

The Evaluation Process

Admission to Hillsdale College is a privilege extended to students who demonstrate the ability to benefit by, and contribute to, the academic, social, and spiritual environments of the College. Important determinants for admission are intellectual ability, ambition, and upstanding character. Accordingly, grade-point average, test scores, strength of curriculum, extracurricular activities, interviews, volunteerism, leadership, work experience, essays, and recommendations are all reviewed carefully and are important in the evaluation process to determine the strength of an application.

College Preparatory Requirements

The single most important criterion for admission is the secondary school record of college preparatory work and the grades earned therein. Students should have superior grades in the college preparatory program of an accredited high school, private preparatory school, or homeschool.

It is assumed that students will complete four years of English at a level that promises facility in reading, writing, and verbal self-expression. Four years of math are strongly recommended, as students entering Hillsdale will need to meet a math proficiency before they graduate. Success in the liberal arts curriculum at Hillsdale requires a strong foundation in foreign language, history, and biological and physical science. Lack of preparation in one of these areas may be overlooked if achievement or talent of superior quality is noted in another.

If enriched or honors classes in any subject have been completed, this fact should be emphasized on the application, for it may have a bearing on the decision of the Admissions Committee. Similarly, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and college or university dual enrollment courses are given special attention in the selection process.

Furthermore, the Committee takes into account academic trends. For instance, steady improvement in a continued program of challenging coursework may be viewed favorably by the committee despite a marginal grade-point average. Conversely, declining academic performance and/or a progressively weakening curriculum may be viewed with alarm despite an acceptable accumulative grade-point average.

Simply stated, the best intellectual preparation is provided by strong performance in a challenging series of college preparatory courses that maintains rigor through the senior year. A superior grade-point average is expected of an applicant who supplies only a minimal number of college preparatory subjects; and, since the grade-point average does not necessarily reflect the degree of difficulty of the academic program, they cannot, in themselves, be the determining criteria for acceptance.

Entrance Examinations

Another measure of intellectual preparedness is standardized testing, as grading procedures and the competitive environments of high schools inevitably vary. Hillsdale accepts, but does not require, the results of the American College Test (ACT), the Classic Learning Test (CLT), or the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT). Equal preference is given to each test, and equal consideration is given to students who choose not to submit a test. For students choosing not to submit a standardized test, the Admissions Committee will more heavily consider the applicant's grade-point average, the rigor of his coursework, and his writing.

It is suggested that, if a student plans to submit standardized test scores, these tests be taken toward the end of the junior year in order to avoid unnecessary delay in processing a student's application.

While it is the practice of many institutions to mix and match highest subscores from multiple tests, Hillsdale College does not. Hillsdale will consider combined (SAT) or composite (ACT or CLT) scores taken during a single sitting. The Admissions Committee will not accept single section retakes of a standardized test.

Hillsdale recognizes the Advanced Placement Program of the College Entrance Examination Board. In most cases, candidates taking college-level courses in secondary school and performing at a satisfactory level (4 or 5) on the Advanced Placement (AP) Examinations will be granted advanced placement and college credit. Hillsdale College will accept for college credit most High Level (HL) Examinations given as a part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program. In most cases, performance at a satisfactory level (4, 5, 6, 7) will be granted college credit. Hillsdale College also accepts certain College Level Examination Program (CLEP) tests for credit (see page 27 for details on CLEP).

Recommendations

Two letters of recommendation are required to complete an application for admission. The Admissions Committee strongly recommends that these letters be completed by someone who can comment on the applicant's academic ability to complete successfully a program of rigorous study at Hillsdale. The letters of recommendation should also provide insight into the applicant's character and preparedness to take full advantage of the academic, social, and spiritual dimensions that distinguish Hillsdale College.

Essay and Resume

During the application process, students are required to submit responses to essay and short answer questions. These responses demonstrate the ability to reason and write effectively and give students an opportunity to share their goals, passions, and principles with the Admissions Committee.

An activity resume is also required to complete an application, as it illustrates the student's desire to be involved in the social and spiritual environment of the College. Resumes should include all extracurricular activities in which the student participated during their high school career, whether related to their school, church, community, or work. It is important to list the years in which the student participated, as well as any leadership positions held or awards earned.

Campus Visits and Interviews

Visits at Hillsdale are tailored to meet the needs of guests, and hospitality is a hallmark of a campus visit. Prospective students have the opportunity to tour campus, attend classes, meet current students and faculty, dine in the Grewcock Student Union, and stay overnight in a residence hall. Students may also meet with a member of the Admissions staff for an information session or an admissions interview. Interviews are not required to complete the admissions process, but are strongly recommended and may help strengthen a student's application.

Campus tours and admissions interviews are scheduled year-round, Monday through Friday. During the academic year, the Admissions Office is also open on Saturday mornings. To arrange a visit, please contact the Admissions Office at (517) 607-2327, or online at hillsdale.edu/visit.