IS THERE A COLLEGE WHERE I’LL FIT IN?

Appalachian State University Early College Planning

Student Workbook

NAME

GRADE

SCHOOL

An Easy Way to Start Thinking About Your Future
Common Questions About College

1 Do colleges only admit top students?
Actually, about 65% of high school graduates enroll in college, and nearly 70% of students who apply to a four-year college or university are accepted.

Sources: “State of College Admission 2008” NACAC (National Association for College Admissions Counseling), “American Diploma Project” (Achieve.org)

2 Do I need to go to college to get a good job?
“Postsecondary educated workers now earn almost eighty percent of the nations’ wages. Between 2008 and 2018 the economy will create 47 million job openings... Job openings that require at least some postsecondary education or training will make up 64% of all job openings.’’

Source: Anthony P. Carnvale (2010 Written testimony before Senate Committee on Health and Labor).

3 Is college too expensive for my family?
In 2011 227.2 billion in financial aid was distributed to undergraduate and graduate students. The Federal Government offers certain grants to students who have significant financial need as well as low-cost loans to help make education more affordable. Financial aid is also available through the state of North Carolina as well as from colleges and universities.

4 Do I need more than good grades to go to college?
Many colleges look for students who take challenging classes in high school and participate in extracurricular activities they enjoy.

5 Do people like me go to college?
There are thousands of colleges in the U.S., and at least one is a good fit for you. Look for a college that fits your skills, interests and needs. If you require accommodations for a specific academic or personal concern, contact colleges that interest you to see what services are offered.

There are thousands of colleges in the U.S., and at least one is a good fit for you.

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I HAVE ABOUT COLLEGE?

Write a list of questions you have about getting ready for college.

Questions To Ask Yourself

Your answers will help find a college that’s right for you.

What are my academic credentials (grades, GPA, Class rank, test scores)?

What non-academic strengths do I have?

What are my goals after high school?

How can college help me meet my goals?
Thinking About Your Future

**BETTER HEALTH**

Better health makes everything else possible. It gives you the strength to take on life’s challenges. To enjoy the opportunities that come your way. College is where you can build the knowledge and skills to maintain better health.

Young adults with a 4-year college degree are much less likely to be obese than those with only a high school diploma.

*Obesity Among Adults Ages 25 and Older, by Age and Education Level, 2008*
*Source: NCHS, 2008 National Health Interview Survey, calculations by the authors.*

**STRONGER COMMUNITY**

Stronger community means more cooperation, more collaboration — and more progress in understanding and solving the issues we face as a society. College is where you can shape your views on those issues. Find your voice. And build a stronger community.

Individuals aged 18 to 24 with a 4-year college degree were much more likely to vote in the 2008 election than those with only a high school diploma.

*Voting Rates Among U.S. Citizens Ages 18–24, by Education Level, 2008*
*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008.*

**MORE SECURITY**

More security means less worry. Less worry that you won’t be able to support yourself or the people you love. That you’ll have to rely on others to get by. College is a way to achieve independence. To achieve more security.

Individuals with a 4-year college degree are about half as likely to be unemployed as those with only a high school diploma.

*Unemployment Rates of Individuals Ages 25 and Older, by Education Level, 2009*

**GREATER WEALTH**

Greater wealth means more choices. Whatever your dreams — owning a home, traveling the world — college is the way to support a richer life. The way to find a career that delivers greater wealth.

Individuals with a 4-year college degree earn an average of $22,000 more per year than those with only a high school diploma.

*Median Earnings of Full-Time Year-Round Workers Ages 25 and Older, by Education Level, 2008*
*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009; Internal Revenue Service, 2008; Davis et al., 2009.*

**CLOSER FAMILY**

Closer family comes from sharing life experiences, from passing on knowledge, from inspiring the next generation to achieve even more than the last. College is an opportunity for you to broaden your world, to create the foundation for a closer family.

Children of parents with a 4-year college degree are much more likely to be read to every day than children of parents with only a high school diploma.

*School Readiness of Preschool Children Ages 3–5, by Parents’ Highest Education Level, 2007*

See all the ways a college degree can enhance your life and lifestyle:

*ycg.org/edpays*
I WANT TO GO TO COLLEGE BECAUSE...

Write down all the reasons why you want to go to college.

ACTIVITY

Finding Your Direction

When you're thinking about what to study in college or what kind of job you'd like to have, there are two key things to keep in mind:

- **You should like it.**
- **You should be good at it.**

Fortunately, most people enjoy the activities they are good at doing. While you're in high school, pay attention to subjects and activities that particularly interest you. Are you good at science? Do you like to work with your hands? Almost any interest can lead to a career, so don't limit your thinking to basic academic subjects.

Even though you don't have to decide what you'll study in college or pursue as a career right away, the sooner you identify your goals, the sooner you'll be able to get on track toward your future. Here are some questions to get you started:

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What's my favorite subject?

What's my hardest subject?

What are some of my talents and skills?

What jobs seem interesting to me?

What accomplishments am I most proud of?

Who are people I admire and why?

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Have questions? Please visit www.ncache.appstate.edu
Life After High School

Education Options

In addition to comparing characteristics such as the size of the student body, location or academic majors offered, it’s helpful to know the basics about your options for life after high school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Education</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 4-Year Private                     | • Private colleges and universities range in size, and many specialize in a certain area, such as fine arts, liberal arts, business or the hard sciences.  
• Private colleges and universities receive endowments from private donors instead of from federal or state sources. |
| 4-Year Public                      | • State systems offer a broad range of academic options.                   
• Public colleges and universities are funded primarily through state and federal sources.  
• Tuition and fees are generally lower than at private schools.  
• In North Carolina, the public college and university system has 16 UNC campuses. |
| Community College                  | • Community colleges are part of the state’s public higher education system, and primarily serve local students and local needs. In North Carolina, the community college system has 58 campuses.  
• Flexible schedule options allow part-time study, night classes for working students and developmental courses to transition into 4-year college.  
• Open enrollment policy allows any high school graduate or GED recipient to enroll.  
• Tuition and fees are generally lower than public or private 4-year colleges and universities. |
| Vocational/Trade School or Corporate Training Program | • Vocational schools and corporate training programs focus on providing skills necessary for specific jobs or trades. |
| Military                            | • Through ROTC, service academies and the G.I. Bill, students receive financial support for their education in exchange for a commitment to serve in the U.S. military. |
AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
I WANT TO...

Write down the things you think you might like to do after high school.
(It’s okay if you don’t know yet.)

Education Options in North Carolina

Did you know that there are over 100 colleges and universities in North Carolina? Can you name some North Carolina schools in each category?

4-Year Private:

4-Year Public:

Community College:

Vocational/Trade School:

Military:

Visit www.cfnc.org to explore NC colleges and universities.
The SAT and ACT

Most colleges require you to submit your score from college entrance tests as part of your application. They are usually taken during your junior year, or early in your senior year. The majority of schools accept scores from both the SAT and the ACT, but you should verify the required tests at each college.

There are several key differences between the two tests, and some students find they do better on one test than on the other. If you want, take both tests. Colleges usually consider only the highest score you submit.

SAT

The SAT measures your critical thinking skills. There are three sections—critical reasoning, math and writing—and each is measured on a scale from 200 to 800.

The PSAT, or practice SAT, is taken either in the sophomore or junior year. Score reports provide individualized study guides to help students prepare for the SAT.

ACT

The ACT measures subject knowledge in English, math, reading and science reasoning, plus an optional writing section. Scores range from 1 to 36.

PLAN, or the pre-ACT, is ideally taken during your sophomore year in high school. The test can assess how well you may do on the ACT, as well as identify your stronger and weaker subjects. PLAN also includes an Interest Inventory to assess relevant career options.

Other Tests

Some colleges may require SAT Subject Tests. Like Advanced Placement (AP) tests, the SAT Subject Tests may allow you to earn college credit.

The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) is sometimes required for students who attend a non-English-speaking high school, or who do not speak English as a primary language.

There are many free resources available to help you study for the ACT and SAT exams. Test preparation workbooks may be available from your high school counselor.

Find links to test dates and registration information for both the SAT and the ACT at www.cfnc.org
Test-taking Strategies

Familiarize yourself with the exam format in advance. How long will the test take? Is it multiple choice, short answer, long answer or a mix? How is the exam scored?

- Ask your school counselor about taking a free sample test.
- Pack your supplies the night before: pencil and erasers, calculator, scratch paper, a snack and your photo ID.
- Get a full night of sleep the night before and eat a healthy breakfast the day of the exam.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students entering in Fall</th>
<th>Minimum GPA</th>
<th>Minimum SAT</th>
<th>Minimum ACT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2013 (and beyond)</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CFNC.org.

Please note that each UNC institution has different admission requirements, please refer to their admissions website for specific requirements.
Exploring Your Interests

Where Will Your Interests Lead You?

There are lots of opportunities in high school for learning more about topics and activities that interest you. Taking time to explore your interests may open your mind to new possibilities for what you might study in college or pursue as a career. Plus, many colleges look for students with unique interests and experiences.

Activity Examples

Interest: Painting
Ways to learn more: Visit a museum, take an art class, work at an art supply store

Interest: Become a Doctor
Ways to learn more: Job shadowing, take the most advanced science and math classes, volunteer at a hospital

Interest: Playing Video Games
Ways to learn more: Read and write reviews, take computer programming and design classes, research the companies that produce the games I like

Activity
Use this page to think about your interests and where they might lead.

_____
Interest:

Why I like it:

Ways to learn more:

_____
Interest:

Why I like it:

Ways to learn more:

_____
Interest:

Why I like it:

Ways to learn more:

_____
Interest:

Why I like it:

Ways to learn more:
**Getting Involved**

What you do when you’re not in class matters. Colleges and even future employers may ask how you used your spare time during high school.

High school is a great opportunity to meet new people and get involved in diverse clubs, organizations, sports and other activities. But be selective about your extracurricular activities. Do activities that you truly care about or that expose you to new areas of interest. And don’t just join—get involved.

Running for office or assuming additional responsibilities allows you to strengthen your social and planning skills and learn more about yourself and potential career interests. Also, sustained participation in activities demonstrates to colleges that you are engaged in learning, while being dedicated and able to balance multiple priorities.

Most importantly, enjoy your high school years and take advantage of opportunities to enhance your interests and grow as a person.

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**Activity/Experience Log**

The next few years will pass quickly, so it’s helpful to record the experiences you have along the way. There are no rules about what is or isn’t important enough to record; it’s all about what you gained from the experience and the impact you had on others. Additional copies of this form can be downloaded at www.cfnc.org.

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### Sample Activity/Experience Log

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (s)</th>
<th>Time Spent</th>
<th>Activity/Experience</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>What I Valued About This Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>June 22, 2012</td>
<td>6 Hours</td>
<td>Community Clean-up Day</td>
<td>Group Leader</td>
<td>Provided a clean, safe outdoor environment for elementary school children to use at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior Year</td>
<td>4 Hours/Week</td>
<td>National Honors Society</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>Helped to develop community outreach program to senior citizens at local retirement home.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The Right College for You

Design Your College

No matter what you’re looking for in a college, chances are there’s a school out there that will appeal to you. A college’s academic programs are important, but factors like location, clubs, sports and campus life matter, too.

ACTIVITY

The following questions may help you get a better idea of what kind of school you’d like to attend. You may also use these questions to talk with your parents about the types of colleges that interest you.

What size college would you like to attend?

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

Why did you pick this size?

Where would you want that college located?

- In a big city
- In a suburb
- In a small town

How much would like that college to cost? (Community, Public or Private College)

How close to home do you want your college to be?

- A short drive
- A few hours away
- A plane ride away

What would you like to study or learn about at that college?

What clubs, sports or activities would you want at your college?
Exploring Colleges

Believe it or not, there are probably many colleges similar to the one you designed on the previous page. There are over 4,000 colleges in the United States, and they vary greatly in size, setting, available programs/majors and cost. You may want to discuss some affordable college options with your family, but do not let the cost of a college stop you from applying. Colleges offer financial aid that may help reduce the cost for your family. To find colleges that are a good fit for you, keep an open mind and start exploring early. Work with your school counselor and family to learn more about schools that interest you.

Ways to Learn More About Colleges

• School counselors
• Teachers
• Friends and family
• College fairs
• Internet searches
• College websites
• College guidebooks
• www.cfnc.org

Campus Visits

Visiting a college campus is another great way to learn more about colleges. A campus visit gives you and your family an initial impression of the college, including the physical setting and what campus life is like.

What are some schools you are interested in visiting? Talk with your family about visiting some of these schools in the upcoming months. It’s never too early to plan a visit.

ACTIVITY

I WANT TO EXPLORE THESE COLLEGES:

Already have some colleges in mind? Start making your list here.
Checklist for the Years Ahead

As you get closer to searching for and applying to colleges, there are specific things you can do each year to prepare. It’s okay if you don’t do everything in exactly this order, but these suggestions may help you stay on track.

**Freshman & Sophomore Years**

- **Take classes that challenge you.**
  Most colleges and universities would rather see a transcript with some honors and AP courses—even if you don’t get all A’s—than a straight-A transcript without any challenging courses.

- **Develop good study habits.**
  Not everyone studies in the same way, but there are strategies that can help make studying more effective. Find a quiet, well-lit spot with enough space to organize your materials. Start with your most difficult subjects first, while your mind is freshest.

- **Get involved in clubs and activities that you enjoy.**
  Be selective. It’s much more rewarding to get involved in activities that really interest you. Most colleges would rather know what you actually did, not just what you joined.

- **Take a sample PSAT/PLAN if your high school offers it.**
  The PSAT is similar to the SAT and PLAN to the ACT, college admissions tests used by many admissions offices, so they are a great way to practice. PSAT/PLAN scores are not sent to colleges.

- **Get to know your school counselor.**
  Your school counselor can help you get the most from your time in high school.

- **Open a savings account.**
  Saving money for college is a great way to keep yourself motivated. It’s also a good idea to talk to your parents about how you will pay for college.

**Junior Year**

- **Take the official PSAT.**
  In your junior year, your official PSAT score is compared to that of other test-takers, and the top scorers may receive scholarship money and academic recognition.

- **Get involved.**
  Pursue roles in extracurricular activities that suit your strengths and interests.

- **Get a job.**
  Part-time work or volunteer experience in a field related to your future major or career can expose you to many aspects of a field.

- **Go to a college fair.**
  Representatives at college fairs can give you lots of information about their schools and answer your questions. This is also a good time to start researching colleges by visiting their websites, requesting brochures and asking teachers, counselors and others about schools that interest you.

- **Take the SAT/ACT by the spring.**
  Many colleges require applicants to submit scores from college entrance tests like the SAT and the ACT. Taking these tests in your junior year will allow you to focus on your college applications and essays in your senior year.
Summer of Junior Year

☐ Visit colleges.
Visiting a college campus gives you an initial impression of the college. You may visit a college or university informally on your own time, or you may schedule a more formal campus visit through the college’s admissions office.

☐ Work on your college essays.
Some colleges give you a prompt while others leave the essay open-ended. Either way, focus on the message that you want to give to the admissions committee—something they can’t learn from any other part of your application.

☐ Save your summer earnings.
If you haven’t already done so, talk with your parents about how your family plans to pay for college.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested High School Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World Languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health &amp; Physical Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The University of North Carolina.  
http://www.northcarolina.edu/aa/admissions/requirements.htm.

Senior Year

☐ Decide which colleges to apply to.
It's a good idea to apply to several colleges, including those that are very selective and those that are not as selective. If paying for college is a concern, be sure to apply to at least one school that is also financially safe.

☐ Take any remaining standardized tests.
Many times your score will improve the second time you take either the SAT or ACT. Most colleges look at the highest score you receive in each section on the SAT.

☐ Attend a financial aid workshop.
CFNC offers College Financing Seminars at high schools and community-based organizations across North Carolina. Check with your school counselor or visit www.cfnc.org to find a seminar near you.

☐ Apply to college.
College applications can be time consuming. Save copies of all of your work since some applications will ask for similar essays and short answers. You can prioritize the applications by when they are due. Note that some institutions have early deadlines.

☐ Complete FAFSA and apply for financial aid.
Apply for financial aid in January of your senior year. The FAFSA priority deadline for UNC institutions is March 1. Search for scholarships at the specific institution you are applying to.

The more rigorous classes you take in academic subjects, the better prepared you’ll be for college.
Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, Appalachian State University offers a challenging academic environment, energetic campus life and breathtaking location. Appalachian combines the best attributes of a small liberal arts college with those of a large research university. Known for its value and affordability, Appalachian enrolls about 17,000 students and offers more than 150 undergraduate and graduate majors. Small classes and close interactions between faculty and students create a strong sense of community, which has become an Appalachian hallmark. Appalachian, located in Boone, N.C., is one of 16 universities in the University of North Carolina system.

Appalachian offers more than 150 undergraduate and graduate major programs through its College of Arts and Sciences, College of Fine and Applied Arts, Reich College of Education, Walker College of Business, University College, Hayes School of Music, College of Health Sciences and Cratis D. Williams Graduate School. Appalachian also offers a doctorate of education.