

Gifted Education

COLLEGE & CAREER RESEARCH CURRICULUM

This guide is designed for students who are planning for college and/or career post high school. Required assignments should be completed, as they are things that will benefit every student. Additional resources are available for those seeking more support or knowledge about a particular area of focus or a situation/opportunity.



Get Organized	
There is a lot of information and deadlines heading your way which can cause a lot of stress. Start early and start organized so you can feel confident in your preparation and have time to make solid, thoughtful decisions about your future.	
Activity 1: Create a way to organize your research, thoughts, handouts, and anything related to career/college research. This could be digital, a binder, notebook, file box, vision board- just choose something that you will use and can easily share with others	
Activity 2: Create a timeline with important dates (application deadlines, scholarship deadlines, ACT/SAT test dates, school deadlines, etc.) and add important dates (start and end tasks) into your calendar. College Board has a GREAT resource- https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started/educator-resource-center/college-handouts-presentations	
Activity 3: Where do you think you will apply for college? Print out and complete the College Planner and Application Organization Form for each college you are considering . Continually update this form as you work through the application process. http://static.usnews.com/documents/college/onlineplanner.pdf (See Mrs. Bishop for additional examples)	
Resource: If you have no idea where you are going to college, skim this article to check out College Search Apps. Tell your teacher if you are able to download any of them to your phone or computer. http://www.usnews.com/education/blogs/high-school-notes/2014/01/06/3-apps-to-help-high-schoolers-organize-their-college-search	
Resource: Check out https://thescholarshipssystem.com/blog-for-students-families/how-to-build-the-ultimate-college-comparison-spreadsheet/ for help in designing your own College Comparison spreadsheet	
College Considerations and Explorations	
Colleges offer many different things and knowing what you want out of “the college experience” is important. Don’t just settle, select. The activities below will help you think about your experience and what a college can offer you. There are a lot of extra resources too!	
Activity 1: Complete the College Planning Values Assessment (see Mrs. Bishop for file). Reflect on the meaning behind your responses and what to look for in a college. File this document in your binder/system.	
Activity 2: Type a list of the 10 most important college criteria to you and make your own spreadsheet (search for a variety of “college comparison worksheets” and use them to help you decide on the ten traits or college criteria most important to you) . Think critically about what is truly important to you in a college, and make a draft list of college selection criteria that are important to you (examples: must be a small college, must be within 200 miles of home, must have college football, etc.)	
Activity 3: Attend a College Fair and have conversations with many different college reps. Write a short reflection on your experience including new thoughts, perceptions, or next steps.	
Activity 4: Meet your college representative! The college reps are a great way to get first access to insider application tips and scholarships. Put your best foot forward and follow-up with a thank you or handwritten note. If the school(s) to which are applying do not send a rep to OW, make email or phone contact with the person assigned to our area.	
Activity 5: Take a “field trip” down to the grade level counseling office and check out the bulletin boards or resources on the wall. Make an appointment with your counselor (Mr. Casel) to share progress, questions, and get advice on next steps. To document your visit, type up a few take-aways..	
Activity 6: Discuss your college plans with your parents!! You would be surprised to know how many seniors have not done this. Make sure you are on the same page. Prepare a list of talking points and questions you’d like to discuss (see Mrs. Bishop for a list of suggestions).	
Activity 7: Set up and attend at least two campus tours. It’s helpful to visit several campuses so you can get a feel for options and variety. A few close options include JCCC, KU, UMKC, Mid-America, Emporia if you need a nearby option!	
Resource: Peruse Chapter 5 of <i>College Planning for Gifted Students</i> , “The Application Process”. Make a list of key points you want to remember. (See Mrs. Bishop for book)	
Resource: Clean up your social media if necessary! Read a one page blog article “Social Media Matters to Colleges.” http://pfacollege.com/2018/07/students-social-media-matters-to-colleges/ Also, read “Do Colleges Really Look at Your Social Media accounts?” https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2017-02-10/colleges-really-are-looking-at-your-social-media-accounts	

Resource: Investigate whether or not your college(s) have an honors program. Read this blog about the pros and cons of applying to an honors program http://www.thecollegesolution.com/the-pros-and-cons-of-honors-colleges/	
Resource: 50 Top Colleges that Rival the IVY League: Skim <i>America's New 25 Elite Ivies</i> . Do any of these colleges interest you? Discuss with your Quest teacher. https://www.newsweek.com/americas-25-new-elite-ivies-108771	
Resource: Have you considered Ivy League? Skim <i>Should You Go to a Public Ivy?</i> Write a summary of your impressions or discuss with the Quest Teacher. https://blog.prepscholar.com/public-ivy-league-schools	
Resource: Visit College Board's My Big Future site and explore the helpful links. https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-started Explore colleges, majors, careers, and prep guides as you plan ahead. Discuss your findings with your Quest teacher and keep some notes in a digital or written journal.	
Resource: http://www.petersons.com/college-search/early-decision-edge-competition.aspx This website will provide information pertaining to Early Decision. Read the information that is available to you. Then, make a list of pros and cons concerning Early Decision. What are the benefits? What do you think? Do you see yourself doing Early Decision? Print the article and type your response. Another resource: http://www.admissionsconsultants.com/college/earlydecision.asp	

Career and Major Exploration

How do you choose a major when there are so many great options? Research shows selection based on strengths, interests, personality, and goals lead to career satisfaction. Don't select for a specific job, but more a lifestyle and opportunity to develop and utilize your strengths. The activities below will help guide your way. Recent statistics say that nearly one-third of all college students change their major at least once. Nearly ten percent change their major more than once. College is expensive. Invest some time now to really think about what might be a good fit for you.

Activity 1: Read this article: <https://puttylike.com/how-to-pick-a-college-major-when-you-have-a-lot-of-interests/> Complete the "Choosing Your Major" workbook to help you narrow down your options and select a major that utilizes your strengths and considers your interests.

Activity 2: Complete two career-related self-assessments from Mrs. Bishop's collection (Career Clusters, College Major, Holland Career Code, SDS Search). Select based upon your needs and questions (ask Bishop for help and assessments).

Activity 3: Explore Princeton's Majors search website- <https://www.princetonreview.com/majors?ceid=nav> Spend some time looking around and make a list of anything that sparks your interest and begs for more exploration!

Activity 4: Update your Career Cruising account surveys and use it to track interests and save information. The state requires use of this tool, so why not make it work to your advantage?

Activity 5: Go the website of at least one college in which you are interested and look up your intended major. Find the four-year plan and print it. Do these course titles look interesting to you? If not, you need to rethink your major intent.

Resource: Check out the book *Do What You Are*. Identify your personality type using the first several chapters (Myers-Briggs type assessment) and find the chapter that pertains to your type. Read through the recommendations on what you might find fulfilling and what types of career opportunities you might find appealing.

Your Resume, Your Story

Your college resume is really a tool for you to create a complete picture of your involvements, accomplishments, and goals. It contains volunteer experience, work experience, strengths, and skills that you can showcase.

Activity 1: Create an updated, working resume both in print and digital format. Some applications and scholarships require a resume. Research what your college/scholarship requirements are for essays and search for examples. Reference Chapter 4 "Your Resume" from *How to Prepare a Standout College Application*. Get feedback, edit, save, print, and put a copy in your binder.

Resource: After you have edited your resume, self-evaluate it using the rubric found here: <http://www.oneonta.edu/development/cdc/documents/ResumeRubric.pdf>

Resource: Read these resume tips from Princeton Review <https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/high-school-resume> Re-edit yours

Resource: Check out the resource tool in Career Cruising and use it to create a printable resume

Writing Your Application Essay

Not all colleges will REQUIRE an essay for acceptance. When all other things are equal college admission officers report that a well written essay can tip the balance in your favor. Often essays can be tweaked and reused for different purposes. Copies of your final submissions should be printed and placed in your Quest binders.

Activity 1: Check out the article "How to Write a Killer College Essay for the College Application You Deserve" https://www.huffingtonpost.com/pavita-singh-mph/how-to-write-a-killer-col_b_13805290.html. Share your progress with the Quest teacher as you work through writing your own!

Activity 2: Take your essay to the writing center for proofreading. Make corrections/changes and take it back. You should have your essay proofread several times before final submission!	
Resource: Read Chapter 6* in <i>Accepted! 50 Successful College Admission Essays</i> . This chapter is humorous but it provides really useful comments from real admission counselors and contains info on common essay mistakes, etc. Highlight and add to your binder.	
Resource – Don't write a boring essay! Remember admissions officers have read thousands of essays. What will make yours noticeable? Another quick resource: https://www.livecareer.com/career/advice/jobs/college-application-essay	
Resource: Read "Why did you choose this college?" essay tips. It is often a supplemental short essay question. Found here: http://pfacollege.com/2017/08/answer-college-supplemental-essays/ See additional samples here: https://applyingtocollege.org/2012/09/22/how-to-answer-why-this-college-pt-3-essay-samples/ and another article here: https://www.noodle.com/articles/how-to-answer-why-this-school-on-college-applications	
Teacher Recommendations	
Not all college applications require teacher recommendations. However, it's a great thing to have for programs and makes you feel really good to read them later on! Be sure to provide your Senior Personal Profile and give at least 3 weeks notice if you want a quality letter. Ask in person <i>and</i> in writing via email or handwritten note.	
Activity 1 – Complete the Senior Personal Profile* found here: http://teachers.olatheschools.com/oecounseling/files/2016/02/Personal-Profile_updated.pdf Be sure to download and save the document to your personal folder! Keep a copy in your binder.	
Activity 2 – Give the teacher whom you are asking a copy of your Senior Personal Profile AND make sure they understand what they are recommending you for (which college admissions or which specific scholarship). The more details you can provide your recommender the better the recommendation! Be sure to think about who to ask. Most often selective colleges want a core teacher in your area of interest. Who knows you the most? Who can write the best, most personal recommendation?	
Activity 3: Show gratitude to your recommenders. Good recommendation letters take hours to write. Send a handwritten thank you or other thoughtful gesture to show you appreciate their efforts (a little snack, a senior picture with note, etc.) You may need to ask them again –even after graduation!	
Scholarships and College Financing	
Be sure you have discussed college costs with your parents! What are their expectations? Do they match yours? You must include them in the process so there are no surprises and you know what you can expect as far as financial support.	
Activity 1: Use the College Funding Planning sheet* found in the hanging file (see Mrs. Bishop) to create a funding plan	
Activity 2: College Funding https://www.princetonreview.com/college-advice/paying-for-college This website will provide information pertaining to college funding. Read all of the information that is available to you. Then, create and design a college funding plan for the colleges that are on your preliminary list. The plan should be set up to fit your needs. Be honest about how much each college is going to cost, how much you can afford, and if your parents are going to contribute any money. Think about tuition, room and board, books, food, activities, etc. Be as accurate and thorough as possible.	
Activity 3: Find and identify two scholarships (<i>at the very least</i>) and apply. Document that you have done so by printing your completing application and put it in your Quest binder. Remember, fewer students will apply to scholarships requiring an essay (better odds).	
Activity 4: – Read the blog article "How to Write a Winning Scholarship Essay in Ten Steps." Found here: http://student-tutor.com/blog/how-to-write-a-winning-scholarship-essay/ If using the online article copy and paste a recap of the ten steps to put in your Quest binder or if using the printed article highlight the recap of the ten steps found in the conclusion and put in your Quest binder.	
Resource: Visit the Olathe School District Scholarship website on a regular basis. http://schools.olatheschools.com/buildings/scholarships/ This should be your first place to look because the pool of applicants is relatively small. Use the Scholarship Tracker* found in the hanging file. Keep this updated and in your binder.	
Miscellaneous	
Other helpful tools and things to check out!	
Resource: Take the College Lingo Quiz* . Check your answers, label and put in binder. http://www.collegeprep101.com/college-terminology.html	
Resource: From <i>College Planning for Gifted Students</i> book read the "College Planning Glossary and Glossary of Financial Terms"*. Type up a list of unknown terms OR highlight the unknown terms from printing list in hanging file, label and add to binder.	
Resource: Read and highlight article "32 Ways to Get the Most out of College"*	

Resource: Attend formal, college-sponsored social events of a college of your choice (i.e. sporting events, recruitment luncheon, etc.), discuss with Quest teacher	
Resource: Connect with an alumni from the colleges you are interested in and exchange emails, share with Quest teachers	
Resource: Choose and read a book from the “AP Suggested College Reading List” online	

Be sure to visit Olathe West Counselor’s page found here:

<https://www.olatheschools.org/domain/97> for additional great resources!