Your College Navigator, LLC

Admissions by design, not chance!

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Seniors

Finalize college list; work on applications & essays; review transcript for accuracy; request recommendation letters from teachers and counselors.

Check Collegeboard.org and ACT.org for the latest information about available test dates

Visit www.nacacfairs.org for a listing of upcoming college fairs

Check your school's website for fall college rep visits to your area or visit colleges or meet them virtually.

9th, 10th, 11th grade students

Pursue extracurriculars of interest to you

October 2022

10th & 11th grade students

Check with your school for date it expects to administer the PSAT

Attend college fairs and meetings

Meet with visiting college reps

Seniors

Continue work on college applications; complete and submit Early Decision/Early Action applications

Complete CSS Profile if required by colleges

FAFSA available October 1st

Making the Most of Your High School Years

Entering high school can be overwhelming for many students; you'll have far more options and opportunities as well as greater expectations. The choices you make through high school will have an impact on your future education. It is important to choose wisely both classes and extracurricular activities so that you can enjoy your high school years.

Academics

Each year, try to increase your level of academic challenge in your coursework. However, while AP, IB, and honors level classes are impressive to universities, so are good grades. If taking every subject at the highest level will start to drop grades below a B, students should prioritize taking difficult classes in subjects they are either best at or most interested in. It may be better to have all As and a mix of AP and CP classes than Bs and Cs in all APs. When choosing classes, try not to be influenced by your friends; choose courses that are best suited to you.

High school classes are challenging, and you should seek support if you having trouble. Emailing teachers to set up time outside of class, looking into a school's offerings such as lunch-time writing programs or TAs, utilizing free online study materials, or forming study groups with peers are all good ideas. Students can also hire tutors or take advantage of free local or virtual tutoring programs.

Extracurriculars

Extracurriculars allow individuals to find and pursue activities that interest them. Examples include sports, clubs, volunteering, artistic pursuits, internships, and other hobbies. Try out any extracurriculars that appeal to you, but remember depth of involvement is more important than quantity. Classes and extracurriculars can help you discover where your passions and strengths lie. College admission officers look for depth of involvement, and leadership roles are particularly appealing.

Have fun and take time for yourself

High school is not just about getting high grades and building an impressive resume. It is also a great time to make friends and explore engaging activities. Check out any school-run events that interest you, such as school dances, sports games, or rallies. There is no right way to enjoy high school, but with the sheer number of opportunities and requirements, doing *too much* can be overwhelming. Build in time to take care of yourself. Self-care looks different for everyone, but ideas include getting adequate sleep, setting a weekly TV night, reading before bedtime, hanging out with friends, cooking or baking, finding time to exercise, and making time to be with those you love.

Scheduling

Balancing classes, friends, extracurriculars, and self-care time may seem daunting. For this reason, high school is a great time to learn how to create a schedule that works for you. Experimentation is key. While some students do homework best at night, others benefit from starting right after school. People need different amounts of time to complete assignments, so it is up to each student to discover when to start each project and how much time to devote to them. Finally, individuals crave different amounts of downtime and socialization. This delicate balance will change over time, but beginning to attune to this will have lifelong benefits.

The high school years provide the opportunity to develop many important life skills as well as an academic education. Make the most of these years by embracing the experience!

Focus on Majors: Chemistry

Career Paths for Chemistry Majors

Only about 25% of all chemistry majors go on to employment as chemists. Trained to solve problems creatively, perform complex analyses and use research results in decision making, chemistry majors acquire numerous skills valued in a variety of careers.

- Biochemist
- Biomedical engineer
- Chemical engineer
- Chemical sales rep
- Chemist
- College Professor
- Consultant
- Dentist
- Food scientist or technician
- Forensic scientist or technician
- Government policy-maker
- Hazardous waste manager
- Laboratory technician
- Materials scientist
- Medical scientist
- Patent attorney
- Perfume chemist
- Pharmacist
- Physician
- Physician's assistant
- Primary or secondary teacher
- Radiologist
- Registered nurse
- Science writer
- Veterinarian

Chemists provide the knowledge needed to create many of the products we use each day. The results of their efforts are seen in the medicines that treat diseases, in the fabrics we use in clothing and furniture and in the synthetic materials that make up many of the objects used in daily life. Students skilled in math, curious about the physical world and good at analysis and problem-solving may enjoy a major in chemistry.

Chemistry majors study the composition, make-up and properties of matter. By learning how one form of matter may react with other molecules to change into a new material, chemists can utilize these chemical reactions to produce the products used in today's technological world.

Initially, chemistry majors begin by taking a core curriculum in the four general areas of chemistry: inorganic, organic, physical and analytical chemistry. These chemistry courses are supplemented by advanced studies in mathematics, biology, computer science and physics.

After a grounding in these general subjects, chemistry students are encouraged to specialize in one of the four traditional subgroups of chemistry. Organic chemists study carbon-based compounds—the chemistry of living things, while inorganic chemists study all other elements. Physical chemists specialize in the structure and properties of matter, while analytical chemists consider the identification of the individual components of complex mixtures.

A major in chemistry requires a great many hours in the laboratory and a large number of required classes. This leaves the chemistry major little time for elective classes. Choosing to combine another major with chemistry will probably add one or more years to your bachelor's degree.

Although some colleges award B.A.s in chemistry and others offer a B.S., there is little real difference between the degrees. Programs accredited by the American Chemical Society (ACS) are required to offer specific courses regardless of degree, thus assuring that graduates are eligible for ACS certification.

Job opportunities for chemistry majors are expected to be most plentiful at pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies. Although entry level employment is available for those with a B.S./B.A., further study leading to an M.S. or Ph.D. in one of the branches of chemistry will yield more responsible as well as more interesting positions.

Chemistry majors often go on to scientific careers, taking such positions (after advanced study) as research chemists, pharmacists and physicians. Many others are employed by drug or oil companies, become high school chemistry teachers or work as laboratory technicians.

Crime lab analysts often have degrees in forensic chemistry. A bachelor's in chemistry also provides an appropriate background for those seeking careers as environmental consultants.

Students thinking about a major in chemistry might also want to look at related majors such as chemical engineering, materials engineering, biochemistry, molecular biology, forensic science and environmental science. In selecting your college for one of these majors, consider the breadth and depth of courses offered in your chosen field and the research opportunities available for undergraduate students. Be sure to check to see if the program is ACS certified. You can learn more at the website of the American Chemical Society at www.acs.org and by reading about careers in chemistry in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Occupational Outlook Handbook at www.bls.gov.

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Financial Matters: Studying Out-of-State at In-State Prices

Because of agreements developed between some neighboring states, many out-of-state students pay tuition at the same or only slightly higher rate than in-state residents. For example, students from Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin may be eligible for tuition reductions at certain mid-western institutions through the *Midwest Student Exchange Program*.

The *Western Undergraduate Exchange* (WUE) program allows residents of member states to enroll in participating institutions at a reduced tuition. States served by WUE include Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The *Academic Common Market* provides reduced tuition (often at in-state fees) for students in sixteen southern states who want to pursue degrees not available at their own in-state public universities. Undergraduate reciprocity programs are available to students in Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia.

Some state universities, such as the University of Texas at Austin, attract highly qualified students to their state by offering them scholarships that include the right to pay in-state tuition. Other state systems, such as that of the Virginia public colleges, have a tuition structure that may result in out-of-state students paying no more than they would for a similar education in their home state.

The bottom line is to check out prices at all programs of interest to you.

Do Safety Schools Really Exist Any More?

As the college admission process becomes more complex, students are beginning to wonder if they are assured acceptance to their so-called 'safety' schools. This is a tricky question, and the short answer is: not really. Traditionally, counselors have suggested that high school students apply to a range of colleges, including a few "targets", "stretches", and "safeties". Targets refer to schools where your test scores and GPA fall within the mid-range of the admit profile. Stretches, or reaches, are schools that have higher average test scores and GPAs than yours. Safeties refer to schools where your scores fall above the 50th percentile of admitted students. Some experts, including myself, argue that these terms should be changed to the more accurate names of **"unlikely", "possible", and "likely"**. College admission is a complicated process, taking into account many factors and, as in life, there are simply no guarantees.

Although SAT/ACT scores and your GPA can give you an idea of whether or not you might be admitted to a particular school, they are not the only factors considered during the admission process. Test optional admission has further muddied the admission waters. Be sure to check all prospective colleges' acceptance rates, as this is another indication of your chances. Commonly considered a best practice, most universities now have holistic admission, which means that they emphasize the applicant's complete academic record along with their life experiences, not just select pieces such as grades and test scores. Athletic accomplishments, legacy status, leadership roles, and involvement with music, art, and community service all potentially play important roles. Keep in mind that it is better to excel and show leadership in a select few extracurricular activities than simply to participate in several.

A common mistake made by prospective undergraduates is to assume they will be admitted to their safety school, and thus put less effort into its essays and applications. They also may fail to show demonstrated interest, which is gaining popularity as a factor considered by many admission departments. These errors imply that a student does not really care about being accepted, and will likely not attend if they are. The term "yield" refers to the percentage of admitted students who actually enroll, and is important to colleges because it affects their ranking and credit rating. If the admission office doesn't think you will actually attend, they will be less likely to accept you, even if your scores and GPA fall into the acceptable range.

There are a few exceptions to the "no more safety schools" concept. Some colleges have open admissions, and if you meet their requirements, you can be fairly confident about being accepted. Community colleges also fall into this category.

In considering where to apply, it is important to submit applications only to schools you are truly excited about. Make sure they are a good fit as far as academics, location, size, & financial needs. If you can't afford your safety school, or if you would be unwilling to attend, it is not a safety at all! Don't rush your applications. Make sure to treat each school as if it were your first choice.

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Check our website for upcoming webinars and seminars.

Considering Early Decision?

What is Early Decision (ED)? Early Decision is a *binding* admissions decision plan. In exchange for receiving an earlier admissions decision, students applying ED agree that, if they're admitted, they'll attend that college and withdraw all of their other college applications. Typically, Early Decision plans have deadlines in early November. Since ED is a *binding* agreement, students who've carefully and thoroughly researched their college options and decided with certainty that one particular school is their top choice are the best candidates for Early Decision. Some colleges also have a second ED round (ED2) with deadlines falling in early January. For ED1, applicants will generally receive their decision before Christmas. In the second ED round, students will receive their decision a month to six weeks before regular decision candidates are notified.

Will applying ED make it easier to get in? Sometimes. Early Decision isn't a "miracle cure" for students whose stats are far below those of the students typically admitted to that college. However, if you wouldn't be a strong applicant during the regular admissions round, then it's unlikely that you'll be admitted simply because you apply under ED. When a student's grades and test scores put the student within the typical ranges for admitted students at a college, they can often have a better chance of admission during the ED round. Keep in mind, however, that ED acceptance rates vary greatly from college to college, and the early applicant pool is often extremely well qualified. At the most competitive colleges, the acceptance rates for ED applicants are still very low. Many of the highly selective colleges, however, fill around half their class through ED; some fill a higher percentage, leaving little space in the regular round.

How will applying Early Decision affect financial aid? If you're admitted during Early Decision, you'll typically receive the same financial aid package that you would have received if you'd applied in the regular admission cycle. However, one of the main disadvantages of an ED acceptance is that you won't be able to compare financial aid offers from other colleges. Because you're giving up the right, it's smart for families to use the Net Price Calculators on different college websites to get estimates of how financial aid may vary before making the ED choice.

What happens when I receive my ED admission decision? When you apply ED, you'll receive one of three decisions: Admit, deny, or deferred. If you're admitted, you must immediately withdraw all applications from other colleges, and send in an enrollment deposit to the ED college. If you're denied (rejected), you can't reapply to the college in the regular decision round and should immediately turn your attention to the other colleges on your list. If you're deferred, the college will take a second look at your application during the Regular Decision round, but you should immediately complete your applications to other colleges.