College Admissions From A-to-Z
Poll time!

Who is joining us today?
COLLEGEWISE MISSION

Our mission to families and educators

Is to be the **most trusted source** of expert advice to help students access the transformative power of higher education.
WHO ARE WE?

Since 1999, Collegewise has mastered simplifying the college application process for students. Here’s why 28,000+ families have trusted Collegewise:

- Personalized Approach
- Seasoned Experts
- Referral Based
- Local Knowledge
- Global Expertise
- Collective Wisdom
Kevin McMullin
Founder and Chief Education Officer at Collegewise

- Founded Collegewise in Irvine, California in 1999
- Has spoken at more than 500 college admissions events
- Has over 20 years of experience in the admissions space
- Author
Brenna Heintz
Collegewise Counselor and Former Admissions Officer

• Tufts University and the University of Pennsylvania graduate
• Former MIT and Swarthmore admissions officer
• Currently supports Collegewise students through the admissions process
Christopher Logan
Collegewise Counselor

- Yale University graduate & two-time recipient of the Yale’s Light Fellowship
- Author of Collegewise’s Race-Based Affirmative Action in College Admissions guide
- Currently supports Collegewise students through the admissions process
WHAT YOU’RE HEARING

ELITE COLLEGES ARE TOUGHER THAN EVER, PERFECT GRADES DON’T SUFFICE

COLLEGES WHERE ACCEPTANCE RATES HAVE DECREASED THE MOST SINCE 2001

HOW TO GET INTO THE IVY LEAGUE, ‘EXTRAORDINARY’ ISN’T ENOUGH THESE DAYS

ELITE COLLEGES REPORTING RECORD LOWS IN ADMISSION
THE REALITY

01 There are over 4,000 4-year colleges and universities in the United States.

02 Colleges accept, on average, 2/3 of their applicants.

*Source: National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)
ACCEPTANCE RATES

The United States has the most open and accessible system of higher education anywhere in the world.
THE REALITY

01 There are over 4,000 4-year colleges and universities in the United States.

02 Colleges accept, on average, 2/3 of their applicants.

03 Seventy-two percent of all undergraduate students received some type of financial aid in 2019–20.

*Source: National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES)
HOW TO ENGAGE IN COLLEGE PLANNING

Don’t assume you aren’t eligible.

- Don’t take yourself out of the running by assuming you won’t be admitted to a specific college.

Begin by investigating the public universities in your state.

- Most give admissions preference and lower tuition to in-state students.
- Academic requirements are a good proxy for college eligibility.
What do colleges evaluate?
ACADEMICS

COURSE SELECTION
Always evaluated in the context of what was available to you.

Pro Tip: Always challenge yourself in the subject you enjoy most.

GRADES
Sophomore and junior years are most the important.
Some colleges also evaluate your 12th grade 1st semester grades.

Pro Tip: Colleges pay attention to trends in grades, giving time to improve.

COLLEGEWISE PRO TIP:
Students can also explore external courses online or at a community college.
TEST SCORES

01 Why do colleges use them?  
- Many colleges want a common yardstick.

02 College preference on standardized tests  
- Explore testing options and college requirements.

03 Plan and prepare. Utilize test prep resources.  
- Standardized test scores can be improved with preparation and practice!

COLLEGEWISE PRO TIP:  
Research testing policies and average scores for admitted students at the colleges that interest you.
Many colleges receive too many applications to do a more personal evaluation.

Visit “Application Requirements.” Check if the schools ask for activities, essays, or letters of recommendation. If not, they only use the criteria we’ve described.
HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

- Academic transcripts
- Standardized test scores
- Essays
- Letters of recommendation
- Extracurriculars and awards
An extracurricular is any activity that isn’t required for high school credit or part of a student’s classroom academics.

Awards, competitions, or certifications  
Clubs or student organizations  
Jobs, internships, or research opportunities  
Sports teams or community involvement

Collegewise Pro Tip: Choose activities that matter to you. Colleges don’t have an activity checklist you must follow.
ACTIVITIES

QUALITY OVER QUANTITY.

Here is a snapshot of what the Activities section looks like. What is being asked of the student?

- The quality and commitment a student has made in this activity.
- What impact they've made or accomplishments worth sharing.
- How they've demonstrated leadership.
HOW TO SPEND SCHOOL BREAKS

- Rest and relax
- Find a balance
- Be productive

- Don’t look for shortcuts
- Try to impress the reader
- Don’t pay to play
Essays: What are they and how can students write effectively?
Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
Students at Boston College are encouraged to consider critical questions as they pursue lives of meaning and purpose. **What is a question that matters to you and how do you hope Boston College will help you answer it?**
ESSAYS: SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Everyone belongs to many different communities and/or groups defined by (among other things) [...] Choose one of the communities to which you belong, and describe that community and your place within it. (Required for all applicants; minimum 100 words/maximum 300 words)
WHY ESSAYS MATTER TO COLLEGES

Colleges use essays to:

- Know the person beyond the academics.
- Learn more about the applicant’s personal qualities.
- Discover if the student is the right fit for the college.

Collegewise Pro Tip:

Ask someone you trust for feedback, like your English teacher or counselor.

REMEMBER!

Not every student admitted has a 4.0 GPA or even submitted test scores, but 100% of applicants had to write at least one college essay. Essays matter!
LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

1. Usually required to come from a counselor and/or teacher(s).

2. Choose a teacher from your junior year if possible.

3. Ask early and give a teacher or counselor enough time to write a glowing letter.

Collegewise Pro Tip:
Choose a teacher who can tell your academic story.
INTERVIEWS

1. Typically offered only by private colleges.

2. Usually conducted by local alumni.

3. Often one of the last components of the application process.

Collegewise Pro Tip:
It’s a conversation, not a job interview. Relax and be yourself.
Our top preparation tips!
COLLEGE PREPARATION TIPS

- Make use of your school resources
- Utilize college admissions resources
- Attend a local college fair or campus visit
- Attend college representative presentations

Collegewise Pro Tip: If you don’t have access to these, ask a teacher you trust for advice. Remember, what you do in college will be much more important than where you do it.
ADMISSIONS TRENDS

01 SCOTUS decision direct implications
- New laws are in effect and new essays can be expected.

02 ChatGPT and Artificial Intelligence
- AI detection on essays, the role of interviews, and graded papers becoming popular.

03 Early decision trends
- How early decision results can impact the larger applicant pool.
Kickstart a less stressful, more successful process
WHY COLLEGEWISE?

Collegewise is your one-stop shop as a trusted source of information. At Collegewise, we believe there is something for everyone and we’re thrilled to help you find the next step on this journey.

Dedicated Counseling Programs

Quick Expert Help for Seniors

Complimentary Webinars & School Resources

28,000 Students admitted.

92% Student acceptance rate to their top three college choices.

500+ Years of admissions experience

9/10 Referred by families.
Poll time!

How can Collegewise best help you?