



Menlo School College Counseling

My search. My college. My path.

A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS AND PARENTS

College Counseling Office

Quick Facts

College Counseling Office

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CEEB and ACT Code

051960

SCOIR

www.scoir.com



Menlo School College Counseling

My search. My college. My path.



Start your journey.

The college search and application process can be challenging. But it's also an opportunity to explore your interests, reflect on your values and find your own voice.

Your **search** is both external and internal. Yes, you'll create a list of colleges that match your criteria. But to discover that list, you'll first undertake an internal search: a quest to discover who you are, what's special about you and what's important to you. Through this educational journey, you'll find a **college** that's the right match for you, and put yourself on your **path** to life after Menlo.

We're here to help. We've created this comprehensive "road map" of information, and we'll be your guides along the way. So get to know us, and help us get to know you!

Our approach is:

- **All about finding your right "match"**
That means you find the school that works for you: one that matches your academic, social, size and location desires. It's not necessarily a college you know much about at the start of the process, and there may be more than one right match. Your list of potential 'homes' for the next four years will develop as you discover what's important to you. And remember, the right match is right in both directions: both you and the college pick each other.
- **Student centered**
At Menlo, everything we do puts students at the center of their own learning. You're the driver—but you've got your counselor with you to help navigate the road. We're very good at helping you discover what's special about you.
- **An extension of Menlo's educational philosophy**
Throughout your years at Menlo, you've practiced self-advocacy, introspection and self-expression. You've been learning the skills you need to succeed in college, and in life. The college search process is no different—the skills you'll learn while on this path will help you continue your educational journey once in college.
- **Built around supportive, individualized counseling**
With over 50 combined years of experience in the field, we've got plenty of resources and know a lot about the wide range of colleges out there. We'll meet with you often, and the best way we can help you is to get to know you. So come say hi!

During the journey:

- **Let's get to know each other.**
We introduce ourselves during your sophomore year and get to know you and your family over the next three years through individual meetings, parent education events, and watching your games, concerts, and plays. In what can be an emotionally charged process, we make ourselves available and provide perspective.
- **What classes to take?**
We advise you as you choose classes that add up to the most rigorous yet balanced course load and that allow you to pursue your interests.
- **What's important to you?**
We help you define your criteria for the types of colleges where you'll thrive, based on your unique mix of skills and interests.
- **Take a trip.**
Visit colleges that will help you discover what kinds of schools you're looking for. We're here to help you decide which ones to visit either in person or virtually.
- **Have you heard of this school?**
We host over 120 college representatives on campus, so that you can learn about many different types of schools—and so we can build relationships with those schools. We get to know admissions officers well through these visits, our trips to their schools, professional conferences, etc., and we work with them closely.
- **Make your college list.**
We work with you to create a list of colleges that will lead to reasonable choices.
- **ACT? SAT? Test Optional?**
We help you understand and make a plan for which, and if, standardized tests are right for you.
- **The Essay**
We support you as you develop your own authentic and compelling essays.
- **The Letter of Recommendation.**
We craft a well written, personalized letter of recommendation that brings you to life and shows you in your best light—and that admissions officers enjoy reading. Those officers appreciate our authentic letters. We're responsive if they call us with questions, and we know when it's appropriate to reach out to them.
- **Athlete? Artist? Learning Difference?**
We provide specialized counseling and resources to those of you with special application needs.
- **Push the send button.**
How to manage all the details and deadlines of the application process? We give you access to SCOIR, an online college planning and search tool, and provide a junior-year College Admission Seminar class to help you organize your application requirements.
- **How to pay for college?**
We're on call for confidential conversations if you think you may qualify for financial aid.
- **You got in! Now what?**
We help you think through all of your options and celebrate with you when you find your right match.

We look forward to working with you!
- **The College Counseling Team**



College Counseling Year-by-Year Checklist

Freshman Year

- ☐ Focus on classes and develop academic interests.
- ☐ Adjust to high school: check out clubs, extracurricular activities and ways to get involved.
- ☐ Drop by the College Counseling Office to have your questions answered, to say hello or just to hang out.
- ☐ In the summer, recharge, do something interesting, complete summer reading and visit colleges if convenient (see Chapter 7).

Sophomore Year

- ☐ Pursue activities of interest in and outside of school.
- ☐ Drop by the College Counseling Office to have your questions answered, to say hello or just to hang out.
- ☐ [October] Take the PSAT (practice exam for SAT; see Chapter 2).
- ☐ Register for SCOIR (See Chapter 5). College Counseling will send an email invitation from SCOIR with a link to register in the spring.
- ☐ In the spring, meet with your academic advisor for the course selection/sign-up process.
- ☐ [May] Take AP Exams for college credit or if you are considering an international college.
- ☐ [May] You will receive your college counseling assignment.
- ☐ [May–August] Students can schedule an optional individual with their college counselor.
- ☐ In the summer, recharge (junior year is traditionally Menlo's most challenging), do something interesting, complete summer reading and visit colleges if convenient (see Chapter 7).

Junior Year

Anytime

- ☐ Drop by the College Counseling Office to have your questions answered, to say hello or just to hang out.
- ☐ Visit college campuses whenever possible to get a sense of different campus styles and settings (see Chapter 7).

Fall Semester

- ☐ Register for SCOIR if you haven't already (see Chapter 5). Explore and familiarize yourself with the different tools you will use for the college admission process.
- ☐ [October] Take the PSAT (practice exam for SAT and competition for the National Merit Program (see Chapter 2).
- ☐ [November] Student-athletes planning to participate in college varsity athletics should register early for the SAT or ACT (see Chapter 2).
- ☐ [December] Student-athletes who plan to participate in college varsity athletic programs, take your first SAT Test (see Chapter 2).
- ☐ [December] Register early for March, May, and/or June testing dates (see Chapter 2).

Spring Semester

- ☐ Meet with your college counselor for the course selection/sign-up process and make sure all graduation requirements are on track for completion—including community service and PE.
- ☐ Meet with your college counselor for a personal interview based on your junior questionnaire.
- ☐ Attend College Admission Seminar (CAS) meetings as required.
- ☐ Have a follow up meeting to start college list discussions.
- ☐ [February/March] Non-athlete students, take your first SAT or ACT test (see Chapter 2).
- ☐ Turn in permission form so that the College Counseling Office can share your grades and scores with colleges.
- ☐ Fill out junior question survey
- ☐ Ask teachers to write letters of recommendation.
- ☐ [May] Take AP Exams for college credit or if you are considering an international college.
- ☐ Parents will fill out the Parent Survey in SCOIR

Summer Break

- ☐ Recharge (the college application process makes the senior year intense), do something interesting or worthwhile and complete summer reading.
- ☐ Visit colleges (see Chapter 7).
- ☐ Student-athletes interested in playing college varsity sports, contact college coaches to confirm your interest in their colleges and athletic programs.
- ☐ Attend the College Essay Writing Workshop offered by the college counselors.
- ☐ Over the summer, complete at least one college essay and prepare a working list of colleges.
- ☐ Register early for August SAT.

Senior Year

Anytime

- ☐ Drop by the College Counseling Office to have your questions answered, to say hello or just to hang out.
- ☐ Pursue activities of interest in and outside of school.
- ☐ Visit college campuses whenever possible to get a sense of different campus styles and settings (see Chapter 7).

Fall Semester

- ☐ Fill out the Summer Update Survey
- ☐ [August] Meet with your college counselor to confirm your college list.
- ☐ [August] Register early for October, November and/or December SAT or ACT tests (see Chapter 2).
- ☐ Meet regularly with your college counselor to work through the application process.
- ☐ Research scholarship (merit-based) and financial aid (need-based) opportunities and apply (see Chapter 8).
- ☐ If you are an athlete planning to play college varsity sports, register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. Once you have registered, a request will be sent to the Menlo School Registrar, who will submit your transcript.
- ☐ [September] Complete rolling applications as they become available (see Chapter 3).
- ☐ [October] Input your preliminary college list in SCOIR (see Chapter 5).
- ☐ [October] Fill out the CSS PROFILE and Cal Grant GPA Verification form (the Cal Grant program offers support to very low income families with students planning to attend California colleges) for financial aid (see Chapter 8).
- ☐ [October] Complete FAFSA if applying for financial aid (see Chapter 8).
- ☐ [October] Prepare early applications (see Chapter 3 and Chapter 4).
- ☐ [October/November] Retake SAT or ACT tests if desired (see Chapter 2).
- ☐ [November] Submit early applications by deadlines (see Chapter 3).
- ☐ [November] Complete UC and Cal State applications and submit online (see Chapter 6).
- ☐ [November] Prepare regular applications (See Chapter 4).
- ☐ [December–February] Receive early decisions—***if you are accepted through Early Decision, you must immediately withdraw any other applications that you have already submitted*** (see Chapter 3).

Spring Semester

- ☐ In the spring, continue to research scholarship/financial aid opportunities and apply (see Chapter 8).
- ☐ [March/April] Receive college application decisions.
- ☐ [May 1] Make college choice by submitting a deposit ***to one school only!***
- ☐ [June] Commencement

Summer Break

- ☐ Celebrate your completion of Menlo's program and the college process.
- ☐ Recharge—the first year in college is wonderful but inevitably challenging.

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Chapter 1: College Counseling Overview for Juniors & Seniors

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Junior Year

Each spring, juniors meet with their college counselors at the beginning of the second semester to start the college process. Numerous resources are available: reference books, scholarship and financial aid information, and anonymous statistics about previous Menlo students' college admissions records. Once the summer begins, students and their families are encouraged to come in for meetings and planning. By the end of the junior summer, each student should have a working list of colleges that match their interests and desires.

PSAT

In October, all juniors take the official PSAT. In addition to serving as practice for the SAT, the PSAT serves as a qualifying test for the National Merit Scholarship Program. Menlo School pre-registers all junior students who are interested in taking the PSAT.

ACT and SAT Testing

Juniors should take a full round of SAT or ACT tests (see Chapter 2: Standardized Tests for College Admission). College counselors and teachers can recommend which standardized tests will be most appropriate.

College Admission Seminar (CAS)

A mandatory class provided by the College Counseling Office to provide students with a head start to the college admission process in an effort to both reduce stress and help students make smart and strategic choices for their college process.

Campus Visits

Junior families are encouraged to visit college campuses during fall or spring break and summer vacations (see Chapter 7: The College Visit).

Preparing to Apply

- Students should be familiar with SCOIR by the end of their junior year. Most college research and comparison can be done with this tool. Students manage and update their college list through SCOIR.
- Rising seniors should make a point of talking to college students who are home for the summer.
- Summertime campus tours also help; summer tour guides are usually current students.
- The summer is also an ideal time to develop interests, save for college, get a jump on the admission process or pursue a meaningful activity, including recharging and reading.
- During the summer, rising-senior families will receive a mailing that includes information and resources pertaining to the upcoming year at Menlo.
- By August of senior year, students should have explored the www.commonapp.org website. They should have familiarized themselves thoroughly with the common application, including the essay prompts, and should have written an essay draft to respond to one of these prompts.

Senior Year

By the beginning of senior year, most students have spent a significant amount of time researching and understanding the type of college they would like to attend. In senior year, a good deal of time is spent filling out/gathering information for applications (i.e. writing essays, requesting letters of recommendation), completing any final standardized testing, and managing the application timeline. One of the first steps seniors should take is to schedule an appointment with their college counselor to talk about final college choices and the specifics of the application process.

Building Your College List

The first item of business is finalizing the college list. Ideally, this list should include 10 to 12 applications, with two or three in the “reach” category, two or three in the “target” or “50-50” category, and two or three in the “likely,” or probable, category. Narrower lists tend to reflect the best research and will keep the process manageable and realistic. Students should discuss their lists, standardized testing and choices for teacher recommenders with their Menlo college counselors.

Sample College List

- | | |
|--------------------|-----------|
| 1. Reach | 6. Target |
| 2. Reach | 7. Target |
| 3. Reach | 8. Likely |
| 4. Reach or Target | 9. Likely |
| 5. Target | 9. Likely |

Collecting Forms and Materials

By September, most colleges and universities will have their applications available. Students should input their college list onto SCOIR (see Chapter 5: SCOIR) by October so that their letters of recommendation can be submitted online for Common Application schools.

College Representative Visits

Each fall, over 120 college admission representatives visit Menlo’s College Counseling Office. Seniors are welcome to attend visits. (see Chapter 7: The College Visit).

College List Review

In October, Menlo College Counselors will review each list to make sure it’s balanced in terms of likely, target, and reach categories. If the student needs to make adjustments, they should work with their college counselor. In mid-October, students will no longer be able to make changes to their list online and will need to submit changes via their college counselor.

Preparing to Apply

- Applications for Early Action, Early Decision, University of California (UC), and the California State Universities (CSU) are typically submitted in November.
- Regular application due dates usually fall between December 1 and March 1; students must exercise responsibility in meeting deadlines.

Applying for Financial Aid

In the fall, many families apply for financial aid. It is vital that students and those with primary financial responsibility do not miss deadlines; a FAFSA filed even one day late will jeopardize substantial awards. Students and families may file the FAFSA starting in December.

Financial aid is based on demonstrated financial need—your family’s income as demonstrated on your tax returns. It is different than merit awards that are based on academic achievement—how well you’ve done in school. (See Chapter 8: Financial Aid)

There are two rounds for filing financial aid forms:

Round 1

An application for the College Board “Profile” should normally be submitted after September 15 but before December, or whenever each specific college requests it. Individual colleges will indicate specific Profile deadlines on their websites and in their materials.

Round 2

The FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) can be filed starting in December. (See Chapter 8: Financial Aid Information)

The College Counseling Office hosts a Financial Aid Evening in the fall with an expert in college financial aid.



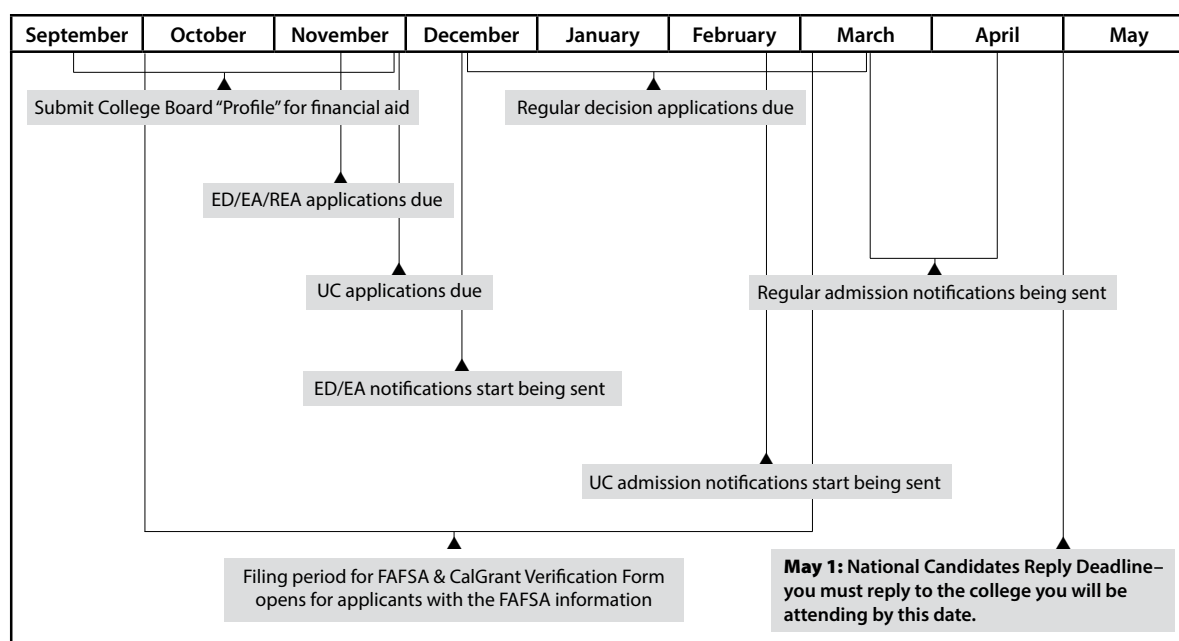
WARNING: There are *illegitimate* scholarship companies. Please check with the College Counseling Office before working with or providing any personal information to an ostensible college-funding ally. Specifically, avoid any company that charges a fee to find financial aid.

Receiving Admission Decisions

Students with a thoughtfully planned, well-balanced college list can generally anticipate that their application will be accepted to about 50% of the schools to which they apply. Even though this number means their application will also probably be denied or waitlisted by 50% of the schools to which they apply, the purpose of a good list is to represent schools that are accessible as well as competitive. So long as students and their families are prepared for this experience and have a list with broad, good options, the ultimate choices will be exciting.

Most colleges and universities mail decision letters between March and April. The UC system normally begins notifying in early March. A student has until May 1 to choose from acceptances. By May 1, each senior informs **only one** college of intention to enroll (with a deposit to hold a space in the entering class) and formally declines the others.

College Application Timeline



Multiple Enrollment

Please be aware that students may not double enroll—that is, pay the enrollment deposit to hold a space at two or more schools simultaneously. Menlo will only send the final transcript to one college. If a student is waitlisted at his or her top-choice school, enrollment may be made at the **single** selected institution while the space on the waitlist stays active. Double enrollment is unethical and harmful to Menlo's reputation. Do not engage in this practice; doing so impacts waitlists, hurts other students who may be making appeals, skews colleges' housing and enrollment projections, and raises admissions offices' skepticism about Menlo students' integrity. Schools that discover students double enrolling may withdraw original admission offers and may even blacklist students.

Finishing Senior Year Strongly

Throughout senior year, students must maintain a consistent GPA or risk adverse consequences in the admission process. Some colleges will request or require first-quarter grades in order to make an early admission decision. All colleges expect students to maintain their grades and reported courses throughout senior year, or students run the risk that colleges will rescind their offers of admission. Colleges report that some students have offers of admission revoked every summer, some even days before the start of Freshman year, due to a drop in GPA or inconsistent transcripts.



Chapter 2: Standardized Tests for College Admission

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Use Menlo CEEB Code 051960 on all Standardized Tests

It is important to review specific campus testing requirements. Check www.collegeboard.org and specific college and university websites for current information. There is no preference on what test a student decides to take.

The Different Tests

COLLEGE BOARD TESTS

www.collegeboard.org

All technical information about College Board tests is adapted from www.collegeboard.org with the permission of the College Board. Additional observations are intended to help guide students and their families through standardized testing.

The PSAT/NMSQT (Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test)

- The PSAT/NMSQT measures the critical reading, math and writing skills that students have developed over the course of their education.
- The PSAT is offered at Menlo School on the Saturday test date. The Academic Office coordinates this process to sign up Sophomores and Juniors interested in taking the PSAT.
- The PSAT is just SAT practice for sophomores.
- Juniors taking the exam compete for National Merit status.

The SAT

- The test's three main sections are divided into evidence based reading, writing and math.
- The SAT contains two multiple-choice tests.
- The SAT is three hours.
- College Board offers additional information on the SAT as well as free test prep and tips. Khan Academy is the official partner with College Board for the SAT. Please go to www.collegeboard.org/sat for more information.

The ACT - www.act.org

- The ACT contains four multiple-choice tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science.
- The ACT is three hours.
- Its dates do not conflict with the SAT, and the ACT organization also offers helpful test preparation information online. Please go to www.act.org for more information.

The Advanced Placement Examinations (APs)

- The Advanced Placement Examinations are administered at Menlo each May.
- Those students scoring a 3 (out of 5) or better may receive college credit or be placed in advanced-level courses, according to each college's policies.
- Those interested in applying to international schools should take AP exams and consult their college counselor.

Test-Taking Timeline

Menlo students typically take two rounds of the SAT Reasoning Test and/or the ACT test, the first round during junior year, and the second in the first semester of senior year.

Sophomore Year

- All sophomores take the PSAT for practice in October.
- Students can sign up for the mock SAT in February or the mock ACT in March.

Junior Year

- All juniors take the PSAT in October.
- Juniors typically take the SAT or ACT Test in November through March.
- We recommend that early athletic recruits complete their round of testing by the end of first semester junior year.

Senior Year

- Seniors have three opportunities to take SAT tests and three opportunities to take the ACT throughout the fall.
- Be mindful of college deadlines for receiving scores—this is especially true for recruited athletes and anyone applying Early Decision or Early Action, as these decisions are typically made in December.
- When applying to colleges that require these examinations, seniors must take the initiative in requesting that scores be sent directly from the College Board's testing office or from the ACT Office to each college and in confirming that the scores have been received. While many colleges require official score reports be sent directly from the testing agency, a growing number of colleges will accept self-reported scores directly from the student's application in the admission process. Students who self-reports scores during the application review period will be expected to send an official score report to the college upon or before matriculation. Students should take care to report scores on their applications precisely from their score reports, as incorrect reporting of scores could result in a college acceptance being rescinded the summer before Freshman year.

Testing-at-a-Glance

	When to take it	Registration	Comments
PSAT/NMSQT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fall of sophomore year (October)• Fall of junior year (October)	Family is asked to respond to Academic Office if student wishes to take PSAT	The PSAT/NMSQT is just SAT practice for sophomores. Juniors taking the exam compete for National Merit status.
SAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Junior year (December or March)• Fall of senior year (August or October)	www.collegeboard.org	Seniors should check application deadlines for the last acceptable test date.
ACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Junior year (February or April)• Fall of senior year	www.act.org	Seniors should check application deadlines for the last acceptable test date.
AP Exams	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Immediately following the completion of an AP course (May)	AP Coordinator at Menlo School	

Prep Courses

Preparing for tests can ease the stress and uncertainty that some students may feel. A good resource is the College Board itself, which offers both free test booklets (also available in the College Counseling Office) and online help at www.collegeboard.org.

The value of SAT or ACT prep courses depends upon the receptiveness of the student, increased familiarity with the test and a structured environment in which to practice. Weighing against such courses are their cost, the number of hours they require and the fact that results are not guaranteed.

Some families elect to pay for test preparation. Two forms exist: classes and tutors. Test prep classes tend to focus on generic test-taking strategies, whereas tutors tend to individualize the test preparation according to the strengths and weaknesses of the student. The college counseling staff does not endorse any particular program or tutor, but we do have a list of names of companies and tutors for Menlo families.



Notes

Chapter 3: Types of Admission

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Regular Admission

The majority of colleges and universities ask students to apply between November and February for admission the following fall, although some schools have later deadlines. Students usually receive decisions in March or April. If accepted, they are asked to matriculate by May 1 with a tuition deposit.

Rolling Admission

Some schools offer a rolling admission system, in which students submit their application and a decision is made soon after the application is complete (usually within 6-12 weeks). Applications are reviewed according to the school's standards for admission rather than by looking at all of the applicants at the same time. In most cases, it is to the student's advantage to apply early rather than waiting.

Early Decision (ED) Admission

Many colleges offer Early Decision plans, whereby students typically apply in November and receive replies in December. Not to be confused with Early Action (see below), the Early Decision plan requires that once accepted, students commit to enrolling. ***A student may apply to only one institution under this plan, but must have other applications ready for filing if the decision is not an acceptance.*** Some colleges employ an ED II program, which allows the early application to be filed slightly later (students may, for instance, file for ED II in January and receive a decision in February). If an ED application is deferred, students will be notified of the final decision in March or April, when all applicants receive notification.

Many people perceive Early Decision as an application strategy due to high ED acceptance rates at some campuses. Students should use ED only when they are certain of their choice—that is, they have visited the school, visited similar schools and are certain that they can handle the cost of tuition. Some seniors report how different their perspective on colleges has become by springtime and caution younger peers to use care with binding programs. Early Decision should not be used by students who have to compare financial aid offers.

Early Action (EA) Admission

A student might want to consider a college that offers Early Action admission, whereby a senior typically applies in November and hears in December but does not have to commit to attendance if accepted. If students are accepted under EA, they may proceed with other regular decision applications, waiting until May 1 to make a final college choice. Students may apply to more than one non-binding EA program.

Restricted Early Action (REA) Admission

For this admission program, as with regular Early Action above, students apply early and hear early without being bound to attend if admitted. However, under Restricted Early Action, students are forbidden from applying to any other early program, including Early Action and Early Decision. Students are able to apply to public universities and can apply to schools who have an early scholarship deadline.



Notes

Chapter 4: The Components of an Application

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The Transcript

The single most important part of the college application is the transcript. When reviewing transcripts, admissions officers consider not only the grades earned, but also the curriculum's level of challenge: number of courses, sustained study in any particular area, and number of advanced courses. The more selective the college, the more its admissions office would like to see challenging coursework (such as advanced courses in the last two years of high school). *In deciding which advanced courses to take, the student should choose subjects of interest, remembering how much work will be expected. No one should take an advanced course simply because it looks good for college applications. Please note that Menlo, by school policy, does not rank students.* Menlo does provide an elaborate school profile sheet with all counselor-submitted application materials so that colleges may contextualize student performance.

The Essay

The Common Application (Common App) college essay is the voice and personality of the application. It's a place where students are able to share their story with the admissions committee. Colleges are looking for authenticity and to learn more about each student. The Menlo college counseling team offers an essay workshop at the end of junior year. The counselors are available to work with students individually to help craft and edit students' essays throughout the summer and early fall.

Extracurricular Activities

Colleges want to know what students are interested in outside the classroom and look for serious commitments developed over time. Although a wide variety of activities may seem impressive, colleges most closely consider how significantly a student has contributed. *Commitment, leadership and depth are more significant than the number of pursuits.*

Teacher Recommendations

Most colleges ask for *two teacher recommendation letters*. These recommendations provide a view of a student's approach to learning in the context of the classroom. Students should choose junior- and/or senior-year teachers who know their work and personality well.

It is crucial that students be considerate of teachers. Teachers should be asked politely, *and in-person*, if they would write a letter in their second semester of junior year. For Common Application Schools, teachers should receive a request from the student via SCOIR. *Students should thank teachers, who wrote letters on their behalf.*

Counselor Recommendations

Your college counselor writes a comprehensive letter about you. The sources of information for these letters include the student questionnaires (completed at the end of junior year), personal interviews, writing samples (including the Common Application or UC essay if the counselor is given a copy), teacher comments written in grades 9-12 and, most importantly, personal interaction. The more information the counselors have, the more informative the letters. Counselors aim to portray strengths, both academic and non-academic, so additional information is extremely helpful and encouraged (parents, friends, coaches, siblings and/or work supervisors, for example, are invited to write to the counselor). We encourage parents to write letters about their children for our use.

Standardized Tests

A student should note carefully which tests colleges require. *Students must remember to have testing agencies send official score reports directly to each college receiving an application. Students must also confirm receipt of those scores with each campus.*

Colleges typically do not request AP exam scores for admissions evaluative purposes, but may request them for class credit once a student enrolls.

Interviews

Some colleges require interviews; some recommend them; some offer informal interviews upon request; some schools will not offer interviews at all. A recent trend is the alumni interview, in which alumni contact applicants and set up interviews locally. Check with each college to learn about its program. The college counseling team is happy to provide mock interviews to make sure all students feel prepared and confident for their scheduled interview.

Some suggestions for interview preparation:

- Read about the institution and formulate questions that are not easily answered by the viewbook or website. It's perfectly reasonable to write questions down and take them into the interview with you.
- Arrive at your interview on time, dressed respectfully, even if it's an informal interview.
- Relax. The interview's main purpose is to enjoy a get-acquainted conversation so that you can get to know the institution better and the institution's representative can get to know you. Remember, the interview should be a conversation, not an interrogation.
- Look your interviewer in the eye during your conversation.
- Speak clearly and respond in a straightforward manner, or ask for more time to think over a question.

Some questions you might want to ask an interviewer:

- Are there any unusual traditions or celebrations?
- What kind of person would be happiest on this campus? Most unhappy?
- What are the current issues of concern among the students?

Questions an interviewer might ask you:

- Specifically, why are you interested in this college?
- What would you expect to contribute to the college?
- What book did you read most recently for fun?
- What is the one thing you wish you could change about yourself?
- What are your interests outside of school and your passions in school?
- What do you think you might major in? (Do not be afraid to answer, "I have no idea." Liberal arts colleges expect most students to explore a wide variety of disciplines before they decide on a major area of study.)

TIP: Students should write a thank you note to the interviewer. It would be wise to keep their name on file in case questions arise, and also just to keep in touch.

The Common Application

Over 900 colleges accept the Common Application in lieu of their own form. The purpose of the Common Application is to make applying to college easier. Many colleges still supplement the Common Application with their own shorter forms and essays. Students must be certain to complete all required supplemental information as well as the general Common Application form. Check the last few pages of the Common Application for specific requirements, which are clearly charted by institution.

The Common Application should be completed and submitted online at www.commonapp.org. College counselors and teachers submit forms and letter of recommendation electronically through SCOIR to Common Application Colleges.

The Common Application website provides the forms, a list of supplementary materials colleges require and deadlines.

The Coalition Application

In addition to the Common Application, some universities use the Coalition Application. This application is similar to the Common App; there are sections for demographic information, extracurricular activities, and essays. To ensure a more streamlined process, however, students are advised to use the Coalition Application only when absolutely necessary. Get more information at: <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/>

The University of California Application

For students who are interested in applying to the University of California (UC) system, they will need to apply using the UC application. Similar to the Common App, there are sections for demographic information, extracurricular activities, as well as essays. Unlike the Common Application's singular personal statement, the UC system asks for four, 350-word essays. In addition, there is only one window for submission: November 1 through November 30. To learn more about the UC application, go to: <https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply-now.html>

Arts Supplement and Athletic Recruitment

Students with exceptional and recognized artistic talent may be able to submit a portfolio as part of their application to be reviewed by the departmental faculty of the university. In general, students will submit the arts supplement through the Common Application; however, there are cases when a live audition is required. Each university will have different deadline and requirements for their portfolios.

Students who wish to participate in collegiate athletics likely need to go through the recruitment process for their respective sport. Students should contact their college counselor and coach to learn more about the recruitment timeline for their sport, as it differs for each one.



Notes

Chapter 5: SCOIR

CHAPTER 5: SCOIR

SCOIR is a web-based college planning system designed especially for students and families. This website can help in making decisions about your courses, colleges, and careers. SCOIR is a platform that we use in the College Counseling Office to track and analyze data about college plans, and it provides up-to-date information that's specific to Menlo School.

SCOIR is most commonly used for the following:

By Students and Parents:

- Researching colleges
- Admission analysis
- Preparing a college list
- Financial information & estimates
- Requesting teacher recommendations
- Searching for scholarships
- Registering for college representative visits
- Communicating with college counseling
- Reporting college decisions and matriculation

By Teachers:

- Electronic submission of forms and teacher letters of recommendation



IMPORTANT: The college counselors use SCOIR to electronically submit forms, transcripts, letters of recommendation and the Menlo School Profile to colleges during the application process. ***Students must keep SCOIR documents up-to-date.***

College Search/College List

Through SCOIR, students will be able to manage their college search in one convenient location. You will be able to search thousands of schools by entering specific parameters into a database. SCOIR can provide specific information about colleges (e.g. deadlines, cost of attendance, location, contact information, etc.) as well as lead you directly to the school's website. Not only will you be able to search schools, but you will also be able to make comparisons and start building a college list that can be saved in your personal account.

Sending Letters of Recommendation

SCOIR also allows teachers and counselors to send their letters of recommendation to colleges. This process allows students and families to track when letters have been submitted. Not only does this streamline the process by cutting down the necessity for multiple forms, envelopes and lists of deadlines, it also keeps everyone informed throughout the process.

Getting Access

To access SCOIR, you will receive an email invitation from SCOIR with a link to register. College Counseling will send invitations to families and students in the spring of sophomore year. Parents and students will be given separate accounts. It is very important for students to use the invitation link to setup their account, since their account is linked to the submission of their letters of recommendation, transcript, and forms.

To log on to the SCOIR website, go to <https://www.scoir.com/>.



Notes

Chapter 6: California's Public Universities & Colleges

CHAPTER 6: California's Public Universities & Colleges

The University of California

www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions

The UC system comprises the following universities:

UC Berkeley	UC Merced	UC San Francisco (<i>specialized graduate study only</i>)
UC Davis	UC Riverside	UC Santa Barbara
UC Irvine	UC San Diego	UC Santa Cruz
UCLA		

Applications to the University of California campuses are submitted between Oct. 1 - Nov. 30 and should be completed online.

To be eligible for admission, a student must meet the Subject and Scholarship Requirements.

The following information comes directly from the UC website.

Subject Requirement ("A-G" Coursework)

www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions/undergrad_adm/paths_to_adm/freshman/subject_reqs.html

To be UC eligible, students must complete the 15 yearlong high school courses listed below. These courses are also known as the "a-g" subjects. At least seven of these courses must be taken in your last two years of high school. (Note: Menlo's graduation requirements meet or exceed UC's subject requirements, provided that students have not earned below a C- in any of the required courses.)

Required "A-G" Coursework

- a. History/Social Science: 2 years required
- b. English: 4 years required
- c. Mathematics: 3 years required, 4 years recommended
- d. Laboratory Science: 2 years required, 3 years recommended
- e. Language other than English: 2 years required, 3 years recommended
- f. Visual and Performing arts (VPA): 1 year required
- g. College Preparatory Electives*: 1 year required

* College Preparatory Electives can be chosen from visual and performing arts, history, social science, English, advanced mathematics, laboratory science, and a language other than English that exceeds the UC's two year requirement.

Scholarship Requirement

The Scholarship Requirement defines the grade point average (GPA) you must earn in the "a-g" subjects. The University uses an Eligibility Index to determine if you meet this requirement. The minimum GPA is 3.0 (as calculated by UC—see "The University of California Eligibility Index") for California residents.

The University of California Eligibility Index

To determine your eligibility, the University calculates your GPA in the “a-g” subjects by assigning point values to the grades you earn, totaling the points and dividing the total by the number of “a-g” courses.

Points are assigned as follows:

A=4 points B=3 points C=2 points D=1 point F=0 points

* Pluses and minuses are not calculated in the grade point average

Only the grades you earn in “a-g” subjects in the 10th and 11th grades (including summer sessions) are used to calculate your GPA. Courses you took in ninth grade can be used to meet the Subject Requirement if you earned a grade of C or better, but they will not be used to calculate your GPA.

Honors Courses

The University assigns extra points for up to eight semesters of University-certified honors-level and Advanced Placement courses taken in the last three years of high school:

A=5 points B=4 points C=3 points

No more than two yearlong UC-approved honors-level courses taken in the 10th grade may be given extra points. A grade of D in an honors or advanced placement course does not earn extra points.

To see which Menlo courses receive UC Honors credit, please visit: www.menloschool.org/menlo-uc-resources

The courses must be in the following “a-g” subjects:

- History/Social Science
- English
- Advanced Mathematics
- Laboratory Science
- Language other than English
- Visual and Performing Arts

They must also be certified as honors courses by the University. In these subjects, as well as in computer science, acceptable honors-level courses include Advanced Placement courses and college courses that are transferable to the University.

D and F Grades

If you have earned a D or F in an “a-g” course, you must repeat the course with a grade of C or better. The original D or F grade will not be included in the GPA calculation, and the new grade will be used. ***Students earning Ds or Fs must discuss their academic options with their college counselors.***

Global Online Academy

Students in grades 10, 11, and 12 are eligible to take classes online via GOA (Global Online Academy) for credit. These courses will appear on the Menlo transcript, and the grades are calculated into a student’s overall GPA. Students may list these courses under the Additional Information Section on the UC/CSU Application.

The California State University System

www.calstate.edu

The California State University System is the nation's largest system of higher education. There are 23 Cal State campuses:

Bakersfield	Long Beach	San Bernardino
Channel Islands	Los Angeles	San Diego
Chico	Vallejo (<i>The California Maritime Academy</i>)	San Francisco
Dominguez Hills	Monterey Bay	San Jose
East Bay	Northridge	San Luis Obispo
Fresno	Pomona	San Marcos
Fullerton	Sacramento	Sonoma
Humboldt		Stanislaus

Freshman eligibility is governed by an eligibility index much like that of the University of California as well as by similar "a-g" requirements. The GPA is based upon academic work completed in Grades 10 and 11.

ELM and EPT Mandatory Testing

Note that admissions to Cal State campuses are conditional for some students; admitted students must be vigilant about requirements that need to be met in late spring or early summer. ***Check admission letters carefully to confirm whether the ELM (Entry Level Mathematics), EPT (English Placement Test) or both must be taken. Failure to complete this mandatory testing can result in a revoked admission offer.*** For more information, visit www.ets.org/csu.

California Community Colleges

www.cccco.edu

For some students these schools provide an economical opportunity to continue their education while also serving as a possible transition to other universities and colleges.

A student is eligible for admission to a community college if he has a high school diploma or GED, or is 18 years of age. Note: University of California attempts to give priority to community college students seeking to transfer into the UC system and claims that nearly eight of ten transfer applicants receive an offer of admission.



Chapter 7: The College Visit

CHAPTER 7: The College Visit

Visiting College Campuses

Visiting different types of schools is a good approach: small, medium, large; urban, suburban, rural; state, private; and East Coast, West Coast, Midwest. To get the most accurate feel for a place, if possible, visit while the college is in session, attend classes, and possibly spend the night—a plan that can be conveniently carried out over a long weekend at a California school.

Students should consider visiting colleges during school holidays, winter break or spring break. The summer following junior year provides another opportunity.

Although we encourage students to visit colleges during school vacations, each student is allowed to miss up to five days total for this purpose during the last two years of high school. Students should miss as few days of school as possible. If students must miss school to visit college, they must abide by the rules as set forth in the Menlo School Student and Parent Handbook. Students should not miss school in the last week of April; this is a time when teachers are wrapping up non-AP classes, and students need to be present.

Aside from visiting classes and spending time with students, the most important aspects of the campus visit are talking to students at the college and getting a sense of place. Tours are led by current students and provide a good opportunity to ask questions. But also feel free to stop students in the cafeteria to ask questions, visit student admission volunteers, arrange an overnight or a meal with students, or simply hang out where students hang out.

To schedule a college visit, go to the college website. They will let you know when tours are offered, if an interview can be arranged, and whether or not they can accommodate an overnight stay.

Students should keep a record of impressions, names and descriptions of the campuses for reference. Keeping a journal and taking pictures is useful. We recommend visiting no more than two campuses a day. (Please use the College Counseling Campus Visit Guide at the end of the Resources section of this handbook to organize your thoughts.)

Tip: Admission officers love to hear from students directly. Whether or not a visit is possible, a friendly call from inquisitive students, rather than parents, makes a personal connection.

Easy-to-Visit Local Colleges

UC Berkeley
UC Davis
UC Merced
UC Santa Cruz
Cal State Chico
Cal State East Bay
Cal State Monterey Bay

Sacramento State
San Francisco State
San Jose State
Sonoma State University
Dominican College
Menlo College
Santa Clara University

St. Mary's College of California
Stanford University
University of the Pacific
University of San Francisco

College Representative Visits to Menlo

Each fall, over 120 college admission representatives visit Menlo's College Counseling Office. Seniors are encouraged to attend visits.

The schedule of visits is posted and updated in SCOIR. A current list of visits is also posted in the College Counseling Office and on the Menlo College Counseling webpage.

Virtual Visits

Many colleges moved to offering more virtual and online programs to promote their school. Each school offers different options, however, some programming might include:

- Virtual Campus Tours
- Virtual Info Sessions
- Faculty Led Classes
- Student Panels
- Faculty Panels

These programs can be helpful as it's a way to get a sense of the school and community without having to travel to campus. For more information, check out their website and sign up!



Chapter 8: Financial Aid Information

CHAPTER 8: Financial Aid Information

Financial aid can be based on need, merit (high GPA, rank, test scores) or special qualifications such as community service, intended major or extracurricular ability. With the exception of the College Board's PROFILE (see below), no family should pay for scholarship or financial aid information. There are many scams of which to be aware.

Financial Aid Based on Need

The majority of the student population in higher education today is receiving some kind of financial aid from colleges and/or the state and federal governments. Admission and financial aid officers consistently tell families to try for aid if it will help make college affordable.

State Aid

In order to receive state aid for in-state schools, a student must first be sure to submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA—see below) and must apply to at least one California college. The Cal Grant provides the student the opportunity to apply for state aid. The deadline is March 2. The application should be filed as close to October 1 as possible. The form requires the college counselors to verify the student's unweighted GPA. There is no processing fee for the Cal Grant or FAFSA, but note that only families with extreme financial need qualify for Cal Grants. Income guidelines and helpful information can be found at csac.ca.gov.

Federal Aid

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) must be filed if you wish to receive any need-based aid from the government, the state or the college. The FAFSA may be filed starting December 1 (the deadline is March 2, however, families should try to submit the FAFSA as early as possible). This form costs nothing to process. When the government reviews the form, it makes a determination of an Student Aid Index (SAI). This SAI is required by colleges in order to determine the amount of aid they will offer. Be sure to contact financial aid offices of specific colleges if there are circumstances not addressed by the FAFSA questionnaire or the determined Expected Family Contribution. To complete the form online, go to fafsa.ed.gov.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile

In addition to submitting the FAFSA, some private colleges and universities will require submission of the College Scholarship Service (CSS) Profile in order to apply for financial aid directly from the institution. Similarly to the FAFSA, an applicant will need financial information, such as tax forms and bank statements. The registration form should be filled out as soon as the student is relatively certain about what colleges they are applying to. Check with the colleges to which you are applying for their deadlines, as each college sets its own deadline. For information and to complete the form online, go to student.collegeboard.org/profile.

The FAFSA and the CCS PROFILE ask for information about a family's assets and determine how much that family can put toward the first year of the child's college education. That amount stays the same, no matter where the child goes to college. If the college wants to admit the student, the admission office will instruct the financial aid office to make up the difference between what the family can contribute and what that college costs. That difference will be presented as the student's aid package and can consist of three parts: a loan, a grant and an on-campus job.

1. A loan requires repayment with interest (usually the terms are generous).
2. A grant is money given to the student with no obligation of repayment.
3. The on-campus job (usually called "Work/Study") is typically manageable.

Parent Loans

Parents may apply for loans through their bank or a college's Financial Aid Office.

Financial Aid Based on Merit & Special Qualifications

Colleges and universities, private organizations, and companies provide merit and specialized scholarships. Like grants, these scholarships are outright gifts of money.

Colleges and Universities

By checking off appropriate boxes on the application form, students let a college know they want to be considered for an academic scholarship. Winning such an award depends on an outstanding high school record or an outstanding talent. Some institutions offer special scholarships in athletics, music and more—be sure to read the literature thoroughly.

Private Organizations and Companies

Numerous private organizations (the Elks, the Rotarians, etc.) and companies (Westinghouse, PG&E, etc.) send applications for scholarships to the College Counseling Office. The criteria may range from a superior academic record, to the excellence of a specific project or essay, to an unusual degree of volunteer involvement in the community. In addition, there are a number of competitions for scholarships available to students with special qualifications having to do with ethnic background, special talents and religious beliefs. Also, many companies offer scholarships to children of employees (e.g., Hewlett Packard, Xerox, Chevron, IBM); parents should check with their companies for these opportunities.

We collect this information for students' reference and have it available on our website and in SCOIR.

Reference Books

See Chapter 10: Resources for a complete list of reference books available on this topic.

Other Resources

If your student qualifies for a fee waiver, talk to your college counselor about the other financial assistance Menlo offers.



Chapter 9: College Advising for Students with Learning Differences

CHAPTER 9: College Advising for Students with Learning Differences

Researching Colleges

Colleges and universities can vary widely in the quality and depth of support services they offer students with learning differences (LD). If LD support is of concern, families need to research support services at the institutions to which they are considering applying. Families may want to drop by the school's LD support services office to see facilities and ask questions about establishing eligibility for accommodations and the kinds of services offered (tutoring, learning technology, counseling, etc.).

Documentation Needed

Parents and students should not assume that accommodations granted in high school will be granted in college. Most colleges require recent testing (defined as a report produced within three years of the date of matriculation) to assess students' accommodation needs. Colleges may also request a copy of a student's Menlo learning plan (known as the SSP or Student Success Plan), standardized test accommodation letters, and/or documentation from a therapist. Parents/guardians should assemble this documentation and submit it to their child's college as soon as possible following your child's acceptance of an offer of admission.

Accommodations for Standardized Testing

Menlo's Upper School is eager to help students with learning differences receive the accommodations they need on standardized tests such as the SAT and ACT. Testing companies refer to these accommodations as "special testing." In order to ensure a less stressful, more efficient special-testing application process, the Upper School Learning Support Office collects consent forms that authorize the school to submit applications on your child's behalf when your child receives their first Menlo Student Success Plan (SSP), usually before the beginning of 9th grade. Menlo also shares a digital copy of your child's most recent educational testing report with both the College Board and ACT since testing companies must review this document before issuing a decision about accommodations. Finally, Menlo shares your child's current SSP with both testing companies. This plan document strengthens the quality of our application for accommodations and meets the testing companies' requirements for demonstrating a documented need.

Where can I find the parent consent documents that authorize Menlo to apply for standardized testing accommodations?

The College Board's [release](http://www.menloschool.org/college-board-release) (www.menloschool.org/college-board-release) covers the PSAT, SAT, and any AP exams your child may take. This form requires your child's signature. Here is the the ACT's parental [consent form](http://www.menloschool.org/act-consent-form) (www.menloschool.org/act-consent-form). Menlo's Learning Support Office will also share digital versions of these files with you when your child receives their first Menlo Student Success Plan (SSP).

Does my child's educational testing report meet the College Board's and ACT's requirements?

The College Board requires educational testing data indicative of a learning difference such as dyslexia or ADHD to be no more than five years old. ACT requires evaluation data to be no more than three years old. Both companies require applications for accommodations based on a medical need (e.g., a traumatic head injury) or psychiatric impairment (e.g., anxiety or depression) to be no more than one year old.

When does Menlo apply for special testing accommodations on College Board and ACT exams?

If your child comes to Menlo in 9th grade with a middle school learning plan and valid educational testing (a report produced within three years of the date of enrollment), Menlo applies for accommodations on College Board exams before your child starts freshman year. If your child receives their first diagnosis in 9th or 10th grade, Menlo applies for College Board accommodations after your child's SSP has been in effect for at least one academic semester. Menlo applies for accommodations on the ACT when a student registers for a specific exam date, typically in the summer or fall of junior year. If your child receives a disability diagnosis later than 10th grade, it's unlikely they will qualify for special-testing accommodations. Therefore, it's unusual for Menlo to apply for accommodations on your child's behalf.

How long does it take the College Board and ACT to issue a decision about accommodations?

The College Board and ACT issue decision letters between one and eight weeks from the date Menlo applies for accommodations. Both companies can take up to seven additional weeks to process appeals of adverse decisions. Though uncommon, it can take up to four months to determine the status of your child's accommodations. Please consider these constraints before registering for an exam.

What happens if the College Board or ACT denies my child's application for accommodations?

In rare cases (2-3% of the applications Menlo makes each year), a testing company will reject all or some of the accommodations Menlo requests. Your family may choose not to appeal the testing company's decision. Alternatively, if your family chooses to appeal a decision, Menlo's Learning Support staff will work with you to acquire additional documentation (e.g., letters of support from tutors, educational therapists, and teachers; report cards and other academic records; or letters of recommendation from your child's psycho-educational evaluator). While we cannot guarantee success, when additional documentation related to a learning difference can be provided, the College Board and ACT may approve an appeal. Finally, please note that most rejections occur because a student cannot demonstrate a history of receiving learning accommodations before their freshman year of high school.

Will my child need to reapply for accommodations after they've been approved for special testing?

Once your child has been approved for accommodations by the College Board or ACT, these accommodations follow them until they graduate from Menlo. Your child would only reapply for accommodations if their learning profile changes after they have been granted approval for special testing (e.g., a new round of educational testing leads to a new disability diagnosis).

What type of special-testing accommodations will my child receive?

Most students with dyslexia and ADHD receive 50 percent extra time. Testing companies also tend to grant students with these disabilities a small-group environment and preferential seating near a proctor. Most students who experience anxiety and depression receive the same accommodations. Students with dysgraphia usually receive access to a laptop. Students with dyscalculia may receive extra time specific to the math sections of standardized tests, access to a calculator, and small-group testing. Menlo students rarely qualify for listening accommodations, large-block answer sheets, 100 percent extra time, or the ability to test over multiple days.

Can Menlo apply for accommodations not listed in my child's evaluation report or Menlo SSP?

Menlo can only apply for accommodations that appear in both your child's evaluation report and Menlo SSP. Moreover, both testing companies can and do deny accommodations listed in a student's SSP or evaluation report when they consider them unreasonable in relation to your child's learning difference. ACT is more likely than the College Board to deny an accommodation listed on your child's SSP.

If the College Board and/or ACT approve my child's application for special testing accommodations, where will he/she test?

Both the College Board (www.menloschool.org/collegeboard-accomodations) and ACT (www.menloschool.org/act-accomodations) require the majority of students eligible for special testing accommodations to test at designated national testing centers. Only students granted 100 percent extra time, access to an MP3/audio version of a test, and a small range of other accommodations may test on campus.



Notes

Chapter 10: Resources

CHAPTER 10: Resources

Helpful Links

Standardized Testing

- The College Board – www.collegeboard.org
- ACT – www.act.org

Online Applications and College Information

- SCOIR – <https://www.scoir.com/>
- The Common Application – www.commonapp.org
- University of California – www.universityofcalifornia.edu/admissions
- California State University System – www.calstate.edu
- California Community College System – www.cccco.edu

Financial Aid and Scholarships

- Fast Web (A comprehensive site of college and financial aid resources with tips, articles, and functionality to search by scholarship category) – www.fastweb.com
- College Connection Scholarships – www.collegescholarships.com
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) – <https://fafsa.ed.gov>
- Federal Student Aid on the Web – www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov
- CSS Financial Aid PROFILE – <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>
- California Student Aid Commission (Cal Grants and other programs) – www.csac.ca.gov
- California Cash for College (free local workshops) – <https://www.cash4college.csac.ca.gov>
- Fin Aid: Offers overall look at financial aid, where to look for it and how to get it – www.finaid.org

Athletes

NCAA Clearinghouse

- www.ncaa.org/playcollegesports
- www.ncaa.org/eligibilitycenter

Gap Year

- USA Gap Year Fairs – <http://usagapyearfairs.org>
- International Studies Abroad – www.studiesabroad.com/gap
- American Gap Association – <https://gapyearassociation.org>

Reading Material

Many of these titles are available in the College Counseling Office as well as in major bookstores. Families should use college guidebooks for factual information. All college rating and ranking systems should be considered suspect.

Reference

- *Where You Go is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania* (Frank Bruni)
- *There is Life After College* (Jeffrey J. Selingo)
- *Who Gets in And Why: A Year Inside College Admissions* (Jeffrey Selingo)
- *The Truth about College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together* (Brennan Barnard and Rick Clark)
- *Grown and Flown: How to Support Your Teen, Stay Close as a Family, and Raise Independent Adults* (Lisa Heffernan and Mary Dell Harrington)
- *The Inequality Machine: How College Divides Us* (Paul Tough)
- *The College Conversation: A Practical Companion for Parents to Guide Their Children Along the Path to Higher Education* (Eric J. Furda, Jacques Steinberg)
- *Colleges That Change Lives: 40 Schools You Should Know About Even if You're Not a Straight-A Student* (Loren Pope)
- *Looking Beyond the Ivy League: Finding the College That's Right for You* (Loren Pope)
- *Harvard Schmarvard: Getting Beyond the Ivy League to the College that is Best for You* (Jay Mathews)
- *The Fiske Guide to Colleges* (Edward B. Fiske)
- *The College Finder: Choose the School That's Right for You!* (Steven R. Antonoff)
- *The Best 387 Colleges* (The Princeton Review)
- *K&W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences, 14th Edition: 338 Schools with Programs or Services for Students with ADHD, ASD, or Learning Differences* (The Princeton Review)

Financial Aid

- *Paying for College, 2022: Everything You Need to Maximize Financial Aid and Afford College (2021)* (Princeton Review)
- *The Price you Pay for College* (Ron Lieber)
- *The Ultimate Scholarship Book 2022: Billions of Dollars in Scholarships, Grants and Prizes* (Gen and Kelly Tanabe)
- *Peterson's How to Get Money for College 2021*





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Atherton, CA 94027

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ACT-CEEB Code: 051960

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Menlo School is accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and is a member of the National and California Associations of Independent Schools.

Menlo School PROFILE 2023-2024

THE SCHOOL

Established in 1915, Menlo School is a highly-selective independent, coeducational, college preparatory day school situated in the heart of Silicon Valley. The School inspires students to lead lives of meaning, impact, and joy. Through our relevant, responsive curriculum, students in grades 6-12 explore diverse points of view and are encouraged to think globally and act with compassion. Our talented educators lead with enthusiasm and curiosity, challenging students in their learning while ensuring the support each student needs to thrive. We believe that learning is a journey that should be enjoyed. Our students are encouraged to chart their own paths through a broad array of exceptional academic, artistic, and athletic programs that spark wonder and launch wider exploration.

MENLO BY THE NUMBERS

STUDENT
POPULATION

584
GRADES 9-12



10:1
STUDENT-TO-TEACHER RATIO



\$7M
IN AID TO
20%
OF THE
STUDENT
BODY

40
ADVANCED
CLASSES OFFERED



22
VARSITY SPORTS
OFFERED

CLASS OF 2024 BY THE NUMBERS

CLASS SIZE

146

MEAN GPA

3.82

HIGH GPA

4.33

12

NATIONAL
MERIT
SEMIFINALISTS

GRADING AND CLASS RANK

In the Upper School, GPA is cumulative from freshman year using all courses with the exception of Physical Education (PE). Menlo reports year long grades, with the exception a few electives where semester grades are reported on the weighted and cumulative transcript. Plus and minus grades are weighted (e.g. B+ = 3.33, B- = 2.67). **Upper School students receive an extra .5 of credit for each Honors (H), Advanced Placement (AP), or Advanced Topics course, as all three designations are considered equally rigorous.** Students are not ranked. Menlo is moving away from the AP curriculum and replacing those courses with more relevant, rigorous Honors and Advanced Topics offerings.

When requested by a college or university to which a student has applied, Menlo School will report incidents that occurred in grades 9 through 12 that resulted in the student being dismissed, suspended, or placed on citizenship probation. Menlo School will also report voluntary withdrawals when disciplinary action is possible or pending whenever such information is requested by a college or university.

DISTINCTIVE PROGRAMS AND COURSES

Applied Science Research (ASR)

ASR is a capstone class. Students learn how to design and build something, do experiments, analyze and graph their data, and compute the errors on their experiments. Students work on campus and/or intern at a local university or company under a mentor. At the conclusion of the second semester, each student writes a science or engineering paper, gives a final presentation, and has the opportunity to publish their work in a science or engineering journal.

BioTech Research

BioTech Research is a capstone class. Students learn key lab techniques in molecular biology, protein biochemistry, immunolocalization, and cell culture. They then use these skills to design and carry out an authentic, independent research project, either in our lab or in a local industry or academic lab.

Menlo Interdisciplinary and Personalized Scholars Program (Menlo IP)

Menlo IP is designed to allow interested students to shape a deep and personalized approach to their studies, which we believe will help them to create more meaningful learning explorations and chart new paths of distinction. The IP provides an opportunity for students to examine root causes of societal problems, envision possible solutions to said challenges, and supports them in creating their own original work or producing original scholarly criticism.

Global Online Academy

Students may take online classes through the Global Online Academy, a consortium of domestic and international independent schools. Students receive Menlo credit for the courses, and the course grade is calculated into the student's GPA.

M Term

M Term has two interrelated and primary purposes: to find new ways to foster joy in learning and engagement and to honor student interest and initiative by providing experiences and opportunities that may not routinely exist in the Menlo School curricula. During the last two weeks of the school year, regular classes are suspended, and students partake in immersive M Term experiential courses designed to get students out into our local and global communities while fostering awareness, empathy, and citizenship.

Menlo Abroad

Three-week international travel programs that feature facilitated curricula, service-learning, language immersion, and homestays. Students develop meaningful relationships with people in distant places, make

friends, and use their skills to address common problems. Current offerings include Costa Rica, and past trips have included Tanzania, India, China, and Guatemala.

Borderlands

One-week domestic travel opportunities to the Southwestern United States to study Indigenous America, immigration, and a host of related topics.

COLLEGE MATRICULATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASSES OF 2021-2023

American University (1)	DePaul University (1)	Sarah Lawrence College (2)	University of Michigan (8)
Amherst College (3)	Duke University (8)	Scripps College (2)	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill (1)
Art Center College of Design (1)	Emerson College (1)	Seattle University (1)	University of Notre Dame (4)
Babson College (2)	Emory University (4)	Skidmore College (3)	University of Oregon (1)
Barnard College (3)	Fashion Institute of Technology (1)	Southern Methodist University (5)	University of Pennsylvania (8)
Bates College (3)	Foothill College (1)	Stanford University (24)	University of Redlands (1)
Baylor University (1)	Georgetown University (5)	Syracuse University (2)	University of Richmond (1)
Belmont College (1)	Gonzaga University (1)	Texas Christian University (2)	University of Rochester (1)
Boston College (9)	Harvard College (5)	Trinity College (2)	University of San Diego (1)
Boston University (6)	Haverford College (2)	Tufts University (8)	University of Southern California (5)
Bowdoin College (2)	Johns Hopkins University (5)	Tulane University (12)	University of St. Andrews (1)
Brigham Young University (2)	Lehigh University (7)	United States Air Force Academy (1)	University of Tennessee (1)
Brown University (6)	Lewis & Clark College (1)	United States Military Academy (1)	University of Texas, Austin (2)
Bucknell University (1)	Loyola Marymount University (1)	University of Arizona (2)	University of Toronto (1)
California Polytechnic Institute, Pomona (2)	Marquette University (2)	University of British Columbia (2)	University of Utah (3)
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo (2)	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (2)	University of California, Berkeley (18)	University of Virginia (1)
Cañada College (1)	Middlebury College (2)	University of California, Davis (1)	University of Washington (4)
Carleton College (1)	New York University (4)	University of California, Irvine (1)	University of Wisconsin, Madison (12)
Carnegie Mellon University (4)	Northeastern University (1)	University of California, Los Angeles (7)	Utah Valley University (1)
Case Western Reserve (2)	Northwestern University (6)	University of California, Merced (3)	Vanderbilt University (5)
Chapman University (2)	Occidental College (2)	University of California, Riverside (2)	Vassar College (2)
Claremont McKenna College (3)	Parsons School of Design (1)	University of California, San Diego (4)	Villanova University (4)
Colby College (2)	Pomona College (2)	University of California, Santa Barbara (3)	Wake Forest University (7)
Colgate University (1)	Princeton University (5)	University of California, Santa Cruz (2)	Washington and Lee University (1)
College of San Mateo (3)	Purdue University (5)	University of Cambridge (1)	Washington University in St. Louis (10)
Colorado College (4)	Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (1)	University of Chicago (14)	Wellesley College (3)
Columbia University (3)	Rhode Island School of Design (1)	University of Cincinnati (1)	Whitman College (1)
Connecticut College (2)	Rice University (3)	University of Colorado at Boulder (6)	Williams College (3)
Cornell University (14)	Rose Hulman Institute of Technology (1)	University of Denver (1)	Yale University (4)
Dartmouth College (7)	Saint Mary's College of California (2)	University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (1)	
Denison University (3)	San Jose State University (1)	University of Maryland (1)	
	Santa Clara University (7)	University of Miami (3)	

COLLEGE VISIT GUIDE

COLLEGE NAME

City	State	Tuition	Average Loan Debt Upon Graduation
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

ADMISSIONS OFFICER CONTACT

Name

Title

Email

Phone

CHECKLIST

What Did You Do?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Talk to professors | <input type="radio"/> Talk to students |
| <input type="radio"/> Visit the library | <input type="radio"/> Visit student housing |
| <input type="radio"/> Information session & campus tour | <input type="radio"/> Read bulletin boards |
| <input type="radio"/> Sit in on a class | <input type="radio"/> Tour the recreational facilities |
| <input type="radio"/> Eat at the cafeteria | <input type="radio"/> Check out student activities |
| <input type="radio"/> Talk to an admissions officer | <input type="radio"/> Tour the community around campus |
| <input type="radio"/> Read the college newspaper | <input type="radio"/> Eat at off-campus hang out |

RATE IT

On a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the best) rate the following

	1	2	3	4	5
Community/People	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Social life	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Academic experience	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Dorms	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Surrounding city/town	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Campus	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5
Food	<input type="radio"/> 1	<input type="radio"/> 2	<input type="radio"/> 3	<input type="radio"/> 4	<input type="radio"/> 5



QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is your typical day like?

What do students do on the weekends?

Why did you choose to attend?

What would you like to improve in this community?

What was your transition like to go from high school to college here?

What are the requirements for need-based aid and for merit-based aid?

THOUGHTS ON YOUR VISIT

The Best Part About My Visit:

The Worst Part About My Visit:



TIPS for Your Visit

1

Students, take the lead.

You are the one who will be attending college, so take the lead during campus visits. Your parents will probably be with you during the visit, but make sure you do most of the talking. Don't take the easy way out and let your parents do all of the work for you.

2

Have an open mind.

Treat every college the same when visiting. You may have a ranked list based on everything you know about the colleges, but your feeling may change after walking on campus and getting a real feel for the college.

3

Do your homework.

Do some research on the college in advance so that you have some basic information on the school before you visit. Don't waste your time on campus by asking questions that could have been easily answered by doing a quick search of a school's website, publications, blogs, or social media. You'll be able to get more out of a visit by asking specific questions.

4

Schedule your visits well in advance.

Group information sessions can fill up very quickly during spring and summer breaks. The general rule of thumb is to schedule your visit at least three weeks in advance. It's always best to visit a school while it's in session.

5

Be thoughtful about logistics.

Leave plenty of time for parking, info session, tour, a meal, and just walking around the campus. It's best to leave time for lunch after your morning

information session and tour. After a morning of walking and talking on campus, you're sure to build up an appetite!

6

Take notes and pictures.

Be ready to take notes and pictures of campus. Chances are you will be visiting more than one school on the same trip and it's easy to forget what you saw at each college or university. Colleges will start to blend together after visiting a few. We advise visiting a maximum of two colleges in one day.

7

Pick up a student newspaper and look at bulletin boards around campus.

See what the hot topics on campus are. Bulletin boards are a good indication of the types of activities happening on campus.

8

Meet the students.

Talk to (former Menlo) students enrolled at the college. Don't leave the campus without talking to students. They'll tell you the good, bad and the ugly about school you're visiting.

9

Talk about it.

Discuss your visit with your family, counselor, and/or other trusted sources—be specific about what you liked and didn't like about particular campuses.

10

Have fun!

Talk to currently enrolled students at the college. They'll be honest and tell you the good, the bad, and the ugly about the school you're visiting.



Menlo School

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