

“Go-to-College” Calendar Checklist

Make your “go-to-college” planning easier by using this checklist. It will provide helpful reminders for tasks you may need to complete during your college planning.

As you review this checklist, keep in mind your calendar may differ depending on the type of education pursued.

Freshmen & Sophomores

- Get to know your high school guidance counselor.
- Develop good study skills.
- Explore careers you find interesting.
- Get a Social Security Number.
- Evaluate your personality, interests, and skills.
- Take challenging courses.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.
- Start to understand the college planning process.

Juniors

September

- Plan a family college discussion.
- Review your courses with your high school counselor.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask college reps.
- Collect college catalogs.
- Sign up to take the PSAT.
- Register to receive College Answer free newsletter.
- Get and stay organized. *Create files to keep copies of applications and correspondence. Set up a calendar to track important dates and deadlines.*

October – November

- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Download College Answer’s College Fair Checklist.
- Take the PSAT.
- Search for scholarships and financial aid.
- Learn the basics about federal and private loans.
- Plan and make college visits.
- Download College Answer’s Campus Visit Checklist.

December

- Review your PSAT results with your counselor.

- Talk with college friends home on break.
- Take both the SAT and ACT at least once.

January

- Identify characteristics you want in a college.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights, if you haven’t already done so.

February

- Run College Answer’s free scholarship search.
- Register and study for the SAT and/or ACT.

March

- Plan campus visits.
- Narrow your college list to a reasonable number.
- Discuss ways to pay with each college on your list.
- Keep up family college discussions.
- Have unanswered “go-to-college” questions? Visit College Answer’s FAQs.
- Estimate how much each college will cost.

April – May

- Compare college requirements to your course load.
- Select senior year courses.
- Visit colleges.
- Take the SAT and/or ACT, if necessary.
- Take Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary.
- Get a summer job to save extra money.
- Considering a military academy or an ROTC scholarship? Meet with your high school counselor before leaving for summer vacation.

Summer

- Improve your reading and vocabulary skills.
- Search for scholarships and ways to pay.
- Download College Answer’s Reading List.
- Combine vacation plans with campus visits.
- Start working on your college application essays.
- Talk to people in careers you find interesting.
- Decide who you’ll ask to write recommendations.
- Talk with college friends home for summer.

High School Seniors

September

- Discuss your course load, college plans, and test scores with your high school counselor.
- Request college applications.
- Arrange campus visits.
- Register to take the SAT/ACT, if necessary.
- Search for scholarships and ways to pay.
- Run College Answer's free scholarship search.
- Submit a CSS PROFILE form, if required.
- Stay organized: File copies of applications and correspondence. Keep your calendar up-to-date tracking important dates and deadlines.

October

- Verify that your transcripts are accurate.
- Find out which financial aid applications are required at your choice colleges.
- Ask for letters of recommendation to include with your admissions and/or scholarship applications.
- Work on admissions application essays.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- "Early Decision" candidates should complete college applications.

November

- Continue completing your college applications.
- "Early Decision" deadline is often November 1 or 15.
- Determine which financial aid forms the colleges on your list require—when in doubt contact the Financial Aid Office.
- Search for additional sources of financial aid.

December

- Complete school applications ideally by December 1.
- Collect family tax information.
- Complete then make a copy of your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). *Don't submit before January 1, it will only be returned to you not processed.*
- Take SAT or Achievements, if registered.
- Stay organized.

January

- Submit your FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible. *Some student aid programs award funds on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are*

depleted. Waiting too long to submit your FAFSA could be costly.

- Fill out and submit required financial aid forms. Follow instructions carefully and make copies.

February – March

- College decisions start rolling in.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR). Carefully examine the results. *A mistake could cause you to miss out on college funding.*
- Don't panic if you're selected for verification. Just provide the college with the documents they need.
- Stay on top of important financial aid deadlines.
- Respond quickly to college requests for additional documentation.
- College acceptance and financial award letters start rolling.

April

- Carefully analyze your letters.
- Make a decision, most colleges request your reply by May 1, and send your tuition deposit.
- Notify other colleges that you won't be attending.
- Register for Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary.
- Mark your calendar with important deadlines (housing, meals, transportation, financial aid, etc.).

May

- Send transcripts.
- Respond quickly to requests.
- Return necessary forms.
- Notify your FAO of any additional funding you'll be receiving (scholarships and loans, etc.).
- Evaluate student loan lenders and take time to understand student loans.

Summer

- Still need money for college? Apply for a loan online at College Answer. *Borrow only what you need to cover your college expenses.*
- Attend orientation.
- Complete any college financial aid info received, if you have question — ASK.
- Finalize your budget.
- Send thank you notes to individuals who help you get in.
- Review College Answer's College Advice section and pick up a few freshmen tips.
- Download College Answer's Packing for College Checklist.