



Full Passage Newsletter

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December 2015

5th—SAT Reasoning
and Subject Exams

12th—ACT and ACT
With Writing

Underclassmen—Review
PSAT report with advisor and
map out a plan for test
preparation

Schedule spring SAT/ACT
testing dates

Seniors—File any additional
college applications before
deadline dates

January 2016

23rd – SAT Reasoning
and Subject Tests

(register by 12/28 - late
registration 1/12/16)

Seniors – complete and submit
FAFSA any time after Jan. 1st

Apply online at
www.fafsa.ed.gov

Seniors – Search and apply for
scholarships that match your
qualifications

Seniors – File any additional
college applications

Acing the Admissions Interview

An admissions interview is a chance for you to go from being a two-dimensional applicant the college knows only on paper to a three-dimensional *person* the college wants and needs. It's a great opportunity to let admissions learn a little more about you, your interests and your goals.

Still, even the most confident student is likely to feel a little nervous before an admissions interview. Understanding the interview process and a bit of advance preparation can go a long way to soothing those jitters. Here are some things to know about interviews to help you relax and make a great impression.

Interviewers are looking for reasons to like you, not reasons to dislike you. Admissions interviewers enjoy talking to students; they're sincerely interested in what you have to say and in learning more about you. They also want to make the interview process as pleasant and stress free as possible. It's highly unlikely that an interviewer will grill you with questions designed to trip you up.

Dress for success. In general, nice slacks or a skirt with a collared shirt or pullover sweater will be appropriate for most interview situations. However, if you normally "dress up," it's fine to do so for the interview. Avoid: tee shirts, ball caps, flip flops, pajama bottoms, torn jeans, and revealing clothing. Ask yourself if the outfit you plan to wear would make your grandmother cringe if she was introducing you to her friends. If the answer is yes, readjust and tone things down. You want the interviewer's focus to be on *what you have to say*, not on what you're *wearing*.

Be ready to talk about yourself. The purpose of an interview is to help admissions learn more about you. Before your interview, reflect on your academic interests and how they developed, the extracurricular activities you've enjoyed most and why, and the reasons you've chosen to apply to that college. Having a few "personal highlights" in mind beforehand will make it easier to respond to the interviewer's questions. Some students find it helpful to practice answering potential interview questions with a friend or parent before the actual interview. However, while *a bit* of practice is never a bad idea, *too much* practice can be counterproductive. You want to sound like yourself, not a robot repeating a prepared script.

Interviews are a two-way conversation. Most interviewers will ask if you have any questions about their college or university. It's wise to refresh your memory about the school's programs and features before the interview. Come to the interview prepared with at least one question that isn't answered on the school's website or in their marketing materials. If you're stumped, a good general purpose question to ask is, "What's a current issue on your campus that students are passionate about?"

Be polite. When you meet your interviewer, shake hands firmly and greet the interviewer by name. When you are speaking, remember to look the interviewer in the eye. Try to remember your body language – don't slump in the chair; sit upright. It is always polite to send a hand-written thank you note to the interviewer within a day or two of the interview. These small social graces will help create a positive impression in the minds of interviewers.

Career Paths for Fashion Merchandising Majors

- Fashion assistant
- Fashion merchandiser
- Fashion director
- Fashion marketing manager
- Advertising account manager
- Buyer
- Public relations manager
- Editor
- Fashion designer
- Illustrator
- Fashion photographer
- Sales representative
- Fashion stylist
- Boutique owner
- Fashion consultant
- Visual merchandiser

Majoring in Fashion Merchandising

Do you love fashion? Are you usually the first in your group to spot the latest clothing trends? Is *Project Runway* one of your favorite reality shows? If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, a college major in fashion merchandising and a career in the fashion industry may be a good match.

While many people picture clothing designers when they think of the fashion industry, designers actually play a relatively small role in keeping the fashion industry running. In addition to designers, the fashion industry relies on professionals with skills in areas as diverse as researching and predicting fashion trends; marketing and advertising; sourcing and production of textiles, clothing and accessories; and retail operations. Across the supply chain, the U.S. textile and apparel industry directly employs more than 4 million people, and contributes \$350 billion to the U.S. economy each year. Globally, the fashion industry accounts for \$2 trillion in sales annually.

A major in fashion merchandising can help you prepare for a career in this fast-paced, creative industry. As a fashion merchandising major, you'll study how clothing, textiles and accessories are designed, produced and marketed to consumers. Most programs begin with a class that will introduce you to the fashion industry and then move to classes in specific aspects of the industry, from design to production to retailing. Depending on your program, you may supplement the courses in your major with additional courses in business and communications. Some colleges allow students to specialize in a particular part of the industry, such as textiles or apparel, while others give students the chance to combine fashion merchandising with courses in specialized areas such as fashion design or fashion advertising. Typically, the classes in this major will have a strong "hands on" learning component; instead of just writing papers about how the fashion industry markets clothing,

you'll be asked to develop advertising plans and ads for class assignments.

Most colleges offering fashion merchandising majors provide off-campus study programs in fashion capitals such as New York or Milan to give students in-depth exposure to the industry. Internships at fashion and retail corporations are also encouraged, and some fashion merchandising programs require internships as part of the major. Some fashion merchandising programs also have connections within the fashion industry that can help students land these highly sought-after internships.

Fashion merchandising majors will be prepared for a wide variety of career paths after graduation. Typical entry level job titles include assistant buyer, production assistant, marketing specialist, retail analyst, and visual merchandiser. According to industry research, most entry level positions will have starting salaries of between \$45,000 and \$55,000, depending on position and company. Mid-career managers can expect salaries in the \$70,000 to \$100,000 range, and senior executives often see salaries in the \$150,000 or higher range, depending on their area of specialization, skills, and experience. However, a fashion merchandising major provides strong business knowledge and skills that can be applied to other businesses, so graduates are not limited just to positions within the fashion industry.

Want to learn more about fashion merchandising and the fashion industry?

Fashion Group International, Inc., www.fgi.org

International Association of Clothing Designers and Executives, www.iacde.net

Retail Advertising & Marketing Association, www.rama-nrf.org

Women's Wear Daily, www.wwd.com

National Association General Merchandise Representatives, www.nagmr.com



Financial Matters: PPY and What it Means for Your Family



A big change was recently announced in the federal financial aid program. For the first time in history, the 2015 tax year will be used to calculate expected family contribution for two years in a row. Currently, the FAFSA considers the prior year's tax information in calculating aid. Beginning in October

of 2016, the base year will be the prior prior year (PPY); thus for this year's senior class, information from 2015 will be used for two years in a row. After that, the system will continue to utilize PPY information.

This change to PPY affects families of both juniors and seniors who plan to file for college financial aid. It is especially important that these families look carefully at their projected income and assets for 2015, since these figures will be critical in the financial aid process. It might be a good time for these families to consult with their tax advisors

before the end of 2015 to see how this change might affect them.

A second change involves the opening date for filing a FAFSA. Currently, families file after January 1st for the next academic year. Beginning in 2016, the FAFSA will open on October 1st to file for the next academic year.

The CSS Profile, used in addition to the FAFSA by 300 colleges to award institutional aid, has not as yet announced what their policy will be in regard to PPY. A statement of their plans is expected sometime in December, so watch for an announcement.

First Year Experience Programs

'First Year Experience' programs (FYE), also known as 'Freshman Year Experience' or 'Freshman Seminar' programs, are designed to help ease students' transition from high school to college. Many universities require freshmen, and often transfer students, to complete these programs during their first year of college. Studies have shown that students and colleges that participate in FYEs benefit by experiencing greater academic success and higher retention rates.

Depending on the university, these programs vary in length. Some schools offer a two-week orientation, while others continue throughout the first year. Components may include orientation, service learning opportunities, small faculty-led classes, academic advising, and support services such as tutoring and mentoring. A typical first-year seminar course may cover topics such as time management, computer and library skills, and drug and alcohol awareness. FYEs can be a lot of fun for new students, as they get to know each other through field trips and special events.

Gaining popularity at many universities, as part of the FYE, is the estab-

lishment of 'learning communities'. For example, at Chapman University, students participate in Living-Learning Communities. They live together based on a chosen focus. Some of the focus topics include 'Exploring Humanity & Society', 'Creativity & the Arts', and 'Individual & Global Wellness'. Students participate in workshops and social events that are centered on their focus topic. They also get to share study and free time with peers who have the same interests, which helps establish a support network.

The goals of FYE programs are: to ensure that incoming students are aware of all available support resources; to give them the confidence to engage with their instructors and peers; and to help them to think critically, work together, and effectively manage their learning. Students in these programs receive frequent feedback from faculty and support from academic advisors, and become comfortable in their new environment.

The positive outcomes of participating in such programs include developing a sense of belonging to a college's community, recognizing personal responsibility for success, maintaining well-

being, and demonstrating competency in academic and life skills. Students who complete FYE programs develop stronger relationships with faculty, gain more understanding of available resources, and establish better time management and learning skills.

The more interaction that exists between students, and between faculty and students, the more likely a first-year student is to become a second-year student, and the more likely students are to be involved with their college community. Since college ranking is in part due to retention rates, it is in a college's best interest to make sure freshmen are prepared to continue on to their sophomore year. Make sure you are examining retention rates when researching colleges; they are a good indicator of how well freshmen are being prepared for success.

Through the implementation of successful First Year Experience programs, colleges hope to maximize students' potential by offering them support and guidance during their critical initial year in college so that they develop adequate critical thinking proficiency, time management competence and self-advocacy skills

Early College Decisions and Deferrals

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December generally brings cooler weather, holiday parties, and the first round of decisions from colleges. And from you, the applicant, a response will be required.

An acceptance from your early decision school requires a prompt response accepting a place in the freshman class. Early decision is binding; students are required to accept the offer and to withdraw any other college applications that may be pending. The only way an offer from an early decision college can be refused is if the school was unable to provide a financial aid package that makes the institution affordable for your family. If this happens to you, you need to contact the college's office of financial aid immediately to discuss any special family needs.

Some decisions bring joy and relief—acceptance to your ED college means that you can wear that college sweatshirt with a sense of pride and ownership. Early action acceptances assure you of a spot in the freshman class, but you are not required to respond to that offer until the common reply date of May 1st. A denial, while disappointing, will allow you to rethink the other colleges on your list and move on with your life. And then there's the deferral—a kind of non-decision that gives you a second chance at acceptance. But if you really want to have

that second chance, you'll need to take a proactive approach and do what you still can to influence the final decision.

First, think about the likely reasons for your deferral. Does your transcript show a rising trend in grades and might the college be waiting for mid-year grades to confirm that the trend is continuing? Make sure it does. You might even consider asking a senior year teacher to write a letter on your behalf, affirming your strength in the classroom or your unusual intellectual curiosity. Perhaps you simply did not demonstrate enough interest in your early action college—a campus visit (if possible) or an interview might strengthen your case.

Treat your deferral as an opportunity to tell them more about who you are and why you believe that their institution is a good match. At the very least, you'll want to write to the appropriate admissions officer at Deferral U, affirming your continued interest in attending that institution and expressing your hope for acceptance in the regular round of admissions. Follow up with a phone call to ask what you might do to improve your standing and then follow through on the college's suggestions. Don't give up on this institution, but rethink all of your college options—there are many colleges that can provide a perfect fit.