



12th Grade Checklist

Fall

College Planning

- ☐ Attend college information events in your community (www.collegenights.org)
- ☐ Check college websites for applications, deadlines, financial aid and housing information
- ☐ Ask your counselor to evaluate your transcript for high school graduation and college eligibility
- ☐ Register to take or retake college entrance exams
 - ☐ Several colleges are test optional—check www.fairtest.org/test-optional-list for the most comprehensive list
 - ☐ SAT (www.collegeboard.org)
 - ☐ ACT, with optional writing section (www.act.org)
- ☐ Keep your test scores, resume and transcript organized to help in completing college applications
- ☐ Ask teachers or counselors for letters of recommendation
- ☐ Finalize portfolios, audition materials or writing samples if required as part of the application
- ☐ Get feedback from a college advisor, teacher or parent/guardian and complete revisions of all applications and essays
- ☐ Begin to submit college applications

Financial Aid

- ☐ Review the financial aid application process and timeline required by the colleges on your list
- ☐ File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>)
 - ☐ Information from the 2025 tax year will be used by the class of 2027 when applying for financial aid for the 2027-2028 academic year
- ☐ Attend financial aid workshops in your community for help completing the FAFSA
- ☐ Be aware that private colleges may require additional financial information from the CSS Profile (<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org>)
- ☐ Check your state financial aid websites for more information about in-state financial aid opportunities for undocumented, DREAMer and DACA students (<https://studentaid.gov/apply-for-aid/fafsa/filling-out/undocumented-students>)
- ☐ Search and apply for scholarships (www.fastweb.com, <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>)
- ☐ Review your FAFSA Submission Summary once the FAFSA has been processed and make any needed corrections
- ☐ Males: Plan to register for Selective Service when you turn the age of 18; federal law requires nearly all male U.S. citizens and male immigrants, ages 18-25, to register with Selective Service; some states require registration before distributing state-based financial aid (www.sss.gov)

Winter

College Application Follow-Up

- ☐ Check your email frequently for additional information colleges might request within their timeline
- ☐ Send your mid-year transcript to colleges that request them
- ☐ Continue scholarship searches over winter break and continue to submit applications

Spring

Academics

- ☐ Keep up your grades—college admissions are conditional and can be rescinded if you do not continue academic excellence
- ☐ Check with the colleges where you have applied before considering dropping a 12th grade year class; colleges expect you to complete all of the high school courses you listed as "in progress" on your admissions application
- ☐ Take your Advanced Placement (AP) and/or International Baccalaureate (IB) exams

College Decision

- ☐ Check your email or college admissions portal for admission decision notification
- ☐ Visit campuses that most interest you
- ☐ Carefully review your financial aid offer for each college where you have been accepted and compare offers; contact financial aid offices to answer questions or update them on any changes to your family's financial situation
- ☐ Finalize your financial aid; accept your financial aid offer or work with the college's financial aid office to adjust it
- ☐ If you'll be attending a four-year college, notify and place a deposit at the college of your choice by National College Decision Day (May 1)

College Admissions Follow-Up

- ☐ Sign into your college portal and review your task list and deadlines
- ☐ Check your email for correspondence and deadline reminders
- ☐ Request your final transcript be sent to your college choice from your high school registrar before the deadline
- ☐ Request AP and IB scores be submitted to your college choice
- ☐ Ask about college placement tests—some colleges require them for certain subjects, such as English and math; make sure to register in time and study beforehand
- ☐ Sign up for summer and/or fall orientation; some are mandatory and some have a cost
- ☐ Figure out housing—if living on campus, complete any roommate survey forms, sign the housing contract and submit a housing deposit to make sure you have a reserved room



Summer—Final Steps!

Orientation

- ☐ Attend orientation; at orientation, you will register for your classes; you may also take English, math or world language assessments

Paperwork and Payments

- ☐ Check your college email account and log into your college's student portal every few days for important notices for new students
- ☐ Download your college's health forms and see your doctor; colleges may require evidence of immunizations
- ☐ Most four-year colleges require students to have health insurance, so you may see it on your fall bill; if you don't want it, you must opt out
- ☐ Research tuition payment options—tuition payments are due at the beginning of the term
- ☐ Search your student portal for "FERPA waiver" and submit a completed form to your college if you want your parents/guardians to access your student account (bill, grades, etc.)
- ☐ Ask your high school to send your final transcript to your college

College Finances

- ☐ Work and save money for college
- ☐ Make a budget with your parents/guardians (www.ecmc.org/studentseducators/student-resources/financial-awareness-basics-fab)
- ☐ View your class syllabus for required textbooks; consider buying used books, which cost less than new; you may also be able to save money by shopping for books online, downloading PDFs, buying e-books or renting books
- ☐ Some college instructors/institutions have shifted to open educational resources (OERs). OERs are learning, teaching and research materials that are in the public domain, making them available at no cost and accessible for a wider audience. Here are a few resources to explore: the University of Minnesota Open Textbook Library (<https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks>), OER Commons (<https://oercommons.org/>) and OpenStax (<https://openstax.org/>)

Living on Campus

- ☐ Check out a sample packing list and start packing (www.upack.com/articles/the-ultimate-college-packing-list)
- ☐ Consider creating a roommate agreement (www.collegexpress.com/articles-and-advice/student-life/articles/living-campus/how-make-your-own-college-roommate-agreement)
- ☐ Set expectations on how and when you will communicate with your family while away at college
- ☐ Make any necessary travel arrangements; buy travel tickets (plane, train, bus) and make hotel reservations early (if necessary)

Living at Home

- ☐ Develop boundaries with your family and let them know that your first obligation is your studies, so you're not available while at school
- ☐ Identify a study space at home

Support

- ☐ Search your college website for academic advising or counseling services to learn more about these free resources available to you; <https://activeminds.org/resource/referral-resources> is another free resource used to help yourself or your friends with topics related to mental health
- ☐ Check your student portal or college website so you don't miss out on any virtual or local welcome events for students before classes start
- ☐ Send thank-you notes to everyone who helped in your college process, such as counselors and teachers who wrote letters of recommendation and scholarship providers who provided you funding for college

