

College Planning Guide



American Christian Academy

2023-2024

Dear Parents and Students,

This is a very exciting time of year. I know God has wonderful plans for your future. I hope you will take time and prayerfully consider what college or career path you should take. In this packet you will find basic information to help you on your college and career journey. It is a way to help you get started on the process. I am here to help you if you need me. If you have any questions, you can email me at atunnell@acacademy.com and I am always happy to meet with you.

Have a Great Senior Year!

Thank you,

Mrs. Tunnell

205-553-5963 ext. 19

Taking the ACT or the SAT

Both the ACT and the SAT are nationally administered standardized tests that help colleges evaluate candidates. Most colleges and universities accept either test scores for admission purposes. Check college websites or call an admissions representative to find out what is the last ACT or SAT test (date) you can take for scholarship consideration.

<u>ACT Test Dates</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration</u>
September 9, 2023	August 4	August 18
October 28, 2023	September 22	October 6
December 9, 2023	November 3	November 17
February 10, 2024	January 5	January 19
April 13, 2024	March 8	March 22
June 8, 2024	May 8	May 17
July 13, 2024	June 7	June 21

<u>SAT Test Dates</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration</u>
August 26, 2023	July 28	August 15
October 7, 2023	September 8	September 26
November 4, 2023	October 6	October 24
December 2, 2023	November 3	November 21
March 9, 2024	February 23	February 27
May 4, 2024	April 19	April 23
June 1, 2024	May 17	May 21

Your High School Resume

A resume is a helpful resource to have when applying for college, scholarships, or jobs. A resume provides a quick summary of your academic ability, extracurricular activities, special abilities and talents, and leadership skills. From the summer before 9th grade all the way through graduation, students should keep a file listing all their activities and awards, as well as copies of their report cards and news articles. Resumes are helpful to those who are writing letters of recommendations for you. High school student resumes can include the following sections if applicable:

Name, Address, phone, email address

Education – school, GPA, ACT/SAT scores, etc.

Honors and Awards

Leadership Positions

Extracurricular Activities

Community Service

Work Experience

Personal/Professional References

Begin Researching Colleges

LOOK AT COLLEGE WEBSITES

- Obtain general information about admissions, scholarships, financial aid, and deadlines.
- Schedule a campus visit
- Investigate sources of financial aid
- Access online application forms
- Many colleges encourage telephone and e-mail inquiries and requests. Be sure to establish a permanent, AND PROFESSIONAL, e-mail address to use during the college admission process. **You may NOT use your ACA email as it expires upon graduation!**
- It is ok to be undecided about a major. Most colleges provide services to help students select a major during the freshman and/or sophomore year.

Campus Visit Checklist

A campus visit is highly recommended. Before you visit the campus, consider some of the options below. It is also important to develop a list of questions and plan specific activities to accomplish your goals.

- Meet with an admission officer.

- Verify admission requirements.
- Discuss your chances for success in certain programs.
- Find out how to apply.
- Obtain a school calendar and a catalog.
- Determine college costs.
- Ask about financial aid opportunities, as well as deadlines, forms required, etc.
- Meet with faculty in the department of your intended major.
- Ask questions about academic requirements/offerings.
- Attend a class to get an idea of typical size, teaching style, and academic atmosphere.
- Ask about the placement record for graduates in the field you might study.
- Identify career-planning services for undergraduates.
- Tour the campus, dorms, dining halls, library, etc.
- Talk to students about the general academic environment and the amount and kind of study necessary for success.
- Find out what student activities (clubs, organization, intramurals, etc.) are available.
- Investigate transportation options.

THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

When you apply to a college, you will typically submit several things: an application, a high school transcript, ACT or SAT score reports, letters of recommendation and one or more personal statements or essays. An important thing to note: applying for financial aid is a separate process that requires you to complete a separate set of forms.

Application

Most colleges prefer that students apply online. Most schools require you to list basic information about you and your family, as well as your GPA, standardized test scores, and any extracurricular activities or awards you earned in high school. Over 300 colleges and universities now accept the Common Application, a single form that you can fill out and submit to multiple schools. The Common Application is meant to simplify the admissions process for you; using this application means you do not have to complete individual application forms for each school to which you wish to apply. There is no penalty for using it: colleges are required to give equal consideration to students who use the Common Application and those who use the school's own application. If you do use the Common App, understand that schools may have supplementary forms that will need to be completed (including additional essays).

Transcript

Some colleges require that your high school send your transcript directly, others allow you, the applicant, to send it. If you wish to take it to the college personally, make sure it remains in its sealed envelope. Do not break the seal on the envelope or your transcripts will not be accepted!

To request an official transcript to be sent to a college or if you need an unofficial copy, please use the Transcript Request link that can be found on ACA's website, also found at the bottom of all of my emails.

- Go to ACA's website
- Click on Academics
- Click on Counselor's Corner
- Scroll down and click Request Transcript on the right side
- Click current student and fill out the google form

If you are using Common App:

- You must invite Ashley Tunnell as a recommender through your Common App account.
- Go to the "Recommenders and FERPA" section of your application, select "Invite Recommenders" or "Invite Advisor" and enter my email address (atunnell@acacademy.com).
- Once you have done this, I will receive an email from the app and can process your request.

If you are using Parchment:

- Some schools require you to request your transcript through Parchment. You will have to create an account.
- There is a fee.

ACT or SAT Score Report

When you take the ACT or SAT, you can request that a score report be sent to your prospective colleges. Make sure you leave plenty of time for your scores to be processed and sent. If you did not request that the scores be sent to a particular school initially, you can go back into your ACT or SAT account, pay a fee, and have the scores sent to the college of your choice.

Letters of Recommendation

Colleges and certain scholarships sometimes require letters of recommendation from high school teachers or guidance counselors. When requesting a letter of recommendation, pick someone who knows you well and can speak to your strengths. Provide them with a copy of your resume so they can use it to write the letter. Approach your potential letter-writers several weeks prior to the actual due date. **Please do not wait until the last minute.** Teachers and

administrators will need time to write your letters and may also be away from school during the time your letters will be needed.

Personal Statement or Essay

This is by far the most time-consuming and difficult part of any application. The personal statement or essay is usually about 300 to 500 words in length, occasionally longer, depending on the college. The prompt or question will be provided in the application. Be sure to write in your own voice and make sure to proofread your statement/essay before submission.

Financial Aid

Financial aid consists of any funding intended to help students pay for post-secondary (higher) education expenses in the form of grants, loans, work study or scholarships. In addition to any scholarships awarded to you based on merit or talent, you may also be eligible for additional aid in the form of grants, loans, and work study based on your expected family contribution. To be eligible for financial aid a student must complete the Free Application for Federal Financial Aid (FAFSA). **Most, colleges require students to fill out FAFSA.** Filling out FAFSA does NOT mandate that you accept student loan arrangements, grants, or work study opportunities, nor does it guarantee financial aid. Filling it out ONLY shows what your options are. This year, FAFSA opens on October 1, 2023 at <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>.

If you would like help with filling out the FAFSA application, Shelton State offers FAFSA Workshops. The FAFSA website is also very helpful.

Shelton State FAFSA Workshop: <https://www.sheltonstate.edu/admissions-financial-aid/financial-aid/fasfa-help-sessions/>

FAFSA Website: <https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out>

SCHOLARSHIP TIPS

1. Start searching and applying early
2. Contact the financial aid office of the college(s) you are considering and ask them for information about their scholarships.
3. Look at the list of Scholarships (in this folder) to see which ones you might apply for, what is required, when they open and what is the deadline.
4. Don't rule out a private college until you've seen their aid package.

5. Apply for local scholarships. They may be smaller amounts, but can be easier to get.
6. Be aware of deadlines.
7. Network. Check for scholarship opportunities with your job, church, and other organizations in which you are involved.
8. Use the internet to locate scholarships.
9. Give teachers and counselors plenty of time to complete their part of the application.
10. Read and follow all instructions for scholarship application.
11. Submit a clean and neat application.
12. Have a teacher proof-read any essays on the application.

College Athletics

The Eligibility Center certifies the academic and amateur credentials of all students who want to play sports at an NCAA Division I or II institution as freshmen. In order to practice, play and receive an athletics scholarship, students need to meet certain academic benchmarks. It is the student's responsibility to check requirements and make sure his/her senior courses ensure eligibility. Please see the link below for more information:

http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/eligibility_center/Student_Resources/CBSA.pdf

Corporate Partnerships and Apprentices Programs

Learn more about the Mercedes-Benz Mechatronics Program, Mercedes-Benz Tech Program, Nucor Technical Academy, Hunt Refining Company Operations Co-Op Program, and BF Goodrich Technical Scholar Program by looking at Corporate Partnerships and Apprenticeship Programs through Shelton State. These are companies that offer scholarship and apprentice programs through their companies.

<https://www.sheltonstate.edu/instruction-workforce-development/corporate-partnerships-and-apprenticeships/>

Military Career Options

Should I enter the Armed Services?

- All males who are at least 18 years old, who were born after December 31, 1959, and who are not currently on active duty with the armed forces must be registered with the Selective Service.
- The Armed Services are major employers in the US and are also major sources of educational training and preparation for entry-level jobs.

- There are numerous job training opportunities in the military for both men and women. If you would like to travel or earn good wages immediately, then military service may be for you. Representatives from all the services are available to give you information about career training and/or educational opportunities.
- You can seek additional information by visiting the recruiting offices in your area or by visiting their online websites. Service branches may also visit the school – be watching!
- Special opportunities for job training are offered to enlisted personnel who meet the testing requirements for specific jobs that may be useful in later civilian life as well. Additional courses are paid for when needed and the credits earned are an asset in future planning.
- All branches of the service offer educational assistance programs.

The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) –

The ASVAB is a test used by the services to help with career counseling and job placement. Here are some of the most frequently asked questions about the ASVAB:

1. What is the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery? The ASVAB is a group of twelve tests that measure your aptitude in five separated career field areas and provides an indication of your academic ability. The tests are General Information, Numerical Operations, Attention to Detail, Word Knowledge, Arithmetic Reasoning, Space Perception, Mathematics Knowledge, Electronic Information, Mechanical Comprehension, General Science, Shop Information, and Automotive Information. Your scores on these tests are combined into scores on the following composites: Verbal; Math; Perceptual Speed; Mechanical: Trade Technical; and Academic Ability.
2. Why should I take the ASVAB? The ASVAB is the result of more than 35 years of military service research. It was specifically designed to identify individual aptitudes. If you are a senior trying to decide what to do after high school, your test scores can help identify a career field worth exploring. No matter what your age or inclination, the ASVAB can be valuable to you because it can tell you more about yourself. The ASVAB is not a pass or fail test. Your scores will only show how well you did in comparison to a representative sample of other students in the United States who took the same tests. You have a lot to gain and nothing to lose when you take the ASVAB.
3. Do I incur any military obligation by taking the ASVAB? No, taking the ASVAB does not obligate you to the military in any way. You are free to use your test results in whatever manner you wish. Additionally, ASVAB results will not be used to enter your name in any draft registration system. You have an option to sign a statement authorizing release of your test scores to representatives of all the military services; and, like the majority of high school students, if you are an upperclassman, a service representative will probably contact you sometime before you graduate. You should expect this whether or not you ever take the ASVAB.

MILITARY RECRUITING STATIONS

US Marine Corps Recruiting

1241 McFarland Blvd E. Suite D-4

Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

(205) 343-2195

www.marines.com

US Coast Guard Recruiting

2933 Eastern Blvd.

Montgomery, AL 36116

(334) 279-4880

www.gocoastguard.com

US Army Recruiting

1241 McFarland Blvd E. Suite D-1

Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

(205) 343-2195

www.goarmy.com

National Guard Recruiting

1422 10th Ave.

Tuscaloosa, AL 35401

(256) 970-9931

www.nationalguard.com

US Naval Recruiting

1241 McFarland Blvd E. Suite D-3

Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

(205) 758-7220

www.navy.com

US Air Force Recruiting

1241 McFarland Blvd E. Suite D-2

Tuscaloosa, AL 35404

(205) 758-4353

www.airforce.com