

Senior Year College Planning Calendar

During your senior year, you will finalize your college choice. This year is filled with admission applications, scholarship essays, financial aid information and the need to meet deadlines. Throughout your senior year, continue to build your resume by achieving academic success, as well as participating in extracurricular activities. Colleges are very interested in well-rounded students.

The college preparation that takes place during your senior year is filled with a lot of details and paperwork. It is very important that you involve your [parents](#) with this process.

Calendar

[Aug.](#) / [Sept.](#) / [Oct.](#) / [Nov.](#) / [Dec.](#) / [Jan.](#) / [Feb.](#) / [March](#) / [April](#) / [May](#) / [June](#) / [July](#)

August

- Review your career plans and [decide which type of postsecondary school](#) is best for you.
- Save money from your summer job for college.
- List your top college choices.
- Request admissions information and school catalogs.
- Go on college visits.
- Collect letters of recommendation from your teachers to include with your college applications.
- Start brainstorming about ideas for your college essays.
- Continue to take challenging courses during your senior year.
- Stay focused on maintaining or increasing your GPA.
- Obtain registration materials and test dates for the [Scholastic Aptitude Test \(SAT\)](#) and/or [ACT assessment](#).
- Compare costs of each school that interests you by contacting the colleges by phone, mail, or via their websites.
- Visit [Going2College](#) for information about career, college, and financial aid resources in your state.

September

- Mark your calendar with registration, admissions, and financial aid deadlines and fees.
- Determine if the schools that interest you have online admission applications. If not, request them by mail now.
- Create separate folders for each of the schools that interest you and keep the materials organized.
- Begin writing drafts of your college essays.
- Start completing early admission college applications.
- Meet with school representatives who visit your high school.
- Look at virtual tours of college campuses online.
- If you haven't already taken the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#), register for the test(s).
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- Ask employers, teachers, and guidance counselors for letters of recommendation to accompany your admissions applications.
- Set up your [FSA ID](#) (and your parent will need one, too) and start gathering information so you can complete the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) as early as October 1.

October

- Take the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#).
- [Continue working on your admissions essays](#).
- If you haven't already done so, [sign up for an FSA ID](#), to complete your FAFSA online. (Also let your parents know that they will need an FSA ID.) Make sure to protect your FSA ID and keep it in a secure place so that you will have it later when you need it. Keep copies of all financial aid and enrollment documents in a file.
- Contact the U.S. Department of Education at 1-800-4FED-AID or 1-800-433-3243 for assistance completing the FAFSA and/or plan to [attend a FAFSA preparation event](#) (free FAFSA advice) near you.
- [Complete your FAFSA online](#) to determine your financial aid eligibility.
- Watch for the e-mail notice indicating your [Student Aid Report \(SAR\)](#) is ready.
- Review your SAR for errors and make any corrections as indicated.
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs. If you cannot attend, ask if you and your parents can borrow a video of the presentation from your counselor.
- Visit your top school choices. If possible, make appointments with faculty, staff, and students.
- Meet with your guidance counselor to develop a college admission and financial aid application plan.
- Contact the schools' financial aid offices to determine which forms they require. Some schools may require special forms.
- Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent if required for admission.

November

- Complete admissions applications by their deadlines.
- If you have not already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- If necessary, register to retake the [SAT](#) and/or [ACT](#).
- If you have not already completed the FAFSA, attend a [FAFSA preparation event](#).
- If it has been a few weeks since you completed your FAFSA and you have not received your [Student Aid Report \(SAR\)](#), call 1-800-4-FED-AID. If you have received your SAR, review it for errors and make any corrections.
- Request financial aid forms and applications. Double check the deadlines for submission.
- Complete applications for every [scholarship](#) for which you may be eligible.
- Follow up to ensure your employers, teachers, and guidance counselors send letters of recommendation.
- Stay focused on maintaining and increasing your GPA.

December

- Finalize admission applications.
- [Research and apply for other financial aid](#), including grants and scholarships.
- Watch for early admissions notices.
- Research deadlines at the college you plan to attend, such as for housing applications, school-specific financial aid applications and deadlines.
- Develop a college application resume to highlight your activities, achievements, etc.
- Organize scholarships, certificates, articles, etc. to illustrate your achievements and create a portfolio to display them.

January

- Keep a watch out for scholarship applications and make notes of the deadlines. Getting an early start completing them.

- Do not let senioritis get a grip on you this semester, finish strong on your last semester of high school.

February

- Be mindful of deadlines. Always submit information on time.
- Research Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.
- Rank your top school choices.
- Research local scholarships and apply as applications are available.

March

- Check with the financial aid offices to ensure your paperwork is complete. Submit tax forms if they request them.
- Narrow your school choices and make campus visits.
- Be on the lookout for acceptance letters.
- Start looking for summer jobs.

April

- Compare financial aid award letters.
- Make your final school decision and mail deposits, as required.
- Check with the school you've chosen about returning financial aid award letters.
- Notify the schools you have chosen NOT to attend.
- Plan for registration, orientation, and housing, and mark your calendar with important dates.

May

- Be aware of any summer orientation sessions that you must attend at the school in which you will enroll, and make plans accordingly.
- Finalize your summer job plans, and make a plan for saving a portion of your summer earnings.
- Prepare a realistic [student budget](#).
- Follow up with your high school to ensure the counselor forwards your final school transcripts to the college.
- Request college transcripts for any dual credit courses you took in high school, a copy for you and a copy for the college you plan to attend.

June

- Plan for college transportation.
- Notify your high school guidance office of your college selection and any scholarships received.
- Follow up with the financial aid office to ensure all paperwork is complete.
- Attend or register to attend college orientation.
- Make sure thank you notes for graduation gifts are written.
- Work with your parents or guardians on things that you need to know how to do, or how to do better, while at college, like doing laundry, taking care of your car, balancing your bank account.

July

- Save money from your summer job.
- Send “thank you notes” to everyone who helped you plan and prepare for college.

- Make copies of your financial aid forms, health forms, etc. for your files to aid in resolving future issues.
- Register for the fall semester.
- Prepare a contact list with addresses of friends and family members and make labels with your new address, some for you and some to share with others.
- Prepare for the new adventures that await you on campus!

Congratulations! It's time to get ready to start college.

Advice for parents

Yes, there are things you can do to help your senior prepare for continuing their education after high school.

- It is important to attend financial aid presentations and career day functions WITH your student. Many of these events will be held in the evenings and on weekends. If you don't know when they're scheduled, contact your son or daughter's high school counselor. (Attend these events even if you did so last year or with a different student - there is new information all the time!)
- Ask them monthly, "Have you been to the Mapping Your Future websites? What are you working on and what scholarships have you applied for?"
- Sit down with your student and prepare a list of what he/she is looking for in a college and then help him/her sort through the information they receive from the different institutions to decide which ones offer what's on the list.
- Complete applications with the student.
- In October, [register for an FSA ID](#) so you can assist your student with financial aid forms.
- In October or November, you will need to help your student complete the FAFSA. Your FSA ID will help speed up the process.
- In late winter or early spring, the award notices will start coming in. Look at the financing carefully and contact the schools with any questions. Make comparisons!
- Go on trips with your student to as many of his or her top school choices as possible. A visit to the campus is invaluable to making a decision.