



# **WILBRAHAM & MONSON ACADEMY**

## **College Counseling Policies & Procedures**

*A Guide for the Class of 2010*

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## Wilbraham & Monson Academy College Counseling Office Information

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### Important Reference Information

Wilbraham & Monson Academy 423 Main Street Wilbraham, MA 01095	Main Tel.: 413.596.6811 Main Fax: 413.596.2448
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CEEB or High School Code: 222400

### Useful Web Links

<b>Naviance Family Connection:</b>	<a href="http://connection.naviance.com/wma">http://connection.naviance.com/wma</a>
<b>Common Application online:</b>	<a href="http://www.commonapp.org">www.commonapp.org</a>
<b>ACT:</b>	<a href="http://www.actstudent.org">www.actstudent.org</a>
<b>SAT:</b>	<a href="http://www.collegeboard.com">www.collegeboard.com</a>
<b>NCAA Clearinghouse:</b>	<a href="http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.com">www.ncaaclearinghouse.com</a>
<b>Financial Aid</b> (federal funds) (non-federal funds)	<a href="http://www.fafsa.ed.gov">www.fafsa.ed.gov</a> <a href="https://profileonline.collegeboard.com">https://profileonline.collegeboard.com</a>
<b>Scholarships</b>	<a href="http://www.fastweb.com">www.fastweb.com</a>

## **WMA College Counseling Philosophy**

Our primary goal is to guide students in the college search, application and selection process. Utilizing a seminar format, individual meetings, and various other counseling resources, we support our students in researching and identifying a range of colleges well suited to their interests, needs, and abilities. It is important to note that there is no solitary “right” college for a student. A number of colleges will be wonderful matches, and our collective goal is to identify that group of “good fit” colleges for each student.

### **Expectations**

It is expected that WMA's students will:

- Take an active and leading role in the process
- Engage in genuine self-assessment and college research
- Pay attention to announcements/e-mails/meeting requirements with counselors
- Pay attention to deadlines throughout the college application process
- Check in with parents and reinforce partnership throughout the process
- Work cooperatively with faculty, counselors, coaches, and parents to maximize opportunities

It is expected that WMA's parents will:

- Continue to guide, support, and trust your son or daughter
- Encourage your son or daughter to take the lead
- Keep counselor informed about any questions or concerns you may have so that we can work together on behalf of your child
- Keep an open mind about what a “good” college is
- Use positive language
- Teach your child how to be an effective self-advocate

It is expected that WMA's college counselors will:

- Work collaboratively with all parties involved in the college process to ensure that students are well supported in the college search, application and decision process
- Provide timely information about the college process
- Provide students with best fit options for potential colleges
- Learn about and communicate new trends and developments, both nationally and at individual colleges

## **Wilbraham & Monson Academy's Application Policies & Procedures**

- **Students are expected to attend Senior Seminar and individual sessions with their college counselor.**

Senior Seminar will occur during the first half of the fall trimester. During these meetings, important information about the college application process is discussed. Attending Senior Seminar is mandatory.

Seniors are required to meet with their college counselor for individual meetings a **minimum of 3 times** throughout the fall trimester. The first meeting must occur by October 1, 2009.

- **Students are limited to the number of colleges they can apply to.**

Students may apply to, **at most, ten** colleges. This maximum number allows a varied and competitive list without becoming counterproductive. Because students can only attend one college, this policy encourages students and their families to evaluate colleges, prioritize what is important in the college search, and to make informed decisions about which colleges will offer the best fit. Excessive applications to an institution can adversely affect the chances for all applicants.

If a student exceeds the limit of ten, the student will be charged \$20 per additional application.

- **Students are responsible for completing their own college applications.**

- There are two primary ways to apply to colleges:
  - 1) The college's own application (hardcopy or online, if available), or
  - 2) The Common Application
- Many colleges accept the Common Application, but it is the student's responsibility to find out if their targeted college uses the Common Application or requires their own specific application. Students may apply online ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)) or by mailing a hard copy. If a college does use the Common Application, they may also require a specific school supplemental application. Again, it is the student's responsibility to find out if their college also requires a supplement(s).

- Students will begin filling out the main portion of the Common Application during Senior Seminar. If students have more than one application to complete or additional supplements to complete, they will have to do so on their own time.
- Students must have their applications ready to submit **at least 2 weeks before** the college's official deadline.

**\* Please note that many application deadlines may occur on January 1, when WMA is on break. When this occurs, the student is responsible for having their application ready to send out 2 weeks before the beginning of WMA's vacation.**

- When the students are ready to submit their applications, they must notify their college counselor and Ms. Scott. The college counseling office will review the completed application, and with the students will package the transcript, letters of recommendation, and any other required documents. If a student is submitting a paper application, it will be included in these packets. Electronic applications can be submitted via the Internet once the noted packets are ready for submittal. Recent trends indicate that most colleges prefer online applications.
- The student is responsible for paying any postage.

### ➤ **Teacher Recommendations**

- Most colleges require two teacher recommendations from either junior or senior year teachers.
- Students should talk with their college counselor about who they are considering for letters of recommendation.
- There are a minimum of 2 forms that students will give to their teachers:
  - WMA's "Request for Teacher Recommendation" form (available in the College Counseling Office)
  - The college's recommendation form or the Common Application's "Teacher Evaluation" form. The student's section must be completed by the student prior to giving the form to the teacher.
- After receipt of the recommendation/evaluation forms by a designated teacher, he/she will complete the forms and prepare a letter of recommendation. The teacher will then turn in these forms and letters to the College Counseling office. The office will send all letters of recommendation when the application is complete.

- Students must notify teachers of their application deadlines. Students must ask teachers for a letter of recommendation **at least six (6) weeks in advance of any deadline**. Remember, the College Counseling Office asks for all completed material 2 weeks before the actual college deadline.

### ➤ **Secondary School Report**

- The secondary school report is completed by the student's college counselor.
- Like the teacher recommendation forms, the student must complete the student section of the form prior to handing it in to the college counselor.
- Students should give this form to their college counselor **at least six (6) weeks in advance of any deadline**.

### ➤ **Standardized Testing**

- Students are responsible for determining what tests are required by the colleges to which they are applying.
- Most colleges require the SAT Reasoning Test and sometimes two or three SAT Subject Tests (SAT II's). Some colleges will accept the ACT Plus Writing in place of the SAT Reasoning Test and Subject Tests.
- Students are responsible for submitting official standardized test scores to each of their colleges. Students can send official scores through their online accounts directly from the testing agencies: College Board ([www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)), ACT ([www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)), and TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language – only for international students) ([www.ETS.org](http://www.ETS.org)). Please note that colleges will not consider scores official if they come from WMA, and it will take up to three weeks for the agencies to submit the scores.

### ➤ **Types of Applications**

- Early Decision (ED) – Early Decision applications are binding and applicants are **required to enroll if accepted**. Students may not apply ED to more than one college. If a student does apply ED, the college should be the student's first choice and the decision must be discussed with their college counselor and their parents. Most ED deadlines occur either November 1 or November 15 and students are typically notified of the college's decision in mid-December.

- Early Action (EA) – Early Action applications are **not binding**. Like ED, most EA deadlines occur either November 1 or November 15 and students are typically notified of the college's decision in mid-December.
- Rolling Admissions – This is a process in which colleges review a student's application as soon as it is complete and make a decision on the application shortly after it is received. Students can optimize their chance of admission by applying early in the process.
- Regular Decision – This is the most common way to apply to colleges. Students apply to colleges according to their regular deadline, which typically occurs in January. Students receive decisions from the college in late March or early April.

### ➤ College Visits

- WMA students are entitled to three college visits in their graduating year. A college visit is perhaps the most informative tool in the college search process, and all students are encouraged to make use of the visit program. Most students use their visit days in the fall term; however, some reserve their days for the winter or spring.
- Students should discuss their visit plan with their college counselor.
- A College/University Visit Request form, available in the College Counseling Office, is required for all college visits. The form provides all pertinent details of the college visit, including dates of travel and return, mode of transportation, etc., and must be signed by the student's advisor, coach, college counselor, the Dean of Students, and each of the student's teachers. Permission for the visit must be acquired **no less than one week** before departure.

### ➤ Colleges Visiting WMA

- Admission representatives from more than 80 colleges and universities visit WMA every fall to conduct information sessions. This is a good opportunity to learn more about a particular institution and to meet a member of their admission team. Interested students are welcome to attend if they provide at least one day's notice to their teacher (if they have a schedule class that period); the teacher will then provide the student with a written pass to attend. Students can sign up for any session via Naviance Family Connection.

## ➤ Financial Aid

- Given the rising cost of education, finances become an increasingly significant piece of the college plan. Parents are encouraged to openly discuss with students the overall fiscal realities, which can include financial aid. There are two primary types of financial aid, federal and institutional.
- Families can apply for federal financial aid through FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) beginning in January of a student's senior year. Online applications are available at [www.FAFSA.ed.gov](http://www.FAFSA.ed.gov). Families can also apply for institutional financial aid by completing a CSS/Financial Aid Profile through the College Board at [www.collegeboard.com/parent/pay](http://www.collegeboard.com/parent/pay). Profile forms are available for filing as early as November 2009.
- There are three basic types of federal student financial aid: grants, work-study, and loans. Grants are gifts and do not have to be repaid. Work-study is student assistance in the form of college employment to offset the cost of schooling. Loans enable students and parents to borrow funds to meet educational costs. These loans are interest bearing and typically offer extended payment terms.
- For specific financial aid questions, families are encouraged to visit with area college financial aid officers given their expertise in the areas of federal, state and institutional aid programs. Financial aid officers can also provide details about private and governmental loan programs available.
- Families are urged to review financial aid and scholarship Web sites as useful resources. These include: [www.finaid.com](http://www.finaid.com), [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com), and [www.collegeanswer.com](http://www.collegeanswer.com), [www.salliemae.com](http://www.salliemae.com), [www.schoolsoup.com](http://www.schoolsoup.com), [www.careersandcolleges.com](http://www.careersandcolleges.com) and [www.allstudentloan.org](http://www.allstudentloan.org).

## ➤ College Decision

- Once a student has decided to accept an offer of admission, he or she is required to notify the remaining colleges or universities of their decision. Most regular decision or early action programs do not require student decisions until the May 1 National Candidates Reply Date, leaving ample time for students to make an informed decision. If a student decides in favor of a college, they are required to submit any necessary enrollment forms, along with a security deposit.

***Please note that students cannot deposit with more than one school.***  
When a student deposits at a college or university, they must send application withdrawal letters to their remaining schools. Form letters are available in the College Counseling office.

➤ **NCAA Clearinghouse**

- Students who are interested in participating in college athletics should familiarize themselves with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). For those considering institutions at the Division I and II levels, it is necessary to register with and be cleared by the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. To be cleared by the Clearinghouse, a student must graduate from high school and meet specific core course, grade point average, and standardized college admission test score requirements. Students may register online at [www.ncaaclearinghouse.com](http://www.ncaaclearinghouse.com) after completion of their junior year. Students must also submit the required NCAA student release form, available online, to the College Counseling office so we can then forward a student transcript to the NCAA. Students must also electronically submit their SAT or ACT test scores to the NCAA using the noted Web sites.

## **College Application Checklist**

- ✓ **Student has met with their college counselor a minimum of 3 times before their applications are ready to be sent out. The first of these visits has occurred before October 1, 2009.**
- ✓ **Student has discussed with their college counselor and parents/guardians their final list of colleges. This list does not exceed 10 colleges.**
- ✓ **Student has fully researched each college's application requirements. They are aware of deadlines, supplements, and standardized testing requirements.**
- ✓ **Student has registered for any fall or winter standardized test (SAT, SAT II, ACT or TOEFL) in a timely manner.**
- ✓ **Student has completed the application at least two weeks before the college's deadline. They have informed their college counselor and Ms. Scott when they are ready to submit the application and all other documents, again no less than two weeks before the college's deadline.**
- ✓ **Student has asked teachers for recommendations at least six (6) weeks before their application deadline. They have submitted all necessary forms to their teachers with the request.**
- ✓ **Student has submitted the Secondary School Report form to their college counselor at least six (6) weeks before their application deadline.**
- ✓ **Student has submitted official standardized testing scores to colleges through the noted electronic Web site accounts.**
- ✓ **Parents have filed the FAFSA and CSS Profile by the noted deadlines.**
- ✓ **Student has discussed their offers of admission with their college counselor and parents, and has weighed their options.**
- ✓ **Ultimately, student has deposited at one institution and has sent withdrawal letters to remaining schools.**

**WMA College Counseling  
Statement of Understanding**

I have read and understand the policies and procedures of WMA's College Counseling Office.

This form must be signed and turned into the College Counseling Office prior to the first day of classes on September 10.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date