

College Counseling Package

Comprehensive College Counseling Program for Individuals

Mercer Education's **College Counseling Package** provides a complete solution for college-bound students as they plan and prepare for college admission. Whether a student needs long- or short-term guidance, ME offers a choice of package options designed to work with students at any level of college preparedness. Students may start as early as freshman year or as late as senior year. At whatever stage students are in their work, ME's College Counseling Package provides a structured, personalized approach where students meet regularly with experienced college counselors to develop a strategic admissions plan that maximizes their opportunities of gaining acceptance to the *best fit* colleges of their choice.

Flexible Start Times

Students may enroll at any time during **Freshman, Sophomore, Junior, or Senior** year and receive customized guidance tailored to their needs and goals.

Students enrolling over multiple years refine the work done in the prior year with ME's counselors.

The College Counseling Package is taught by a **team** of Mercer Education's most experienced counselors, including ME's Director, Eric Cohen, who supervises each student's work with assigned counselors. Instructional staff includes veteran college and high school faculty members and admissions officers who have direct knowledge of the college admissions process and have provided college counseling to hundreds of students, many of whom have been admitted to some of the most selective colleges and universities in the United States.

Students embarking on this exciting process of gaining acceptance to the schools of their choice, whether they start working as freshman or seniors, can be confident in the support they will receive from ME's team of highly experienced advisors who will methodically guide them every step of the way.

*See following pages for information on package content
and inquire with us directly for rates.*

Under the direction of Eric Cohen, a graduate of Harvard University with over 30 years of experience in education and college counseling, Mercer Education's team of admissions counselors place an emphasis on getting to know each student individually, his or her unique personality, interests and goals, and to provide customized, step-by-step guidance that focuses on the following elements of the application process.

ME's College Counseling Package covers the following:

- Personal Inventory of interests, goals, aptitudes
- Strategic Timeline Calendar
- High School Course Recommendations
- Exploring College Majors and Career Options
- Brainstorming and Crafting Application Essays
- Building a College List
- Extracurricular Planning
- Summer/Volunteer/Internship Planning
- Standardized/AP Test Planning
- Planning for Application Deadlines
- Resumés and Cover Letters
- Merit Scholarship Strategies
- Navigating Common Application
- Finalizing College List
- Regular vs. Early Admissions
- Completing Applications
- Understanding Costs and Financial Aid Applications
- Interview Coaching
- Campus Visits
- Evaluating Acceptance Offers
- Post Acceptance Tasks
- Gap Year Planning

Since 1999, **Mercer Education** has been helping students – locally, around the country, and internationally – with the college application process. We are professional educators dedicated to helping our students gain acceptance to the colleges of their dreams. We offer a full range of services – test prep, tutoring, enrichment education, and help with special projects – including college admission, which is the culmination of all these efforts and a core focus of our work. If you would like custom-tailored support for this important element of college readiness, we invite you to contact us to learn more about our **College Counseling Package**.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

For freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, the “CCP” program includes **ten 1’20” meetings** (once a month September through June).

Students can have **weekly 50-minute meetings** in their senior year summer.

In the fall of senior year, students have **weekly 50-minute meetings** with their counselors from mid-September through December 23.

Students may increase the frequency of meetings and, if necessary, seniors may add more sessions after the New Year’s break for as long as necessary.

Enroll Freshman Year - 10 Monthly Meetings per Year

At the start of freshman year, most students are not thinking about college, let alone the application process for getting into college. With this in mind, our counselors typically start out addressing the question of college in the broadest strokes, including the utility of a college education, the different kinds of colleges that exist, and the different ways to familiarize oneself with them. Having established the value of attending college and the variety of schools that exist, counselor and students discuss the *expectations* that colleges have of their applicants—grades, standardized tests, extracurricular activities, to name a few—and how best to meet those expectations.

Before students can decide about specific schools, though, they first need to better understand themselves and what careers and college majors might best suit them. One of the first tasks, then, is the “personal inventory” of interests and aptitudes, which will help with determinations of college majors and target schools. In many cases, students just starting high school will need more time to discover their own strengths, and a related, ongoing task of the college counselor is to encourage and identify possible extracurricular activities and/or civic participation. This, in turn, is an opening to learning about resumé’s, and students will begin to work on these, even if they do not yet have actual work or volunteer experience to document.

As students at this age still have time to take charge of their academic focus and direction, counselors work with students to review their course selections for upcoming years, direct them to resources if they need academic support, and map out possible standardized tests to document their academic achievement.

One of the primary tasks of the college application process is the writing of multiple essays, the “personal statement” and other long and short-response writings.

To help students understand the kind of narratives they eventually will be generating based on their academic and extracurricular efforts, we start students on this from the beginning, writing short narratives about various topics and regularly reading sample essays. This serves not only to hone their writing skills but also to give them examples, both of the activities they might consider and approaches to the essay questions they will face. Under the guidance of their counselors, students write and revise regularly, no matter when they enroll in the program.

Regular Communication

Communication of all “stakeholders” – students, parents, counselors, and school director – is key, and we encourage regular, open communication to make sure students are staying on track with their work and that parents are advised of their child’s progress.

Students and their **parents** will have a meeting with their counselor at a mutually convenient time at the start of the year.

Counselors will provide parents with a **mid-year report** tracking progress and providing targets for the remainder of the year as well as an **end-of-year follow-up** report reviewing the work they have done and the student’s overall college readiness.

Students and their **parents** have an end-of-year meeting with the school director to discuss completed and upcoming work.

The counselor and the director are always happy to field quick questions.

Enroll Sophomore Year - 10 Monthly Meetings per Year

High school sophomores can start the program or continue to build on the work they have done in the prior year - exploring academic majors, possible future vocations, and the numerous connections between academic interests and eventual career paths. As academics come into clearer focus, students begin to build preliminary lists of schools and even take virtual tours to become more familiar with the various school options. Additionally, we continue to support students in their exploration and pursuit of extracurricular activities and paid or volunteer jobs and summer opportunities, for all of which students will create resumés and prepare short narratives. Students read new sample application essays each year and continue to refine their understanding of what constitutes a “good” college essay.

Enroll Junior Year - 10 Monthly Meetings per Year

A consolidated focus on freshman and sophomore activities becomes dominant in the fall and spring of junior year when students explore the various application options such as early decision and early action and create a list of dream, match, and safety schools to apply to the following year. Students concentrate on their writing skills as they read successful application essay samples and work through the challenging process of drafting effective, distinctive personal statements for each of their target schools.

Students at this stage are now able to learn about questions of college financing, scholarships, registering for the Common Application and other application portals, and the more specific questions related to their particular academic focus. Planning for the upcoming summer begins early in the year to maximize the chances of landing meaningful activities, and students finalize resumés and applications for summer.

Summer Prior to Senior Year

Depending upon the status of pending and completed essays as well as student availability, students may enroll for a package of eight weekly classes during the summer to make sure they are on track.

Enroll Senior Year - Weekly Meetings, Mid-Sept to Dec. 23

During senior year students begin weekly meetings in mid-September to finalize college essays and complete college applications. During these sessions, students fine-tune personal statement essays and complete any required college- or major-specific supplemental essays, statements of purpose, narratives, and short-format responses. If needed, each student may also receive coaching on other application-related tasks such as interviews and auditions for fine arts departments. This careful application guidance continues right up until the New Year's break.

Post-Holiday Wrap Up

If, after the New Year's holiday, students need help with any remaining applications or post-application tasks, e.g., drafting wait-list appeals, evaluating/negotiating offers, or any other factors that may impact their final college choice, it is possible to sign up for additional sessions with their counselors on an as-needed basis.