

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(The following information comes from a publication sponsored by The Ohio State University)

When should I begin visiting colleges?

It's never too early to start visiting colleges and universities. Visiting campuses in your early high school years will help you figure out what kind of environment you prefer (big or small campus, located in a city or a rural environment, etc.) Try stopping at campuses that are on your route when taking family vacations, or make plans to visit friends and relatives who are college students or who live near campuses. As a general rule, you should begin making visits to specific colleges of interest by your junior year of high school.

How difficult is college?

How smart do you have to be? College will be a greater academic challenge than high school. Even though you will take fewer courses at a time in college, those courses will require more outside preparation than high school courses do. Students taking four or more classes at a time in college are usually referred to as "full-time students" because the work load and time commitment is much like a full-time job.

What if I don't know what to major in when I get to college?

You won't be alone. Most students enter college undecided about a major or change their minds at some point after starting. Many colleges offer thousands of different classes—and give you time to explore the possibilities. Most colleges don't require students to choose a specific major area of study until their third year.

Does it hurt my chance of receiving financial aid if we have money saved for my education?

In most cases, students whose parents have saved for college are still able to receive financial aid, but end up with less loan indebtedness. This benefits the family, because it's much cheaper to save than to borrow. A recent study showed that the typical graduate who borrows to pay for college has an average of \$174 per month in student loan payments. A student who can avoid borrowing due to savings will start his or her life as a college graduate without the burden of student loan payments.

What role do extracurricular activities play in the college admission process?

Colleges and universities are looking for well-rounded students, and extracurricular activities like student government, school clubs, sports, yearbook, a part-time job, or volunteer activities are experiences that most colleges value. Remember, however, that colleges will consider academic factors above all others.

What are my chances of graduating from a college in four years?

At colleges around the country, the average time to graduation is more than four years. Why? Some students change their major several times and need to take more course work than students who stick to one area. Students also often take advantage of special programs such as co-operative education, internships, or overseas study, which are valuable experiences but can delay graduation. Many students work to help pay for college and may not take a full load of classes each term. There are many students, however, who do graduate in four years. It just depends upon the choices you make.

What is more important: taking harder courses or maintaining a higher GPA?

It is important that you challenge yourself while in high school by taking difficult coursework. This will prepare you for the demands of the college classroom. Most colleges and universities will look at both your course selection and your grades in the admission process and balance them together. Of course, you should make sure that you are choosing the best course for your level

What credits from eighth grade count toward college?

Most credits from before high school will not count toward college. However, if you take Algebra I or the first year of a foreign language in the eighth grade, many college and universities will count those courses as part of your college prep curriculum.

Do colleges and universities have programs and services in place to help students with special needs?

You will find that each college and university is different, but most will offer help to students with special needs. Some common programs and services are programs to help students with physical or learning disabilities, honors programs for exceptionally talented students, programs and services for underrepresented minority students, and tutoring service for students needing additional help with particular academic areas.