

Financial Aid Checklist

Senior Junior

Senior

September

- Talk to your high school counselor about your college plans and money needs. Ask about scholarships offered by local organizations and businesses.
- Check out other ways to pay for college at www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov.
- Keep a calendar of important deadlines for college admission and financial aid.
- Attend your high school's college fair and financial aid nights.
- Get started filling out forms and writing essays for college admissions and scholarship applications.
- Look into programs that let you earn money for college for volunteer service.
- Sign up for the SAT (www.collegeboard.org) or ACT (www.actstudent.org) in the fall, if you haven't taken them already.
- Check out colleges on the web, starting with www.californiacolleges.edu and www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator. Meet with college representatives who may visit your school.
- Ask your teachers, counselors, employers, friends, neighbors and family for letters of recommendation.
- Make sure you have an e-mail address that's appropriate for corresponding with colleges, lenders and employers.
- Complete FAFSA4caster before early December to get a jump on the FAFSA on the Web. Create your FSA ID and shorten the time it takes you to complete the online FAFSA in October. You'll find it at www.federalstudentaid.ed.gov.

October

- Complete the FAFSA or CADAA as soon as possible. Provide the required e-signatures and an email address for faster processing.
- Confirm with your high school that your verified Cal Grant GPA is submitted to the California Student Aid Commission. Public high schools and public charter schools are mandated to upload your verified Cal Grant GPA by October 1. However, you must submit both the FAFSA or CADAA and your verified GPA by March 2 to apply for a Cal Grant.
- Attend a California Cash for College workshop for free help completing the FAFSA and other forms.
- Request any additional financial aid applications your college or financial aid program may require.
- Register for the College Board's PROFILE application at www.collegeboard.org if you're applying to a private college that requires it.
- Keep up your grades.
- Visit your top college choices or take a virtual tour online.
- Start applying for private scholarships. Some may have very early deadlines.

November

- Be sure to meet all financial aid deadlines. Some may be earlier than the Cal Grant March 2 deadline.
- Track your Cal Grant status online using WebGrants for Students at www.webgrants4students.org.

December

- Review your Student Aid Report and make corrections, if necessary. If you don't receive your report within three weeks of submitting your FAFSA, call toll free 800.433.3243.
- If you receive a California Aid Report or a corrections letter regarding your eligibility for a Cal Grant, review it carefully and respond, if necessary.
- Continue to apply for private scholarships.

January

- Look into Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exams for college credit held in the spring at participating high schools.
- Log into WebGrants for Students to verify your Cal Grant application and GPA have been received.
- Continue to review your Student Aid Report and make corrections, if necessary.

- Attend a California Cash for College workshop for free help completing the FAFSA and other forms.
- Be sure to meet all financial aid deadlines. Some may be earlier than the March 2 Cal Grant deadline.
- Keep a copy of everything you submit.

February

- Continue to check WebGrants for Students to verify your Cal Grant application and GPA have been received.
- If you are awarded a Cal Grant, you can begin claiming your award by verifying your school of attendance in your WebGrants for Students account.
- Follow up with your high school to make sure your Cal Grant GPA was electronically submitted.

March

- Ensure that your Cal Grant application is received by the March 2 deadline.

April

- Watch for college acceptance letters and financial aid offers.
- Evaluate all financial aid offers carefully. Ask questions!
- Consider grants, work-study and other aid you don't have to repay before accepting a student loan.
- Decide on a college and send in all forms or deposits by the deadline (May 1 for most colleges).
- Let your college know the financial aid awards you're accepting and the ones you're declining.
- If you applied for a Cal Grant (you submitted the FAFSA or CADAA and your verified Cal Grant GPA by March 2) and have not received a letter regarding your application by April 30, e-mail studentsupport@csac.ca.gov or call toll free 888.224.7268.

May

- Claim your Cal Grant award by verifying your school of attendance in your WebGrants for Students account.
- Look for a summer job, or consider summer school or an internship.
- Arrange for housing plans.
- If you missed the March 2 Cal Grant deadline, complete the FAFSA or CADAA and contact your financial aid office to learn about other financial aid opportunities.