

**Congratulations-You've made it to Grade 12!** While Grade 12 can be a fun and exciting time for students, it is also a time to make plans and preparations for the future. There are many possibilities out there for students; sometimes it just means digging a little deeper to find what's best for each individual student. The purpose of this handbook is to help students and parents navigate the sometimes confusing elements of Grade 12 and beyond. While this handbook won't answer all questions, it will provide a good start to the planning process.

## **I'M IN GRADE 12-NOW WHAT?**

It's important to remember that there is no one "right" way for students to begin their post-secondary path. Some students will know exactly what it is they want to do with the rest of their lives, while other students will take a few extra steps along the way. There are several post-secondary options out there for students:

1. "Gap year"- Some students choose to take time off after graduation in order to earn money for post-secondary study, to upgrade their High School credits/courses, or simply to take some time before making the leap into post-secondary schooling. Upgrading can be completed at select NBCC campuses, through distance/correspondence courses, or at the local High School (some conditions may apply for the re-entry of students who have already graduated).
2. Armed Forces- Many students consider the Armed Forces for several reasons: an opportunity to serve their country, the availability of various programs of study, and the possibility of having their education funded.
3. Career Colleges: Private career colleges offer a variety of educational and training options that normally require less time to complete than public institutions such as colleges and universities. Since these types of colleges are not normally funded by provincial or federal governments, many charge fees that are higher than publicly funded colleges. The National Association of Career Colleges ([www.nacc.ca](http://www.nacc.ca)) can provide program information and links to its member institutions.
4. Community Colleges: Community colleges are government funded educational institutions that offer certificates and diplomas in a variety of fields of study. Community colleges can be found in every province (except Quebec); be aware, however, that entrance requirements can vary from province to province, and from program to program. Many college programs also provide for articulation agreements where students may be able to transfer their community college credits to specified universities, leading to the completion of a university degree. For more information on Community Colleges visit the Association of Canadian Community Colleges website ([www.accc.ca](http://www.accc.ca)).
5. Universities: Universities are degree granting educational institutions and programs are, on average, four years in length. Some universities offer undergraduate degrees only (for example, a Bachelor of Arts or Science), while others also offer graduate and professional degrees, such as a Bachelor of Nursing or a Master's in Business Administration. Many universities provide students with the opportunity to participate in Co-Op education or study abroad programs. A directory of Canadian universities can be found at [www.aucc.ca](http://www.aucc.ca).

## HOW DO I DECIDE WHICH INSTITUTION TO ATTEND?



With the number of choices available to students today, it can be very difficult for students to make that final decision about post-secondary education.

In order to start your research:

- Select a program or course of study that you are interested in and find out which institutions offer programs in that area
- Select a few institutions and get a list of programs they offer
- Select a type of degree/certificate/diploma and get a list of the institutions that offer the program
- Visit the institutions' websites and learn as much as you can- What are the admissions requirements for each program? What does a typical first year look like? What supports are available for students who might be struggling academically or emotionally? What housing options are there? What about extra-curricular activities? Are there various campus locations?

Deciding on one school to attend can be a difficult decision. You will be investing a considerable amount of time and money once your decision is made, so you must consider all aspects of an institution before that final decision is made.

### What should you consider when selecting a post-secondary institution?

- What are the admissions requirements for the various programs?
- What are the costs involved?
- What are the class sizes? What academic supports are in place?
- Where is the institution located? Will it be easy/hard to get home if you want?
- What facilities are available on campus and in the community?
- What opportunities are there outside the classroom (sports, extracurricular etc.)?
- Is the institution in a primarily rural or urban setting?
- Are Co-op, study abroad or other programs available?
- What do current students say about the institution?
- What is the reputation of the institution?
- How will attending the institution benefit your long term personal/career goals?

Make a point to attend any information sessions held at your High School or, better yet, take advantage of "Open House" days and visit the institution personally. This way you can get a better feel for the atmosphere of the institution and talk to current students. As well, some institutions also offer virtual tours on their websites, as a means of giving students a better idea of the workings of the school.

## AND NOW...THE PAPERWORK

Admissions processes vary from institution to institution. Most institutions have application forms available online, but application deadlines can vary. Some have deadlines for early admissions, such as NBCC's application process for Grade 11 students. It is always best to check individual websites for more details about deadlines. As well, some institutions have early deadlines that allow students to qualify for certain programs or for funding incentives. A completed application package may include:



- a completed application form
- a recent transcript of your high school marks
- an up to date resume
- a summary of your extra and co-curricular activities
- a short essay
- reference letter(s)
- an application fee

Be certain to double check the admissions requirements for individual institutions early and frequently, as you need to ensure that you have all the necessary High School credits for your chosen program. Some specialized programs may require additional admissions requirements such a physical examination, a security check, minimum age requirement, or a separate application form, to name a few. As well, pay close attention to the deadline for application-starting your application the day before the deadline is too late! It is always best to have all of your information on hand before you start applying.

Once you have gathered all of your necessary information and documents, complete a **draft copy** of your application before you recopy any information on to the final application. Just as in a personal interview, **appearance** is extremely important. A completed application form should be kept neat and clean, business-like and organized. Typing your application is not always possible and if it is necessary to handprint information ensure your writing or printing is legible and neat. Many on-line applications time out after a specified period of time, so remember to save all of your work for future editing.

**Read the application** thoroughly and carefully. Answer all questions honestly and to the best of your ability. Make note of items which must be submitted with your application and those which should be forwarded directly (e.g. an official copy of your transcript). Be certain that your references also know where they are to submit their letters of recommendation. You should have at least two people whom you can call upon to act as references. References should be people who can comment on your attitude, work habits, strengths and your overall personality.

If you are required to complete an essay, **make sure you understand and address the specific question(s) topic**. Your essay should be well thought out and developed using proper grammar and spelling. An essay may represent an excellent opportunity to explain your educational and work related goals, to outline why the scholarship is important to you and to illustrate that you have potential for success.

Don't forget to make sure your application is complete. **Check and double check** that you have completed all blanks and enclosed all items that have been requested. You do not want to be disqualified because of a technicality!

Once you have completed the application process and have submitted your application, you may receive one of the following responses:

**“Cannot be accepted at this time” could mean:**

“You do not meet the admissions requirements”/ “Your file is incomplete”

**“Conditional Acceptance” means:**

“Yes we have a place for you providing you maintain your present academic standing – do well on your school work”.

**“March Progress” Means:**

“We are not sure we can accept you at this time. Please send you next set of marks”

**“June Final Marks” Means:**

“Acceptance is not guaranteed until final marks are available”

An acceptance letter will usually be accompanied by information regarding scholarship opportunities, an application for residence or other accommodation options, and a student identification number and information about how to set up and access your on-line student account.

**Save all correspondence (information/responses) you receive. If you need a further explanation about the response you have received, please come and talk to the Guidance Office.**

## **WHERE DO I FIND THE MONEY FOR POST-SECONDARY STUDY?**



Getting a post-secondary education can be expensive. It is important that you prepare a budget and consider all methods of earning and saving money. A little planning can mean fewer loans to repay once you have completed your education. Many students work part-time in order to help fund their education, but sometimes this is not enough. Both the federal and provincial governments offer loans to students for their studies, but these loans must be paid back once a student completes their education. Grants, bursaries, and scholarships, on the other hand, are a great way to finance an education without the obligation of having to repay the funds.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Scholarships are usually awarded on merit, and can be based on criteria such as academic performance, volunteer work, extracurricular activities, sports or community involvement. You can also qualify for scholarships based on where you live, your cultural background or your involvement in specific social organizations.

University entrance scholarships:

- Most can be applied for on the admission application form.
- Some Universities do have separate forms to complete, check your instructions carefully.
- Offers from most Atlantic universities will not be made before April 1st.

Candidates for scholarships may be asked to send March Progress marks – please inform the Guidance Office. Non-local scholarships are posted in the Guidance Office as these are received – check the NSER website (under “Graduation”) weekly for any new arrivals. Local scholarship application forms will be available in the Guidance Office in May of each year. A list of the previous year’s local scholarships is included in this information package.

## **GRANTS AND BURSARIES**

Grants and bursaries are usually awarded based on financial need, although some may be tied to particular activities, service clubs, unions or institutions. Both the federal and provincial governments have grant programs. When you apply for a Canada Student Loan, your eligibility for most Canada Student Grants will be automatically assessed. For more information visit [www.canlearn.ca](http://www.canlearn.ca) and [www.studentaid.gnb.ca](http://www.studentaid.gnb.ca).

## **ADDITIONAL SCHOLARSHIP INFORMATION**

The sites listed below may also help you in your search for ways to fund your post-secondary education:

### **[www.studentawards.com](http://www.studentawards.com)**

This site helps to match you with the right scholarship or bursary

### **[www.scholarshipscanada.com](http://www.scholarshipscanada.com)**

This site helps you search for scholarship opportunities

### **[www.milleniumpartnerships.ca](http://www.milleniumpartnerships.ca)**

This site offers detailed information about this government program

### **[www.canada.com](http://www.canada.com)**

This site offers a great search tool regarding scholarships

### **[www.scholarships-bourses-ca.org](http://www.scholarships-bourses-ca.org)**

This site includes information about Canadian and International scholarships

### **[www.campusaccess.com](http://www.campusaccess.com)**

This site offers a resource for financial information  
Click on “financial aid” in the left margin

## **BEAT OR MEET THE DEADLINES!**

Most scholarships have due dates and students are expected to meet these deadlines; a late application may not be considered at all. Read the criteria carefully, and if an application must be mailed, note whether the completed application has to be post-marked by that date or received at its destination by the deadline date. Pay close attention to all details, some scholarships do not allow materials to be faxed or sent by overnight courier. Keep copies of your completed application forms, as well as any correspondence received from the institutions. Organization is key to keeping track of what needs to be completed before you head off to post-secondary studies!



Once you have completed all of your research and paperwork, your most important task will be to maintain your academic average in order to guarantee admission to the institution of your choice. And remember to relax and enjoy your last year of High School!