

HELENA HIGH SCHOOL



POST-SECONDARY PLANNING GUIDE

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BENGALS,

IT STARTS NOW - BE A GRADUATE!

We work hard each day to make sure that every student who graduates from Helena High School is college and career ready! Many students believe that planning for life after high school begins during their junior or senior year, but it doesn't. Your post-secondary planning begins during your freshman year of high school, and this guide has been designed to aid you in that process.

HIGH SCHOOL MATTERS – BE RESPONSIBLE!

It's important for students to know that every high school grade matters. There's no way to get around graduation requirements, so make them a priority. Consider challenging yourself by taking an Advanced Placement or Dual Credit course, and give yourself the opportunity to earn college credit as a high school student. In addition to working hard to graduate, it's important that you work hard to develop skills that will translate into the workplace. Show up every day and be on-time, follow directions, and ask questions.

USE YOUR RESOURCES – BE RESPECTFUL!

You're fortunate to be in a building where all of your teachers, administrators, and counselors will help you begin thinking about life after high school. Don't worry if you're unsure where to start! We'll help you explore career options and make sure that the high school classes you take will be the best ones possible to prepare you.

TAKE THE INITIATIVE – BE INVOLVED!

If you haven't met your counselor yet, come introduce yourself. We're excited and honored to have the opportunity to help you navigate through high school in order to become college and career ready. We wish you the best of luck and look forward to working with you!

SINCERELY,

Mrs. Chrissy Murgel
Ms. Corena Hall
Ms. Nancy Oliveira

Mrs. Ellaina Staldine
Mrs. Ashten Broadhead

Mr. Jason Murgel
Mrs. Jaime Pandis



USE YOUR RESOURCES!

It's never too early to start planning for your post-secondary options, and the good news is you don't have to do it alone! If you have an idea of what you want to do when your time at Helena High School is over, we can guide you through putting together a 4-year plan that will help you reach your goals. If you're unsure about what comes next, we can help you figure that out too. This booklet is a great resource, but it's not your only one. Make an appointment to work with your counselor on the best way to achieve your goals!

Stay Connected!

HHSWebpage: www.hhs.helenaschools.org

Counseling Page: <http://hhs.helenaschools.org/counseling-and-career-guidance/>

Facebook: Helena High School Counseling Department

Remind: text @helenahi to 81010

COUNSELING OFFICE: 406.324.2220

Last Names A-E	Mrs. Ellaina Staldine	406.324.2227
Last Names F-L	Mrs. Ashten Broadhead	406.324.2224
Last Names M-R	Mr. Jason Murgel	406.324.2226
Last Names S-Z	Mrs. Chrissy Murgel	406.324.2223
All Freshmen	Mrs. Jaime Pandis	406.324.2225
Career Counselor	Ms. Nancy Oliveira	
Office Manager	Ms. Corena Hall	406.324.2221

STUDENT CHECKLIST



9th Grade

- ✓ Track your academic progress regularly on Powerschool
- ✓ Meet with your counselor to discuss your post-secondary goals and 4-year plan
- ✓ Join a club
- ✓ Consider trying out for an athletic team
- ✓ Look into volunteering with a community organization
- ✓ Create a spreadsheet to track all of your extracurricular/volunteer activities
- ✓ Use your 4-year plan when registering for your 10th grade classes
- ✓ Volunteer or work over the summer



10th Grade

- ✓ Continue to monitor your academic/graduation progress
- ✓ Continue to keep track of your extracurricular/volunteer activities
- ✓ Use the Montana Career Information System or Career Cruising to take an Interest Inventory and begin exploring careers
- ✓ Think about job shadows to coordinate for your junior year
- ✓ Attend Sophomore Parent Night
- ✓ Consider registering in the spring to take the PSAT the following fall. Talk with your counselor if you're unsure of whether or not to take this test.
- ✓ Use your 4-year plan when registering for your 11th grade classes
- ✓ Volunteer or work over the summer



11th Grade

- ✓ Continue to monitor your academic/graduation progress
- ✓ Continue to keep track of your extracurricular/volunteer activities
- ✓ Schedule a job shadow and begin thinking about an internship you would want to do during your senior year.
- ✓ The PSAT is an optional test that you may want to take in the fall. It's good practice if you're considering taking the SAT, and it's used to determine National Merit Scholarships.
- ✓ Talk with your counselor and put together a plan for taking college entrance exams. Your counselor can go over differences between the ACT and SAT with you. (see pg. 27)
- ✓ The ACT is required for all juniors in Montana in April.
- ✓ Attend a college fair
- ✓ Attend Junior Parent Night
- ✓ Research jobs, colleges, military options, apprenticeships, and other training opportunities.
- ✓ Begin visiting job sites and colleges. 2 college visits per year can be school-related absences.
- ✓ Use your 4-year plan when registering for your 12th grade classes
- ✓ Volunteer or work over the summer
- ✓ If you're interested in playing a sport in college be sure to register with the NCAA/NAIA clearinghouse.



12th Grade

- ✓ Continue to monitor your academic/graduation progress
- ✓ Make sure your list of extracurricular/volunteer activities is up to date and ready to use when filling out college/scholarship applications
- ✓ Attend a college fair in the fall
- ✓ Attend Senior Parent Information Night
- ✓ Meet with your counselor to discuss your post-secondary plans
- ✓ Decide whether or not to re-take the ACT and/or SAT (It needs to be taken by December to be eligible for financial aid)
- ✓ Begin applying for jobs, colleges, apprenticeships, and other training opportunities
- ✓ Participate in College Application Week. Submit one application to a Montana school and have the application fee waived or deferred.
- ✓ Apply for scholarships
- ✓ Attend the Financial Aid FAFSA Workshop
- ✓ Attend the FAFSA Completion Night
- ✓ Be a graduate!

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

23 CREDITS

(For the graduating classes prior to 2019, 21 credits are required for graduation.)

1. Four years of English (4 credits)
2. One year of World Cultures (1 credit)
3. One year of American Government (1 credit)
4. One year of American History (1 credit)
5. Two years of Science (2 credits)
6. Three years of Mathematics (2 credits)
7. One and one-half years of Human Performance (1.5 credits)
8. One-half year of Health (.5 credit)
9. One year of Fine Arts (1 credit)
*Art, Music, Drama, and Photography
10. One year of Career and Technical Education/Practical Arts (1 credit)
*Industrial Arts, Family and Consumer Science, Auto Mechanics, Carpentry, Welding, Drafting, Marketing, and Business Classes
11. Electives (7 credits)

If you are hoping to attend a Montana University System school you should plan on following a rigorous course of study as follows:

4 years of English
4 years of Math
3 years of Science
3 years of Social Studies
3 years of Concentrated Electives

****Many schools outside of Montana also require 2 years of a foreign language.**

HONORS/ADVANCED CURRICULUM

HONORS COURSES

Honors World Cultures
Honors English I, II, III
Honors Math I (Honors Algebra I/Geometry
Emphasis)
Honors Math II (Honors Geometry/Algebra II
Emphasis)
Honors Pre-Calculus

Honors Calculus
Calculus/Linear Algebra/DEs (Carroll College
Class)
Honors Earth Science
Honors Biology II
Honors Chemistry II
Word Clues

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

AP Calculus
AP Stats
AP Biology
AP Art History
AP U.S. History
AP Human Geography
AP American Government
AP English Literature
AP English Language

AP Psychology
AP European History
AP Studio Art

ACCELERATED COURSES

Foreign Languages III
Foreign Languages IV
Physics
Art IV
Science Seminar

TESTING INFORMATION

9th/10th Graders take Aspire
10th Graders take the Science CRT (measured progress)
10th-12th Graders optionally take Advanced Placement Exams & PSAT10
11th Graders optionally take the PSAT and/or SAT I
11th Graders take the ACT and the Smart Balance Assessment
11th-12th Graders optionally take the ACT or SAT I and/or II

DUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES

All dual credit courses count as both high school and college credit. The courses are taught on the Helena High campus. Students are responsible for college registration, cost of tuition, and fees. Students must be at least 16 and/or a junior to qualify. Due to potential changes in staffing and instructor credentials, the availability for dual credit may not be guaranteed.

Helena College Courses:

College Writing
Introduction to Literature
Technical Writing
Pre-Calculus
Elements of Calculus
College Algebra
Statistics
Tech Math
Drafting CAD
Theater 1
Theater 2
Accounting
Welding II, III, or IV
Computer Science 1
Computer Science 2
CAPP 154 MS Word
CAPP 155 MS Excel
Psychology

Carroll College Courses:

Computer Science
Carroll College Calculus

Missoula College Courses

Culinary III
Welding II, III, and IV

Advanced Placement classes are rigorous courses offered on the Helena High campus. Students pay approximately \$88 to take a test in the spring. The test is scaled from 0-5, and students must achieve at least a 3 in order to have the AP course count as college credit. The university determines the type of credit.

AP US History	AP Psychology	AP Art History	AP Statistics
AP Language	AP European History	AP Biology	AP Studio Art
AP Literature	AP Calculus	AP Government	AP Human Geography

MONTANA CAREER INFORMATION SYSTEM

The Montana Career Information System is a great resource for students! If you're unsure what you want to do after high school you can use the MCIS Interest Profiler to match your skills and interests to a wide variety of occupations. If you already have an idea of your future career (or have completed the Interest Profiler) you can use this site to learn more about that occupation. The Montana Career Information System can also be used to map your high school classes in order to prepare you for a specific career, research colleges/universities, find scholarships, and complete a job search.

MCIS is a part of the Montana Department of Labor and Industry's Workforce Services Division, and here's what they have to say about themselves:

“We work in partnership with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, and Employment & Training Administration to develop labor market information about Montana and the United States that businesses, educators, government agencies, researchers, students and others find useful. We are also home to Montana's Career Resources which provides career development tools and information for everyone from elementary school students to Montana seniors. Take some time to check out our website (www.careers.mt.gov).

There's lots of information. It's updated frequently. And, best of all, it's free.”

840 Helena Avenue Helena, MT 59601

Phone: (406) 444-2430 Toll-free: (800) 541-3904

<https://www.mtcis.intocareers.org>

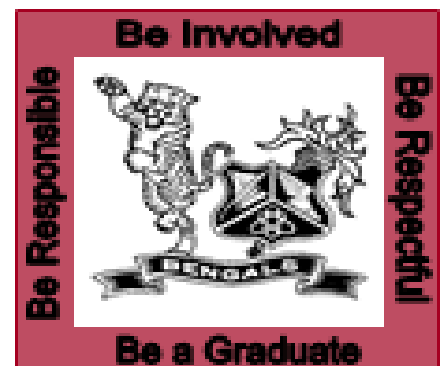
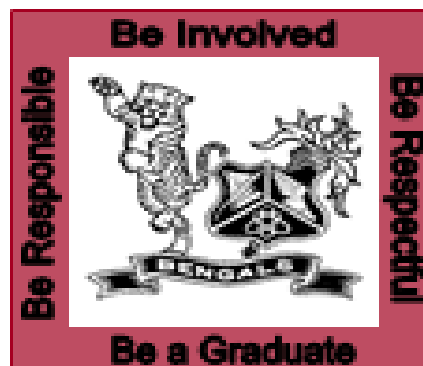
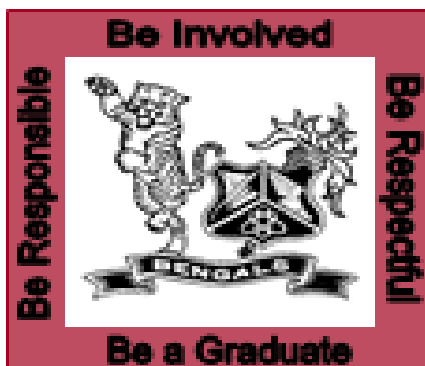
1. Username: helenahigh
Password: plan7ing
2. Click on “My Portfolio” on the menu bar at the top of the home page
3. Click on “Create my Portfolio” under the “New Users” header.
4. Complete as many fields as possible, making sure to complete all required fields which are marked with an asterisk.
5. Explore the site!

I'M A GRADUATE!



NOW WHAT?

Working hard throughout your time in high school means you have a variety of options for what you can do afterwards! Use the rest of this guide to help you decide which option is best for you.



WORK FORCE

Some students will choose to join the work force right after graduation. This may mean turning a part-time job into a full-time one or spending part of your senior year researching and applying for jobs. If you're not sure what type of job/career you'd be interested in, check-out the Montana Career Information System.

One of the first things you'll need to do is create a resume. Many students struggle in doing this the first time because they assume they don't have anything to include if they've never had a job. Employers will consider hiring you if your resume reflects workplace skills you've already developed even if you haven't had any formal work experience.

Your future boss needs to know that you will have consistent attendance, the ability to be at work on time, the skills needed to listen and follow directions carefully, the inclination to ask for help, a history of being a self-starter, inter-personal social skills, the ability to lead, the willingness to work on a team as well as alone, the know-how to dress appropriately for the workplace, and the determination to follow through on big and small projects.

You can develop all of these skills by being a diligent student, challenging yourself with a rigorous (for you) class schedule, participating in extracurricular activities, belonging to community organizations (Scouts, churches, clubs), and one of the best things you can do is volunteer your time. Volunteer work is just that – work. Even if you weren't paid, a potential boss can infer a great deal about you through your volunteer work experience. The other great thing about volunteering is that your supervisor/boss can serve as a reference when you're applying for jobs.

In addition to meeting with your counselor and career counselor, you may find some of these resources helpful:

www.resume.com

www.mtcisintocareers.org

www.a2zmontana.com

<http://wsd.dli.mt.gov/local/helena/>

www.expresspros.com/helena/

<http://www.prioricare.com/ContactUs.aspx>

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/vocrehab>

(They help with placement for jobs in the health care field. Their closest office is in Billings.)

www.helenaindustries.org

www.westmont.org

APPRENTICESHIPS & OTHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

Many high school graduates want to join the workforce right after graduation but need more training for their chosen career. For some of these students the option that makes the most sense is to participate in an apprenticeship or other training program.

APPRENTICESHIPS

According to the Montana Apprenticeship and Training Directors Association, “Apprenticeship . . . is a system for training and developing skilled craft workers. It combines working on the job under the supervision of skilled workers who have completed an apprenticeship program with related instruction in the classroom.” Throughout the training an apprentice spends time in a classroom learning theories and techniques, learns to maintain and use tools and machines critical to the field, and spends time with a journeyman “to ensure mastery of the subject materials and the skills.” One of the great features of an apprenticeship is the chance to earn a wage (and sometimes benefits) while learning a trade. This wage is a percentage of what a journeyman earns, and the percentage increases as an apprentice gets further into the program. Upon completion of a program (anywhere from 1-5 years) the apprentice is now a journeyman and has job security in a field that is in need of workers.

While there are many approved apprenticeship programs in Montana, the most popular ones are in the trades. If you’re interested in a trades apprenticeship, start by contacting the trade of your choice to learn what requirements/qualifications are needed. If you meet those qualifications ask for an application. Some apprenticeships will require you to take a qualifying test so be sure to ask if that is needed as part of your application. Following submission of the application and all required materials, a candidate will be required to participate in a selection interview.

Automotive Technician
Boilermaker
Bricklayer
Carpenter
Construction Craft Laborer
Electrician – Inside Wireman
Iron Worker

Lineman
Machinist – Automotive Machinist
Millwright
Operating Engineer
Piledriver
Plumber-Pipefitter
Sheet Metal Worker

<http://dev.apprenticeship.mt.gov/>

JOB CORPS

According to the Anaconda Job Corps website, “Job Corps is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through career, technical and academic training.” “In addition to career training, Anaconda Job Corps also provides academic training, including basic reading and math. Courses in independent living, employability skills, and social skills are offered in order to help students transition into the workplace. We also have several academic programs to help our students achieve their full potential.” Job Corps is a good opportunity for high school graduates; it’s also a great option for students who haven’t graduated to get some career training while earning their GED or diploma.

Job Corps programs are self-paced but typically last between 8 months and 2 years. Participants are required to live in a dorm on the campus and are able earn a living allowance that increases throughout the training program. As participants get close to graduation Job Corps staff will help students search for jobs and provide them with information on social service programs. (health care, housing, etc)

The career areas that the Anaconda office provides training for are:

Bricklaying
Painting
Culinary Arts

Heavy Equipment Operators
Clerical
Heavy Equipment Mechanics

Carpentry
Warehouse
Welding

JOB CORPS SITES IN MONTANA

Anaconda Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center
1407 Foster Creek Road
Anaconda, MT 59711
406.563.8700
<http://anaconda.jobcorps.gov/home.aspx>

Kicking Horse Job Corps Center
33091 Mollman Pass Trail
Ronan, MT 59864
406.644.2217
<http://kickinghorse.jobcorps.gov>

Trapper Creek Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center
5139 West Fork Road
Darby, MT 59829-5139
406.821.3286
<http://trappercreek.jobcorps.gov>

JOB CORPS SITES IN UTAH

Clearfield Job Corps Center
20 West 1700 South
Clearfield, UT 84016-0070
801.774.4000
<http://clearfield.jobcorps.gov>

Weber Basin Job Corps Civilian Cons. Ctr
7400 S. Cornia Drive
Ogden, UT 84405.9605
801.479.9806
<http://weberbasin.jobcorps.gov>

ARMED FORCES

The United States military is a post-secondary option that provides students with training in a wide variety of areas. The main branches of the military are the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. Opportunities for students also exist in the Coast Guard, the National Guard, and the reserves. In addition to training soldiers for national security, the military gives soldiers the opportunity to train in many military career areas that also translate into civilian life. Through the Montgomery GI Bill soldiers are also eligible to receive funding for a variety of things, including education.

Students interested in the military will need to take an aptitude test called the ASVAB that helps the military identify your skills and abilities.

If you're interested in exploring your options in the military, make an appointment with your counselor or the career counselor. You can also contact your local recruiter. If you're in need of contact information for a recruiter, check-in with the career counselor.

www.airforce.com

www.gocoastguard.com

www.goarmy.com

www.nationalguard.com

www.marines.com

www.navy.com

ROTC

The Reserve Officers' Training Corps is a great opportunity for students interested in earning a college degree and then fulfilling their military service obligation. While working on their degree ROTC students also focus on physical and mental growth as well as enhancing their leadership skills.

There are ROTC programs for the Air Force, Army, Marine Corps, and Navy. The NROTC program includes those in the Navy as well as those participating in the Marine option. While the Coast Guard does not have an ROTC program, they do have a program called Split Training. Enlistees in this program serve one weekend each month for which they are paid, and they train for two summers. Once they have completed training they begin Reserve duty.

Some participants in the ROTC programs can have all or part of their schooling paid for through scholarships and a book/fee allowance. Some programs even offer a living allowance so that candidates can focus on their academic and physical training.

ROTC graduates leave the program with a college degree, officer status in their branch of the military, and a service obligation to fulfill.

If you're interested in any of the ROTC programs make an appointment to talk with your counselor and/or career counselor.

<http://todaysmilitary.com/training/rotc>

<https://www.afrotc.com/>

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

<http://www.navy.com/joining/college-options/nrotc.html>

<http://www.marines.com/becoming-a-marine/commissioning-programs/four-year-colleges/nrotc>

<http://www.gocoastguard.com/reserve-careers/enlisted-careers/reserve-enlisted-programs>

SERVICE ACADEMIES

For high-caliber students interested in a post-secondary education in a military environment our nation's five service academies are an option. Those academies are the U.S. Military Academy (Army) in West Point, New York; the U.S. Naval Academy (Navy/Marine Corps) in Annapolis, Maryland; the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado; the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut; and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in Kings Point, New York. Admission into each of these academies is incredibly competitive as they only accept top-level students and award full four-year scholarships to all who are accepted. Academy graduates will have earned a Bachelor of Science degree, will be commissioned officers, and will have a service obligation to fulfill. If you're interested in pursuing admission into one of these service academies talk with your counselor as soon as possible.

www.westpoint.edu

www.uscga.edu

www.usna.edu

www.usmma.edu

www.academyadmissions.com

GAP YEAR

According to the American Gap Association, a gap year is defined as “a structured period of time when students take a break from formal education to increase self-awareness, challenge comfort zones, and experiment with possible careers. Typically these are achieved by a combination of traveling, volunteering, interning, or working. A gap year experience can last from two months up to two years and is taken between high school graduation and the junior year of their higher degree.” (<http://www.americangap.org/educators.php>)

“In most cases, a Gap Year candidate fits into a few specific categories: some are tired of running the same academic tracks, thus feeling ‘burnt out.’ In this typical case, students tend to be fairly high achieving academically, but perhaps want some time to revitalize and seek passions that may lay off-the-track rather than within its four walls. In other cases, an ideal candidate, is one who simply doesn't know for sure what they want to be doing with their life and fear that the average \$39,800 per year [<http://nces.ed.gov>] in tuition costs won't be well spent until they do. Thus, taking a Gap Year is about clarifying their own goals from university, as well as into their first careers. In other cases, students will simply consider a Gap Year because they either didn't get into the university they were hoping to, or, because they were granted a spring acceptance and now have a semester of time they want to do something productive with.” (<http://www.americangap.org/educators.php>)

Some Gap Year options:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| *Travel | *Community Service/Volunteer Work Abroad |
| *Work/Explore Career Options | *Rotary Exchange |
| *AmeriCorps | *Montana Conservation Corps |

<http://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps>

<http://mtcorps.org/>

<https://www.teenlife.com/category/gap-year/>

<http://www.americangap.org/>

<http://usagapyearfairs.org/programs/>

<https://thinkingbeyondborders.org/why-gap-year/choosing-gap-year-program/>

http://www.yale.edu/yalecollege/international/welcome/gap_year.html

<http://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/right-school/timeline/articles/2010/05/19/7-questions-to-ask-when-considering-a-gap-year>

2-YEAR SCHOOLS

2-year schools have been and continue to be known by a variety of different names: community college, vo-tech (vocational-technical), technical school, etc. Regardless of what they're called, 2-year schools can be a great option for many students looking for certificate programs and/or associate's degrees.

Students choose 2-year schools for a variety of reasons. One of the biggest factors is cost. While some 2-year schools charge different tuitions for in-state and out-of-state students, 2-year schools in Montana will typically be significantly cheaper than 4-year schools in the state. For this reason, many students will spend their first couple years of college at a 2-year school in order to complete their basic college graduation requirements before transferring to a 4-year college/university. Others will choose a 2-year school because they can get the same education as they would at a 4-year school for a much more affordable price and a shorter period of time.

The smaller campus and enrollment of a 2-year school can also be important factors in a student's decision-making process. Students graduating from small high schools may be more comfortable on a college campus that is closer to what they experienced in high school. Students who graduated from a larger high school may prefer the smaller community that a 2-year school provides.

Oftentimes the admission requirements for a 2-year school are different than those of a 4-year school. Many of them have an open admissions policy which means they will accept anyone who has met the basic requirements of being old enough and having earned a high school diploma or HiSET. (High School Equivalency Test)

Another benefit of 2-year colleges is that they often have relationships with 4-year schools in the state. There are pathways for students to start at the smaller school and then make a smooth transition into a specific department on a larger campus. Other 2-year schools have pathways for students to complete a bachelor's degree on their campus with the help of visiting professors or through online programs.

For those looking for a more traditional "college experience," there are 2-year schools with residence halls for on-campus living. For those students who aren't interested in living in a dorm, not having to pay for room and board can be a great way to save on the cost of a college education.

Some 2-year schools also offer intercollegiate athletic programs. These are great opportunities for student athletes who want the experience of a smaller academic setting or for those who need to improve some of their academic skills before transferring to a larger school for an athletic program.

MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM INFORMATION

<http://www.mus.edu>

2-YEAR COLLEGES IN THE MONTANA UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

Bitterroot College
University of Montana

<http://www.umt.edu/bitterroot-college/>

Helena College
University of Montana

<http://www.umhelena.edu/>

Missoula College
University of Montana

<http://mc.umt.edu/>

City College
at Montana State University-Billings

<http://citycollege.msubillings.edu/>

Gallatin College
Montana State University

<http://www.montana.edu/gallatincollege/>

Great Falls College
Montana State University

<http://www.gfcmsu.edu/>

Highlands College
of Montana Tech

<http://www.mtech.edu/academics/highlands/>

Dawson Community College

www.dawson.edu

Flathead Valley Community College

<http://www.fvcc.edu/>

Miles Community College

www.milesccl.edu

TRIBAL COLLEGES IN MONTANA

Aaniiih Nakoda College

<http://www.ancollege.edu/>

Blackfeet Community College

<http://bfcc.edu/>

Chief Dull Knife College

<http://www.cdkc.edu/>

Fort Peck Community College

<http://www.fpcc.edu/>

Little Big Horn College

<http://www.lbhc.edu/>

Salish Kootenai College

<http://www.skcc.edu/>

Stone Child College

<http://www.stonechild.edu/>

4-YEAR COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES

4-year colleges and universities are another popular post-secondary option for high school graduates. You'll find a handful of them in Montana and many more outside of our state.

4-year schools fall into one of two categories: public or private. Public schools are funded by state and local governments while private schools rely on tuition, fees, and donations for funding. Public schools typically have lower tuition, but private schools often have larger endowments, allowing them to offer more financial aid/scholarships to their students. Some schools (mostly private but not always) offer students the opportunity to study on a campus with a specific characteristic that appeals to them. (liberal arts curriculum, religious affiliation, single-sex schools, etc)

Most 4-year schools have residence halls that make it possible for both traditional and non-traditional students to live on campus. In fact, some schools require students to live on-campus for at least part of their college career.

One advantage of a 4-year school is the variety of programs they can provide students. While not every school will have the program you're interested in, you should be able to find at least a few schools with programs that fit your interests.

Another characteristic of 4-year schools that students find appealing is having graduate programs on the same campus. This actually is the main difference between a college and a university; a college typically only offers undergraduate degrees while universities offer undergraduate and graduate degrees. While some students will prefer to attend a different school for their graduate degree, others see it as an advantage to have access to masters and doctoral programs at the school with which they're already familiar. These campuses can also provide students with a wider variety of opportunities to help professors with their research and publications.

Some students take athletic programs into consideration during their college search. For students with athletic abilities, athletic scholarships can be a helpful way to fund all or part of their college education. Since there's a wide variety of school sizes there's also a variety of conferences and divisions, which means that student athletes should be able to find a program that fits both their academic needs and athletic abilities. For those students with a passion for sports but not the collegiate-level ability, many schools offer intramural sports leagues.

It's important to note that the basic requirements to graduate high school are not usually enough to gain admission into a 4-year school. This is why it's so important to start planning for your post-secondary education during your freshman year.

PUBLIC 4-YEAR SCHOOLS IN MONTANA

Montana State University
<http://www.montana.edu/>

Montana State University Billings
www.msubillings.edu

Montana State University Northern
www.msun.edu

Montana Tech of the University of Montana
www.mtech.edu

University of Montana
www.umt.edu

University of Montana Western
www.umwestern.edu

PRIVATE 4-YEAR SCHOOLS IN MONTANA

Carroll College
www.carroll.edu

Rocky Mountain College
www.rocky.edu

University of Great Falls
www.ugf.edu

APPLYING FOR COLLEGE

The thought of applying and paying for college can be overwhelming, but it's doable if you're willing to invest your time and effort in the process. As with everything else, you're not alone in navigating the path from high school freshman to college freshman. Be sure to communicate your goals with the counseling office staff so that we can provide you with as much help as possible. However, don't wait until November of your senior year to have this conversation. You're more likely to achieve your goals if you give yourself an adequate amount of time.

Having said that, it's important to keep in mind that things don't always work out the way we plan. Having a GPA less than 4.0 during your first semester of high school doesn't mean you're not going to be able to attend college. Not being accepted into your dream school doesn't mean you can't receive an excellent education somewhere else. Hang in there, and be flexible!

The journey to a post-secondary education can be long and arduous, but you can do it! Use the remainder of this guide book to help you begin the process.

College Planning Timeline
How to Choose a School
Applications
Transcripts
ACT and SAT
Writing the Essay
Letters of Recommendation
Financial Aid
Scholarships
NCAA/NAIA Freshman Eligibility Services
Disability Services



COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINE

MAR.	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG.	SEPT.	OCT.	NOV.	DEC.	JAN.	FEB.	MAR.	APRIL	MAY
Research and Visit Colleges														
Interested in the military? Talk to your counselor!														
	Take the ACT and consider taking the SAT													
		Request Letters of Recommendation												
			Div. I & Div. II Student Athletes Should Complete NCAA Clearinghouse Forms											
				Begin applying for schools										
					Take additional ACT and/or SAT tests, if necessary (by Dec. for Financial Aid consideration)									
						Complete and Submit the FAFSA								
							Apply for Scholarships							
												Make your decision!		

HOW TO CHOOSE A SCHOOL

It's important to spend some time researching and visiting schools. With so many schools to choose from you'll be able to find ones that match your criteria. One easy way to research schools is by talking with admissions representatives during your junior and senior years when they visit our campus. Here are some things to ask about and take into consideration during your college search:

- Location
- Size
- Degree Programs
- Cost
- Financial Aid
- Extracurricular Activities
- Campus Resources

Select and apply to more than one school. It's important to give yourself options in the event that things don't turn out the way you planned. It's also nice being able to examine and compare financial aid packages once you've received them. Apply to at least one school in each of these categories:

Safety: A safety school is one that you know you can afford and exceed the admissions requirements for; it may not be your first or even second choice, but it's one where you know you would be happy.

Target: A target school is one that you really want to attend and meet the admissions requirements for; a target school is one that you are likely to attend.

Reach: A reach school is your dream school. You want to be accepted, but you realize that you don't meet every admissions requirement. For example, you might have an exceptional GPA and transcript, but your ACT score isn't quite what it needs to be. Apply anyway! There's a reason why schools have you write essays and submit letters of recommendation.

Finally, visit the schools in which you have an interest! A school may look incredible on paper, but a campus visit might make you realize it's not a good fit for you. Or, the opposite may happen. What you thought was going to be a safety school may actually turn out to be a target school.

Request a tour as well as meetings with an admissions counselor, a financial aid officer, a professor in your field of interest, and a student studying in the department. With enough notice, many schools will also provide accommodations for an overnight stay in one of their residence halls. Take advantage of every opportunity you have on a campus visit!

APPLICATIONS & CEEB CODE

Once you've researched and visited the schools you're interested in it's time to start filling out applications. While many schools have moved to an online application, some schools still also offer a paper application.

Before filling out applications gather all of the materials that you'll need: transcripts (including those from colleges if you took any dual enrollment courses), ACT/SAT scores and testing dates, advanced placement test scores, parent/guardian employment and residency information, letters of recommendation, and a list of all extracurricular activities, community service work, and awards received. This will make the process go much smoother for you.

Most schools will require you to pay an application fee at the time of submission. This fee typically ranges between \$30.00 and \$90.00. Applying for college isn't cheap, so be sure to plan for having to pay these fees. If you don't have the financial means to pay an application fee talk to your counselor as some schools offer fee waivers.

Make sure to take advantage of College Application Week! This one-week event gives you the opportunity to apply to a school in Montana and have the application fee waived or deferred. If a fee is deferred, you'll have to pay it later but only if you decide to enroll at that school.

More than 600 schools in the United States and abroad use what is called the Common Application. This means students will only need to fill out some of the required elements of an application one time even if they're applying to many schools. (name, address, GPA, etc) Some schools will require supplementary materials, but the common app can be a really useful tool for many students. The main disadvantage of the common app is that the 600+ schools that do accept it is only a small percentage of the total number of schools in the United States.

www.commonapp.org

**Our school CEEB
code is: 270455**

TRANSCRIPTS

Your high school transcript is the record of all classes taken, grades earned, GPA, class rank, and ACT scores. Your transcript may also contain immunization information that is required by colleges/universities. When you apply for college you'll send the school the most up to date transcript available. It will list all grades earned as well as the classes in which you're currently enrolled.

Don't forget to have transcripts from any schools you earned dual credit from sent to colleges!

You can request an unofficial transcript from anyone in the counseling office. If you need an official transcript and/or need it sent to a school or scholarship committee you'll fill out a request form in the counseling office. At the end of your senior year you'll receive a card to request to have your final transcript sent to the school you've decided to attend.

ACT & SAT

The ACT and SAT are the main tests that colleges and universities look at when considering applications. Most schools will accept either score, but be sure to look closely at the admission requirements for the schools in which you're interested.

When registering for these tests you have the option to have your scores automatically sent to schools in which you have an interest. You can also log back into your online account and request to have your scores sent to schools at a later date.

Montana students are fortunate to be able to take the ACT in the spring of their junior year at no cost to them or their families. You should also consider taking the SAT at this time as well. During the summer between your junior and senior years you should really analyze whether or not to re-take the ACT/SAT. The important thing to remember is that most schools need your scores by the end of December in order for you to be eligible for their scholarships, but it's up to you to look for the specific date at your schools.

www.actstudent.org

www.collegeboard.com

<http://www.act.org/aap/concordance/pdf/reference.pdf>

Since all high school juniors in Montana take the ACT one of the questions we get asked most is whether or not someone should also take the SAT. Ultimately, this decision is yours. It is important to note that the tests are a little different from each other. On the next page you'll find a chart that compares the tests. You may find it helpful in making a decision of whether or not take the SAT.

Newsweek Magazine, KAPLAN Guide

updated Sept 2016

WRITING THE ESSAY

Don't minimize the importance of the essay(s) you submit with your college and scholarship applications. A standout essay may be the difference between a marginal candidate and one that a selection committee is excited about accepting. Keep in mind that it works in the other direction as well.

Writing a standout essay isn't easy, but you can do it. One of the most important things to remember is that selection committees have seen your transcripts, test scores, and list of extracurricular activities. The essay is an opportunity for you to tell them something they don't already know; it's a chance for them to get to know you as a person and not just a student. Here are some other tips:

- ✓ Stay at or under the word count
- ✓ Answer the question
- ✓ Stay on topic
- ✓ Proofread and edit
- ✓ Know your audience
- ✓ Have your teachers read and comment

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

In addition to the essay, a great letter of recommendation can make a student's application stand out from the others. Spend some time choosing the authors of your letters. You want your recommenders to know you well enough to speak beyond your academic abilities, and you should try choosing people you've known for more than a semester.

You should begin making requests in the spring of your junior year, being sure to give your recommenders more than enough time to craft a great letter. In addition to giving them ample time to write, you need to give them all of the information they'll need to write a great letter for you. They may know your academic strengths but are unaware of your volunteer work. You can find a form in the counseling office that will aid you in this process.

Information you should give your recommender:

Name, Address & Phone Number

GPA & Class Rank

Who the letter should be addressed to

Future Goals

Plans for college or other training

Awards & Honors

Special Interests & Hobbies

Clubs & Service Organizations

Non-School Activities (Church, Job, etc)

Student Government

Athletic Teams

Purpose of the letter (college, scholarship, etc)

FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS

Getting into college is one thing; paying for college is another. There are a variety of ways to fund your post-secondary education: through personal finances, federal loans, private loans, grants, and scholarships. Many students will find it necessary to use a combination of these options.

One of the most important things you need to do is fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA is used to determine how much money a family is expected to contribute to a child's post-secondary education. The form is also used to determine student grants, loan amounts, and work study, and colleges use this information when putting together financial aid packages for prospective students. Starting in the fall of 2016 the form will be available on October 1st each year. Check with the schools in which you're interested to find their deadline for submitting the FAFSA.

Scholarships are a great way to help pay for college. If you're willing to invest your time and effort into as many applications as possible you'll increase your chances of winning some of them. Scholarships typically come in one of two forms: merit-based or need-based. Merit-based scholarships are based on your academic record, GPA, class rank, and test scores. Need-based scholarships are based on financial need. Many scholarship committees also look for an extensive history of community service.

If you're willing to spend the time looking for scholarships you're sure to find many for which you're eligible. Start with the Helena High School scholarship list. It's posted online, and the updated list is printed every Monday morning for students to pick-up. Many colleges and universities will also have scholarships you can apply for so be sure to check with their financial aid office. Many local organizations will offer scholarships for high school graduates in their community. It would also be wise to check with your parents' employers. Oftentimes businesses will provide scholarships for children of their employees. Another great resource is the MCIS website. They have an extensive list of Montana scholarships.

<http://hhs.helenaschools.org/counseling-and-career-guidance/scholarships/>

www.collegegreenlight.com

<https://www.mtcis.intocareers.org>

https://sfs.mus.edu/scholarship_search

www.fafsa.ed.gov

www.reachhighermontana.org

www.collegexpress.com

www.scholarships.com

www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org

www.scholarshipexperts.com

www.fastweb.com

SCHOLARSHIP CHECKLIST

SCHOLARSHIP NAME	DEADLINE (Received or Postmarked)	APPLICATION (Online Or Paper)	ESSAY	LETTERS OF REC (# Needed)	TRANSCRIPT (Official Or Unofficial)	DATE SUBMITTED	AWARD \$\$\$

NCAA FRESHMAN-ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

CORE COURSES

*Both Division I and Division II require 16 core courses. 10 of the 16 courses must be completed before the 7th semester begins. See the lists below for the breakdown of these core-course requirements.

GRADE-POINT AVERAGE

*Only core courses are used to calculate your grade-point average for eligibility. Be sure to look over the list of NCAA-approved core courses offered at HHS. You can find this list in our registration book.

*Division I GPA requirements are listed on this website: www.eligibilitycenter.org; Division II schools require a minimum GPA of 2.0.

TEST SCORES

*Division I schools use a sliding scale for test scores and grade-point averages. You can find it on the NCAA Eligibility Clearinghouse website: www.eligibilitycenter.org

*Division II schools require a minimum of 820 on the SAT (critical reading and math only) or a sum of 68 on the ACT. Starting on August 1, 2018, division II schools will begin using a slide scale for GPA and test scores.

*All scores must be reported directly to the NCAA Eligibility Center by the testing agency. That code is 9999.

REGISTRATION

*Student athletes must register with the NCAA Clearinghouse. This is a recommended stop following the completion of the student's junior year. Register online at www.eligibilitycenter.org

DIVISION I – 16 CORE-COURSE RULE

4 years of English

3 years of Math (Algebra I or higher)

2 years of natural/physical Science (1 yr of lab if offered)

1 year of additional English, Math or natural/physical Science

2 years of Social Science

4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language, or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy)

DIVISION II – 16 CORE COURSE RULE

3 years of English

2 years of math (Algebra I or higher)

2 years of natural/physical Science (1 yr of lab if offered)

3 years of additional English, Math, or natural/physical Science

2 years of Social Science

4 years of additional courses (from any area above, foreign language, or non-doctrinal religion/philosophy)

NAIA FRESHMAN-ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

You must graduate from high school and meet at least 2 of these requirements: minimum score of 18 on the ACT or 860 on the SAT; achieve a minimum high school GPA of 2.0 on a 4.0 scale; graduate in the top half of your high school class.

DISABILITY SERVICES

There are many great resources to assist college-bound students with disabilities. Some of those resources are located here in Helena, and others are located on college campuses. Let your counselor know if you're interested in college, and we can help you find contact information for an admissions counselor.

Vocational Rehabilitation and Blind Services

111 N. Sanders St.

406.444.2590

<http://dphhs.mt.gov/detd/vocrehab>

Carroll College

Borromeo Hall, Room 115

406.457.4504

<http://www.carroll.edu/academics/resources/arc/disability.cc>

City College

Disability Support Services

Tech Building, Room A008

406.247.3029

<http://www.msubillings.edu/dss/>

Dawson Community College

Disability Services

SUB 180

406.994.2824

www.dawson.edu/students/request-for-disability-accommodation/

Flathead Valley Community College

Disability Support Services

LRC 129

406.756.3881

<http://www.fvcc.edu/current-students/advising-counseling/disability-support-services.html>

Miles Community College

www.milesc.edu/DisabilityServices/Students/

Montana State University

Disability, Re-Entry, and Veteran Services

180 Strand Union Building

406.994.2824

<http://www.montana.edu/drv/>

Montana State University – Billings
Disability Support Services
College of Education, Room 135
406.657.2283
<http://www.msubillings.edu/dss/>

Montana State University Northern
Disability Services
Library 203A or 206
406.265.4133
406.265.4131
<http://www.msun.edu/stuaffairs/disabilityserv/>

Montana Tech
Disability Services
North Campus: 406.496.4429
Highlands College: 406.496.3730
http://www.mtech.edu/student_life/disability/

Rocky Mountain College
1511 Poly Drive
406.657.1128
<http://www.rocky.edu/academics/academic-services/DisabilityServices.php>

University of Great Falls
TRiO/Center for Academic Excellence in Sullivan Hall
406.791.5212
<http://www.ugf.edu/CurrentStudents/StudentDevelopment/TrioSupportServices/DisabilityServices/tabid/1954/Default.aspx>

University of Montana
Disability Services for Students
Lommasson Center 154
406.243.2243
<http://www.umt.edu/dss/>

University of Montana Helena College
Disability Resources Office
DON 119
406.447.6952
<http://www.umhelena.edu/disability/default.aspx>

University of Montana Western
Disability Services
406.683.7900
<http://www.umwestern.edu/114-campus-life/student-services/1351-disability-services.html>