

Navigating the Admissions Process

Counseling on Postsecondary Opportunities Benchmark:

Acquire information about admissions processes, expanded financial literacy, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application process and scholarship resources provided. (Partial)

Note to those providing service:

These activities are developed in a way that allows the learner to gradually build upon their skills. Each student has different foundational skills so some students may need more support or instruction than others. With that being said, you can choose what activity you start with based on your learner's strengths and needs.



Extended Pathways

Students who are interested or enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) or postsecondary education, regardless of disability (remember to presume competence!), may or may not need some of the information that seems introductory in nature. Take as much or little time as needed based on student knowledge. More specific activities related to CTE and postsecondary education are identified as extended activities and pathways.

Preparation and Materials Needed:

- Know the student's knowledge or awareness regarding their current high school or college transcript, classes taken, GPA, etc. (this helps with knowing how much time you may need to spend on an activity)
- Prepare needed assistive technologies and/or accommodations (ex: communication supports (visual, objects, pictures, voice output devices, etc.), physical supports/space access needs, vision supports, hearing supports, sensory needs/supports).
- Computer to access videos. Print materials in advance if necessary.
- There are many Click and Explore resources in this lesson. Be sure to explore them yourself so you can help match students with any additional resources that may help their learning.



Print

- [The Language of Postsecondary Admissions](#)
- [Checklist and Timeline](#)
- [Admissions Process Scavenger Hunt](#)
- [Bridging the Gap](#)

Activities to Meet Benchmarks:

Activity 1: Understanding Admissions and Why It Matters

This activity aims explain postsecondary admissions process and why it is important



Discuss: Whether you are in high school or already in a training program, you have many choices like going to college, joining the military, or learning a job skill or trade through an apprenticeship. But just because you want to do one of these things doesn't mean you'll automatically get in. Getting into these programs usually involves something called an admissions process. Each program has their own process to apply for acceptance or admission into that program. The admissions process is a way to show schools, training programs, or employers why you're a good fit by sharing your skills, interests, and goals. Each program will have a way to review your admission to determine whether or not you are accepted. It is not uncommon to submit applications to several different programs and schools to maximize options.


It's important to know that sometimes, even if you complete the admissions process, you might not be accepted into the program. This can happen for different reasons, like if there are more applicants than spots available or if the program is looking for specific qualifications you don't have yet. Being denied doesn't mean you aren't good enough—it just means that this particular opportunity wasn't the right fit at that time. There are always other options to explore and ways to keep working toward your goals.

It's important to learn about this now because understanding how it works can help you feel more prepared and confident when it's your turn to apply. Whether it's filling out forms, gathering recommendations, or submitting test results, these steps are all about helping you plan for your future. Let's explore what all could be part of an admissions process.



Resource: [The Language of Postsecondary Admissions](#) (PowerPoint)

- **Extracurricular Activities / Enrichment Activities:** Things you do outside of regular school classes. These can include sports, clubs, volunteering, music, art, or other hobbies you enjoy.
- **Test or Assessment Scores:** Some admission processes ask you to send results from standardized tests (like the SAT or ACT for college or the ASVAB for the military) or other assessments that measure your abilities.
- **Transcript:** This is an official record of your academic history from a school you have attended. It typically lists what courses you've taken along with the grades you received, credits earned and sometimes information like attendance, test scores, or honors.
- **Grade Point Average (GPA):** An average number value given to your grades. Schools and programs use your GPA to see how well you're doing in school.

- 
- **Application:** A formal or specific document you complete to be considered for admission. This is a form that is usually completed online where you provide details like your name, contact information, educational background and other information.
 - **Eligibility:** Many programs or schools have specific requirements, like age, education level, or experience. You need to make sure you meet these eligibility criteria before applying.
 - **Letter of Recommendation:** A written letter you request from someone who knows you well, like a teacher, coach, employer, or counselor who can share information about your strengths like teamwork or work ethic and why they think you would be a good fit for the program.
 - **Credentials:** Programs may require you to submit specific credentials. This could include proof of education like your high school transcript, letters of recommendation, other documents that show your skills or achievements, or experience needed for admission.
 - **Essay:** A short essay or personal statement that you write to explain why you are applying to a school or program.
 - **Interview:** A conversation scheduled by the school or program you're applying to where they may ask questions about why you are applying and your strengths and experiences to assess if you're a good fit for a program.
 - **Financial Aid:** Money that helps students pay for education after high school. It can be:
 - **Grants:** Money you do not have to pay back
 - **Scholarships:** Money awarded for good grades, talents, achievements or other eligibility standards
 - **Loans:** Money you borrow and pay back later, usually with interest
 - **Work-Study:** Program where you work part-time to earn money for school

Activity 2: Admissions Scavenger Hunt

This activity aims to help students research admissions processes



Discuss: You've learned about the admissions process, but it can be different for each person depending on their goals and interests. Understanding what you're interested in can guide you in finding the right information and getting prepared. Now, you'll take a closer look at what the admissions process involves for a school or program. This will help you learn the steps to take and make a plan to reach your goals.



Resource: [Admissions Process Scavenger Hunt](#). This worksheet is a guide to help students search for specific information related to admissions processes. Instructors can demonstrate how to find this information explaining the process and importance of each step.

- Pick a program to research. Select an admissions process for a school or program. This can be a military branch, trade/apprenticeship program, community college, college/university, or other adult learning option.
 - Navigate to the program website and find the admissions or apply section.
 - Highlight key steps (filling out an application, submitting transcripts, required experience, placement tests, etc.).
 - This is an activity that can be demonstrated, done together or in a small group, or completed independently depending on the learner:
1. **Instructor Assisted:** Instructors can demonstrate how to find and outline an admissions process. Ensure students can see and follow along. Pick a program to research.
 2. **Guided Activity:** Instructors can guide students through looking up a program and the admissions process. Students can work together or independently.
 3. **Independent Activity:** Students can independently research an admissions process.



Discuss: Let's talk about what we found out. There is a lot of information to find when you are considering a postsecondary program. While it may seem overwhelming it is important to know the information to help with planning since many things need to happen before you can complete an admission process.

- What was interesting or surprising about the process?
- What steps seem easy? What steps seem hard?
- What was confusing about the process?
- How can planning help you?

Activity 3: Staying Organized

This activity aims to help students explore ways to plan and organize materials needed for an admission process.



Discuss: Many admissions processes have deadlines to apply. Some may have an early option, called early decision. This may increase your chances of acceptance or financial aid. Some have a regular decision deadline, and others may have a rolling deadline where they take applications throughout the year. It's important to research this information to stay organized. In this activity, you'll research the admissions process for a program of your choice and create a timeline to keep track of what needs to be done and when. This will help you feel confident and prepared as you work toward your goals after graduation.



Resource: Using this [Checklist and Timeline](#), start by researching a program of interest you want to know more about. Using the checklist as a guide, start to complete the information listed. Once you have this information, you can start to fill in your timeline.

- 1. Instructor Assisted:** Instructors can demonstrate how to find and outline an admissions process. Ensure students can see and follow along. Pick a program to research and complete the checklist. Talk through the timeline to demonstrate planning stages.
- 2. Guided Activity:** Instructors can guide students through looking up a program and the admissions process. Students can work together or independently to complete their checklist and timeline.
- 3. Independent Activity:** Students can independently research an admissions process together or in small groups to complete the checklist and timeline.



Review: Students can share what they worked on and found out for the program they researched. Here are some prompting questions to help with discussion.

- Which postsecondary program are you interested in? Why?
- How does having a timeline help you?
- What ways or ideas do you have to keep track of these tasks and deadlines?



Click and Explore: Below are additional resources and examples of checklists and sites to consider for use when researching schools or programs

- [Discover Your Potential | OhioMeansJobs](#): This website links to a source to help students consider careers, college, or military
- [ApprenticeOhio | Department of Job & Family Services](#): Launching the information on this site takes you to a dashboard of information. You can then click on current apprenticeship sponsors and see if any are near you.
- [Ohio Vocational Apprentice Program | Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities](#): This site shares information about OOD's apprentice program and how to connect with them for more information.
- [College Application Checklist | Big Future](#) – This site provides a broad overview and timelines of the admissions process for most colleges and universities.



Extended Pathways

Bridging the Gap

This activity aims to help students identify an admissions process for themselves.



Discuss: Sometimes, you might run into challenges during the admissions process, like not knowing how to do a step or needing extra help. That's okay! You can talk to counselors, teachers, family members or guardians to get support. It's also important to speak up if you need accommodations or have questions. The more you prepare and ask for help when needed, the more confident you'll feel.



Review: [Bridging the Gap](#) Use this worksheet to help explore what help, support, or planning you may still need as you are exploring admissions processes. Consider what classes or activities you could participate in that would also help you. It is ok to have questions and to be unsure. Knowing who you would want to talk to for help is important. Is there a guardian, teacher, counselor, or other trusted adult that could help you with planning for your future?



Discuss: What types of questions do you still have? Do you know who can help you? It is ok to be unsure and it is ok to start your planning. Whether you feel like the postsecondary application process is soon or far away, planning now is important. If you are still needing help, consider who you will talk to and when.



Wrap-Up:

Learning about the admissions process for different postsecondary programs is an important step in preparing for life after high school. Each program—whether it's college, a trade school, the military, or an apprenticeship—has unique requirements, deadlines, and steps to follow. By knowing what to look for, such as application forms, transcripts, recommendation letters, and deadlines, you can take control of your future and to make sure you're on track to meet your goals. Keeping everything organized with a checklist or timeline will make the process easier and less stressful. Planning ahead helps you stay ready and confident as you work toward your goals.