



# COLLEGE COUNSELING GUIDEBOOK 2014-2015





*“Just as teachers at the Harkness table create a student-centered learning environment, the College Counseling Office fosters active and open-minded collaboration with students and parents. In this supportive environment, students learn to identify their goals and interests, to manage a complex process, and to make healthy and confident decisions about higher education. Fundamentally, we believe that each student should control the self-evaluation, research, and application writing that is essential to good college selection. Keep in mind that the journey is as important as the destination and nowhere is that notion more appropriately applied than to the college process.”*

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## MEET THE COLLEGE COUNSELING OFFICE

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**ELIZABETH M. DOLAN**

Director of College Counseling, [edolan@exeter.edu](mailto:edolan@exeter.edu)

**PAMELA R. APPLETON**

Associate Director of College Counseling, [pappleton@exeter.edu](mailto:pappleton@exeter.edu)

**GRETCHEN BERGILL**

Associate Director of College Counseling, [gbergill@exeter.edu](mailto:gbergill@exeter.edu)

**KAREN CLAGETT**

Associate Director of College Counseling, [kclagett@exeter.edu](mailto:kclagett@exeter.edu)

**R. CARY EINHAUS**

Associate Director of College Counseling, [ceinhaus@exeter.edu](mailto:ceinhaus@exeter.edu)

**MARK HOVEN**

Associate Director of College Counseling, [mhoven@exeter.edu](mailto:mhoven@exeter.edu)

**MICHELLE THOMPSON-TAYLOR**

Associate Director of College Counseling, [methompson1@exeter.edu](mailto:methompson1@exeter.edu)

**LAURIE CAPONE**

Administrative Manager, [lcapone@exeter.edu](mailto:lcapone@exeter.edu)

**SARAH A. HERRICK**

Program and Operations Manager, [sherrick@exeter.edu](mailto:sherrick@exeter.edu)

**CORI A. KINGSLEY**

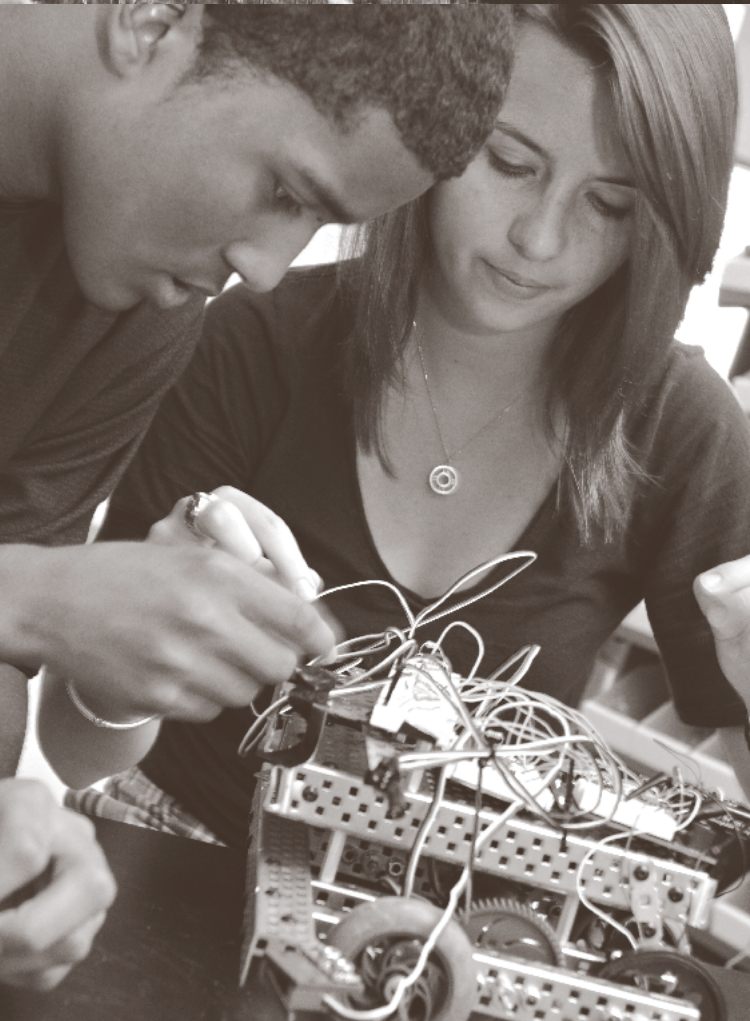
Staff Assistant & Standardized Testing Coordinator, [ckingsley@exeter.edu](mailto:ckingsley@exeter.edu)

**MAUREEN SEMPRINI**

Staff Assistant, [msemprini@exeter.edu](mailto:msemprini@exeter.edu)

Phillips Exeter Academy College Counseling Office  
20 Main Street, Exeter, New Hampshire 03833-2460  
Tel 603-772-4311 • Fax 603-777-4326  
[ccoffice@exeter.edu](mailto:ccoffice@exeter.edu) • [www.exeter.edu/college](http://www.exeter.edu/college)  
Located in the Frederick R. Mayer Center on Tan Lane





# COLLEGE COUNSELING GUIDEBOOK

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# Welcome to Exeter.

Your time here  
will help lay  
the foundation  
for the rest of  
your life.

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## PEA COLLEGE COUNSELING

**7 VETERAN  
COLLEGE  
COUNSELORS**

**= 150+**

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE



**WELCOME TO THE COLLEGE PROCESS.** Since you have already gone through a selective admissions process when you applied to Phillips Exeter, you have a sense of all that is involved. You have taken appropriate testing, filled out applications, asked teachers to recommend you, and interviewed in order to gain admission to Exeter.

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This time, the task may appear more daunting. There are more than 2,500 colleges and universities in the United States – not to mention universities in Canada and overseas – from which to develop a list of appropriate matches. You have also heard about today’s competitive admission picture at the most selective colleges and the increasing tuition costs at these schools. You are maybe left wondering, “Which schools will admit me, and can I afford to attend?”

The staff of Exeter’s College Counseling Office stands ready to guide you through the college admissions maze, ready to talk with you about your choices and concerns as we work together in the months ahead. In addition, we offer you this guide.

The College Counseling Guidebook offers vital information all in one convenient place. The information is organized chronologically, according to the seasons. Prep and lower years form the foundation of your academic achievement, and the fall term of your upper year is the beginning of standardized testing. Winter and spring of your upper year is the time when you and your counselor get to know each other and begin to form college lists. In summer and fall of your senior year campus visits, research, and college lists are finalized. By early winter, the applications are completed. Finally, in the winter and spring, admissions officers make their decisions, and you finally make your choice. Additional chapters cover candidates with special considerations and discuss how decisions are made.

This Guidebook is written directly for you the student, although it is intended to be shared with your parents and others who may be interested in its contents.

The college process is one of self-discovery, when students take stock of their ambitions, strengths, and challenges as they begin to build a list of college choices. Students are responsible for contacting colleges for interview appointments, signing up for appropriate tests by the deadlines, and putting the necessary energy into all aspects of the application process. Just as you have been responsible for attending to your academic commitments and personal needs at the Academy, you must invest fully in researching and applying to colleges. At all times, you should be at the center of your college admissions process, learning to take charge of it and eventually owning it.

In this endeavor, your parents and college counselor will support and encourage you. As stewards, the college counselors will offer you important guidance along the way. Your college counselor is a counselor, not a placement officer, who supports you in your choices and offers a realistic assessment of your chances of admission to colleges. Your parents will offer you moral support and encouragement along the way. The process requires close communication and cooperation among the important players – student, parents, and counselor. Success is most often achieved when we all approach our various roles with an open mind, humor, and commitment.

## COLLEGE COUNSELING HONESTY & INTEGRITY STATEMENT

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*One of the core values of Phillips Exeter Academy is honesty. Every aspect of the college process is built upon the trust between student and counselor, counselor and parents, student and colleges, and the Academy and colleges. The success of the college process is thus integrally dependent upon the honesty and integrity of all involved. Exeter's College Counseling Office (CCO) is committed to fostering and expecting the value of honesty inherent in the Academy's founding principles of "goodness and knowledge."*

*The Exeter College Counseling Office is committed to effective advocacy for every student and seeks to develop on-going relationships with students, parents, and colleges that will support both present and future Academy students. The CCO can best fulfill its responsibilities when everyone the college process adheres to the highest requirements of truth. While the "larger" culture sometimes places inordinate emphasis on individuals to attain goals at any cost, we believe that completing the college admissions process with honesty and integrity is important in itself and is as important as any eventual outcome.*

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## THE COLLEGE COUNSELING PARTNERSHIP

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*The College Counseling Office believes that the college admissions process involves a partnership between you and your counselor. The success of this partnership depends upon students, parents and counselors fulfilling their obligations and maintaining open communication throughout the admissions process. We have detailed below the expectations and responsibilities of each partner.*

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### STUDENTS

**Prior to your first individual meeting with your college counselor in upper winter, you should:**

- Attend the required all-upper opening meeting and come to the College Counseling Office to schedule your first individual meeting.
- Complete the Student Questionnaire found on the College Counseling Office's Naviance website. It is imperative that you answer all of the questions on the Questionnaire thoughtfully and thoroughly. The information from the Questionnaire helps guide counselors in their discussions with you and aids them in writing the recommendation they send to your list of schools.
- Begin to regularly check your Academy email, post office box, and social media accounts for important updates from the CCO.

**At your first one-on-one counseling meeting in upper winter, you and your counselor will:**

- Review your Questionnaire, and talk openly about what you are looking for in a college.
- Discuss future course work and appropriate AP's and SAT II subject tests.

**During the remainder of upper winter term and over spring break, you should:**

- Attend a required college resource meeting, and complete the college search homework assignment which will be given to you. This exercise helps you understand what criteria are critical to you and the colleges in the admissions process.
- Engage in standardized test prep for the SAT/ACT.
- Discuss college costs with your family.
- Visit, if possible, a variety of college campuses during spring break (the "Goldilocks" college tour).
- Consider taking, if possible, the SAT I over spring break.

**During your upper spring term, you should:**

- Schedule your second and third one-on-one meetings with your college counselor, having completed your college search homework assignment (preliminary college list) prior to your second meeting.
- Attend a required mock admissions meeting, which is designed to offer you a hands-on understanding of how selective admission committees review applications.

- Attend the Spring College Fair.
- Take appropriate SAT I, SAT II, ACT and/or AP exams in spring term. Students considering an Early Decision or Early Action application should have taken one set of SAT Is and two SAT IIs by the end of spring term.
- Begin researching Category I, II, III, IV, and V college choices from your preliminary college list, using the resources available on line, in college guidebooks, from admission officers attending the annual spring college fair and, if applicable, other panels and workshops for athletes, students studying abroad, etc.

**By the end of upper spring term, you should:**

- Establish a balanced, tentative list of college choices with the guidance of your college counselor and your parents. You must include colleges across the spectrum of admissions selectivity (Category I, II, III, IV and V schools), and colleges that will address your financial aid concerns.
- Request recommendations from two teachers.
- Complete a draft of the Common Application, and discuss possible essay topics with your counselor.

**Over summer break, you should:**

- Review the late June letter from your college counselor, listing your preliminary colleges and their admissions selectivity (Category I, II, III, IV and V), as well as suggestions/comments regarding your list.
- Try to visit colleges from each of your Category I, II, III, IV and V categories. Take a formal campus tour, attend an information session, and schedule an on-campus interview, where appropriate. Schedule visits well in advance.
- Finish your Common Application, along with drafts of essays and supplements.
- Continue to talk with your family about the admissions process and begin narrowing your choices while maintaining a balanced list.
- Talk to your family about the possible need for financial aid.

**During the fall of your senior year, you are expected to do the following:**

- Meet at least twice individually with your counselor, and attend required all-senior class meetings and workshops.
- Finalize and narrow your list of college choices, while maintaining a balance of admissions selectivity.
- Complete your SAT Is and SAT IIs and send all of your scores to all your colleges through the College Board/ACT before application deadlines.
- Confirm your recommendations with your teacher recommenders, and invite them to submit their recommendations electronically via Naviance, or, if necessary, provide them with forms, stamps, and envelopes.
- Meet with college representatives at college mini-fairs and, as applicable, schedule interviews.
- Complete your applications and supplemental forms by their deadlines, and, if applying for need-based financial aid, complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile before college deadlines.

**PARENTS**

Throughout students' college search, parents can support their children by listening to students' ideas and concerns, by empowering them to make their own decisions, by helping them manage important details and deadlines, and by encouraging students' well-being during what for some adolescents can be a very stressful process. At all times, parents are welcome to contact college counselors to talk with them about their child's process.

**During uppers' winter and spring terms, parents should:**

- Complete the Parent Questionnaire on the Naviance website, to help your child's counselor understand him/her better and to aid the counselor in writing the composite recommendation letter for colleges.
- Help students to identify and articulate their personal criteria for their college search by listening and by offering realistic feedback.
- Discuss college costs with your child and your family's need for merit- or need-based financial aid.



- If possible, schedule a handful of “Goldilocks” colleges visits at universities of varying degrees of selectivity, during Exeter’s spring break.

#### **During the summer:**

- Help students plan to visit colleges from each of their I, II, III, IV, and V selectivity categories, by facilitating travel arrangements during your family’s summer vacation.
- Continue to listen to your child’s evolving college criteria as students begin narrowing down their preliminary college list while maintaining several colleges that offer a range of selectivity.

#### **During senior fall and winter, parents should:**

- Help students plan college visits and interviews, as applicable, during college days, over Family Weekend, and over Thanksgiving break.
- If applying for need-based financial aid, complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile before college deadlines, and provide colleges with necessary financial aid documentation.
- During vacations, provide space and a supportive environment so your child can complete their college applications, essays, and supplements over Thanksgiving vacation and, as necessary, winter break.

#### **At all times during the college process, parents should:**

- Empower your child to make his or her own decisions; do not send the message that your child cannot handle the process.
- Promote integrity and model good behavior; children still learn from their parents’ example.
- Pay attention to verbal and physical cues that show your child’s stress, to encourage their physical and emotional well-being.
- Be a refuge by remaining calm and confident in the face of the process’ ups and downs, to help your child follow your example.

### **COUNSELORS**

Your college counselor will support you initially as you develop a balanced college list matched to your particular interests and abilities, and continue working with you through the application process. Important information about events and college visitors will appear on Blackboard, email bulletins, social media, as well as in periodical mailings, so you must check these regularly.

In addition, the college counselors cultivate relationships with colleges and universities, and with returning students, both to explain the unique features of the Exeter program and to understand the admissions procedures at particular institutions. Your counselor will be your resource and your guide, but remember that you do the work, and the college makes the choice.









## CHAPTER 1

# **PREP AND LOWER YEARS, AND FALL OF UPPER YEAR**

**“Keep in mind that the journey is as important as the destination and nowhere is that notion more appropriately applied than to the college process.”**



From a developmental perspective—as educators, as advisors, as parents—the College Counseling Office believes that “the college process” should be the farthest thing from a prep or lower’s mind. Ninth and tenth grade are a time where you should focus on developing intellectual interests through curricular investigation, study habits through independent initiative, and extracurricular and athletic passions through after-class exploration.

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Given how the college process can sometimes feel like a high-stakes, stressful process for seniors, we do not believe underclass students at the Academy should be anxious about life after Exeter at the very beginning of their Exeter careers.

However, we recognize that many Exeter prep and lower students and their parents may have questions about the college process and Exeter’s academic curriculum and extracurricular offerings, as well as standardized testing. The thoughtful choices that you make now as a prep or a lower can certainly impact your college search, and potentially, your college choices as a senior. While your faculty dorm or day student advisor is always your first resource for questions about your academic program and schedule, we offer these recommendations as you chart the next three or four years at Exeter.

### **ACADEMIC CURRICULUM**

As you plan your Exeter course program with your dorm/day student faculty advisor, you can be confident that the Academy’s graduation requirements, along with the depth and breadth of Exeter’s curriculum, will fulfill many colleges’ admission requirements. Exeter’s requirements for English, math, science, social science (history and religion), and foreign language help you gain a broad exposure across the curriculum, yet still have some curricular flexibility to discover and explore your intellectual passions.

For more information go to [http://www.exeter.edu/academics/72\\_5770.aspx](http://www.exeter.edu/academics/72_5770.aspx).

Given Exeter’s graduation requirements, colleges expect you to take a challenging curriculum that is appropriate for a student’s ability and current level of achievement. College admission committees appreciate students who challenge themselves – but colleges do not want you to be in ‘over your head,’ so that you are struggling. You should choose an academic program that is manageable, yet challenges you to do your best.

Most 300 and 400-level courses at the Academy are equivalent to college-level courses, and Exeter also offers ‘enriched,’ ‘intensive,’ and ‘accelerated’ coursework, often marked with an asterisk on your transcript. However, when planning your schedule, you should always speak with your academic advisor or your subject teacher, as appropriate, to determine whether enrolling in an enriched section or accelerating your studies are appropriate for you. If your teacher and/or faculty advisor believe that you can move up a level in difficulty and not have your grades drop, then you should consider taking on this challenge; if you or they aren’t sure, you can feel confident remaining in your course sequence.

Although Exeter’s graduation requirements for three- and four-year seniors are extensive, many highly-selective colleges require curricular depth beyond Exeter’s requirements, or expect students to pursue your intellectual interests in greater depth. For example, Exeter only requires two years of a lab science, including biology, for a four-year senior; most selective universities – even colleges with admission rates greater than 50% – expect successful candidates to have a minimum of three years of lab science. Some engineering programs expect students to have studied both chemistry and physics, with both 400-level math and additional physical

science study in your senior year. College admission office webpages will often detail expected requirements for successful applicants, and are your best resource, if you have specific questions.

## **ACADEMIC SCHEDULE**

**As you plan your academic schedule, keep in mind the following about specific subjects and study opportunities:**

**ENGLISH:** Although many selective colleges and universities recognize that Exeter's extensive senior electives sometimes can replace a spring English elective with no loss to your reading and writing experience, most state universities – and some highly-selective private colleges – require or recommend four full years of English. In addition, if you are a varsity athlete who is planning to compete on a Division I or II intercollegiate team, the NCAA requires that you complete four full years of English. **(Additional information about NCAA requirements can be found in Chapter VIII of the Guidebook.)**

**MATH:** After completing Exeter's graduation requirement – completion of Math 330 – you should select additional math coursework based upon your ability and interest, after discussing your options with your faculty advisor and your current math teachers. Generally, the most qualified applicants to highly-selective colleges and universities will have taken calculus (Math 410 and beyond), and you may be at a disadvantage at the most selective colleges if you have not.

If you are a prospective quantitative major, colleges expect you to have mastered Exeter's 400-level calculus sequence, with as much math beyond Exeter's graduation requirement as your schedule permits. If you intend to study science, engineering, economics, or business at a highly selective university, you should strongly consider taking calculus at Exeter, both for admission and in preparation for successful completion of your first-year college coursework.

Exeter's math electives are often good choices for students who would like to study the humanities or social sciences in college, but who would like to continue math. While some admissions offices may still favor calculus, even the most selective universities recognize that Exeter's math electives are taught at the level of college courses. Coursework in statistics and math modeling can be very useful if you are planning to do social science research; humanities students may enjoy studying

the history of math or discrete math. Speak with your dorm/day student advisor to see if these options may be appropriate for you.

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE:** The Academy requires students to demonstrate language proficiency beyond 330 coursework or its equivalent. Whether you continue with a foreign language depends on your ability, interests, and intended college major.

Most selective colleges and universities, however, expect students to have studied three years of the same foreign language; some highly-selective universities expect four years of study, or at least proficiency at the fourth-year level, of one foreign language.

Studying more than one foreign language while at the Academy can be done, but it is very difficult, given the breadth of Exeter's graduation requirements and given that students are restricted to only five courses each term.

Because of prior junior high school study or heritage language skills learned at home, some Exeter students begin their foreign language studies at an advanced level. If you will fulfill the Academy's graduation requirement as a prep or lower, you should not drop the language, until you have demonstrated greater mastery with fourth year-level study. If your potential college major includes linguistics or international affairs, you might consider starting a new language – particularly a language that offers the option of two-years-in-one accelerated study, or a senior-only language, such as Arabic or Italian, which are accelerated courses. Or consider adding a new language in addition to advanced study in the original foreign language, if your schedule and fulfillment of graduation requirements permits.

You should be aware, however, that many of the most selective colleges prefer that applicants attain full fluency in one non-heritage foreign language, rather than a less-in-depth exposure in two languages.

## **STUDY ABROAD & OFF-CAMPUS PROGRAMS:**

Colleges appreciate the maturity, independence, and cultural enrichment a new environment brings to a student, and the Academy offers an extensive number of term- and year-long study programs, both in the U.S. and overseas. And many three- and four-year seniors find that time away from campus can invigorate your studies, and help you appreciate Exeter more.

Students considering off-campus programs must plan well and in advance, to make certain that your graduation requirements will be completed before you leave Exeter or when you return to campus. Study abroad programs may also restrict your curricular choices. For example, if you study off-campus for a term in England, France, Spain, or Germany during your senior year, you will not be able to take full-year courses, such as the three-term science sequences in Advanced Biology, Chemistry, and Physics. If your college plans include studying science or engineering, you will need to consider this carefully. By planning ahead, you might be able to complete such coursework in your upper year, or take 400+ science electives.

Most students find there isn't a "right or wrong" answer when considering an educational program away from the Academy. But taking an inventory of interests and ensuring the program is a good match are important factors in creating a successful educational experience, both on- and off-campus.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

### IMPORTANT CODES

PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY  
CEEBCODE

**300185**

EXETER HIGH SCHOOL  
SAT TEST CENTER

**30145**

EXETER HIGH SCHOOL  
ACT TEST CENTER

**238260**

As a successful Exeter applicant, you are already familiar with standardized testing, such as the ISEE or SSAT. There are a number of other tests that you will take before you graduate from Exeter, and a thorough explanation of these exams – the SAT I, SAT II, ACT, AP and TOEFL – can be found in Chapter II, under the section on Standardized Testing. Find below details about the few exams that you may take as an Exeter prep, lower, or during the fall term of your upper year.

### PSAT/NMSQT—PRELIMINARY SAT/ NATIONAL MERIT QUALIFYING TEST

The PSAT is administered every October to high school tenth and eleventh graders nationwide. Similar in format

to the SAT I, the PSAT measures the critical reading, math problem-solving, and writing skills that students have developed through the first half of their high school career. The PSAT also gives students firsthand practice for the SAT I. PSAT scores are reported as two-digit numbers ranging from 20 to 80; score reports also include national percentiles which allow you to compare your scores with other students in your grade level who have taken the PSAT.

The National Merit Scholarship Program (<http://www.nationalmerit.org/nmsp.php>) uses the PSAT to screen students of exceptional test-taking ability who may qualify for one of its scholarships. If your score is above a certain threshold, which varies each year, you will be notified of your semi-finalist status and invited to complete an application for the final round of competition. This notification process takes place in September of your senior year.

Although only the PSAT score from your upper year counts in the National Merit competition, we strongly encourage lowers to take the PSAT as practice for the "official" PSAT and for the SAT I.

The PSAT exam is administered at Exeter High School and transportation is provided by the Academy. Uppers are automatically registered for the PSAT and lowers will receive registration instructions at the beginning of fall term. Preps cannot take the PSAT. Additional information about the PSAT is available on the College Board website at <http://www.collegeboard.org/psat>.

### TEST PREPARATION

No student should take any standardized test without first preparing, yet your schedule of classes, sports, and extracurricular activities here at Exeter leaves little time for test prep. We encourage preps and lowers to use summer vacation as an opportunity to review for the PSAT, using free publications from the College Board and other test-taking guides.

### OTHER STANDARDIZED TESTING

A small handful of Exeter preps and lowers may consider taking a SAT II Subject Test in a particular academic field; **additional information about the SAT II can be found in Chapter II, under the section on Standardized Testing.**

If you are excelling in any 400-level science course (or Chemistry 319), many 300-level language courses, Math 430 (or above), or History 215, you may consider taking a



SAT II Subject Test in that field at the end of the academic year, following the completion of the course. The June SAT II test date generally falls after the last day of spring classes, during which time most students will be at home and can test at their local high school. Students who live overseas can petition the Dean's Office to remain on campus until the afternoon following the exam.

If you have any questions about whether you should take an SAT II Subject Exam, you should speak with your subject teachers and your academic advisor.

### ***SAT Score Choice***

Some parents want their prep or lower child to try the SAT I prior to the second half of the eleventh grade year – the developmental period in a student's high school career for which the test was designed. Indeed, the College Board implemented a "Score Choice" option, in order to allow students to choose by test date the SAT I or SAT II scores they send to colleges. While Score Choice might tempt parents to encourage their children to take the SAT multiple times, many highly-selective colleges have stated that they will require students to submit their entire testing history, so that weaker testing – even when taken as a prep or lower, or at the beginning of upper year – will be received and potentially reviewed in the admissions process. Learn more about Score Choice online, at <https://sat.collegeboard.org/register/satscore-choice>.

Given this trend among the most selective universities, the Academy strongly believes that no prep or lower should take an SAT I or ACT exam prior to the winter term of his/her senior year, unless explicitly required by a scholarship or summer enrichment program, or a college athletic coach. In addition, Exeter High School – the SAT testing site to which the Academy provides transportation when school is in session – only has space to accommodate Exeter's senior class in the fall or winter terms, and upper class in the spring term. By scheduling your testing at the time when it is appropriate for you developmentally and when you are most likely to earn stronger scores, you are also acting in the best spirit of 'Non sibi,' to help assure that your senior classmates are not shut-out from taking the SAT I or II exam, when the timing of the test is critical.

We encourage you to follow our recommended guidelines for standardized testing, which can be viewed online, at [http://www.exeter.edu/documents/Standardized\\_Testing\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.exeter.edu/documents/Standardized_Testing_Guidelines.pdf).

## **EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS**

Learning and growth continue outside the classroom. Many parents narrowly focus on their son or daughter's academic curriculum, while forgetting the importance of co-curricular or extracurricular interests. While a student's academic achievement is primary in the application process, your extracurricular portfolio not only will be reviewed with your application to college, but also activities not only for the college admission process.

Broadly speaking, extracurricular activities are simply anything you do that is not part of an Exeter course. The Academy offers over one hundred campus clubs, over sixty sports teams, over fifteen performance groups, and numerous service opportunities. Your prep and lower years offer the chance to explore Exeter's clubs, teams, volunteer opportunities, and other activities, as both a chance to strengthen your leadership skills, to demonstrate your commitment to 'Non sibi' service to others, and to discover your passions. And given that colleges and universities seek to create a vibrant social community, college admission committees appreciate an applicant's genuine interest and demonstrated leadership in non-academic activities.

When it comes to extracurriculars, less is often more. You may find enjoyment in being involved in a variety of activities, but don't join every club on campus for a term and then drop the activity; you should develop a deeper commitment in a small number. This gives you, from a developmental perspective, an opportunity to achieve mastery in a few extracurricular interests. From an admissions perspective, demonstrated commitment helps confirm for a college that you are sincerely interested in an activity, instead of simply pursuing it so that it looks good on your college application. Remember that many selective colleges are not necessarily seeking the "well-rounded student," as much as the well-rounded freshman class.

While Exeter offers a wide range of opportunities, you should define your extracurricular activities in broad terms, not thinking of them solely as school-sponsored or during the academic year. For example, summer internships and research programs count as extracurriculars. Activities organized in your home community through civic or religious groups are also extracurriculars. Spend time developing your hobbies and independent interests, whether model railroads, vintage LP collecting, blogging, or knitting. (We're sorry: gaming and social media do not count!) Even

paid employment – especially a typical teen job such as scooping ice cream, working at a drive-thru, or busing tables – is viewed as an extracurricular activity (and can get you noticed by a college admission officer as someone who understands the value of a day’s work).

Additional information about extracurricular activity and the college process can be found in Chapter IV of this Guidebook.

## **SUMMER ACTIVITIES**

Following your prep and lower years, you should use your summers primarily for rest and relaxation, instead of cramming every week of vacation full of resume-building activities that leave you (and often your parents) exhausted before the start of another busy academic year.

Yet given how filled your Exeter schedule can be, many students intentionally use part of the summer as an opportunity to develop their intellectual and extracurricular interests through volunteer work, athletic or special interest camps, part-time employment, enrichment programs, or travel. Choose summer activities that will both energize you and further your growth.

Many students at other high schools are regularly encouraged by their parents to pursue summer school and scholastic camps, as opportunities for intellectual growth. Given that colleges recognize Exeter’s curricular rigor, we encourage you to be judicious with academic enrichment programs: from an admission committee’s perspective, summer after summer in a classroom can, counter-intuitively, be a less appealing use of a perspective student’s summer vacation.

Many families travel over the summer, and while no family trip of a prep or lower should be organized around college visits, we recommend that, if possible, you and your parents consider incorporating one or two ‘practice’ college tours into your summer family vacation. A practice tour college should be picked based upon the location of your family holiday, and not visa versa. One or two ‘practice’ college tours will help you gain a better sense about the qualities you are searching for in your future college home. The best ‘practice’ tours are what Exeter’s College Counseling Office calls “Goldilocks” college tours: a big, medium, or small college and/or a rural, suburban, or city college. For preps and lowers, the name recognition or perceived reputation of a college for a “Goldilocks” tour isn’t necessarily important. Indeed,

our experience has shown that a college tour of a highly-selective university for a prep or lower can often increase a student’s anxiety about the college admission process, as a prep or lower worries – rightly or wrongly – about meeting perceived parental expectations.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT, COMMUNICATION, AND EXPECTATIONS**

For a prep or lower parent or guardian, there are very tasks related to the college admission process that needs to be completed, other than the few recommendations noted above. However, the relationship that you establish with your child in his or her first years at the Academy will pay dividends later, as your active listening, emotional openness, and honesty will build a foundation for the communication necessary to support your child in navigating the college process and in transitioning from adolescence to adulthood.




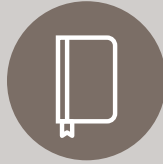
Often Exeter students experience some anxiety about the college process. For many students, the college process may be the first time in their lives when they have worked hard towards a specific goal, but have not been able to achieve what they want. And without any need to be reminded of the fact by adults, students know very well how the college process has become more selective.

Look at the ways that you presently support your child’s emotional and physical well-being at Exeter. Identify the healthiest ways to continue to support your child as his or her anxiety builds, particularly with the approach of the upper year. Help your child assess their strengths and their areas for growth. Listen more that you speak.

Finally, be honest about expectations you have placed on your child, whether real or imagined. Your child has become very skilled at picking up clues, both verbal and non-verbal, about what you think; be mindful of what you say and how you say it. Adolescents’ sensitivity can be heightened as the college process approaches, and by modeling mature and calm behavior, you can reassure them both of your unwavering support and that they are ready for adult life after Exeter.

The College Counseling Office has assembled a variety of recommended books, websites, magazine and web articles as a resource for how to parent your adolescent not just during the college process, but also in his or her transition to adulthood. Resources are identified at appropriate junctures throughout the Guidebook and summarized at the end of each chapter.

## PREP AND LOWER YEARS, AND FALL OF UPPER YEAR

TESTING	PROGRAMMING	COMMUNICATIONS	RECOMMENDED READING	
				
PSAT	REQUIRED MEETING FOR PREPS & LOWERS (SEPTEMBER)	SPRING TESTING LETTER TO PREPS & LOWERS	<i>CONNECT</i> BY ED HALLOWELL (PREPS)	
	FAMILY WEEKEND EVENTS (OCTOBER)	SUMMER TESTING LETTER TO LOWERS	<i>THE PARENTS WE MEAN TO BE</i> BY RICHARD WEISSBOURD (LOWERS)	
		WINTER TESTING LETTER TO LOWERS	<i>I'M GOING TO COLLEGE - NOT YOU!</i> BY JENNIFER DELAHUNTY (UPPERS)	













## CHAPTER 2

# **WINTER AND SPRING OF UPPER YEAR**



**“There is no one college that is the ‘perfect fit’ for anyone. Focus on your personal criteria and a list of schools will follow.”**

As you begin your college exploration, approach your search with a commitment to work hard and be candid about yourself and your past achievement.

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### CONSIDERATIONS FOR YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH

The experience of the College Counseling Office has shown that, too frequently, students and families begin the college search focusing on the well-known handful of highly-selective colleges that are familiar household names. We encourage you as you begin your search process to forget about college names, and concentrate on establishing and identifying your own personal, unique criteria for selecting a college before carefully researching a wide range of the schools that meet your needs. In your search, focus on your personal criteria – the list of schools will follow.

We've grouped together general categories below to help frame your thoughts about your college search. Each category offers several questions to ask yourself about your interests, goals, needs, and wishes for your potential colleges.

#### TYPE OF INSTITUTION

##### Public, Private, Secular, Non-Denominational, Religious Affiliation

As you consider the type of institutions in which you may be interested, ask yourself these “self-evaluation” questions:

- Am I receiving any financial assistance from Phillips Exeter? How important is financial aid to my college studies?
- Do I have a religious affiliation which may influence my college choice? Is it important for me to attend college with others who share my beliefs and values?

Like high schools, institutions of higher education can be either public or private. Many of the nationally ranked colleges in the United States are state-supported institutions. Often these schools can offer an exceptional, top-tier education at a fraction of the price of private schools for in-state residents, and even a substantially reduced tuition for out-of-state students. At this early

stage of your investigation, we would strongly encourage you to consider both private and public universities. If financial aid has been a consideration in attending Phillips Exeter, and/or could be for college, we urge you to include in your college list at least one public school in your home state.

While private colleges frequently cost more than public ones, they often possess the financial means, in the form of endowment and alumni giving, to offer generous need-based or scholarship-based financial aid that might make private education as inexpensive as attending your state school. Most Exonians consider both public and private schools in their college search.

A large number of competitive private universities and colleges have a religious affiliation. The extent of spiritual influence varies. But at the beginning of your college search we strongly encourage you to consider all private colleges, regardless of religious affiliation.

#### STUDENT BODY AND GENDER

##### Coed, Single Sex, Historically Black Colleges

Ask yourself these “self-evaluation” questions:

- Would I consider single-sex education?
- How important is it for me to attend college with others who share my ethnic heritage?

The consideration of single-sex education is predominantly one for women, although there is a very small handful of outstanding all-male colleges (such as Wabash and Morehouse). Similarly, students might consider one of the small number of colleges enrolling predominantly African-American students. National studies have shown that students at these institutions are more academically involved in classroom participation, have greater academic self-esteem, and are more likely to pursue advanced degrees.

## COLLEGE SETTING

### Size and Location

Think about the kind of place in which you could be comfortable for the next four years of your academic life.

Some questions:

- How have I felt about living in the town of Exeter (with approximately 14,000 residents)?
- What do I like or dislike about the Academy's location?
- What extracurricular activities do I generally enjoy?
- Will my family allow me access to a car in college?

The location of your academic home for the next four years will determine your quality of life and should reflect your personal values and lifestyle. Colleges and universities can be located right in the hearts of major cities, in the suburbs, or in more rural settings. Each setting has its own distinct advantages and disadvantages.

Attending college in a major metropolitan setting offers extensive opportunities for cultural events, internships and part-time jobs, and research. Most students do not need or use a car and have the opportunity to build an extensive social life outside of the campus. Yet college life in a city also embodies big city problems. Suburban areas afford more limited cultural and resume-building opportunities, but also possess fewer of the social problems of major cities.

More traditional college towns may not have all of the amenities of city life but can often have a more relaxed, friendly feeling. College faculty tend to live in their small college towns, creating a more residential community feeling on campus. You may need a car for transportation to the big city a few hours away, but you can also easily drive to nearby outdoor activities. Generally, small towns have a lower cost of living than bigger cities. Also, colleges in more rural settings work hard to bring concerts and speakers to their campuses to supplement social life.

Consider what you appreciate or dislike about the town of Exeter and living and learning here. Do you live for “out-of-towns” to Boston? Or do you relish the intimate feeling of living and learning alongside your teachers?

## ENROLLMENT SIZE

### Size of Academic Community

Think about the following “self-evaluation” questions:

- How have I felt learning in a community the size of Phillips Exeter?
- What do I like or dislike about the Academy's classroom size?
- How important is faculty accessibility?
- To what extent do I desire academic and social recognition for achievement?

Colleges can vary dramatically in size: think carefully about which size is best for you both academically and socially. Use the following generalizations to reflect on your experience both in and out of class here at Exeter.

Over 80 percent of American private colleges — and almost a quarter of public colleges — have enrollments under 2,500. Smaller colleges generally place a greater emphasis on teaching as opposed to research. Similar to the opportunities available through the Academy's Harkness Table seminar pedagogy, lecture and discussion classes at smaller colleges can afford a high level of interaction with faculty and opportunities to contribute in class. There can be a wonderful comfort in being a bigger fish in a small pond.

Larger colleges and universities can offer a greater breadth and depth of course selection than smaller schools, allowing opportunities to explore a wider range of potential majors for students who are undecided about their field of study. Faculty at larger institutions may balance teaching with research. This research keeps them up-to-date on current developments in their fields and enhances their classroom instruction, but it may also decrease their available time for informal interaction outside of class. Class size tends to vary greatly. While courses requiring greater faculty interaction (such as foreign language or English composition) may be smaller, many introductory courses are taught in a large lecture format using graduate teaching assistants. Larger colleges and universities usually have a more diverse student body and a broader selection of extracurricular opportunities to explore. Finally, many students prefer the greater anonymity intrinsic to a larger academic setting.

While we encourage you to gain a better feel for the size environment most appropriate for you, we would also encourage you to investigate colleges of a wide variety of sizes in your search.

## GEOGRAPHIC REGION

### Location in the United States or Overseas

When considering the possible locations of your future colleges, ask yourself these “self-evaluation” questions:

- How do I feel attending Exeter in relation to its proximity to my home and family?
- How important is it to me and my family for me to attend college close to home?
- How much do I value attending college with students of different geographic backgrounds?
- How frequently do I anticipate going home during the academic year?
- How extensively does the weather affect my studies or quality of life?

A truly national and international community, Phillips Exeter attracts a broad-ranging geographic diversity. Such diversity includes day students living down the road, students only a few hours away from home, and others from across the country or across the world. Your personal Exeter experience benefits from this geographic mix of cultures and backgrounds.

While you are not planning where you will vacation for the next four years, weather and climate can have an influence in the geographical range of potential college choices for some individuals.

Students who live within a short distance of Exeter enjoy the ease of going home for long weekends. Yet many students are perfectly content to go home only for major vacation periods. While some colleges include travel expenditures within their financial aid packages, transportation is often a hidden, but costly, academic expense.

Reflect on your experience here at the Academy with regard to Exeter’s location, climate, and proximity to home. Consider whether, at college, you would prefer a geographically diverse student body such as Exeter’s, or a regional community of students from more homogeneous backgrounds. Think about climate and how it affects your quality of life. Perhaps most importantly, take into account your experience with your family while attending boarding school, how frequently you currently go home, and the cost of round-trip transportation between your home and potential college. We strongly encourage you to talk with your family about

their possible geographic preferences for you at the beginning of your college search.

Avoid regional parochialism! While the East Coast offers an extensive number of outstanding colleges and universities, we strongly encourage students to include as wide a geographic range as possible in their initial college search. Don’t overlook Midwestern or Southern schools – many of these institutions are hidden gems of truly national reputation. Recognize, too, that you might have an advantage as an Exeter applicant applying to exceptional colleges outside of New England that receive fewer applicants from the Academy.

Depending on your personal search criteria, you may also consider investigating colleges outside of the United States. These can include Canadian universities and colleges (McGill, Queens, University of Toronto, etc.), American colleges overseas (the American Colleges of Paris, London, or Switzerland, for example), and a select number of European national universities which have historically welcomed American students (such as the University of St. Andrews and University of Edinburgh in Scotland). While transportation and living costs may affect the total cost of education, tuition at these institutions can be significantly less expensive than tuition at comparable U.S. universities. Some of these colleges, particularly the American colleges overseas, may offer their own need-based financial assistance; others may allow select U.S. federal financial assistance, such as Stafford loans, to be used to meet tuition expenses.

Finally, if financial assistance may be a consideration in your college search, the College Counseling Office emphatically recommends that you include a financial aid “safety” school on your college list. To qualify as a financial aid “safety,” a college must **both** be affordable and a Category I school – that is, one where you have the greatest percentage chance of admission. For most Exonians a state university in the student’s home state is an appropriate choice.

## MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY

As you consider potential college majors, ask yourself these “self-evaluation” questions:

- What are the courses I enjoy most here at the Academy? Enjoy least?
- Do I have specific or general career goals?



Uncertain of your intended major in college? Don't panic! While a few students begin their college careers with a very specific academic major, most students have only a broad idea of potential fields of study.

Liberal arts is the term most generally used to describe the most common form of undergraduate education in the United States. Pre-professional training in such fields as business, engineering, and education prepares students for careers immediately after receiving their undergraduate degrees. While offering solid preparation for post-college careers, the liberal arts can often serve as an outstanding springboard for further graduate-level study, such as law, business, or medical school. A handful of exceptionally qualified Exonians who are confident of their intention to pursue medicine may consider joint degree programs offering early admission to medical school.

Remember that many liberal arts colleges may not offer either majors or extensive coursework in certain professional fields, such as engineering, business, or physical therapy. If you are certain of a specific field be sure that the colleges you are considering offer that major.

## CAMPUS LIFE

Consider the following self-evaluation questions:

- ▣ How important is it for me to attend a primarily residential college?
- ▣ What extracurricular activities am I currently pursuing here at Exeter that will be critical to the quality of my college life?
- ▣ Do I plan on working part time while in college?
- ▣ Do I require any support services for physical or learning differences/disabilities?

Much of the success of your college career comes from enjoying the experience of living on a college campus. Alumni frequently reflect that they learned as much from their interaction with their college peers through study groups, extracurricular activities, and just hanging out in the dorm as they did through classroom instruction. Campus residential and social life plays a significant role in effecting student satisfaction with their alma mater.

### *Housing*

Living on-campus for the first few years of their college experience is a primary consideration for most Exonians. Dormitories can become a focus of college campus life and the easiest way to meet new friends. Thus finding

a college campus that has a primarily residential feel, rather than the feeling of a "commuter" school, can be important. Consider the percentage of students who live either in campus housing or within a close radius of the college campus. If it is an important consideration for you, remember to ask about availability of on-campus housing for all four years. Some colleges only have enough housing for underclassmen, and a few may even require students to move off-campus for a year to help alleviate their own on-campus housing shortage.

### *Extracurricular Options*

College is about working hard and studying ... but there is plenty of time to have fun, too. Thoughtfully consider which of your current campus activities will be critical to your collegiate experience. Also consider those activities you've never explored but would now like to pursue in college.

### *Campus Employment*

As a means of providing personal spending money, gaining valuable professional experience, or augmenting their need-based financial assistance, many students will hold a part-time job on or off campus while enrolled full time in college. These jobs can be work-study positions sponsored by the college as part of the student's need-based financial aid package, volunteer or paid internships, or more traditional part-time jobs in service industries. The college's location can play a determining factor in the availability of off-campus employment. Universities in or near major metropolitan areas offer extensive opportunities for part-time jobs, including positions in a student's field of interest; colleges in more rural settings may offer fewer options.

Most colleges and universities provide some assistance for finding part-time jobs, either through a career center or work-study office. In addition, most institutions of higher learning offer career counseling and placement assistance for graduating seniors who will not be pursuing graduate school immediately after their undergraduate degree.

### *Support Services*

Federal law now requires colleges and universities to offer extensive support services to students with unique physical or educational needs. These services can include physical accommodations, such as universal access restrooms and entrances to buildings. For some Academy students, finding colleges offering extensive support services for students with learning disabilities may be an important factor in their college search.

## ATHLETICS

As you think about your interest in collegiate athletics, ask yourself these “self-evaluation” questions:

- What sports am I currently participating in at the Academy that I might continue in college?
- Will my athletic participation be at the intercollegiate, club, or intramural level?
- Will I be a recruited athlete in any of my Exeter sports?
- Have I spoken with any Exeter coaches to gain a better sense of my potential for intercollegiate athletics?

Many Exonians who currently engage in athletics may want to continue such participation in college. College students participate at three levels: intramural, club, and intercollegiate. Intramural play is most common. Intramurals allow students to compete at a variety of different levels of competition with a primary emphasis on enjoying the sport for personal fitness, relaxation, and fun. Club sports are usually jointly sponsored by students and the college, and can compete against other schools’ club sports as well as varsity intercollegiate programs.

Intercollegiate athletics is the university equivalent of varsity-level sports. These programs are categorized by the NCAA into three divisions of varying degrees of competition: Division I, Division II, and Division III. There are some very general rules of thumb concerning athletic divisions. Most small liberal arts colleges and smaller universities will have a majority of Division II or Division III athletic programs, with perhaps one or two high-profile sports competing at a higher division level. Most Exeter alumni participating in intercollegiate athletics will compete at this level. By definition Division III colleges do not offer athletic scholarships, while Division II programs offer partial scholarships. Most larger colleges and universities field predominantly Division I programs, with some of their underdeveloped programs occasionally competing at a lower division level. Division I athletic programs are generally the college sports which receive the most extensive media coverage, including such athletic conferences as the Big Ten, the Big East, and the Patriot League. A handful of truly exceptional Academy alumni will compete at the Division I level. Almost all Division I programs offer athletic scholarships with the noteworthy exception of

the eight members of the Ivy League athletic conference (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Princeton, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale).

The College Counseling Office strongly believes that student-athletes should discuss their collegiate potential with their Academy coach and other club coaches early in the college search process. Coaches offer a supportive, seasoned perspective that can prove invaluable in students’ own self-assessment of their athletic ability. Take advantage of your coach’s wisdom.

For detailed information about the athletic recruitment process, please read Chapter Eight of this Guidebook (link to chapter), and speak with your Academy coach.

## ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Consider the following “self-evaluation” questions:

- Do I plan on taking any AP examinations prior to graduating from Exeter?
- How important is finishing my college study in less than four years?
- Are there any financial benefits to completing my college degree more quickly?
- Do I plan to apply to any British universities, such as Oxford or Cambridge?

Many selective colleges and universities can award college credit on the basis of AP test scores. Students can fulfill general curriculum or graduation requirements earlier, advancing to higher level courses even in their freshman year. Advanced standing can allow students to double major or minor more easily, or to take a reduced load one semester in order to concentrate on especially challenging coursework or extracurricular activities. Because of the financial benefits gained by earning AP credit, some students will accelerate earning their college degree through AP credit, graduating a semester or even a year early.

While the awarding of advanced academic standing on the basis of AP credit is commonplace, please note that several of the most highly selective colleges and universities may at best use AP examinations for placement and do not award any academic credit for even the highest scores.

While no U.S. universities require AP scores for admission – and most Exonians successfully apply to U.S. colleges without any AP scores – some of the most selective British universities, such as Cambridge and Oxford, expect successful candidates to have several AP scores at the time of application. If you are considering an application to a British university, you should speak to your subject teacher to consider whether taking AP exams would be appropriate for you, given the rigor of your curriculum and your likelihood of earning a high score.

### FINANCIAL AID/SCHOLARSHIPS

Discuss with your family and consider the following “self-evaluation” questions:

- How important is financial assistance to my education here at Exeter?
- Will I require need- or merit-based assistance to attend college?

While we believe that the cost of attending a college should not be the principal factor in creating your college list, the high price tag for today’s college education has become a serious factor in the final decision for many students and families. Even if you are not receiving any current assistance from the Academy, college financial aid may be important. We strongly encourage you to begin discussing these issues with your family at the beginning of your college search.

There are many forms of financial assistance available. The most basic financial assistance offered at all colleges is need-based. Need-based financial assistance is given to families who demonstrate financial eligibility using nationally standardized needs-analysis forms, such as the Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile. Demonstration of financial eligibility is determined through detailed review of a family’s net assets, salary, investment income, liabilities, home equity, and other factors.

Some colleges also offer merit-based assistance. Such financial assistance comes in the form of scholarships for students who have achieved superior levels of academic excellence or offer some special talent in the performing

arts or athletics. Please note that while all of the most-highly competitive colleges and universities offer need-based assistance, only a handful offer any merit-based aid.

### ADMISSIONS SELECTIVITY

Category 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

As you think about admissions selectivity, ask yourself these “self-evaluation” questions:

- What percentage of applicants is offered admission?
- How does my academic achievement compare with other applicants?

The most important factor to consider in building your college list and conducting a college search is finding institutions for which you have a good chance of being offered admission. While the review of your application will take into consideration numerous subjective factors, such as your essay, your teachers’ letters of recommendation, and your major field of study, you must focus your search on the more concrete factors involving your academic performance and standardized testing.

One tool to help narrow down your prospective colleges is the percentage of students admitted. This ‘admit rate’ provides a general guidepost for admissions selectivity. Approximately eight percent of colleges and universities nationwide admit fewer than fifty percent of applicants to their freshman class. For many Exonians, the institutions in this category would most likely be classified as Category 3 or 4 schools for admission selectivity. Any college or university with a single-digit admission rate would be designated a Category 5 school. Colleges admitting more than 50 percent are generally Category 1 or 2 schools for many Exeter applicants. Note that the admission rate may not always provide the most accurate sense of selectivity. For example, many nationally ranked state universities (such as UC-Berkeley, UNC-Chapel Hill, and the University of Virginia) may have higher than a 50 percent admission rate for in-state students, yet select a mere handful of out-of-state applicants.

Naviance uses a different nomenclature to define admission selectivity, but the chart on the following page will help you make the translation to the appropriate category.

NAVIANCE EXPECTED OUTCOME	PEA SELECTIVITY & CHANCE OF ADMISSION
"FAR REACH"	CATEGORY 5 = $\leq 10\%$ NATIONAL ADMIT RATE
"REACH"	CATEGORY 4 = $< 15\%$ CHANCE OF ADMISSION
"POSSIBLE"	CATEGORY 3 = 15 – 30% CHANCE OF ADMISSION
"LIKELY"	CATEGORY 2 = 50% CHANCE OF ADMISSION
"SAFETY"	CATEGORY 1 = $> 90\%$ CHANCE OF ADMISSION

Standardized testing plays a critical role in admissions. Most colleges and universities require the SAT I and many require two sets of SAT II subject examinations. Other colleges will accept the ACT exam. When reviewing potential colleges and universities, keep in mind their 'middle 50 percent' range of testing. While a quarter of admitted students have scores either above or below this test range, such a median range will give a general indication of the strength of the applicant pool.

Including colleges with a broad range of admissions selectivity is important to a successful start to your college search. Be honest with yourself, making a realistic assessment of your chances for admission. The more truthful you are with yourself at the start of your college search, the better your chances of having a good number of choices in the spring of your senior year.

Your academic performance in a challenging, rigorous program of study is the most important factor in determining your admissibility to highly selective colleges. Admission committees value a consistent level of achievement over four years, but they also give strong weight to students who demonstrate significant improvement over the course of their academic career. While your grades are the most obvious indication of potential future success, colleges also want to see that you have challenged yourself in a competitive, demanding academic program throughout your high school career.

In conclusion, as you begin to consider your personal criteria in selecting the college that is right for you, the College Counseling Office strongly encourages you to think about three critical points.

First, take plenty of time to do this step in the process. The more conscientious effort you put into thoughtfully reviewing the characteristics of the colleges that will meet your needs, the more satisfied you will be with the choices available to you.

Second, resist the pull of the "names." From our experience in the College Counseling Office, too many Exonians focus on the names of colleges rather than the characteristics of the schools behind those names. A college isn't "good" only if you have heard of its name. Remember that there are over 4,000 private and public colleges and universities in the United States, Canada, and overseas to consider. Don't think about names. Focus on characteristics, and the names will follow.

Finally, your college criteria will be distinctive from your best friend's, your roommate's, and perhaps from every other student in your dormitory. Frequently, Exonians forget this simple fact when they begin to compare college lists. Recognize – and celebrate – the fact that you are unique.

### COLLEGE RESEARCH RESOURCES

College-related websites seem to be as numerous as colleges, yet not all websites are created equally. While some organizations' websites, such as those for College Board, the Common Application, and Colleges that Change Lives, are reputable, thoughtful and fair, other sites – particularly those that purport to offer confidential, insider information or a precise ranking of colleges – may not be as balanced and trustworthy. Use the good sense you've gained by your research for your History 333 paper to determine the editorial bias of secondary sources related to colleges, and if in doubt, ask your college counselor for recommended online sources.



Fortunately, Exeter provides two trustworthy foundational tools for you as you navigate the college selection process. The Academy's public website, <http://www.exeter.edu>, and the Academy's intranet, ExeterConnect (<http://connect.exeter.edu>), offer extensive information about the college process, including a calendar of events, copies of all communications, information on scholarships and financial aid, links to the CCO Guidebook and other documents and forms, and much more. The College Counseling Office also uses a private, password-protected site called Naviance Family Connection (<http://www.exeter.edu/cco-naviance>), which allows you to manage most aspects of your college search. With individual passwords, uppers, seniors and their parents will take advantage of the rich interactivity of personalized information and the Naviance website's database of college profiles. You will use these features to create your prospective college list and to modify your college list throughout your search. In addition, both uppers and parents can complete their own Upper Questionnaire on the site; this questionnaire will enable you to update your personal and extracurricular information as necessary, thus keeping your counselor fully informed and giving yourself a well-organized database for filling out your college applications. Uppers and their parents will receive access to the Naviance website at the start of the college process during winter term.

There are many more helpful aspects of the Academy and Naviance's websites, which you will discover as you use them. The college counselors will give you a training session on both websites at the required all-class "kickoff" meeting in January, and in a required College Resource Meeting during winter term. The more you use both websites, however, the more you will benefit from their many features.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

Every Academy student will take a series of standardized tests as part of the college application process. The acronyms – including PSAT, SAT I, SAT II, ACT, AP and TOEFL – can be intimidating, and the purposes of the various tests can be confusing. Read this section for help in sorting through the various testing options appropriate for you.

## PSAT/NMSQT—PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT QUALIFYING TEST

By the second half of your upper year, you have likely taken the PSAT, which is administered in October to high school tenth and eleventh graders nationwide. Details about the PSAT can be found in Chapter I under the Standardized Testing section, or online at <http://www.collegeboard.org/psat>.

The National Merit Scholarship Program (<http://www.nationalmerit.org/nmsp.php>) uses the PSAT to screen students of exceptional test-taking ability who may qualify for one of its scholarships. If your score is above a certain threshold, which varies each year, you will be notified of your semi-finalist status and invited to complete an application for the final round of competition. This notification process takes place in September of your senior year.

PSAT scores are generally available in mid-December; when they arrive, copies of the score reports will be placed in your campus PO box and it is *your* responsibility to share your scores with your parents. Upon receipt of their scores, some students only pay attention to the predicted SAT I score range while ignoring the valuable information also included with the test results (such as your strengths and weaknesses and recommended areas for improvement). Don't make this mistake. Review your PSAT score report thoroughly and discuss your results with your parents, your academic advisor and your college counselor.

## SAT I REASONING TEST

(<http://sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests>)

The SAT I Reasoning Test is the most general standardized test offered by the College Board, and the exam that almost every member of Exeter's senior class will take for college admission. With three sections measuring critical reading, mathematical reasoning, and writing skills, the SAT is a long test, at three hours and 45 minutes. The Critical Reading section emphasizes reading skills and tests vocabulary in the context of short and long reading passages and sentence completion questions. The Writing section includes both multiple choice questions and a student-written essay, and tests a student's skill with grammar, word usage, and word choice. The Math section includes topics from advanced algebra and pre-calculus, and emphasizes data interpretation and applied math questions. Although it is possible to complete the Math section without one, students should use a four-function, scientific, or

graphing calculator on the exam. Scores are reported in the 200–800 range, one score for each section (CR, M and WR), and two Writing sub scores for multiple choice and the essay.

In 2009, the College Board implemented a “Score Choice” option (<https://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-score-choice>), which allows students to choose by test date which SAT I or SAT II scores that they want to send to colleges. While this policy might tempt parents to encourage their students to take the SAT multiple times, many highly selective colleges require students to waive the score choice option and to submit their entire testing history. Given this trend among many of the most selective universities, the Academy strongly believes that you should take the SAT I or SAT II exam at the time when it is appropriate for you developmentally and when, given your course work, you are most likely to earn your strongest scores.

Most students will take the SAT I once in the second half of their upper year, and once or twice in the fall of their senior year. The Academy believes students are best prepared for the SAT I following this recommended schedule, because research has shown that long-term preparation for the SAT yields better scores (than does short-term cramming); in addition, it has been proven that students see very insignificant score improvements upon repeated SAT I testing.

Because Harkness pedagogy depends on full class participation, the Academy’s academic calendar is built to promote a minimum disruption of class attendance from standardized testing. Therefore, we encourage students in all grade levels to abide by our recommended guidelines for standardized testing and to be judicious in scheduling SAT and other exams. These guidelines can be viewed online, at [http://www.exeter.edu/documents/Standardized\\_Testing\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.exeter.edu/documents/Standardized_Testing_Guidelines.pdf).

The SAT is administered seven times per year, in January, March, May, June, October, November, and December. When classes are in session, Exeter students should register to test at nearby Exeter High School (test center code 30145); transportation is provided. When classes are not in session, students should register to test at their local high school.

Please note: the College Board is in the process of redesigning the SAT I for release in the spring of 2016. Read more about the new exam online, at <https://www.collegeboard.org/delivering-opportunity/sat/redesign>.

## **SAT II SUBJECT TESTS**

(<http://sat.collegeboard.org/about-tests>)

Many colleges to which Academy students apply require two or three SAT II Subject Tests: Math I or II, and one or two other tests of the student’s choice. In selecting which Subject Tests to take, focus on your strongest areas of study and plan to take the corresponding test on the dates you will be best prepared, usually when you complete a certain course. SAT II Subject Tests are one-hour long and you may take as many as three subject tests on any given test date. Like the SAT I, scores range from 200 to 800.

If you have any questions about the appropriateness and timing of a particular test, particularly in light of selective colleges’ varied approaches to Score Choice, please talk to your subject teacher and/or your college counselor.

## **ACT—AMERICAN COLLEGE TESTING PROGRAM**

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

For an increasing number of Exonians, the ACT may be a testing option to consider. The ACT can be used at many colleges as a substitute for the SAT I, and sometimes even for certain SAT II Subject Tests. The ACT consists of four sub-tests in the areas of English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. You will receive four separate scores for each section in addition to a composite score (overall average) ranging from 1 (lowest) to 36 (highest).

The ACT is administered six times per year, in February, April, June, September, October and December. When classes are in session (except in February), Exeter students should register to test at nearby Exeter High School (test center code 238260); transportation is provided. When classes are not in session, students should register to test at their local high school.

## **AP—ADVANCED PLACEMENT EXAMS**

(<https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/takingtheexam/preparing-for-exams>)

Advanced Placement exams are subject-area tests based on full-year college level courses offered in high school. AP scores range from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest) and many selective colleges offer credit and/or course acceleration for scores of 4 or higher. While AP exams were not originally intended to be used in the admissions process, and while many Exonians are offered admission to highly selective universities without any AP scores, some colleges pay attention to AP scores included in a student’s testing profile. If you have taken AP exams and have done very well, it is in your best interest to report these scores to the colleges to which you apply.

Because the majority of Exeter's courses have content that is well beyond Advanced Placement (AP) subject matter, students are encouraged to take SAT II Subject tests rather than AP exams. Colleges understand that we do not offer AP courses and do not expect our students to take AP exams. However, students applying to universities in the United Kingdom need to take AP exams and they should consult with their subject teacher and the College Counseling Office to determine what is the best time to take an exam.

AP exams are administered once per year, in May, on the Exeter campus. Students will receive registration instructions during winter term.

### **TOEFL—TEST OF ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE** (<http://www.ets.org/toefl>)

The TOEFL is used to evaluate English proficiency and many colleges require it of applicants whose native language is not English. The test is administered throughout the year at independent testing sites, such as Sylvan Learning Center. Please your college counselor about the appropriateness of the test and the timing and location of its administration. Given the Academy's schedule, students for whom the TOEFL is appropriate should consider taking the exam during school vacations.

### **TEST SCORES**

It is *your* responsibility to send scores to the colleges to which you apply.

Sending SAT scores:

<http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/>

Sending ACT scores:

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

Sending AP scores:

<https://apscore.collegeboard.org/scores>

Sending TOEFL scores:

<http://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/scores>

### **TEST PREPARATION RESOURCES**






Although we may decry the role that the SAT and ACT have assumed in relation to a student's academic record, standardized tests are more important than ever in selective college admission. As for any event of such significance, we believe that preparation beforehand can not only provide students with specific, effective test-taking strategies that will improve their test performance, but also can build confidence and teach useful skills that extend far beyond the tests.

Because standardized tests measure abilities and skills acquired over many years of education, the best preparation for the SAT and ACT is for a student to study hard in a challenging academic program and to read extensively outside the classroom. Yet some familiarity with the exam and preparation *before* the test can certainly help students improve their scores, on occasion with dramatic results. We strongly believe that the first step in test preparation is to review your PSAT results. Look beyond your estimated SAT I score range and review the detailed score report showing how you performed on each question in each section. The second step is to familiarize yourself with the exams by reviewing sample questions or free full-length practice tests, many of which are available for free online. You may also consider working through a study guide such as College Board's 10 Real SATs or ACT's The Real ACT Prep Guide.

Some students benefit from more targeted preparation through the use of a private tutor or test-preparation course; however, these services are generally very expensive. If you decide to go this route, please do so when you have ample time as your main focus during the school year should be your academics.

During upper year, students will receive access to Academic Approach, an online ACT and SAT test preparation service. Featuring full-length practice tests and individualized courses and quizzes, students can move flexibly through the curriculum at their own pace. This opportunity is unique to the Academy and is accessible to all uppers at no cost. Read more about the Academic Approach test prep philosophy online, at <http://www.academicapproach.com>.

## WINTER AND SPRING OF UPPER YEAR

TESTING	PROGRAMMING	COMMUNICATIONS	RECOMMENDED READING	RESOURCES
				
SAT I (MARCH, MAY OR JUNE)	ALL-CLASS MEETING (JANUARY)	CCO WELCOME LETTER	<u>THE ICONNECTED</u> <u>PARENT</u> BY BARBARA HOFER	NAVIANCE FAMILY CONNECTION
SAT II SUBJECT TESTS (MAY OR JUNE)	ACADEMIC APPROACH INFO SESSION (JANUARY)	WEEKLY CCO E-NEWS EMAILS		ACADEMIC APPROACH
ACT (APRIL OR JUNE)	GAP YEAR & SUMMER PROGRAMS FAIR (FEBRUARY)			
AP (MAY)	COLLEGE RESOURCE MEETING (FEBRUARY/MARCH)			
	MOCK ADMISSIONS WORKSHOP (MARCH/APRIL)			
	NCAA ATHLETIC PANEL (APRIL)			
	ALL-CLASS MEETING (MAY)			
	SCHOLARSHIP WORKSHOP (MAY)			
	SPRING COLLEGE FAIR (APRIL)			
	FAMILY WEEKEND EVENTS (OCTOBER)			







## **CHAPTER 3**

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# **SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR**

**“Before  
anything else,  
preparation  
is the key to  
success!”**

***—Alexander Graham Bell***



Summer may seem to offer a break in your college search process, but in fact the opposite is true. The summer between your upper and senior years is ideal for committing a significant amount of time to researching and visiting the colleges on your preliminary list; for interviewing, and for writing drafts of essays. Use this summer to rest, clear your mind, and think about your college criteria without the distractions and commitments of the Exeter school year. The steps you take now during the “downtime” of this summer can benefit your college search later on.

### THE COLLEGE VISIT

For the majority of seniors, the campus visit will be a decisive factor in where you will apply and enroll. The campus visit is your chance to size up a school and to gauge how it fits with your interests. Do some research before you go — read the catalogue and look at the website — so the visit will be more meaningful in the context of what you have already learned. If you are planning an extended trip, consider visiting no more than two schools a day and keep notes of your impressions, and build in days with a lighter schedule to make the trip more enjoyable. Most upper visit campuses during the academic year breaks or during the summer prior to senior year. Seniors are allowed two college visit days during the academic year, but often use long weekends, such as Family Weekend in October, to revisit top choices or to interview at a Category I or II college. College Day forms are available in the College Counseling Office and your college counselor’s signature is required. See the *E Book* for further information on the Academy’s college visit policy.

### PREPARING FOR YOUR TRIP

Always research the college’s website to find out what type of campus visit arrangements are available well in advance, at least three weeks, of your intended visit. Many colleges will allow students to register for their visit on-line; others may request that families call ahead. But by preparing for your trip ahead of time, you can set up a schedule that ideally suits your travel needs and makes the best use of your limited time.

Avoid dropping in on a college – you may be visiting on a day the university has an all-campus event, cancelling classes and tours. And while it might be tempting, don’t simply drive through campus, even if pressed for time. If you choose to walk around campus on your own because your travel plans do not fit with tour times, stop

by the admissions office to pick up a campus map, get suggestions about highlights on campus, and confirm that you are on the college’s mailing list, particularly given that many universities that use “demonstrated interest” in their admission review keep a record of campus visits.

### OVERVIEW OF VISIT OPTIONS

#### Tours

Campus tours generally last about an hour and range in group size from as small as your family and a student guide to as large as 50 prospective students and a tour leader. The campus tour format usually includes a brief background on the college’s history, an overview on the academic and student life programs offered, and a view of the resources available. If there is a part of the campus (the sports center, music facilities, or particular dorms) you want to see, be sure to ask. While the building of interest to you may not be part of the general tour, your guide may be able to point it out, and you can always go back on your own. Be sure to wear comfortable walking shoes.

#### Group Information Sessions

This is a popular and efficient forum where a school provides general information and offers a large gathering of students and their families the chance to learn more about the college or university.

#### Interviews

While many colleges and universities neither offer nor use interviews, many selective schools schedule on-campus personal interviews with a member of the admissions staff. An interview can be evaluative, an information-sharing exchange with a representative of the institution, or a combination of both features. Generally the interview will last between thirty and forty minutes. When a student cannot interview on campus, an



interview with an alumnus/a usually may be arranged in a student's home area. The interviewer generally writes a summary report that is placed in the student's file. Neat, comfortable attire is appropriate. Interviews must be scheduled ahead of time, and, if you decide to interview, you should plan to sign up early; during heavy college visit periods that coincide with school vacations, such as late August, interview slots may be filled several weeks in advance. More information is outlined in the "How to Interview" section of this chapter, below.

### **Class Visits**

During the academic year, a prospective student may attend a class or two of his/her choice. The student generally stays the entire class period and can approach the instructor afterwards with any questions.

### **Overnights**

Some colleges have designated students who serve as overnight hosts or offer common rooms to visiting students. Generally overnights are not offered on weekends and might be limited to one night only.

### **Meetings with Coaches, Music Teachers, Learning Specialists**

Plan to arrange these meetings on your own. While the admission office can give you the name and phone number of the person to contact, they will generally ask you to call directly to arrange a convenient time.

## **COLLEGE INTERVIEWS**

The interview serves two purposes. It reinforces your interest in a particular institution and it is an opportunity for the admission staff to clarify the match between their school's offerings and your interests and abilities. Every school treats interviews differently, so it is important to read their literature closely and determine where and when to interview. Your college counselor will guide you.

### **Personal Interviews**

Personal interviews usually take place on the college campus and are held with a representative of the admission office. Students may be interviewed by a member of the admissions committee, a professor, or an upperclassman or recent graduate intern trained to interview. Sometimes, families are concerned when a student interviews with a student interviewer, yet these individuals are great sources of information and their perspective on the candidate is weighed in committee just as seriously as a more veteran interviewer; students should treat be mindful to treat younger interviewers with respect. The conversation usually lasts about thirty

minutes. Parents are typically not included in the initial conversation but may be approached afterwards to see if they have any questions.

### **Alumni Interviews**

When students are not able to travel to a college campus for an interview, or when that university may not schedule interviews at Exeter, the admission office may offer students the chance to interview with an alumnus/a in the student's home area. The local alumni chapter of the university works with the admission office to arrange the interviews. Some universities may ask students to put their request in writing, and other universities will automatically contact you once you have sent in your application. Be sure to check the application materials or call admission offices directly to see about arranging alumni interviews. Alumni interviews are given the same weight as on-campus interviews in the admission process.

### **Interviews at Exeter**

Every fall over 150 university representatives visit the Exeter campus either at our mini college fairs, or at an evening presentation. When the universities' staffing and schedules permit, representatives will spend an additional day or evening on campus interviewing interested students, either in the fall or the winter. All seniors are notified of upcoming interviewing opportunities through email and social media. Seniors who have a specific university on their college list on Naviance will receive a sign-up notice by email stating when the interviews will take place; students sign up for interviews electronically. If a university requires an interview as part of their admission process, the College Counseling Office will make sure that there are sufficient spaces for all applicants. Interview slots fill quickly, however, particularly optimal time spots. Seniors are encouraged to check email and social media regularly, to learn about interview dates and times.

Seniors who are participating in Academy study abroad programs, particularly during either the winter term, should work closely with their college counselor to plan how to interview prior to their departure.

### **TIPS FOR SUCCESS**

- Take interviews seriously. It is important to come across as interested and engaged in both the learning process and the institution you are visiting.
- Be prepared to talk about yourself. Sounds easy, but you have just 30 minutes to talk about all your classes, your activities and summer plans. Prioritize your thoughts: what have been your favorite classes,

teachers, assignments? What extracurriculars are most important to you and why? Think ahead. What do you want to try in college? Where do you see yourself in ten years?

- Relate your interests and questions back to the college you are visiting. “I am interested in Russian and I saw you have a study abroad program. I’d love to go abroad.” It is imperative that you prepare and are familiar with the offerings of the school.
- Check out your interview style. Do you appear poised, confident, articulate? Work at containing any nervous habits and try to keep your thoughts focused on what you are saying. If you are shy, reticent, or a non-native speaker, we strongly encourage you to do some practice interviews before going to your Category III, IV and V schools. You will naturally become more comfortable with the interview format once you have done a couple and know what to expect.
- Keep the conversation focused on strengths. While it may be important for an admission officer to have a sense of family transition or teacher conflicts, the overriding tone of the conversation should be upbeat, geared toward the last two years in school, and show a fit with an institution. Be sure to intersperse the genuine challenges with the success stories of your life.
- During the busiest times of the year, staff members may be doing numerous interviews in one day. Or you may have an alumnus/a who seems a bit out of touch with the university. Don’t let the interviewing style faze you. Politely guide the conversation when you want to mention something, or at the very end be sure to add that you have one more thing you want to emphasize. At the conclusion leave a résumé with the person so that he or she has a record of your activities and interests. The résumé will be a useful reference and may help jog your interviewer’s memory about specific topics you have mentioned. The résumé should not be used as an interviewing prop.
- As most admission officers will tell you, the interview is just one piece in the student’s application file, and no one credential alone gets a student admitted or denied. Rather, all information is examined, and typically the interview evaluation reinforces or clarifies other aspects of the file.

- Occasionally, an interview may not be in the student’s best interest, or could adversely affect the student’s application. Discuss with your college counselor whether interviewing is appropriate for you.

## **FINANCING YOUR COLLEGE EDUCATION**

### **Beginning the Search for Need- and Merit-Based Assistance**

As increasing college costs put more stress on family resources, the topic of financial aid can be a decisive factor in the college search for many families. The College Counseling Office strongly encourages you to honestly and openly discuss with your family the role of financial assistance in your college selection. While we believe that the total cost of college should not be the primary factor which shapes your college search, availability of financial aid frequently plays a critical role in the final decision about which college to attend.

There are two basic types of financial aid: merit-based and need-based. Merit-based aid is offered to a student based on academic, artistic, athletic, or other criteria; the college or scholarship-sponsoring group makes the determination of the merit award on their own criteria. The most common merit awards are college-sponsored scholarships, corporate or non-profit scholarships, government-sponsored scholarships (such as service academies and state scholarships), athletic scholarships for highly talented Division I and II athletes, and multicultural scholarships.

The timetable for some merit scholarships can be as early as the summer between your upper and senior years. During this time, students who are interested in merit-based aid should begin their research by looking at two websites devoted to scholarships: <http://www.fastweb.com> and <http://studentaid.ed.gov>. We also provide detailed information about scholarships in Naviance, and we maintain a printed file of available scholarships in the College Counseling Office.

Need-based aid is the most common form of financial assistance. Since private colleges cost more than Exeter, most colleges have an even higher percentage of students on need-based aid; the Academy provides need-based aid to almost half of our students.

Need-based aid requires a family to submit financial documentation which establishes their eligibility. All colleges and universities require a student to submit the federal government’s Free Application for Federal Student Assistance (FAFSA). Some colleges and universities will also require their own institutional form. In addition, over 600 private and public colleges

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**FOR SENIORS ONLY:** *The U.S. Department of Defense requires all 18-year-old U.S. citizens to register with the Selective Service System. In order to be eligible for federally-funded financial aid, students must register with the Selective Service.*

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also require the CSS Profile, which is customized by each college to provide the specific additional financial information each college needs to assess a student's eligibility for aid. Two external parties – the federal government's Central Processing Agency and the College Board's College Scholarship Service – serve as impartial agents in assessing eligibility.

It is vitally important that students and families not wait until senior year to find a way to finance their education. To assist families, almost all colleges and universities provide printed and website material which gives guidelines about their individual policies and timetables. In addition, we suggest using some of the most helpful and commonly used financial aid website resources:

- FAFSA  
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>
- CSS Profile  
<http://collegeboard.com/cssprofile>
- Finaid  
<http://www.finaid.org>

Every family contemplating applying for need-based aid should try at the beginning of the college search process to determine what their approximate eligibility will be. By completing the College Board's Net Price Calculator (<http://studentnpc.collegeboard.org/>) or the EFC Calculator on the [finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml) website (<http://www.finaid.org/calculators/finaidestimate.phtml>), families can be provided with an approximate Expected Family Contribution (EFC). In addition, many colleges will have their own online calculator which can provide the EFC as determined by their own unique policies. It is important to remember that this EFC figure is only an estimate; some colleges and universities will expect a family to pay more or less than the EFC, depending on the college's admission and financial aid policies and the availability of institutional funding. However, by knowing your estimated EFC, you can begin to look more knowledgeably at grant and loan options for paying for college costs.

In addition, keep in mind these points about financial aid:

- Aid is offered in packages consisting of grants, work-study, and a sizable amount of loans. Carefully consider whether you are willing to assume a heavy loan burden.
- Most highly-selective institutions offer few, if any, merit-based scholarships.
- Our experience has shown that Exeter often awards much more generous financial aid than colleges.
- Although many colleges are "need-blind," some schools may consider a student's financial eligibility as they make admissions decisions. Because of this, students should apply to several colleges where their credentials will place them among the strongest candidates in the applicant pool.
- It is possible for colleges to admit you but deny financial aid, or to provide you with an aid package that does not meet your calculated need. This is known as "gapping."
- On your summer college visits, ask questions about each school's financial aid policies: Is the college need-blind/need-aware? Any merit-based scholarships?
- If receiving financial assistance is critical to your ability to attend college, you must include a financial aid "safety" school on your college list. This financial "safety" school must both be affordable and fall in the Category I group for admissions. Often a state university in the student's home state is an appropriate choice.
- Deadlines are important, and many come early; a handful of scholarship applications are due as early as the summer prior to the senior year. Although the federal government's FAFSA form cannot be filed until January of the senior year, we recommend that the College Board College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile registration form (Part 1) should be submitted shortly after a student's return to campus in September. (If you are applying under an Early Decision or Early Action plan, you should register as soon as possible.)

The College Counseling Office encourages parents and guardians to discuss financing higher education with their children in order to assure that college planning will reflect family circumstances and will promote the search for any and all means of supporting our students' aspirations. Please feel free to speak with your college counselor if you have any questions regarding financing your college education.

SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

PROGRAMMING	RESOURCES	COMMUNICATIONS		
  PEA SUMMER SCHOOL COLLEGE FAIR (JUNE)	  NAVIANCE FAMILY CONNECTION  ACADEMIC APPROACH	  JUNE COLLEGE UPDATE LETTER		







## **CHAPTER 4**

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# **FALL OF SENIOR YEAR**

In the past 5 years  
PEA students  
have applied to  
**487** colleges  
and universities  
in 47 U.S. States  
and 16 foreign  
countries.

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Members of the class of 2014 attend  
**122** institutions, including flagship  
research universities, selective liberal  
arts colleges, as well as Ivy League  
and NESCAC schools.

**OPTIONS FOR ADMISSION** Most colleges and universities offer an early application plan that allows a senior to apply and receive a decision by mid-December or in January. Whether these options are right for you depends upon your academic achievement through your upper year, your certainty of your college list, and your family's willingness to make a financial commitment to one college.

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#### **EARLY DECISION AND EARLY ACTION**

Many institutions offer Early Decision, a binding plan that states that a student agrees to matriculate if offered admission and if given financial aid that meets demonstrated need. Parents and counselors are asked to endorse this agreement, and both the colleges and the Academy trust that the student's Early Decision agreement will be honored. Students can only apply Early Decision to one school, given that the binding agreement of Early Decision implies that a student is applying to their first-choice college. Once admitted to an Early Decision school, a student is required to submit a deposit, confirming attendance. Once an Academy senior admitted to an Early Decision college or university agrees to attend, the student must withdraw all of his/her other applications. The student will not continue with any other college applications for that particular admissions cycle. Additionally, the College Counseling Office will notify all the colleges on the student's list that the student will be attending an Early Decision institution and will be withdrawing the application. The Academy will only release a transcript to the Early Decision school, and students who do not uphold the Early Decision agreement may be subject to discipline.

Some schools offer an Early Decision II plan which is still binding but has an application deadline later than November. If admitted, Early Decision II candidates are required to make a deposit at the university shortly after their admission offer, to secure their place in the class, and must withdraw their other applications for admission. The above guidelines and protocols will also apply.

Early Action and Restricted Early Action, also early plans, are not binding. Students, if admitted, do not have to deposit until May 1, and may apply elsewhere. However, Phillips Exeter assumes that a student admitted under

an early admission plan – whether Early Decision, or Restricted Early Action or Early Action at a college or university with a national admit rate of less than 10% – has been admitted to his first choice school and therefore has completed the application process and will file no further applications. This philosophy parallels the spirit of the Academy's motto of *non sibi*, and allows the greatest number of Exonians to be considered favorably at the most selective colleges. Given the changing admission landscape and the importance of financial aid for many families, seniors should certainly consider applying Early Action to public universities, as well as any private university that limits eligibility to their own merit-based scholarships to Early Action applicants, as these Early Action applications are within the spirit of Exeter's *non sibi* philosophy.

#### **EARLY EVALUATION AND EARLY NOTIFICATION**

With Early Evaluation and Early Notification plans, universities send a preliminary letter indicating the likelihood of acceptance in late February with the official decision being mailed in late March. Often these plans may advantage a student in the review process. Students should discuss this option with their college counselor.

#### **PRIORITY APPLICATIONS AND ROLLING ADMISSION**

Some state universities have a Priority Application deadline in the fall, which allows students to hear official decisions before Regular Decision applicants. Other state and some private universities render decisions as applications become complete, under a process known as Rolling Admission. Therefore, we encourage students to apply to universities with Rolling Admission (for example, Penn State) and Priority (for example, Illinois and Wisconsin) plans by late September of the fall term.



## APPLICATION TYPES

The time has come. You have made your college list, balanced it for admissions selectivity to have a range of options, and are ready to put pen to paper and start filling out your college applications. Before you begin the process, keep a few things in mind.

First, college admission committees expect honest and complete answers to the questions asked. Take this process seriously, recognizing that your personal integrity as an Exeter student is at stake. As the applicant, you will be required to sign, either electronically or by pen, a statement that says that the application is your work and that you have accurately declared honors received and extra-curricular positions earned on your application. Students must complete their own essays and application forms; parents cannot complete these on their child's behalf. While our larger culture sometimes suggests that individuals attain their goals at any cost, Phillips Exeter believes that completing the college admissions process with honesty and integrity is important in itself, and is as important as any eventual outcome.

Second, college applications take lots of work, and students sometimes underestimate the amount of time needed to complete them well. Work on your applications a little bit at a time. Take time to read each part of the application fully, and then spend some time thinking about how you want to organize your academic and extracurricular record. Jot down some essay ideas. Revisit the whole process again and again. By working at it a little bit at a time, you will have more time to prepare a full and attractive application.

Finally, use all the resources available to help you complete your application: your college counselor, your teachers and parents, and college brochures and websites. For example, many university and college websites often provide a checklist for keeping track of required credentials and important dates. Refer to these checklists, and consider printing or bookmarking these lists, to make sure you have fulfilled all the requirements for each completed application.

## STATE APPLICATIONS

State university applications require transcript and testing information but may not ask for teacher recommendations or an essay. Some university

systems, such as the University of California, require the completion of a standardized self-reporting form; students submit one application to the university system and indicate which campuses they prefer. Because many state universities admit on a rolling basis, the College Counseling Office strongly encourages all seniors to submit state applications by late September. Students applying to the University of California system need to complete the application during the month of November, and by November 30.

## BRITISH UNIVERSITIES

The British university system, including Cambridge and Oxford, uses a standardized application form. Applications to British universities are processed through the Universities and Colleges Admissions Services (UCAS), and are submitted online at <http://www.ucas.co.uk>. While most British universities require an application to be submitted prior to January 15, we encourage students to submit applications sooner than later, given that many schools in the British system use a "rolling admissions" process, and can notify applicants as early as late fall.

Both Cambridge and Oxford have a significantly earlier deadline – October 15 – and students interested in either school should submit the UCAS application by mid-September. Students may not apply to Cambridge and Oxford in the same year. Students should ask an Academy teacher to be their referee before mid-August, so that the referee's recommendation can be submitted to UCAS prior to late September.

In addition to the UCAS application, both Oxford and Cambridge require additional application materials, which require advanced pre-planning to meet the universities' deadlines. For example, Cambridge applicants must also complete a supplemental online form called the Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA). Following submission of the COPA, Cambridge applicants are also required to upload their high school transcript, which the College Counseling Office will help you complete the first week of October.

Depending upon your field of study, some applicants to Oxford and Cambridge may be asked to sit for a written examination as part of the application process, or to submit a piece of analytical writing graded by a teacher, as part of the application. Check the university's admissions website, to determine if your program of study requires an exam or a writing sample. The College

Counseling Office will act as the proctor for any entrance examination administered at the home school; these required exams are offered on a specific date in early November. Other programs require students to sit for an exam at the university. If your Cambridge or Oxford program requires a graded writing sample, make sure to follow the recommended word count, and to mail the materials well in advance, to meet the required deadline for receipt.

Both Cambridge and Oxford require interviews as part of their application process. If you are granted an interview, you are given a specific date and time, generally in early December, which cannot be altered. British interviews are typically oral examinations; expect to know about the area of study to which you have applied. Our experience has shown that students who interview in the U.K. are advantaged in the process. In order to travel to Oxford or Cambridge for an interview, students will need to petition the Dean's Office to miss classes.

The evaluation process for applicants to most British universities is less holistic than the review at most private U.S. universities, as U.K. universities assess undergraduate applicants using their standardized test scores. Offers of admission can be made on a conditional basis until any or all testing is completed; most successful candidates to Oxford and Cambridge with an unconditional offer of admission will have several Advanced Placement test scores of '5's prior to their senior year.

Additional information about applying to British universities and the application timetable are available from the College Counseling Office.

### **THE COMMON APPLICATION**

The Common Application provides students with the ability to complete one application and essay thoughtfully and carefully, and to send it to multiple member schools electronically, as opposed to completing each individual college's application. Over 500 colleges and universities are member institutions of the Common Application, and, given its ease of use and breadth of reach, its popularity continues to grow. Indeed, the Common Application accounts for four-fifths of the applications submitted by Exeter seniors, making it the preferred application of most universities to which Exonians apply. While the Common Application simplifies the process for submitting applications,

many institutions also require students to complete a supplement in addition to the Common Application; occasionally, students hastily complete or don't submit this required supplement, and thus jeopardize their candidacy. If you use the Common Application you must follow through fully on these subsequent forms.

The Common Application can be found online at <http://www.commonapp.org>.

### **INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS**

Many schools still offer some version of an admission application. While similar in appearance to the Common Application, institutional applications may include questions about legacy, visit information, and different essay questions. While some colleges that still have their own institutional application form also accept the Common Application, don't be afraid that colleges will pay less attention to the Common Application than their own application – they won't, provided you have demonstrated interest in that college through contact.

### **COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATIONS**

Starting your college applications can be intimidating, but here are a few helpful hints to keep in mind as you begin completing application forms:

- Read the directions thoroughly and follow the instructions.
- If you are uncertain where to start, print a copy of the application and write out a draft to see how the information appears.
- Be sure to link your Naviance and Common Application accounts; this will make it easier to keep your college list up-to-date.
- Remember that writing assignments often take longer than you think they will. A short-answer essay question may take you a long time since you are trying to find just the right four lines.
- Finally, technology can be both a blessing and a curse. Be sure to build into your application schedule extra time in case your computer crashes and you forgot to back-up your essay drafts, or your internet server shuts down minutes before your electronic application deadline.

## GENERAL APPLICANT INFORMATION

All applications will ask for basic factual and biographical information which you should know off the top of your head, or can find out easily. Some colleges have a two-part application; the receipt of your Part I will often convert you in the university's system from a prospective student to an official applicant. Some of the typical biographical questions asked in all applications are:

**Name:** Be consistent. Use the same name that is on your Exeter transcript and SAT tests.

**Address:** The permanent address is where your family resides and the mailing address is where most correspondence, including the admissions decision, is often mailed. If you reside overseas, consider using your Exeter address as your permanent address.

**Phone/E Mail:** Students should use their Academy e-mail address for their college applications; by using your Exeter address, linking your Common Application and Naviance accounts is easier. Students can provide both their home and cell phone numbers, and many applications allow you to designate your preferred method of contact.

**Demographic Information:** Most applications will ask about an applicant's race or ethnicity. While colleges are required by Federal law to ask this question, the law is also clear that any self-identified ethnicity is optional for applicants. Most college applications allow students to check more than one category, if a student identifies as multiracial; some applications, such as the Common Application, allow students to identify the country or region of ethnic origin.

Colleges are not required to use self-identified race or ethnicity as an admission factor. Indeed, some state institutions – the University of California system, and state universities in Michigan and Texas – are prohibited by state law or court rulings from considering ethnicity as an admission factor. Some private colleges do weigh a student's background, while others do not.

It is your choice to self-identify or not as you wish. Recognize that students from a wide range of ethnic groups are admitted to all universities, including the ones to which you've chosen to apply. If you have questions about answering these questions, please speak with your college counselor.

Some applications, including the Common Application, ask an optional question about religious identification; students can choose to answer this question or not.

Again, if you have any questions, speak with your college counselor.

**Geography:** Applications regularly ask where a student was born, and how long the student has lived in the United States or, for international students, overseas.

**Languages Spoken:** Applicants can tell admission committees about their proficiency in one or more languages. If a student has a low SAT Reading or Writing score, an admission officer will look here to see whether another language is spoken at home.

**Citizenship:** Applications ask for citizenship information, as part of their application review and financial aid consideration. If you are a U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident, and you and your family are applying for need-based financial aid, many applications require students to provide their Social Security numbers as part of the application.

**Parent and Sibling Information:** Check and verify college attendance and graduation dates of your parents and siblings. If your parents did not attend college, it is important for your colleges to know that; you may be identified as a first generation college student. If one of your parents graduated from a university to which you are applying, your application can be considered for legacy status.

**Fee/Fee Waiver:** Since most applications are electronic, students need to be prepared to pay the application fee with a credit card; paper applications regularly accept personal checks, money orders, or credit cards as forms of payment. If you receive substantial financial support from the Academy, as determined by Exeter's Director of Financial Aid, application fee waivers are available through the College Counseling Office. Be sure to speak with your counselor early in the fall. An application may be processed and read without a fee or fee waiver but the university might withhold notification of the final decision.

## More Detailed Applicant Information

Most questions on an application take a little more time and thought to complete. Be sure to allot a sufficient amount of time to answer these questions.

**Decision Plan:** Standard options include Regular Decision, Early Decision, Early Action/Restrictive Early Action, or another decision plan.

**Intended Major:** Most colleges and universities recognize that students will change their minds several times before officially declaring a major at the end of their sophomore year, so the emphasis here is on “intended.” Be aware some universities suffer from over-represented majors (for example, science majors interested in pre-med). Discuss with your college counselor the possible impact your intended major may have on the admission process.

If you have attended another high school, you will be asked to provide information about your former school; use Google or another internet search engine to find out about your previous school’s address, phone number, and CEEB/ETS school code.

**Class Rank and Grade Point Average:** Many schools request information on class ranks. Phillips Exeter does not rank its students, and you should indicate we this on your application; the Academy does, however, provide a range of cumulative grade point averages attained by seniors who entered Exeter in a particular year on the Academy’s School Profile ([http://www.exeter.edu/about\\_us/495\\_7095.aspx](http://www.exeter.edu/about_us/495_7095.aspx)).

When reporting your Exeter grade point average, report your Academy GPA using our 11-point scale, and write it as a fraction (for example, 9.24/11.00). Remember that Exeter grade point averages are unweighted, meaning that your course rigor does not factor into your GPA.

**Senior Courses:** Admission officers want to see your full senior schedule. Students are often asked to select the number of unique courses they will take during their senior year. As each individual course counts as one credit, most students will have a total of 15 credits (five courses for each trimester). Sequential courses, such as ENG 410/420 or BIO 410/420/430, can be entered as one course. List the course name and code exactly as it appears on ExeterConnect. For any course marked by an asterisk (\*), or with the words ‘Accelerated,’ ‘Enriched,’ or ‘Advanced,’ be sure to denote that it is an “intensive-/college-level course.”

On the Common Application, students are asked to indicate the term(s) when the course has been scheduled, and the course level. Selected ‘Accelerated’ for any course with an asterisk (\*) or with the words ‘Accelerated,’ ‘Enriched,’ or ‘Advanced’ in the title. For all other courses, level the course level blank.

For more detailed information, refer to the Common Application guidelines worksheet available on ExeterConnect.

Because of Exeter’s rigorous and unique curriculum, the University of California application presents its own challenges when students enter their courses into the electronic application. To help you complete the UC application, the College Counseling Office presents a workshop in early November to help students present their Exeter credentials in a way that accurately distinguishes our curriculum. For more information, check out the University of California Application worksheet on ExeterConnect.

### REPORTING STANDARDIZED TESTS

Most applications provide a place where students can self-report their standardized test scores. If a college does not participate in Score Choice and requires students to report all of their testing, remember to list all of your SAT I and SAT II exams. If an institution participates in Score Choice, you can self-report your best individual test scores. If you are applying to a test optional college and are not using your standardized test scores, be sure that you do not include your testing portfolio on that college’s application.

Although your application may include your test history, you are still required to send your official scores. Standardized testing information is **not** reported on the Phillips Exeter Academy transcript. **Students are responsible for contacting the College Board or ACT directly and requesting that scores be sent to their university choices.** At certain times in the admission process, universities may contact Phillips Exeter and request scores. Only with your prior written approval will the College Counseling Office release the scores to admission offices. Students who have attended a previous high school should check about the reporting of testing on their previous transcript. While the College Counseling Office submits all transcripts to admission offices, we cannot be held responsible for the testing information provided by other schools.

### PRESENTING YOUR EXTRACURRICULAR INTERESTS AND ACTIVITIES

Just as college admission officers try to assess your academic record by looking at your course of study and grades, they will also try to gauge your level of achievement outside of the classroom by looking at how you spend your time. While there may be significant



personal merit and enjoyment by being involved in a variety of activities, admission officers value a significant commitment in a smaller number.

**Commitment To Activities:** Most colleges will ask students to detail their commitment to an activity by defining hours per week, positions held, and whether or not a student plans to continue with the activity in college. Be thoughtful in adding up the number of hours of your involvement: you don't want your extracurricular schedule to appear unrealistic, even for an Exonian, to admission committees.

**Leadership:** As you consider your senior activities, think about ways that you can take on a leading role, perhaps in your dorm, in clubs/organizations, or on athletic teams. If an organization does not exist at Exeter, think about starting one; many established groups started this way. Be aware, however, that the Student Activities Office does not allow seniors to found clubs.

**Volunteer Work/Community Service:** Admissions officers are interested in how you help others, whether during the academic year or on breaks from school. Through the Exeter Social Service Organization (ESSO), potential contributions are limitless. Rather than being active in five or so different social service groups, try identifying which issues are of most concern to you and play an active role in making a difference.

**Work/Internship Experience:** Paid employment or non-paid internships during summer and school vacations are viewed as extracurricular activities by colleges. Do not worry if your only job experience has been limited to typical teen jobs such as babysitting or working in retail; admissions officers will recognize you as someone who understands the value of a day's work.

**Hobbies/Outside Interests:** Admission officers are interested to see how you spend your free time. Off-campus activities can be particularly helpful if a hobby complements your intended field of study – hiking and camping for an environmental studies major, for example.

**Academic Honors or Awards:** Be sure to list all the academic achievements that you have earned since ninth grade.

## APPLICATION SUPPLEMENTS

Many Common Application colleges and universities will also have an application supplement, often including short answer questions, lists of books read, short essays,

and longer essays. Students should approach these supplements with the same seriousness and commitment they have demonstrated with the main application.

**Supplemental Essays:** While the Common Application essay allows you to write a single essay for all of your colleges to which you are applying, any supplemental essays should be unique for each application. Many institutions ask a student to elaborate on why they are applying to that college, or why you believe you would be a good match for that university. Be as specific as you possibly can, referring back to your research about the college. Review the university's mission statement for a sense about the institution's core values, so that you can write your response with them in mind.

Often Exeter applicants fail to invest quality time into polishing their supplemental essays, instead attempting to use generic responses for multiple schools – and their modest college decisions in April reflect their poor decision-making. Be sure to allow yourself sufficient time to refine your supplemental essay, so that you will express your genuine enthusiasm about the particular college and thus advantage your candidacy.

Some colleges' supplemental essays may be optional. We strongly suggest that you complete these: not only will you provide the college with more information about yourself as an applicant, but you will also demonstrate your interest in the institution by tackling this optional work.

For more tips about writing supplemental essays, refer to the section about college essays later in this chapter.

**Influences On Your Decision To Apply:** Students should answer honestly from the sampling of choices usually provided. Yet while most universities ask this question in order to understand which of their marketing efforts are particularly effective in getting students to apply, many institutions may review your choices as an indication about your level of interest, given how thoroughly you have used these institutional resources to research the college.

**Questions About Where Else You Are Applying:** Some universities might pose this question to see where their applicant pool overlaps with the competitors. You should either leave it blank or offer a partial list (say, of three other schools similar in personality) with a varied range of selectivity ratings; if you only list your Category 5 schools, and the college asking the question is a Category 2, they may wrongly infer that you view their institution

as your ‘safety school.’ We strongly recommend against offering a full list of schools under consideration.

## **OTHER FORMS AND RECOMMENDATION LETTERS**

**Secondary School Report (SSR):** Most colleges and universities require the College Counseling Office to submit information about you – your academic performance, your personal qualities and your extracurricular accomplishments – as part of your application. We provide this information with a form, called the Secondary School Report, to which we attach your high school transcript(s), documentation of leaves or probations, and a detailed recommendation written by your counselor. The Secondary School Report form, transcript, recommendation, and additional information will automatically be sent to every college on your Naviance college list.

If you are using a paper application, you can ignore the Secondary School Report form included with the application. Provided the college is included on your Naviance college list, Exeter will submit credentials either electronically or by mail, depending on the institution’s preference.

**Midyear School Report Forms:** Many colleges and universities will ask students to have midyear grades sent, and often applications include midyear report forms. Because Exeter is on a trimester system, the Academy does not have midyear grades. The College Counseling Office sends final winter term grades, which are usually available mid-March, to all schools on a student’s Naviance list, even if a student was accepted under an Early Decision or Early Action plan. Exeter does not release midterm grades to colleges since they are an internal assessment tool. A final transcript is sent to the school where a student matriculates.

### **Academic Recommendations from Teachers:**

Generally, two teacher recommendations are requested by colleges, and you should ask teachers from upper year; occasionally, students may choose an instructor from the fall term of senior year. Some schools will require a humanities teacher and a math or science teacher, but be sure to read each application closely. Be sure to ask your teachers early – the end of your upper year, or a month or two in advance of deadlines during senior fall, are not too soon.

Many universities, including colleges that accept the Common Application, allow teachers to submit their recommendation letters electronically via Naviance; students invite their teacher recommenders via the “Teacher Recommenders” link under “Colleges I’m Applying To” on your Naviance page. If your university does not allow teachers to submit recommendations electronically, or if you or your teacher choose to submit your recommendations by mail, you should complete the recommendation form with your name, address, and birth date and provide your teachers with pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelopes.

Share your interests with your teachers and your thoughts about their class by providing them with a completed *Preliminary* Teacher Rec Form (in the spring) and an *Official* Teacher Rec Form (in the fall). Both forms are available on ExeterConnect. Academy faculty are not required to agree to write recommendations, and they graciously extend themselves by writing for seniors, so please be considerate and give them as much notice and information as possible. And remember to thank them!

One year seniors and postgraduates are encouraged to talk with their college counselors about asking teachers from both Exeter and from their previous high school.

### **The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act**

**of 1974:** Also known as “FERPA,” the act entitles you to review your permanent record once you have matriculated at a college. When you match your Naviance and Common Application accounts, you will be asked to either waive or not waive your right to review your permanent record. Almost all students opt to waive the right to see the recommendation because it implies that the recommendation was written candidly.

**Additional Recommendations:** If you have one additional person who would like to write on your behalf, it may be worth considering. However, too many additional reference letters can be distracting to the admission reader. Again, talk with your college counselor about the value of your additional letter.

## **ADDITIONAL CREDENTIALS**

Students with talents in the performing arts should discuss with their college counselor the process for sending art, music, theater or dance material. See the chapter “Special Applicants” for more information.

# “Never underestimate the power of your own written words.”

## WRITING YOUR COLLEGE ESSAY

The most difficult, time-consuming, and sometimes intimidating portion of the application is the essay – or essays, since many college supplements will require more than one. Take a deep breath, and exhale. As an Exeter student, you have been writing personal narratives and personal essays for several terms, and have gained greater experience in refining your skill at balancing ‘showing,’ ‘telling,’ and reflection. Our experience in the College Counseling Office has shown that Academy students are well equipped to tackle this college ‘assignment,’ and, after investing time and effort on their college essays, they regularly craft superior work.

Of course, the difference between an English Department personal essay and a college essay is your audience and your purpose for writing. Approach your college essays as your opportunity to speak for yourself and for your candidacy in an honest and straightforward manner. Consider it an invitation to talk face to face with an admission committee, like an interview on paper. Colleges ask essay questions for these primary reasons:

- To learn more about you. Who is the real person behind these credentials?
- To discover if you are a skilled and articulate writer.
- To confirm that the person represented on a transcript and extracurricular resume, and described in recommendation letters, matches the person represented in an essay.
- To gain a sense about your fit with the institution.

Every essay should reflect these attributes. This is your chance to reveal your best qualities and to distinguish yourself from other applicants to the college admissions committee, by making one of your experiences come alive. Never underestimate the power of your own written words.

The end of the upper year or the beginning of your summer vacation following upper year is not too early to begin thinking about college essays. While college essay topics often change from year to year, many essay questions, such as those on the Common Application, remain the same. Review these essay topics before beginning; you want to make sure you answer the question or questions that the college asks.

Brainstorming about your personality traits and defining your strengths is a good place to begin, because you can begin to understand the themes of your candidacy. Make a list of traits and experiences that set you apart from others. Develop a chronological list of important things you have done in and out of school, and other meaningful experiences in your life. Look for experiences and activities that illustrate your personality and your strengths. Finally, identify one or two experiences or anecdotes that have meant the most to you, so that you can develop those experiences and reflect on the lessons you learned from them with specific detail. Consider taking notes either on your cell phone or tablet, or by using a small pocket journal, so you can record your thoughts no matter where or when you are inspired.

Starting the essay can be the hardest part. After you’ve reviewed your notes, choose an essay topic that is close to your heart. Brainstorm how you can approach your topic creatively or from a particular perspective. Consider creating an outline to organize your ideas and to help you decide where you can include ‘showing’ description that helps your reader connect with your anecdote. Don’t worry about making your rough draft perfect; there will be plenty of time to polish your prose in subsequent drafts.

Now is the time to showcase all of your writing skills you’ve learned in your English classes at the Academy. Lead into the essay clearly and quickly. Use transitions between paragraphs to retain continuity. Remember

Hemingway's sentiment, "Show, don't tell!" – but also remember that you will want to reflect on your experience, and therefore may need some 'telling' to balance your 'showing.' Avoid slang, long words found in a thesaurus, and controversial topics; remember that you do not know the political or religious views of the admissions officer who will read your essay. Be judicious in your use of humor (unless you are truly funny and have a truly funny story to tell). Since your essay has a word limit – the Common Application essay, for example, expects essays between 250 and 650 words – refine your focus and your language continuously. Remember to be concise; most admissions readers allow approximately 2-3 minutes per essay. How long should your essay be? "As short as you have time to make it," writes one admissions officer.






As you write, always remember that your reader for this essay is an admissions officer, and not a teacher, yet be honest and authentic. Find your own voice; don't twist yourself into someone else. Tell the admissions committee what you want them to know, not what you think they want to hear.

Like any piece of writing, your first draft will be very rough. Leave it for a few days, then read it again with fresh objective eyes. Rewrite. Ask a friend you trust, your teacher, or your advisor to read it and make suggestions. Ask her if your personality shows through in the essay. Take criticism gracefully. Re-read your draft, being aware of grammar, spelling, and correct organization around the theme. Ask someone to proofread for you; they are likely to catch errors you may overlook.

Finally, college admission officers are savvy to essays that have been over-edited by parents or writing coaches. The college admissions committee expects you to write the way a 17-year-old writes, not the way a parent writes. Please do not download any part of your essay from the internet or copy another individual's work; not only will colleges have no problem denying you admission, but you may also face disciplinary action at the Academy.



## FALL OF SENIOR YEAR

TESTING	PROGRAMMING	COMMUNICATIONS	RECOMMENDED READING	RESOURCES
				
<p>SAT I (OCTOBER, NOVEMBER OR DECEMBER)</p> <p>ACT (OCTOBER OR DECEMBER)</p> <p>TOEFL (IF APPLICABLE)</p>	<p>MEETING FOR PGS &amp; ONE-YEAR SENIORS (SEPTEMBER)</p> <p>ALL-CLASS MEETING (SEPTEMBER)</p> <p>COLLEGE FAIRS (SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER)</p> <p>COMMON APPLICATION WORKSHOP (SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER)</p> <p>FAMILY WEEKEND (OCTOBER)</p> <p>UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA APPLICATION WORKSHOP (NOVEMBER)</p> <p>ALL-CLASS MEETING (DECEMBER)</p> <p>COLLEGE INTERVIEWS AND INFO SESSIONS (OCTOBER, DECEMBER)</p>	<p>WEEKLY CCO E-NEWS EMAILS</p> <p>NOVEMBER COLLEGE UPDATE LETTER</p>	<p><u>LETTING GO</u> BY KAREN COBURN</p>	<p>NAVIANCE FAMILY CONNECTION</p> <p>ACADEMIC APPROACH</p> <p>COMMON APPLICATION</p>





## **CHAPTER 5**

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# **CCO POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**





**THE E-BOOK** contains relevant information about the College Counseling Office and its policies and procedures; *The E-Book* is available online at: <http://www.exeter.edu/documents/EBook.pdf>.

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### **COLLEGE VISIT DAYS**

In general, Exonians are encouraged to visit colleges during vacation times. However, by faculty decision, seniors are allowed to miss classes on two days for the purpose of visiting colleges. You must obtain a permission form from the College Counseling Office for a college day, complete the form, and return it to your college counselor. Then submit the completed form to the Dean of Students Office and fill out an out-of-town form. If you are staying overnight on a college campus, a written invitation from the host at the college and written parental permission is required by the Dean's Office before an out-of-town will be approved.

Only one college day can be taken in any one term; students who wish to take both their college days in one term must petition the Dean's Office. We advise students to reserve at least one college day for a visit after the receipt of college admission letters to help inform their final choice. A college day used for a revisit program is restricted to one day. All college days must be taken before May 1.

Students who are admitted through an Early Decision or Early Action program will not be allowed to miss a class for a college visit subsequent to their acceptance unless they receive an invitation to an orientation or open house program for admitted students. In such a situation, you must submit a copy of your invitation or a description of the program to the College Counseling Office and the Dean's Office in order to obtain the necessary permission.

Extensions of the college day for travel are not permitted, so you should plan these days carefully. To facilitate travel, consider taking a college day on a day adjacent to a no-class day or long weekend. The college day is defined as any 24-hour period. Before travel plans are made, students should obtain approval from the Dean's office for a college day.

As stated, this college day policy is determined by faculty vote and may be changed upon re-evaluation by the entire faculty. If changes to the existing policy are made by faculty, students will be informed in a timely fashion.

### **DISCIPLINARY ISSUES**

Increasingly, colleges are asking students and college counselors about disciplinary infractions of the applicant. In those cases where the question is asked directly of the student and/or the college counselor on the application forms, the question needs to be answered truthfully. A student who is placed on disciplinary probation during his/her tenure at the Academy, but before filing of applications, should address the situation within the body of the application. A brief and honest explanation of your past trespasses and a longer description of what you have learned from your experience are both required. If you have questions about reporting such matters to colleges with your initial application, you should seek clarification and guidance from your college counselor.

If you are placed on probation during or shortly after the filing of your application, and the colleges to which you have applied ask a direct question about probation, you should submit a supplemental letter explaining the incident in question to the particular colleges, despite the fact that the actual application may have already been submitted. Colleges have numerous ways of uncovering such information, and a straightforward, honest approach concerning the disciplinary process at the Academy has proven to be the most effective method of dealing with such issues and the college application process. Once again, you should always check with your counselor if there are lingering concerns or questions regarding such a specific situation.

In those cases where the question is asked directly of the student and/or the college counselor on the application forms, the College Counseling Office will forward to the college a brief statement describing the Academy's philosophy about discipline, a brief description of the disciplinary process, and a simple statement of the charge brought against the student. If you are placed on probation after filing an application, you will be instructed by the College Counseling Office (in writing or through a personal meeting with your college counselor) to notify the college in writing about the disciplinary action. After ten calendar days, to allow the student to

inform the college, the College Counseling Office will send a statement concerning the probation directly to the college. All colleges on a student's college list, regardless of admission decisions, will be notified. Please note that all transcripts will be accompanied by this probation statement for seven years after graduation, if the college in question asks about discipline.

In situations where a student is required to withdraw from the Academy, the College Counseling Office will notify in writing all the colleges to which the student has applied describing the charge and the change in status within ten calendar days of the decision. Students are encouraged to contact the colleges involved immediately and discuss the specifics of their situation. If such disciplinary action is taken after the student has been admitted to college, the College Counseling Office is still obligated to notify the colleges to which the student has applied of the change in status, through a written statement describing the charge and the change in status, within ten calendar days of the decision.

### **MEDICAL, PERSONAL & DEAN'S LEAVES**

By Academy policy, when a student takes a medical or personal leave from Exeter, the student's transcript reflects the change in status. In most cases, college admission officers will ask questions about such leaves of absence. It is the practice of the College Counseling Office to indicate that the medical or personal leave has occurred, and to encourage the student to discuss the leave and the reasons behind it with each college directly.

In cases where the student has taken a medical leave of absence and has returned to school prior to the filing of his/her application, the fact that the student has successfully continued his/her academic career after the medical leave often reassures college admission offices of the student's readiness to handle the rigors of college life. In cases where the leave is prolonged or occurs close to or after the filing of the college applications, colleges will be more concerned about the leave and its ramifications.

The College Counseling Office encourages students to be direct and honest with admission officers in these situations so the college representative can make an informed assessment of the effect of the medical condition on the student's ability to perform academically. Medical leaves occurring prior to senior year will be noted on the student's transcript and should be addressed by the student within the body of the application. Check with your counselor for advice on the most effective means to convey this information to colleges.

If medical or personal leave is taken during the senior year, the College Counseling Office is required by the colleges to notify them immediately of the absence, regardless if the leave is granted from the Academy or from an off-campus program. Students should contact the college admissions office immediately and discuss the specifics of the particular situation. After giving the student ten calendar days to contact the colleges directly about the reasons for the leave, the College Counseling Office will submit to each college in question a written statement indicating the change in status for that student. If a student has already been admitted to a college, the College Counseling Office is still required by the colleges to inform them of a change in status, and a written statement will be submitted to all schools on the student's college list.

In situations where a student is required to take a Dean's Leave from the Academy, the College Counseling Office will forward to all the colleges to which the student has applied a brief statement describing the Dean's Leave. The student will be instructed by the College Counseling Office, in writing or through a personal meeting with his/her counselor, to notify colleges in writing about the Dean's Leave. After ten calendar days, to allow the student to inform the colleges to which s/he has applied, the College Counseling Office will send a statement concerning the Dean's Leave directly to each college.

### **LEAVING EXETER EARLY**

On rare occasions, a student who has generally exhausted the Academy's curriculum, has demonstrated a significant level of academic achievement, and has a high degree of emotional maturity may consider applying to college in the eleventh grade year. Such a process is unusual and should be approached cautiously, after consulting with the student's adviser, college counselor, subject teachers, and academic deans. Students must declare their intention for an early admissions application to the College Counseling Office by November 1 of the eleventh grade year. The Academy and the College Counseling Office will assume that a student who has applied and has been admitted to college in the eleventh grade year (prior to receiving an Exeter diploma) will not return to the Academy, nor continue in the college admissions process.

## TRANSCRIPTS & RECOMMENDATIONS

The College Counseling Office will process transcripts and counselor letters of recommendation. The Exeter transcript only reports end-of-term grades. It is the policy of the College Counseling Office NOT to include unofficial midterm grades. The College Counseling Office sends out transcripts on all applicants (including those admitted under an Early Action or Early Decision plan) to all schools at the end of each term.

We do not act as a clearinghouse for teacher recommendations or your part of the application.

**Except in the case of some large state universities which require that all application materials be enclosed in the same mailing, it will be the student's responsibility to make sure that he/she has sent all applications to the colleges before the applicable deadline.**

## TRANSCRIPT REQUESTS

If you are a current Exeter upper or senior or an Academy alumna/us requesting a transcript, all requests must include:

- your full name and any former names;
- your graduation year;
- name and address to where transcript(s) are to be mailed; and
- your daytime phone number.

Requests can be made by completing the online transcript request form, at <http://www.exeter.edu/transcripts>. Please note that the College Counseling Office will only mail 'official' transcripts from our office directly to a third party (such as a college admission office, employers, scholarship organizations, etc.). Since there may be as much as a 10-day processing period, particularly during busy periods when the office is helping current seniors or processing their applications, we encourage you to plan accordingly.

Standardized test scores, such as the SAT, ACT, AP, and TOEFL, do not appear on Exeter transcripts. If you need your previous standardized test scores, you are responsible to contact the College Board and/or the ACT for all testing reports.

## ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS

A student wishing to review his or her Academy records must submit a written request to either the Dean of Students or Director of College Counseling. Parents of students under the age of 18 must sign a request. The Academy will respond within a reasonable amount of time.

Copies of transcripts will be provided to students and families upon a written request. Seniors and alumni may request a transcript in writing from the College Counseling Office; all other students, including students who attended Exeter but did not receive a diploma, must request a transcript in writing from the Dean of Students' Office. These transcripts will clearly indicate either unofficial or official status, depending on the nature of the request and the specific situation at hand. All other records contained in a student's permanent file may be reviewed at the Academy in the presence of the Director of College Counseling. The composite report written in the College Counseling Office does not become a part of a student's permanent file until the completion of the college admission process, after graduation. Seniors, parents, or guardians wishing to review the composite report may follow the above procedures after graduation. Once again, the Academy will respond within a reasonable amount of time. Alumni may also request to review their records; requests for a copy of a transcript must be made in writing to the College Counseling Office. The process for alumni review of other records is identical to the one outlined above.

## COLLEGE DEPOSITS

A student must accept only one offer of admission, regardless of the number of acceptances received. In most circumstances, the acceptance of such an offer is indicated by the submission of an enrollment deposit and occurs on or before May 1 of the senior year. Submitting two or more deposits, or double-depositing, is against the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) guidelines and will not be condoned by the College Counseling Office. Students who double-deposit may jeopardize their place in the freshman class at both institutions. In exceptional situations, students may request extensions from an individual college to resolve financial issues, but extensions beyond the May 1 common reply date are rarely granted. Once students make their final decision, the College Counseling Office will send their final transcript to one college in mid-June, validating their graduation from the Academy.

## **STUDENT RIGHTS & PRIVILEGES**

The College Counseling Office recognizes and abides by all counseling principles set forth by NACAC. We expect students and parents to abide by these principles, as described through the counseling process, as well. If you have questions about your rights and obligations in the application process, you should immediately seek clarification or explanation from a college counselor.

Students admitted to a college under a binding Early Decision program are expected to abide by their agreement that they, their parents, and their college counselor sign as part of the process. While financial issues sometimes complicate such agreements, students and their families must recognize that Early Decision commitments entail a financial, as well as an admission commitment that may affect their decision to apply under an Early Decision plan. Once admitted to an Early Decision institution, a student is required to submit a deposit, confirming attendance. Once an Academy senior admitted to an Early Decision college or university agrees to attend, the student must withdraw all of his/her other applications. The student will not continue with any other college applications for that particular admissions cycle. Additionally, the College Counseling Office will notify all the colleges on the student's list that the student will be attending an Early Decision institution and will be withdrawing the application. The Academy will only release a transcript to the Early Decision school, and students who do not uphold the Early Decision agreement may be subject to discipline.









## **CHAPTER 6**

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# **WINTER AND SPRING OF SENIOR YEAR**

“Have the courage to follow your heart and intuition. They somehow already know what you truly want to become. Stay hungry. Stay foolish.”

—Steve Jobs  
*Stanford Commencement Speech*  
2005

By now you have mailed your applications, have requested that test scores be sent to colleges, and are finishing up supplemental application materials that arrived after mailing the initial application. Although it may now seem like a relatively quiet time in the college process, the college counselors – through telephone calls and campus visits – are making themselves available to admission officers. For this reason, we encourage you to remain in close contact with your college counselor so that the counselor is aware of course progress and winter term activities.

## STUDENT CREDENTIALS

By late December and early January, all transcripts and counselor letters of recommendation have been mailed or sent electronically to your list of colleges on Naviance. Occasionally, students will receive notification that their application is incomplete because of missing documents or test scores. Don't panic. Admissions officers are processing tens of thousands of documents, sent both electronically and by mail, with varying degrees of efficiency. Often the "missing credential" letter and the Exeter materials or SAT scores have crossed in the mail, or the materials have been received by the admissions office but have not been processed. If you receive such a notice, bring it to the College Counseling Office and we will promptly follow up with the college to confirm that the information has been received. If, for any reason, the missing document cannot be found, we will resend any missing information electronically, by fax, or via express mail.

After you have submitted your applications, some colleges may send you a supplemental update form that you need to complete and promptly return. Be sure to take as much care with this supplemental form as you did with the original application. More and more institutions are gauging student interest in their college, so your prompt response and the answers you provide will help the admission office to determine the level of your interest in their school.

At the conclusion of winter term, the College Counseling Office automatically sends winter term grades to all colleges to which a senior has applied. Early Decision and Early Action candidates should note that the College Counseling Office sends winter term grades to the school where they have been accepted. While many colleges request midyear grades by February 15, the winter term at Exeter does not end until mid-March. As soon as the

winter term ends, the grades are sent to the schools to which a senior has applied. Although students receive midterm grades, they are unofficial and are not released to admission officers.

Several colleges and universities offer interviews at the Academy during the winter term. If the college offers interviews at Exeter and is on a student's Naviance college list, students will receive instructions for signing up electronically. Not all colleges, however, offer interviews on Exeter's campus; contact the individual college to see if you can schedule a Skype or phone interview with an admissions officer or an alumni interviewer.

## FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

Most colleges request that institutional financial aid forms, supporting documentation, and the Profile form be submitted by February 1. While it can be challenging to gather tax information and complete the necessary paperwork by the deadline, it is important that financial aid officers are able to process your financial aid award as soon as they know the admission status of your application. If you are having trouble getting your financial aid forms prepared, speak with your college counselor.

Winter term can also be an appropriate time to continue to look for scholarships, online (<http://www.fastweb.com> or <http://studentaid.ed.gov>), through Naviance's scholarship database, or in the College Counseling Office. You will receive notification from the CCO if you qualify as a National Merit Semifinalist or a Congressional Presidential Scholar.



## COLLEGE DECISIONS

It's here — that long-anticipated “senior spring.” The many hours you have spent thoughtfully researching your college choices, filling out forms, writing essays, and visiting college campuses have paid off with offers of admission and financial aid packages from several of your colleges. For many of you, the decision will be an easy one, as you have been offered admission to your first-choice college. Other seniors may still be undecided, and may choose to revisit college campuses to narrow their choices, attend open houses or receptions for admitted students, or speak with Exeter alumni who are currently attending colleges under consideration. Use your college counselor as a resource to help you sort through your options, confirm your financial aid award, and make your final decision.

As the College Counseling Office celebrates your admission offers with you, we recognize that many of you will also have received some disappointing news from colleges. A denial letter is never pleasant, even if you were anticipating it. Being denied admission does not mean that you were unqualified or did something “wrong.” With many more highly qualified students applying by record numbers at institutions nationwide, a denial letter simply means that there were other candidates who better met the college's unique needs and criteria. Your college counselors firmly believe that the college didn't turn you down — they turned down your résumé. Use the support resources of your family and friends as you sort through your decisions.

When you make your final decision, remember that **students must accept one offer of admission by the official candidate reply date, May 1**. Take this deadline very seriously. Colleges have been known in the recent past to return deposits postmarked, whether electronically or by the U.S. Postal Service, after the stated deadline. Do not put yourself in this difficult position. Be sure to graciously and promptly decline the admission offers made by other colleges; by quickly notifying the college that you will not be accepting their offer of admission, you may help your Exeter classmates who have been waitlisted at that institution. Remember that accepting more than one offer of admission to secure a spot in the freshman class at multiple schools — an unethical practice known as “double-depositing” — is prohibited by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), of which Exeter is a charter member.

## HOW ARE ADMISSIONS DECISIONS MADE?

There are many factors that influence an admissions decision. The type of institution (public vs. private), the size of the university or college (large, medium or small), the level of admission selectivity based upon the percentage of students who are admitted, the admission philosophy of the institution, and the “context of the applicant pool” in any given year — all these factors can influence how an admissions officer will read and rate an application, present an application to a committee, and make a final decision on an application.

Most often at public institutions, objective data — a student's class rank, grade point average, and standardized test — will direct a decision. However, this is not true for every public university; you must research each institution, to determine how it evaluates in-state and out-of-state applicants. Remember that admission rates for out-of-state applicants may be significantly lower than for in-state residents.

At the most selective private institutions, both a student's academic and personal profile are weighed. In addition, selective admission committees consider the context of the high school — for example, the number of Exeter applicants in any given year; the strength of the university's applicant pool in comparison to the Academy's applicant pool; the history of admissions decisions; the matriculation rates in recent years; and the present academic performance of Exeter alumni attending the institution. If you have attended more than one secondary school, each educational experience will be evaluated in the context of your high school.

An admissions officer at a selective institution focuses on two main ingredients of a student's application — the student's academic profile and personal qualities. The outline below will offer some insight into the varied facets of each profile.

A review of your academic credentials generally includes:

- Your transcript, both the balance and the rigor of courses (intensive/college-level, 400+), as well as your grades;
- School profile: the context of learning environment; the number of Advanced Placement, intensive, accelerated, and college-level courses offered; faculty/student ratio; percent of graduates attending four-year colleges; unusual programs, history of school with the college or university, grade distribution;

- Grade distribution vs. class rank (for schools that rank) vs. grade-point average;
- Standardized test scores (SAT I, SAT II, ACT, TOEFL);
- Teacher and counselor recommendations. Both should provide specific information about the student's strengths and accomplishments, while briefly addressing areas for improvement and any challenges with the material that have led to an aberrant performance;
- Achievements, awards, and scholarships earned;
- Academic programs beyond the traditional school-year curriculum, including study abroad programs and summer study;
- Your intended academic interest or major).

A review of your personal characteristics can include:

- Extracurricular activities, including a student's time commitment and roles within various activities, both in and outside of school. Remember that colleges are not necessarily looking for the "well-rounded student" – they are looking for a well-rounded freshman class;
- Essays and written answers to questions on an application supplement. Admission committees pay attention both to what you say and how you say it.
- Character traits that help build a vibrant college community, such as leadership, discipline, resilience, determination, humility, empathy, and selflessness. Admission officers seek to understand who you are at your current high school, based upon your essays and recommendations, and who you might be at their institution;
- Interviews can give life to your application, or clarify a special talent or a lapse in your academic record.
- Recommendations from your college counselor and high school teacher;
- Summer experiences, and how have they influenced your life/perspective;
- Cultural experiences (travel, living abroad, etc.).

The list below may also be factored into the admission equation:

- Gender;
- Family background, race, or ethnic heritage;
- Permanent residence (particularly with a college's desire for geographical diversity);
- Supplemental recommendations from an employer, peer, or fine or performing arts instructor. Be wary of submitting recommendations from an influential alumna/us or political figure, unless the person writing knows the applicant very well. Before submitting, confirm with the institution whether they will accept and review an additional recommendation;
- Special talents (art, music, writing, athletics, etc.);
- Foreign language ability;
- Area of academic interest, particularly if a student is applying for an undersubscribed major;
- Legacy status as the child of an alumna/us;
- Status as a child of a faculty or staff member;
- Other supplementary materials, such as a term paper, research précis, or art portfolio. Confirm with the institution if they will review it;
- Philanthropic interest or development potential;
- Financial need, particularly if the college is "need aware" or "need sensitive" in their application review;
- Unusual circumstances;
- Disciplinary issues such as probation.
- Separation from school, such as medical leaves.

## COLLEGE WAITLISTS

Many students incorrectly judge a college's decision on the size or weight of the envelope: a big, fat packet means an offer of admission; a thin envelope signifies the disappointment of being denied admission. Yet colleges mail out more than two types of decision letters. Often, that thin envelope can convey a different type of decision: a waitlist letter.

Most selective colleges and universities use waitlists as an "insurance policy" for meeting their target for their freshman class. College admissions is an art, not

a science. Sometimes a college's projections for its target may be dead-on; other times, significantly over or under its goal. At any point just before or after May 1, once the college has recognized that they have not met their target enrollment, admissions offices review their waitlist to select a number of students to round out their class. When waitlist letters are mailed, it is impossible to know which colleges will be able to admit students from their waitlists or how many students they will admit. The status of the waitlist will become much clearer after May 1 when admissions offices will have a final tally of matriculating students.

No two colleges look at waitlists in the same way. Some schools use it as an effective enrollment tool, whereas others hope never to go to their waitlist. Others inappropriately use the list as a supposedly gentler way of saying "no," without any intention of ever admitting a student. The number of students taken from a waitlist can be a mere handful or in the hundreds. Sometimes colleges have "special interest" waitlists for athletes or legacy cases; others group everyone together. Some institutions rank waitlists; others do not. Recognize that there are numerous variables to how a college uses a waitlist. Waitlist opportunities can fluctuate from year to year – no two years are exactly alike at a given institution. Carefully review the waitlist notification for clues about past waitlist activity. A telephone call to admission offices or a review of a college's admission website can also provide valuable information.

Being placed on a waitlist can be both a blessing and a curse. The good news is that you might have received a simple letter of denial. Yet there are downsides. Accepting a place on a waitlist prolongs your admissions process at a time when most of your peers may be wrapping up their own. There is also absolutely no guarantee of any positive outcome to remaining on a waitlist. Despite a college's statement that only a handful of waitlist students may be admitted, many students cling to a false sense of hope, only to be disappointed. Whatever happens, a waitlist can be an emotional roller coaster ride.

There are concrete things you can do if you have been placed on a waitlist:

- If you plan to remain on a college's waitlist you should immediately contact your college counselor and work out a plan. Students who plan to drop their waitlist candidacy should notify both the college and their counselor promptly. Consider your options carefully, and talk with your college counselor and your family about your plans.

- You should only remain active on a waitlist if you are sincerely interested in attending that college. If you have other college choices about which you are excited, then it is not advisable to remain on a list. It may not be wise to remain on a waitlist if your recent grades or other parts of your college candidacy have not shown improvement.
- Many colleges provide information on how often and to what extent the waitlist has been used by their admissions office in the waitlist notification. The information may also give an indication of whether the college encourages additional supporting evidence or recommendations. Some schools welcome diplomatic, yet restrained "lobbying" from candidates, while others actively discourage any contact.
- Decline offers of admission at colleges you do not plan to attend before May 1. In the spirit of *Non sibi*, such action could benefit one of your peers in getting off that school's waitlist and being offered admission to their first-choice school. If you and your friends respond quickly, colleges may turn to their waitlists earlier than mid-May.

While the decision to take a student from the waitlist ultimately rests with the college admissions office, there are some effective actions you can take if you choose to remain on a waitlist:

- Tell your counselor of your plans.
- Accept one college's offer of admission and make a deposit there **before May 1** so that your place in their freshman class is guaranteed. Your deposit will be forfeited if you are accepted off the waitlist at your other choice, but you cannot postpone depositing because you will lose your place at the college which offered you admission. It is an accepted practice to commit to one college while remaining on the waitlist at another. Remember that there is no guarantee that any college will offer admission to any students placed on its waitlist, so it is imperative that you accept an offer of admission that has been made to you before May 1.
- Keep up your performance in the classroom and remain active in extracurricular activities.
- Discuss with your counselor the efficacy of writing a direct, succinct letter to the appropriate admissions officer at your waitlist school. Restate your reasons for wanting to attend the college, update them about

any recent accomplishments or pertinent new information about which the college may not be aware, and emphasize that you will attend if offered admission from the waitlist. Show this letter to your college counselor before mailing it.

- Resist the urge to telephone admissions offices to lobby on your own behalf.
- Discuss frankly with the college, your college counselor, and your family the opportunities available for need-based financial aid for waitlisted students. Many colleges completely deplete their institutional resources for grant money on or before May 1. Some schools do not have the resources to offer any aid to waitlist students.

Above all else, try to maintain perspective and a sense of humor. Remember that you probably have wonderful college choices available to you. By concentrating your focus and energy on those and making a deposit before May 1 to one of them, you can assure yourself of a good college option.

The College Counseling Office will stay in contact with the colleges during this time to support your efforts. Remain patient, keep this process in perspective, and continue communicating openly with your family and your college counselor. Use the support network you have to assist you through this challenging time.

## SENIORITIS

**You've made it!** The 1st of May has come and gone, you have deposited with your first-choice school and are already beginning to anticipate the start of college. You are now ready to relax, knowing that the pressure of performing academically in order to get into college is off. It is time to take it easy because, after all, grades don't count anymore.

This is false. The college process isn't over until that Sunday in June when the final senior's name is announced at graduation. Until that moment, and even beyond, colleges retain the right to rescind offers of admission for students who have failed to maintain consistent academic performance. Reread your offer of admission. Colleges require students to agree to maintain their academic status quo and complete their Exeter career at the same general standard which they had achieved before. Your failure to do so is a breach of your end of the bargain, thus permitting colleges to reconsider their part of the contract — your offer of admission.

Some clever students may attempt to gauge the threshold at which they can lessen their effort without causing their grades to raise any "red flags." Yet only the college knows its own threshold. Continue to work hard to maintain your present standard of performance.

Colleges have been known to rescind offers of admission. While colleges are not eager to take such a dramatic step, they are willing and able to rescind offers of admission. Remember that you are not a freshman at that college until the first day of class. Any action you take – not only academic inconsistency, but also disciplinary matters both on- and off-campus – can impact your offer of admission. Don't be foolish. Do not do anything that can jeopardize all of your hard work.

## UNDERSTANDING YOUR OFFER OF FINANCIAL AID

For students who have applied for need-based financial aid, most colleges will notify students of their aid package shortly after their offer of admission. If a student has submitted required documents, such as the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the Profile forms, on time, college financial aid offices are usually able to notify students of their aid award prior to the May 1 deadline for accepting an admission offer.

Upon receipt of their financial aid package, students and families should thoroughly read **all** of the information that has been included in their aid award. Families who have questions about award packages should contact the college's financial aid office **as soon as possible**. Aid officers are available to help families make sense of their packages and financing options. When contacting aid offices, be patient – many other families are also seeking to clarify their packages in the next three weeks, before the May 1 deadline.

Remember that need-based financial aid packages consist of two types of assistance: grant and 'self-help' money. Grants may come from the college or from federal/state governments, and do not require repayment. The most common forms of grants Exonians receive in their financial aid award include SEOG, Pell Grants, and college-sponsored scholarships or grants. Colleges expect students and families to help finance their education through such 'self-help' means as college work-study or student loans. Students are required to pay back 'self-help' money. Exonians may see in their award packages such 'self-help' funding as Perkins Loans, college work-study, Stafford Loans, and privately-sponsored loans, such as PLUS loans.

When reviewing the aid package, students may also consider college-sponsored options, such as payment



plans and deferred payment programs, that can help spread out a family's contribution. Some colleges and universities may include their own college-sponsored loans, which are often offered with attractive payment plans and competitively low interest rates. Check with the college aid office to see how to apply for these programs.

On occasion, some colleges' financial aid awards do not fully meet a family's demonstrated financial need, as calculated by the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) from the FAFSA and Profile forms, with sufficient grant dollars, leaving a significant difference between the cost of attendance and the total aid award. This administrative policy is known as 'gapping.' If you have received a 'gapped' aid package, we suggest you speak directly with the respective financial aid office. Some students may choose to borrow funds from an outside source – Tree Loans, CitiAssit loans, or other loans recommended by the New Hampshire Higher Educational Assistance Foundation – to meet the 'gap.' Please recognize that some of these loans have origination fees, in addition to interest payments and requirements that students begin to repay during their undergraduate years.

If you have any questions about understanding your financial aid award, or need help in determining how to proceed with questions and negotiations with college financial aid officers, please feel free to contact your college counselor.




If you have not heard about your financial aid package by the first week in April, we strongly recommend that you contact the college financial aid office **immediately**, to confirm that your aid application is complete. Frequently, the following missing information can hold up a student's aid package:

- Did you complete your FAFSA/Profile on time? Delays in submitting these forms create delays in receiving financial aid.

- Did you receive your Student Aid Report (SAR)? After submitting your FAFSA, you will either be mailed a paper SAR or you will receive an e-mail that lets you access your electronic SAR. If you did not receive a SAR or need an extra copy, an electronic copy can still be accessed from the FAFSA website with your PIN.
- Has your Student Aid Report (SAR) been selected for verification? On the paper form or the electronic SAR, look for the letters EFC followed by a series of numbers. If there is an asterisk (\*) after your EFC, your FAFSA has been selected for verification. About 30 percent of FAFSAs are selected for verification. If selected, you will be asked by college financial aid officers to provide more information.
- Have you submitted copies of tax returns and W-2 forms to financial aid offices, or via an electronic delivery provider, such as College Board's IDOC (Institutional Documentation Imaging service)?
- If your parents are divorced or separated, have you submitted documentation verifying their marital status? Financial aid offices may seek additional information about a student's non-custodial parent.
- Does your family own a business or are they self-employed? Usually, college financial aid offices require additional documentation (such as specific tax return schedules) for small-businessmen.
- Do you have any siblings or parents who are enrolled as undergraduate college students? Financial aid offices may require verification of full-time enrollment.

Because every family's financial circumstances are unique, each financial aid case will be different. Do not hesitate to speak directly with a college's financial aid office, should any of these specific areas of concern pertain directly to you.

WINTER AND SRPRING OF SENIOR YEAR

TESTING	PROGRAMMING	COMMUNICATIONS	RESOURCES	
				
SAT I OR SAT II (JANUARY, IF NEEDED)	COLLEGE INTERVIEWS  FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOP  GAP YEAR SUMMER PROGRAMS FAIR (MARCH, FEBRUARY)  ALL-CLASS MEETING (FEBRUARY)	WEEKLY CCO E-NEWS EMAILS	NAVIANCE FAMILY CONNECTION  COMMON APPLICATION	



## **CHAPTER 7**

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# **SPECIFIC APPLICANTS**







**“Treat people as  
if they were what  
they might be . . .  
and you will help  
them become  
capable of being.”**

**—Goethe**

## STUDENT ATHLETES

If you presently compete in varsity athletics, and/or with a competitive club, AAU team, Junior National and/or Junior Olympic team, you may want to consider the possibility of playing at the college or university level. Athletics can enrich your undergraduate experience and may assist you in the college admissions process.

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) oversees athletics at many colleges and universities, and its membership is divided into three Divisions. There are over 340 Division I schools, over 290 Division II schools, and over 450 Division III schools. One of the major distinctions among the divisions is that Division I and Division II universities and colleges may offer athletic scholarships; Division III colleges do not. For more information about the NCAA's Divisions, review the "Athletics" section in Chapter II of this guidebook.

Before you contact college coaches, take time to discuss your interests and abilities with your present coach. Ask your coach for a candid evaluation of your ability: can you play at the Division I, II, or III level, or are you a recreational student-athlete? If your present coach is unable to assess what division you can compete at on the college level, you may want to attend a summer camp in order to access the expertise of college coaches, most of whom can evaluate your skill level. Once your skill level is determined, you can identify with your coach and college counselor a list of colleges that meets both your academic and athletic needs.

As in the overall college admissions process, it is important to create criteria for selecting athletic programs. What are you looking for in your college athletic team? Do you want to be part of an already winning program or do you want to be a star in a building program? Is your talent or position needed in the college's upcoming class or in two years? How many seniors graduate from the team? Given that many Division I coaches expect athletes to approach their training in and out of season as a full-time "job," how much of a time commitment do you want to give to your sport in college? As you match your talent with the "right" program, your coach and college counselor can give you additional questions to ask to be an informed consumer.

## RECRUITMENT

With a handful of notable exceptions, such as Men's crew, the NCAA oversees the recruiting policies and practices for almost *all* intercollegiate sports. These guidelines are updated annually and are available online, at <http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>. It is important for prospective student-athletes to become familiar with recruiting terms and the specific recruiting calendar for his/her sport. Prospective athletes are strongly advised to read the "NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete" (available online) *before* starting the recruitment process.

Here is some common terminology used in the recruitment process:

**Prospective Student-Athlete:** According to the NCAA, you become a "prospective student-athlete" when you start ninth-grade classes. You become a "recruited prospective student-athlete" at a particular college if any coach or representative of the college's athletic interests (booster or representative) approaches you (or any member of your family) about enrolling and participating in athletics at that college. Most of the Academy's "recruited prospective student-athletes" are contacted in the summer prior to their senior year or during the fall of their senior year.

**Contact:** Any time a college coach has face-to-face contact with you or your parents away from the college's campus that is more than a simple greeting, it is known as "contact." A contact also occurs if a coach meets with you at your high school or at any location where you are competing or practicing. As a prospective student-athlete, you can contact coaches at any time; college coaches, however, have restrictions on when they can contact you, particularly prior to your lower year. For detailed information about contact rules for each sport, refer to the "NCAA Guide for College-Bound Student-Athletes," available online at <http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>.

**Evaluation Period:** During this time, a college coach may watch you play but cannot have any in-person conversations with you or your parents off the college's campus; a coach may write and telephone you.

**Official Visit:** An official visit is any visit to a college campus by you and your parents that is paid for by the college. For both Division I and Division II, you can have five expense-paid "official visits" to a particular campus. An official visit may not exceed 48 hours and has a limit on dollars spent on the recruited student-athlete as well

as dollars spent by the host. Before a college may invite you on an official visit, you are required to provide the college with a copy of your high school transcript and, if applicable, your standardized test scores; you will also need to have registered with the NCAA Eligibility Center. Division III student-athletes can have one expense-paid (official) visit to a particular campus; however, there is no limit on the number of campuses that you may visit if you initially enroll in a Division III college.

**Unofficial Visit:** Any visit by you and your parents to a college paid for by you or your parents.

### THE RECRUITMENT CALENDAR

All students interested in playing sports at the Division I, Division II, or Division III level should review the schedule below. In addition, prospective Division I and Division II athletes should review the recruiting calendars noted by sport found in the “NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete.”

#### *Fall and Winter of Upper Year*

It is your responsibility to review your past, current, and future academic courses with your academic advisor. Are all of your courses certified by the NCAA and do you project meeting the NCAA’s core requirements by graduation from Exeter? You can check by reviewing eligibility requirements online, at <http://www.ncaa.org/initial-eligibility>. For more information, please also read the section below on NCAA Eligibility (link to section below).

#### *Spring of Upper Year*

Speak to your respective Academy, club, and/or AAU coaches for their assessment of your level of skill and potential as a recruited student-athlete. Ask them for their recommendations of potential college programs that would best match your athletic talent. Share this information with your college counselor. Ask your coaches if they will be willing to complete college sport questionnaires on your behalf and/or write letter of recommendations with follow-up phone calls to the college coaches.

As you use your coaches’ feedback to help develop your prospective college list, student-athletes should also check college team websites for athletic recruiting questionnaires, and complete and submit them for all of their prospective colleges, and before making any summer college visits.

#### *Summer Between Upper Year and Senior Year*

In addition to completing athletic programs’ on-line recruiting questionnaires, you should consider e-mailing every coach of the respective college programs to which you are interested in applying. Include in your letter the following information:

- Your interest in both the athletic program and the college;
- A profile of both your athletic and academic performance over the past three years;
- Information about summer camps and competitions outside of your Exeter experience, names of coaches, and any statistics or pertinent information clarifying your talent; and
- Any questions regarding the program that you cannot answer by reading the team website (for example, the coach’s recruitment needs for specific positions, given the number of players who will graduate in the coming year).

#### *Fall of Senior Year*

By September you have contacted your Exeter and league coaches for an updated assessment of skill. Remain in contact with them regarding the completion of college athletic questionnaires and telephone contact with college coaches.

Assuming you have already contacted all of your prospective college coaches in writing to provide them with both athletic and academic information, it is now time to begin the follow-up telephone calls and/or e-mail contact to express continued interest in their program.

Keep track of each college coach contact (i.e. name of coach, Head vs. Assistant, etc., date and substance of contact). Consider keeping a journal noting the frequency of contacts and distinguishing between handwritten notes or personalized e-mails and computer-generated, generic form letters. Remember that Division I and II coaches are guided by the NCAA recruitment guidelines in terms of contact with potential student athletes; Division III coaches are not constrained by any NCAA rules.

Register with the NCAA Eligibility Center, if you have not done so already; this is particularly critical if you hope to schedule an “official visit” to a Division I or II college.

Be aware that some coaches may encourage you to apply Early Decision/Action as a tool in their recruitment process. Talk to your college counselor about the advisability and ramifications of such a decision.

If you and a coach are having serious conversations about your prospective contributions to his or her athletic program, you should speak to your college counselor about asking the coach for a “preliminary review” of your academic credentials by his or her athletic liaison in the college’s admission office. A preliminary review is not a guarantee of admission; rather, it is an opportunity for both you and the coach to gain feedback on whether or not you are a viable admissions candidate as a prospective student-athlete. For Division I universities that compete in the Ivy League Athletic Conference, a preliminary review can help a coach determine your “Academic Index,” or “AI”; at Division III colleges, especially those that compete in the New England Small College Athletic Conference (NESCAC), a preliminary review can help a coach identify your recruitment “band.” For a preliminary review, some colleges simply require an unofficial Exeter transcript and, if applicable, standardized test scores; others require a completed application, supplemental essays, and all letters of recommendation.

If you would like to have an unofficial transcript and, if applicable, standardized test scores faxed to a college coach, please complete the online transcript request form, at <http://www.exeter.edu/transcripts>. You will need to provide the coach’s name and sport, the college’s name, and the coach’s fax number. Please kindly allow ten business days for your request to be completed.

A Division I student-athlete may be asked to sign a National Letter of Intent. By signing a National Letter of Intent, a student-athlete agrees to attend the institution for one academic year; in exchange, that institution must provide athletic financial aid for one academic year. There are restrictions on signing a National Letter of Intent that may affect your eligibility. Read it carefully (and show the letter to your parents, coach and college counselor). Remember, DO NOT sign any institutional or conference letter of intent before the National Letter of Intent signing date. The National Letter of Intent is administered by the NCAA Eligibility Center; signing dates are listed in the NCAA Guide, and more information is available online, at <http://www.national-letter.org>.

A college coach’s recruitment “list” can shift through the fall and winter. Reasons for a shift can include:

- a coach’s assessment of a student-athlete’s level of talent to compete at the college’s NCAA Division level;
- a coach’s needs to fill a particular position;
- a student-athlete’s level of interest in the college (willingness to make a commitment as the student’s number one choice vs. considering several choices);
- the results of a preliminary review of academic credentials by the admissions office, where a student meets or does not meet admission parameters;
- and the number of student-athletes who have been offered admission through Early Decision/Action.

Remain realistic – if coaches are not calling or returning your calls, you may not be currently considered a recruit by the coach. Use your contact journal and talk with your Academy coach and college counselor to get a “reality check” of your prospects.

#### *Winter of Senior Year*

Continue your contact with coaches through the beginning of March. Remember that it is important to maintain a solid academic and disciplinary record throughout the senior year. Offers of admission are contingent on successful completion of the senior year.

#### *June of Senior Year*

After graduation, Division I and II college-bound student-athletes must receive a final certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center before they will be allowed to practice or compete for their college or university. Remember that Division III athletes do not have to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

After the Dean of Students office has processed the graduation clearance for all seniors in mid-June, the College Counseling Office will send final transcripts to the NCAA Eligibility Center for all seniors who have completed the NCAA registration process.

#### **NCAA ELIGIBILITY**

Just as they set standards for the recruitment of Division I or Division II student-athletes, the NCAA certifies the academic records of all Division I and Division II student-athletes through the NCAA Eligibility Center. You can register with the NCAA Eligibility Center beginning in eleventh grade. You must register with the



NCAA Eligibility Center by the time you graduate from the Academy if you plan to participate in Division I or II athletic programs, whether as a recruited player or as a “walk on” who tries out for the team after enrolling in college. All Division I and Division II intercollegiate athletes – even “walk-ons” – must be cleared by the NCAA Eligibility Center before they can practice or play with the intercollegiate team. Athletic recruits who plan to participate in an “Official Paid Recruiting Visit” at a Division I or Division II school should register for the NCAA Eligibility Center as soon as possible.

There are three steps necessary to complete your NCAA eligibility:

1. First, register for the NCAA Eligibility Center by completing the form at <http://www.eligibilitycenter.org>.
2. After completing the NCAA Eligibility Center form, you must request the College Counseling Office to

send your transcripts to the Eligibility Center. To do this, complete the online transcript request form, at <http://www.exeter.edu/transcripts>. If you attended another high school prior to Exeter, you must request that institution to send an official transcript to the NCAA Eligibility Center, as they will not accept the Academy’s copy of your former transcript.

3. In addition, you must request official scores from College Board to the NCAA Eligibility Center, using the CEEB code 9999.

These three steps – completing the NCAA online form, requesting your high school transcript(s), and submitting official test scores from College Board – comprise the initial eligibility process. A student’s final eligibility, which takes place after the student has graduated from high school, will be determined once a university contacts the NCAA on the student’s behalf.

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## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2015

In order to compete in Division I or Division II athletics as a freshman, you must meet the NCAA’s eligibility requirements.

1. Graduate from high school.
2. Have a core-course grade-point average (based on maximum of 4.000) and combined score on the SAT Reading and Math sections or a sum score on the ACT based on the qualifier index scale in the NCAA “Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete.”
3. If you are enrolling in college on or before August 1, 2016, you must successfully complete a core curriculum of at least 16 academic requirements. These requirements include:

### ENGLISH:

4 full years for Division I; 3 years for Division II

### MATHEMATICS:

3 years for both Division I and II

*(One year of algebra, plus one year of geometry or a year of higher-level math for which geometry is prerequisite.)*

### NATURAL OR PHYSICAL SCIENCE:

2 years for Division I or II

*(including one year of lab science for both)*

### ADDITIONAL MATH, SCIENCE, OR ENGLISH:

1 year for Division I; 3 years for Division II

### SOCIAL SCIENCE:

2 years for Division I and II

*(history, economics, geography, psychology, sociology, government, political science, anthropology)*

### ADDITIONAL CORE COURSES:

4 years for Division I and II

*(from any category above, or foreign language, comparative religion, or philosophy)*

To review courses that meet eligibility according to the NCAA, as well as non-core courses that do not meet NCAA eligibility, please check for Phillips Exeter’s “List of Approved Core Courses (Form 48H)” on the NCAA website. The list of NCAA-approved core courses is maintained and updated annually by the Director of Studies in the Dean of Faculty’s office.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2015 AND BEYOND

In 2012, the NCAA announced changes to the academic eligibility requirements for any student-athlete enrolling in a Division I college after August 1, 2016. As in the past, a student must complete 16 core courses following the same past distribution, as listed above. However, **ten of the 16 core courses must be completed before the start of the senior year of high school.** In addition, seven of the ten core courses **must** be English, math, or natural or physical science. Students who fail to meet the required ten core-courses prior to the start of their senior year will be allowed to retake core courses in their senior year, but will be academic “redshirt” student-athletes, who may receive athletic scholarships and may practice during the first year of college enrollment, but may not compete during their first year.

The minimum grade point average required for core courses has increased from a 2.00 gpa (pre-August 2016) to a 2.30 gpa (post-August 2016). Grades earned in the ten courses required before the start of senior year are “locked in” for purposes of grade point average calculation; any repeated courses prior to twelfth grade will not be used to improve the initial three-year grade point average. Students who fail to meet the required grade point average minimum will be “redshirted” their first year of college.

For more information about the NCAA Eligibility Center’s change in academic eligibility requirements for student-athletes entering university on or after August 1, 2016, please review the “Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete” on the NCAA website.

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY

- For Division I, you must complete the 16 core-course requirement within four consecutive academic years (i.e., eight semesters or nine trimesters on Exeter’s calendar), which begin when you initially started high school with your ninth grade class. Students who have repeated a grade during their high school experience should speak directly with their college counselor about NCAA eligibility issues.
- *Repeated courses are only counted once.* This includes classes taken at different high schools that have similar titles. Courses with similar content may be deemed duplicative by the NCAA Eligibility Center.
- Changing schools can sometimes make the certification process more confusing.

- Post-graduates (PG’s) should have received certification before coming to Phillips Exeter. However, post-graduates who have earned a high school diploma within four consecutive academic years from the start of ninth grade may use **one** additional core-course unit completed during their post-graduate year.
- For Canadian citizens who have graduated from a Canadian high school prior to attending Exeter, the certification process is different than domestic students; speak with your counselor and the NCAA directly.
- Field Courses do NOT fulfill NCAA requirements.
- Potential Division I or II student-athletes who participate in fall term abroad (Stratford, Grenoble, Russia) or winter term abroad (Ecuador, Germany, or Taiwan/Beijing) **MUST** enroll in two English electives during senior spring.
- The Washington Intern Program does NOT provide an NCAA-recognized English credit. Students who participate in the Washington Intern Program may find that they will be ineligible to compete in Division I or II athletics.
- After graduation, students will have to receive a final certification from the NCAA Eligibility Center before they will be allowed to compete for their college or university.
- Division III athletes, and students interested in club or recreational sports at a Division I or II college, are NOT affected by any of this, and do not need to register with the NCAA Eligibility Center.

## Meeting NCAA Eligibility with a Learning Disability

If you have a documented learning disability, discuss with your college counselor how to meet NCAA eligibility. There is a four-step process that includes:

1. Documenting your disability.
2. Registering with the NCAA Eligibility Center as a student with a disability with the intention to potentially request a waiver of certain requirement standards.
3. Registering and completing non-standardized SAT I testing.
4. Meeting the acceptable NCAA core courses for students with disabilities, obtained from your college counselor. Also, review the section on “Learning Disabilities” in this guidebook.



## PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTISTS

If you are a student with talent in the visual arts, music, dance or theater, you may want to submit a sample of your ability to the various colleges to which you are applying. Consider the following in determining what you send:

- Does your Academy or private instructor believe your talent will win a favorable review from a particular college? Which pieces should be used to demonstrate your talent?
- Do you have the time and resources to present your talent in a format that is acceptable to the college? Many colleges are now using web-based applications to manage submissions. Check out [www.slideroom.com/commonapp/Applicant\\_Experience.html](http://www.slideroom.com/commonapp/Applicant_Experience.html) for more information on how SlideRoom connects with the Common Application.
- Check each college's website for information on how, when, and where to submit optional art supplements. Keep in mind that art supplements may need to be submitted earlier than the admission application deadline, in order to give the college enough time to have them evaluated before your application is read and reviewed.

If you are planning to apply to a conservatory, art institute, or school devoted to the arts (for example, Julliard or Museum of Fine Arts) or a school for the arts within a larger university (such as The Tisch School at NYU or Cornell's College of Architecture, Art and Planning), you should understand how your application will be evaluated. Research or ask each college:

- How much is your talent used in the decision-making process?
- How do they evaluate your talent (portfolio, audition, CD, or on-line)?
- Does each institution look for specific ingredients in talent? What does each college want to see in your portfolio or audition?
- For this year's applicant pool, is the college looking for one type of student more than another? For example, does the university orchestra have too many violinists but are desperate for a harpist? Does the Art Department need students who seek to concentrate in oil and watercolors, because of an abundance of graphic designers?

- How do you make an audition appointment? Who does the actual evaluation? Recognizing the Academy's rules that restrict senior college days, how long is the audition program? Are there regional auditions available? Can you send a CD or would the university prefer a portfolio presented on line?

After learning more about the evaluation process at each college, have a conversation with your college counselor, adviser, and Exeter teacher to determine which schools are a better match for you.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

It is important to determine how each of your respective colleges defines an "international student." Some students are defined by citizenship, while others are defined by foreign educational experience; some colleges consider both. Check with each school on how they define your particular status and whether you must submit a different international application, supplemental form, or declaration of financial status form.

## RESIDENCY

If you are an "undocumented" resident of the United States, you will be considered an international student by most colleges. This will impact significantly your eligibility for Federal financial aid, such as student loans and college work study. If you are applying for legal residency, please do your best to expedite the process **before** your senior year so that you may be considered for Federal dollars and financial aid.

## TESTING

Some colleges ask international students who are not native English speakers to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam. The TOEFL exam is used for international students whose native language is not English and who are applying for admission to colleges and graduate schools in the United States. The College Counseling Office recommends students **take the TOEFL exam in the summer between their upper and senior year.** Offered at regional sites throughout the United States and world, the computer-based exam is expensive, must be scheduled well in advance, and has limited available dates, so plan ahead.

## FINANCIAL AID

U.S. citizens, dual citizens with the United States, and permanent residents are all eligible for federal financial aid dollars should they qualify. This is not true for most international students. However, some colleges and universities offer some financial assistance for international undergraduate students. *The International*



*Student Handbook of U.S. Colleges*, published by the College Board, provides a list of average aid awards given to international students at a wide range of colleges and universities. While some of the most selective Category 4 and 5 universities offer financial aid to targeted international students, competition is fierce for these scarce dollars, and can often mean that several hundred international applicants may be competing for just a handful of spaces for funded students. Whereas Exeter can and does fully fund international students, the majority of U.S. universities don't.

Ask your college counselor for suggestions of colleges where generous financial aid is available to international students. Every college and university approaches international financial aid differently; speak directly with the college about their aid policies. If you require significant financial aid in order to attend college in the U.S., your college list **must** include a majority of Category 1, 2, and 3 schools, where the statistical odds are in your favor. Keep in mind that at many of these colleges, the admissions process will not be "need blind" for international students, so the admissions selectivity may increase dramatically. Students should also research and consider universities in their home country.

### DECLARATION OF FUNDS

Most colleges and universities will ask international students for a declaration of funds. This is a statement from your parents' bank indicating in American dollars that your family can afford at least one year and as much as four years of college. Be sure to check the document requirements by reading each college's admission webpage closely. Ask each institution exactly what they are looking for in their declaration of funds. Many colleges and universities will not notify a student of their admissions decision until supporting financial documentation has been submitted for review. Do not hesitate to call an admissions office for help if you have questions.

### LEARNING DIFFERENCES

If you are a student with a documented learning difference – meaning that a professional has evaluated your learning style with diagnostic tools and has written a report indicating a learning style difference – you have the right by law not to share this information with colleges. However, most Academy students with learning difference have developed various strategies to help them with their academics and share with colleges their learning difference and coping strategies.

Colleges must accommodate students with documented learning differences or physical disabilities by law. However, it is helpful to inquire what the individual college offers in terms of support for students with learning disabilities. Do they presently have the services you need? Do you need extra time on papers and tests, or do your present strategies allow you to handle your workload without any intervention?

### STANDARDIZED TESTING

The College Board and Phillips Exeter Academy facilitate special testing arrangements for students with a documented disability. To become eligible for such services, the College Board's SSD Student Eligibility Form must be submitted for each student requesting accommodations. The American College Testing (ACT) has a similar qualification process. To be eligible for any special accommodations for any test, the student must have documentation on file in the Dean of Students' Office that supports the need for requested accommodations and meets the guidelines for such documentation. Students must also receive and utilize the requested accommodations, due to the disability, for school-based tests as well.

The submitted documentation that supports the need for testing accommodations must state the specific disability, be completed within three years of the request for accommodations, provide relevant educational, developmental, and medical history, describe the comprehensive testing used to arrive at the diagnosis, describe the functional limitations supported by the test results, describe the specific accommodations requested, and establish the professional credentials of the evaluator. Qualified students wishing to use these services must contact the Dean of Academic Affairs and the College Counseling Office (CCO) at least nine weeks in advance (two weeks for the Dean of Students' Office to process all relevant materials and then seven weeks for the testing agency to render a decision).

### SERVICE ACADEMIES

If you are considering one of the service academies among your college choices, the College Counseling Office recommends you think carefully about the education and experience found at a service academy. First and foremost, you must know yourself well enough to understand whether this is an appropriate match for you personally, academically, physically, and vocationally. The extensive steps necessary to complete the application include nomination by a Member of Congress, as well as evaluation of your academic credentials, personal integrity, and physical fitness.

## POINTS TO CONSIDER

### *Eligibility and Application Process*

Prospective service academy applicants must be at least seventeen years old but no older than twenty-three, a U.S. citizen, and unmarried without any obligation to support any dependents. The application process is more complex than for most colleges and universities. In addition to an evaluation of an applicant's academic credentials, an applicant's personal character and physical fitness, confirmed by physical exams, are considered in the application review. Unless you are a recruited athlete, you must receive a nomination from your U.S. Senator or Representative.

### *Academic Programs*

Math, engineering, and the physical sciences continue to be strong at the service academies. Are you interested in one of these academic areas? Students attending service academies can pursue majors in the humanities and social sciences, but you should be prepared to take extensive required coursework in quantitative subjects.

### *Lifestyle Change*

The service academy requires a change in lifestyle, and attending an academy is very different from the traditional undergraduate college experience. Investigate and comprehend the magnitude of the change and whether you are ready to fully embrace it on a daily basis.

### *Postgraduate Obligations*

As a service academy graduate, you are obligated to serve on active duty for several years, in addition to a commitment to reserve duty, in return for your free education. Determine whether this obligation is reasonable to you.

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS

### *Starting the Application Process*

Request and submit a pre-candidate questionnaire at the end of your upper or beginning of senior year. You may obtain a pre-candidate questionnaire from one of the service academies at the web addresses below:

U.S. Air Force Academy

<http://www.academyadmissions.com>

U.S. Coast Guard Academy

<http://www.cga.edu/admissions>

U.S. Merchant Marine Academy

<http://www.usmma.edu/admissions>

U.S. Military Academy

<http://www.usma.edu/admissions/SitePages/Home.aspx>

U.S. Naval Academy

<http://www.usna.edu/Admissions/>

## THE NOMINATION PROCESS

For four of the five service academies, you must be nominated by a member of the U.S. Congress, in order to apply. Contact each of your U.S. Senators and your Representative to ask if they would consider you as one of their nominees. Competition for these spots is fierce: each member of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives may have no more than five people attending each service academy at any given time. Many members of Congress require students to submit a formal letter requesting a nomination, in addition to submitting a nomination application form; some only require a nomination form. In addition, you can expect to submit such supporting documents as a resume, a personal statement about your interest, a copy of your Exeter transcript, standardized test scores, and up to three letters of recommendation. Each member of Congress has his or her own application requirements; review your Senator or Representative's webpage for more information.

The U.S. Coast Guard **does not** require a Congressional or Senate nomination, although the evaluation process does use the same selection criteria as the other military academies.

### *Complete Service Academy Application*

Each service academy has a multi-step process for applying; contact the individual academy via the above websites to begin your application.

### *Complete Fitness Exam*

If you are considered an "official" candidate by one of the service academies, you will be scheduled for a medical examination by a physician certified by the Department of Defense. In addition, you will also be required to complete a Physical Aptitude Evaluation (PAE), which can often be administered by members of the Academy's Physical Education department or athletic trainers.

## ROTC SCHOLARSHIPS

In addition to service academies, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) offers training to college students preparing to become military officers. The Army, Navy, and Air Force each have their own ROTC program. Students interested in the Marine Corps can participate in Navy ROTC; neither the Coast Guard nor the Merchant Marine currently sponsors their own ROTC program.

Not only does ROTC offer you the opportunity to pursue a professional career in the armed forces, but it can also cover all or part of your tuition costs, depending upon your university's tuition and factors such as your grades, post-graduation enlistment commitment, and your need for tuition assistance. Partial scholarships may also be available to help pay for educational and living expenses. In return, students must enlist in their particular branch of the armed forces after graduation from college, and must serve both active and reserve duty for a set period of time.

If you are interested in a ROTC scholarship, contact the following websites for more information:

Air Force ROTC <http://www.afrotc.com>

Army ROTC <http://www.goarmy.com/rotc.html>

Navy ROTC <http://www.nrotc.navy.mil>

### TRANSFER APPLICANTS

Occasionally Academy alumni discover that the college or university which they chose to attend after graduating from Exeter has not met their expectations, whether academic or social. If you are a college freshman and you find that you are missing your Academy friends, Harkness discussions, and late night intellectual (and not so intellectual) conversations with your Exeter dormmates, take a deep breath. All Exeter alumni, no matter which college they attend, find that it takes time – ranging from a few weeks to several semesters – to adjust to their new academic home. During your first term at college, you may find that many of your fellow classmates, in addition to your Exeter friends, are also experiencing bouts of homesickness, troublesome roommates, and underwhelming professors.

Give your current college time, and give yourself a chance to adjust. Recognize that by scheduling out-of-class meetings with your professors and by joining campus groups, you will begin to make richer connections with your teachers and fellow students. Use the resources that are available to you at your school to make your current college meet your expectations more fully. You might find that by working with a college academic advisor or professor, you can achieve your academic goals through independent study, smaller discussion-centered seminars, or access to more advanced-level coursework. And recognize that transferring can often be challenging socially, as new transfer students can feel outliers in a campus community where returning students have bonded over shared experiences.

However, if you are genuinely dissatisfied with your current college experience, or if new academic interests cannot be met by your current university, you may consider transferring. Colleges generally expect successful transfer applicants to have completed at least one semester's worth of credits, but prefer students to have more than two years of study, even if not all of your previously-earned course credit transfers. Given the differences in universities' graduation requirements, and depending on whether your previous credits transfer as elective credits or fulfill requirements, transferring can impact your intended date of graduation, as well as your ability to study abroad or participate in cooperative education programs. Finally, transfer students are rarely eligible for merit-based scholarships, and need-based financial aid may be less than generous, depending on the particular college. For all these reasons, a decision to transfer should not be made lightly.

If you are still considering transferring colleges, here are some guidelines to consider. First, the same research process for first-year students applies to transferring, with a few slight modifications. Begin the transfer process by thinking about a range of schools (i.e., Category I, II, III, IV, and V). Review your original criteria for colleges and research each of the colleges that you believe meet your criteria. After your preliminary research, contact the admission office at each college, and ask if you can speak with a member of the admissions committee who works with transfer applicants; write down this person's name as your contact source, in case you have additional questions. Review the answers to the following questions to determine how to proceed in your college coursework in order to enhance your transfer application:

- How many transfer students were accepted as sophomores for the last two years? How many applicants were accepted as juniors? How many applicants were there for the number of spaces in the transfer class?
- Does the admission office have a projected target for the year you plan to apply?
- What is the minimum or average college GPA for transfer applicants who have been accepted recently?
- How much weight is given to the high school record and SAT/ACT scores in the evaluation? While colleges may still request this information, these credentials usually play less of a role in the application process, if you are applying for junior status.

- What are the required courses the admissions office is looking for transfer applicants to have completed by the end of their first year? Usually, colleges will evaluate transfers more favorably if they have taken some of the basic requirement courses towards their major. This may not hold true for students attending a focused program, such as art school or a music conservatory; those candidates may be evaluated differently due to the courses and opportunities available.
- Did the university exceed its freshman enrolment target for the class into which you hope to transfer? Too many rising college sophomores may mean there are fewer spaces available for transfer applicants.
- Does financial aid play a role in the transfer admissions decision? Is the college “need blind” or “need aware” when evaluating a transfer applicant? Colleges may have different levels of commitment in funding transfer students; recognize that at many universities, there may be considerably less financial aid available for transfer students than freshmen.
- What was the percentage of aid given to accepted transfer students last year? What was the average grant for transfer students? Average loan debt?
- Does the college have a separate financial aid budget for transfer students? Does this budget fluctuate each year? How much?

The application process for transfer admission parallels the process for freshman admission, with a few notable differences. First, transfer application deadlines are later; for admission the following September, many colleges deadlines aren’t until February or March; check the specific deadlines on university websites. Notifications of decisions are also later – generally in May and June, after the freshman application process has finished.

Unlike the freshman college essay, most transfer application essays seek to understand your reasons for transferring. Be clear about what you intend to study, and what your transfer college can offer you academically; an admission officer may be wary about transfer students who are undecided in their intended major. As you write your essay, be positive in expressing your current university experience, while describing what you seek to gain academically and socially from the college to which you’re applying. While many universities will request your Exeter transcript and official standardized test scores from the College Board

or ACT, they will also need your official college transcript. If you are applying as a sophomore transfer, you may be required to submit your spring semester college grades, before a decision is made. While you are required to submit recommendation letters, admission offices are most interested in receiving feedback from your college professors, and not necessarily your Exeter instructors. The perspective of a professor who can address your ability to excel in college coursework, particularly within your academic discipline, often holds more weight with admission committees than a high school teacher, even one from Phillips Exeter.

Finally, recognize that even despite your hard work in class and on your transfer application, you may not be offered admission. This is especially true if a university overenrolls in its target number of freshman, or if your intended academic program has fewer upperclassmen spaces available than the college initially expected.

### FORMER STUDENTS

While Exeter’s College Counseling Office will provide occasional support to gap year and transfer applicants, it is our expectation that you have acquired the skills necessary to complete the college admission process. Our primary responsibility is to the current student body; we know Exonians are characterized by their ability to think independently, to evaluate information critically, and to utilize appropriate research tools—all of which are necessary to ensure a successful college match. We are happy, however, to schedule a brief telephone conference with alumni during January and February – after most of the application process has concluded for seniors – to answer general questions about transferring.

If you are a recent Exeter alumna/us who is planning on filing a new college application, either as a transfer applicant or as a first-year student after having completed a gap year, please complete the online transcript request form at <http://www.exeter.edu/transcripts>. Remember that the College Counseling Office requires ten working days to complete your request.

If you are pursuing a gap year, please let your former college counselor know how you have spent your interim year and if you are currently deferred from any other university. If a gap year student has deferred admission at a university, the College Counseling Office requires a copy of the deferral letter, before we can release transcripts to additional colleges. If you are transferring, it is very helpful to our counseling of other students to know why alumni are considering transferring from their current college. To that end, we would appreciate



your response to our year-end “Transfer and Gap Year Application Results” questionnaire when it is emailed to you in June. Your feedback is extraordinarily helpful and greatly appreciated.

The Academy follows the Principles of Good Practice set by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) (hyperlink: [http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Documents/SPGP\\_9\\_2013.pdf](http://www.nacacnet.org/about/Governance/Policies/Documents/SPGP_9_2013.pdf)). The College Counseling Office expects that alumni will self-report their records honestly and fully. Alumni should also know that some colleges and universities ask the Academy about discipline issues as part of the application. Phillips Exeter’s policy is to report on discipline whenever a college asks the question on any application. This policy continues after initial applications are filed and after graduation if an alumna/us initiates a transfer or gap year application.

Former Exonians who did not receive a diploma from the Academy for any reason, including a Requirement to Withdraw, do not request transcripts from the College Counseling Office. Instead, former students should contact the Dean of Students Office for official Academy transcripts.



## APPENDIX

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Academic Discipline:** A college departmental or subject area, such as English literature, history, or business.

**Academic Year:** The period in which school is in session - typically September through May.

**Accelerated Programs:** Exceptionally-selective admission programs which offer graduate school admission, generally for medical school, to freshman applicants. Program length can vary from seven to eight years, often including summer coursework.

**Accrual Date:** The date on which interest charges on an educational loan begin to accrue.

**Adjusted Available Income:** The remaining income after taxes and a basic living allowance have been subtracted in Federal Methodology. (q.v.).

**Advanced Placement (AP) Exams:** Tests sponsored by the College Board for students who have taken advanced, college-level courses here at the Academy. Some colleges may allow students to receive college credit for high scores on these exams; still others will place students out of introductory-level courses into higher levels.

**American College Test (ACT):** College admissions examination administered by the American College Testing Program, measuring through multiple-choice questions four areas of academic knowledge: English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning. While widely accepted throughout the United States, this exam is used more commonly by Midwestern and Western colleges and universities for admission testing.

**Assets:** Cash in checking and savings accounts, trusts, stocks, bonds, other securities, real estate, income-producing property and business equipment and inventory which is all considered in determining the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) (q.v.).

**Asset Protection Allowance:** The portion of parents' assets that is not included in the calculation of the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) (q.v.), as calculated by Federal Methodology (q.v.).

**Bachelor of Arts (B.A. or A.B.):** Traditional degree awarded by a liberal arts college or university following successful completion of a course of study. These degrees may be granted in any number of fields in the humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, or fine/performing arts. Some colleges award an A.B., which is simply the Latin abbreviation (Arts Baccalarius) for a Bachelor of Arts degree.

**Bachelor of Business Administration (B.B.A.):** Degree offered by undergraduate business and management programs, which are accredited by such national agencies as the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business, by meeting a required set of certification and course requirements. Accredited business programs can differ significantly from B.A. (q.v.) liberal arts degrees.

**Bachelor of Fine Arts (B.F.A.):** Degree offered by fine arts, design, theater, dance, and other visual and performing arts programs. Admission to B.F.A. programs can be based to a large extent upon artistic talent, determined through an audition or portfolio review, and to a lesser extent upon standardized testing and academic performance in traditional curriculums.

**Bachelor of Science (B.S.):** Degree usually awarded for successful completion of requirements in the natural and physical sciences, or for more professionally-oriented programs, such as education, engineering, or business. Note that many colleges award B.A.s (q.v.) for similar degrees. Some universities may offer both degrees in a particular academic discipline; generally the B.S. degree may require additional work in the major for graduation.

**Budget:** The estimated cost of attendance for a student at an institution which typically includes tuition, fees, books, supplies, room, board, personal expenses, and transportation.

**Category I:** Selective colleges and universities on an Exonian's college list, to which s/he has the greatest chance of gaining admission; generally colleges with a higher percentage of applicants offered admission.

**Category II:** Selective colleges and universities on an Exonian's college list, to which s/he has roughly 50/50 odds of gaining admission; frequently subjective factors, such as the college's own institutional needs and a student's demonstration of interest, can play a large role in the application review for Category II schools.

**Category III:** Highly-selective colleges and universities on an Exonian's college list, to which s/he has a moderate chance of gaining admission.

**Category IV:** The most-selective colleges and universities on an Exonian's college list, to which s/he has the smallest chance of gaining admission; generally colleges with the lowest percentage of applicants offered admission.

**Collateral:** Property used to secure a loan which can be seized if the borrower defaults on the loan.

**College Board:** For-profit organization which sponsors such educational testing as the SAT I, SAT II, AP, and CLEP exams and such financial aid forms as the Profile form. The informal name of the College Entrance Examination Board [CEEB] (q.v.).

**College Days:** Academy policy currently allows for a student to use two days during the senior year to visit colleges, known as college days. In addition to the standard out-of-town procedure, students must procure from their college counselor a permission slip to request a college day from the Dean of Student's office. Visits must take place prior to May 1.

**College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB):** Another name for the College Board (q.v.). In filling out applications and other college forms, students are frequently asked for their high school's CEEB number; the Academy's CEEB number is 300185.

**College Level Examination Program (CLEP):** Exam offered by the College Board testing knowledge in a subject area without regard to how a student gained that knowledge. Unlike AP exams, these tests do not require that a student complete high school coursework to take the exam. Some colleges award college credit for high CLEP results; others will waive certain general curriculum requirements.

**College Scholarship Service (CSS):** Branch of College Board (q.v.) which administers the Profile (q.v.) form and other financial aid services.

**College Work-Study Program (CWSP):** A federally-sponsored program which allows students to pay for part of their educational expenses through part-time work on campus. A portion of the work-study salary comes from the college employer; most is through federal subsidies. Only students with demonstrated financial need are eligible for work-study jobs.

**Cooperative Education (Co-op):** College-sponsored programs designed to help undergraduates meet college expenses and gain work experience, alternating periods of study with periods of work in a field related to a student's academic or professional interests. Traditionally, but not exclusively, used by students in such pre-professional programs as engineering, computer science, and business.

**Core Curriculum:** Required college courses necessary for graduation, consisting of a comprehensive selection from such fields as the humanities, social sciences, natural and physical sciences, quantitative fields, and

requiring English and foreign language proficiency. Core curriculums can range from a handful of courses to well over half the required courses necessary for graduation.

**Cosigner:** Individual who assumes responsibility for a loan if the borrower fails to repay.

**Credit Hour:** Measure of degree of difficulty of courses, frequently proportionate to the number of hours of weekly classroom instruction. For example, a four-credit hour course will generally require more work and be more demanding than a three-hour course. Most colleges require students to meet a certain threshold of credit hours in order to graduate.

**Custodial Parent:** In cases where a student's parents are divorced or separated, the custodial parent is the parent with whom the student lived the most during the past 12 months.

**Default:** Failure to repay or otherwise meet the terms and conditions of a loan. Penalties include a damaged credit rating, withholding of tax refunds, and loss of future aid eligibility.

**Demonstrated Financial Need:** Amount, as determined through Federal, private and/or institutional financial aid forms, which is the difference between the total cost of attendance and the estimated family contribution (q.v.).

**Demonstration of Interest:** An internal measure by selective colleges and universities that may be sensitive to their freshman yield (q.v.) of an applicant's level of interest in their institution. Such factors considered can include on-campus visits, interviews with an alumnus/a or admissions officer, meetings with an admissions officer off-campus, or the level to which a student engages with the college's application and essay.

**Dependency:** A student's dependency status determines the degree to which the student has access to parental financial resources.

**Differential Packaging:** Administrative policy where colleges use enhanced financial aid offers to entice academically-stronger or under-represented students to matriculate (q.v.). While meeting demonstrated financial need (q.v.), differential packages may consist of a larger percentage of grant money vs. student loans than what most students would receive.

**Disbursement:** The process by which financial aid funds are made directly to students for use in meeting educational expenses.



**Discipline:** See “Academic Discipline.”

**Division:** Academic unit of a college or university; can also be a school (“School of Business”) or college (“College of Arts & Sciences”) within a university.

**Double Deposit:** Accepting two colleges’ offers of admission by submitting a binding deposit to secure a spot in the freshman class at both. This practice is prohibited by the regulations of the National Association for College Admissions Counseling (NACAC), and is vehemently discouraged by the College Counseling Office.

**Early Action:** The non-binding admission process used by a handful of colleges whereby a student applies to his first choice college in late fall and is notified of his admission decision in mid-December, yet does not need to respond to the institution until the May 1 common notification deadline (q.v.). While Early Action colleges do not require a student to withdraw other applications, the College Counseling Office takes the approach that, since a student has been offered admission to her/his first choice school, s/he will withdraw all other college applications.

**Early Admission:** An admission process whereby a student who has completed 11th grade applies for college admission, thus skipping their 12th grade year. Occasionally, though infrequently, used synonymously for Early Action (q.v.).

**Early Decision:** The binding admission process whereby a student applies to his first choice school in late fall, and is notified of their decision in mid-December. If offered admission under Early Decision, the student must withdraw any other applications from other colleges.

**Early Evaluation:** A non-binding admission process where a student is tentatively notified of their admission decision in January or February, receives their official offer in late March, yet does not need to respond to the college until May 1. While the Early Evaluation college does not need to be a student’s first-choice school, most applicants use the program for their first or near first choice college.

**Educational Testing Service (ETS):** Branch of the College Board (q.v.) which administers the SAT I and SAT II (q.q.v.) examinations, and processes requests for scores to be reported to colleges.

**Eligibility Center:** Division of the National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA] (q.v.) which certifies that all Division I and Division II athletes have taken 16

“core” high school courses, meeting a minimum level of achievement in academic and testing performance. Prospective athletes must register and be cleared by the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to their participation in college sports. Most Academy students initiate the NCAA Eligibility Center process during the fall of their senior year.

**Enrollment Status:** For financial aid purposes, the amount of time a student is enrolled in courses per semester – “full-time” for a full course load generally consisting of four or more classes and “part-time” for less than that amount.

**Expected Family Contribution (EFC):** The amount of money determined through needs analysis, (q.v.) from Federal and institutional financial aid forms, that a family can afford to spend for college.

**Extracurriculars:** Activities in which students participate outside of the classroom, such as athletics, student organizations and clubs, volunteer work and community service, music lessons or groups, or part-time jobs.

**Federal Methodology (FM):** The method created by the U.S. Government and calculated from the information supplied by the FAFSA (q.v.) used to determine a student’s expected family contribution (q.v.).

**Federal Processor:** The organization that processes the information submitted on the FAFSA (q.v.) and uses it to compute eligibility for federal student aid.

**4-1-4 Plan:** An academic calendar usually including a fall term with four courses, a shortened winter term with one course, and a spring term with four courses.

**Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA):** The Federally-sponsored financial aid form required by all U.S. colleges and universities to apply for Federal loans and grants, used to determine a student’s financial need based upon Federal Methodology (q.v.).

**Gapping:** Administrative policy where the college’s financial aid award does not fully meet a family’s demonstrated financial need (q.v.). Such a “gap” can range from a few hundred to several thousand dollars.

**Grade-Point Average (GPA):** Numerical conversion of letter grades into a cumulative average, by term, year, or academic career. Generally GPAs are computed using a 4.0 scale (4.0 = A, 3.0 = B, etc.); the Academy utilizes an 11.0 scale (11.0 = A, 10.0 = A-, 9.0 = B+, etc.).

**Grants:** Financial aid money from the Federal/ state government or matriculating college, which does not require repayment, like a loan.

**Honors Programs:** Special college courses within an informal or structured program offering greater intellectual challenge for highly-qualified, motivated students. Some programs are open by invitation only; others require a supplemental application, different from the application for admission. Many honors programs offer scholarships or special prerogatives, such as preferential registration.

**Hook:** A subjective factor in the admissions decision-making process which can influence, to varying degrees, a student's final decision, such as legacy (q.v.) status, athletic recruitment, exceptional artistic talent, or membership in an underrepresented multicultural population.

**Humanities:** Fields of study including English, literature, languages, philosophy, classics, history, music, fine arts, theater, and religion.

**Institutional Methodology (IM):** The method used by individual colleges from the information supplied by the Profile form (q.v.) to determine a student's EFC (q.v.). Where Federal Methodology is universally standard, the individual components of Institutional Methodology can vary from school to school.

**Interest:** See "demonstration of interest."

**Internship:** A part-time paid, volunteer, and/or for-college-credit position offering hands-on experience in a student's academic or professional field of interest. Internships are undertaken either while enrolled during the academic year or in the summer.

**Ivy League:** While its eight members (Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Dartmouth, Harvard, Penn, Princeton, and Yale) are highly selective colleges for admission, the designation "Ivy League" only refers to their membership in a common athletic conference.

**Joint Degree:** Also may be known as a "dual degree" program. Academic program of study which allows a student to either major in two separate undergraduate fields in completely distinct disciplines (such as engineering and business, or business and foreign language), or to pursue a joint undergraduate-graduate degree program (such as joint B.A./M.B.A., B.A./J.D., or B.A./M.D. programs).

**Legacy:** Having an immediate family member, generally

a parent and occasionally a grandparent or a sibling, as an alumna/a of a college to which the student is making application.

**Liberal Arts:** A broad-based introduction to a wide variety of subjects, including the social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences (q.v.v.). Generally does not include professional programs, such as business, engineering, or nursing, although these programs may contain some coursework in the liberal arts.

**Loans:** Financial assistance which must be repaid over an extended period of time, generally after a student completes an undergraduate degree, but occasionally beginning during undergraduate enrollment.

**Major:** Concentrated field of collegiate study in one academic discipline (q.v.), requiring a set number of required courses for completion beyond any required core curriculum (q.v.) requirements. Students concentrate in two academic fields by "double-majoring."

**Matriculate:** Academic term meaning to "enroll" at or "attend" a college or university.

**Merit-based Aid:** Financial aid based on academic, artistic, athletic, or other non-need based criteria.

**Minor:** A secondary field of concentrated study during the final two years of college, similar to a major (q.v.) yet with fewer requirements.

#### **National Association for College Admission**

**Counseling (NACAC):** Professional association of college admissions and high school guidance/college counseling personnel. As a member of NACAC, Exeter and its students agree to abide by the "Principles of Good Practice," which outlines the appropriate ethical standards for such issues as Early Decision, application deadlines, and double depositing.

**NCAA Clearinghouse:**  
See "Clearinghouse."

**National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA):** National organization which supervises and regulates most intercollegiate athletic programs. Based upon size of institution and level of competition, these programs are divided into three divisions: Division I, II, and III. The first two Divisions generally award athletic scholarships; Division III athletic programs do not.

**National Merit Commended Student:** A designation given to students by the National Merit Corporation for

students who score high on the PSAT/NMSQT (q.v.) examination, but do not pass the state-specific threshold score to become a Semifinalist (q.v.).

**National Merit Finalist:** A National Merit Semifinalist (q.v.) who becomes eligible for merit-based academic scholarship, based upon the student's strong PSAT/NMSQT (q.v.) scores, high school record, and counselor recommendation.

**National Merit Scholar:** A National Merit Finalist (q.v.) who receives a merit-based academic scholarship, sponsored by a member organization or college, or the National Merit Corporation.

**National Merit Semifinalist:** The initial designation by the National Merit Corporation for students who pass a state-specific threshold score on the PSAT/NMSQT (q.v.) examination.

**Need Aware, Need Conscious or Need Sensitive:** A college financial aid policy where a family's ability to pay may influence the college's admission decision. Students with a higher demonstrated financial need who may not be near the academic top of a college's applicant pool are most vulnerable in the admissions process at need aware colleges.

**Need Blind:** A college financial aid policy where a family's ability to pay does not influence the college's admission decision.

**Needs Analysis:** The standard, uniform process by which a college financial aid office determines how much a family can afford to pay, using two systems: federal methodology and institutional methodology (q.v.v.).

**Package:** A student's financial aid award, "packaged" together with such components as loans, grants, work-study, and scholarships.

**Parent Contribution (PC):** Another name for the EFC (q.v.), usually not including any of the student's summer-employment savings.

**Payment Plans:** College-sponsored programs which allow families to spread the yearly cost of attendance out over monthly installments.

**Pell Grant:** Named in honor of Sen. Claibourne Pell (RI), Federally-funded grants (q.v.) designed to help students with the lowest EFC (q.v.). Eligibility is determined through the information provided through the FAFSA (q.v.). The yearly maximum amount of a Pell Grant is about \$3,000.

**Perkins Loans:** Federally-funded college loan with traditionally lowest interest rate of educational loans, with repayment deferred until nine months after a student leaves school. Students may borrow up to a total of \$15,000 for an undergraduate degree (approximately \$3,000 annually), and eligibility is determined through the information provided through the FAFSA (q.v.).

**PLUS Loans:** Federally-sponsored college loans administered through individual banks and loan lenders available to parents who are U.S. citizens of an undergraduate student enrolled at least part-time. Parents must pass a credit check to qualify for PLUS loans and are legally responsible for repayment. Available without regard to financial need, PLUS loans may cover the full cost of education minus other forms of aid.

**Prepaid Tuition Plan:** A college savings plan guaranteed to rise in value at the same rate as college tuition. Several states and private institutions offer such programs.

**Principal:** The amount borrowed or owed on a loan.

**Professional Judgment:** For need-based federal aid programs, financial aid administrators can adjust the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) (q.v.) or the cost of attendance, or change the dependency status (q.v.) with documentation when extenuating circumstances exist, such as when a parent becomes unemployed.

**Promissory Note:** A legally binding contract which a student signs before receiving the disbursement (q.v.) of their financial aid package that details the terms of the loan contract and obligating the borrower to repay the loan.

**PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test):** Administered by ETS (q.v.), a standardized exam generally administered during the 10th and/or 11th grade enabling students to practice for the SAT I and SAT II: Writing tests. The PSAT test offered in October of the 11th grade year is the qualifying exam for the scholarship competitions administered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

**Pre-Law/Pre-Med:** Not a major (q.v.) or academic discipline (q.v.), but an intended direction for graduate school allowing a student to concentrate in many different fields of study. Law and medical schools generally offer basic guidelines on undergraduate courses for students interested in gaining admission to these graduate programs. However, students can

generally integrate these basic requirements into many divergent majors, including business, engineering, and other non-traditional pre-professional majors.

**Profile:** Financial aid form sponsored by CSS (q.v.) and utilized by approximately 320 participating colleges, which is similar to the FAFSA (q.v.), but is customized by colleges to supply additional information as required by the colleges to which the student is applying for aid.

**Quarters:** Academic calendar consisting of four terms, approximately 10 weeks in length; some quarter-system schools have courses in the summer.

**Rate of Attrition:** Percentage of students who do not return, due to academic, financial, or personal reasons, usually given at the end of the freshman year.

**Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC):** U.S. military program offering one-, two-, and four-year scholarships at select colleges and universities, covering tuition, books, and fees in addition to a living stipend, in exchange for a set number of years in a branch of the service.

**Rolling Admission:** Admission process whereby students are offered or denied admission throughout the calendar year.

**Satisfactory Academic Progress:** A college or university's policy stipulating that a student maintain a certain minimum number of courses that must be completed each semester, the maximum time permitted, and the minimum grade-point average (q.v.) required to continue to receive financial aid.

**Scholarships:** Merit-based financial assistance offered in recognition of a student's academic, personal, extracurricular and/or athletic achievements and promise, regardless of whether a student qualifies for assistance on the basis of demonstrated financial need (q.v.).

**Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT):** Standardized tests administered by the College Board (q.v.) which provide college admission offices with a common national standard for evaluating student records from different high schools. Along with a student's academic performance in high school and other more subjective factors such as recommendations, extracurriculars (q.v.), and essays, the SAT is used with variable success to attempt to predict a student's academic performance in college.

**SAT I:** The most general standardized test offered by the

College Board – a three-hour, primarily multiple-choice test which measures Verbal and Mathematical reasoning abilities. The SAT is required by almost all U.S. colleges and universities for freshman admission.

**SAT II:** One hour-long, primarily multiple-choice tests measuring knowledge of particular specific subject areas and a student's ability to apply that knowledge. SAT II Subject Tests fall into six general areas: English, history and social sciences, mathematics, sciences, and foreign languages. Many highly selective colleges and universities will require SAT II exams for admission.

**Secondary School Report (SSR):** College-generated form requesting a copy of the applicant's high school record and, frequently, a college counselor letter of recommendation. Exeter creates its own SSR forms and does not use any of the colleges' own copies.

**Selective Service:** U.S. Department of Defense bureau which requires registration by all 18-year-old U.S. citizens. Confirmation of registration with the Selective Service is required for eligibility for federally-funded financial aid money.

**Self-Help:** The amount of money, in addition to receiving non-repayable grants, which colleges ask students to help finance their education through college work-study or loans (q.q.v.).

**Semester:** The most common academic calendar, dividing the year into two equal terms.

**Servicer:** An organization that is paid by a loan lender to administer student loans.

**Simplified Needs Test:** An alternative method of calculating the expected family contribution (q.v.) for families with adjusted gross incomes over \$50,000, who have filed or are eligible to file an IRS Form 1040A or 1040EZ, or who are not required to file an income tax return.

**Social Sciences:** Academic fields of study which focus on human behavior and societal interactions, such as psychology, sociology, political science, anthropology, and economics.

**Stafford Loan:** Formerly known as "Guaranteed Student Loans" and renamed in honor of former Sen. Robert Stafford (VT), low-interest loans sponsored by the Federal government for students enrolled at least half-time. Loans can be both subsidized (for students with demonstrated financial need) and unsubsidized (for students who do not qualify for need-based financial



aid). While the U.S. government will pay the interest on subsidized Stafford Loans until six months following a student's final full-time semester enrolled, students pay the interest (no principle) on unsubsidized Stafford loans.

**Student Aid Report (SAR):** The form returned to a student following the completion of the evaluating processing of the FAFSA (q.v.) by the U.S. government's Central Processing Agency. Copies of this form are frequently required by colleges, and are necessary for sending additional copies of the FAFSA information to colleges.

**Student Contribution:** An estimate of the student's ability to contribute to his/her college education, typically up to 35 percent of savings and up to half of student summer earnings above \$1,750.

**Student-Faculty Ratio:** The ratio determined by dividing the number of students by the number of professors. The student-faculty ratio is often of questionable value; "average class size" frequently provides more useful information about faculty-student interaction.

**Subsidized Loan:** Student loans on which borrowers do not have to pay interest until after their grace period expires, usually within six months of completion of a terminal degree.

**Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (SEOG):** Federally-funded grants, with priority funding going to students receiving Pell Grants (q.v.). The maximum annual SEOG is \$4,000.

**1040/1040A/1040EZ Form:** Federal income tax form frequently required by colleges to verify accuracy of financial information submitted on FAFSA and Profile (q.q.v.) forms.

**Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL):** Examination providing a more accurate assessment of non-native verbal ability than the SAT I (q.v.) Critical Reading and Writing Sections.

**Three-Two (3-2) Program:** Degree program where a student begins their studies at one institution, generally a smaller liberal arts college, and after three years, transfers to another larger institution to complete his or her studies. Most of these programs are in business, engineering, computer science, or a related field. Three-two programs can be either single or dual undergraduate degree programs; others are undergraduate and graduate B.A./M.S. or M.B.A. combinations.

**Title IV Programs:** Federal student aid programs authorized under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, such as Pell Grants, Plus Loans, Perkins Loans, and Stafford Loans (q.q.v.).

**Title IX:** Federal government law requiring that any college or university that receives money from the U.S. government must have roughly the same proportion of female athlete opportunities as female undergraduates. Schools must also demonstrate a continuing history of expanding athletic opportunities for women.

**Transcript:** Official school record of grades and courses.

**Trimester:** Academic calendar divided into three roughly-equal terms (i.e., the Exeter academic calendar).

**Tuition:** The portion of college expenses which covers the cost of a student's academic program and enrollment. For full-time students, tuition is calculated at a set figure; part-time students pay a pro-rated amount calculated per class or credit hour (q.v.).

**Unmet Need:** Difference between cost of attendance and the student's available resources, including his/her financial aid package.

**Verification:** Review process in which the financial aid officer requests all documentation from a federal aid applicant to verify accuracy of information.

**Waitlist:** Limited number of freshman applicants who are neither admitted nor denied admission, but are told they will be notified after May 1 of their final decision as spaces within the freshman class become available during the summer. Waitlists are utilized by most selective institutions to ensure that they will meet their target enrollment numbers.

**Yield:** The percentage of students offered admission to a college or university who