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## WKU's Exploratory Program

Choosing your major is an important decision. This program is an initiative of the Academic Advising & Retention Center (AARC) to assist students by giving them additional tools to be successful in their college career. [The Exploratory Program](#) is for students who are exploring their major options, have not chosen a major, or wish to change their major. Take advantage of this program to choose a major and career path that suits you personally.

# Helpful Hints for High School Students

ACADEMIC ADVISING & RETENTION CENTER  
WESTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

## Thinking about College?

There are many things to consider when looking for a college and the search can be overwhelming. Here are some helpful criteria to keep in mind as you search:

- **Size** - Consider the class size and professor to student ratio. Decide if you would rather blend in with the crowd or know the majority of the student body.
- **Location** - Rural, cities, suburbs: What type of environment is most conducive to your learning? What is the town like? Also look at how far it is from home, think about the likelihood of homesickness, and how much money you can spend on travel.

\*If you can, visit a campus. A tour can give you some good background information about the school's history, traditions, and values. Eat in the dining hall to see what the food is like. Visit the library or student center, look at the study areas, and computer lab accessibility. If you know what department you are interested in, take the time to sit in on a class while you are there. Talk to a few students and ask if they would make the same college choice if they had to do it again.

- **Cost** - Tuition is typically lower at public institutions for in-state residents. Scholarships are available at both public and private institutions. A community college can be a good idea because they typically allow



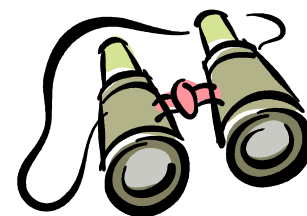
you to save money while completing your general education requirements. It also can give you more time to think about your choice of major. Staying closer to home might be your best option.

- **Major** - If you have an idea of what major you might choose, find schools that offer it. Be sure to research the programs offered by various universities.
- **Activities** - Social opportunities on campus such as sports, organizations, intramurals, and other extracurricular activities may influence your decision.

Additionally, consider student life, student government, Greek life, honors societies, school newspaper, etc. If you visit a campus, check the bulletin boards and flyers for more information on events.

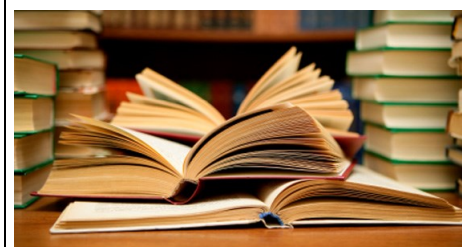
- **Campus Life** - Is there on campus housing available? Are there jobs on campus? Is the campus diverse? Are there study abroad programs?
- **Education** - Read about the faculty on the school's website and other places like [ratemyprofessor.com](http://ratemyprofessor.com) to get various students' perspectives on an instructor. What is the freshmen retention rate and how many actually graduate?
- **Applying** - Be sure to apply to more than one school. It is good to have the option if you need it and then narrow down your choices instead of having no options.

A good place to start your search is the [College Board's](#) website.

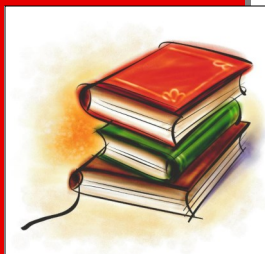


For additional specific WKU departmental requirements, click the links below:

- [Carol Martin Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science](#)
- [College of Education and Behavioral Sciences](#)
- [College of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Gordon Ford College of Business](#)
- [Honors College](#)
- [Ogden College of Science and Engineering](#)
- [Potter College of Arts & Letters](#)
- [University College](#)

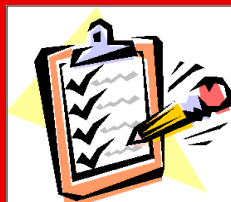


## Don't Panic: Freshman & Sophomore Year Checklists



### Honors College at WKU

WKU is home to Kentucky's only independent [Honors College](#), providing students the experience of a highly selective private college for less than half the cost. Prepare to begin your college career by utilizing the personalized academic advising, building a strong class schedule, and planning ahead for study abroad and research opportunities. "The Honors College encourages each student within our close-knit community of scholars to actively engage in the life of the College through student organizations, cultural and academic programs, and social activities."



\*Checklist tips are from The College Board, Education-Portal.com, and OfftoCollege.com

Here is a checklist to keep in mind as you progress through high school.

#### Your Freshman Year:

- During your freshman year, it is important to focus on what classes you should complete during high school.
- Pick a club or a sport to join. Show colleges that you have more than one interest by joining extracurricular activities.
- Speak to your counselor about [Pre-College Curriculum](#) requirements. (WKU requires 4 years of English; 3 years of Math, Social Studies, and Science; and at least 2 years of foreign language.)
- Consider which math, foreign language, science, or social studies courses you may want to take.
- Review your schedule to make sure you are enrolled in challenging classes that will

help you prepare for college.

- Find out the required courses and tests for colleges that you might be interested in attending.
- Create a calendar with important deadlines and dates.
- Go to college fairs in your area.
- Sign up for college preparatory courses for next year.
- Explore summer opportunities by looking for a job, internship, or volunteer program.

#### Your Sophomore Year:

- Participate in a community service activity. Volunteering is a good way to learn skills that will help you later in life.
- Consider taking the PSAT. This experience will be beneficial because it will help you realize if you will need extra preparation in certain subjects.

- Prepare for tests, such as the SAT, by making a study plan based on your PSAT results.
- Meet with your counselor to discuss your college plans.
- Continue taking math, foreign language, science, and social studies courses.



- Go to college fairs in your area.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities.
- Sign up for the PSAT which is given in October.
- Learn about college costs and how financial aid works.
- Sign up for college preparatory classes for your junior year.
- Look for a great summer work

## Don't Panic: Junior Year Checklist

#### Your Junior Year:

- Continue your involvement in a club or sport.
- Consider taking College Board Advanced Placement (AP) courses.
- Take AP tests if you are enrolled in AP courses and want college credit.
- Make sure you have planned enough courses to fulfill college requirements.
- Begin deciding what kind of colleges you are interested in attending. Start with considering your abilities, preferences, and personal qualities. List things you may want to study in college.
- Visit college campuses. Take

tours and schedule interviews with admissions counselors. Schedule a tour through the WKU Office of Admissions or call (270) 745-2551.

- Begin researching financial aid options.
- Take the ACT or SAT (or both) in the spring. If you are not satisfied with your score, schedule another test. [WKU Admission requirements](#) are an ACT composite of 20 or higher.
- Consider test prep courses if you are having trouble with the SAT or ACT.
- Read about majors and careers to help with your planning.
- Talk to your counselor about your college plans. Attend college night and financial aid night at your

school.

- Prepare for the SAT by taking an official practice test. Learn which skills you need to improve.
- Develop a list of 15-20 colleges that interest you. You can narrow it down later.
- Prepare for AP exams, if you do well you can receive credit, advanced placement or both.
- Plan ahead for the summer and senior year. Review your senior year class schedule with your counselor. Challenge yourself with honors and AP classes.
- Request applications from colleges you are planning to apply for admission. Check important dates.

## Don't Panic: Senior Year Checklist

#### Your Senior Year:

- Take or retake the ACT or SAT exams.
- Narrow your list of colleges to approximately three to eight and review it with your counselor.
- Make a master calendar and note: test dates, fees, and deadlines; college application due

dates; required financial aid applications and their deadlines; recommendations, transcripts, and other necessary materials. Your official transcript should be mailed to the WKU Admissions Office, 1906 College Heights Blvd. #11020, Bowling Green, KY 42101-1020 or call

(270) 745-2551.

- Review how to fill out college applications. Prepare your college applications September-October. Write essays and ask teachers, family members, and friends to read first drafts. Get letters of recommendation.
- Send out applications at the appropriate time. (Continued on page 3).

## Don't Panic: Senior Year Checklist (Continued from page 2)



### Your Senior Year: (cont.)

If you can apply for early admission, you may want to consider this option. Colleges may require test scores and applications in early November.

- Most regular applications are due between January 1 and February 15. Keep copies of everything you send

- to colleges.
- Contact colleges to make sure they have received all application materials.
- Apply for scholarships. Questions concerning WKU student financial aid can be answered by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (270) 745-2755. Or e-mail your questions to [fa.questions@wku.edu](mailto:fa.questions@wku.edu) or [scholarships@wku.edu](mailto:scholarships@wku.edu).
- Many priority financial aid deadlines fall in February.
- Fill out the FASFA (Free Application for Student Aid) in January. Fill out your FASFA as soon as you complete your taxes because you will already have all the information you need. Ask your parents to help. Apply for [financial aid](#) in May-September.
- Attend information or open house sessions for colleges that have accepted you.
- Make your final choice by May 1. Send a deposit to the college you choose.
- Start preparing for the year ahead. At WKU all beginning freshmen must sign up for the Academic Transitions Program. If you have questions please call the New Student Orientation Office at (270) 745-2551.
- Contact your academic advisor. If you are an Exploratory major e-mail us at [academic.advising@wku.edu](mailto:academic.advising@wku.edu) or call (270) 745-5065.

## WKU Dual Credit Programs

The Dual Credit Program is a partnership between WKU and area high schools that offers qualified students the opportunity to earn college credit as part of their high school curriculum. These courses are offered during regular school hours.

- Students taking dual credit courses are registered and enrolled at WKU as "non-degree seeking student prior to high school graduation." The grades earned in dual credit courses are the first college grades a student receives.

- If they decide to attend a university other than WKU the credits will transfer and the grades earned will be a permanent part of the student's academic record.
- Qualifications for the program include:
  1. Student must be either a junior or senior in high school.
  2. The student must be recommended by their high school principal or counselor. This recommendation will be based on the student's

potential for academic success in college level courses.

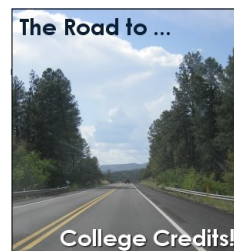
3. Some courses (ENG 100, MATH 116 for example) taken through the program have specific requirements that must be met prior to being registered.

### Participating High Schools

- If you have any questions about the program please contact:

Dewayne Neeley,  
[Dewayne.neeley@wku.edu](mailto:Dewayne.neeley@wku.edu)  
(270) 745-2386.

or  
Brittney Jones,  
[Brittney.joiner-jones@wku.edu](mailto:Brittney.joiner-jones@wku.edu)  
(270) 745-3418.



**Students who have had success with dual credit coursework usually have a minimum GPA of 2.5/4.0 and an attendance rate of at least 90%.**

## What to Expect at Your ATP

### What is ATP?

ATP is WKU's Academic Transitions Program. It is a required orientation for all new WKU students and is designed to help them transition from high school to college by providing information sessions, placement testing, academic advising, and class registration.

### What to Bring

- Your WKU ID# and TopNet password
- Your photo ID
- An umbrella in case of rain
- Please wear comfortable shoes  
There will be a *significant* amount of walking throughout the day for both students and guests. Please dress accordingly.

### Don't forget you will be taking a placement exam (Math or Chemistry for example).

Placement exams allow your academic advisor to place you in the level of coursework best suited for you. A practice exam for Math can be taken before the real test. Keep in mind that these can **ONLY** be taken once. The Math Placement Exams should be taken on TopNet prior to you coming to ATP.

### Update Your Major

To change your major **BEFORE** ATP, e-mail your name, WKU ID#, and new major to: [atp@wku.edu](mailto:atp@wku.edu).

### Other Important Information

- Students must participate in the entire program in order to meet with an

advisor and register for classes.

Students who arrive late or leave early must reschedule their ATP.

- Review the website for tips about [class scheduling](#).
- Put a reminder in your phone or on your calendar about your ATP date so you won't forget. If you need to reschedule, please call (270) 745-4242 as soon as possible.

### Housing

For all the details on [residence hall life](#) and living on campus call (270) 745-4359 for more information regarding requirements.

### Student Financial Assistance

Review the website to apply for [Financial Aid and Scholarships](#), or call (270) 745-2755.



## The Academic Advising & Retention Center

AARC provides a wide range of academic services to undergraduate students. The Center coordinates academic advising activities among undergraduate colleges and academic departments for undergraduate students. All degree-seeking undergraduate students must meet with an academic advisor prior to registering for classes until they have 90 hours and an Application for Graduation on file in the Office of the Registrar. AARC advises all Exploratory/Generally Undecided students and helps these students plan for their potential major.

The mission of AARC is to provide students with the academic support necessary to achieve their academic goals. We provide advising, student success initiatives, and training on advising for faculty and staff. Please review our website and the many services provided by AARC, The Learning Center, and the Best Expectation Programs.

TLC  
Tutoring and Academic Assistance are available throughout campus at the following locations:

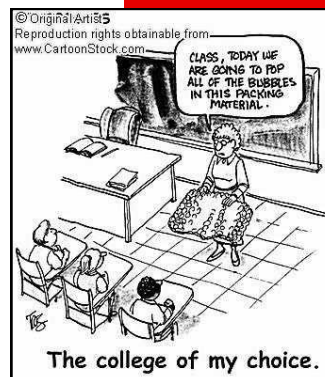
- [The Learning Center \(TLC\)](#)
- [Academic Center for Excellence \(ACE\)](#)
- [Alice Rowe Learning Assistance Center \(LAC\)](#)
- [Math Lab](#)
- [Physics Help Center](#)
- [Resource Room](#)
- [The Writing Center](#)
- [Student Support Services](#)
- [Modern Languages Media Center](#)

[BEP](#) is run through the Academic Advising & Retention Center (AARC) with the aim of teaching students the importance of positive study habits and time management. BEP provides academic support to help students be independent and successful learners. These programs provide students with the opportunity to be better prepared for and adapt to college life while improving their academic skills and performance in college courses. BEP has numerous resources for students including [academic assistance](#), [academic resources](#), and [TutorTrac](#).

BEP Retention Programs include:

- [STEPS](#)—Success Through Evaluation, Placement, and Support
- [Step Up](#)
- [Undergraduate Retention](#)
- [Freshman & Sophomore Probation](#)
- [Voluntary](#)

*"Desire is the key to motivation, but it's the determination and commitment to an unrelenting pursuit of your goal - a commitment to excellence - that will enable you to attain the success you seek."*  
-Mario Andretti



## Prepare to CLEP

\*Information from The College Board

[The College-Level Examination Program \(CLEP\)](#) gives students the opportunity to receive college credit for what they already know by earning qualifying scores on any of 33 examinations. This enables students to earn credit for knowledge acquired through independent study, prior course work, on-the-job training, professional development, cultural pursuits, or internships. CLEP exams are based on information generally studied during students' freshman and sophomore years of college. Some exams grant credit for single semester classes while others are longer in order to cover full one or two year courses. The exams are around 90 minutes in duration and, with the exception of the English College Composition exam, are typically comprised of multiple choice questions.

### Why Take a CLEP Exam?

- **Save Time** - A good score can

earn you from 3 to 12 college credits.

- **Save Money** - The cost of a CLEP exam is \$80, a fraction of the tuition and fees for the corresponding course.
- **Make College More Interesting** - Skip general introductory courses and move on to more advanced classes, or explore new and challenging academic areas.
- **Graduate on Time** - CLEP can help you to the finish line if you're a few credits shy of graduation
- **Satisfy a Proficiency Requirement** - Demonstrate your ability in college math or a foreign language.

### Studying for CLEP Exams

Most students prepare their own study plan for these exams. Consider the amount of preparation you will require, whether it is a quick review

of the information or if you will need to refer to other resources. There are free study materials and other [preparation resources](#) available.

### Taking a CLEP for Credit at WKU

WKU does not require completion of the essay section of the CLEP Subject Examinations. Tests are offered on campus through the Counseling and Testing Center at WKU's main campus.

### CLEP Exams Accepted by WKU Include:

- English Composition
- Humanities
- Social Science - History
- Natural Science
- Mathematics
- French
- German
- Spanish

Visit the [CLEP website](#) for more

### Parents:

At WKU there are lots of ways parents can [stay informed and involved](#). WKU is proud to offer many special programs designated to introduce prospective students and their families to the University. From public open house events and preview dates, to offsite informational sessions, college fairs, and school visitation events; we at WKU are excited to welcome you to our campus!