

# How to Get into College

As a high school student, you have many responsibilities such as grades, extracurricular activities and maybe even a part-time job. However, you should also be preparing for acceptance into college. Colleges and universities base their admission decision on more than just grades, they look at other factors to determine if you will be an asset to their school. There are things that you can do to start preparing so that you can raise your chances of acceptance into the school of your choice.

## GRADES

This is of course the most obvious factor in a school's decision to accept a student. If your grades and/or overall GPA are not up to par, then you probably will not be accepted. Schools want to see consistency in your grades over your four years of high school, especially in subjects such as English, Math, and Science. Do not worry if you received a D in Spanish, or a C in gym. If your grades are satisfactory as a whole, then the D in that one class is just a blemish on your report and will most likely be overlooked.

## SAT/ACT

Most colleges and universities use college placement exams such as the SAT or ACT to determine your overall knowledge of the most important subjects. Usually you would take these tests as a junior and/or senior in high school. If you wait until your senior year, be sure to take the test early in the year such as September or October. You can take these tests more than once so that you can send your best score to your intended college. Universities do understand that some students are not good "test-takers" and they use your college placement test scores, in conjunction with your overall high school GPA to determine if you are a good academic fit for their school.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Extracurricular activities are another important factor in the admission process at most schools. Colleges want to see that you are not only a good student academically, but that you have participated in clubs and sports during your high school years. Volunteer work is always a plus as well as the ability to hold down a part time job, even if it was only 5-10 hours per week. This shows colleges that you are a well-rounded student that will be able to do the same at their school.

## APPLICATION

It is best to apply to your intended schools early in your senior year. A lot of schools may even have October or November deadlines for priority admission; so make sure to have your applications ready within the first few weeks of your senior year. This means take your college placement tests early as well, maybe even over the summer to ensure that your score is received in time for your application. You may also need letters of recommendation and a college essay, so you will also want to talk to your favorite teachers to see if they can write up a quick letter for you. Remember, you may not be the only student asking certain teachers for letters, so ask early so that you can give your teacher(s) plenty of time to return the letters back to you.

Do not be intimidated by the whole college admission process. If you keep up your grades to a satisfactory level or better and participate in activities, you should have no problem getting into college. Just be sure to apply to more than one school. Some schools only admit a select amount of freshman each year, so it is possible that you may get a rejection letter. If you do, then do not take it personally. As long as you do not put all of your eggs in one basket, you should be able to breeze through the whole admission process.