

College Admissions During COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

What are colleges going to do if students cannot take the ACT or SAT?

Colleges and universities are aware of SAT and ACT testing concerns due to COVID-19. The college application review process aims to look closely at the whole student, taking note of extracurricular activities and academics. Many institutions use a holistic evaluation process; testing is one component used to identify students who are the best match for their academic and campus culture. There is an understanding that COVID-19 may impact an applicant's testing options, and consideration will be given for those circumstances during the student evaluation. Colleges and universities are closely monitoring testing cancellations and will communicate any necessary updates to their testing policy to prospective applicants.

Will colleges view 11th grade grades negatively if they are pass/fail?

No one will be penalized or put at a disadvantage because of changes to a school's grading policy. Students apply from many different grading systems, and colleges and universities always consider applications based on each high school's specific grading system. They will review an application based on multiple years of academic achievements and extracurricular engagement, as well as consider academic achievements in conjunction with qualitative support (such as recommendation letters and a demonstration of academic character throughout high school).

Since the Maryland Higher Education Commission is not making decisions until mid-June regarding grant amounts, what can I do about a college that has a May 1 or June 1 decision day?

Colleges and universities approach this situation differently, so it is important to contact individual schools to determine how they will handle this. For example, for some private institutions that may meet 100 percent demonstrated need, a student's financial contribution is not impacted by this delay. However, at public institutions and colleges, this funding may impact the overall financial aid offer to a student.

What is a CCIC? How do I get in touch with them if I do not have access to a computer or the internet?

The College and Career Information Coordinator (CCIC) works in the College and Career Center at your school. They provide college application information, host college events, assist families with financial aid information, help with Naviance (a college and career readiness tool) and more.

If I am a junior and have not started any of my college applications, how do I get started now that MCPS learning is taking place online?

Students and parents should email their school counselor or College and Career Information Coordinator (CCIC) to discuss the college application process.

In addition, many colleges offer virtual tours and information sessions that you can take advantage of.

What do I need to do to have my final transcript sent to my college?

Contact the registrar or CCIC at your school. They will be able to assist you.

My parents do not speak English and do not understand the college process. Can you help me explain to them what is involved and what we need to do to apply and get financial aid?

The CCIC or your counselor can connect with the ESOL counselor, another staff member or a partner organization that can help organize a meeting and assist with interpretation.

I received my acceptances and award letters, but am having trouble understanding the true cost of attending the schools and comparing my offers. How can I get help deciding where to enroll?

Please reach out to the financial aid office at each institution. Your CCIC or counselor can help you.

I am a junior and the first in my family to apply to college. What should I be working on now?

Your Naviance account has a wealth of information on the colleges tab of your portfolio. Additionally, you should schedule a meeting with your school counselor or CCIC at your school. They will help you research colleges and discuss how to determine the best fit for you.

Before COVID-19, I was hoping to go out of state for college, but now I am having second thoughts. What should I do?

Discuss your thoughts with your family to determine the best option for you. Several Maryland universities—public and private—are still accepting applications. Community colleges are as well. Some students are taking gap years, attending schools closer to home or transferring to community colleges.

Will MCPS offer a free in-school SAT in the fall since the spring test was cancelled?

MCPS is working with the College Board to offer SAT School Day in September or on the annual PSAT day in October.

The College Board provides [ongoing SAT updates](#).

[ACT updates can be found here.](#)

I have learning challenges and do not learn well in an online environment. If colleges are online in the fall, should I still go? Will I get my money back if I change my mind?

Discuss this with your family to determine the best option for you. We also recommend talking with the college admissions office regarding your concern with distance learning. You should also ask the college for information on its reimbursement policy.

Where can I get help with my college essay?

Your English department is a great place to start. You can also reach out to your counselor or CCIC for assistance.

This is also a resource for prospective college students:

<https://apply.jhu.edu/application-process/essays-that-worked/>

How do I decide what colleges to apply to?

Contact your CCIC, who can show you how to start a college search using Naviance and Collegeboard.org.

How do I learn about scholarship opportunities?

Contact your CCIC and make sure to check the school's counseling and CCIC websites. You can also find scholarship information in Naviance.

What are MCAG, FAFSA and the CSS Profile?

These are different ways that students can obtain financial aid for college. Families will fill out financial information starting Oct. 1 for FAFSA (Free Application For Federal Student Aid) and the CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service—only for certain colleges). The MCAG (Maryland College Access Grant) distributes grants from the state of Maryland. Students will create an account in December of their senior year in order to be able to receive grants from the state of Maryland.

Are fee waivers available to help me pay for the SAT or ACT? How do I get a waiver?

Yes, fee waivers are available for students who qualify and meet certain income guidelines.

Are fee waivers available to cover college application fees? How do I get a waiver?

Yes, but these are school-specific. Additionally, Common App and Coalition App have eligibility criteria included in the application. Also, as part of the Maryland College Application Campaign, several Maryland state colleges and universities are offering college application fee waivers. For more information, contact your school counselor or CCIC.

What should we do if our family's financial situation has changed due to COVID-19?

You should appeal your financial aid package with updated information.

Will colleges be flexible about allowing students to defer their enrollment (with the same financial aid package) for a semester or even a year? Some students may want to wait to decide since they don't yet know what the fall will look like due to the crisis.

Colleges and universities are prepared to assist you with how to defer enrollment. Students and families should contact colleges to discuss deferring enrollment before making a decision.

As a junior, what can I do now to make up for the loss of extracurricular activities and sports to make my application stronger?

Colleges are aware of COVID-19, and most students are in the same situation regarding extracurricular involvement. First, students should let the college know about their intended involvements. You can simply include them in your activities list in your application and note that they were impacted by COVID-19. You can also provide a brief description, if necessary, in the additional information section of the application. Reflecting on experiences you have had to date and the impact on your life will help support writing your college essay.

If I am interested in a college and am unable to visit or meet with the college representative at my school, what can I do to get engaged and show them my interest?

All colleges are offering virtual information sessions and a variety of workshops related to the college search, financial aid, application processes, and more.

What will recruitment efforts look like in the fall?

It's too early to tell, but, regardless of the current climate in the fall, colleges will continue virtual engagement.

How do I know if a school will still accept confirmations past May 1?

Students and families should contact the school directly. We also suggest visiting the National Association of College Admissions Counseling website. The website has COVID-19 updates from colleges and universities located here:

<https://www.nacacnet.org/news--publications/newsroom/college-admission-status-coronavirus/>

When will campuses have a decision about in-person versus online instruction for Fall 2020?

This information varies by college. Reach out to the institution directly.

How will colleges evaluate 11th grade?

The admissions review process has always been about how you navigate academic and personal circumstances, and anchors on three things:

Academic character: how you pursue academic interests based on the opportunities available to you

Impact and initiative: how you apply your learning to life and make an impact on the community around you

Making the match: how colleges see you interacting as a member of the college community and making the most of the opportunities at the university

While colleges will consider your experiences during this unique time knowing the impact this virus has had on many things—classroom learning, testing, extracurricular activities and enrichment—you should keep in mind that the college review process takes the entirety of your high school career into consideration.

What is the difference in parent contribution to schools with no loans, loans and scholarship displacement, including the ability to accurately estimate costs via the Net Price Calculator?

In addition to using the [Net Price Calculator](#) to determine financial contribution, we also recommend using the following:

[MyIntuition website](#)

Please note that not all colleges have MyIntuition.

[College Board EFC Calculator Tool](#), which provides both an estimate of the federal and institutional methodologies