

Veritas Academy



**College and Career Planning
Packet for Students and Parents**

Guidance Department

Future Planning for High School Students

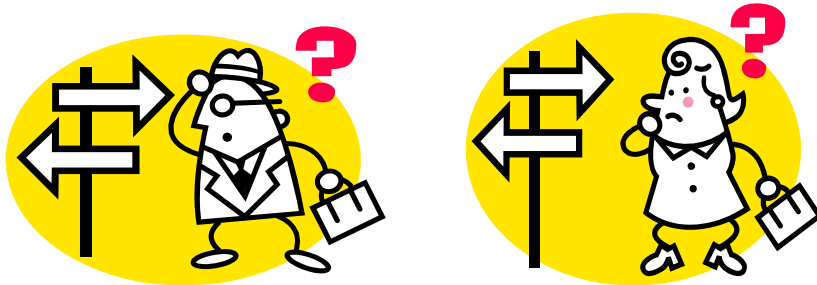
Introduction

So, you're a Senior, now what? What will the future hold? Where will you go? How will you get there? If you are like most students, you have asked or been asked these questions many times. You may be flooded with information from many different sources to assist you in your decision making: colleges, military recruiters, business professionals, technical or trade schools, friends, family members, teachers, etc. It can be as exciting as it is terrifying. The Guidance Team at Veritas Academy would like to help you sift through this barrage of information. The best way to begin is asking questions and making some honest assessments.

Let's Get Started!

Not everyone who graduates from High School has a goal of going on to further education. Some graduates choose to join the workforce or a branch of the military immediately upon graduation. Some careers demand more academic ability and experience than others, some demand specific aptitudes more than intellectual strengths. It is important to evaluate your career ambitions in light of all your aptitudes. If you cannot determine, even vaguely, an area of interest, a counselor may be able to help you.

Once you focus on a general area, there are many consultants available to provide needed information. Do not overlook the excellent resources that parents, teachers, family friends, professionals in your field of interest and again, a guidance counselor can be to you. Career information may be found in hardcopy resource materials, and of course, on the World Wide Web (see careercruising.com to take a test or an interest survey). Materials may be found in the school's Guidance Office, Library or any bookstore. Research and further investigation is essential to being properly prepared for whatever you decide to do after High School. If you wish to begin a professional career, you may need further training or you may wish to volunteer your time throughout the year to gain further insights into the job. If college is where you want to go, class rank, standardized tests and recommendations will most likely be required for admission.



School Daze

When some students talk about post High School plans, they have only one type of institution in mind--college. While, in our society, the word college seems synonymous with success, it is not the only kind of post High School institution, nor is it the only factor leading to a satisfying career. Some of the different types of schools as well as their admissions requirements are described on the following pages.

College Knowledge

When the term College is used, it implies a format of education which is not found in trade or technical schools. There are certain courses that a college adds to its curricula which do not necessarily relate to the career interest of the student but which are deemed necessary to provide the student with a well rounded education. Such courses could be English, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science, psychology, Sociology, Humanities, Foreign Languages, and Physical Education. They are referred to in some college catalogues as core courses or general education courses. Most of these courses are taken during the first two years of college and the courses dealing with the major field of interest are studied during the last two years.

Trade and Technical Schools

Schools which specialize in teaching technical and manual skills are becoming increasingly popular. There are schools which teach electronics; schools specializing in art; schools that concentrate only on business and/or secretarial skills; those that teach skills related to allied health fields; trade schools that instruct in the various craft skills used in construction or industry; schools which teach culinary arts and restaurant management; and many other types of schools that concentrate on one particular field. Some of these schools award an Associate Degree in specialized technology upon completion of the educational program. Usually, credits earned under such a degree program are not transferable to a bachelor degree program in a four year college.

Lancaster County Career and Technology Centers

The Lancaster County CTC campuses offer full-time and part-time technical programs for High School graduates, for a very reasonable tuition rate. More information on these offerings is available at <http://www.lcctc/adulted/fulltime.php>.

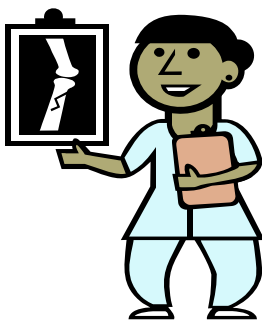
Junior/Community Colleges

There are a number of benefits derived from such two-year colleges. For those students whose career interests demand only two year of further education, and who want more than a technical education, such schools provide an acceptable compromise: technical training plus some core courses to bring the educational program up to the level of an associate in arts or science degree after two years of study. A chief benefit of having this degree is that by taking the core courses, the door to an advanced degree remains open if the student desires to return to college at a later date. Another benefit of the two year college is the likelihood of a student

who is academically struggling to gain admission to higher education. A student who may have difficulty gaining admission to a four year college may find more success in applying to a two year college. At this level, more remedial help is usually available. Generally, if the student is able to maintain a 'C' or a 'C+' average, s/he may be able to enter a four year college for their junior year.

Nursing Schools

Diploma schools of nursing are rather unique entities. These schools, while technical in nature, do provide some core courses during the three years of training, however, they fall short the necessary requirements needed for a bachelor's degree. At the end of three years, students sit for the state board examination and, upon passing it, are awarded Registered Nurse status. Some colleges are now offering programs for Registered Nurses from diploma schools who wish to take more courses in order to receive the degree of Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN). There are two other avenues for becoming a Registered Nurse. Some two year colleges offer an associate degree program in nursing and many four year colleges offer bachelor degree programs. These choices may be discussed with admissions counselors or your Guidance Counselor.



Admission Requirements

Generally, the easiest road to acceptance into any type of post High School institution is good High School preparation. The attention you give to developing good study skills, paying attention in class, developing a positive attitude toward learning, consistently submitting homework in a timely fashion, efficiently making up missed work/tests if you are absent, all contribute to your eligibility for further education. However, different types of schools have different admissions requirements. It is always a good idea to consult the school's catalogue or website or call the admissions office if you have questions.

Four Year Colleges/Universities

In most cases, the most important admission factors are a combination of your grade point average, your class rank, and your performance on the SAT I or ACT. Keep in mind that while you may be having a stellar senior year grade wise, at the time that you apply to college, it is the accumulation of your academic work up to the end of your junior year (6 semesters) that colleges see first on your official transcript. Some colleges request your first quarter and/or second quarter senior grades before they

arrive at a decision regarding your application. The Guidance Office automatically sends midyear grades to all colleges that you have applied to and then, when you indicate to us which college you are definitely attending, your final transcript verifying your graduation and completed courses/credits is sent. You will be asked to submit this information before you graduate.

Along with success in academics, the extent of a student's participation in extracurricular activities is important in the admissions process. The number of activities is not as important as the quality of time you have given to the activity or the leadership experience this provides for you.

Letters of recommendation are another piece of the admissions requirements. Although some schools do not require that you submit letters of recommendation, some colleges require one or more letters of recommendation and it is a good idea to submit these regardless of whether a school requires them. You may ask teachers, activities moderators, coaches, Guidance Counselors, supervisors from work or volunteer activities to write a letter on your behalf. To assist those who will write a letter for you, please complete a Letter of Recommendation Form which may be obtained at the Guidance Office.

Trade and technical Schools

These schools require graduation from High School or a GED certificate. Some schools administer their own tests to determine the strengths and weaknesses a student may have.

Junior/Community colleges: These colleges are generally concerned about courses a student has taken in High School, grades a student achieved, grade point average, and class rank. Some community colleges administer their own admission or placement tests.

Visiting Schools

As a junior, making plans for spring and summer college visits is an excellent idea. Many colleges host open houses or overnight visits that are specifically for juniors. College visits are highly recommended in order to properly evaluate the school. During the visit you will have the opportunity to speak with students, tour the facilities, visit classes, and look at on campus living options. This is also an opportunity for you and your parents/guardians to ask admissions personnel any questions you may have. Arrangements for visiting colleges may be made by contacting the school's admissions office by phone, through the internet, or in writing. Before you contact a school, you should have a few dates in mind that will accommodate your schedule and try to contact the schools well in advance to arrange a visit. Remember during certain holidays such as Columbus Day, Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday, and President's Day, colleges are inundated with requests for visits, so plan accordingly.

STAY ORGANIZED! The application process is usually not difficult to complete. Most students find the most time-consuming part of the application is the essay or personal statement. Sometimes just talking to other students, teachers or guidance counselors will help to move this process along. Do not let this be a roadblock for you. Most schools are looking for something in the essay or personal statement that says something about you. This is an opportunity for you to demonstrate what makes you unique. Maybe you have had to overcome a difficult situation, maybe you would like to write about a volunteer activity you have been involved with, or maybe a humorous look at what it's like growing up in a big family. Whatever the topic, make sure someone else (a teacher, a parent, etc) proofreads it before it is sent.



Read all instructions carefully on the application and answer everything that applies to you. Print or type neatly. Along with the application there is usually a Secondary school report to be completed by the guidance counselor. Since the school or college will also request a transcript of your grades, you must submit a Transcript Request Form available in the guidance office (see appendix). In order to facilitate the application process, please submit your completed application along with the request for a transcript and any other forms or materials that need to be completed. There is a fee of \$3.00 for each transcript requested. This covers postage for the application and transcript.

What Guidance Will Do For You

Your Guidance Counselor can be a great resource for you throughout your college search and application process. Most students, once they have completed their part of the application, together with the application fee, will give it to their Guidance Counselor. The counselor then includes a transcript, any school report forms required, letters of recommendation from teachers, etc. you have previously contacted, and mails it from the High School. Any Federal Express or overnight mail service is the student's responsibility. If you decide to complete your application online, please do not forget that you must request your transcript be sent.

If you would like to mail the applications yourself, indicate that you will pick up your transcript on the request form and it will be sealed. Please do not open the envelope containing your official transcript or the college you are applying to may not accept it.

Letters of recommendation from your teachers may be forwarded to your Guidance counselor and copies kept on file for all applications. If you prefer, you may provide your teacher or anyone outside of the school who will be writing a letter for you, with a stamped envelope addressed to your school.

A Word or Two about Deadlines

Be cognizant of all deadlines. Do not expect that anyone can write you a letter of recommendation overnight. Generally, you need to allow a writer two weeks including two weekends to write you a letter of recommendation. Remember, you may not be the only student who has asked this person, and you certainly do not want to place undue pressure on someone you are asking to write a positive letter for you. Additionally, allow time for your Guidance counselor to complete the necessary forms and letters and check your application. It is not advisable to wait until the day before a deadline or the last day of school before Christmas break to drop off your material at the Guidance Office as there is no guarantee your application will be able to be sent on time.

The Application Process

Generally begins in September of Senior year and continues through January

By **September** of your senior year, you should be finalizing the list of schools to which you intend to apply. We suggest the use of a checklist (see attached) to keep yourself organized as each college or university will require different documentation. *Please* pay close attention to deadlines for admission and financial aid, as those dates also vary from school to school.

You will need to think about the following questions as you start the process...

- What is the preferred method of applying? (on-line, paper, common app.)
- What is the college's application deadline?
- Does the college recommend SATs or ACTs?
- Does the college require Subject Tests or SAT II's?
- Do I want to apply Early Action or Early Decision?
- Are letters of recommendation required? If so, how many?
- Is an essay required?
- Is an interview required?
- Is this school a reach, target or safety?

Some terminology.....

Early Decision (ED) – This is a binding agreement in which you pledge that if accepted, you will withdraw all applications to other schools and will attend that university. We only recommend applying ED if you have done all your homework on a certain school, visited that school, and are absolutely certain that is where you want to attend. ED applications require your parents’ signatures, your signature, and the guidance counselor’s signature.

Early Action (EA) - Students choosing to apply EA will be notified earlier but do not have to commit to the school until the regular deadline (typically May 1st).

Rolling Admissions – There is no set deadline to apply and colleges will review the student’s application once all the required materials have been received. Applications are reviewed in the order in which they are received and will continue until the class is full.

Priority Deadline - If a student’s application meets the posted deadline, they will be given priority in admission. If a college offers a priority deadline, students are encouraged to take advantage of that opportunity.



How do I apply?

There are several ways of submitting your application to colleges: online, a paper application, and the Common Application.

Online Application - This is the generally preferred way of applying. Applications can be accessed through the university’s website. Make sure to proofread everything before sending your materials!

Paper Applications - If you prefer to complete a paper copy, you can call or write to the admissions offices to send you one, or if you are visiting a college, pick one up there. The guidance office has limited copies of paper applications, please check our supply if you need one or download from the college’s website.

The Common Application - Some colleges will accept the common application for admission, and students can fill out one application for all participating schools.

To find out if your college participates, go to www.commonapp.org. Note: There are supplemental forms that students need to print out and give to their teacher(s) and guidance counselor for recommendations (see below).

Once you have submitted your application, you must notify our office so that we can send your transcript. Please allow 5 school days for processing of your paperwork. Student protocol for requesting a transcript:

- 1.) Complete a Transcript Request Form (located in the Guidance Office) for *each* college.
- 2.) Be sure to list any teachers from whom you will have letters of recommendation.
- 3.) Be sure to list any deadlines.
- 4.) There is a fee per transcript request. This includes our initial mailing, midyear grades, and final grades to colleges.
- 5.) Please try to give us the complete packet of information that you want sent to the college, not individual pieces. It keeps things much more organized!



The SAT and the ACT: Students can register for the SAT at www.collegeboard.com or for the ACT at www.actstudent.org. Each time you register for a test, you may request to have your scores sent directly to the colleges of your choice. Most colleges will accept either test, but you should check with your individual school to be certain. Most colleges will accept the best Critical Reading, the best Math, and the best Writing scores, even if they are from different tests. Remember, the **SAT II** Subject Tests are required by most highly selective schools, please check your schools' testing requirements.

Sometimes people ask us whether there's an advantage to taking the SAT or the ACT. Most colleges accept either one. The difference is that the SAT is a reasoning test, which focuses on Math and Reading skills. The ACT is more like an achievement test (which most students have taken in elementary and middle schools) which includes

sections on Social Studies and Science, as well as the Math and Reading. Some students who don't score well on one test will do better on the other. You may want to consider taking them both.

Veritas does list your SAT, ACT, AP, and SAT II scores on the transcript. Most colleges will accept your scores as official when received on the transcript. However, there are colleges that will not accept test scores from the High School and want scores to come directly from the testing agency. Students are encouraged to check with each college or university for their policy on standardized scores.

Please include our CEEB code #392249 when registering so that we also receive your testing results!

Interviews: Not all colleges require interviews. If colleges list an interview as optional, go ahead and schedule one. Anything a college lists as "optional" should be done (i.e. interview, essay, letters of recommendation). By doing so, you are telling them that you are willing to go the extra mile!

Teacher Recommendations: Many colleges do require teacher reference letters. Be sure to give the teacher ample time (**at least two to four weeks**) to generate a letter for you. It is also helpful to give them a resume or a list of your activities to help when writing the letter. Teacher letters should be given directly to your guidance counselor, and we will keep copies on file for you. See appendix for form.

Essays: Topics for a college essay will vary from school to school. Please do not forget to proofread your essay before mailing, and an extra set of eyes is always helpful. Should you need help, please see your Guidance Counselor or English teacher for ideas.

Resume: It is highly recommended that students generate a resume which lists extra-curricular activities, academic accomplishments, and community service activities. Many college applications do not allow much space to list those details. Copies can then be put in each application you send.

Special Situations: Candidates for the Service Academies

United States Military Academy at West Point
United States Naval Academy
United States Coast Guard Academy
United States Merchant Marine Academy
United States Air Force Academy



Admission to the United States Service Academies is highly competitive and the admission process is long and involved. Students should start the process by Spring of the junior year if they are serious about applying. In addition to the application packet for the High School, there is at least one nomination packet, a physical examination, and a physical fitness test. A nomination by an elected official (US Representative, Senator, or Vice-President) is also required by all academies **except the Coast Guard**. There is a separate application process for the nomination and a mandatory interview for qualified candidates. To begin the process, you will need to contact Congressman Joseph R. Pitts via his website at www.house.gov/pitts.

Interested students are encouraged to attend High School Night which is typically held in the Fall of each year at a local High School. Representatives from each of the five academies will be in attendance to give presentations and to answer questions. Please check in the Guidance Office for the details of this event.

Please check each High School's website for additional application instructions:

www.usma.edu (West Point)

www.usna.edu (Navy)

www.usafa.af.mil (Air Force)

www.usmma.edu (Merchant Marine)

www.cga.edu (Coast Guard)

Student Athletes & the NCAA Clearinghouse

For some students, athletics may play a major role in their college selection process. For those students who are considering athletics at the Division I or II level will have to register through an organization known as the NCAA or National Collegiate Athletic Association. Students must meet the Academic Eligibility Requirements set forth by the NCAA and its Eligibility Center. Again, this only applies to Division I or II schools.

Students must register on-line at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net and enter through the **Prospective Student-Athletes** link. This is generally done at the end of junior year but can be done early in the senior year as well. Once you are registered, you must request a transcript from the guidance office, and we will send it directly to the NCAA.

Also, SAT and ACT scores must be sent directly to the NCAA from the testing agency, scores on the transcript will not be accepted.

Financial Aid Overview

Families who plan to apply for financial aid cannot do so until **January 1st** of your child's senior year of High School. The FAFSA, or Free Application for Federal Student Aid, can be accessed at www.fafsa.ed.gov. It is recommended that you complete your prior year's income tax return before filing your FAFSA, although you can still submit the FAFSA using your best estimates. Paper copies of the FAFSA are available by contacting 1-800-4-FED-AID. Before completing the FAFSA, the student applicant and their parent(s) should have the following information: social security numbers, driver's licenses, federal income tax returns, W-2 forms, bank statements, and records of any stocks, bonds, or other investments and assets.

The student and parent(s) must EACH apply for a **PIN #** in order to sign the FAFSA. You can obtain a PIN # by accessing PIN.ed.gov to have one assigned to you, or you can choose your own.

If you are not yet ready to apply for financial aid but would like to gather an **estimate** of your eligibility for aid, the **FAFSA4caster** can help. This site is recommended for juniors (with parental help). The 4caster is available through: www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov



If the FAFSA is submitted electronically, a **Student Aid Report** or **SAR** will be returned to you within three days. Your information will also be sent to the colleges listed on the FAFSA at this time.

****Each college or university has its own deadline to apply for financial aid, please pay close attention to these dates in order to avoid missing out on potential loans or scholarships opportunities.**

PHEAA or the **Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency** will handle all loan and grant monies for PA students. PHEAA requires that all students file their FAFSA before the **deadline of May 1st** to be eligible for state grants and loans. Keep in mind, most colleges will have their own deadline which is usually earlier than May 1.

The guidance counselors are happy to help with questions regarding financial aid, or you can contact our regional PHEAA office at 717-720-3919. You are also encouraged to contact the financial aid office at the specific college(s) to which your student has applied.

Career Corner

“What do I do, if I don’t think I want to go on for more schooling right after High School?”

Some High School seniors don’t feel ready to commit themselves to college or technical school right after graduation. For these students, there are a number of options to consider.

Entering the “World of Work”: Seniors who decide to do this will need to learn how to search for employment, write a resume, and practice interviewing skills. Some students may find a job immediately after High School which will help them to pay for further education, through tuition reimbursement programs. Many of your teachers, as well as our guidance staff, will be happy to help you along the way!

Internships and community service: Opportunities do exist for enthusiastic young adults who are willing to do work that is not necessarily well-paid. This might be a chance for someone to connect with an organization or company, and offer to take an unpaid or low-paying internship, in order to learn more about a certain field. Some organizations, such as Americorps or Job Corps, offer a stipend and sometimes even tuition credits for participation in their programs. Many religious organizations offer programs as well, where people are able to do community service work in exchange for a modest stipend and room and board.

Taking time off before college or other schooling does not necessarily put you at a disadvantage. Check into delayed admission programs if there are schools you are interested in (where you can apply now, in your senior year; but delay your start for a year or two.) Or ask a school representative what their school thinks about students taking time off, and what your chance of getting in might be, if you end up reapplying in a year or two.

Where to go for ideas about “alternative plans”: Searching the internet; talking to your local librarian; reading books and magazines related to your areas of interest; interviewing people in your community who are already doing something that interests you...all of these are ways to learn more about developing a unique plan that will meet your needs after High School graduation. (And of course, your friendly neighborhood guidance counselors will be happy to help!)

WEBSITES FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION
(just a few...feel free to search out your own!)

Next Step After High School? Some alternatives to College

http://www.quintcareers.com/college_alternatives.html

College Board: Taking Time Off after High School

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/starting-points/31.html>

Cool, Unusual and Seasonal Jobs

http://www.quintcareers.com/cool_unique_seasonal_jobs.html

Americorps

<http://www.americorps.gov/>

Jesuit Volunteer Corps

<http://www.americorps.gov/>

Student Conservation Association

<http://www.thesca.org/>

The Nature Conservancy

<http://www.nature.org/>

Internships

<http://www.studentjobs.gov/>

Careers in the Military

http://www.quintcareers.com/cool_unique_seasonal_jobs.html

A few other tidbits:

According to recent surveys, **the top 10 jobs** for the next decade are:

- 1.) Computer Programmer
- 2.) Day Care Provider
- 3.) Elder Care Specialist
- 4.) Employment Specialist
- 5.) Home Health Aide
- 6.) Management Consultant
- 7.) Networking Specialist
- 8.) Physician's Assistant
- 9.) Environmental Engineer
- 10.) Social Services Consultant

We *strongly* encourage our students to complete self-assessments to gauge their possible interest areas. The following is a list of those resources:

www.careercruising.com – (Username: veritas) (Password: academy)

- Students are able to take a career interest survey and find out which occupations are a potential match for their skills and interests. A detailed explanation of careers, education requirements, salary ranges, and job outlooks are provided. This is an excellent resource!

www.pheaa.org/plan_for_college/educationplanner -

- This website also offers a career interest inventory and will identify which professions best suit your personality type. Results are based on Holland's theory of personality: Realistic, Conventional, Social, Enterprising, Artistic, and Investigative.

www.ed.gov/students/prep/job/edpicks -

- This website developed by the Department of Education, offers students a multitude of resources including career opportunities, job trends, college planning, and financial aid.

Veritas Academy GUIDANCE DEPT CONTACTS:

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