



Navigating the Admissions Process

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BENNINGTON COLLEGE



SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING | GRADUATE-STYLE ADVISING

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**College is a match to be
made and not a prize to
be won.**

What is 'fit'? How Do I Choose?

Find the school that is the best fit for you, not the most familiar name.

- Academic rigor
- Academic offerings
- Internships, research, opportunities available to students
- Resources in surrounding area for interests
- Health care and dietary needs
- Religious affiliation
- Social environment/campus culture
- Activities, hobbies, interests
- Size, location, distance from home, etc.
- Financial affordability

**Remember: fit goes both ways!
When colleges are evaluating you,
you should also be evaluating
them.**

The Language of College Admissions

- Common Application
- Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision
- Rolling admissions
- Holistic admissions/holistic review
- Test optional/text flexible/test free/test blind
- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- CSS Profile
- Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
- Required vs. recommended
- Demonstrated Interest

Elements of the Application: Academics

- Transcript
- GPA
- School report and school profile
- SAT or ACT scores



Elements of the Application: Personal Qualities



"OK, I'LL MOVE BALLET BACK AN HOUR, RESCHEDULE GYMNASTICS, and CANCEL PIANO...YOU SHIFT YOUR VIOLIN LESSON TO THURSDAY and SKIP SOCCER PRACTICE..... THAT GIVES US FROM 3:15 TO 3:45 ON WEDNESDAY THE 16TH TO PLAY."

Elements of the Application: Personal Qualities

- Activities list
- Personal essay
- Supplemental essays
- Letters of recommendation
- Portfolios
- Supplemental information
- Demonstrated interest

What are Colleges Looking For?

- Academic Rigor (Course Selection)
- Academic Record (GPA)
- Standardized Testing
- Extracurricular Involvement
- Volunteer Experience (depth not breadth)
- Demonstrated Interest (sometimes)
- Recommendations (teacher vs. counselor)
- Alumni Connections (not as valuable as you think)

Colleges may be looking for all of these, none of them, or some combination.
Most importantly - be yourself!

How to Distinguish Yourself

- Extracurricular activities
 - Are your activities unique?
 - Have you described them appropriately?
 - Do your activities show a theme?
- Letters of recommendation
 - Many institutions require letters from your school counselor and/or teachers
 - They can speak to your academic achievements, but also personal qualities and anecdotes
- Personal essays
 - Proofread!
 - Tell us something unique about you
- Demonstrated interest
 - Check if your colleges track this - if they do, make sure you've engaged with them!
- Additional context

Final Tips!

- Do your research - don't base your decision on colleges with name recognition
- Don't compare with your classmates
- Let your voice and personality shine through your application
- Meet all deadlines
- Ask questions
- Relax!



Questions?

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