

COLLEGE ADMISSIONS GLOSSARY

ACT: All colleges in the State of Alabama use ACT as part of their admissions criteria. This is also true of all colleges and universities outside the state. Our school code is 010-332. The test measures educational development in English, mathematics, reading, and science reasoning and is given at specified test centers throughout the year. An optional writing component has been added. ACT scores range from 1-36.

Accreditation: Recognition of a college or university by any of the regional or national accrediting bodies; indicating that the institution as a whole has been judged to be meeting its objectives.

Admissions Terms:

- **Regular Decision:** Deadlines usually begin December 15th. Students are notified by April 15th and must respond to the college by May 1st. We encourage you to complete your application as soon as possible and not wait until the postmark deadline.
- **Rolling Admissions:** Applications are read as they are received. Although candidates may receive acceptance within one month, they maintain the right to wait until May 1st to accept the offer of admission. The earlier you apply the better. You may be the most qualified applicant, but they may not have a space for you in April.
- **Early Decision I:** This is a contractual, binding agreement between the college and the student. The agreement is if accepted, the student will attend. Notification is given usually by December 15th. You may submit only one ED application. If accepted, you must withdraw any other applications.
- **Early Decision II:** This works the same as EDI, but has a later due date to allow students more time to make an informed decision.
- **Early Action:** This is a non-binding application with early deadlines for the student and the college. You may apply to other schools and have until May 1st to accept an offer of admission.
- **Early Action - Single Choice (also called REA):** This is a non-binding early admission option for those students who have completed a thorough and thoughtful college search. It allows students to learn of their admission decision in December without requiring a response until May 1st or obligating them to enroll at that school. Furthermore, Single-Choice Early Action allows applicants to apply to as many colleges as they want under a Regular admission time frame. This option, therefore, gives early admitted students considerably more time to reflect on future plans and, if they so choose, explore a variety of educational institutions that might meet individual needs and aspirations.

Advanced Placement: Granting of credit and/or assignment to an advanced course on the basis of evidence that the student has mastered the equivalent of an introductory course.

Aid Package: A combination of aid (possibly including a scholarship, grant, loan, and work) determined by a college financial aid office.

CSS Financial Aid PROFILE: The CSS PROFILE Service is offered by the College Scholarship Service and is used by certain schools to award their own private funds. Students register for the service at www.collegeboard.org.

Candidates Reply Date: A policy of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) that permits students to wait until May 1 to choose, without penalty, among offers of admission/financial aid.

Coalition Application: An unprecedented coalition of diverse public and private colleges and universities has come together to improve the college admission application process for all students. The Coalition has developed a free platform of online tools to streamline the experience of applying to college.

College Calendar: Common systems of instruction time-

- Traditional semester - two approximately equal semesters
- Early semester - two semesters, the first ending before Christmas
- Quarter - three equal terms of about 12 weeks each
- Trimester - calendar year divided into three equal semesters - The third semester replaces summer school
- 4-1-4 - two equal terms of about 18 weeks each, with a 4-week interim term

Common Application: Many colleges have worked together to develop and distribute the Common Application. Using this online form to apply to several schools has many advantages both to students and counselors because you only have one form to complete. The Common Application may then be sent to any number of participating colleges. The same is true of the "School Report" and "Teacher Evaluation" portions. Common Applications will be available online in August at www.commonapp.org. Statistics show that students using Common Applications are given the same consideration as those using the colleges' individual forms.

Credit hour: A unit of academic credit that often represents one hour of class time per week for a period of study (semester, quarter, etc.).

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The application required for students to be considered for student financial aid. It is important to complete a FAFSA even if you do not think you will qualify for federal aid since colleges typically will not award their own need-based aid without a FAFSA report. The **FAFSA** is processed free of charge, and it is used by most state agencies and colleges. The FAFSA may be completed online in December or after of your senior year at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Grade Point Average (GPA): GPA is an indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance. It is computed by multiplying the number of grade points earned in each course (generally, A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0) times the number of course hours/credit hours, then dividing the sum by the total number of course hours/credit hours carried.

Honors Program: Any program offering opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced, or accelerated study. Honors Programs often provide other perks such as special housing, early registration and/or mentoring.

Major: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years.

National College Fair: Selecting the right college is one of the most important decisions you will make during your lifetime. This decision will have a great impact on shaping your future educational career. To assist you in this process, the National Association of College Admission Counselors (NACAC) organizes a National College Fair in Birmingham each September.

SAT: A test of verbal, mathematical, and writing abilities given by the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) at specified test centers throughout the year and required or recommended by many colleges as part of the admission process. This test is published by the College Board. The SAT Subject Tests are sometimes required in addition to the SAT score. Our school code number is 010332. Go to www.collegeboard.org for testing dates.

SAT Subject Test: One-hour subject tests which are primarily multiple-choice that measure knowledge or skills in a particular subject and your ability to apply that knowledge. Many colleges require or recommend one or more of the subject tests for admission or placement.

Student Aid Report (SAR): The information you will receive approximately 3-6 weeks after your FAFSA has been processed. It will report the information from your application and, if there are no questions or problems with your application, your SAR will report your Expected Family Contribution (EFC) to colleges of your choice.

Transcript: A transcript is a copy of your grades, 9-11, and includes the results of the ACT and/or SAT test results by request. Upon graduation, the transcript shows your grades through your senior year. Transcripts can be requested through Family Connection. Following graduation, a final transcript is sent if you complete the proper Final Transcript Request in your Family Connection account in May.