

# PLANNING FOR COLLEGE CALENDAR



From researching and visiting colleges to taking standardized tests, the college admissions process can be both exciting and overwhelming. Use this checklist to help you and your family keep up with important deadlines and tasks. The key to success is to always plan ahead!

## SOPHOMORE YEAR

### FALL

- ☐ Start thinking about majors and careers that interest you, and ways for you to learn more about your interests like a volunteer position, an internship, a particular class or club at school, etc.
- ☐ Consider your activities and involvements: how do you currently contribute? How could you make a significant contribution this year?
- ☐ If you plan to play intercollegiate sports at an NCAA college, create a Certification Account with the NCAA Eligibility Center to make official visits to Division I or II schools, or to sign a National Letter of Intent.

### DECEMBER

- ☐ Use your down time during Winter Break to start researching schools that might be of interest to you. Lots of online search tools (i.e. College Board, Princeton Review, Niche) let you filter by geographic location, distance from home, size, and more!
- ☐ Most schools offer virtual visit options on their websites. This is a great way to learn about a school before committing to an on-campus visit.

### FEBRUARY

- ☐ Begin planning your junior year schedule with your school counselor. Try to challenge yourself by taking Honors, AP, IB, or dual enrollment classes in courses you enjoy.
- ☐ Start making your summer plans: are you applying to an academic enrichment program? Going to camp? Getting a job? Volunteering in your local community?

### SPRING BREAK

- ☐ It's never too early to start visiting colleges that interest you! Every visit helps you learn more about what you like and don't like. Maybe start with schools local to you, or schools in the area of your family trip. Make sure to write some notes after you visit to help keep details organized.

### MAY

- ☐ Take AP or IB exams if you have participated in AP or IB courses as a sophomore.
- ☐ Finish your school year strong!

### SUMMER

- ☐ Continue pursuing hands-on opportunities to gain familiarity with areas of study or careers that interest you.
- ☐ Look for ways to contribute meaningfully to your summer involvements. Consider taking on additional responsibility, making a suggestion for improvement, or learning a new skill.

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## JUNIOR YEAR

### SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Register for the October PSAT through your school counselor.
- ☐ Continue researching majors and careers that interest you, and getting involved in activities and programs that allow you explore.
- ☐ Attend college fairs and collegiate planning workshops in your area. Your high school may also allow juniors to join visits from college representatives who will be traveling to high schools throughout the fall.

### OCTOBER

- ☐ Take the PSAT.
- ☐ Begin requesting admissions materials from schools that interest you.

### DECEMBER

- ☐ Review your PSAT results with your college counselor.
- ☐ On your own, take a full, timed practice SAT and/or ACT test. Discuss with your counselor whether a prep course or tutor would be beneficial to you. Make sure to make use of free online resources as well, such as Khan Academy.

### FEBRUARY

- ☐ Begin planning your senior schedule with your school counselor. Continue challenging yourself in your areas of strength and interest.
- ☐ Research colleges that interest you to determine their testing requirements, and register for spring/summer standardized tests if needed. On the day of your test, add your top schools to your free score report list using their school code.

### SPRING BREAK

- ☐ Visit colleges that interest you! If you make a connection with a counselor during your visit, don't forget to follow up with a thank you. After campus visits, try to narrow your list of colleges to between five and eight.

### MAY

- ☐ Take AP or IB exams if you have participated in AP or IB courses as a junior.
- ☐ Ask teachers, counselors, employers, or community leaders for letters of recommendation (to be provided in the Fall).

### SUMMER BREAK

- ☐ Continue campus visits.
- ☐ Start working on your personal statement (the "college essay") with the goal of completing it by August.
- ☐ Continue learning and growing through your summer involvements.
- ☐ Research financial aid, scholarship, and special program information at your top schools. Record important dates and requirements.

# SENIOR YEAR

## AUGUST

- ☐ The Common Application and most other institutions will make their applications available on August 1. This is a great time to get started filling out the application, finishing your personal statement, and writing your supplementary essays.

## SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Make a master calendar and note important dates. Include application deadlines and any additional requirements for each college you're applying to.
- ☐ Attend area college fairs, financial aid programs, and visits from college representatives to your school.
- ☐ Submit a draft of your college essay to your English teacher or another trusted editor for help polishing.
- ☐ Register and review for the October SAT/ACT if needed.

## OCTOBER

- ☐ Take the SAT/ACT if you have registered.
- ☐ Make sure you are prepared to meet any Early Action application deadlines and finalize all required materials for applications.
- ☐ Prepare to submit any required scholarship or Honors College applications at colleges you plan to apply to.
- ☐ Complete and file your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) as soon after October 1 as possible. Save copies of all completed forms.
- ☐ Submit applications for admission along with high school transcript and other supporting documents by the end of October. Keep records of everything you send.

## NOVEMBER

- ☐ Meet your Early Action or Early Decision deadlines.
- ☐ Begin researching outside/external scholarships at your high school and selected colleges.
- ☐ Obtain scholarship/financial aid forms from your colleges of choice and submit by the appropriate deadlines.

## DECEMBER

- ☐ Continue to work on applications and make sure you're on track to complete all requirements by Regular Decision application deadlines.

## JANUARY

- ☐ Meet your Regular Decision deadlines and keep applying for scholarships

## FEBRUARY

- ☐ Supply your mid-year transcripts or any other additional supporting documentation to schools where necessary.

## APRIL

- ☐ Compare all financial aid award packages you receive from different colleges, and don't be afraid to reach out to your admissions representative to discuss your package.
- ☐ Visit or re-visit your favorite schools to which you have been accepted to attend admitted student events, shadow a class, or take a tour.

## MAY

- ☐ Make a final decision and send in your enrollment/housing deposit to reserve your space at your chosen institution = by May 1, the National Decision Day.
- ☐ Notify the schools that you will not be attending.
- ☐ Accept financial aid package at your college of choice.
- ☐ Take AP/IB exams if you have participated in AP/IB courses as a senior. Have official scores for junior and senior year sent to your college over the summer.
- ☐ Request that your final high school transcript be mailed to your college.