

SENIOR YEAR CHECKLIST

HOW TO START YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH



Your senior year in high school will find you looking back nostalgically, but if you're looking forward to college, you're also going to have to keep an eye on a college search to-do list. It's nearly a yearlong process.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER

- Get and stay involved, from extracurriculars to internships/part-time jobs.
- Narrow down your college list to those to which you will apply.
- Work toward a great finish in high school.
- Register for, prep for, and take standardized tests.
- Note important dates in the scholarship, financial aid, and college application processes.
- Polish a final draft of your résumé.
- Give providers notice (at least two weeks) on when you'll need recommendation letters.
- Reconnect with counselor(s) to discuss scholarship and admissions options.
- Prep for ACT/SAT do-overs if there's room for improvement.
- Create a Common App account.
- Begin your application essays. Tailor them to the schools you're targeting.
- Submit Early Decision or Early Action applications.
- Apply for financial aid if needed. Regardless of need, do the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) paperwork as soon as possible.
- Keep executing your scholarship search.

NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY

- Finish application forms for target schools before winter break.
- Follow up on applications.
- Make decisions on early-decision applications.
- Submit financial aid forms and midyear grade reports.
- Finish the standardized testing process.
- Keep socking away money, and continue the scholarship hunt.

MARCH-MAY

- Watch for application responses.
- Choose your school and do the enrollment paperwork.
- Compare financial aid offers, and follow through on things such as the FAFSA acknowledgement and Pell Grant applications.
- Press the scholarship hunt, and, just in case, research the student loan process.

JUNE-AUGUST

- Stay connected and keep earning and saving money. And yes, the scholarship hunt.
- Stay on top of communications with and from your college. There are choices to make on housing, meal plans, what to pack, and much more. Schedule orientation.
- Continue discussing and calculating finances. It's also time to sharpen budgeting skills, prepare for the move, and hone life skills you'll need as an independent college student.