



Senior Year College Planning Calendar Print-Friendly Version

During your senior year, you will finalize your college choice. This year is filled with admission applications, scholarship essays, and financial aid information. Throughout your senior year, continue to build your resume by achieving academic success, as well as participating in extra curricular 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

August

- Review your career plans and decide which type of postsecondary school (mapping-your-future.org/selecting/schools.htm) is best for you.
- List your top college choices.
- Request admissions information and school catalogs.
- Obtain registration materials and test dates for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) (<http://www.collegeboard.com/testing/>) and/or ACT assessment (www.act.org/aap/).
- Compare costs of each school that interests you by contacting the colleges by phone, mail, or via their web sites.
- Contact your state financial aid agency (mapping-your-future.org/about/sponsors.cfm) or department of higher education for information about paying for college.

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.
- Meet with school representatives who visit your high school.
- If you haven't already taken the SAT (www.collegeboard.com/testing/) and/or ACT (www.act.org/aap/), 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.

October

- Take the SAT (www.collegeboard.com/testing/) and/or ACT (www.act.org/aap/).
- Work on your admissions essays.
- If you haven't already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- Visit your top school choices. If possible, make appointments with faculty, staff, and students.
- Complete applications for every scholarship for which you may be eligible.

- 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 haven't already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- If necessary, register to retake the SAT (www.collegeboard.com/testing/) and/or ACT (www.act.org/aap/).
- Request financial aid forms and applications. Double check the deadlines for submission.
- Follow up to ensure your employers, teachers, and guidance counselors send letters of recommendation.

December

- Sign up for a PIN (www.pin.ed.gov/PINWebApp/pinindex.jsp), your key to a fast, online financial aid application.
- Finalize admission applications.
- Urge your parents to file their taxes as soon as possible after January 1. This will ease the financial aid process.
- Research and apply for other financial aid (mapping-your-future.org/features/resources.cfm#Scholarships,Grants,Fellowships), including grants and scholarships.

January

- As soon as possible after January 1 and when tax forms are complete (they don't have to be filed until April 15; you can use estimates), complete your FAFSA online (www.fafsa.ed.gov/) (or get a paper form from your counselor).
- If you can't attend financial aid nights, ask if you and your parents can borrow a video of an event from your counselor.
- Contact the U.S. Department of Education at 800-4-FEDAID for assistance completing the FAFSA.

February

- Research Advanced Placement (AP) or College-Level Examination Program (CLEP) exams.
- Watch for the e-mail notice indicating your Student Aid Report (SAR) (mapping-your-future.org/paying/sar.htm) is ready.
- Review your SAR for errors and make any corrections as indicated.
- Rank your top school choices.

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.

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.

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 (mapping-your-future.org/features/budgetcalc.htm).

June

- Plan for college transportation.
- Follow up with the financial aid office to ensure all paperwork is complete.

July

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 (mapping-your-future.org/) web site? 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 November, register for a PIN (www.pin.ed.gov) so you can assist your student with financial aid forms.
 - In March, 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 choices as possible. A visit to the campus is invaluable to making a decision.
 - Hug them, send them on their way, BUT don't change the locks - they'll be back!
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