

Wilbraham & Monson Academy

College Counseling Office
Policies & Procedures

2020-2021

A Guide for the Graduating Class

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A. Statement of Understanding (Signature Required)

I have read and understand the policies and procedures of the Wilbraham & Monson Academy College Counseling Office.

Please Print Student's Full Name: _____

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Parent

Date

This form must be signed and submitted to the College Counseling Office by Oct. 1.

Please mail the signed form to: Wilbraham & Monson Academy, Attn. Sandi Scott. You may also scan and email it to sscott@wma.us, or fax to 413.596.2448.

B. Contact Information

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Director of College Counseling

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To schedule an appointment: calendly.com/jboozang

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C. Important Reference Information

Address:

Wilbraham & Monson Academy
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Wilbraham, MA 01095

Main Phone: 413.596.6811

Main Fax: 413.596.2448

Website: www.wma.us

CEEB or High School Code: 222400

D. Useful Web Links

Naviance Family Connection.....www.connection.naviance.com/wma

Common Applicationwww.commonapp.org

ACT.....www.actstudent.org

SATwww.collegeboard.com

NCAA Eligibility Centerwww.web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/

Financial Aid (U.S. Federal financial aid)www.fafsa.ed.gov

(institutional financial aid).....www.cssprofile.collegeboard.org/

Scholarshipswww.fastweb.com, www.scholarships.com

(Please refer to the Scholarships section of your Naviance account for additional information.)

E. Philosophy

Our primary goal is to thoughtfully and purposefully 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 singular “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.

F. Expectations

It is expected that WMA students will:

- Take an active and leading role in the entire search and application process
- Engage in genuine self-assessment and college research
- Pay attention to announcements, emails and meeting requirements with counselors
- Pay attention to deadlines throughout the college application process
- Pay attention to the Naviance schedule of college admission representative information sessions at WMA
- 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 parents will:

- Continue to guide, support and trust your child
- Encourage your child to take the lead and to communicate their thoughts, feelings, concerns and preferences
- Keep the counselor informed about any questions or concerns you may have so we can work together on behalf of your child
- Keep an open mind, in particular regarding what may define a “good” college
- Encourage your child to be an effective self-advocate

It is expected that WMA college counselors will:

- Work collaboratively with all parties involved in the college process to ensure students are fully supported in the college search, application and decision process
- Provide timely information about the college process
- Provide students with a balanced list of good-fit options for prospective colleges and universities
- Actively engage in professional development and effectively communicate new trends and developments, nationally and at individual colleges

G. Application Policies & Procedures

1. Workshops & College Counseling Meetings

Students are expected to attend workshops for the graduating class and individual sessions with their college counselor.

- Workshops for the graduating class will occur during the first half of the fall trimester and dates will be announced prior to the start of the school year. During these meetings, important information about the college application process is discussed.
- Seniors and PGs are required to meet with their college counselor for individual meetings a **minimum of three times** during the fall trimester. The first meeting must occur by Sept. 15.
- Seniors and PGs are required to meet with Ms. Scott at least once before Oct. 1 to review application submittal procedures and recommendation letter policies.

2. Transcripts

Students who attended another high school prior to enrolling at Wilbraham & Monson Academy must submit a complete (and in the case of international students, translated) transcript from their previous high school to the College Counseling Office by the start of senior year.

3. College Application Limit

We strongly recommend that a student submit no more than 10 college applications. This maximum number provides for a balanced and competitive list without becoming counterproductive. Because students can only attend one college, this policy encourages students and their families to thoughtfully evaluate institutions, prioritize what is most important in the college search and to then make informed decisions about which colleges will offer the best fit. A comprehensive search should yield a final list of no more than 10 schools. It's important to note that applying to more than 10 can be overwhelming and may contribute to an inordinately high number of applications from WMA to an institution. This may adversely affect the chances of admission for all applicants.

If a student chooses to apply to more than 10 schools, a surcharge of \$25 will be assessed for each additional application.

4. Completing College Applications

Students are responsible for completing their own college applications.

There are two primary ways to apply to colleges:

1. A college's own online application .
2. The Common Application (www.commonapp.org)
 - Many colleges accept the Common Application; however, it is the student's responsibility to find out if the prospective college uses the Common Application or requires a specific application. If a college does use the Common Application, school specific supplemental information may also be required and often includes an additional essay. Again, it is the student's responsibility to determine each school's application requirements, including any supplement(s).
 - Students must have their applications ready to submit **at least two weeks before** the college's official deadline. Note that deadlines for specific majors, e.g., nursing, and some scholarship programs are sometimes earlier than regular deadlines.

Please note: Many application deadlines occur on Jan. 1 when WMA is on break. When this occurs, the student must be ready to apply two weeks before the beginning of WMA's vacation.

- When the application is ready for submission, the student must notify his or her college counselor. The college counselor will review the student's completed application in detail prior to submittal.
- The student will then schedule a meeting with Sandi Scott, who will submit the student's transcript, letters of recommendation and any other required documents electronically through Naviance.
- If a specific college does not accept application materials electronically, the College Counseling Office will package all application materials and mail them to the specific college.
- The student is responsible for paying all application fees and any required postage. Application fees can be paid online using a credit or debit card.

5. Teacher Recommendations

- Most colleges require two teacher recommendations from either junior or senior year teachers.
- Rarely is there a need to submit more than two letters of recommendation to a college. Students are responsible for coordinating submittal of any external recommendations.
- Students should confer with their counselor to determine which teachers would be best suited to serve as recommenders.
- At least four weeks prior to the first application deadline, a student is required to personally request a recommendation letter from their teacher and to subsequently email Sandi Scott with confirmation that a recommendation is forthcoming. That teacher will then be assigned as a recommender in the student's Naviance account.
- After the teacher agrees to write, the student will complete a Teacher Recommendation Survey that is accessed in Naviance (go to About Me, My Surveys, Surveys Not Started).
- Teachers upload recommendation letters and forms to a student's Naviance according to the following deadlines:

College Application Deadline:	Recommendation Due Date:
October 15	October 1
Nov. 1 - Nov. 15	October 20
Dec. 1 - Dec. 15	November 20
Jan. 1 or after	December 1

Students must notify teachers of their application deadlines. Students must ask teachers for a letter of recommendation **at least four weeks** before WMA's internal teacher recommendation due date.

6. Secondary School Report

- The Secondary School Report (SSR) is completed by the student's college counselor and will be completed and submitted electronically through Naviance.
- Similar to teacher recommendations, if any of the colleges on a student's list do not accept supporting application material electronically, the student must give their college counselor a hardcopy of any college specific form.

7. Midyear School Report

In January, the College Counseling Office submits Midyear Reports (MYR) to all colleges where students have active applications. The grades used for these reports are the first semester (S1).

8. Final Report

A final transcript is sent after Commencement to the college or university where the student matriculates. Transcripts are also sent to the NCAA for those students who have indicated they will be competing in athletics at the Division I or II level.

9. Reporting Disciplinary Incidents to Colleges and Universities

Wilbraham & Monson Academy's motto, "Live clean, speak true, work hard, play fair," embodies the collective and noble values celebrated for generations within our WMA community. To act responsibly, with compassion and integrity are longstanding ideals that define our school, inspire decisions and interactions, and foster a heightened sense of purpose and character. In this light and in compliance with the National Association for College Admission Counseling's Statement of Principles of Good Practice, WMA will report to prospective colleges and universities any adverse changes to a student's standing that result from a violation of a major school rule, the effects of which have a direct and potentially negative impact on the well-being of others or the WMA community. Changes in status that meet this standard include violations of a major school rule that result in suspension, probation, removal, dismissal or expulsion.

Wilbraham & Monson will also report any adverse change in a leadership position resulting from disciplinary measures and will also disclose any material change to a student's course load.

We expect and encourage our students to respond honestly and directly when asked to disclose noted disciplinary incidents on their college applications, or later if an application or applications have been submitted. If a reportable change occurs after applications have been submitted, the student is required to notify colleges or universities within two weeks of the date of status change. In reporting changes, the student should confer with his or her college advisor to ensure that the effect and wording of the notification are appropriate.

Clearly, disciplinary matters are of concern to colleges and universities; however, our experience suggests that they understand that young people make mistakes and learn from them. Admission committees are generally more concerned with the manner in which students respond to any disciplinary measures than the actual transgression. A thoughtful, mature and articulate response to a discipline infraction can illustrate a student's accountability and growth as an individual.

10. Standardized Testing

- Students are responsible for determining the testing requirements for each school to which they will apply.
- Although an increasing number of colleges and universities have implemented test-optional policies, many institutions require either the SAT I or the ACT. Some colleges also require two or three SAT II (SAT Subject Test) scores but may accept the ACT Plus Writing in place of the SAT Reasoning Test and Subject Tests.
- Students are responsible for understanding the standardized testing requirements for each of their colleges and for submitting official standardized test scores to each school. Students can send official scores through their online accounts directly from their individual testing agency accounts: College Board (www.collegeboard.org), ACT (www.actstudent.org) and TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language (only for international students, 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 your scores. Finally, a list of test-optional schools can be found at www.fairtest.org.

11. 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 Nov. 1 or Nov. 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 Nov. 1 or Nov. 15 and students are typically notified of the college's decision in mid-December. Students can apply EA to more than one school, unless they apply under a Restricted Early Action (REA) or an Early Action Single Choice program.
- Restricted Early Action (REA) or Early Action Single Choice – Another non-binding application plan, students apply early, typically by Nov. 1 or Nov. 15, and are notified by mid-December. It is important to note that the restriction under this program is that a student may not apply ED to any other school.
- 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, typically within three weeks. Students can optimize their chance of admission by applying early in the process.
- Priority and Fast Applications – Some colleges will offer accelerated decisions to those students who apply within a certain time period. Applications received on or before the specified priority date will be reviewed first and students can expect an earlier decision. Institutions may utilize this program to bolster the applicant pool, and often entice prospective applicants with preferential consideration for admission, housing and scholarships. We generally discourage students from applying under such a plan, so be sure to discuss any invitations to do so with your counselor.
- Regular Decision This is the most common application type. 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.

12. Demonstrating Interest

A growing number of schools will consider a student's level of interest in their institution in the overall admission decision. In short, admission offices want to admit qualified students who want to be part of their community. Many offices track an applicant's level of interest and place a premium on campus visits, perhaps interviews, attendance at regional information sessions or meeting with a college representative on the WMA campus. Other ways to demonstrate interest include internet inquiries, phone calls, communication with coaches, opening emails from colleges, etc.

13. College Visits

- A campus visit is perhaps the most useful tool in evaluating a prospective college or university as a potential fit. It can also be an integral way of demonstrating interest in a school. We strongly encourage students and families to visit campus during the summer months before senior year, if not before. For each visit, be sure to register for a tour and information session via the school's admission website.
- Students are entitled to three separate trips, each of which may require multiple days dependent upon the number of schools and distance travelled.
- At least three days prior to departure, a College Visit Request form and a detailed itinerary of the trip is required. 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 three days before departure. Visits that extend school breaks, including long weekends, will not be approved.
- Students will be excused from classes to visit college campuses in their graduating year. Most students will use their visit days in the fall term; however, some will reserve their days for the winter or spring.
 - Members of the graduating class may be excused from up to four days of school in the spring for planned college visits to high-interest schools that have offered admission.
 - Note that the four days cannot be consecutive. Only two days may be consecutive. As an example, the consecutive days could be Monday and Tuesday, or Wednesday and Thursday, or Friday and Monday.

- Official documentation confirming a visit is required from each school. College admission offices provide said documentation readily upon request and it must be submitted to Ms. Julie Chan in the Deans Office the morning after returning to campus.
- Academic and athletic policies remain in place and any absences must be approved by teachers, coaches and others noted in the College Visit Request form.
- Any campus visits are subject to final approval from the Deans and College Counseling offices, and will be limited to those students in good academic and citizenship standing.
- Campus visits for members of the junior class will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- Students should discuss their visit plan with their college counselor.

14. Colleges Visiting WMA

Admission representatives from more than 80 colleges and universities visit WMA each fall, either in-person or virtually, 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 juniors and seniors are welcome to attend if they provide at least one day's notice to their teacher if they have a scheduled class that period. Students can sign up for any session via Naviance Family Connection and on the signup sheets outside the College Counseling Office.

15. Interviews

- On-Campus Interviews – Many schools, in particular smaller liberal arts colleges, offer applicants the option of on-campus interviews. If you are interested in pursuing an interview, please discuss this with your counselor. The College Counseling office conducts interview workshops, including mock interviews, for any interested students.

- Alumni Interviews – In lieu of, and sometimes in addition to, on-campus interviews, many schools offer alumni interviews. Some schools require alumni interviews as part of the application process. In these cases, the admission office or interviewer will contact the applicant after the application has been submitted to schedule the time and location of the interview. At other institutions, an applicant can request an alumni interview if he or she is unable to get to campus.
- With any interview, it is always advisable to follow up with a thank you note or email. Be sure to personalize your email by addressing it to the person with whom you met.

16. 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: need based federal aid and merit-based institutional aid

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.

All families can also apply for institutional financial aid by completing a CSS/Financial Aid Profile available at www.collegeboard.com/parent/pay. Note that some institutions require their own profile form which can be downloaded from the tuition or financing pages of a school's website. Profile forms are available for filing as early as November. Merit-based aid is offered by individual institutions to applicants with particular strengths.

- Families of U.S. citizens and permanent residents can apply for federal financial aid through FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) beginning in October of a student's senior year. Online applications are available at www.FAFSA.ed.gov.
- Most colleges and universities offer a Net Price or Net Tuition Calculator on their websites to help families determine the level of financial aid they might qualify for at a particular institution.

- 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 websites as useful resources. These include: www.studentaid.gov, www.fastweb.com, www.scholarships.com, www.collegeanswer.com, www.salliemae.com and www.careersandcolleges.com.
- At U.S. colleges and universities, significant financial aid is not usually available to international students. Some of the most selective colleges offer need-based aid to international students while other schools may offer some merit-based grants to international students. Any international students that will require financial aid should consult with their college counselor.

17. College 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 decisions. When a student decides in favor of a college, they are required to submit any necessary enrollment forms, along with a specified security deposit. Please note that a student may deposit at **only one** institution. Depositing at more than one school is unethical, is not allowed and may jeopardize a student's matriculation. Instructions for selecting and depositing at an institution are provided in the admission portal or the admission page of a chosen school.

If a student has been placed on a waitlist at a higher preference school, they should deposit at **one** of the schools offering admission pending a final decision from the waitlist institution. Also, after depositing, it is very important that a student declines offers of admission from all other institutions. An example of appropriate wording in this regard can be found in the Document Resources section in Naviance.

18. NCAA Eligibility Center

Students athletes who are interested in participating in college athletics should inform their college counselor and familiarize themselves with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and its eligibility mandates. Those aspiring to compete at the NCAA Division I or II level, are required to create a NCAA Certification Account by the end of junior year at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/> for consideration of academic eligibility and amateur status. Specific eligibility requirements are clearly delineated on the NCAA website.

H. College Application Checklist

- Student has met with their college counselor a minimum of three times before their applications are ready to be sent out. The first of these visits will take place prior to Sept. 15.
- Student has met with Ms. Scott at least once before Oct. 1.
- Student has discussed his or her final list of colleges with their college counselor and parents. This list should not exceed 10 colleges. The student should provide their counselor with at least six week's notice of their intention to apply, prior to a school's application deadline.
- Student has fully researched each college's application requirements and is 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 is prepared to submit a completed application at least two weeks before a college's deadline and has scheduled a meeting with their college counselor for a final review of the application and required documents.
- Student has asked teachers for recommendations at least four weeks before his or her earliest application deadline. Once a teacher agrees to write, the student will provide all required forms, including the teacher recommendation survey.
- Student has submitted official standardized testing scores to colleges as required through their account portal(s) prior to the application deadlines.
- Parents have filed the FAFSA and CSS Profile by the noted deadlines, if applying for need-based or merit-based aid.
- Student has discussed offers of admission with their college counselor and parents, and has made a thoughtful and informed decision.
- Ultimately, the student has deposited at one institution and has sent withdrawal emails to their remaining schools.