



Bruce High School Senior Information Guide



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How to Get Organized for Your Future

Important documents are frequently misplaced or forgotten because a student has not created an organized plan for keeping records.

Necessary Components for Getting Organized

- Folders to organize your files
- A safe and secure location in your home for all records to be kept
- A yearly calendar or pocket organizer for recording important dates

Helpful Hints for Good Organization

- Make copies of everything you fill out
- Record all important dates and deadlines in your planner
- Request parent/guardian involvement

You Will Need to Create “Basic Files” for the Following

- Your Social Security number
- Your high school transcript
- Your personal resume
- ACT, SAT, PSAT, or any applicable test scores
- Letters of recommendation from teachers, counselors, employers, etc...
- Immunization records
- Income tax records
- Medical records
- Insurance records
- Your Educational/Career Plan

Create These Additional Files as the Year Progresses:

For each post-secondary institution or college to which you have applied or visited, create a file for:

- Your admission status
- Scholarship information
- Housing information
- Meal plans
- Registration information and dates
- Campus visits
- FAFSA application (Available online October 1st)
- Each specific scholarship for which you have applied
- Summer employment or internship possibilities
- Student or parent loan documents

Education/Career Planning Calendar for Seniors

September

- Check out the School Counseling tab under “Schools” on the Bruce website
- Visit post-secondary campuses
- Finalize list of post-secondary options for which applications will be sent
- Obtain post-secondary application forms
- Write all post-secondary application deadlines on a calendar
- Begin or continue to complete applications for admission, housing, and/or financial aid
- Actively search for scholarships
- Register for any necessary tests (ACT, SAT)
- Check that academic program meets high school graduation and post-secondary entrance requirements
- Attend post-secondary information nights or fairs; prepare specific questions for post-secondary schools
- Encourage parents to attend post-secondary information sessions

October

- **Apply now if you know where you want to go!**
- **Start Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) on the [FAFSA website](#)**
- Visit post-secondary campuses
- Update your resume highlighting your academic, extracurricular work, and volunteer activities to give to people writing recommendations

- Spend time choosing recommendation writers
- Hand out forms to people chosen to write recommendations
- Take SAT if necessary
- Continue working on applications
- Start searching for possible scholarships, especially at your post-secondary school (local scholarships will be available in the Spring)
- Continue attending post-secondary and career information sessions

November

- An application is considered “early” if it is received by November 1st
- Visit post-secondary campuses
- Take SAT if necessary
- Continue applying and searching for scholarships
- Continue attending post-secondary and career information sessions

December

- Visit post-secondary campuses
- Complete post-secondary applications
- Continue applying for scholarships
- Register for future admissions tests, if necessary
- Take SAT if necessary

January

- Make final visits to post-secondary campuses
- Have all post-secondary applications completed
- Take SAT if necessary
- Check that all recommendations, transcripts, and test scores have been sent to post-secondary schools of choice
- Study for semester tests. GPA during your senior year is very important
- Send mid-year grades to post-secondary schools, if needed

February - - April

- Complete [FAFSA](#) form if not already done
- Complete any late deadline application forms
- Take ACT (state required)
- Evaluate offers of admission
- Consider visiting post-secondary campuses before making final decision
- Review your SAR (Student Aid Report) for accuracy
- Begin completing local scholarships if available

May

- Make final decision, if not made earlier
- Take AP tests, if appropriate
- Thank all those who have helped in the admissions process
- Celebrate your success!!!!

June

- Be sure to finalize post-secondary information with Lori Villiard so final transcripts and scholarship money can be sent.

Post Secondary Options

Most careers require at least some education or training beyond high school. One career may require four years of college while another may require a six-month program at a technical school. In most cases, your career goal will determine which of the following options is the most appropriate:

- Four-Year Colleges
- Two-Year Colleges
- Career and Technical Colleges
- Military
- Apprenticeships
- Employment

Four-Year Colleges/Universities

A four-year college education, or bachelor's degree, is necessary for approximately 20% of today's careers. A bachelor's degree can open doors, provide status, and prepare students for financially rewarding careers. All colleges and universities hope to attract bright, well-prepared students. Colleges and universities vary greatly in their majors offered, admission policies, and costs.

Four-year colleges and universities want students to have both a broad-based education, and education in a specific subject area or major. In order to ensure that students receive a well-rounded education, most four-year colleges and universities require that students take 25 to 50% of their classes in general education courses like English, math, science, and history. Since many of the general education courses are taken during freshman year, "undecided" students can use their first year of college to fulfill general education requirements and to decide on a major.

Entrance requirements vary greatly. Colleges and universities that have an open admission policy will accept most high school graduates who apply. At the other end of the spectrum are colleges and universities that are highly selective. In order to be accepted at a highly selective college or university, a student must usually have high ACT/SAT scores and a high GPA. Regardless of the entrance requirements, all colleges and universities want applicants who have followed a college prep program in high school. This generally includes four years of English, three years of math (including Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II), three years of science, three years of social studies, two years of the same world/foreign language, and one year of fine arts. If a student has not taken all of these courses, it does not mean that he/she cannot go to a four-year college or university. Consult with the college admissions counselor for more information.

The student who has not taken several of the recommended college preparatory courses may want to start at a two-year college, and then transfer to a four-year college after a year or two. Students may also start off at a four-year college or university's branch campus where the admission requirements are less competitive, classes are smaller, and where there is less academic pressure. Students can attend the branch campus for one or two years, then, if they have high enough grades, transfer to the college's or university's main campus. Degrees from a four-year college include a B.A.—Bachelor of Arts or a B.S.—Bachelor of Science. After a Bachelor's degree, some advanced degrees include: M.A.—Master of Arts, M.S.—Master of Science, Ed.D.—Doctor of Education, Ph.D.—Doctor of Philosophy, J.D.—Juris Doctor (lawyer), and M.D.—Medical Doctor.

Two-Year Colleges

Students may start their education at a two-year college, and then transfer to a four-year college to earn a bachelor's degree. Check out the transferability of credits from one school to the next before transferring. At UW campuses the "Guaranteed Transfer Program" allows a student to transfer to a U.W. four-year post secondary school. Schedule a campus visit to learn more about their programs and facilities.

More college info:

[Apply to UW System Colleges](#)

[UW Help - Information about all WI college campuses](#)

[UW system website](#)

[Minnesota State Colleges](#)

[University of MN](#)

Career and Technical Colleges

Technical colleges provide affordable, career-oriented programs, which enable students to begin their careers after only one or two (or less) years of college. Typically, class sizes are kept small and instructors have worked, or are working, in a related career field. Career and technical colleges offer students short-term training in a wide variety of career fields. Career and technical colleges may be publicly or privately owned, and the programs they offer vary greatly. Some career and technical college programs last only a few weeks, while others take up to two years to complete. These programs are designed to prepare students for specific careers. Students spend most of their class time in job-related settings where they receive hands-on training from experienced instructors.

More info at www.witechcolleges.com.

Reciprocity

Residents of Wisconsin may qualify for reduced rates at Minnesota and other state colleges by complying with the procedures of the reciprocal agreement. Reciprocity application forms are available in April online at

<http://www.heab.state.wi.us/programs.html#reciprocity>. **Due to changes in the law, keep current by checking the site.**

Military

The military trains young men and women so that they can protect the interests of our country. In order to do this, the military offers qualified high school graduates a good salary and free job training. The military also provides discipline and structure, as

well as opportunities for career advancement and travel. The United States military is the nation's single largest employer. It offers training and employment in over 2,000 job specialties, 75,000 of which have civilian counterparts. There are four major branches of the military: the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. Opportunities for students also exist in the Coast Guard, the National Guard and the Reserves. College students who take ROTC will enter the military as officers, while academically gifted students will find excellent educational opportunities at the four military academies.

College Representative and Military Recruiter Visits

Representatives from colleges and military branches visit the high school each year. Recruiters will be available during lunch. Ask Mrs. Tremblay to help schedule other appointments as necessary.

Apprenticeship

Students who prefer a hands-on approach to learning may want to consider an apprenticeship program. Apprentices learn a skilled trade through a combination of classroom instruction and on-the-job training. Apprenticeship programs are considered by many to be the best way to receive training in the skilled trades.

Apprenticeships are agreements in which employers pay individuals while they are learning their trade or profession. These programs demand hard work and dedication. Contact your career counselor for more information.

Employment

Employment is an appropriate option for some high school graduates. Turn a job into a career. High school graduates with no vocational training will probably find that they have limited career options. In many cases they will find that they are, in reality, not entering a career field as much as they are "getting a job". In most cases they will also find that they will not be making much more than minimum wage, and opportunities for advancement will be very limited. On the other hand, business and industry are always anxious to find employees who are hard-working, polite, punctual, well-groomed, willing to learn, and able to get along well with others. Of course, if a student has a particular talent or skill in sales, art, computer, etc., he/she can be very valuable to an employer. Contact your career counselor for more information.

Job Shadowing

It's highly recommended that you complete one or more job shadowing experiences in your high school years.

Job shadowing is often an important step a student takes in defining a career goal. Once a student has read what he/she can about an occupation, job shadowing allows the student to see the occupation in action and to ask employees important questions. This activity assists the student in deciding to either explore the career further or search for an alternative.

Students may explore a variety of positions within the community by observing employees perform their duties. This is an actual on-the-job experience where a student is paired with a person who is in a career in which the student has shown interest.

General Admission Standards For College

Colleges will use some, if not all, of the information listed below when determining whether or not to accept an applicant. Individual colleges, however, differ in how they evaluate this information. For example, one college may place a great deal of importance on test scores, while another college may not.

- Grade Point Average (GPA)
- Class Rank
- Strength of subjects
- ACT and/or SAT scores
- Recommendations
- Activities/awards
- Personal essays
- Interviews
- Volunteer and/or community service

Grade Point Average (GPA) and Class Rank

Even though individual colleges use their own criteria when evaluating prospective students, virtually all colleges consider a student's GPA. Since college applications are generally completed during the fall of the senior year, the GPA at the end of the junior year is very important. Final ranks for honors and scholarships are determined after the 11 trimester.

Admission standards to Wisconsin four-year universities include the following core curriculum:

- 4 units of English
- 3 units of mathematics, including Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II
- 3 units of laboratory science
- 3 units of social studies
- Foreign Language is a requirement for UW-Madison

College Entrance Exams

There are two major college exams, the ACT (American College Test) and SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test). Nationally, most schools will accept scores from either the ACT or SAT I.

The University of Wisconsin System recommends the ACT, which is given, statewide, during Junior year. Students receive scores in English, reading, math, and science reasoning, as well as a composite score.

SAT I is a college entrance examination, generally taken during the junior and/or senior year. It is a three-hour test, primarily multiple choice, that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning abilities. Students planning to attend a college that prefers the SAT I must also determine if any SAT II subject tests are required. SAT II consists of subject tests, which measure the student's ability to apply knowledge. Subject Tests are one-hour, primarily a multiple-choice test in specific subjects.

Testing Info

www.act.org (for ACT test)

www.collegeboard.org (for SAT test)

Writing an Essay

DO start early. Leave plenty of time to revise, record and rewrite. You can improve on your presentation.

DO read the directions carefully. You will want to answer the question as directly as possible, and you'll want to follow word limits exactly. Express yourself as briefly and as clearly as you can.

DO tell the truth about yourself. The admission committee is anonymous to you; you are completely unknown to it.

DO focus on an aspect of yourself that will show your best side. You might have overcome some adversity, worked through a difficult project, or profited from a specific incident. A narrow focus is more interesting than broad-based generalizations.

DO feel comfortable expressing anxieties. Everybody has them, and it's good to know that an applicant can see them and face them.

DO tie yourself to the college and/or program. Be specific about what this particular school/program can do for you. Your essay can have different slants for different situations.

DO speak positively. Negatives tend to turn people off.

DO write about your greatest asset and achievements. You should be proud of them.

DON'T repeat information given elsewhere on your application. The committee has already seen it and it looks as though you have nothing better to say.

DON'T write on general, impersonal topics - - like the nuclear arms race or the importance of good management in business. They want to know about you.

DON'T use the personal statement to excuse your shortcomings. It gives them additional attention.

DON'T use clichés.

DON'T go to extremes: too "witty", too "opinionated", or too "intellectual".

College Athletics

If you are planning to participate in Division I or II college athletics the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse must certify you. To be certified by the Clearinghouse, you must:

- Graduate from high school
- Earn a grade point average of at least 2.0
- Earn a sum score of at least 68 on the ACT or a combined score of at least 820 on the SAT I

To learn more about NCAA eligibility and to get an application, visit the web site at www.ncaaclearinghouse.net. **Students planning on playing Division I or II college sports must register www.ncaa.org.**

Transcripts

If you need transcripts sent, please email Lori Villiard. Include the address of the school you would like them sent to.

Selecting a College - Here are some things for you to consider when selecting your college:

Location

- Distance from home

Size

- Enrollment
- Physical size of campus

Environment

- Type of school (2yr., 4 yr.)
- School setting (urban, rural)

Academics

- Location & size of nearest city
- Co-ed, male, female
- Religious affiliation

Admission Requirements

- Deadline
- Tests required
- Average test scores, GPA, rank

- Special requirements
- Your major offered
- Special requirements
- Accreditation
- Student-faculty ratio
- Typical class size

College Expenses

- Tuition, room & board
- Estimated total budget
- Application fee, deposits

Financial Aid

- Deadline
- Required forms
- Percent receiving aid

- Scholarships

Housing

- Residence Hall Requirement
- Availability
- Types and sizes
- Food plans

Facilities

- Academic
- Recreational

Activities

- Clubs
- Organizations
- Athletics, intramural

Campus Visit

Arrange to visit any colleges to which you plan to apply. Consider these factors before and during your visit:

- Make arrangements with the admissions office for your visit
- Meet with the college admissions officer
- Verify admission requirements (tests and high school preparation)
- Discuss your chances for success
- Obtain the college calendar and a catalog
- Determine college costs
- Ask about financial aid opportunities, as well as deadline, forms required, etc
- Ask questions about academic requirements/offering, the average class size and academic fitting
- Attend a class to get an idea of typical size, teaching style, academic atmosphere
- Check the percentage of entering freshmen who graduate in four years
- Ask about the placement record of graduates in the field you are considering or major study
- Identify career planning services for undergraduates
- Tour the campus. Check out the dorms, dining hall, library, bookstore, computer labs and other areas key to your needs
- Talk to students about the general academic environment and the study commitment necessary for success
- Find out what student activities (clubs, organizations, etc.) are available
- Inquire about campus life and social activities
- Investigate transportation options

Financial Aid

Parents and students who would like to get a jump start on planning for the costs of college should log on to www.finaid.org/calculators. This web site can help you estimate how much money college will cost through a financial aid calculator. The calculator will estimate how much money you, or your child, will receive in financial aid and loans. The web site has many other valuable resources such as information on designing a savings plan for post-secondary education.

What Is FAFSA?

[Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#). The federal government uses this form to determine your eligibility for aid, which includes grants, scholarships, work-study and loans.

Students and parents need to create a [Federal Student Aid \(FSA\) ID](#) first, which will require making a username and password. Once applicants have created an FSA ID, they can start the FAFSA, save their progress and log in and out as they wish.

Ten Great Financial Aid Tips

1. Prioritize your efforts, starting with the federal government. Then turn to the private sector for additional assistance.
2. Learn all you can about the college financial aid process. Be sure to meet with your aid administrator. Attend a Financial Aid meeting either at Barron High School or surrounding school.
3. Submit a FAFSA, even if you don't think you qualify for aid. Being rejected for federal aid is sometimes a prerequisite for private awards.
4. Apply for aid as soon as possible after October 1st. The early bird gets the worm—and sometimes the scholarship!
5. Inform financial aid administrators about atypical expenses. Certain allowances may be made to assist you.
6. Take advantage of tuition prepayment discounts. Some colleges offer up to a 10% discount for early payment.
7. Money from grandparents should be paid in your name directly to the school. This avoids gift tax liability.
8. Investigate company-sponsored tuition plans. Many employers will invest in the education of their employees.
9. Apply! You cannot win awards or receive funds for which you do not apply, so pay attention to deadlines.
10. Use scholarship search engines like fastWEB to help you find the private sector assistance you need!

Scholarship Listings

Throughout the year notification of scholarship competitions are received and students are made aware of the scholarships. An active scholarship list is available within the school counseling page on the Bruce School website. Students are encouraged to involve parents in the search for financial aid. Religious groups, fraternal organizations, and employers may also be sources of scholarships. Students are encouraged to inquire into the availability of scholarships at the schools they are considering. The fastWEB search on the Internet contains a database of over 275,000 scholarships. You may set up a fastWEB mailbox to receive information on scholarships that match your personal criteria. (www.fastweb.com).

Top Ten Tips for a Winning Scholarship Application

- Apply only if you are eligible.
- Complete the application in full.
- Follow directions.
- Neatness counts!
- Write an essay that makes a strong impression.
- Watch all deadlines.
- Make sure your application gets where it needs to go.
- Keep a back-up file in case anything goes wrong.
- Give it a final 'once-over'.
- Ask for help if you need it.

Suggestions for Letters of Recommendation

- When requesting a letter of recommendation from a teacher, friend, or employer be sure to:
- Think of an individual who knows you well.
- Make an appointment to ask the individual to write a letter of recommendation for you.
- Plan ahead to meet your timeline and allow **10-14 days** for the completion of the letter.
- At the time of the appointment give the letter writer specific dates and directions for the completed recommendation.
- Be sure the letter writer understands the requirements for the recommendation.
- If appropriate, provide stamped envelopes.
- DO NOT assume the letter will be completed if you leave the request in his/her mailbox or drop it off on a desk; make sure you make personal contact with the individual.
- Write a thank you note to the person who wrote your letter of recommendation.