

Map To The Stars





**A College Guide For Students And Parents
Of
Science, Technology, and Research High
School**


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Four Reasons Why Anybody Should Go To College

 Become a skilled professional – A college education helps you become advanced in the specific subjects you are most interested in. It also increases your ability to think conceptually and critically, and to make wise decisions.

 Have More Job Opportunities – Today, more than ever, more jobs require higher education than in the past.

 Increase Your Potential – A college education can help you increase your interests, discover new areas of knowledge, and consider lifelong goals.

 Earn More Money – On average, the more degrees you earn, the more money you will make.

Please Note: While this guide should help you with your responsibilities, it is still up to you to give the necessary thought, effort, and involvement to make sure your future plans are positive and meaningful as possible.

Throughout the process, you should be working closely with S.T.A.R.'s college advisor, as well as your parents/guardians.

Junior Year Calendar

September

- Get involved in one or two extracurricular activities, and run for office in these organizations.
- Attend a college fair.
- Visit S.T.A.R.'s college office as often as possible.

October

- Be sure you have a Social Security number, if you don't, be sure to get one.
- Register and take the PSAT/NMSQT. This test also serves as the only National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test for students who may qualify to be National Merit Scholars, Finalists, or Semifinalists.

November

- Work to get the best grades you can.

December

- If you haven't already been doing volunteer work, get involved in a community service activity.
- Buy a standardized test prep book and study from it every night, increase study times on weekends.
- Look for scholarships/ internships.

January

- Assess your performance on the PSAT.
- Begin to seriously consider college choices. Go on the internet, read college guides and conduct a reflective self appraisal.

February

- Begin to inquire about summer academic programs or internships.
- Check with local community centers/ politicians and other professional offices about the possibility of paid or volunteer work available.

March - April

- Register for the S.A.T., S.A.T. II, ACT, as necessary.
- Plan to visit colleges during your spring break.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to discuss college choices.

May – June

- Take the S.A.T.

July - August

- Write to colleges for applications as well as information on need based and merit based financial aid for entering freshman.
- Write a rough draft of your personal statement essay.
- Visit college campuses.

Senior Year Calendar

September

- Register to re take the S.A.T., S.A.T. II, ACT, as necessary.
- Wrap up your campus visits.
- Keep your grades up.

- Ask teachers to write you a college/scholarship recommendation. Note: Only ask a teacher who truly knows you and give them ample time to write the recommendation before it is due.
- Meet with your college advisor.
- Narrow your college list to 8 – 10 schools.

October

- Be aware of all deadlines.
- Photocopy all the application forms and use the duplicate as a worksheet.
- Some private universities may require you to register for CSS/Financial Aid Profile at this time.
- Take the S.A.T. or ACT exam.

November

- Be sure your transcript has been sent to your colleges of choice.
- Complete all applications by Thanksgiving. Make copies of everything.
- Obtain financial aid application forms (Federal Student Aid, FAFSA). Read them carefully to determine what information is required and when the applications are due.

December

- Meet with the college advisor to verify that all is in order and out to colleges.
- Parents: Save your end year payroll stub if it shows your earnings for the year. You may need it for financial aid eligibility.

January

- Submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) immediately after January 1st.
- Parents: It is helpful to get income tax returns prepared early. Schools may request them to prove financial aid eligibility.

February

- Have your mid – year grades sent to the colleges, if required.
- Send in all your financial aid forms.

March

- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR), from the federal government. Respond immediately if any changes or corrections are necessary.

April

- Continue to look for scholarships.
- Make your final decision and send in a deposit by the deadline; before May 1st to secure your seat.
- Watch for important deadlines at your chosen college (housing, financial aid, etc).

May

- Notify guidance counselor of your final college decision (transcripts will be sent verifying your graduation).

June

- Congratulations on a fine job of completing the application process!

Student Self Assessment

To choose a college you have to know something about your interests and abilities, dreams and goals, and reasons for attending college.

Interest and Talent Inventory

Answer the following honestly.

1. What subjects in school do you like the best? List them along with the talents or aptitudes used in these courses.
2. List three achievements in your life of which you are most proud.
3. What are your hobbies or interests outside/inside school?

Next, fill in the charts as they apply to you.

List all of the activities in which you participated in during high school.

Activity	9 th grade	10 th grade	11 th grade	12 th grade	Accomplishments

Leadership positions: List all elected or appointed positions held in school, the community or at work.

Activity	9	10	11	12	Accomplishments

Community Activity: List community activities in which you have participated for the betterment of your community. For example, church groups, volunteer groups, clubs sponsored outside of the school, etc.

Community Activity	9	10	11	12	Accomplishments

Work Experience, Recognition and Awards: List any job experiences, honors, or recognitions that you have received. Work experience may be paid or volunteer.

Job, recognition, award	9	10	11	12	Number of hours spent

Factors To Consider In Your College Search

Location

Region of country

Specific states

Certain cities

Campus Setting

Major cities

Small cities

Suburban setting

Rural setting

School Size

Small (100 – 1000) student

Medium (2000 – 5000)

Large (5000 – 10,000)

Very Large (10,000 +)

Cost

How much can you afford? What is the cost to attend the school?

Expensive – Private / independent colleges

Less expensive – publicly funded state college

Least expensive – State or City supported public colleges in the state in which you reside

Home or Away

Commuting – live at home

Residential – live on campus in dorm or off campus housing

Campus Diversity

Diverse – many different types of students from many different regions

High percentage of students from similar backgrounds as yourself

Single Sex / Co- Ed

Men's college

Women's college

Co - Ed

Religious Affiliation

Sponsored by a particular religious group or denomination

No religious sponsorship

Student Activities – Campus Life

Student Government

Publications

Radio / TV station

Honor societies

Religious organization

Minority student organizations

Fraternities/ Sororities

Foreign student organizations

Athletics

Intercollegiate sports – NCAA Divisions

Intramural sports – open to all interested

Special Programs

Accelerated study

Double major

Dual Degrees

ROTC

Study Abroad

5 year combined degrees

Internships

Pass / Fail option

Semester Away

Student Faculty Ratio

Low – less than 15 students to 1 faculty member

Medium – 15 – 20 to 1

High – greater than 20 to 1

Selectivity – Academics

Least selective – 70 – 100% accepted S.A.T. scores not applicable or 600 – 1050

Less selective – 66 – 94% accepted S.A.T. scores 1050 – 1200

Selective – 59 – 73% accepted S.A.T. scores 1350 – 1500

More selective 53 – 83% accepted S.A.T. scores 1500 – 1800

Most selective 24 – 42 % accepted S.A.T. scores 1800 – 2400

Majors

Pre professional

Engineering

Education

Criminology/ Criminal law

Business

Creative Arts

Etc...

Write a Great College Admissions Essay By: Mike Pugh

Don't let the college admissions essay intimidate you. Remember, it's the part of your application that is fully under your control. Make it work to your advantage!

Don't recycle essays. Nothing will land your essay in the circular file faster than an obviously recycled or "near match" essay.

Be yourself. Choose a topic that is meaningful to you. Write in your own words. Write what you feel, not what you think the admissions committee wants to hear. The essay is the candidate's opportunity to explain to us who they are and why they are unique.

Don't overextend. Don't take on too big of a topic, and don't adopt a preachy tone. College admission officers don't want to be lectured on rainforest destruction. Instead, tell them how you became interested in environmentalism.

Be creative. Try to come up with something different. Remember that the people reviewing your essay have read hundreds -- if not thousands -- of essays. Don't give them one more "The Teacher Who Influenced Me Most" or "Drinking and Driving is Bad" essay to wade through.

Captivate your audience. Your essay needs to be engaging and memorable. Try to draw the reader in with a quick, enticing introduction. You want to catch their interest and give them a reason to finish your essay.

Accentuate the positive. If you're writing about a traumatic experience, describe the negatives but don't dwell on them. Rather, explore how the experience changed you and what you took away from it.

Leave time for drafting. Write a first draft. Let it sit for a few days. Then review it carefully and look for weak or dull spots, as well as spelling and grammatical errors. Never let your first draft be your final draft.

Revise, rewrite, reword. Revision is the key to all good writing including college application essays. Hammer your draft into shape through various rewrites. Read each draft aloud. Your ears can pick up problems that your eyes may miss.

Ask for input. Teachers, counselors, friends, parents, siblings - ask people you respect for some candid feedback. "What do you think I'm trying to say?" "Does it sound confusing?" "Is it boring?" "Do I come across well?"

Pursue perfection. No essay needs to be error-free more than this one. Have your English teacher look it over. Quadruple-check the spelling. Type your essay carefully. Don't let careless mistakes get between you and the school of your dreams.

College Visits

The best way for a student to form their own perspective regarding the academics, social life and living environment of a college/university is to visit the institution. Take advantage of being on the college campus and discover as much as you can on your visit.

Things to do while you're on a campus visit

Take a tour of campus—see a residence hall room, the cafeteria, classrooms, the union or activity center, the field house/gym/athletic fields.

Talk to an admission counselor, a financial aid counselor, students, teachers/professors (especially in the department(s) of interest to you), and coaches (of sports you think you're interested in playing).

Attend classes.

Pick up a copy of the student newspaper.

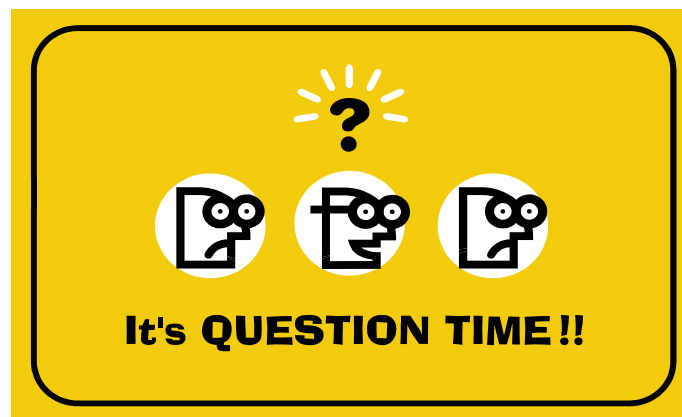
Notice what students are doing, what they are wearing, etc...

Ask for a list of clubs and organizations.

Questions to ask when visiting a college campus

1. On average, how large are classes?
2. How helpful is the faculty? Do they make themselves available to provide extra help? Are they instructors or are they graduate students?
3. Are tutors available? If so, are the sessions at my expense?

4. What are the computer resources? e.g. Number of terminals, hours of availability, etc. May I have a computer in my dorm?
5. Are internships/co-ops available? Can I receive credit for them?
6. What kinds of work study (jobs on campus) are available?
7. Are there study-abroad programs? If so, where?
8. Does the college sponsor an overnight program? (A current student serves as a host/hostess for a prospective student, giving him/her the opportunity to experience the dorms, dining hall, classrooms and social life of the college.)
9. Is housing guaranteed for all four (two) years?
10. What kind of public transportation is there?
11. Are most room's doubles, triples? Are singles available?
12. What is the process of selecting a room after freshman year?
13. How is the food?
14. What percentage of the students are commuter/resident?
15. Is this a "suitcase" college? (Do students pack up and leave on weekends?)
16. What is the policy for students possessing cars?
17. How do I pick and register for courses?



Standardized Tests

Check the information from schools that you are interested in to see which tests they may require. Registration forms and lists of test dates are available in the guidance office as well as fee waivers.

PSAT/NMSQT – the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test is given in October as a practice to familiarize sophomores and juniors with the S.A.T. I. Results are reported in detail, so strengths and weaknesses can be easily assessed.

S.A.T. I – The Scholastic Assessment Test is a standardized, multiple choice test used by most colleges and universities. The S.A.T. is a measure of critical thinking skills you'll need for academic success in college. The S.A.T. assesses how well you analyze and solve problems. S.A.T. scores can be used to determine scholarship eligibility. The S.A.T. includes a math and critical reading sections as well as a writing section. The S.A.T. should be taken more than once. For example, take the test twice in the spring of the junior year, and once in the beginning of senior year.

S.A.T II Subject Test – Each test is a one hour test measuring competence in a specific subject. You can not schedule the S.A.T. II and the S.A.T. I on the same test day.

ACT – The American College Testing Program Assessment tests four areas: English, math, reading, and science. The tests are designed to assess educational development and readiness to handle college – level work.

The Scholarship Corner

Steps for getting a scholarship:

Start Early

- Always remember that you will be applying for scholarships about a year before you will actually receive the aid.
- Get good grades-they will only help you and put you above the next applicant.

Prepare Yourself

- Often scholarships are awarded to students who are involved in activities both in school and out of school. Well-rounded students have the best chance of receiving scholarships.

Do Research

- Figure out what makes you a special individual. This may include such things as academics, volunteer work, athletics or your family background.
- Consider unique circumstances or conditions that might make you eligible for aid such as being a foster child, having asthma, or having a disability.
- Scholarship opportunities can be found in many places including college catalogs financial aid offices, libraries, local civic organizations, your (or your parents') employer, local businesses, your high school guidance office, and the Internet.

Apply

- Many organizations require information such as a completed application, an essay, recommendations, and/or a resume from each applicant. Make sure you have given yourself plenty of time to gather all of the required information.
- Most scholarships will have deadlines for applying. You may want to keep a calendar with all of the deadlines listed so that you do not let any expire.
- Before you send in your completed application, make sure to double-check the spelling and grammar. Nothing looks worse on a scholarship application than a common spelling error.
- Remember that the application process takes time, and it could be months before you are notified of any awards. Be aware that some organizations will not send any follow-up correspondence if you do not receive the award.
- Always put your best effort into each application. Be neat and organized.

Internship Tips

- ◆ Plan Ahead! Many internships repeat year after year, so if you see one this year that had passed, keep it for future reference.
- ◆ Pay as little as possible! Some internships require payment; if this is the case, seek out financial aid resources.
- ◆ Read the qualifications and expectations carefully.
- ◆ Watch out for deadlines.
- ◆ If there is a check sheet provided, use it!
- ◆ Letters of recommendation – Make sure you ask a teacher who knows you very well. Also, give that person two weeks to write the recommendation, which means you have to plan ahead very carefully not to miss a deadline.
- ◆ Make every effort to proofread your essay, or better yet, have someone else read it over as well.
- ◆ Provide any self-addressed, stamped envelopes, postcards, etc... that are requested. Omitting these items may delay or void your application and indicates a lack of attention to detail.
- ◆ Make copies of everything you send out.
- ◆ Your entire application must be typed, neat, error free and professional looking.



Top Ten Things Colleges Look for in a High-School Student

1. A high school curriculum that challenges the student.

Academically successful students should try to include as many Brooklyn College courses as possible, so keep those grades, attendance and good conduct up.

2. Grades that represent strong effort and an upward trend.

Grades should show an upward trend over the years. However, slightly lower grades in a rigorous program are preferred to all A's in less challenging coursework.

3. Solid scores on standardized tests (SAT, ACT).

These should be consistent with high school performance.

4. Passionate involvement in a few activities, demonstrating leadership and initiative.

Depth, not breadth, of experience is most important.

5. Community service showing evidence of being a "contributor."

Activities should demonstrate concern for other people and a global view.

6. Work or out-of-school experiences (including summer activities) that illustrate responsibility, dedication, and development of areas of interest.

A job or other meaningful use of free time can demonstrate maturity.

7. A well-written essay that provides insight into the student's unique personality, values, and goals.

The application essay should be thoughtful and highly personal. It should demonstrate careful and well-constructed writing.

8. Letters of recommendation from teachers, and guidance counselors that give evidence of integrity, special skill, and positive character traits.

Students should request recommendations from teachers who respect their work in an academic discipline.

9. Supplementary recommendations by adults who have had significant direct contact with the student.

Letters from coaches or supervisors in long-term work or volunteer activities are valuable; however, recommendations from casual acquaintances or family friends, even if they're well known, are rarely given much weight.

10. Anything special that makes the student stand out from the rest of the applicants!

Include honors, awards, evidence of unusual talent or experience, or anything else that makes the student unique. Overall, colleges are seeking students who will be active contributing members of the student body.

Getting Hold Of The Application

The best way to attain an application is to pick one up when you visit the college. Head over to the Admissions Office or Student Visitor Center to pick one up. If you have not visited the school as of yet, you can do one of two things. Either call the Admissions Office and provide them with your address or you can go on-line and request an application through the school's web site.

Special Admissions Programs

Early Admissions – Rules and deadlines concerning early admission differ from college to college. But in general, it is a process that enables a student to apply to a college before the regular application deadline and receive early notification of acceptance or rejection. You should seek the advice of our college advisor if you are considering early admission.

Early Decision – Under the early decision process, you apply to one college only. If selected, you must accept the offer. You can not accept a subsequent offer from another college.

Early Action – Under the early action process, you apply to only one school before the regular application deadline. You may apply to other schools by the regular application deadline.

Please Note: There are several variations to early decision/action plans at different colleges. Read the literature of each college carefully!

Filling Out the C.U.N.Y. Application

1. Print all answers in capital letters.
2. Read every item on the application carefully. Incomplete applications may be delayed indefinitely.
3. Record your social security number in the appropriate place.
4. Choices of college and curriculum – You may select up to six choices of colleges and programs.
5. Once all of the application is filled out, bring it, along with the application fee, and stamped envelope to the college office. S.T.A.R. Early College High School will then send the completed application form, with your official transcript, to the University Application Processing Center.
6. The process that determines which schools will accept you are based on the order you list the schools.
7. Keep a copy of the application for your records.

Filling Out the S.U.N.Y. Application

1. Print all answers in capital letters.
2. Read every item on the application carefully. Incomplete applications may be delayed indefinitely.
3. Record your social security number in the appropriate place.
4. Choices of college and curriculum – You may choose up to six (6) S.U.N.Y. schools on the S.U.U.Y common application. If you need to apply to more schools, you must

attain an application from each school. Your application fee of \$40.00 for each school must be included, along with your stamped envelope.

5. Keep a copy of the application for your records.

Filling Out Private School Applications

1. Read the application carefully before completing. Each application will be different and will request you to submit different material.

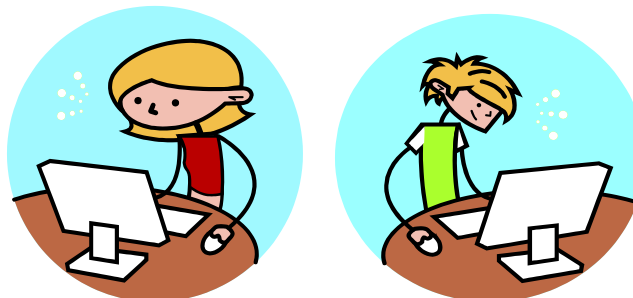
2. Bring the completed application forms, financial aid forms and fees to the college office, along with stamps to mail the completed application.

3. Keep a copy of the application for your records.

Applying On- Line

To apply on –line, go to the college’s web site. Indicate which programs you are interested in, and any other pertinent information that is required in its specific field.

You also, at this point, must pay the application fee. Keep a copy for your records and bring the print out to your college advisor.



Financial Assistance

All colleges and universities expect you and your parents to contribute as much as you can for the cost of your education. Colleges provide financial aid to help bridge the gap between what you can afford and what the college costs.

Types Of Financial Assistance

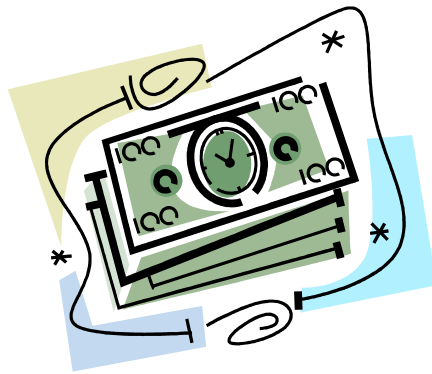
Grants and Scholarships – These do not have to be paid back, in other words they are gifts. They can be based on need, or, are awarded for academic excellence or special achievement or ability.

Loans- Loans must be repaid, but most often, not until the student graduates. Interest rates usually apply and there is a payback period of four to ten years.

Work – Study- This is a part time job on campus, usually to work in a school office, dining hall, library, etc...

Sources Of Funding For Financial Assistance

Colleges and Universities Themselves
Federal Government
State Government
Private Sources



The cost of college tuition and fees continue to rise from one year to the next. While this may be true, it should in no way limit the type of school you should apply to or consider attending. Financial aid may be available.

In order to navigate the process of applying for financial aid, you need to know the following terms:

Financial Aid- This is the funding a student a student receives from a college or university to enable him/her to meet the cost of attendance.

Financial Need- This refers to the cost of college attendance minus family contribution.

Family Contribution – This refers to parental contributions plus student contribution.

The Real Cost Of College

1. Direct Costs – Tuition, Fees, Books, and Supplies

Tuition- The amount a college requires from you for your child to attend class

Fees – Charges made by the college for your lab courses, student activities, medical care, etc...

Books and Supplies – Textbooks, notebooks, pens, calculators, etc...

2. Indirect Costs – Room, Board, Transportation and Travel, Miscellaneous

Room - Differs according to whether you live in a dorm or off – campus.

Board – Refers to meals or college food plan you choose for the year.

Transportation and Travel – This refers to the cost of commuting back and forth or the cost of coming home on vacations.

Miscellaneous – Phone bills, entertainment, laundry, clothing, etc...

Where The Money Comes From

1. Past Income (Savings)

Savings accounts

Certificates of deposits

Money market accounts/funds

Mutual funds

Bonds or stocks

U.S. Treasury securities (Treasury bills, notes, or bonds)

2. Present Income – Your wages, interest and dividends on investments. This includes scholarship money.

3. Future Earnings – This refers to loans.

The Three Types Of Financial Aid

1. Grants and Scholarships – Gift aid that does not have to be repaid

Most colleges offer some gift aid from their own resources. This can be merit based, need based or both. Merit based is special achievement/academics and need based is family income.

State Grant – In New York this is called Tuition Assistance Program. This program is only available if you attend a New York school. In order to apply, one must fill out a FAFSA form.

Federal Pell Grant – The minimum award is \$400 and the maximum is \$4,000. The amount received depends on cost of the school, eligibility based on need, and full/part time status of enrollment.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) – This grant is given to the neediest of students in addition to the Federal Pell Grant. The minimum is \$200 and the maximum is \$4,000.

2. Loans Programs- All loans must be repaid

Federal Perkins Loans – This loan is made to a student who qualifies for a Pell Grant.

Subsidized Federal Stafford Loan – This loan is made by a bank, savings and loan, or credit union or another lender. The colleges' financial aid office determines how much one can borrow. Each year, on a whole, the amount of money the student can borrow will increase.

Unsubsidized Federal Stafford Loan – Eligibility is not based on need. Open to all students. The four year cap for this loan is set to around \$20,000.

Federal PLUS Loan – Also, a non need based loan for parents of undergraduate students. There is no annual limit; parents can borrow up to the total cost of the college budget, minus any financial aid the student receives. This loan, unlike the others, obligates the parents.

3. Work Study – Self-help program.

Financial Aid Forms

A student cannot receive any type of financial aid without applying for it. To apply, the student uses the information on his/her own financial status, as well as that of the parents'.

1. Profile Registration – This form may be required for certain private colleges. It is a one page financial aid form that you must pay a small fee for.

2. FAFSA- Free Application For Federal Student Aid – Every student must fill this form out to establish eligibility for financial aid; including grants, loans, and work study. First you and your legal guardian must obtain a PIN by going to www.pin.ed.gov. Next, go to

www.fafsa.ed.gov to complete the form. Paper versions of the form are available in the college office; however, most schools want the form to be completed on the Internet.

Once the form is mailed in or submitted via internet, after January 1st, you will receive a Student Aid Report (SAR), either by mail or e-mail if you provided your e-mail address, which contains all of your FAFSA information. You must read over your SAR to make sure all of the information is correct. You must list the schools you are applying to on your FAFSA for them to receive a copy of the SAR in order to determine financial aid.

To fill out a FAFSA you will need:

Social Security Number

Driver's license (if any)

Most recent W-2 forms and other records of money earned

Most recent Federal Income Tax Return – IRS Form 1040, 1040A, 1040EZ, 1040Telefile

Most recent year's untaxed income records – Social security, Temporary assistance to needy families, welfare

Bank statements

Business and investment mortgage information, stocks, bonds, and other investment records

Alien registration card (if not a U.S. citizen)



3. TAP – Tuition Assistance Program – New York State – If a student is planning on applying to any school in New York State, he/she must file the free form for a NY State Tuition Assistance Grant. This is money that is not paid back. You are automatically sent this form if and only if you indicate that you will be applying to a NY state school on your FAFSA.

4. SEEK/EOP/HEOP Programs – Federally funded programs for students who meet both financial and academic guidelines. SEEK is for C.U.N.Y.’s four year colleges and College Discovery is for C.U.N.Y.’s two year colleges. EOP is S.U.N.Y.’s support program and HEOP is for private colleges. This free program usually provides counseling, remedial instruction, tutorial services and financial payment for book expenses. In order to be eligible, all you have to do is check off EOP/CD/SEEK/HEOP on the college application. If you do not check the box, you will not be considered and lose out on this great opportunity.



How To Research Careers

Step 1: Know Yourself

Interests, abilities, values, motives, experiences

Step 2: Produce Career Ideas

Brainstorm, browse, read

Step 3: Prioritize and Find Out More

Observe and use the Internet

Step 4: Target Interests

Learn level of education needed for career, roles within career, job outlook, settings of career (indoor, outdoor, etc...), qualifications, experience needed, and future goals

Step 5: Experience

Intern, volunteer, shadow an adult in your career of choice for a day



List Of Useful Web Sites

www.blackexcel.com

www.bls.gov/oco/

www.campustours.com

www.campuscareercenter.com

www.chci.org

www.collegeboard.org

www.collegelink.com

www.collegeispossible.org

www.ed.gov/thinkcollege.com

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.fastweb.com

www.finaid.org

www.guideforparents.com

www.homeworknyc.org

www.latino.sscnet.edu

<http://mapping-your-future.org/planning>

www.myfuture.com

www.nafeo.org

www.ncaa.org

www.network4good.org

www.nycareerzone.org/

www.petersons.com

www.uncf.org

www.usnews.com/usnews/home.html

www.usstudentathlets.com

www.wiredscholar.com

Use the rest of this page for notes

