



# ***Polson High school Postsecondary Handbook***



Compiled by Emily Johnson, School Counselor  
Polson High School – Updated for 2019-20 school year

To our Students and Parents:

This booklet is meant to help you with the process of deciding your post high school training/education. Hopefully, what we present here will help you begin the process of choosing the best training program or college/university for your chosen career. Please take the time to talk as a family and to use the information in this booklet as a stepping stone to good conversation.

Also, keep in mind that there is more than one perfect school or training program for everyone. Your training program or school should be both comfortable and meaningful. Take time to focus on the best fit for you—one that matches your educational/career goals and that will also allow you the chance to experience personal growth opportunities.

The School Counseling Office at Polson High School is available to assist you in all aspects of this exciting process. We have access to many resources that will guide you and your student as you make these important decisions. We'll do our best to assist you and to make this process as "stress free" as possible. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

Enjoy the journey!!

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## TIMELINE & CHECKLIST FOR GRADUATION

### Spring of your junior year:

- Discuss your postsecondary plans & options with your family.
- Keep a personal file that includes academic and personal achievements, awards and certificates. These will be necessary when you complete your resume next year.
- Review your courses and high school credits with your school counselor.
- Begin your course selection for next year.
- Compare college requirements to your course load.
- Pay special attention to courses that will help prepare you for your career and postsecondary goals.
- If planning to attend a military academy or enrolling in an ROTC program, meet with your school counselor.
- Ask about college prep programs and workshops offered during the summer.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask college representatives.
- Visit college websites. Most college catalogs can now be found online.
- Create a list of schools you would like to attend/visit.

### Summer before your senior year:

- Begin the search for scholarships and financial aid.
- Learn the basics about federal student aid.
- Talk with friends who are home from college about their college experience.
- Schedule college visits and interviews.
- Talk to people in career fields you find interesting
- Begin researching college applications. KEEP copies and files.
- Consider whom to ask for letters of recommendation. Ask early, and have a resume handy.

### Semester One of your senior year:

- Discuss your course load, postsecondary plans, and test scores with your counselor.
- Begin college applications. **College Application Week –TBD**
- Arrange campus visits and schedule visits with college reps who visit the PHS campus.
- Search for scholarships.
- STAY ORGANIZED. Keep files with copies of all application materials.
- Verify that your transcript is correct.
- Attend the Polson High School College Fair—**September 25, 2019 10:00- 11:30 a.m**
- Find out which financial aid applications are required at the colleges you are applying to, and their priority deadlines.
- Ask for letters of recommendation to include with your admissions and/or scholarship applications.
- “Early Decision” candidates should complete college applications.
- File the NCAA/NAIA Student Initial Eligibility form if planning to compete in collegiate athletics.
- Apply for your FSA ID at [www.fsaidth.gov](http://www.fsaidth.gov) Both you AND a parent will need an FSA ID to apply for financial aid.
- Submit your FAFSA electronically as soon after October 1 as possible. Some student aid programs award funds on a first-come, first-served basis. 2018 tax information is required from both students and parents. **PHS FAFSA Event: TBD**
- Complete all school applications, ideally by their scholarship priority deadline

### **Semester Two of your senior year:**

- Stay organized and watch deadlines.
- Apply for admission to the postsecondary school(s) of your choice (if you haven't already done so). Schools will not process your financial aid application until they have received your application for admission.
- College acceptance & financial award letters will begin to arrive. Respond quickly to any requests for additional information. Keep copies of everything you send.
- Discuss your offers with your family and counselor. Weigh any offers against what you want. Decide which school is right for you.
- Pay close attention to scholarship deadlines.
- Make your decision regarding school choice. Many colleges request your decision and initial tuition deposit by May 1.
- Register for AP tests.
- Mark your calendar with important deadlines (housing, meals, financial aid, etc.).
- Notify other colleges of your decision NOT to attend.
- If you were not accepted into a 4-year college of your choice, consider attending a community college.
- As you make postsecondary decisions or receive scholarship awards, please keep your school counselor informed.

### **Summer after graduation:**

- Verify that your final transcripts have been sent to the correct school.
- Read and be familiar with your college catalog and semester class schedule.
- Send thank-you notes or postcards to those who helped you get into college and to scholarship donors.
- Register for and attend a college orientation session.
- Confirm housing arrangements and meal plans.
- Finalize your college budget. Remember that every dollar you don't borrow is a dollar you don't have to repay.
- Consider opening a bank account near your campus.
- Contact your roommate and coordinate what to pack.
- Get ready for a grand adventure!



## **EDUCATIONAL/TRAINING OPTIONS**

### **FOUR-YEAR COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES**

- Four-year colleges offer Bachelor of Arts (BA) or Bachelor of Science (BS) degrees.
- Universities can be larger than colleges and usually include a liberal arts college, some professional colleges (for example, education), and graduate programs.
- Colleges can be specialized (for example, nursing or art), or they can offer a broad curriculum.
- Class sizes vary depending upon the size of the college or university.
- University professors are usually involved in both teaching and research. Some of their classes may be taught by graduate students called Teaching Assistants (TA's)
- Four-year colleges have specific requirements for admission.

### **TWO-YEAR COLLEGES**

- Community and Junior Colleges offer Associate degrees.
- Two-year colleges offer both specific career training programs which can be completed in two years or transfer programs for students who plan to transfer to a four-year college or university to continue their education.
- Colleges of Technology offer a variety of degrees from one-year certificate to two-year associates.
- Colleges of Technology can be a good option for students who have chosen a specific, specialized occupation (for example, welding).
- Some Colleges of Technology offer general courses that students can use for transfer to a four-year program.
- Two-year colleges are usually much less expensive than four-year schools, and any high school graduate can attend.

### **TRIBAL COLLEGES**

- Tribal colleges are small colleges offering everything from one-year certificate programs to four-year degrees.
- Tribal colleges serve mostly American Indian students, but all students are welcome.
- There are over 30 Tribal Colleges in the United States, and seven of them are located in Montana.

### **ONLINE COLLEGES**

- Distance education in the form of online courses and online degrees is becoming increasingly popular.
- Most colleges and universities have begun to include some online courses. Some even offer full degrees.

## **APPRENTICESHIPS**

Apprenticeships are high quality, work-based training programs. They provide practical on-the-job training combined with related academic instruction. Apprentices receive both salary and career training. The length of apprenticeship training varies from two to five years, depending upon the occupation. Some examples of apprenticeships offered in Montana are:

Auto Body Repairer, Air Conditioning & Heating, Aircraft Mechanic, Boilermaker, Bricklayer, Fire Fighter, Plumber, Sheet Metal Worker, Lineman, Welder, and many more!

You can get more information about apprenticeship opportunities at:

Montana Apprenticeship & Training Program  
Montana Department of Labor & Industry  
P.O. Box 1728  
Helena, MT 59624-1728

Phone: 406-444-3998

Website: [Http:// apprenticeship.mt.gov](http://apprenticeship.mt.gov)

## **U.S. MILITARY OPTIONS**

- **SERVICE ACADEMIES:** U.S. Military Academy (West Point, NY), U.S. Naval Academy (Annapolis, MD), U.S. Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, CO), U.S. Coast Guard Academy (New London, CT). All expenses are fully paid for all four years. Students are also paid a monthly stipend. However, the competition to get into a service academy is fierce. Admission criteria includes strong high school academic performance, high SAT or ACT scores, athletics, extracurricular activities, leadership positions, community involvement, work experience, plus a nomination by your state senator. Graduates receive a Bachelor of Science degree and a leadership job as a junior officer. There is a minimum service obligation of five years.
- **FULL-TIME MILITARY SERVICE:** Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, Navy, & Coast Guard
- **PART-TIME MILITARY SERVICE:** Reserves and the National Guard
- **RESERVE OFFICER TRAINING CORPS (ROTC):** Students in ROTC programs take military science courses plus their regular courses while still in college. Upon graduation, ROTC members are commissioned to serve as leaders in active, reserve, or guard components of each military branch. ROTC offers many scholarships—some pay ALL expenses plus a stipend. These are very competitive scholarships.

**For more information about military options:**

[www.todaysmilitary.com](http://www.todaysmilitary.com)

[www.military.com](http://www.military.com)

## HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHERE TO GO?

### ➤ **RESEARCH :**

- Yourself—know your personality, interests, skills, aptitudes
- Occupations—which jobs fit YOU?
- Job Outlook—will there be jobs when you're training is completed?
- Training—be a smart consumer. Where can you learn what you need for your career?

### ➤ **FIND A SCHOOL THAT'S A GOOD MATCH FOR YOU:**

- Location—do you want to be close to home or far away? Big city or small town? Near the mountains or near a beach?
- College Size—will you be comfortable being one amongst 25,000 or would you rather be on a campus with a few hundred students? Larger schools usually have more majors to choose from. Smaller schools are more personal with smaller class sizes.
- Costs—can you afford the school? College costs vary greatly. Private schools are usually more expensive, but they often have more scholarships to offer.
- Majors—if there's a specific subject you want to study, then you need to find a college that offers that major. For example, if you want to be a mechanical engineer, you have to go to a college that offers that course of study.
- Special Programs—is there a specific activity, program, or sport that's important to you? Do you want to play soccer? Would you like to play in an orchestra? Do you need services for students with disabilities?
- Admission Requirements—each college sets its own admission requirements. Some are very liberal and some are very selective. Look for schools that will accept you and that have students with academic records similar to your own.
- Type of School—do you want to go to a private school? One with a religious affiliation? An all girls' school?

### ➤ **MAKE A CAMPUS VISIT**

- The summer before your senior year is a good time to do this, but it really helps if you can visit a campus while classes are in session.
- Call the admissions office in advance—let them know when you'll be there, and ask about visiting classes or talking with faculty. In some cases, you may be able to make arrangements to spend the night in a dorm!
- Research the college before you get there so that you can ask good questions.
- Talk to as many students as you can—don't be bashful about asking questions.
- Take a tour of campus.
- Have a meal in the cafeteria.
- Pick up copies of the student newspaper and alumni magazine.
- Prepare for an interview. You'll probably be asked about your academic background, interests, hobbies, goals, and why you're interested in the college. Be on time, or call ahead if you're going to be delayed.
- Take time to explore the campus on your own and absorb the atmosphere.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK AT A COLLEGE VISIT

### At the Admissions Office:

- What are the admission requirements for this college/university?
- What high school courses are necessary?
- What tests are required?
- How may I receive an application?
- What will be necessary in the application?
- What are the deadlines for admission and financial aid?
- Does this school offer a variety of programs in the areas that interest me?
- How does academic advising work on campus?
- What study abroad or volunteer opportunities are there for students?
- Are there opportunities for internships?
- What academic support services are available?
- Are students required to live on campus?
- Is it difficult to get on-campus housing? What is the cost?
- How many students live on campus? Do most stay on weekends?
- What extracurricular activities are available?
- What medical services/facilities are available to students?
- HOW SAFE IS THE CAMPUS? What proactive measures are taken?

### For the Financial Aid Office:

- What is the total tuition and fees for this college?
- What kind of financial aid is available?
- Do I need to fill out the CSS Profile in addition to the FAFSA?
- What are the priority deadlines for financial aid?
- Are there institutional scholarships to apply for?

### For Current Students:

- How many hours per week do you study? Is that typical of all students here?
- Do you feel safe here?
- Are the professors available to students outside of class?
- Are support services easy to access?
- Is it easy to get involved on campus?
- Are campus jobs available?
- What is dorm life like?
- Do students stay around campus on weekends?
- What types of activities are available to students on weekends?
- Is the dorm food good?
- Is it possible to study in your dorm room?
- What type of political climate exists? Would you describe this campus as liberal or conservative?
- What do you like most about this college? Least?
- If given the opportunity, would you choose this college again?



## APPLYING TO COLLEGE

Applying to college entails the following basic steps:

- ✓ **Begin in the fall of your senior year.** The admission deadline for most schools is not until early spring. However, some schools have fall scholarship deadlines. So the earlier you apply the better.
- ✓ **Complete the Admission Application for the schools you wish to attend.** You can usually download the application from the school's website, or contact the admissions office to have one mailed to you. Most schools now offer the option of online applications. Make sure you don't miss any information. Incomplete applications can cause delays or a rejection of your application.
- ✓ **Make sure you include any other materials the school requests.** These vary from school to school, but typically requested materials would be:
  - Application fee (usually \$30 - \$50 depending on the school)
  - Official high school transcript
  - ACT or SAT scores
  - Immunization records
  - Counselor or teacher recommendations
  - An ESSAY

You may find it helpful to make an application checklist for each school. Check off each task as it's completed.

- ✓ **Keep a copy of everything you submit to the school.** Start a file for each school. Make sure you keep track of all of the information sent back and forth between you and the school. It's a good idea to include a stamped postcard with your application so that the college can let you know your application has been received and is complete.
- ✓ **You can apply to more than one college.** It's best to limit your choices to 3 – 5 schools.

### ***REQUESTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COLLEGE:***

- ❖ Asks teachers whose subject may relate to your future field of study.
- ❖ Request recommendations from people who know your strengths.
- ❖ Choose teachers who can comment upon growth and willingness to work and improve.
- ❖ Give your recommenders plenty of time to write the letter—at least 2 weeks. Give them a resume to review.
- ❖ Be clear about how the recommendation will be sent to the school. Some colleges provide a form for recommendations. Often, the letters can be sent with your transcript through the school counseling office. If necessary, provide a stamped, addressed envelope for each college.

# COLLEGE APPLICATION & ADMISSION TERMS

## **Customized Applications:**

Many schools have authorized forms that must be requested from that school. Be sure to follow the directions as explained on each form

## **Common Application:**

More than 700 U.S. colleges use this form. You complete one online form which can be accessed by the colleges/universities you designate. Counselors and teachers will also complete their portion online.

## **Two-Part Application:**

If your school uses a two-part application, submit Part I (usually basic demographic information) as soon as possible. The school will then send your Part II upon receipt of Part I.

## **Online Application:**

Many schools are encouraging online application. Some schools will even waive or reduce the application fee if you apply online. Online applications ensure receipt and legibility of your application.

## **Regular Admissions:**

Many colleges establish an application deadline by which all applications must be received or postmarked. All students are then notified of the college's decision at a uniform date—typically in early April

## **Rolling Admissions:**

A process in which a school reviews applications and makes decisions on them continually throughout the year. Most public colleges in Montana utilize rolling admissions.

## **Early Decision:**

A binding agreement between the applicant and the school. This college clearly should be the applicant's first choice. The usual deadline for Early Decision is in November and colleges usually make their decisions by mid-December. If accepted under this plan, you are obligated to attend the college and withdraw or forego applications to other schools.

## **Early Action:**

This is another option for early notification of acceptance. However, the applicant is usually NOT obligated to attend that college, and the student may apply to other colleges. When other conditions apply, it is sometimes called Restrictive Early Action.

## **Open Admissions:**

An admission decision, usually made by public junior, community, or technical colleges without regard to your academic performance.

## **Deferred or Delayed Admission:**

Most colleges allow an accepted student to postpone enrollment in a college for one semester or one year depending upon the college. Students need to notify the college as soon as possible to request deferment.



## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships are available through the Polson High School Counseling Office, the school you are planning to attend, your parents' place of employment, FREE scholarship searches online, and organizations you or your parents may be a member of. Be sure to look under EVERY rock for that extra financial help! The time you spend searching for and completing scholarship applications can pay off in large sums of money for your postsecondary education.

All scholarships received by the PHS Counseling Office are listed on the Counseling page of the PHS website: [www.polson.k12.mt.us/phs](http://www.polson.k12.mt.us/phs)

All scholarships are listed in chronological order by application due date. Please contact the Counseling Office for assistance with any scholarships you're eligible for. Many of the local scholarships can be emailed to you. Please note that many scholarships can be used at **ANY ACCREDITED** postsecondary school—this includes technical schools, two-year schools, and four-year schools.

### TYPES OF SCHOLARSHIPS:

- **Institutional Scholarships** are those scholarships offered by the school you will be attending. They may be for athletics, merit based (for good grades/test scores) or need based (based on family income).
- **Private Scholarships** are offered by organizations and businesses. These scholarships often have specific eligibility criteria
- **Military Scholarships** ROTC programs can pay up to full college tuition plus a stipend for books. These scholarships are offered in return for your commitment to military service upon completion of college. Be sure you're prepared to fulfill the terms of these scholarship agreements.

***Never pay for a scholarship search! If it's not free, it could be a scam!***

### STATE & FEDERAL SOURCES OF FINANCIAL AID FUNDS

The federal government provides billions of dollars in financial aid to post-secondary education students annually. In order to receive a grant from these federal programs, your college must qualify to administer them. Check with your school's financial aid department to be sure your school is a qualified participant. You must complete a "Free Application for Federal Student Aid" (FAFSA) in order to receive these funds. Everything you've ever wanted or needed to know about Federal Student Aid can be found at <http://www.studentaid.ed.gov>

## SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION TIPS

- ✓ Apply for any and ALL scholarships you are eligible for. Don't be afraid that you're sending out too many applications—there is no such thing! The more you apply for, the more you could win.
- ✓ Read the scholarship requirements and directions very carefully.
- ✓ Follow the directions. Provide exactly what is asked for. Missing items, or even submitting items not requested could cause you to be disqualified.
- ✓ Pay very close attention to deadlines! **Late applications are disqualified.**
- ✓ Neatness counts! Always type or word process your application, essay, and any other information you submit. If you cannot type it, make sure it's printed legibly in black ink.
- ✓ Prepare a resume. Use your resume to help you showcase your abilities and accomplishments.
- ✓ Get letters of recommendation. You should have at least one letter from an academic professional. The letters should address areas such as your talents, your academic abilities, your personality and character traits, your leadership abilities, commitment to your community, and any other areas that demonstrate how unique you are. Ask the letter writer for permission to make copies of the letter for each scholarship application.
- ✓ If you have to write an essay:
  - Write one that makes a strong impression.
  - Always be honest about your skills and accomplishments
  - Stick to the point and give examples that support your experience.
  - If given a word limit, make sure you don't exceed it.
  - Unless given a specific topic, write an essay that covers a broad range of scholarship requirements, so that you may reuse the essay for more than one scholarship application.
- ✓ Proofread, Proofread, Proofread! It's best to have at least one or two people look at the entire application before you send it in. Spelling errors or poor writing skills could have a negative effect on your chances of winning the scholarship.
- ✓ Keep a copy of everything you send in. You may need to refer to it later.
- ✓ Be organized. Keep track of deadlines, application materials, etc.
- ✓ If you receive a scholarship, be sure to send a thank you note to the donor. A simple thank you note will demonstrate your appreciation and respect for the donor and will make a lasting impression.
- ✓ ***Please notify the Counseling Office of any scholarships you receive so that we can recognize your accomplishments at graduation!!***

## TIPS FOR WRITING APPLICATION AND SCHOLARSHIP ESSAYS

Personal statements and essays are your chance to speak in your own voice and personalize your application. This is your opportunity to demonstrate not only your writing skills, but also to explain why you and the school would be a good “match.” This is the time to step back and be reflective about who you are as an individual, how you view the world, what you value, and which experiences and people have had an impact on who you are. This reflection will help you find your own voice so that your essay will be one that only **you** could have written.

### ***Tips for writing your personal statement:***

- ✓ Write about parts of your life that can't be gleaned from other parts of your application.
- ✓ The personal statement should complement, not repeat, the rest of the application.
- ✓ Focus only on a few characteristics so that you can have a clear focus to the essay.
- ✓ Be careful about being too self-revealing or personal.
- ✓ If you write about parts of your life dealing with difficult issues such as drugs, divorce, depression – be able to evaluate and reflect rather than just relay information.
- ✓ Write about the qualities and accomplishments that reveal more about **you**. What makes you stand out from everyone else who is applying?
- ✓ Stay away from vague examples – don't be afraid to reflect real life.

### ***Tips for writing an essay:***

- ✓ Answer the what and why – read the question carefully! Demonstrate how well you *think* as well as how well you write.
- ✓ Write from an analytical point of view.
- ✓ Colleges are looking for a higher level of thinking and for students who are able to make connections between simple and complex concepts.
- ✓ Write an essay you like – write something you will be proud of.
- ✓ Be thoughtful
- ✓ Remember that humor can be difficult to pull off in an essay. Don't try to be funny if that isn't your personality.
- ✓ The less the essay sounds like a 17 or 18-year old, the more it may hurt your file.
- ✓ Write about what you know.
- ✓ Double check any facts that you include.
- ✓ Make it easy to read.
- ✓ Remember that the essay is being read quickly and for a general impression.
- ✓ Leave yourself plenty of time to rewrite and revise.

**PROOFREAD!** Ask a parent, teacher or counselor to read it before you submit it.



## ACT and SAT Testing

Because course offerings and grading systems can vary so much from one high school to the next, colleges and universities use standardized tests to evaluate prospective students. The scores from these tests are used to supplement applicants' high school records and other information in the admission application. Colleges may use a student's scores to predict college performance, make certain course placements, and to determine eligibility for certain institutional scholarships.

Both tests are designed to examine your knowledge of the fundamentals of your high school education. However, there are some differences:

### ACT:

- ✓ Total testing time=3 hours 35 minutes (which includes 40 minute essay)
- ✓ Includes English, math, reading, and science. It also has an optional writing test.
- ✓ Math topics extend into trigonometry territory.
- ✓ The highest score on each section is 36. The highest composite score is 36.
- ✓ There is NO penalty for incorrect answers
- ✓ Content-based test; covers material learned in school

### SAT

- ✓ Total testing time=3 hours 50 minutes with essay ; 3 hours without essay.
- ✓ Includes critical reading, math, and writing. Beginning March, 2016, the writing portion will be optional.
- ✓ Math topics extend into trigonometry territory
- ✓ The highest score on each section of the SAT is 800.
- ✓ There is NO penalty for incorrect answers
- ✓ Tests critical thinking and problem solving skills; more of an aptitude test.

SO—which test should you take?

The first thing you must determine is which test the schools you are applying to require. Anymore, most schools will accept either test. If it doesn't matter which test you take, the best way to determine which is right for you is to take one SAT practice test and one ACT practice test. Compare your scores and comfort level with each test.

**The PSAT (taken during your Junior year) is an excellent practice test and predictor of SAT test results.**

For more information and for full-length practice tests:

[www.sat.collegeboard.org](http://www.sat.collegeboard.org)

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

## ACT TEST SCHEDULE

*(Basic fee: \$50.50 **OR** ACT + Writing: \$67.00)*

*(Late registration fee: Basic fee+\$29.50)*

| TEST DATE          | REGISTRATION DEADLINE | LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE |
|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| June 8, 2019       | March 8, 2019         | March 25, 2019             |
| July 13, 2019**    | June 14, 2019         | June 24, 2019              |
| September 14, 2019 | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| October 26, 2019   | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| December 14, 2019  | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| February 8, 2020   | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| April 4, 2020      | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| June 13, 2020      | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| July 18, 2020      | TBD                   | TBD                        |

\*\*Non-Saturday test date —only for students who cannot test on Saturday because of religious convictions

**Register online at [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)**



## SAT TEST SCHEDULE

*(Basic fee: \$47.50 **OR** \$64.50 with essay)\*\**

*(Late registration fee: Basic fee + \$29.00)*

| TEST DATE        | REGISTRATION DEADLINE | LATE REGISTRATION DEADLINE |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| August 24, 2019  | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| October 5, 2019  | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| November 2, 2019 | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| December 7, 2019 | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| March 114, 2020  | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| May 2, 2020      | TBD                   | TBD                        |
| June 6, 2020     | TBD                   | TBD                        |

**Register online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)**

**\*\*\*Fee Waivers are available for qualifying students. Please check with your school counselor.\*\*\***

## HELPFUL WEBSITES

### **Montana University System Information**

[www.mus.edu](http://www.mus.edu)

### **Financial Aid Information**

<http://www.finaid.org>

<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov>

[www.reachhighermontana.org](http://www.reachhighermontana.org)

### **College Searches**

[www.mtcis.intocareers.org](http://www.mtcis.intocareers.org)

(students access via their PowerSchool account)

<http://www.petersons.com>

[www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org)

<http://www.knowhow2go.org>

### **Career & College Information**

[www.mtcis.intocareers.org](http://www.mtcis.intocareers.org)

(students access via their PowerSchool account)

<http://www.knowhow2go.org>

[www.smartaboutcollege.org](http://www.smartaboutcollege.org)

<http://collegeprowler.com>

### **SAT & ACT Registration**

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

[www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)

### **Student Loan Information**

[www.mus.edu](http://www.mus.edu)

[www.reachhighermontana.org](http://www.reachhighermontana.org)

### **Scholarship Searches**

[www.reachhighermontana.org](http://www.reachhighermontana.org)

(free access to SCHOLLY)

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

[www.meritaid.com](http://www.meritaid.com)

[www.scholarships.com](http://www.scholarships.com)

[www.zinch.com](http://www.zinch.com)

[www.collegeprowler.com](http://www.collegeprowler.com)

[www.studentscholarships.org](http://www.studentscholarships.org)

[www.collegeexpress.com](http://www.collegeexpress.com)

### **Scholarships for Native American Students**

[www.nativepartnership.org](http://www.nativepartnership.org)

[www.collegefund.org](http://www.collegefund.org)

[www.aigcs.org](http://www.aigcs.org)

[www.catchingthedream.org](http://www.catchingthedream.org)

### **NCAA & NAIA Eligibility\*\***

<http://www.ncaa.org>

<http://www.PlayNAIA.org>

**\*\*Please see the School Registrar for Assistance**





# Montana University System Admission Standards

## ***Four-year Campuses***

### **Traditional Students**

A traditional student is defined as one who enters college within three years of high school graduation or within three years from the date when they would have graduated college.

In order to receive full admission to a four-year university in the MUS, entering traditional students are required to meet the following standards:

#### **Achieve one of the following:**

1. Earn at least a 2.5 high school GPA; or
2. Rank in the top half of the school's graduating class; or
3. Earn a minimum composite score of 22 for the ACT or 1540 for the SAT (exception: MSU-Northern requires ACT score of 20, SAT score of 1440).

#### **Complete either the Regents' College Preparatory Program or the Rigorous Core College Preparatory Program**

Complete the Regents' College Preparatory program: mathematics (3 years), English (4 years), lab science (2 years), social studies (3 years), and college prep electives (2 years), which include world language, computer science, visual and performing arts, and career/technical education units that meet the office of public instruction guidelines.

Complete the Rigorous Core College Preparatory Program: mathematics (4 years), English (4 years), lab science (3 years), social studies (3 years), college prep electives (3 years), which include world language, computer science, visual and performing arts, and career/technical education units that meet the office of public instruction guidelines. The Rigorous Core is an advanced alternative to the Minimum Core for math proficiency standards. High school students who successfully complete the Rigorous Core are eligible for the MUS Honor Scholarship.

#### **Demonstrate Mathematics Proficiency via one of the following methods:**

Earn an ACT math score of 22, SAT math score of 520, AP Calculus score of 3 or above, or complete the Rigorous Core.

#### **Demonstrate Writing Proficiency via one of the following methods:**

Earn an ACT writing/English of score of 18, SAT score of 440; or score 7 or higher on the ACT/SAT essays, or earn a score of 3 or above on either the AP English Language or AP English Literature exam.

### **Provisional Admission**

Provisional admission is granted to students scoring 18-21 on the ACT or 440-510 on the SAT mathematics tests and 2.5-3.0 on the MUSWA or 5-6 on the ACT/SAT writing essays.

Students who are provisionally admitted can gain full admittance by demonstrating one of the following:

- Earn a "C" or better in developmental math and writing courses preparing students for college level course work (must be completed within the first 3 semesters)
- Earn the required score on one or more of the math or writing assessment tests required for admissions
- Complete an associate of arts (A.A.) or associate of science (A.S.) degree
- Submit a letter to the admissions office documenting a disability that prevented the student from adequately demonstrating proficiency in a test setting if no accommodation was provided at the time of the test

## ***Two-year Campuses and Two-year Programs***

### **All Students**

Two-year campuses in the MUS abide by a non-competitive open enrollment policy that does not require applicants meet the Regents' four-year admissions criteria. The only requirement is that applicants must have obtained a high school degree or successfully completed an official high school equivalence completion assessment designated by the Board of Public Education (formerly the GED and currently the HiSET<sup>®</sup>).

Students who have not yet demonstrated the ability to meet the mathematics or writing proficiency standards may be admitted without condition to a two-year college; however, certain programs within the college, such as Nursing, may have higher admission standards.

## Application Checklist

School: \_\_\_\_\_

Admissions telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ email: \_\_\_\_\_

Application deadline: \_\_\_\_\_

| <u>Application type (check one)</u>                                              | <u>Date sent</u> | <u>Method</u>                         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School Specific Application Form</li></ul> | _____<br>_____   | Hard copy mailed<br>Online submission |
| or                                                                               |                  |                                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Common Application:</li></ul>              | _____            | Online submission                     |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Common Application Supplement</li></ul>    | _____            |                                       |

| <u>Standardized Test Scores</u>                                                | <u>Required</u> | <u>Date Taken</u> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SAT Reasoning Test</li></ul>             | Yes    No       | _____             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>SAT Subject Tests</li></ul>              | Yes    No       | _____             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ACT</li></ul>                            | Yes    No       | _____             |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Placement Test (COMPASS/ASSET)</li></ul> | Yes    No       | _____             |

| <u>Financial Aid Forms</u>                                            | <u>Required</u> | <u>Date Completed</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>FAFSA</li></ul>                 | Yes    No       | _____                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>CSS Profile</li></ul>           | Yes    No       | _____                 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>School Specific Forms</li></ul> | Yes    No       | _____                 |

| <u>Transcripts &amp; Recommendations</u>                             | <u>Date Sent</u> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Transcripts sent</li></ul>     | _____            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recommendations sent</li></ul> | _____            |

Other Information Required?

## *College Comparison Worksheet*

|                                                                                                                                                                                |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|--|
| <b>COLLEGE NAME</b>                                                                                                                                                            |  |  |  |
| <b>Location</b><br>—distance from home                                                                                                                                         |  |  |  |
| <b>Size</b> —<br>enrollment<br>—physical size of campus                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |
| <b>Environment</b><br>—type of school (2- or 4-year) —<br>school setting (urban, rural)<br>—location & size of nearest city<br>—co-ed, male, female —<br>religious affiliation |  |  |  |
| <b>Admission Requirements</b><br>—deadline<br>—tests required<br>—average test scores, GPA, rank<br>—notification                                                              |  |  |  |
| <b>Academics</b><br>—your major offered<br>—special requirements —<br>accreditation<br>—student-faculty ratio —<br>typical class size                                          |  |  |  |
| <b>College Expenses</b><br>—tuition, room and board —<br>estimated total budget<br>—application fee, deposits                                                                  |  |  |  |
| <b>Financial Aid</b><br>—deadline<br>—required forms<br>—percentage receiving aid<br>—scholarships                                                                             |  |  |  |
| <b>Housing</b><br>—residence hall requirement<br>—food plan                                                                                                                    |  |  |  |
| <b>Facilities</b><br>—academic<br>—recreational<br>—other                                                                                                                      |  |  |  |
| <b>Activities</b><br>—clubs, organizations —<br>Greek life<br>—athletics, intramurals<br>—other                                                                                |  |  |  |
| <b>Campus Visits</b><br>—when<br>—special opportunities                                                                                                                        |  |  |  |

## The Common Application Announces 2019-2020 Essay Prompts

We are pleased to share the 2019-2020 Common Application essay prompts with you. The changes you see below reflect the feedback of 108 Common App member colleges and more than 5,000 other Common App constituents, as well as consultation with our advisory committees and Board of Directors. Students represented the single largest share of constituent survey respondents (59%), followed by school counselors (23%), and teachers (11%).

The word limit on the essay will remain at 650.

### **2018-2019 Common Application Essay Prompts**

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story. [No change]
2. The lessons we take from *obstacles we encounter* can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a *challenge, setback, or failure*. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience? [Revised]
3. Reflect on a time when you *questioned* or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your *thinking*? What *was the outcome*? [Revised]
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution. [No change]
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or *realization* that *sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others*. [Revised]
6. *Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?* [New]
7. *Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.* [New]

\*\*From CommonApp.org