



Asheville High School and SILSA School Counseling Department

Senior Info Packet: Planning for After High School

2019-2020



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

Admission Criteria

Some combination of the following (not all colleges use all of these):

Rigor of courses (Honors, AP)	Class Rank	Grade Point Average
SAT/ACT Scores	Recommendations	Activities/Awards/Service
Personal Essays	Interviews	

How to Decide Where to Apply

Start to make some decisions about which college programs, majors, or degrees interest you, and see which schools offer your chosen programs. Think about what type of setting you would like to be in (Public? Private? City? Rural? Large? Small?). Check to see if the schools offer the extracurricular activities or athletics that interest you. Also, consider the cost of attendance.

- 1. College Rep Visits** Check your email and our [Counseling website](#) for the schedule of college rep visits to our campus
- 2. Online College Searches** Website Suggestions:
 - 1) CollegeBoard BigFuture: bigfuture.collegeboard.org
 - 2) Princeton Review: princetonreview.com
 - 3) CFNC.org
- 3. Campus Visits** If visiting a campus during school hours, please turn in an Educational Leave Form (can be picked up in the main office and returned to Ms. Moura or Mr. Veale in the Principal's office or Ms. Matayabas in the SILSA office) at least two weeks prior to your visit to excuse your absence. If forms are not submitted at least two weeks prior, your leave will not be approved and you will accrue an unexcused absence in your classes.

College Applications

- 1. Complete application online.** Check the college's website for information about how to apply: Common App, CFNC, or directly through the college's website. Make sure to complete all sections.
- 2. For North Carolina schools, complete the [Residency Determination Service](#)** as soon as you can. Save your RCN (residency certification number) - you will need this for your applications. [Click here for helpful RDS info.](#)
- 3. Counselor recommendations:** If a counselor recommendation is required, or if you would like us to have more information about you when filling out the School Report forms, please submit a [Request for Letter of Recommendation Form](#) to your counselor at least two weeks prior to your first deadline. Also, please make sure to add your School Counselor as your "Counselor Recommender" on Common App or any other application forms at least two weeks prior to your first deadline.

- 4. Teacher recommendations:** If a teacher recommendation is required, ask an academic teacher at least two weeks prior to your deadline. Provide that teacher with your resume or any other forms they request. It may be helpful to think about which teachers from 11th grade you would like to ask.
- 5. Complete the [FAFSA](#)** beginning October 1.
- 6. Send your SAT/ACT scores.** If you have to send scores beyond the four free included when you take the tests, log in to your [CollegeBoard](#) and/or [ACT](#) accounts to send official scores electronically.

Additional Application Considerations

1. Check to see if separate housing, financial aid, and/or scholarship applications are required.
2. You do not have to wait for SAT/ACT scores before sending your college applications. Put future test dates on your applications where applicable.
3. Pay attention to your deadlines!
 - a. **Early Action:** non-binding. You may apply earlier and learn your admissions decision earlier. Many Early Action deadlines are October 15, November 1, or November 15.
 - b. **Early Decision:** binding. This means that if you are accepted into the school, you are expected to commit to attend and withdraw any other college applications for other schools. Many Early Decision deadlines are October 15, November 1, or November 15.
 - c. **Regular Decision:** many regular decision deadlines are January 15, February 1, or February 15.
4. Colleges will require a decision and a deposit by May 1 to confirm your decision to attend.

SAVE THE DATES

Senior College Prep Night - Thursday, September 5, 2019

AHS/SILSA Media Center

3:30-4:30 - Students only with School Counselors

5:30-6:30 - Parents and students with CFNC rep Laura Miser for Financial Aid and FAFSA information

6:30-7:30 - Q & A with the School Counselors and Laura Misner

CACRAO College Fair

Thursday, September 12, 2019 - 6PM-8PM

UNC Asheville, Sherril Center and Kimmel Arena

CFNC College Application Week - October 21-25, 2019

During this time, *some* North Carolina colleges and universities offer application fee waivers. Counselors will send out a list of participating colleges this fall. Also, Counselors will offer college application support sessions for ALL seniors and colleges at school during this week. Be on the lookout for this information in your emails this fall.

FAFSA Day - Saturday, October 26, 2019

Free FAFSA support with financial aid professionals. This is typically offered at UNCA and A-B Tech. More information to come!

SAT & ACT TESTING

- Colleges typically accept either SAT or ACT scores and they will typically count your highest scores.
- The AHS High School Code is 340140.
- The SILSA High School Code is 340123.
- You must send test scores directly to colleges from your [ACT](#) or [CollegeBoard \(SAT\)](#) accounts. Hold onto your score report from your 11th grade ACT because you will need the access code to log in to your account and send scores. *Counselors cannot send scores for you.*
- We strongly recommend taking the optional essay as part of the SAT or ACT at least once.
- Please see your counselor prior to registering for a test if you qualify for a fee waiver.
- Test prep resources: please see the [Counseling website](#) for more information.
- See the [SAT Test Day Checklist](#) and [What to Expect](#) to be prepared on your SAT testing day.
- Visit the [ACT Test Day](#) website to be prepared for your ACT testing day.

2019-2020 Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

2019-2020 SAT Administration Dates and Deadlines		
SAT: \$49.50 SAT with Essay: \$64.50 Register at SAT.org		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline *additional fees apply*
August 24, 2019	July 26, 2019	August 13, 2019
October 5, 2019	September 6, 2019	September 24, 2019
November 2, 2019	October 3, 2019	October 22, 2019
December 7, 2019	November 8, 2019	November 26, 2019
March 14, 2020	February 14, 2020	March 3, 2020
May 2, 2020	April 3, 2020	April 21, 2020
June 6, 2020	May 8, 2020	May 27, 2020

2019-2020 ACT Administration Dates and Deadlines		
ACT: \$50.50 ACT with Writing: \$67.00 Register at ACT.org		
Test Date	Registration Deadline	Late Registration Deadline *additional fees apply*
September 14, 2019	August 16, 2019	August 30, 2019
October 26, 2019	September 20, 2019	October 4, 2019
December 14, 2019	November 8, 2019	November 22, 2019
February 8, 2020	January 10, 2020	January 17, 2020
April 4, 2020	February 28, 2020	March 13, 2020
June 13, 2020	May 8, 2020	May 22, 2020
July 18, 2020	June 19, 2020	June 26, 2020

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

What is Financial Aid? Some Basic Information to Help Understand the Financial Aid Process

Financial Aid is any money a student receives to pay for college. The can include grants, scholarships, and loans. Any tuition, room and board, or other expenses not paid for through these methods become the student's responsibility.

Grants: Money that is given by the government to help those in need; this money is not repaid. Grants are completely need-based.

Loans: Money that is loaned by the government or private loan agencies to help pay for college tuition and expenses. This money **MUST** be repaid to the lending agency along with interest. Use loans only as a last resort and take out only what you need. Loans can be need-based or non-need based.

Scholarships: Money that is given to a student by a scholarship committee. This money does not have to be repaid. It is often awarded after an application is submitted, and sometimes after an interview. The student(s) chosen best exemplify the qualities that the committee is looking for. For many larger scholarships, academic excellence, leadership, community service, and personal character are considered. ***Check the Counseling website and your school emails OFTEN for regular notifications about available scholarships. These are the best ways to stay informed of available scholarships. DON'T WAIT! Many scholarships are available in the fall of senior year.**

Cost of Attendance (COA): Each college or university will provide an estimated COA on their website. This will give you an idea of how much it will cost to attend that school as a full time student. You will want to examine the estimated COA for each of the colleges you are considering attending.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The first step in securing financial aid is completing the FAFSA. The FAFSA qualifies you for both federal and state grants and loans. The FAFSA can be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov (be careful not to use any other fake "FAFSA" websites!). This year, you can begin filing the FAFSA on October 1st. First, you'll have to apply for your [FSA ID](#), which both you and your parents will need and is how you will electronically "sign" your FAFSA. Full instructions are on the FAFSA website. ***Completing the FAFSA is the responsibility of the student and his/her parents. Although Counselors can help with providing the websites and resources, Counselors cannot help students complete the FAFSA at school. Keep your eyes on your emails for FAFSA help sessions and Financial Aid information sessions with CFNC.**

[Click here for a helpful FAFSA and RDS Information Sheet](#)

I'M ADMITTED...NOW WHAT?

- 1. Do not rush your decision.** The National Candidates' Reply Date is May 1. No college can require a deposit before that date.
- 2. Review your options carefully.** Gather as much information as possible about your future options. Compare financial aid and scholarship offers, attend prospective student events at the colleges to which you were accepted, and talk with your family about your decision.
- 3. Develop an action plan with your college admissions counselor.** Find out if you will be required to take any placement exams and when they will be offered. Find out when new student orientation is held and schedule your appointment. If you are offered conditional admission or are placed on a waitlist, make sure to follow up with the college admissions counselor to determine your next steps.
- 4. Send AP scores and dual enrollment transcript.** Once you know which school you will be attending, make sure you have sent any AP scores or dual enrollment grades directly to the college in order to receive college credit. You can send your AP scores from your [CollegeBoard](#) account. If you have taken courses at [A-B Tech](#) or [UNCA](#), please visit those schools' websites to request your college transcript be sent to the college you will be attending.
- 5. Have a strong finish to high school.** You need to finish your senior year strong! Reread your acceptance letter. It usually informs you that your admittance is conditional on the successful completion of your senior year. Colleges can and do rescind their offers of admission if a student's grades significantly decline or if a student becomes involved in a disciplinary situation after the offer of admission is made.

NOT ATTENDING A FOUR YEAR COLLEGE? OTHER OPTIONS

If needed, email your counselor for an appointment to discuss your plans for after high school. There are many other options open to students who decide not to attend a four year college. Here are some of the options available to you:

- 1. Two Year Colleges, Community Colleges, Junior Colleges, and Career/Trade Schools** - Schools like A-B Tech, Blue Ridge Community College, etc. may be a great fit for you. These schools generally do not have a minimum GPA or test score requirement, they offer many different academic programs and majors, and many of them offer transfer agreements with four year schools so you can continue your education and earn a bachelor's degree. Additionally, some careers require specific training that you can learn by attending a career or trade school. Examples of these schools are cosmetology or automotive schools.
- 2. Gap Year** - Taking a gap year is a student and family decision. Seek out opportunities that will benefit your future and make sure to have these discussions with your parents.
- 3. Work Force/Employment** - Many students begin working during high school and choose to continue focusing on full time employment after graduation. Work with your counselor to develop your resume, employability skills, and post-secondary plans, and meet with the Career Development Coordinator for additional resources and opportunities.
- 4. Military** - If you think you may be interested in a military career, your first step should be to gather as much information as possible. Speak with a recruiter and schedule a time to meet if you are interested in learning more.

www.goarmy.com, www.airforce.com, www.marines.com, www.navy.com, www.gocoastguard.com

College Planning Timeline

Throughout high school, you should be thinking about your plans for after graduation. Use this helpful timeline to get started and make sure to meet with your counselor to talk about your plans!

Summer BEFORE 12th Grade

- Create a username and password called a [FSA ID](#) that you'll use to confirm your identity when accessing your government financial aid information and electronically signing your federal student aid documents. **Note: Both you and one parent must each create your own FSA ID; if your parent creates it for you, that will cause confusion later and will slow down the financial aid process.**
- Use the FAFSA4caster at financial aid estimator www.fafsa.gov to determine federal aid to which you may be entitled. To supplement government aid, be sure to apply for scholarships. Your goal is to minimize the amount of loan funds you borrow so you have less to pay back later.
- Narrow down the list of colleges you are considering attending. Visit the schools that interest you. Know the difference in non-profit and for-profit institutions and beware!
- Contact colleges and visit websites to request information and applications. Ask colleges about financial aid, admissions requirements, deadlines, and their scholarships.
- Decide whether you're going to apply for admission under a particular college's *early decision*, *early action* or *regular decision* program. Be sure to learn about the program deadlines and requirements.
- Apply for your RDS number on the [NC Residency website](#). All North Carolina colleges will require this number so you can get in state tuition at the public colleges and qualify for the other NC grant programs.
- Update your resume for when meeting with college admissions representatives, applying for scholarships, and to give to anyone writing a letter of recommendation for you.
- Think about who to use for scholarship and college recommendation letters. If possible, let the person know in advance you'll be asking for these.
- Research scholarships on the [Counseling website](#) and make notes about when these will be due.
- Create and set up a system for keeping track of your scholarships applications and deadlines. Many students use Google Sheets or Google Docs. Essays can be tweaked and used multiple times for different applications!

Parents To Do

- Create your own [FSA ID](#) if you don't have one yet. (The FSA ID is a user name and password you'll use for such purposes as signing your child's FAFSA and applying for federal parent loans.) **Note: You and your child must each create your own ID. If your child creates this for you or if you create it for your child, it will cause confusion later and slow down the financial aid process.**

- Take a look at your financial situation and be sure you're on the right track to pay for college. If you haven't yet, attend a financial aid workshop.
- Talk to your child about colleges he/she is considering and help him/her clarify his/her goals and priorities.
- Take your child to visit college campuses, preferably when classes are in session. **Listen** and let your child do the talking.
- Help your child find scholarships he/she may qualify for and assist with organizing these into a system. Proofread but **DO NOT** write the essays for your child. Readers will know.
- Ask your employer about possible scholarships available for employees' children.
- Check out the free resources on www.cfnc.org and www.studentaid.gov
- **DO NOT feel that you need to pay for financial aid or scholarship information!!!**

Senior Year

August-December

- Register and take the ACT and/or SAT again (early fall semester), if needed.
- Review your transcript to make sure you are on track for graduation and double check your requirements.
- Visit colleges!
- Ask your counselor, teachers, and employers for letters of recommendation early. Give at least two weeks before your deadlines.
- Keep working hard! You are in the home stretch, but senior year grades, including second semester, can affect many things (scholarships, acceptances, etc.).
- Don't slack off in your course load. Colleges will be looking at your senior schedule and want to see that you are still challenging yourself.
- Continue with extracurriculars. Remember that it is important to choose something and stick with it.
- If you plan to play sports in college make sure to sign up for the [NCAA Clearinghouse](#), speak with your School Counselor, and submit any needed forms.
- Attend the college fair and meet with college admissions as they visit the high school.
- To request your transcript, please [click here for AHS](#) and [click here for SILSA](#). Please note that for Common App and CFNC schools, your counselors will send your transcripts for you and you do not need to request a transcript separately.
- Fill out your college applications to apply for admissions beginning in September either on the Common Application, CFNC, or the college's website.
- Start the financial aid application process and check colleges to see if you qualify for scholarships offered. FAFSA is now open beginning October 1.

- Complete the [NC Residency](#) process as soon as possible if you haven't already. You will need to complete this and have your Residency Certification Number (RCN) before finishing applications to any NC colleges.

January-May

- Complete the [FAFSA](#) by the March deadline if you have not already done so.
- Visit colleges one more time before you commit.
- Keep working hard in class - colleges want to see seniors maintain their grades until graduation.
- Compare financial aid packages from different schools.
- Decide which college to attend, and notify the school of your decision by May 1.
- Keep track of and observe deadlines for sending in all required fees and paperwork.
- Notify schools that you will not attend of your decision.
- Continue to look for scholarship opportunities.
- Keep track of important financial aid and scholarship deadlines.
- Sign and send in a promissory note if you are borrowing money.
- Notify your college about any outside scholarships you received.
- Enjoy the end of the year and graduation!

AHS/SILSA REQUEST FOR COUNSELING LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Return this form to your School Counselor at least 2 weeks before your deadline, along with any forms that need to be completed from the college.

No recommendation can be completed unless all forms are received.

Intended college major and career goal: _____

Are you planning on taking any dual enrollment courses in the Spring of senior year? _____

List at least four adjectives or personal characteristics that describe you.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

What do you consider your greatest strengths? Also, describe a time you had to overcome a situation.

(Please feel free to attach additional pages as needed).

Please list any unusual circumstances (financial need, change in family, loss of income, health, family situations, academic roadblocks, etc.).

Please list here or attach a resume of any extracurricular activities, athletics, clubs, honors, awards, community service work, employment, community groups, etc. that you have been involved in.

What are your SAT and ACT scores?

Test	Test Date (add future dates too)	Reading	Math	Writing	ACT Composite
SAT / ACT					
SAT / ACT					
SAT / ACT					
SAT / ACT					

What colleges are you planning on applying to, and what are your deadlines?

College Name	Application Deadline	Do your SAT/ACT test scores fall into their range?	Does your GPA fall into their range?

If you had to write your own letter of recommendation, what would you say? Is there anything else you would like to include?