

**SHAWSHEEN VALLEY TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL**

# COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING GUIDE



**BILLERICA • BEDFORD • BURLINGTON • WILMINGTON • TEWKSBURY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Shawsheen Valley Technical High School guidance counselors have prepared this planning guide to help both students and parents prepare for the student's post-high school years. Listed below are some student options.

### **Employment**

Many of our seniors will be entering the world of competitive employment in a fulltime capacity upon graduation. To embark on a career and not just seek employment, takes meaningful planning. Your guidance counselor can assist you in developing career goals and a plan to attain those goals.

### **Apprentice Programs**

There are formal and informal apprenticeship opportunities available in many of the vocational/ technical programs of study. An apprenticeship is a paid employment position with a clearly defined career path and an educational/ training component.

### **Military Service**

The military provides a choice for the student who wants to earn money immediately, likes to travel, or needs organizational skills and self-discipline. The military can offer you job skills as well as educational opportunities to help you with your career. Each branch of the armed services offers you educational benefits and tuition incentives that will help you with your future educational goals.

### **Career Training Schools**

Most of these schools offer programs that are short in duration. Many career schools are eligible for federal grants and aid.

### **Community College/ Private Two-Year College**

The Massachusetts Community College System offers a wide range of career-oriented courses to students at a reasonable cost. Most have very good job placement records for their graduates, who receive an associate degree and training in a specific career area. Some students may want to start their college career at a community college and then transfer to a four-year college for a bachelor's degree. The private two-year college is similar to a community college; however, it is generally more expensive and often residential.

### **Four-Year Colleges**

The four-year college experience culminates in a bachelor's degree (B.A. Bachelor of Arts or B.S. Bachelor of Science) and can be earned by attending a public or private university. These institutions vary greatly and your counselor can help you choose among them. The Naviance program can offer you a look at all the characteristics and special features of any college that interests you. Make sure that you fully investigate all the colleges that interest you. Make an appointment with your counselor to discuss your options.

### **Service Academy**

The Army, Navy, Air Force, Merchant Marines and Coast Guard all have academies that are similar to four-year colleges. All have a component of required military service. Entrance to the academies is very competitive, both intellectually and physically, and requires congressional appointments by our local legislatures. This process should start in the beginning of your junior year.

\*If you are a male who is 18 years of age then you must apply to the **Selective Service** in order to be eligible for financial aid. You can sign-up at age 17. You can register online at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).

## College Vocabulary List

### **General Information**

**Semester:** a grade reporting period; there are two in a typical college schedule: Fall (September-December) and Spring (January-May). Students choose different courses for each semester.

**Elective:** a course that you choose to take that is not necessarily connected to your major, which can be used to fulfill the credit hour requirement for graduation.

**Major:** the field of study in which students concentrate, or specialize, during their undergraduate study.

**Minor/Concentration:** course work that is not as extensive as that in a major but gives students some specialized knowledge of a second field.

**Academic Advisor:** a person assigned to help students choose appropriate courses each semester. Many students consult their advisor for help in selecting a major.

### **Admissions**

**Registrar:** the college official responsible for registering students for classes, and keeping academic records.

**Alumni:** a person who has graduated from a particular school. If you know an alumni from a college you are interested in attending, you should let that person know because there may be scholarships available.

**Open House:** a time when a campus is specifically set up for a visit and allows people to see what happens on their campus.

**Tour:** a detailed overview of the college that is often given by a current student at scheduled intervals. You should take a tour of the campus. Remember to wear comfortable shoes but dress nicely!

**Virtual Tour:** You can take a virtual tour of a college through your Naviance account.

**Early Admissions Options:** under these plans, students can apply to colleges early - well before the usual deadline - and get a decision early. These plans usually require you to apply in October or November. They will give you a decision in December or January.

**Early Action:** you can apply to more than one early action college. If you're accepted, you can say yes right away or wait until spring to decide. You can also decline the offer

**Early Decision:** you can only apply to one early decision college. If the college accepts you and offers you enough financial aid, you must go to that college. That is why these plans are referred to as binding. You must withdraw all other applications if accepted by this college.

**Rolling Admissions:** a college considers each student's application as soon as all the required credentials, such as school record and test scores are submitted. The college usually notifies an applicant of its decision immediately. There is no deadline but you should apply early!

### **Application**

**Application Fee:** money you must pay the college to process your college application. This may be waived if you apply early, attend an Open House, or apply online. The fee may also be waived based on free/reduced lunch guidelines (see guidance counselor).

**Common Application:** an online application that can be sent to multiple colleges at the same time.

[www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) Check the colleges you are interested in and see if they accept the Common App.

**Supplement:** an additional part of the Common Application that is specific to a certain college.

**CEEB#:** a code that identifies your high school. **Shawsheen Tech = 220473**

**SAT/ACT:** college entrance exams that are used by many colleges as a component of the admissions process. Check the colleges' admissions requirements to determine which test (if any) you need to take.

**Extracurricular Activities:** sports, clubs, and community involvement that you have done throughout high school. This is an important part of your college and scholarship applications as it distinguishes you.

**Transcript:** a compilation of your high school grades (9-12), including your GPA and class rank, that must be sent to the colleges as part of the application process.

**GPA:** Grade Point Average is the average of all of your grades throughout high school (ex. 3.31); ours is weighted.

**Class Rank:** numerical standing in class (ex. 14/335); we have a weighted class rank.

**Recommendation:** a letter of reference from a teacher, coach, or guidance counselor about your accomplishments. Make sure to give the people writing letters for you a letter of recommendation form.

**Essay:** a component of many college applications. You should write this essay during the summer and focus on your achievements, character, significant things that set you apart from others.

## Financial

**Financial Aid Office:** the location where the money to pay for college is handled. Utilize the financial aid office to apply for additional scholarships and to process student loans.

**Bursar:** college official responsible for handling billing and payments for tuition, fees, housing, etc.

**Student Loans:** money that you borrow from a bank or another financial institution that you must pay back. Federal Student Loans have a low interest rate and give you ten years to pay them back after you graduate.

**Scholarships/Grants:** money that is awarded to attend college, that you **do NOT need to pay back**, provided you meet certain requirements

**FAFSA (Federal Application for Student Aid):** free online form (fafsa.ed.gov) completed by you and your parent in October of your senior year in order to receive financial aid.

**MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority):** organization that aims to make higher educational more affordable and accessible to Massachusetts students and families. ([mefa.org](http://mefa.org))

**Tuition:** the price of instruction (classes) at a college. Tuition may be charged per term or per credit hour.

**Fees:** money you pay to use the school's resources including the library, labs, internet, gymnasium, cafeteria, etc.

**Room & Board:** money you pay to live and eat on campus.

**Work-Study:** positions available on campus that you can easily work while attending classes.

**Fee Waivers:** a form that must be completed by you and your guidance counselor that indicates that you do not need to pay the application fee because you meet guidelines of the free or reduced lunch program. Certain restrictions may apply and waivers are limited.

## Residential

**Dormitory:** the housing most popular for freshmen who live on campus. Other options can include apartments or condominiums. Make sure you see the rooms and find out how many students share a room/bathroom.

**Resident Assistant (RA):** an upperclass student who monitors/enforces regulations on a dorm floor as a work-study job or for reduced rates of room & board.

**Resident Director:** an adult who oversees a dorm by working directly with Resident Advisors to make sure all rules are enforced.

## Other

**ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps):** a means of preparing for entrance to the military while in college, often resulting in a higher rank.

**ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery):** a test that is taken for entrance into the military. In some cases, scores can determine eligibility for different branches. The higher your score the more opportunities available to you.

**Commonwealth Commitment through Mass Transfer:** a statewide transfer program to streamline the transfer process. If you enroll in a linked degree program at a community college and complete your associate degree then you will be eligible for full transfer of credit and guaranteed admission to a Massachusetts public college or university. Learn more at [www.mass.edu/MAComCom](http://www.mass.edu/MAComCom)

## **POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS**

**COLLEGE:** A school that offers educational instruction beyond the high school level in a two-year or four-year program.

**UNIVERSITY:** A school, which grants undergraduate and graduate degrees in a variety of fields and which also, includes degree-granting professional schools. It is made up of a number of “Schools” and “Colleges” each of which encompasses a general field of study.

**LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE:** A four-year institution that emphasizes a program of broad undergraduate education. Professional and/or professional training may be offered but is not emphasized.

**JUNIOR COLLEGE:** A two-year college which provides career training and academic curricula and offers an Associate Degree (this can be a terminal degree or students can transfer to a four-year institution). Most have dropped “Junior” from their names.

**COMMUNITY COLLEGE:** A two-year public college offering programs similar to those at junior colleges. Community colleges offer options such as one-year certificate programs, two-year Associate Degrees, and transfer programs to public and private four-year colleges.

**ENGINEERING OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE:** An independent professional college that provides four-year programs in the fields of engineering and physical sciences. They are often known as “Institutes of Technology” or “Polytechnic Institutes.”

**TECHNICAL SCHOOL:** A two-year school that offers occupational programs intended to prepare students for immediate employment in fields related to engineering and other technologies. These schools may also offer a one-year certificate program in certain areas.

**NURSING SCHOOLS:** There are three kinds of Nursing schools: Diploma, Associate and Baccalaureate. At schools affiliated with hospitals, students receive a Diploma and an R.N. or L.P.N. upon completion of their training and passing the nursing boards. In Associate programs, students receive an Associate Degree and an R.N. after passing the nursing boards. At schools affiliated with four-year colleges, students receive a Bachelor of Science Degree and an R.N. after passing the nursing boards.

**MILITARY COLLEGE:** Federal military academies prepare officers for the Army, Navy, and Air Force. These institutions require recommendations and appointments from members of Congress. Private and state-supported military institutes operate on the same application system as regular colleges.

**BUSINESS COLLEGES AND BUSINESS SCHOOLS:** Some four-year colleges award the majority of their degrees in business-related areas. Some two-year schools offer business and secretarial courses leading to an Associate degree or certificate.

## THE PARTS OF THE APPLICATION THAT MUST BE SENT ARE:

**The application form and fee**  
**The high school transcript**  
**Official Test scores**  
**Teacher recommendation(s)**

Shawsheen Tech's Zip Code – 01821

The CEEB high school code number for Shawsheen Tech is **220473**

### **The Application Form:**

Complete applications before the deadlines. We will electronically upload and send your transcript and letters of recommendation through Naviance.

### **Official Test Scores**

Some colleges want official **SAT** or **ACT** scores. This means that the scores have to go directly from the testing companies to the colleges. You need to tell the testing companies where you want your scores sent, so follow their instructions and keep track of where you are sending your scores. To send SAT scores use the CollegeBoard's "Send Scores" section at [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org). The charge is per report. To send ACT scores go to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) \***SAT and ACT scores will not be recorded on our official transcript.**

### **Teacher Recommendation(s), if required**

Teacher recommendations are required by some, but not all colleges. Give a letter of recommendation form to teachers who have agreed to write one for you and then you need to invite them through your Naviance account via the letters of recommendation section. Make sure that you give teachers at least four weeks before the colleges' deadlines, so they will have time to write a thorough recommendation.

## **SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

As you go through the process of planning for life after high school, remember that you are the one in charge; however, there are many resources to help you along the way.

1. **Your counselor.** Support, advice, encouragement.
2. **Guidance Office.** Counselors, computers, books, career information on the military, apprenticeships and job opportunities.
3. **Naviance: [succeed.naviance.com](http://succeed.naviance.com)**- Information re: colleges, careers and financial aid.
4. **The scholarship office (Guidance Office) and Shawsheen Tech's website [www.shawsheentech.org](http://www.shawsheentech.org) and the Naviance website: [student.naviance.com/shawsheen](http://student.naviance.com/shawsheen).** Scholarships and other financial information.
5. **The college's admissions offices.** Admissions counselors.
6. **The college's financial aid offices.** Financial aid officers.
7. **Written material from the colleges.** Viewbooks, catalogs, applications.
8. **The internet.** (See list of internet resources).
9. **Your English teacher.** May help you with your college essays.
10. **Your coaches.** Which NCAA divisions should you consider?
11. **Teachers.** Suggestions of colleges for you to explore.
12. **Parents.** The process works best when you work as a team.
13. **College Fairs.** Meet admissions counselors and get college information. Generally held in October and November.
14. **Open Houses.** Most colleges have open houses during the fall for prospective students.
15. **College students.** Talk to them during campus visits or when they are home on breaks.
16. **Military recruiters.** Will speak of opportunities within the different branches.
17. **MassHire Department of Career Services ([www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers](http://www.mass.gov/masshire-career-centers)).** This is a great resource when looking for employment. When job hunting please use the Lowell Career Center Office.

## CollegeBoard Testing Information

1. Check each college you are interested in to find out if they require tests for admission. (SAT Exam, SAT Subject Test and ACT). Make sure to note the last test dates accepted for application.
2. Registration for the SAT's must be done four weeks prior to the test date you have chosen. It also takes about 2 to 4 weeks from the date of the test for colleges to receive your test results.
3. You are responsible for ordering official score reports to be sent to each of the colleges you are applying to. Colleges require an official report from the CollegeBoard. Send SAT scores from [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org)
4. The following are ways in which you can get your test scores sent to colleges:
  - Enter the college code numbers **when you register**. You may have up to four reports sent free of charge if you enter their school codes when you register.
  - You can go to [collegereadiness.collegeboard.org](http://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org) and add schools later through the "Send Scores" section.

## FACTORS IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

**High School Transcript-** How are your academic grades? Colleges would much rather see you take a tough and challenging course load that shows your ability instead of easy courses to boost your GPA. Make sure you have a solid foundation in English, math, science and history.

**SAT Scores-** Admissions counselors are using reasoning tests as a measure to compare students from different schools. Many capable students score poorly on the SAT's. A combination of high grades and low test scores can be explained by a number of factors. However, high scores and low grades often describe an able person who does not work to their potential.

**The Application-** Make sure you fill it out properly and submit it on time.

**The Essay-** You should make sure that your college essay is extremely well thought out and written. This is your chance to become more than just a name to the admissions staff. Always make sure that there are no spelling or grammatical mistakes. The essay should be personal and honest and something that is of importance to you. If needed, please have your English teacher proofread your essay.

**Recommendations-** When called for in an application, your guidance counselor will write a recommendation for you if you give them a letter of recommendation form and then invite them through your Naviance account. The counselor will present a fair assessment and try to highlight your strengths. A counselor's recommendation is not a teacher's recommendation. Most colleges will want recommendations from your teachers. Try to choose teachers who know you and your academic strengths well. If you participate in extracurricular activities such as athletics or SkillsUSA then you may want your coach or advisor to write you a letter. Read the application forms carefully because some colleges are very specific as to who they want letters from. It is common courtesy to thank the person who has written you a letter of recommendation.

## 2022-2023 SAT Administration Dates and Deadlines

<u>Test Dates</u>	<u>Test</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>*Late Registration Deadlines</u>
Aug. 27, 2022	SAT	July 29, 2022	<u>Phone/Online</u> 8/16/22
Oct. 1, 2022	SAT	Sept. 2, 2022	9/20/22
Nov. 5, 2022	SAT	Oct. 7, 2022	10/25/22
Dec. 3, 2022	SAT	Nov. 3, 2022	11/22/22
Mar. 11, 2023	SAT	Feb. 10, 2023	2/28/2023
May 6, 2023	SAT	April 7, 2023	4/25/23
June 3, 2023	SAT	May 4, 2023	5/23/23

TEST FEE: SAT \$60

4 score reports are available up to nine days after the test date.

Additional reports (outside of the above four) or score reports ordered outside of the above time period are subject to a fee of \$12 each.

\*If you register after the Registration Deadline and during the Late Registration period then you will be charged a late fee of \$30.00. This fee is subject to change.

TO REGISTER FOR THE SAT EXAM, YOU MUST REGISTER ONLINE AT:

<https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/>

The SAT has the following components:

1. Evidence-Based Reading and Writing (Reading Test and a Writing and Language Test)
2. Math

The exam lasts for approximately 3 hours.

The school code for Shawsheen Valley Technical High School is: 220473

Free SAT Practice information can be found at: [www.khanacademy.org/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/sat) or <https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/>

**\*\*Students on an Individualized Educational Plan (I.E.P.) or a 504 Plan may be eligible for testing accommodations and should see their guidance counselor, as additional forms are required. Accommodation approvals may take 4-6 weeks prior to the regular registration deadline. Please plan accordingly!!!!**







## Junior Year Pre-College Calendar & Checklist

### AUGUST

- Review your high school coursework and activity plans.
- Keep in mind that colleges look for the following: challenging coursework, a strong GPA, involvement in extracurricular activities, such as: sports, volunteer work, and church or community involvement.
- Obtain a social security number if you do not have one. You will need it to apply to college and for financial aid.

### SEPTEMBER

- Take advantage of the career and college information in the Guidance Office. We use a software program called Naviance ([student.naviance.com](http://student.naviance.com)) which links us to information on hundreds of colleges across the country. Naviance will enable you to learn about many careers as well as take interest inventories, which will give you an assessment of your strengths and weaknesses.
- The guidance office has catalogs, brochures, and resource manuals.
- Sign-up to take the PSAT exam.
- Obtain dates, locations, and times of college fairs and college Open Houses.

### OCTOBER

- Take the PSAT exam.
- Attend the virtual financial aid night in October at Shawsheen Tech. This event is sponsored by MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority)
- Attend a virtual tour of colleges through your Naviance account or the colleges website.
- Attend the College & Career Fair at Shawsheen Tech

### NOVEMBER

- Continue to search for colleges on the Naviance website.
- Try to schedule college tours during your February/April vacations or during the summer break.
- If possible try to meet with alumni during the holiday break and learn as much about the college experience as possible.

### DECEMBER/JANUARY

- Review your PSAT scores.
- Set up an SAT study plan through CollegeBoard's Khan Academy ([www.khanacademy.org/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/sat)).
- Create a file to manage your college search, testing, and application information.
- Use the Naviance website and research 3-5 schools that interest you the most.
- During your college visits make sure to meet with an admissions representative as well as a financial aid officer.

## **FEBRUARY/MARCH**

- Start investigating private scholarships and other student aid programs.
- Go to [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com) or [www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov) to find out about scholarships that may be available to you.
- Register online for the May or June SAT Test at: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- Consider taking an SAT Prep course at Shawsheen or doing free SAT Prep through CollegeBoard's Khan Academy at [khanacademy.org/sat](http://khanacademy.org/sat)
- Make a list of colleges that are of interest to you and contact them for additional information.

## **APRIL**

- Attend spring college fairs.
- Visit colleges and try to attend some college classes.
- Begin preparing essays for college admissions and scholarship applications.

## **MAY**

- Take the SAT exam.
- Create a resume that includes all your accomplishments, extracurricular activities, community service, and work experience over the past 3 years.
- Continue researching scholarship possibilities.

## **JUNE**

- Take the SAT exam.
- Utilize CollegeBoard's Khan Academy ([www.khanacademy.org/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/sat)) to help improve your SAT scores.
- Read a variety of books and magazines and review your math skills over the summer. This will help to prepare you for the summer and fall SAT exams.
- Obtain a summer job that might be related to your career interest.
- Save some money from your summer job to help pay for college costs.
- Register for the August SAT exam.



## Senior Year Pre-College Calendar & Checklist

### SUMMER

- Register for the August or October SAT Exam if necessary at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)
- Set up a study plan for the SAT's through the Khan Academy ([www.khanacademy.org/sat](http://www.khanacademy.org/sat))
- Review your career plans and decide which type of school is right for you.
- Visit some college campuses.
- Narrow your college search down to five schools.
  - 1 reach school
  - 1 safety school
  - 3 mid-range schools
- Request catalogs or go online to review all pertinent admissions information.
- Begin working on admission essays if required.
- If applying via the Common Application then you should begin setting up your application at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

### SEPTEMBER

- Register for the October SAT Exam if necessary.
- Meet with the college representatives visiting your school.
- Request applications.
- Make an appointment with your guidance counselor to utilize the Naviance ([student.naviance.com](http://student.naviance.com)) website to help in your college search.
- Attend college Open Houses if possible.
- Go into Naviance or to guidance and get a letter of recommendation form.
- Begin asking teachers, guidance counselors, or coaches for letters of recommendation. Give them a copy of your letter of recommendation form and then invite them through your Naviance account.

### OCTOBER

- Register for the November SAT Exam if necessary.
- Take the SAT Exam in October if necessary.
- Attend college fairs or take a virtual tour of a college through your Naviance account or the colleges website.
- Attend Shawsheen Tech's *Virtual Financial Aid Night in October*. This event is sponsored by MEFA (Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority).
- Go to [FAFSA.gov](http://FAFSA.gov) to obtain an FSA ID. Both student and a parent each need their own ID.
- Fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Financial Aid) at [FAFSA.gov](http://FAFSA.gov)
- Find out which financial aid applications the colleges you are applying to require and what their due dates are.
- Attend then College & Career Fair at Shawsheen Tech

## NOVEMBER

- Take the SAT Exam in November if necessary.
- Finalize your list of colleges.
- Begin looking over applications you will be completing, and start writing final drafts of essays, which may be required on some applications. Ask an English teacher or Guidance Counselor for assistance if you need help.
- Males who are 18 or over must register with the Selective Service in order to be eligible for financial aid. You can register at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov)
- Make sure you have all required letters of recommendation.
- Make sure to request a transcript through your Naviance account.

## DECEMBER

- Take the December SAT Exam if necessary.
- Be aware of college deadlines. The most common due dates are January 1, February 1 and 15, and March 1.

## JANUARY

- Apply for local scholarships
  - Login to your Naviance account at: [student.naviance.com/shawsheen](http://student.naviance.com/shawsheen). Select the colleges tab at the top of the page. Go to the Scholarship & Money Section and Select Scholarship List
  - All scholarships will be posted in Naviance.
  - Scholarships will be updated on a regular basis so check in you Naviance account frequently.

## FEBRUARY

- Be sure all necessary materials have been sent to your chosen colleges (application, fees, transcripts, essays, letters of recommendation, SAT/ACT scores etc...).
- Check to see if mid-year transcripts are required from your colleges.

## MARCH

- Be sure that the colleges you have applied to are in receipt of all materials they may need to make a decision.
- Continue searching for and applying for scholarships.

## APRIL

- Admissions decisions and financial aid award letters should begin to arrive.
- Revisit your top choices if necessary.
- Send in a deposit to the college of your choice.
- Notify the guidance department of all of your college acceptances.

## MAY

- During senior sign-out, make sure you identify the college or university you plan on attending.

## JUNE

- Ensure that your final transcript is sent to the college you plan to attend in the fall.

### **TIPS FOR COLLEGE VISITS**

1. Call in advance to make an appointment and to find out when tours are given.
2. Research the college you are visiting and prepare some questions to ask the tour guide.
3. Dress neatly and appropriately, but most importantly relax and be yourself.
4. Make sure you arrive on time and find out in advance where to park.
5. While visiting colleges try to take notes of the things that impress you as well as the things you don't like about the school. Later you can compare notes of each of the colleges you have seen.
6. Bring someone with you a friend or relative who knows you well, who will discuss the pros and cons with you honestly after the tour.
7. Try to talk to students as well as professors to find out the level of difficulty of the college and also to get a feel for the culture of the school.
8. If possible, try to visit a college while classes are in session. Many colleges will let you sit through a class and many offer overnight visits. If you cannot go while classes are in session, then try to go to an open house.
9. Typically, you can visit two schools per day.
10. Take a virtual tour through your Naviance account or through the colleges website if you cannot visit.

### **TIPS FOR A COLLEGE INTERVIEW**

1. Make an appointment to meet with an admissions counselor. You should call four weeks before you plan to visit.
2. Dress neatly and appropriately.
3. Make sure you arrive a few minutes early. Call in advance for directions and allow time for traffic. Have the telephone number of the admissions office in your cell phone in the event that you get lost or will be late.
4. Shake the interviewer's hand firmly and maintain eye contact throughout the interview.
5. Do research on the college by reviewing the college catalog or taking a tour before your interview.
6. While interviewing the college is checking you out just as you are checking them out. Be sure to highlight your accomplishments both academically as well as extracurricular activities. Remember you are trying to leave a lasting impression on the interviewer.
7. Answer questions with well thought out answers. This means that you should take some time to anticipate what type of questions may be asked. Your counselors or alumni of certain institutions can help you.
8. Ask questions of the interviewer. This will show them that you are eager to learn more about their institution.
9. Send a brief and concise thank-you note explaining why you think this college is right for you.

### **HOW TO PROPERLY FILL OUT A COLLEGE APPLICATION**

1. Fill out the application electronically or with a pen. Never use a pencil.
2. If you are using the Common Application you can access it at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
3. Make sure to meet the deadline!! Try to send it in early. An early application speaks volumes about your motivational level. Late applications may not be considered.
4. Send letters of recommendation from teachers, coaches, employers etc...
5. Spend time on your essay and write about something that is interesting and will catch the reader's attention. If you are using the Common Application then they will give you the essay prompts.
6. Proofread, Proofread, and Proofread!!! Make sure there are no spelling mistakes and no grammatical errors. Your English teacher would be a great resource if you are stuck or need a proofreader.
7. Be honest with all of your answers.
8. Make sure your CollegeBoard Scores (SAT's) are sent directly from the testing service to the college.
9. Make sure your ACT scores are sent directly from the testing service to the college.

## **HOW TO DECIDE WHICH COLLEGE IS FOR YOU**

In deciding which college is for you, you must first and foremost determine what you are looking for in a college. Of course, everyone has personal preferences and issues of special concern, but we suggest you use the CollegeBoard's website and narrow your choice with the College Search tab.

### **Type of Institution**

- Would you prefer a college or a university? A university is comprised of several colleges.
- Are you considering a private or a public institution? Costs, diversity of students, range of programs, and amount of administrative control, vary considerably.
- Some of you may wish to attend a professional or specialized school. Some students have chosen fine arts schools, conservatories, or technological institutes. (This may also include Business, Management, Communications, Allied Health or Engineering).
- Will you consider a single sex or coed college? Most students choose a coed environment, but there are number of students who prefer an all women's or an all men's college.
- Religious affiliation of the school may be an important factor.

### **Location**

- Try not to let what is familiar to you be the sole reason why you choose a college. Consider the value of living in another part of the country. College may be a great opportunity to experience another part of the country. There are excellent colleges everywhere. Do not overlook a college that may be a perfect match for you just because it is too far or too close to home.
- Urban settings are great for those who like the city and they can bring great benefits as far as internships, jobs and cultural enrichment.
- Rural settings are great for those who do not want to be in the city. Many times these colleges offer a more close-knit community on campus.
- Suburban settings can offer the best of both worlds as the city; airports and trains are generally easily accessible.

### **Size**

- The size of an institution can affect many areas of college life. Does class size matter to you? Would you like to know the faculty? Would you like to play on an athletic team? Larger institutions are perfect for a person who just wants to be "a face in the crowd." However some people enjoy a more intimate setting where you "have a name and you're not just a number."

### **Culture / Environment**

- What does the college "feel" like? Are you comfortable in this type of setting? Do you see yourself surviving for four years there?
- What type of atmosphere does the college project? Competitive, Cooperative, Supportive, Preppy, Artistic, Intellectual, Environmentally and Socially concerned?
- Are there employment opportunities on campus or nearby? Are campus jobs given only to students who receive financial aid?
- Is there a 'party' environment during the weekdays? How serious are the students about their academics?
- Are there activities on the weekends that are not alcohol related?
- What kind of entertainment is available on campus or nearby? Is there accessibility to movies, plays, concerts, dancing, exhibits, etc...?
- Is the campus safe? What kind of security do they have? Are campus police readily available? Do they provide an escort service?

## **Facilities**

- How are the library facilities? Do they have more than one library? Is the library online? Is it open most of the time? Can you get work done there or is it used as a socializing spot?
- What are the resident facilities like? What percentage of students live on campus? Do students remain on campus during the weekend or does it turn into a 'ghost town'? Do they have all freshmen dorms? Do they offer residence halls for specific majors to be housed together? Are the entire dorms coed? Can you live off-campus if you so desire? Are there ample housing opportunities if you choose to live off-campus?
- What are the health facilities like? Is there an infirmary on campus?
- What are your dining options? Do you eat in your dorm or in a dining facility? Do they offer flexible meal plans? Can you dine anywhere on campus with your meal card?

## **The Competition for Admission**

- Meet with your counselor to discuss the degree of competition that will provide you with a challenging yet comfortable environment. Many college guides will rate schools by their competitive standing. Admissions standards have changed drastically in the last ten years so do your research.
- What criteria do they use to admit students? Academic performance? SAT scores? GPA? Extracurricular activities? Strength of program? Essays?
- Are interviews required? Offered? Recommended? Optional?

## **Academic Program**

- One of your main priorities should be the quality of academic programs a school may offer. Evaluate the strength of departments that interest you. You can do this by analyzing the variety of courses offered, research opportunities, and placement of graduates in professional schools as well as in the job market. Find out if there is a flexible schedule that will allow you to take courses outside of your major.
- If you are undecided on a major course of study then you should find a school that offers you broad array of options. Find out how many areas you can explore. You need to find out when you must declare a major if you go in undecided. Does the school offer independent study, internships, semester abroad, and cooperative learning programs?
- What types of degrees are offered? Does every department offer a major? Can you have a double major or a minor concentration?
- What is the academic calendar? Semester? Trimester? Quarter?
- How many courses must you take to be considered a full-time student? Is there a summer term? Is there a winter session?
- What are the class sizes? Will you be required to take large lecture classes? Do professors teach all of the classes?
- Is it difficult getting the classes you need? Do most graduates finish in four years?
- Do they offer support services? Tutors? Writing Center? Math Center?

## **Student Body**

- What are the people like on campus? It is important to get a sense of what the student body is like so that you can determine whether the environment is suited to you and your needs.
- What is the make-up of the student body? Where do most students come from? Do they reside in state? Out of state? Are they international? Is the campus ethnically diverse?
- How many students go on to graduate school?
- How many students go directly to work? Does the Career Placement Center offer support? Do recruiters come to campus with job offers?



## Faculty

- How many full-time faculty members are employed? What is the faculty/student ratio? Are part-time adjunct faculty used frequently?
- Does the faculty serve as academic advisors?
- Are the professors accessible? Do they post their office hours and adhere to them?

## Extracurricular Activities

- Are students encouraged to pursue extracurricular activities? Are activities open to all students? Is there an introduction to extracurricular activities offered during orientation?
- Does the school offer a fitness facility open to all students? Do they offer a gym, pool, and racquet facilities? Are there intramural programs as well as interscholastic teams?
- What types of activities are offered? Community/Volunteer activities? Student Government opportunities? Musical or theatrical opportunities? What other organizations exist on campus?

## Cost

- Cost of tuition, room and board are the primary expenses in college, but you must realize that you may have to pay for transportation costs, clothing, books and fees. You will also need spending money.
- Some schools offer scholarships for various reasons such as athletics, music performance, dance performance, visual arts talent, academic merit or community involvement.

Your parents and teachers will be able to help you choose among your college options. However, your most important resource is your college counselor who has experience with career planning and with the college admissions process. The guidance staff at Shawsheen urges you to visit the guidance office regularly.

The tool that we use at Shawsheen to help students with career and college planning Naviance. Naviance is a post high school planning tool that provides information about civilian and military occupations, two and four year colleges, graduate schools, and sources of scholarships. Naviance offers career interest inventory, personality and strengths programs. The best way to use this program is to work closely with your counselor. Naviance can identify colleges based on geographic location, academic majors, size, cost, athletics etc... You can also receive information about occupations based on personal interests, education, salary and employment potential. This program cannot make decisions for you, but it can aid you in your career and college exploration process.

The student letter of recommendation worksheet is another useful tool, which gives additional information about your activities both in school and in the community. A description of your club activities and positions held, participation in sports, jobs held, hours worked, community involvement and a paragraph about your future goals and aspirations as well as your interest will help to give colleges a different perspective about you. It will also help teachers and counselors write a more effective letter of recommendation for you.

## **MASSTRANSFER A2B DEGREE**

**through**

### **Commonwealth Commitment**

#### **Students Commit To:**

- **Begin College at one of MA Community Colleges**
- **Complete associate degree within 2.5 years**
- **Transfer to one of MA State Universities or UMass campuses**
- **Complete bachelor's degree within 2 more years**
- **Maintain a full-time, continuous enrollment and a cumulative 3.00 GPA**

#### **Commonwealth Commitment Students:**

- **Freeze on all tuition & mandatory fees on program entry**
- **A 10% rebate off tuition & mandatory fees**
- **Additional MassTransfer Tuition Credit on bachelor's program entry**
- **Guaranteed admission**
- **Guaranteed transfer of credits**
- **No application fee or essay**

**Students who attend college through the Commonwealth Commitment save BIG on their bachelor's degrees.**

**Community College to State University 37%    Community College to UMass 45%**

**Learn more about MASSTRANSFER A2B DEGREE at:**

**[www.mass.edu/masstransfer](http://www.mass.edu/masstransfer)**

## **Students on an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan**

**If you are going to be asking for academic support in college you should contact the support services office to find out what you need in order to get services. Upon high school graduation I.E.P. services are terminated.**

**Common questions that you should ask the disability services office is:**

- **How is eligibility determined?**
- **What does the college/university define as “current” documentation?**
- **Are there any published guidelines?**
- **How early can I submit my documentation?**
- **Can I make an appointment to speak with a support services representative?**
- **What is the procedure to register for support services?**
- **Does the office provide letters of accommodation to the instructors?**
- **Are accommodations given in the classroom or in a separate testing center?**
- **How supportive are the faculty of students with disabilities?**

**Accommodations in a college setting may include:**

**Textbooks on CD  
Note-taking services  
Adaptive equipment and software  
Alternate testing procedures (ex., extra time for tests, etc.)  
Reduced-distraction environment for testing  
Tape recorder during lectures**

**You should develop a file with disability related information such as:**

**High School records  
Medical records  
Copy of current I.E.P. or 504 Plan  
College entrance exam results  
Psychological and educational evaluation records**

**For more information on Colleges for students with learning disabilities or AD/HD you may want to reference the following books:**

<b>Peterson's</b>	<b>Colleges for Students with Learning Disabilities or AD/HD</b>
<b>The Princeton Review</b>	<b>The K &amp; W Guide to Colleges for Students with Learning Differences</b>

## FINANCIAL AID

**\*The Federal Financial Aid forms are always free. You should never pay for financial aid.**

With the rising costs of today's college tuition, many families are finding it difficult to fund their child's postsecondary education. Students applying to college who feel as though they may not be able to pay the entire cost of their education should apply for financial aid. Students interested in applying for financial aid should apply at [FAFSA.ed.gov](http://FAFSA.ed.gov) (this application is free) after October 1. If you have questions call 1-800-4-FED-AID.

### **Definition of Need**

Colleges review the information you provide to determine your family contribution and financial need. The family contribution includes parent contribution, student income contribution, and student contribution from assets and/or benefits. Your family's income, assets, debts, family size and extenuating circumstances are considered when determining the family's contribution. Parents with special or unusual circumstances should discuss their situation with the financial aid officers at the institution to which their child is applying.

Financial need is the difference between what it will cost a student to attend a college and the family contribution. After your financial need has been determined, most colleges will award financial aid as a "package." The package may include a combination of scholarships or grants (money that is not paid back), loans (money to be paid back after the student leaves college), and work-study (money earned while in school).

### **FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTERS**

Typically in March or April you will receive a letter stating the amount of financial aid you have been awarded. In the letter, you will see three kinds of aid: grants or scholarships, work-study opportunities, and/or loans.

The key elements that you want to focus on are the total cost of attending the college of your choice, grants/scholarships, work-study, loans, and ability and willingness to pay. Remember that grants and scholarships are considered "free money" because you do not have to pay these back. Loans on the other hand can vary in many ways from rate of interest to the amount of time you have to pay them back. Most loans do not have to be repaid until six months after you have graduated. When you receive a financial aid award letter, you should review the following information:

- **Total Cost of Attendance/ Budget**

Do you understand how much it will cost you to attend college next year? Each award letter should state the total cost of attendance. If this information is omitted, then call the school's financial aid office and ask for the total cost of attendance figure. Included in this figure should be tuition, fees, room & board, books, supplies, transportation and personal expenses.

- **Grants/Scholarships**

How much of the total aid awarded are grants and/or scholarships? These are the most beneficial types of aid because they are "free money," which means that they do not have to be repaid.

- **Work-Study**

How much aid is awarded as work-study? You will earn this money while working on campus.

- **Loans**

How much money is being offered as a loan? This money will have to be paid back. Pay careful attention to the kind of loan as well as the interest rates and repayment options.

- **Ability and Willingness to Pay**

Look at the total aid offered and subtract that figure from the total cost of attendance. Can you afford or are you willing to pay the difference in order to go to that school?

Scholarships are a great source of financial aid and you must do your research in order to take advantage of all that is out there. The institution that you are accepted to will provide the greatest opportunity for scholarships. However, it is important to investigate all other sources that may be available to you. Many times, you can find scholarship money available at a parent’s place of employment, religious affiliations, social organizations, or on the web. Most importantly, you should complete the Shawsheen Local Scholarship form. This scholarship form makes you eligible for numerous scholarships that are given out to Shawsheen Tech students. It is imperative that you check your Naviance account at ([succeed.naviance.com](http://succeed.naviance.com)) to find scholarships. All scholarships will be listed in Naviance. If you do receive a scholarship, then it is expected that you follow through and send a thank-you note as a token of your appreciation.

### FINANCIAL AID TIME LINE

- OCTOBER**      Attend Shawsheen Valley Technical HS Financial Aid Night. Complete the FAFSA online as soon as possible after October 1. Visit schools, attend college fairs, narrow choices. For private colleges, you may have to register for “CSS/Financial PROFILE.” You can access this form at [cssprofile.CollegeBoard.org](http://cssprofile.CollegeBoard.org)
- NOVEMBER**    Gather information from schools; finalize admission applications.
- DECEMBER**    Mail admission applications; attend financial aid workshops; check with each school to determine specific documents required.
- FEBRUARY**    Check with Financial Aid Offices to insure completed applications are on file.
- MARCH**        Applications are processed.
- APRIL**         Aid packages are mailed. Compare financial packages. Consult with counselor or financial advisor.

### ESTIMATING COLLEGE EXPENSES

When estimating college costs there are many areas to consider besides tuition, room and board. The following is an expense list that can be helpful in estimating the amount of money you will need for the school year.

Tuition and fees	\$ _____
Housing	\$ _____
Meals	\$ _____
Books	\$ _____
Personal expenses (Laundry, snacks, medical etc.)	\$ _____
Transportation	\$ _____
Miscellaneous	\$ _____
<b>Cost of Attendance for 1 year</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Each college & university offers a **Net Price Calculator** online tool on their website. This tool provides families with a personalized, **estimated net price** to attend that college for 1 year.

## Scholarship & Financial Aid Information

[student.naviance.com/shawsheen](http://student.naviance.com/shawsheen) (all scholarships that we are aware of will be listed here)

- Choose College tab
- Scholarships & Money
- Scholarship Search

### Top Scholarship & Financial Aid Databases

- **studentaid.gov**: Free federal financial aid forms. Get an FSA ID.
- **fastweb.com**: A searchable database of millions of scholarships worth billions of dollars.
- **finaid.org**: This award-winning site includes a comprehensive database of scholarships, student financial aid information, advice and tools.
- **www.mass.edu/osfa**: MA Office of Student Financial Assistance-promotes student financial aid info.
- **scholarships.com**: Browse through 2.7 million free scholarships and grants worth over \$19 billion.
- **myscholly.com** This app is a great scholarship matching tool.
- **studentaid.gov**: Federal student aid resource from the U.S. Dept. of Education.
- **Bigfuture.CollegeBoard.org**: A database of more than 2,300 sources of college funding, totaling nearly \$3 billion in available aid.
- **collegedata.com**: Use the Scholarship Finder search engine to search 500,000 awards worth more than \$2.3 billion.
- **Salliemae.com** Scholarships, grants and loans.
- **ecampustours.com**: A scholarship search that contains a database of over 10,000 scholarship programs that distribute awards worth more than \$36 million.
- **studentscholarshipsearch.com**: A comprehensive guide to over 4,000 scholarships worth more than \$10 million.
- **cssprofile.collegeboard.org**: CSS Profile gives access to more than \$9 billion for post-secondary education.
- **mefa.org**: Offers education financing programs.
- **Cappex.com**: Find Colleges and Scholarships

## **EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES AND RESOURCES ON THE WEB**

### **American College Test (ACT):**

[www.act.org](http://www.act.org)

Register for ACT's. (College readiness assessment)

### **Campus Fairs (National Association for College Admissions Counseling):**

[www.nacacnet.org](http://www.nacacnet.org)

Dates and locations of NACAC'S National College Fairs.

### **CollegeBoard:**

[www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org)

A comprehensive web site that offers a database of college information. You can access online college applications as well as register for the SAT's.

### **College Scorecard:**

[Collegescorecard.ed.gov](http://Collegescorecard.ed.gov)

Compares college costs, debt, and graduation rates against the national average.

### **Federal Student Aid**

[www.studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov)

Federal student aid resource from the U.S. Department of Education.

### **MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:**

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

A wealth of resources re: Education in Massachusetts.

### **MA Educational Financing Authority (MEFA):**

[www.mefa.org](http://www.mefa.org)

College financing information.

### **Peterson's Education Center:**

[www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)

Links to all college and university home pages.

### **School Guides:**

[www.schoolguides.com](http://www.schoolguides.com)

College searches and financial aid and information.

### **U.S. Department of Education:**

[www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)

Higher education information and college financing.

**Shawsheen Valley Technical High School**  
**LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION/ACTIVITIES FORM**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Shop \_\_\_\_\_ GPA \_\_\_\_\_ Class Rank \_\_\_\_\_

ACTIVITY	GRADE LEVEL				OFFICE HELD	AWARDS/HONORS RECEIVED
	9	10	11	12		
Anti-Bullying Club						
Art Club						
Baseball						
Basketball						
Cheerleading						
Chess/Checkers Club						
Cross Country						
Class Officer/Council						
Football						
Gaming Club						
Gay/Straight Alliance						
Glee Club						
Golf						
Hockey						
National Honor Society						
Lacrosse						
Literary Magazine						
Mathematics Club						
Newspaper						
Oratory Club						
Orientation/Mentor						
Outdoor Club						
Performing Arts						
Reading Book Club						
Robotics Club						
Ski Club						
SkillsUSA						
Soccer						
Softball						
Sportsmen Club						
Student Council						
Swimming						
Teen Dating Awareness						
Tennis						
Track						
Traveling Rams Club						
Volleyball						
Wrestling						
Yearbook						
Yoga Club						

**\*COMPLETE THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS SHEET!**



**Volunteer Activities:**

**Community Involvement:**

**Employment History: (Please list name of employers and your job responsibilities)**

**Unusual Circumstances (ex. financial hardship, family illness/injury, or living situation):**

**List three adjectives to describe yourself:**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

**Describe an event or activity that has had the most significant impact on your life. How has this shaped the person you are?**

**What are you most proud of and why?**

**Intended college major** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of postsecondary education. Please circle one.**

- Technical School
- Community College
- 4-year College or University



Shawsheen Valley Technical High School  
**Transcript Release Form**  
Guidance Department

I hereby give permission for my son's/daughter's transcript from Shawsheen Valley Technical High School to be sent to colleges, universities, and or scholarship programs where they are applying. Students must request transcripts a minimum of 2 weeks before the due date to insure timely submission.

Students Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Shop: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student may sign if over 18 at time of request)

College/Scholarship Name Address	Student Initials	Due Date	Date Sent Guidance Initials

## **MILITARY**

Some of you may opt to join the armed services upon graduation. This is a great opportunity for those who want to earn good wages right away, travel and be afforded many educational opportunities. The branches of the military are the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, and Navy. If you are interested in any one of these branches, then see your guidance counselor and find out when the recruiters for each specific branch will be visiting our school.

### **THE ARMED SERVICES VOCATIONAL APTITUDE BATTERY (ASVAB)**

The ASVAB is used by the services to help with career counseling and job placement. The test is a group of twelve tests that measures your aptitude in five separate career field areas and provides an indication of your academic ability. By taking this test, you are in no way obligated to join the military. You are free to use the results in whatever manner you wish.

### **Military Recruiter Information**

#### **AIR FORCE**

Recruiting Office  
18 John St.  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 459-7976 (Office)

#### **ARMY NATIONAL GUARD**

Recruiting Office  
3 Merrimack St.  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(617) 438-0047 (Cell)

#### **AIR FORCE RESERVE**

Recruiting Office  
29 Randolph Rd.  
Building 1102C Suite 250  
Hanscom, AFB, MA 01731  
(781) 225-2820 (Office)

#### **COAST GUARD**

USCG Recruiting Office  
Center Plaza  
221 Center Street  
Malden, MA 02148  
(781) 338-9486 (Office)

#### **AIR NATIONAL GUARD**

Recruiting Office  
255 Park Ave., Suite 110  
Worcester, MA 01609  
(781) 243-1190 (Office)

#### **MARINES**

Recruiting Office  
18 John Street  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 452-3485 (Office)

#### **ARMY**

Recruiting Office  
18 John St.  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 549-9300 (Office)

#### **NAVY**

Recruiting Office  
24 Merrimack Street  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 735-5929 (Office)

#### **ARMY RESERVE**

Recruiting Office  
18 John St.  
Lowell, MA 01852  
(978) 549-9300 (Office)

## **EMPLOYMENT**

For those of you who have had enough schooling for now there are a few options that you should investigate before you graduate. Some of you will take your technical skills and go directly into the workforce. Some of you may have found out through your co-op placement or through externship that you may want to change the direction of your career. See your guidance counselor and we can work with you and help you with your career exploration. Another resource available to you is our Career Placement Coordinator. This person will maintain and keep and up-to-date list of jobs intended for Shawsheen Tech students.

### **PLANNING FOR EMPLOYMENT**

1. Know yourself ... what are your abilities, interests, and values? Learn to use your high school education in determining what type of career would best suit you. For example, what courses did you like in school and what ones did you dislike? Ask yourself a few questions. Did I do any extracurricular activities that made me realize something about my employment skills? Is money a determining factor for choosing a job? Do I like to work with people? Am I a loner? Is there a set amount of money I have to earn in order to live the lifestyle that I want? Do I like to work with my hands? Am I looking for a job or am I trying to establish a career?
2. If you have never tried the field that you think you may be interested in then try to spend time with people who are doing that job. Job shadowing is a great way to get a feel for what a job is really all about. This is a great opportunity to find out about education, salary, hours, and benefits that may come with a particular job.
3. Take advantage of career presentations that may be offered at your school. Attend a Career Fair and learn which jobs are in demand and which ones are predicted to have the most growth. Check in the Guidance Office to see the latest job postings we have received.
4. There are many ways in which to find employment such as the newspaper, the web, trade magazines, employment agencies, in-person visit, as well as the local post office, which posts civil service job openings. Other resources include friends, relatives and acquaintances that may have an inside track on a job opening, this is called networking and is generally very successful. Many times the most desirable job openings are found from networking with people who are in a specific field that you are interested in.
5. Make sure you have a resume prepared that highlights your skills. Practice filling out job applications and make sure you print clearly and your spelling is accurate. If an employer struggles to read your job application then chances are you won't make it to the interviewing stage.
6. If at all possible try to get letters of recommendation from current employers, teachers, coaches and counselors. Many jobs require three letters of recommendation and you don't want to wait till the last minute to ask for these.
7. If you are in a trade and want to stay with this field then you may look into joining a trade union. These jobs begin by doing an apprenticeship where the union will teach you every facet of the trade. After the training period is over you will then be a full union member.

## TEN RULES OF INTERVIEWING

Before stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job seeker going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing. To help with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind.

1. **Keep your answers brief and concise.**  
Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.
2. **Include concrete, quantifiable data.**  
Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.
3. **Repeat your key strengths three times.**  
It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company's or department's goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and ---if supported with quantifiable accomplishments---they will more likely be believed.
4. **Prepare five or more success stories.**  
In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Then reflect on past jobs and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully.
5. **Put yourself on their team.**  
Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer's name and products or services. For example, "As a member of \_\_\_\_\_, I would carefully analyze the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.
6. **Image is often as important as content.**  
What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 65 percent of the conveyed message is nonverbal; gestures, physical appearance, and attire are highly influential during job interviews.
7. **Ask questions.**  
The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview. Don't ask about benefits or salary. The interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.
8. **Maintain a conversational flow.**  
By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of a monologue—you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.
9. **Research the company, product lines and competitors.**  
Research will provide information to help you decide whether you're interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.
10. **Keep an interview journal.**  
As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up action you should take and put it in your calendar. Review your presentation. Keep a journal of your attitude and the way you answered the questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief, concise thank you letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

Written by Roseanne Lidel Bensley, Placement and Career Services, New Mexico State University.

**The Ultimate Guide to  
Becoming a Union Building Trade Apprentice  
In  
Massachusetts**

**<https://massbuildingtrades.org>**

**Union apprentices spend two to five years in the classroom and on-the-job training. The Building Trades unions and their contractor partners operate over 30 joint apprenticeship training centers (JATCs) across Massachusetts.**

# NORTH AMERICA'S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

## International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Allied Workers



Members of this union apply insulation to pipes, tanks, boilers, ducts, refrigeration equipment and other surfaces requiring thermal control of temperatures. The responsibilities of these mechanics, Improvers and apprentices also include the manufacture, fabrication, assembling, molding, erection, spraying, pouring, mixing, hanging, preparation, application, adjusting, alteration, repairing, dismantling, reconditioning, corrosive control, testing and maintenance of heat or frost insulation. Workers also handle insulation materials made of fiberglass, rubber, calcium silicate and urethane. Insulators also handle the removal of asbestos-containing material.

[www.insulators.org](http://www.insulators.org)

## International Union of Painters and Allied Trades



IUPAT members work in one or more of several crafts: painting, wallpaper hanging, glazing (glass work), drywall and taping, floor covering, and sign and display work. Painters and paperhangers work in industrial, commercial and residential settings, from bridges and ships to interior walls of office buildings and homes. Drywall finishers tape, fill in and smooth seams in sheets of drywall. Glaziers prepare and install various kinds of glass, mirrors, metal framing and doors/entrances to buildings. Floor coverers work with resilient floors, as well as carpet and decorative coverings. Exterior sign and display work, like billboards, is another choice. Other types of work are convention display and show decorators.

[www.iupat.org](http://www.iupat.org)

## International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers



The Boilermakers are a diverse union of workers in construction, maintenance, manufacturing, professional emergency medical services, repair and related industries. Boilermakers build and repair ships, fishing boats, ferries, barges, cranes, boilers, tanks, pressure vessels, plate and structural fabrications among other things. These skilled workers often use acetylene torches, power grinders and other equipment for welding, burning, cutting, rigging, layout and bolting. It's hard work, and heavy lifting and dedication to the craft is required.

[www.boilermakers.org](http://www.boilermakers.org)

## United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers



Members of the Roofers union install new roofs and remove old roofs using a variety of materials. Roofers install hot built-up and single-ply roofing systems on mostly commercial/industrial structures. Waterproofers install moisture-resistant products on below-grade structures and other surfaces to prevent water intrusion into buildings. The work is performed in all weather conditions. Members also operate a variety of mechanical and electrical equipment associated with the installation of roofing and waterproofing products.

[www.unionroofers.com](http://www.unionroofers.com)

## International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers



SMART members work in several industries. Sheet metal workers fabricate, install and service heating, venting, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems; blowpipe and industrial systems; metal roofing; coping and flashing; and stainless steel work for restaurants, kitchens and hospitals. They prepare shop and field drawings manually and with computer programs. Members also provide HVAC and refrigeration service.

[www.smart-union.org](http://www.smart-union.org)

## International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers



BAC represents all skilled trowel trades workers, including bricklayers, tile setters, plasterers, cement masons, marble masons, restoration workers, stonemasons, helpers or finishers, terrazzo and mosaic workers. Their work includes buildings, homes, stadiums, monuments and landmarks throughout the United States and Canada.

[www.bacweb.org](http://www.bacweb.org)

## International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers



The IBEW represents workers in the electrical industry including construction, gas and electric utilities, telecommunications, railroads and government agencies. Construction and residential electricians work in all phases of the electrical construction and service industry. Their worksites range from single-family residences to state-of-the-art industrial plants. Inside wire workers may install and maintain conduits, switches and converters, as well as wire lighting, to complex systems incorporating computerization and current technology. Electricians work in the electric sign industry and increasingly perform more work in the installation of fiber optics and voice/data/video equipment.

[www.ibew.org](http://www.ibew.org)

## United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada



UA is a multi-craft union that represents plumbers and pipe, sprinkler, and refrigerator fitters, as well as service technicians. All of these jobs require the installation, remodeling or maintenance of systems that carry water, steam, air and other liquids or gases necessary for sanitation, industrial production, heating and air conditioning, and many other uses. Workers measure, cut, and bend pipe, as well as weld, braze, caulk, solder, glue or thread joints at residential and commercial job sites.

[www.ua.org](http://www.ua.org)

# NORTH AMERICA'S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

## International Union of Operating Engineers



IUOE members are operating and stationary engineers, as well as significant numbers of public employees engaged in a wide variety of occupations. Stationary engineers work in operations and maintenance in building and industrial complexes, and in the service industries. Operating engineers operate heavy construction equipment such as cranes, bulldozers, pavers, trench excavators and many other kinds of equipment used in constructing buildings, dams, airports and highways. Operating engineers also work in the sand and gravel, cement and asphalt industries; in shipyards; on water dredges, oil refineries and oil pipelines; in sewer and water construction; in ports of major cities and many other industries. Most work is done outdoors and depends on the weather.  
[www.iuoe.org](http://www.iuoe.org)

## United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America



Members of the UBC are commercial and residential carpenters, floor layers, millwrights, pile drivers, interior systems carpenters, lathers, cabinetmakers and trade show carpenters. They build forms for concrete and frame buildings, walls, footings, columns and stairs. Carpenters also install doors, windows, storefronts and hand rails, and build cabinets, counter tops and finished stair handrails. Carpenters must read blueprints, measure accurately and calculate dimensions.

Carpenter crafts include: Carpenters and Joiners, Millwrights, Pile Drivers, Residential Carpenters, Interior Systems Carpenters, Lathers and Drywallers, Cabinet Makers, Millworkers and Floor Layers.  
[www.carpenters.org](http://www.carpenters.org)

## International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers



Members of the Iron Workers assemble and erect steel framework and other metal parts in buildings and on bridges, dams, skyscrapers, factories and other steel structures. They raise, place and join steel girders and columns to form structural frameworks, including the welding for metal decking. In addition, iron workers are responsible for the steel reinforcing of concrete construction. Iron workers fabricate and install ornamental, architectural and miscellaneous metal building components. They also install curtain wall under the umbrella of the Ornamental and Architectural Department.  
[www.ironworkers.org](http://www.ironworkers.org)

## Laborers' International Union of North America



LIUNA represents members working in construction, environmental remediation, maintenance, food service, health care, clerical and other occupations, as well as in state, local and municipal government jobs and as mail handlers in the U.S. Postal Service. LIUNA members have helped lay down new highways, build spectacular bridges, dig tunnels and subways, build new plants, factories, dams and power plants, and erect new schools, churches, hospitals and houses. In building construction and housing, Laborers' work includes excavation, footing and foundations, carpenter tending, compaction, concrete placement, power and hand tools, general clean-up and mason tending for bricklayers. Environmental laborers do asbestos removal, hazardous waste and radiation clean-up. The work performed by Laborers is very physical and it includes digging, carrying, pulling and bending—usually outside in all kinds of weather for long hours at a time.  
[www.liuna.org](http://www.liuna.org)

## International Brotherhood of Teamsters



The Teamsters union has several divisions, including a Building Material and Construction Trades Division. Members in this division are truck drivers who transport and haul material, merchandise, equipment or personnel between various locations—including construction sites, manufacturing plants, freight depots, warehouses, and wholesale and retail facilities. They may also load and unload, make mechanical repairs and keep trucks in good working order.

Building material and construction Teamsters are employed in the following types of work: rigging, demolition work, landscaping, pipeline construction work, warehousing and building supply manufacturing.  
[www.teamster.org](http://www.teamster.org)

## Operative Plasterers' and Cement Masons' International Association of the United States and Canada



OPCMIA members represent skilled plasterers, cement masons, shophands and associated members. Plasterers finish interior walls and ceilings of buildings, apply plaster on masonry, metal, wirelath or gypsum. Bridges, canals, dams, reservoirs, roads and many other engineering feats would be impossible without the skills of OPCMIA cement masons. Cement masons are responsible for all concrete construction, including pouring and finishing of slabs, steps, wall tops, curbs and gutters, sidewalks, paving and other concrete construction.  
[www.opcmia.org](http://www.opcmia.org)

## International Union of Elevator Constructors



The IUEC represent the most qualified and trained elevator constructors in the world. Members assemble, install and replace elevators, escalators, dumbwaiters, moving walkways and similar equipment in new and old buildings. Elevator Constructors also maintain and repair this equipment once it is in service, as well as modernize older equipment.  
[www.iuec.org](http://www.iuec.org)



## **FINDING THE RIGHT CAREER**

Before beginning any job search, you should first take the time to assess who you really are and what type of field would be of most interest to you. There are a number of interest inventories available that will help you in determining which career field would best suit you. Most self-assessment tools are centered on the following areas: personality and attitude traits, skills you may bring to a job, achievements you have accomplished, knowledge you have gained, personal values, and interest you have.

## **CAREER INFORMATION ON THE WEB**

### **BostonWorks**

[www.boston.com/jobs](http://www.boston.com/jobs)

Job search site.

### **CareerBuilder**

[www.careerbuilder.com](http://www.careerbuilder.com)

More information for career seekers.

### **Career One Stop**

[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)

Explore careers, job training possibilities and job searches.

### **Indeed**

[www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

Links to numerous job openings.

### **Job Hunt**

[www.job-hunt.org/](http://www.job-hunt.org/)

Links to job openings and other job-hunting information.

### **Job Quest**

[jobquest.dcs.eol.mass.gov](http://jobquest.dcs.eol.mass.gov)

Links to job openings in Massachusetts.

### **LinkedIn**

[www.linkedin.com/jobs](http://www.linkedin.com/jobs)

Business and employment-oriented service that operates via websites and mobile apps.

### **MassCareers**

[www.mass.gov](http://www.mass.gov)

Job opportunities working for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

### **MassCIS**

[Portal.masscis.intocareers.org](http://Portal.masscis.intocareers.org)

Career Information System

### **Massachusetts Labor & Workforce Development**

[www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-labor-workforce-development](http://www.mass.gov/orgs/executive-office-of-labor-workforce-development)

Information on training and careers.

### **My Future**

[www.myfuture.com/](http://www.myfuture.com/)

Here is help with your career direction, resume, and money for college.

### **Monster**

[www.monster.com/](http://www.monster.com/)

Information about careers and job searches.

### **ZipRecruiter**

[www.ziprecruiter.com](http://www.ziprecruiter.com)

Job search tool.

## **SENIOR YEAR COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM**

The Cooperative Education Program is a privilege that provides an opportunity for qualified seniors to enhance their vocational-technical training through work experience in industry on a job related program of study. The cooperative education placement takes place on an alternate-week basis during the regularly scheduled vocational-technical week for seniors. Students participating in the cooperative education program are expected to work at least 6 hours everyday that school is in session. If a student is not at work and does not attend school, then he or she must call in sick to both the employer and the placement counselor or, the student will be considered truant for that day.

### **Eligibility Guidelines for Participation in Cooperative Education Program**

To be eligible to participate in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter you must meet the following criteria:

#### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Maximum of 12 total days absent during the junior year with no more than 3 days absent occurring in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Maximum combined total of 20 days absent and tardy during junior year with a maximum combined absence and tardy total of no more than 5 days tardy in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

#### **Grade Requirements**

Minimum of a B- (80%) average in vocational-technical program for both 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and final grade for junior year.

Pass all subjects in 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and final grade for junior year.

Cumulative average of C- (70%) for related and all academic subjects combined 4<sup>th</sup> quarter and final grades for junior year.

#### **Teacher Recommendations**

Recommended by vocational-technical shop, related, and academic teachers.

Verification of completion of 2 years in the vocational-technical program of study.

Students must have taken and successfully completed a 10-hour OSHA Safety Training Program or a 10-hour Career Safe Training Program, whichever is appropriate for the individual's area of career and technical training.

To be eligible in the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> quarter you must meet the following criteria:

#### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Maximum of 3 total days absent during the previous quarter.

Maximum combined absence and tardy total of 5 days.

#### **Grade Requirements**

Minimum of B- (80%) average in vocational-technical program for previous quarter.

Pass all subjects previous quarter.

Cumulative average of C- (70%) for related and all academic subjects combined for previous quarter.

#### **Teacher Recommendations**

Recommended by vocational-technical shop, related and academic teachers.

Verification of completion of 2 years in the vocational-technical program of study.

Completion of Safety/ Career Training Program as noted above.

### **Obtaining Cooperative Education Program Employment**

Students are encouraged to use job postings provided by the placement office as leads in their search for employment, as well as contacts that their vocational-technical instructors may provide. It is each student's responsibility to find and obtain employment, related to their program of study, with a qualified employer who is in compliance with federal and state discrimination, wage and workers' compensation insurance laws.

## **JUNIOR YEAR COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM AND PROCEDURES**

The Junior Cooperative Education Program is a program designed to give exemplary students the opportunity to participate in a paid training program beginning in the 4<sup>th</sup> term of their junior year. This program recognizes the quality and educational advantages of industry designed training programs. These programs can offer a pathway into higher wage options. The program takes place on an alternate-week basis during the regularly scheduled vocational-technical week for juniors. Students participating in the program are expected to work at least 6 hours every day that school is in session. If a student is not at work and does not attend school, then he or she must call in sick to both the employer and placement counselor or, the student will be considered truant for the day.

To be eligible to participate in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of junior year you must meet the following criteria:

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Maximum of 6 total days absent

Maximum combined total of 9 days tardy and absent

### **Grade Requirements**

Minimum of a B-(80%) average in vocational-technical program for the third quarter and first three quarters grade average.

Minimum of C-(70%) average for all subjects in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and first three quarters grade average.

Minimum of a B-(80%) average for related in 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and first three quarters grade average.

### **Teacher Recommendations**

Recommended by vocational-technical shop, related and academic teachers.

Verification of completion of 2 years in the vocational-technical program of study.

Summer eligibility is based on standards for the first three quarters of junior year as listed above and the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter standards as follows:

### **Attendance and Punctuality**

Maximum of 2 total days absent during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Maximum combined absence and tardy total of 3 days.

### **Grade Requirements**

Minimum of a B- (80%) average in the vocational-technical program for 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Minimum of a C- (70%) average for all academic subjects 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

Minimum of a B- (80%) average for related 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.

### **Teacher Recommendations and a 2- Year Verification**

Recommended by a vocational-technical shop, related and academic teachers.

Verification of 2 years in the vocational-technical program of study.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Barron's Profiles of American Colleges. Woodbury, New York:  
Barron's Educational Series.
- College Admissions Data Handbook. New Orleans, LA:  
Orchard House, Inc.
- College Costs & Financial Aid Handbook. New York, New York:  
College Entrance Examination Board.
- College Handbook and Index of Majors. New York, New York:  
College Entrance Examination Board.
- Kaplan's the Road to College. New York, New York:  
Kaplan Educational Centers and Simon & Schuster.
- Peterson's College Money Handbook. Princeton, New Jersey:  
Peterson's Guides.
- Peterson's Guide to College Admissions. Princeton, New Jersey:  
Peterson's Guides.
- Peterson's Guide to Four to Four-Year Colleges. Princeton, New Jersey:  
Peterson's Guides.
- Peterson's Guides to Two-Year Colleges. Princeton, New Jersey:  
Peterson's Guides.
- Peterson's Scholarships, Grants & Prizes. Princeton, New Jersey:  
Peterson's Guides.

Most of these books can be found in the high school library or in the guidance office. These publications can be very helpful with postsecondary planning.

College and Career information can also be found on the Shawsheen Tech website:

**[www.shawsheentech.org](http://www.shawsheentech.org)**

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination Act**

**Shawsheen Valley Technical High School admits students and makes available to them its advantages, privileges and course of study, without regard to race, color, gender, religion, gender identity, national origin, sexual identity, sexual orientation, disability or homelessness status.**