2-2 approach. With this method you apply to (2) probable schools, (2) target schools and (2) reach schools as described below.

**Probable:** Your GPA and test scores are higher than the average student admitted.

**Target:** Your GPA and test scores are on par with the average student admitted.

**Reach:** Your GPA and test scores are slightly below the average student admitted, but not so much lower that you think they could not be accepted.

Help is available for all Maine students and families. Please see our resource guide listed on the back page.

# College Application Checklist

Follow-up	Check that all colleges have received all materials								
Aid	Financial Aid Submitted (FAFSA, PROFILE)								
Interview	Thank You Note								
	Interview Required								
Test Scores	Test Scores Sent								
Letters of Recommendation	Thank You Note								
	Recommendation Request								
	Thank You Note								
	Recommendation Request								
	Thank You Note								
	Recommendation Request								
	Thank You Note								
	Transcript Requested								
	High School Report Request								
Applications	Application Sent								
	Regular Deadline								
	Early Deadline								
Colleges									

# Need more help? These resources are available in Maine.

Program	Serving	Services			Phone Number / Internet Address	
		Career	Admissions	Financial Aid Information		
Early College for ME Comprehensive high-school-to-college transition program.	High School Juniors and Seniors	•	•	•	207 699-4897 earlycollege.me.edu	
Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) Free resources to help students and families plan and pay for college.	All Ages			•	800 228-3734 FAMEmaine.com/Education TTY: 207 626-2717	
Gear Up	7th - 12th Grade	•	•	•	207 685-3171 gearupmaine.org	
Jobs for Maine's Graduates Identifies students who face barriers to education and guides them on to a successful path toward continued education, a meaningful career and productive adulthood.	6th - 12th Grade	•	•	•	207 620-7180 jmg.org	
Maine Educational Talent Search (METS) Early intervention program for eligible youth in grades 6-12 to prepare for higher education.	6th - 12th Grade	•	•	•	UMaine 800 540-0493 mets.maine.edu	UMPI 800 734-3636 umpi.edu/ trio-college-access
Maine State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training Programs provide outreach and information to foster the usage of the GI Bill.	Service Members, Veterans and Eligible Dependents	•		•	207 582-2100 msaa.maine.edu	
Student Support Services Helps eligible students (including individuals with disabilities) stay in college, and receive tutoring, counseling and remedial instruction.	College Students	•	•	•	CMCC 207 755-5209 EMCC 207 974-4600 KVCC 207 453-5019 NMCC 207 768-2839 SMCC 207 741-5500 Thomas College 207 859-1297 UMA Cornerstone Program 207 621-3157 UMF Liberal Studies Bridge Program 207 778-7295 UMFK Academic & Counseling Serv. 207 834-7530 UMPI Student Support Services 207 768-9612 USM Student Support Services 207 780-5203 WCCC 207 454-1064 YCCC North Star 207 216-4424	
Upward Bound Helps eligible high school students prepare for higher education and includes a summer residential component.	10th - 12th Grade	•	•	•	Bowdoin College 207 725-3559 UMaine Math Science 800 581-2522 UMF 207 778-7296 UMPI 207 768-9612 USM 207 780-5203	



# Maine College Access Network

[www.mainecollegeaccess.org](http://www.mainecollegeaccess.org)

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