



Steps to Get Ready for College Seniors

September

- Double check the admissions requirements for your schools of interest, and make sure that your senior year courses prepare you to meet them. If not, contact your advisor immediately about revising your schedule.
- Finish identifying the colleges that you will apply to this year (5-8 recommended). Make sure to have at least two safety schools on your list (see <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/how-to-finalize-your-college-list-admissions-college-application>).
- Start a calendar with all college admissions and financial aid deadlines, and other important college dates. Note the difference between early and regular decision deadlines, and decide if applying early is right for you (see <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/applying-101/the-facts-about-applying-early-is-it-right-for-you>).
- Start a file or electronic folder that includes all of your correspondence with your top colleges.
- If needed, register for and study to re-take the SAT and/or ACT in August, October or November (keep your college application deadlines in mind).
- Update your Activities Resume (used for college and scholarship applications) with anything you are scheduled to do during Fall of your senior year.
- Start looking and applying for senior year scholarships.
- Read and act on important college information that comes from your School Counselor and is posted on the SCS College/Career Center website.
- Start working on your college applications in order of when they are due. Aim to submit applications a *minimum* of two weeks before the deadline.

October

- With your parents, complete the FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. The sooner you submit your FAFSA, the more money your colleges have available to offer you and the sooner they can prepare your financial aid award letter. (Note: You will receive one financial aid award letter from each college you are accepted to as long as you completed all steps in their financial aid process.)
- Attend applicable college fairs and information nights.
- Talk to college reps that visit SCS.
- Common Application submissions, including letters of recommendation and/or completion of application-related forms must be requested with a *minimum* of two weeks' notice. Remember to follow the steps your School Counselor outlined in September to request letters of recommendation! (Note: All non-Common Application transcripts must be requested via the [Parchment tab](#) on the SCS web site.)
- Read and respond to all of the information you receive from your top colleges by their deadlines.
- Continue to look and apply for scholarships.
- If undecided, continue to research possible college majors and make sure your top colleges offer the program(s) you want or are considering. Compare your program(s) of interest at your top colleges to see which college(s) may be a better match for you and your goals.
- Review the process and forms for applying for financial aid at your top colleges. Use each college's Net Price Calculator to get a customized estimate of your cost of attendance (versus the sticker price; see <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs/how-to-get-the-best-estimate-of-your-college-costs>).
- Work with your Language Arts teacher in class to craft a strong college admissions essay.

November

If necessary, register for and study to re-take the SAT and/or ACT in December.

- Continue to look and apply for scholarships.

December

- Continue to read and respond to all of the information you receive from your top colleges by their deadlines. Pay special attention to application and financial aid deadlines.
- Review your second semester schedule. Remember to select challenging classes that meet college entrance requirements and/or relate to your career goals, and know that some colleges ask to be informed of any schedule changes you make. Also remember that your senior year grades do count; colleges and universities will review your grades, even if you've already been admitted. So make sure you are on track to finish first semester strong!
- Remember to bring home everything that you need to apply to colleges and/or scholarships over Christmas Break, as the school will be closed.

January

- Continue to read and respond to all of the information you receive from your top colleges by their deadlines.
- If you are unsure of the status of a submitted application, contact the college's admissions office to make sure that your application was received and is complete.
- As you begin receiving acceptance letters and any academic merit scholarship awards, these come with your acceptance letters and are based on your GPA and SAT/ACT test scores only, let your School Counselor know. Bring in a copy of your acceptance letters to get posted too (optional).

February

- Continue to read and respond to all of the information you receive from your top colleges by their deadlines.
- If you are unsure of the status of a submitted application, remember to contact the college's admissions office to make sure that your application was received and is complete.
- When you get your Student Aid Report (SAR) from FAFSA, make sure that your colleges of choice are listed. If your SAR asks for additional information, or if you need to make any corrections, do so ASAP.
- Remember to continue looking and applying for scholarships.

March

- If you have questions about the financial aid that a school has offered you, call the college's financial aid office. Learn more about financial aid award letters, including what to do if what you're offered isn't enough at <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards>.
- Research on- and off-campus housing and meal plan options at your top colleges, and use each college's Net Price Calculator to see how your different choices impact your cost of attendance. You may find options that both meets your needs and make the cost of attending a specific school more affordable!

April

- By mid-April, you should have heard from all of your colleges about your acceptance status and received a financial aid award letter from any schools to which you were accepted (as long as you completed their financial aid process). If you haven't received this information, contact the college's admissions and/or financial aid offices.
- Work with your parents to choose what college you will attend, paying attention to any deadlines for housing deposits, accepting their admission, and responding to their financial aid offer. When you make your decision, send a thank you letter of acceptance and submit any required financial deposit(s). Almost all schools require this notification and deposit by May 1. Write letters to other schools that accepted you to thank them and let them know that you will not be attending their school.
- Start researching and applying for summer internships, jobs or volunteer opportunities related to your career interests.

May - August

- Continue to read and respond to all of the information you receive from your top colleges by their deadlines.
- Request a final transcript be sent to your college, via Parchment. Also verify any other needed information has been sent to your college prior to June 30.
- If living on-campus, double-check your campus housing arrangements. This includes calling your college roommate and shopping for dorm essentials.
- Participate in any Freshman orientation and advising (course-selection) programs at your college.
- Take any required college placement tests (your college will let you know about their specific requirements).
- Save money over the summer for college expenses.
- Work with your family to identify, learn and/or practice any independent living skills that you will need to know for college (managing money, doing laundry, grocery shopping, cooking food, etc.). This will help make the transition to college much easier!

Questions? Need help? Talk to your School Counselor

Adapted from <http://studentaid.ed.gov> and www.independence.wa.gov