

## Make the Dream Real

Families and teachers want to see their students' dreams come true. This usually includes the dream of a college education. Certainly a college education expands an individual's knowledge and skills, but it also brings greater job opportunities and the chance to earn more over a lifetime than someone who only has a high school diploma. Increasingly, employers are looking to hire individuals with a college degree. Making the right choices in middle school and through high school will open up possibilities that are not available without a college education.

Preparing for college should start well before the fall of a student's senior year in high school. The information and timelines in this newsletter outline how students can use their high school years to prepare for college. Taking the right steps can open up a world of possibilities.

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## Resources

### Planning for College

#### New York's Private, Independent Colleges and Universities

[www.nycolleges.org](http://www.nycolleges.org)

Part of clcu's Outreach Programs, this site has information about more than 100 independent, private, nonprofit colleges and universities in New York State, including locations, information on financial aid, lists of academic programs, demographic information, and profiles of each campus.

#### Go! CollegenY

[www.gocollegeny.org](http://www.gocollegeny.org)

A new college preparation initiative for under-represented students by the NYS Higher Education Services Corporation. Students have interactive workbooks and other tools to help them every step of the way to the goal of attending college.

#### College Navigator

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>

This site, developed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), offers information about nearly 7,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. Students can find out about enrollment, graduation rates, tuition costs, and financial aid. They can also use the site's tools to create lists, spreadsheets, and interactive maps with their search results.

#### New York State Career Zone

[www.nycareerzone.org/](http://www.nycareerzone.org/)

An initiative of the NYS Department of Labor, this site offers students and parents a career exploration and planning system, offering relevant labor market information and descriptions of 800 occupations.

#### College Search/College Matchmaker

<http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/index.jsp>

At this site, sponsored by the College Board, students can search for information on nearly 4,000 colleges and universities by entering their individual preferences: 4-year or 2-year college; public or private; size; urban, suburban, or rural campus; distance from home; majors; athletic and extracurricular activities, housing options; academic programs; financial aid – and more.

### Mapping Your Future

<http://mappingyourfuture.org/>

A free resource center where students can explore careers and search for colleges. Students and families can also find information about paying for college and other money management tips.

### KnowHow2Go

[www.csopportunity.org/](http://www.csopportunity.org/)

This site, a project of the American Council on Education and the Lumina Foundation, is especially useful to middle and high school students who will be the first in their families to attend college and offers general advice, tips, free student newsletters, and links to online resources about college.

### Learn about Financial Aid for College

#### Federal Student Aid Information Center

[www.studentaid.ed.gov](http://www.studentaid.ed.gov)  
1-800-4FED-AID

#### FAFSA4caster

Provides students and families with an opportunity to estimate eligibility for federal student aid. Visit [www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov).

#### NYS Higher Education Services Corporation

For information on NYS grants and scholarships, contact NYS HESC at 1-888-NYSHESC or [www.hesc.org](http://www.hesc.org)

#### New York's 529 College Savings Program

Families can save for college with significant tax benefits. For more information, call 1-877-NYSAVES or visit [www.nysaves.com](http://www.nysaves.com)

#### Upromise® Rewards Program

<http://www.upromise.com>

A savings-through-purchase program. When you shop at hundreds of companies, a percentage of the purchase price is deposited into a savings account. Upromise® can be tied to the New York 529 College Savings Program.

#### Fastweb.com Private Scholarship Search

A database of thousands of private scholarships. Visit [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com).

# MIDDLE SCHOOL: Too Early to Think About College? Think Again.

**M**iddle school is definitely **not** too early to start thinking about college. Doing well in middle school classes provides a strong foundation for the high school courses students will need to take to be prepared for college. And the sooner students and their families learn about and start saving for college, the more choices they will have later.

Helpful resources from the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cicu) for middle school students and their families include the following publications, which can also be downloaded for *free* from [www.nycolleges.org/resources.php](http://www.nycolleges.org/resources.php).



◀ **Making College Possible** introduces the subject of college, with a list of steps to take to prepare for college, sources of information about college programs, costs, and financial aid.



◀ **Set the Bar High/Expect the Best** and its Spanish edition, *Establezcan metas altas/Esperen lo mejor*, provide a quick guide on courses to take and the importance of studying hard and doing well academically in middle school.



◀ **Getting To College** is a dual English/Spanish publication designed to get middle school students and their families thinking about college and realizing that a college education is an achievable goal.



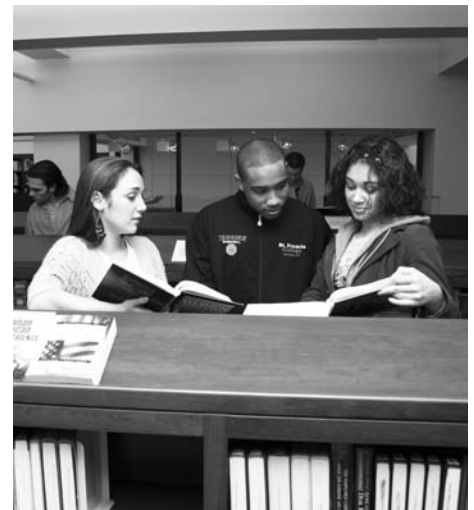
◀ **Getting To College Starts Now: A Guide for Families** offers information on planning financially for college; a timeline of steps middle and high school students can take to prepare for college; Internet resources, and more.



◀ **Paying for College/Como pagar la universidad** is a one-page guide for parents/guardians about how to pay for college. It includes a list of Web sites with more information about colleges and suggestions on how to financial aid and save for college.



◀ **Middle School to College/Escuela intermedia hasta la universidad** offers a timeline of the path through middle and high school that leads to college and a list of factors admissions personnel consider when making their decisions.



## Helpful Tips to Plan Ahead

- Saving early—even a little—will decrease the amount of loans needed for college.
- Become familiar with federal and state tax credits and deductions for allowable college expenses.
- Look for scholarships early. Search online and in your community to discover what is available and what is required to apply.

## Paying for College?

It's never too early to start thinking about saving for college. Planning and saving – the earlier the better – will help ensure you have a leg up in the college planning process.

Never count out college because you think the cost of college is too high or won't fit in your budget. The actual cost to students is rarely the "sticker price" since there are many ways that the state and federal governments, and colleges and universities, provide support with grants, scholarships, and loans to help students and families pay. In fact, on average more than 8 out of 10 students receive financial aid to help pay for college.

## Know What Colleges Look For

When you're searching for the right college, there are at least two things to consider: what you want in a college, and what the college is looking for in its applicants.

By starting early, you'll have time to make the best match. Think about your strengths, and the qualities you will bring to the college.

Here are some qualities colleges often look for in their applicants:

- Academic preparation.
- Challenging coursework.
- Good grades in a range of courses.
- Ranking among high school peers, including senior year ranking.
- SAT or ACT scores (not required at many colleges - check with the college).
- Extracurricular activities (commitment, rather than quantity, is the key).
- Recommendations from teachers and others.
- Written self-expression, often judged by your application essay or other writing sample.
- Verbal expression and presentation.
- Leadership ability and positions.
- Level of interest in and enthusiasm for the college.

# College Timeline for High School **FRESHMEN**

## Fall

- Meet with your school counselor to discuss your college plans and the courses you want to take during the four years of high school.
- Enroll in challenging courses to prepare for college. You will need classes in English, social studies, mathematics, science, and a language other than English. For a list of New York State's most recent requirements for a high school diploma, go to [www.nysed.gov](http://www.nysed.gov).
- Start a calendar on which to list important dates and deadlines.
- Decide on your extracurricular activities, but don't sign up for too many; keep quality rather than quantity in mind.
- Begin keeping a portfolio of your academic and extracurricular accomplishments.
- Learn more about colleges you might want to attend. Surf the Web to get information about colleges and universities. Visit the U.S. Department of Education's College Navigator, at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>. cIcu's [www.nycolleges.org](http://www.nycolleges.org) site is helpful, too. It offers profiles of more than 100 private, nonprofit colleges and universities in New York State.

- Find out about NCAA-approved courses if you are interested in college athletics.
- Continue, or start, saving money for college. The more you save the less you may need to borrow.

## Winter

- Read! Reading a wide variety of books and other materials is one of the best ways to increase your vocabulary and prepare for college.
- Study hard and be prepared for mid-term tests. Grades *do* matter in college admission.
- Find out about college life first-hand from older siblings, relatives, or friends during the holidays. Ask them what surprised them most about college life and what they might have done differently to prepare.

## Spring

- Learn about college costs and financial aid. The New York State Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC) has a number of useful resources on paying for college, including information on grants, scholarships, loans, and New York's 529 College Savings Program, at [www.hesc.org](http://www.hesc.org). Download a copy of *Affording College* at [www.nycolleges.org/resources.php](http://www.nycolleges.org/resources.php) (free!).

- Attend college fairs being held in your school or near your home. HESC maintains a College Fair Calendar that lists college fairs in New York State at [www.hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/College\\_Fair\\_Calendar](http://www.hesc.com/content.nsf/SFC/College_Fair_Calendar). See the tips below on getting the most out of a college fair.
- Visit local colleges while they are still in session. Go to the college's Web site to find out about arrangements and schedules for campus tours and open houses. A list of college open houses and events can be found at [www.nycolleges.org](http://www.nycolleges.org).
- Learn about college prep programs being offered by your school or community and sign up for them.
- Look for a summer opportunity – a job, internship, volunteer position, or enrichment activity.

## Summer

- Volunteer or participate in educational programs to explore your interests and possible careers.
- Visit college campuses near you.

Sources: [http://studentaid2.ed.gov/prepare/timeline/prepare\\_timeline\\_9th.html](http://studentaid2.ed.gov/prepare/timeline/prepare_timeline_9th.html); [www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegePrep/Pages/FreshmanYear.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegePrep/Pages/FreshmanYear.aspx); [www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/freshmen.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/freshmen.html).

## Getting the Most From A College Fair

Each college campus has a personality. It is very important to find a college that fits your interests.

A college fair offers students an opportunity to meet admissions representatives from a number of colleges and universities at one time in one place. Fairs can be overwhelming; getting the most out of them requires some advance planning. Here's some advice on getting the most from a college fair.

### Before the Fair

- Ask yourself what kind of college might suit you. Two years or four? A large university or a small college? Urban, suburban, or rural campus? What kinds of academic programs? Any special needs?
- Research colleges that interest you on the Web and in your school or guidance library. Discuss college hopes and plans with a school counselor, teachers, family, and friends.
- To save time filling out college information cards at each table, print out some self-stick labels with your name, address and phone number.
- Study the list of colleges and universities whose representatives will be at the fair and note which interest you the most. Also check out the schedule for sessions on the college search process, the FAFSA, the SAT and ACT, and financial aid.

- Make a short list of questions to ask admissions staff. Some questions you might ask:
  - ▶ What distinguishes this college from others like it?
  - ▶ How would you describe the personality of a typical student at your college?
  - ▶ Do the professors make time to meet and work with students?

### At the Fair

- When you approach a college table, be calm and professional. The college reps are eager to speak with you. Don't be intimidated; your goal is to gather information about the colleges that interest you.
- Casual, comfortable clothing is fine, but dress neatly. Bring a pen, notebook, any questions you've written down, and a bag to hold brochures and other materials you pick up at the fair.
- If your parents or other family members are coming with you, discuss your plans ahead of time. Having a family member at your side will allow you to get a second opinion about a college or splitting up will allow the family member to attend an information session while you talk to college representatives.
- Allow extra time to stop at the tables of colleges that catch your attention at the fair.

You might discover a fine college you hadn't previously considered.

- It's important not to simply swing by the table of a college you're interested in attending only to pick up a brochure and smile meekly at the admissions representative before walking away. Take the time to talk with the representatives. The college reps will appreciate someone who appears to be taking the fair seriously. Show initiative by talking notes. In addition, ask the admissions representatives for their business cards and follow up with them after the fair. Those ongoing conversations can help provide you with a good contact and information you might never find in guidebooks or on Web sites.

### After the Fair

- Review your notes, brochures and the information you picked up. Start weeding colleges that aren't a good fit.
- Find out more about the colleges that impressed you. Research them online and in libraries. Schedule visits to their campuses.

Sources: [www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/where-to-start/28841.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/csearch/where-to-start/28841.html); [www.nacacnet.org/EventsTraining/CollegeFairs/nctf/Pages/NCFTips.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/EventsTraining/CollegeFairs/nctf/Pages/NCFTips.aspx); [www.embarc.com/Articles\\_old?pages/5fabulousquestionstoaskacollege.aspx](http://www.embarc.com/Articles_old?pages/5fabulousquestionstoaskacollege.aspx); <http://homeworktips.about.com/od/juniors/a/collegefair.htm>

# College Timeline for High School **SOPHOMORES**

## September

- Meet with your counselor to discuss your courses and college plans. Learn about Advanced Placement (AP) classes and which AP courses are available at your school. Advanced courses will prepare you for college-level work and may earn college credit.
- Consult with your counselor or other school personnel about taking the PSAT, a preliminary test that will prepare you for the SAT, and/or the PLAN, which offers practice for the ACT. Information about the PSAT can be found at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). To learn more about PLAN, go to [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).
- Start a calendar on which to list important dates and deadlines, such as the dates of important exams, college fairs, financial aid workshops, due dates for papers or other schoolwork, and deadlines to register for the PSAT or PLAN.
- Decide on your extracurricular activities, keeping in mind what most interests you and what you want to learn more about or explore.
- Sign up for NCAA-approved courses if you are interested in college athletics. You can search for a list of approved courses by state, city, and high school name at <https://web1.ncaa.org/hportal/exec/hsAction>.

## October

- If offered at your school, take the PSAT in October. For advice on and practice in taking the test's different sections, go to [www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/psat/prep.html).
- For ACT practice questions, visit [www.actstudent.org/sampletest](http://www.actstudent.org/sampletest).
- Continue to maintain a portfolio of your academic and extracurricular achievements and a record of your employment and volunteer work.
- Attend college fairs in your area.

## November

- Find out more about college costs and financial aid. Learn about the FAFSA (Free Application for Student Aid), which you will have to file to be eligible for federal student aid and some colleges' own aid, at <http://studentaid.ed.gov>.
- Assess your academic work. Meet with your teacher and school counselor to discuss your progress and any help you might need.
- Continue to explore colleges online and write to those that interest you for any additional information or materials. Resources to help you begin your search, including links to sites that will help you compare different institutions, can be found at [www.ucan-network.org/share-u-can](http://www.ucan-network.org/share-u-can).

## December

- Review your PSAT and/or PLAN test scores with your school counselor. With the access code on your PSAT score report, you can sign in to My College Quick Start online for a personalized study plan to help you improve your score.
- Talk to your counselor and teachers about taking SAT Subject Tests in your strongest subjects. The schedule for the subject tests can be found at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) (Search "Subject test").
- Talk with friends and family members who are attending or have attended college about their experiences with college life.

## January

- Keep studying and keep reading!
- Continue researching colleges and universities. Look for college guidebooks in your school counselor's office and visit college and university home pages. Begin to identify each college's application requirements. It's not too early to start visiting colleges. If there is a college near you that you might like to attend, set up an appointment to tour the campus.
- Become a volunteer, as this is one way to explore your interests and possible careers.

## February

- Visit colleges near you while they are still in session.
- Continue to save money for college and to learn about financial aid.

## March

- Begin planning to sign up for rigorous courses during your junior year that will prepare you for college. Consult with your counselor or teachers about which courses they recommend.

## April

- After discussing SAT Subject Tests with your counselor and teachers, register to take the test(s). Information about SAT fee waivers can be found at <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-fee-waivers>.
- Keep researching colleges and careers.

## May

- Begin planning for summer. Think about getting experience in an area that interests you. Research volunteer opportunities or consider taking a summer course or participating in an enrichment program at a local college. A list of such programs, updated annually, is available at [www.nycolleges.org](http://www.nycolleges.org); (Search "Middle School/High School Enrichment").

## June

- Study (hard!) for final exams. Grades *do* matter in college admissions.

## Summer

- Create a summer reading list. Ask teachers, mentors, and older students for recommendations.
- Visit college campuses near you.
- Do your summer job, volunteer work, or enrichment activity and make your summer a productive one.

Sources: [http://studentaid2.ed.gov/prepare/timeline/prepare\\_timeline\\_10th.html](http://studentaid2.ed.gov/prepare/timeline/prepare_timeline_10th.html); [www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/sophomores.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/sophomores.html).

## Questions to Ask a College

- Which forms are required to be considered for all forms of aid?
- What are your requirements for merit aid? For need-based aid?
- What are the aid renewal requirements?
- What are the financial aid application deadlines?
- Are there state aid programs I should know about?
- When will you notify me of my aid eligibility?
- How will outside scholarships affect my financial aid package?
- Do you have a monthly payment plan?



# College Timeline for High School JUNIORS

## September

- Establish an academic mindset. Your GPA and class rank at the end of this year will be considered by colleges.
- Get to know your teachers. You will likely want to ask some to write college recommendation letters for you.
- Meet with your school guidance counselor to review courses for junior and senior years, grades, graduation requirements, and class rank.
- Check with your counselor about registering to take the PSAT/NMSQT, the qualifying test for National Merit Scholarships, National Scholarship Service, and National Hispanic Scholar Recognition Program.
- Get involved in extracurricular activities and volunteer work.
- Work on and improve your study and time management skills.
- If a particular college major or field of study interests you, take related electives, if offered.
- Start saving samples of your best work in a portfolio.

## October

- Prepare for the PSAT/NMSQT by taking a practice test. Find out more at: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).
- Investigate colleges that interest you. Make a list of those that meet your preferences for size, location, distance from home, majors, academics, housing, cost, and financial aid offered. Start your college search at: [www.nycolleges.org](http://www.nycolleges.org); or at <http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator>.
- Attend local college fairs and meet with college representatives who visit your school.
- Request viewbooks and information from colleges. Visit college Web sites. Preview college applications, such as the Common Application accepted by more than 450 colleges and universities at: [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org).
- Sharpen your writing skills.

## November

- Continue to explore colleges and attend college fairs.
- Assess study skills, strengths, and weaknesses. Continue to read widely, take practice tests, and work on writing essays.
- Research college majors and your career interests. Talk to people who work in your fields of interest, teachers, counselors, and college professors. A good place to explore careers is: <http://nycareerzone.org/>.
- Consider interning in a field that interests you.

- If interested in sports, check NCAA registration requirements at [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).
- Begin researching financial aid, including options for grants, scholarships, and work-study programs. Learn about New York State grants at [www.hesc.org](http://www.hesc.org) and about federal grants at <http://studentaid.ed.gov>.

## December

- Examine applications and literature you receive from the colleges.
- Know what is required when you apply – types of tests, interview, personal essay, recommendations from teachers, mentors, or employers.
- If you are taking standardized tests, prepare by taking practice tests.
- Check registration deadlines for the SAT or ACT if you plan to take a test soon. Find out testing schedules at: [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org) for the SAT and [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) for the ACT.
- Begin to narrow down your college choices. Set up a filing system with individual folders for each college's correspondence and printed materials.

## January

- Make a preliminary list of colleges you would like to investigate, using the Internet, your school's guidance office, or the library.
- Consult with teachers, counselors, and others about your college plans. Start asking for recommendation letters.
- Review your academic progress with your counselor: course work, grades, and test scores.
- Investigate sources of financial aid. Visit your high school's counseling center, your public library, and online at: <http://studentaid.ed.gov/>; and at [www.nycolleges.org/](http://www.nycolleges.org/) (click on "Financial Aid").
- Ask about available financial aid from employers, religious groups, community groups, and service organizations.
- Begin thinking about a summer job, internship, or on-campus college summer program.

## February

- Work on test skills with practice SAT tests.
- Writing is important – work on it. Write admission application essay drafts and go over them with a teacher or other adult whose judgment you trust.
- Register for and take any SAT Subject Tests you need for your applications. Talk to your school counselor about which tests to take. Find out test schedules at: <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register/sat-dates>.

- Visit colleges to feel the "fit" and narrow down your list while being open to considering a college you might not have thought of earlier.

## March

- Ask about personal interviews at your college choices, and call or write for appointments.
- Request admission literature, application forms, and financial aid information from colleges.
- Stay involved in extracurricular and volunteer activities.

## April

- Prepare for SAT or ACT tests with practice tests and study.
- Before taking any test, get plenty of sleep the night before and eat a good breakfast on the morning of the test. Have your admission ticket, know where you're going, and how long it will take to get to the test site.

## May/June

- Prepare for your final exams.
- Discuss with teachers and counselors what you can do during summer to prepare for senior year.
- Decide on and prepare for summer activities – jobs, internships, and on-campus summer college programs.
- Plan college tours and visits.
- Review your senior year courses with your counselor. Consider challenging yourself with honors and AP courses if available.

## Summer

- Organize all your important coursework, honors, activities, certificates, and letters of achievement or recognition.
- Visit colleges in person if possible, or online. Talk to people who have gone to the colleges that interest you. Involve your family in your college application process.
- Compose rough drafts of your college essay.
- Develop a financial aid application plan, including a list of aid sources, requirements for each application, and a timetable. Search for scholarships at sites such as: [www.fastweb.com](http://www.fastweb.com); [www.finaid.org](http://www.finaid.org); and [www.hesc.org](http://www.hesc.org).

Sources, accessed on October 11, 2011:  
[www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegePrep/Pages/JuniorYear.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegePrep/Pages/JuniorYear.aspx); [www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-eleventh-students.aspx](http://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-eleventh-students.aspx); [www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-eleventh-parents.aspx](http://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-eleventh-parents.aspx); [www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/juniors.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/juniors.html); <http://parentingteens.about.com/od/collegeinfo/a/timelinejyear.htm>.

# College Timeline for High School SENIORS

One of the most important goals for your senior year is to remain focused on your academics. Don't allow "senioritis" to creep in and ruin all of your hard work.

As you start the college application process, be aware of the many deadlines you must deal with: testing deadlines, financial aid deadlines, scholarship deadlines, and, of course, application deadlines. This is a year where organization is critical!

## Throughout Senior Year

- Meet all your deadlines!

## September

- Meet with your school counselor to discuss college plans. Make sure you meet all requirements for graduation and have all the credits needed for the colleges on your list.
- Keep working on grades and continue with extracurricular and volunteer activities.
- Discuss final college choices and financial aid with counselors, teachers, and parents/guardians.
- If you are applying for Early Decision or Early Action, check the deadlines; they are typically in early fall. Allow enough time to prepare essays and give recommendation forms to teachers, counselors, and mentors. Follow up to make sure your high school has sent your transcripts to the college(s). Be sure to schedule any required interview or audition.
- Make sure that you have all forms required for college admission and financial aid. Print extra copies and/or make photocopies of every application you send. Keep a record of the date each was sent.

## October

- Take SAT or ACT tests as needed. Be well-rested on the day of any test, eat a good breakfast that morning, have your admission ticket ready, know where you are going and how long it will take to get there. If necessary, register for December or January SATs at <http://sat.collegeboard.org/register>.
- Request recommendations from teachers, counselors, mentors, and/or employers. Give them any necessary forms, with your part properly filled out, along with stamped, college-addressed envelopes.
- Attend a college fair to speak to representatives of colleges to which you are likely to apply.

## November

- Prepare applications for regular college admission. Keep in mind that deadlines for submitting these are usually the end of December or early January. Arrange for your high school to send official transcripts to colleges and schedule required interviews.
- Allow enough time to prepare essays and other required materials.
- Start work on filling out forms for the FAFSA, keeping in mind that they should not be submitted before January 1. For more details: [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov).
- Attend financial aid information events at your school or locally.

## December

- Confirm that your standardized test scores (official SAT and ACT scores) have been sent to the college(s) of your choice.
- Arrange and confirm with your school counselor that transcripts and recommendations have been sent to the colleges to which you are applying.
- If applying for early admission, you will begin hearing from those colleges now. Early Decision plans are binding and require withdrawal of any applications to other colleges. Early Action plans allow you to confirm your acceptance immediately or wait until the spring to accept admission.
- Watch the deadlines on the applications for admission and financial aid at the colleges you are applying to. While colleges with rolling admissions allow students to apply throughout the year, students who apply as early as possible can increase their chances of being admitted.

## January

- **Complete and submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1.** If your parents have not completed their tax forms yet, *you may submit estimated information* on the FAFSA and financial aid applications, but remember that corrections will have to be made later on.
- If you submit the FAFSA online, it will be processed faster. Go to [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to learn about filing options.
- For help in completing the FAFSA, look for FAFSA completion workshops or contact a local college's financial aid office.
- If you haven't yet done so, contact admissions offices at the colleges where you applied to confirm that they have everything needed from you.
- Complete scholarship applications. Many priority financial aid deadlines are in January or February. Keep copies of everything you send.

## February

- You should have received your Student Aid Report (SAR). Make any corrections and return to the FAFSA processor. Make sure colleges receive your corrected SAR.
- Continue your applications and *watch the deadlines!*

## March

- Contact financial aid offices at the colleges to confirm that they have all of your aid application materials.
- Keep up your academic work and your extracurricular activities. Don't slack off! Many colleges check your senior year grades.

## April

- As college acceptances arrive, compare acceptance letters, scholarship offers, and financial aid packages.
- Choose your college, and find out deadlines for your acceptance letter and deposit check. Most colleges require acceptance notification to be postmarked by May 1. Don't miss the deadline!

## May

- May 1 is the deadline for acceptance notifications at most colleges. Make sure your acceptance is postmarked by this date!
- Take Advanced Placement (AP) exams for AP subjects you have taken.
- If you are on a college's waiting list, and are still interested, contact the college and let the admissions office know.

## June

- Be sure to follow the college's deadlines for submission of housing and board contracts as well as fees for tuition, room, and board.

## Summer

- Participate in summer orientation programs offered by the college you will be attending. Check up on your residence hall assignment, roommate assignment, and course schedules.
- Arrange for required medical exams and for health insurance coverage if you have not already done so.

Sources, accessed on October 11, 2011: [www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegePrep/Pages/SeniorYear.aspx](http://www.nacacnet.org/studentinfo/CollegePrep/Pages/SeniorYear.aspx); <http://studentaid.ed.gov/PORTALSWebApp/students/english/timeline.jsp?tab=applying>; [www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-twelfth-students.aspx](http://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-twelfth-students.aspx); [www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-twelfth-parents.aspx](http://www.petersons.com/college-search/planning-list-twelfth-parents.aspx); [www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/seniors.html](http://www.collegeboard.com/student/plan/action/seniors.html); [www.collegebasics.com/college-planning/charting-your-plan/college-planning-timeline-for-seniors.html](http://www.collegebasics.com/college-planning/charting-your-plan/college-planning-timeline-for-seniors.html).

# Completing an Online College Application



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Colleges across the nation report that they are receiving increasing numbers of applications. Surveys to colleges and universities show that this increase has been fueled by individual students submitting applications to a greater number of colleges and by colleges doing what they can to facilitate the application process. Increased participation in common applications, on-the-spot admissions opportunities, early admission programs, and the use of online applications have all contributed to the overall increase in the number of college

applications submitted. Online applications for admissions are increasing every year. On average, colleges and universities receive more than 75% of their applications online. With the majority of admissions applications being received online, how can you ensure that your online application will be correct, complete and competitive? The most important component of the online application process is to be certain you are applying only to schools in which you are truly interested. Do not apply to an institution simply because the application is free. Do your homework. Research colleges and universities and look for those institutions that will be a good fit for you. Also, be sure to work with your school counselor to make



certain you are applying to appropriate institutions and that all of your application materials and credentials are submitted on time.

## Helpful Hints for Applying Online

Follow these helpful hints and make the most of your online college applications.

- Inform your school counselor right away of any schools you applied to online and request required documentation to be mailed.
- Print a copy of the online application before submitting it so it can be proofed for accuracy and completion.
- Keep a copy of the submitted application for your records just as you should keep a copy of anything sent to, or received from, a college.
- Be sure to complete all the items on the application to avoid unnecessary delays or extra work for the college admissions office. Items include those asking about whether you were ever suspended or dismissed due to disciplinary reasons, and, if your answer is yes and a statement is required, be sure to include the statement with your application submission.
- If an acknowledgement from the college is not received, you should follow up to make sure all of the application components transmitted successfully.
- Some students complete the online application, print it and mail it to the college. This is fine; however, do not submit it online as well. This causes confusion in the admissions office and may result in processing delays.
- If supplements are required, complete and submit them as soon as possible.
- Be sure to proof your essay – even an interesting essay will make a weak impression if full of errors in spelling or grammar.
- Read any and all instructions regarding the submission of online applications. They are not all the same.
  - ▶ Some colleges will accept supplements in the mail even though the application was submitted online.
  - ▶ Some applications, however, clearly state that if a student submits the application electronically, he/she must submit the supplement electronically as well.
- Consider the impression you are making with your e-mail address.
- If payment is sent by mail instead of online, send it right away...do not make the college ask for it. Also, timely payment will prevent processing delays.
- Because online applications typically require less data entry on the part of the colleges, they will often waive or discount the application fees for those submitted online. Check with the colleges to which you plan to submit an application and see if you can save on application fees by applying online. If the college does discount or waive the application fee, this will likely be done for their own online application only and not necessarily for the Common Application.
- Do not apply to a school online just because there is no application fee, especially if you have no true interest in that school. Before submitting an application, research the school.
- Do not fret over which is preferred – paper or online. Call the college and ask if it has a preference. There are colleges that accept only online applications but the majority accept both. Also know that if you are applying to multiple colleges (i.e. via the Common Application) the colleges cannot see the other institutions to which you are also applying.
- Put e-mail addresses of the colleges applied to in your address book so that when the colleges want to contact you via e-mail, the e-mail won't get spammed.



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This publication is supported with a federal College Access Challenge Grant (CACG) awarded to the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (cicu) by the Higher Education Services Corporation (HESC), the state agency designated to administer the grant.

## New York's 100+ Private Colleges and Universities

- Adelphi University
- Albany College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences
- Albany Law School
- Albany Medical College
- Alfred University
- American Academy McAllister Institute
- Bank Street College of Education
- Bard College
- Barnard College
- Boricua College
- Bramson ORT College
- Canisius College
- Cazenovia College
- Clarkson University
- Cochran School of Nursing
- Colgate University
- College of Mount Saint Vincent
- The College of New Rochelle
- The College of Saint Rose
- Columbia University
- Concordia College
- Cooper Union
- Cornell University
- Crouse Hospital School of Nursing
- The Culinary Institute of America
- D'Youville College
- Daemen College
- Dominican College
- Dorothea Hopfer School of Nursing
- Dowling College
- Elmira College
- Excelsior College
- Fei Tian College
- Finger Lakes Health College of Nursing
- Fordham University
- Hamilton College
- Hartwick College
- Helene Fuld College of Nursing
- Hilbert College
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges
- Hofstra University
- Houghton College
- Institute of Design and Construction
- Iona College
- Ithaca College
- Keuka College
- The King's College
- Le Moyne College
- Long Island University
- Manhattan College
- Manhattan School of Music
- Manhattanville College
- Maria College
- Marist College
- Marymount Manhattan College
- Medaille College
- Memorial Hospital School of Nursing
- Mercy College
- Metropolitan College of New York
- Molloy College
- Mount Saint Mary College
- Nazareth College
- The New School
- New York Chiropractic College
- New York College of Podiatric Medicine
- New York Institute of Technology
- New York Medical College
- New York School of Interior Design
- New York University
- Niagara University
- Nyack College
- Pace University
- Paul Smith's College
- Phillips Beth Israel School of Nursing
- Polytechnic Institute of NYU
- Pratt Institute
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Richard Gilder Graduate School at the American Museum of Natural History
- Roberts Wesleyan College
- Rochester Institute of Technology
- The Rockefeller University
- The Sage Colleges
- Samaritan Hospital School of Nursing
- Sarah Lawrence College
- Siena College
- Skidmore College
- St. Bonaventure University
- St. Elizabeth College of Nursing
- St. Francis College
- St. John Fisher College
- St. John's University
- St. Joseph's College
- St. Joseph's College of Nursing at St. Joseph's Hospital Health Center
- St. Lawrence University
- St. Thomas Aquinas College
- Syracuse University
- Teachers College, Columbia University
- Touro College
- Trocaire College
- Union College
- Union Graduate College
- University of Rochester
- Utica College
- Vassar College
- Vaughn College of Aeronautics and Technology
- Villa Maria College of Buffalo
- Wagner College
- Watson School of Biological Sciences at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory
- Webb Institute
- Wells College
- Yeshiva University