

College Planning

for seniors

September

Narrow your list of colleges to between five and 10. Meet with a counselor about your college choices and, if you've not yet done so, download college applications and financial aid forms. Plan to visit as many of these colleges as possible.

Create a master list or calendar that includes:

- Tests you'll take and their fees, dates and registration deadlines
- College application due dates
- Required financial aid application forms and their deadlines (aid applications may be due before college applications)
- Other materials you'll need (recommendations, transcripts, etc.)
- Your high school's application processing deadlines

If you can't afford application or test fees, a counselor can help you request a fee waiver.

Be sure to have your college admission test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying.

October

Try to finalize your college choices.

Prepare early decision/early action or rolling admission applications as soon as possible.

Ask a counselor or teacher for recommendations if you need them. Give each teacher or counselor an outline of your academic record and your extracurricular activities. For each recommendation, provide a stamped, addressed envelope and any college forms required.

If you're submitting essays, write first drafts and ask teachers and others to read them. If you're applying for early decision, finish the essays for that application now.

Be sure to have your college admission test scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying.

November

Nov. 1-15: For early decision admission, colleges may require test scores and applications between these dates.

Complete at least one college application by Thanksgiving.

Ask counselors to send your transcripts to colleges. Give counselors the proper forms at least two weeks before the colleges require them.

December

As you finish and send your applications and essays, be sure to keep photocopies.

If the college wants to see second-semester grades, be sure to give the form to your counselor.

January

If you apply online to colleges, be sure to have your high school send a transcript — it is sent separately by mail to colleges.

February

No senioritis, please! Accepting colleges *do* look at second-semester senior grades.

March

Keep active in school. If you are wait listed, the college will want to know what you have accomplished between the time you applied and the time you learned of its decision.

April

You should receive acceptance letters and financial aid offers by mid-April. If you've not done so yet, visit your final college before accepting. As soon as you decide, notify your counselor of your choice.

If you have questions about housing offers, talk to your counselor or call the college.

May

May 1: Colleges cannot require your deposit or your commitment to attend before May 1. By that postmarked date, you must inform every college of your acceptance or rejection of the offer of admission and/or financial aid. (Questions? Talk to your counselor.)

Send your deposit to one college only.

Wait listed by a college? If you intend to enroll if you are accepted, tell the admission director your intent and ask how to strengthen your application. Need financial aid? Ask whether funds will be available if you're accepted.

Work with a counselor to resolve any admission or financial aid problems.

June

Ask your high school to send a final transcript to your college.

For more college planning tools and guidance, visit bigfuture.org.

Source: The College Board.

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