

TOP 10 TIPS FOR STUDENTS INTERESTED IN COLLEGE

1

Take Challenging Courses in High School - www.NHscholars.org

Be sure to take the most challenging high school courses you can succeed in. Strong academic preparation makes you a better candidate for admission and improves your chances for success in college. Doing well in challenging courses shows colleges that you are ready for college-level work.

2

Grades, Grades, Grades

Throughout high school, nothing matters more than your academic record. If you're aiming for a highly selective college, every low grade you earn might be limiting your options (or at least additional scholarship dollars). Work on self-discipline and time management in an effort to earn the highest grades possible. But remember, it's just as important to challenge yourself. Straight A's in lower level courses might be an indication that you aren't willing to be challenged.

3

Take a Trial Run of the PSAT - www.collegeboard.org

If you did not take the PSAT as a sophomore, you should consider taking the PSAT when available. The consequences of doing poorly are zero, and the practice can help you figure out what subjects you need help with before SAT time in your junior and senior years. The PSAT won't be part of your college application, but a high PSAT score may qualify you for scholarship dollars.

4

Take SAT & ACT Tests - www.collegeboard.org

While your high school transcript is the most important piece of a college application, standardized test scores are still required by some colleges and universities. Beginning in 2016, every NH student takes the SAT as a high school junior at no cost. You can take it again as a senior and only the best scores will be evaluated.

5

Put Effort into Extracurricular Activities

By the time you apply to colleges, you should be able to demonstrate depth and leadership in an extracurricular area. Colleges are generally more impressed by a real commitment to a few co-curricular activities than limited participation in many. A long but shallow list of extracurricular involvement really doesn't amount to anything meaningful. Colleges look for well-rounded students. Extracurricular activities show them that you are active and involved as well as a good student.

6

What is Important to You?

Before making a list of colleges to consider, spend some time putting together a list of the criteria most important to you (location, size, academic programs, campus environment, co-curricular activities, etc.). If you are thoughtful and thorough in this phase of the process, it will be much easier for you to create your "colleges to explore" list, the next step in your college search.

7

Don't Let the Sticker Price Scare You

Do not eliminate colleges from your "colleges to explore" list because of their "sticker price", as financial aid may greatly reduce your actual cost of attendance. There are many options to help pay for college (grants, scholarships, loans and work-study jobs to name a few). Focus on developing a list of colleges that interest you. Applying to a "range of schools" allows you to compare offers later.

8

Visit Colleges and Browse the Web - www.visitNHcolleges.org

Your sophomore year is a good time to do some low-pressure exploration of the college options out there. If you find yourself near a campus, stop by and take the tour. Also, lots of schools offer informative virtual tours on their websites. This preliminary research will help you make good decisions in your junior and senior years. Never attend a college or university you have not visited.

9

Understand the Importance of “Having Options”

Finding the “right fit” not only refers to location, size, and program of study. It also means cost. The average student applies to 6-8 colleges to ensure he/she gets accepted to and receives financial aid packages to compare. Apply to a diverse list of colleges – probable, target and reach schools. This increases the chance of getting multiple acceptance letters and allows you to compare financial offers.

10

Put Yourself in a Position to Succeed - www.NHscholars.org

Make the most out of high school. Take challenging classes, get good grades, begin researching colleges, learn about the admission and financial aid process, and start early! The more you know about what it takes to apply and get into college, the more prepared you will be. Ask questions. Communicate with your parents and your school counselor to ensure you are on the *road to college*.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The College Search - <https://collegescorecard.ed.gov/>

This is not only the college you may attend; this will be your home for the next 4 years! Explore every facet. When searching for possible colleges and universities consider the importance of the following characteristics: type of institution (liberal arts, co-educational, public, etc), size of the student population, demographics, location, curriculum, extracurricular, cost, and admission policies.

The College Application - www.commonapp.org

There are several pieces required for admission into college, and just to make the process more exciting, these requirements may be different from school to school! If this process requires anything, it's organization. Most colleges will require an essay, official transcripts, two to three recommendations, standardized test results, the application and fee.

The Balanced Approach

Applying to only one school is like putting all of your eggs in one basket. However, applying to twenty schools is expensive! Get to know just what colleges are looking for and how you and your academic record fit the criteria. Work with your guidance counselor and parents to narrow down the list. A balance of probable, target, and reach schools is very important to providing yourself with options!

What is 2 + 2? www.NHtransfer.org

Completing two years at a community college and then transferring those credits to a 4-year college. Many times this enables you to graduate with an associate and bachelor degree. Many students choose this option if they have not declared a major or are looking for a more cost-effective approach.

APPLICATION DEADLINES DEFINED

Regular Admission: Students must submit a completed application by the school's deadline. Each college may have a different deadline, so be sure to adhere to the earliest one. February 15th, March 1st and March 15th are common regular admission deadlines with colleges.

Rolling Admission: Students are able to apply for admission throughout the year. Applications are reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis and are accepted until the class is filled.

Single Choice Early Action: This is a non-binding early notification that allows you to apply to as many colleges as you want under a Regular admission timeframe, but you can not submit an application to any other school under early decision, early action, or early notification.

Early Action: This is a policy that allows prospective students to apply early. You will also be notified of your admission status early; this process does not commit you to the college.

Early Decision: This admissions policy also asks students to apply early and will hear about the admission decision early as well. However, if you are accepted, you are obligated to attend that institution. You had better love it and be confident you can afford it without knowing your complete financial aid package.