

NACAC National College Fairs

Searching for a college?

Attend a free National College Fair
in your area to meet
college reps face-to-face.

nationalcollegefairs.org

To order copies of this brochure, visit nacacnet.org.

Copyright © 2016 National Association for College
Admission Counseling

1050 N. Highland Street
Suite 400
Arlington, VA 22201

p. 703.836.2222
800.822.6285
f. 703.243.9375

www.nacacnet.org

For more information about college admission, contact
your school counselor. They want to help you make good
decisions about your future.

NACAC

National Association for
College Admission Counseling

NACAC

National Association for
College Admission Counseling

Guide for Families in the College Admission Process



Encourage your student to prepare for the future!

Financing College

As a parent, guardian,
or family member, you
want the best for your
student's future.

College selection is an
important decision for the
whole family.

Going to college costs a
lot, but money is available
if you plan ahead.

How can I find money?

Start with your student's school counselor.
They can direct you to resources to help you
learn about applying for money for college.

Loans, grants, scholarships, and work study
are the four ways your student can get money
to support their education. Financial aid can
be used for educational expenses like tuition,
fees, and books, as well as food, housing,
and transportation.

How is financial aid determined?

To receive need-based aid, you must
demonstrate need. (Need is the difference
between what it costs to attend college and
what your family can afford to pay.) Merit-based
aid in the form of scholarships and grants are
awarded to students with special talents or
outstanding academics.

How about money for two-year colleges?

Money is available for two-year community
or junior colleges (and for business and
vocational/trade schools). Ask schools
for information about financial aid and the
transfer-out rate.

Searching Online

School websites are great places to gather
information about financing education at that
particular institution. Each site has a Net Price
Calculator that can help you determine college
costs. From there, you can calculate you
student's need.

Additionally, school websites give you more
information about how to finance college and
apply for aid.

Federal Aid Websites

Free Application for Federal Student Aid
www.fafsa.ed.gov

Funding Education Beyond High School:
The Guide to Federal Student Aid
www.studentaid.ed.gov

Free Guide to All US Government Grants
and Student Loans
www.fedmoney.org

Education Attained and Median Weekly Earnings (2015)

Bachelor's degree: **\$1,137**

Associate's degree: **\$798**

Some college, no degree: **\$738**

High school diploma: **\$678**

No diploma: **\$493**

Yes, it's worth the cost.

A college degree
makes a difference
in what your
student earns after
high school.

Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
Source: Current Population Survey, US Department of Labor, US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Steps to College

What you should do:

1. Start as early as middle school.
2. Talk with your student's school counselor or teachers about your student's options after high school.
3. Keep and use this guide to be sure that your student is taking the right courses.
4. Be involved in school activities. Go to parents' nights and conferences and meet with your student's teachers.
5. Be sure your student maximizes their college and career choices by taking the most challenging courses they can handle.
6. Encourage your student to participate in school, community, and other activities.

What your student should do:

1. Practice reading, writing, and using technology.
2. Take rigorous, high-level math and English courses.
3. Take science, social studies, foreign languages, and arts classes.
4. Learn good study habits.
5. Consider what they want to do after high school and discuss options with their school counselor and you!

What courses should my student take?

Talk with your students' counselor and teachers. They can show you what classes will best prepare your student for the future.

Use the chart below as a guide to be sure your student takes the recommended courses. Research admission requirements—they vary from institution to institution. Many colleges require applicants to submit ACT or SAT scores. Discuss test dates and prep courses with your school counselor.

Minimum Education Requirements by Institution

	2-Year and 4-Year Colleges, Universities and Military Academies	Performing and Visual Arts Colleges	Vocational and Technical Schools	Business Schools
English	4 years	4 years	4 years	4 years
Science (including laboratory)	3–4 years biology, chemistry, physics	3–4 years	1–3 years	1–3 years
Math	3–4 years Algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, pre-calculus, calculus	3–4 years	2–4 years	3–4 years
History/Social Sciences	3–4 years	2–4 years	2–4 years	3–4 years
Foreign Language	2–4 years of same language	2–3 years of same language	2–4 years of same language	3–4 years of same language
Other Activities (including community service, and participation in clubs)	Music, art, dance, drama	Music, art, dance, drama	Shop and skills courses	Shorthand, accounting

Computer skills and foreign languages are becoming prerequisites in many schools.

School Types

Colleges and Universities (4-year):

- Made up of divisions called schools or colleges.
- Geared toward preparation for professional occupations such as accounting, engineering, and health services.
- Traditional classroom setting.
- Offer BA or BS degrees upon completion of program.

Community and Junior Colleges (2-year):

- Conveniently located in local communities.
- Specialize in college transfer programs often tied to area four-year colleges.
- Usually respond to local employment needs by offering courses in high-demand areas.
- Offer associate degrees or certificates upon completion of program.

Comprehensive Institutions:

- Award baccalaureate degrees, may also award associate degrees.
- Offer graduate degree programs primarily at the master's, specialist, or professional level, although one or two doctoral programs may be offered.

Military Academies:

- Combine education and training for the armed forces in large, structured institutions.
- Require serving at least four or six years as officers in exchange for four years of tuition-free education.
- Produce officers well-educated both academically and in the workings of the military.
- Offer degrees upon completion of officer training.

Performing and Visual Arts Colleges:

- Universities, colleges, schools, and conservatories with programs of study in music, art, theater, dance, and related disciplines.
- Emphasize auditions and portfolio presentation.
- Offer degrees or professional degrees upon completion of program.

Specialized Colleges:

- Concentrate their offerings in one or two specific areas.
- Include colleges offering studies in: agriculture, technology, art/music, religion, business, engineering, health sciences, military, and teacher preparation.

Vocational, Technical and Business Schools:

- Specialize in trades or vocations by offering various courses and occupational programs.
- Offer skill training (welding, cooking, hair styling, and word processing) required for a specific job.
- Offer certificates upon completion of training program.

There's a place for
your student.
Discuss options
and listen to where
they think they fit.