



College Application Guide

Class of 2012

Questions? Contact Us!

Students A-L: Mrs. Shannon Brown, 428-5332, Shannon.Brown@alterhs.org

Students M-Z: Mrs. Courtney Graham, 428-5333, Courtney.Graham@alterhs.org

Administrative Assistant: Mrs. Teresa Rupper, 428-5316, Teresa.Rupper@alterhs.org

College and Scholarship Application Process

- Identify and meet application deadlines
 - On a single sheet a paper, compile a list of all college or scholarship application deadlines and the corresponding 'To the Guidance Office' deadline
- The Guidance Office requires at least **two weeks** to process and mail your application packet
 - Keep in mind we process an estimated 700 college applications on a **first-come, first-serve basis**
 - **DEADLINE EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE 2-WEEK RULE:**
 - *APPLICATIONS WITH A DECEMBER 1 DEADLINE MUST BE IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE BY **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28***
 - *APPLICATIONS TO BE MAILED BEFORE CHRISTMAS BREAK MUST BE IN THE GUIDANCE OFFICE BY **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 4***
- Some competitive programs (architecture, engineering, pharmacy, fine arts, etc.) may fill up in early fall. Contact the college and determine when they begin to accept students and how quickly the programs fill up
- A **"Release of Confidential Information"** form ('Yellow Form'), signed by you and a parent, **MUST BE ON FILE** in the Guidance Office before we can send transcripts to colleges, the NCAA Clearinghouse, etc.
 - You will receive this at the beginning of senior year
- A **\$2.00** fee is required for **each** transcript (payable in cash or by check to Alter High School) which is also utilized by the Guidance Office for postage to mail your application packet
- Check any application essays for correct grammar and spelling before submission
- Before you submit **Online Applications** (colleges prefer online applications over paper):
 - Be sure to use your full given name (i.e. Michael instead of Mike, Jennifer instead of Jenny, etc.)
 - Print all required supplemental forms such as **teacher recommendations, counselor recommendation, counselor information, college prep, secondary school report, mid-year report, final report, etc.**
 - These forms have different titles at each school and most colleges have supplemental forms
 - **COMPLETE ANY SECTIONS THE STUDENT IS REQUIRED TO FILL OUT!**
 - Bring Mrs. Rupper, the Administrative Assistant of the Guidance Office, the required forms and transcript fees and tell her which teacher(s) are writing your recommendation letter(s) or filling out the teacher recommendation form(s)
 - If applicable, give your selected teachers the **teacher recommendation form** along with your resume
 - Your resume will assist them in writing a good recommendation
 - Your teacher will send the recommendation directly to the Guidance Office
 - After Mrs. Rupper has all required forms and teacher recommendations, the application will be complete
 - If you are using **Paper Applications** rather than submitting your applications online, include these with the other forms you are giving Mrs. Rupper
 - With **Paper Applications**, if the college requires an application fee, also include a check made out to the college
 - We include an Alter High School profile in all your application packets, which outlines key facts about Alter, such as our grading scale
- **RESUMES** are not required; however we do encourage you create one to include with your application packet
 - Use your Peterson's Student Edge account (www.mystudentedge.com) to build your resume

- Select the 'Careers' tab → 'Build Your Resume' → 'Get Started' → Select one of 7 designs → Follow Prompts
- Utilize the Taylor Lab to create your resume, and we can proof it for you upon request
- When we mail your application packet, you will receive a verification notice from the Guidance Office
 - The college should verify by email, post card, or letter that your application is complete
 - Please keep in mind this may take SEVERAL weeks due to the large number of applications they process. Expect colleges to be at least 4-6 weeks behind opening mail in December
 - If you receive notice that your application is **not** complete, **please let us know**
- We will meet with you in the first quarter of senior year; however you may sign up at any time if you need to see your counselor

College Visits

- A total of three college visitation days during the junior and/or senior year are considered official absences. Please see page 22 of your student handbook for details
- If you are visiting on a school day, you must obtain a college visitation form from the Guidance Office prior to your absence in order to have your absence excused
- Arrange an official campus tour by calling the admissions office or visiting their website
- Make an appointment with an admissions counselor and bring your transcript and resume to this appointment
- Schedule a meeting with the department you are interested in and talk with them about their program
- Sit in on a class
- Stop by the financial aid office to inquire about financial aid and scholarships
- If appropriate, visit the minority affairs office to ask about special financial or academic opportunities for students of your ethnic background
- In the Guidance Office, we have pocket guides produced by the National Survey of Student Engagement, which provide important questions to ask on college visits. Pick one up before your visit!
- Try to visit colleges this summer!

College Representatives

- College representatives from in-state and out-of-state colleges visit Alter High School throughout the year to pass on important information about their institutions
- We set up presentations with college representatives from the historically 'most applied to schools' by our students (ex. University of Dayton, The Ohio State University, University of Cincinnati)
- The presentations will be held in the conference room or library
- Parents are welcome to attend; however we request calling the Guidance Office ahead of time to RSVP
- Seniors can attend **five** of these presentations
- Passes will be available in the Guidance Office for students interested in attending these programs
- These passes must be picked up prior to the first period on the day of the scheduled presentation
- Any student who does not pick up a pass will **not** be permitted to attend the presentation

Scholarships

- The scholarship search process can be even more laborious and time-consuming than the application process; however it pays off when you help earn money towards your higher education
- How to find scholarships:
 - Contact college financial aid offices to find out what applications exist for merit-based or need-based scholarships
 - Visit the college websites. Colleges post their scholarships differently, such as on a financial aid page, scholarship page, or even the individual department/college major websites

- Utilize the large scholarship search engines listed in the 'Resources' section of this packet
- Type 'scholarship' and a key word such as 'service' or 'dance' into search engines like Google
 - It may be necessary to contact the organization for their application
- The scholarship information we receive from outside sources will be posted on the scholarship wall outside the Guidance Office on the 3rd floor
 - Example: One opportunity for students is the Dayton-Montgomery County Scholarship Program, which supplies money for approximately 15 different scholarships and is posted in February
 - **CHECK THE SCHOLARSHIP WALL WEEKLY, ESPECIALLY IN THE WINTER!**
- Because this is a time-consuming process, summer would be a good time to research scholarships you can apply for during your senior year

College Tests*

PSAT/NMSQT: Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/about.html>

- Alter sophomores and juniors take this test in the fall, and it is only offered on one testing date (no make-ups)
- The junior year test qualifies eligible students for the National Merit Scholarship Corporation Programs
- PSAT/NMSQT measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills
- The most common reasons for taking the PSAT/NMSQT are to:
 - Receive feedback on your strengths and weaknesses on skills necessary for college study. You can then focus your preparation on those areas that could most benefit from additional study or practice
 - See how your performance on an admissions test might compare with that of others applying to college
 - Enter the competition for scholarships from NMSC (grade 11)
 - Help prepare for the SAT. You can become familiar with the kinds of questions and the exact directions you will see on the SAT
 - Receive information from colleges when you check "yes" to Student Search Service
- PSAT/NMSQT scores are reported on a scale of 20 to 80
- Also listed on your score report is the Selection Index, which is used to determine eligibility in National Merit Scholarship Corporation programs (NMSC). It is the sum of the three scores in each test section (CR + M + W)
 - The Selection Index ranges from 60 to 240
 - National Merit Semifinalists generally have selection index scores of 210+

SAT

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

- Most students take the SAT during the spring of their junior year of high school and many choose to take it a second time in the fall of their senior year after becoming familiar with the test day experience
- SAT is an aptitude test which measures critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills
- Each section of the SAT (critical reading, mathematics and writing) is scored on a 200 to 800 point scale, for a possible total of 2400
- SAT figures out your raw score by:
 - Adding points for correct answers and subtracting a fraction of a point for wrong answers
 - **Remember:** Questions that you skipped do not count either for or against your score, and points are not taken away for wrong answers on the math questions where you need to fill answers in a grid
 - SAT then takes your raw score and turns it into a scaled score. This is where the score of 200–800

points comes from. This process makes it possible to compare your score with the scores of other students who took alternative versions of the test, and to your own scores on previous tests

ACT

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

- Many students take the ACT test twice, once as a junior and again as a senior
 - Research shows that of the students who took the ACT more than once 55% increased their Composite score on the retest, 22% had no change in their Composite score on the retest, and 23% decreased their Composite score on the retest
- The ACT is an achievement test, measuring what a student has learned in school
- The ACT has up to 5 components: English, mathematics, reading, science, and an optional writing test
- Your Composite score and each test score (English, Mathematics, Reading, Science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high)
- The Composite Score is the average of your four test scores, rounded to the nearest whole number
- ACT figures out your raw score by:
 - Counting the number of questions on each test that you answered correctly
 - **Remember:** ACT does not deduct any points for incorrect answers. (There is no penalty for guessing)
 - ACT then converts your raw scores (number of correct answers on each test) to "scale scores." Scale scores have the same meaning for all the different forms of the ACT, no matter which test date a test was taken

SAT Subject Tests

<http://sat.collegeboard.com/register/sat-subject-test-dates>

- Most often used for admittance and placement in **very competitive** colleges
- SAT offers 20 different Subject Tests in the areas of English, math, science, history and languages that measure your knowledge of that specific subject
- You may take up to three SAT Subject Tests on a single test date
- Some colleges recommend and others require SAT Subject Tests for admission or course placement
 - Check requirements of colleges where you might apply before registering for the Subject Tests because they may require certain tests or let you choose the Subject Test you wish to take
 - If you can choose which test to take, you should choose based on your interests and academic strengths

Advanced Placement Exams

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/ap/about.html>

- Alter High School offers 9 AP courses
- The fee for each exam is \$87
- Over 90% of 4-year colleges in the U.S. provide credit and/or advanced placement for qualifying scores
- Individual colleges and universities, not the College Board or the AP Program, grant course credit and placement. Because it varies from school to school, you should obtain a college's AP policy in writing. You can find this information in the institution's catalogue or on its Web site, or by using collegeboard.com's "AP Credit Policy" Info search
- The AP score range is 1-5
- AP Score Reports are sent in July to the college you designated on your answer sheet, to you, and to your high school

*College Tests' information taken directly from testing websites

ACT/SAT Online Registration

http://www.actstudent.org	
ACT Test Dates	Register By
September 10, 2011	August 12, 2011
October 22, 2011	September 16, 2011
December 10, 2011	November 4, 2011
February 11, 2012	January 13, 2012

http://www.collegeboard.org	
SAT Test Dates	Register By
October 1, 2011	September 9, 2011
November 5, 2011	October 7, 2011
December 3, 2011	November 8, 2011
January 28, 2012	December 30, 2011

- Some colleges require a writing test
 - The ACT writing section requires an additional fee and only needs to be taken once
 - The SAT automatically includes a writing section
- **Many colleges require official test scores sent directly from the testing agency**
 - Choose a few colleges to send the scores to for free when registering
 - Scores can also be sent to colleges at a later date for a fee
- Alter's high school CEEB code: **362794**
- If you plan to play varsity athletics in college, you must send your testing scores to the **NCAA Clearinghouse** (Their code is **9999**)

Senior Year Transcript/Application Packet

- Outline of your high school courses and final grades through 6 semesters including the cumulative GPA
- Standardized testing scores including results of the 10th grade Ohio Graduation Tests
- Copy of your senior class schedule
- Alter High School Profile
- Any supplemental forms required by the college, recommendation letter(s), and resume
- Applications sent after the 7th semester will include most recent transcript/grades

Resources

Financial Aid www.fafsa.ed.gov www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov www.finaid.org www.collegeanswer.com	Scholarships www.fastweb.com www.schoolsoup.com www.scholarships.com www.brokescholar.com www.supercollege.com	Test Preparation www.mystudentedge.com** www.number2.com www.actstudent.org www.collegeboard.com www.kaptest.com www.princetonreview.com
General College Search Info www.mystudentedge.com** www.petersons.com www.collegeboard.org	Career www.mystudentedge.com** ACT Discover** www.bls.gov/oco www.kuder.com	College Essay Writing www.essayedge.com

Peterson's Student Edge is an all-inclusive college, career, and test preparation resource available to Alter students through the Taylor Resource Center in room 208. All students receive Student Edge accounts their freshman year and can utilize this online program wherever internet is available. ACT Discover is a career planning resource also available in the Taylor Resource Center. **We strongly encourage you utilize the Taylor Resource Center during your study hall for all its college planning and test preparation resources!

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