

The Education Fund

SmartPath to College & Careers

Guide to College Clubs Grades 9-12

**Best Practices, Lessons, and Tools for
Resilient Student Success**



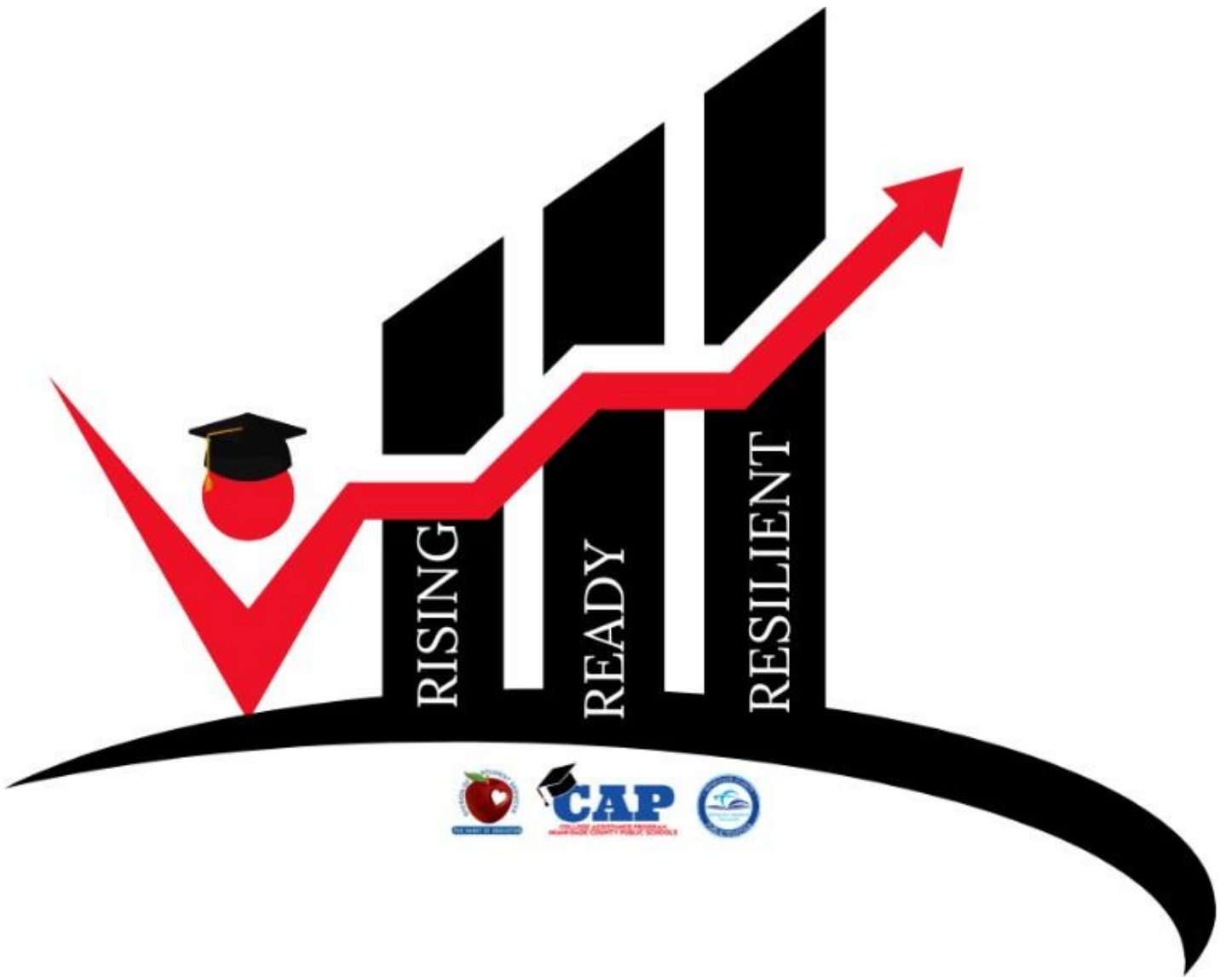
We are on the SmartPath to College & Careers!

**The Education Fund SmartPath to College & Careers
Guide to College Clubs Grades 9-12
Best Practices, Lessons, and Tools for Resilient Student Success**

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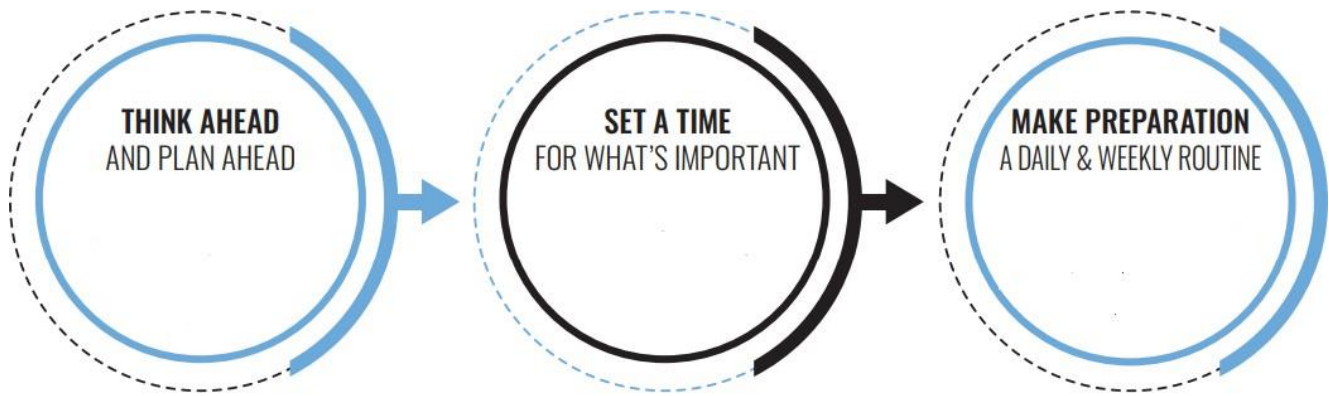


Name:

It's time to set a GREAT goal! People who do great things are people who set goals and then work toward achieving those goals. **Let's get started!** What is your postsecondary goal?

G	Goal's Name – Describe your goal in 5 words or less. This statement is your goal's name. _____ _____ _____
R	Reason for your Goal – Every GREAT goal has a “why” that gives it purpose and direction.
E	Efforts Required – How will you achieve the goal? List 4 steps you will take to achieve your goal. 1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____
A	Accountability Partner – Telling someone about your goal makes it real. List two people you share your goal with. 1. _____ 2. _____
T	Timeline for Your Goal – Today is your starting point. Set a finish line and place your efforts in order on the timeline. Date: _____ Date: _____ Effort: _____ Effort: _____

It's time to plan! Planning and being prepared can help you reach your postsecondary goals.



What task do you need to complete?

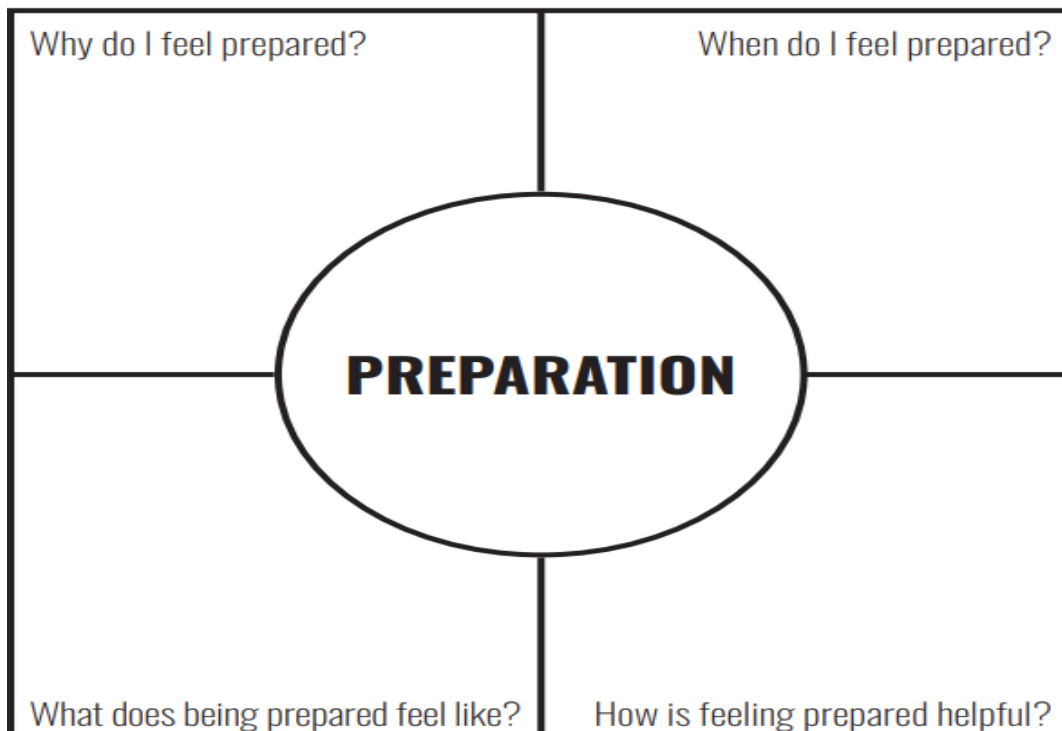
When will you work on this task?

When will you check for completion of this task?

Use the emotion square to think about feeling prepared.

Most people want to feel prepared. However, it can be really hard to feel prepared — even if you are. Feeling prepared is related to confidence. Preparation can boost our confidence when we need it the most.

Use the box to the left to write ideas about what feeling prepared means to you. Think about the why, when, what, and how of being prepared in your life.



Roadmap to College

Write what you will do to reach your college planning goals.



April/Moy

June

February/ Morch

December/ January

August/September

October/November

Resources

Florida's Bright Futures Scholarship Program

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program establishes lottery-funded scholarships to reward Florida high school graduates for high academic achievement. To find out about ways you can qualify for Bright Futures and more information, visit Floridastudentfinancialaidsq.org.



Volunteering Miami

For Students by Students – Connecting local, Miami-based businesses and organizations with volunteers through one, easy-to-use platform.

To find our more information, visit Volunteeringmiami.org



State University System of Florida

Florida's state universities offer high quality academic degree programs and student services to enable students to meet their educational needs and professional goals.

Scan the QR Code to learn more about our State University System.



State of Florida Graduation Requirements

Florida's public high school graduation requirements for a standard high school diploma.

Scan the QR Code to take a closer look at your graduation requirements.



Building Your College Club Recruitment Tips

A1. (Aug) Building Your College Club Recruitment Tips

Getting the word out about school clubs can be difficult. Here are some tips to generate student interest, buy-in, and ownership of the club.

First, Decide a Date/Time for Your First Club Meeting

- Review the school calendar to avoid conflicts with other school events/activities
- Speak with existing and perspective students about perspective dates/times to attend the first meeting

Next, Get the Word Out!

- Utilize morning and afternoon school announcements
- Create bright and colorful posters to place around the school
- Create fliers to place in the main office, counselor offices, media center, and lunch room
- Request teachers make announcements in their classrooms
- Ask existing club members to spread the word to their peers
- Create a social media page to post important club information; get students engaged with photos, videos, and graphics

Your First College Club Meeting

- Define what it means to be a college club member; what are the benefits?
 - o resources, tools, college trips, guest speakers
- Allow for introductions; learn more about the students interested in the college club
 - o What unique talents/interests/abilities to they possess that could benefit the club?
 - o This will allow you to further customize club activities based on student interests
- Discuss student expectations and leadership opportunities
 - o Discuss creating a college club board (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer) to allow the club to function as a student-led extracurricular
 - Think about and discuss training/responsibilities that will be required for each role
 - o Empower students to take on more responsibility while creating role models for younger members; which will positively impact the future of the club
- Establish regular meeting dates/times (2x per month, during lunch or after school)
- Encourage students to bring a friend to the next meeting

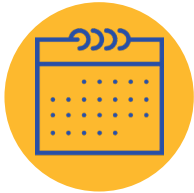
Your Second College Club Meeting

- Define what it means to be a college club member; what are the benefits?
- Allow for introductions of new participants
- Continue discussion for a college club board (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer)
 - o Request nominees for each role; club members should plan to vote on each position at the next meeting
 - o Discuss training/responsibilities that will be required for each role
- Continue to encourage students to bring a friend to the next meeting

**Continue Meeting with Students Twice Per Month &
Utilize the College Club Guide for Lessons, Resources and Tips!**



5 Ways to Demystify College



1. Start Early and Often.

Expose students to as many college opportunities as you can, as early as you can. Build in class time for college exploration! August is a great time to bring in admissions reps from local colleges to speak with younger students. Admissions reps are more willing to come and speak with older kids, especially seniors, September to November. Many universities also offer virtual tours on their websites.

2. Communicate With College Admissions Reps.

It is so important to establish relationships with college admissions reps. They will trust your judgement when recommending students and help you keep tabs on how your students are doing in college. Try setting up an Application Workshop Day with your local reps! There's a chance they can waive admissions fees and accept unofficial transcripts and test scores, making it extremely easy for students to apply early with lots of guidance and little excuse.



3. Build Your Students' Comfort Levels.

The more campuses they see, the more comfortable they feel. Work with the universities to see how many students they can accommodate and if they offer financial assistance for students to visit. Some schools will give the students free lunch or offer to pay for buses to get the kids there. The more opportunities they have to see multiple schools, the easier it will be for them to choose the college that is best for them.



4. Take the Parents.

Try to invite parents to come on college field trips too. Then they can build their own comfort level. This is especially important for first-generation college students, whose parents may not have a clear picture of what college will be like for their child. Once they visit one campus, they are more likely to take their children to visit additional campuses. This is also a way to get free chaperones!



5. Share Multiple Postsecondary Options.

Exposing students to four-year universities is important, but that's just one postsecondary option. Work with your counseling department to help students research careers. Not all students will want to pursue careers that require them to go to a four-year university. Look at the careers your students are interested in and reach out to local technical schools and community college departments who specialize in corresponding certificate programs. Ask them to come in and make admissions presentations. You can invite a branch of the military to speak with seniors too. This allows students to see more of their options in addition to four-year schools.



To read the full blog, visit www.avid.org/blog

How Do You Learn Best?



A2. (Aug) How Do You Learn Best (Finding Your Learning Style)

Recognizing how you learn best can be the key to good grades and success in school.

There are all kinds of ways we learn new information. Finding your “learning style” can help you improve your study habits and may even improve your GPA.

Take this quiz to find out which style suits you best, and then review the tips to tailor your study techniques to make the most of your learning style.

For each question, select the letter that best describes you.

Which of the following describes your favorite teacher?	
A	Uses charts, diagrams and drawings to explain concepts and material
B	Holds a lot of class discussions and lectures
C	Provides helpful handouts and assigns interesting books and reading material
D	Conducts demonstrations and uses hands-on activities in lessons

Aside from the cost, which of the following best helps you decide what type of phone to buy?	
A	The design, color and “look” of the phone
B	Listening to what the salesperson says about the phone
C	Reading about the phone’s features and reviews online
D	Going to a store and trying out the phone for yourself

When you’re learning how to play a new game, you’d rather...	
A	Look at pictures or diagrams that show how to play the game
B	Ask your friends to tell you about how the game works
C	Read the instructions that came with the game
D	Just start playing the game and figure it out as you go

How Do You Learn Best?

A2. (Aug) How Do You Learn Best (Finding Your Learning Style)

A friend asks you for directions to a restaurant you know well. You...	
A	Show or draw him/her a map
B	Tell him/her the directions
C	Write down the directions
D	Offer to go with him/her to show the way

Which letter(s) did you choose the most?

Match your results with the **learning style** and **study tips** that best suit you.

Learning Styles Defined	
<p><u>A – Visual Learner</u></p> <p>You learn by seeing concepts depicted in some way.</p> <p>Study tip: Try drawing diagrams and flowcharts to organize new information for better learning.</p>	<p><u>C – Reading and Writing Learner</u></p> <p>You prefer learning information in written form.</p> <p>Study tip: Re-copy key terms/dates/ideas and their description into flashcards for better learning.</p>
<p><u>B – Auditory Learner</u></p> <p>You learn by hearing something spoken aloud.</p> <p>Study tip: Try recording yourself reading notes aloud and play them back for better learning.</p>	<p><u>D – Kinesthetic Learner</u></p> <p>You learn by doing, moving and testing things out for yourself.</p> <p>Study tip: Role-play, recreate a lab or construct a basic model of what you are trying to learn.</p>

Source: Florida Trend's NEXT, Your Future After High School, <http://www.floridanext.com/>

Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students 9th Grade



First Quarter

Action Steps

- Review your schedule to ensure it meets college/scholarship requirements.
- Create solid study habits as grades are an important part of college admissions and you want to start strong.
- Build connections with your teachers, as they will be potential recommenders in the future.
- Begin reviewing scholarship lists for eligibility.
- Set up a RaiseMe account to begin earning microsolarships for college.
- Create a Scoir account, build your profile and download Scoir's mobile app.
- Send your parent(s) an invite link to join Scoir.
- Create a professional email address to use for formal communication in high school.
- Explore extracurricular activities that interest you.
- Learn about NCAA Clearinghouse requirements if you are a student-athlete who hopes to receive an NCAA scholarship.
- Research community service opportunities and begin documenting your community service hours.
- Attend your school's college fair to explore various postsecondary options.
- Attend M-DCPS' College Month Virtual Workshop series in October.
- Connect with your school counselor, CAP Advisor, or ESE teacher to learn about postsecondary transition programs available for students with IEP as you plan your postsecondary goal.

Resources

- [Florida Bright Futures Scholarship](#)
- [Scoir: Creating a Student Account](#)
- [RaiseMe: Get Started Guide for Students](#)
- [Standard Diploma- What Parents & Students Need to Know](#)
- [The Benefits of Extracurricular Activities](#)
- [Student Services \(dadeschools.net\)](#) * See Student Services Programs
- [Transition Services](#)



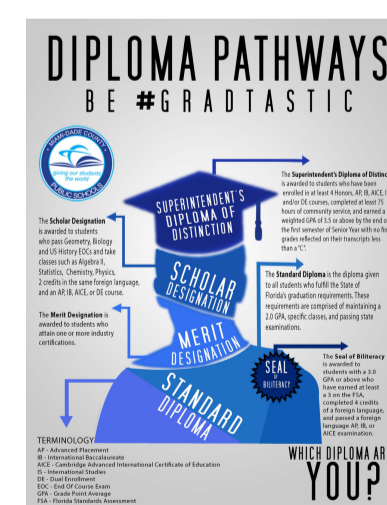
Second Quarter

Action Steps

- Review and reflect on your first quarter report card to reinforce good study habits and provide assistance where necessary.
- Seek tutoring or assistance if necessary to improve academic progress.
- Get involved in extracurricular and community-based activities that interest you.
- Begin composing your resume.
- Continue to seek opportunities for community service including during winter break. This is a great time to do research on community projects and organizations.
- Research options available, including technical colleges and career pathways.
- Familiarize yourself with M-DCPS Diploma Pathways to understand how you can graduate with various diploma designations.
- Choose your "College Preferences" to begin exploring and virtually visiting postsecondary institutions on Scoir. This will assist you in building your Scoir "Following" college list.

Resources

- [Scoir- Setting Your College Preferences](#)
- [Scoir: Creating Your Resume](#)
- [M-DCPS Technical Colleges](#)
- [MDC Career Pathway Programs](#)
- [Diploma Pathways](#)
- [M-DCPS CTE Career Pathways](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students 9th Grade



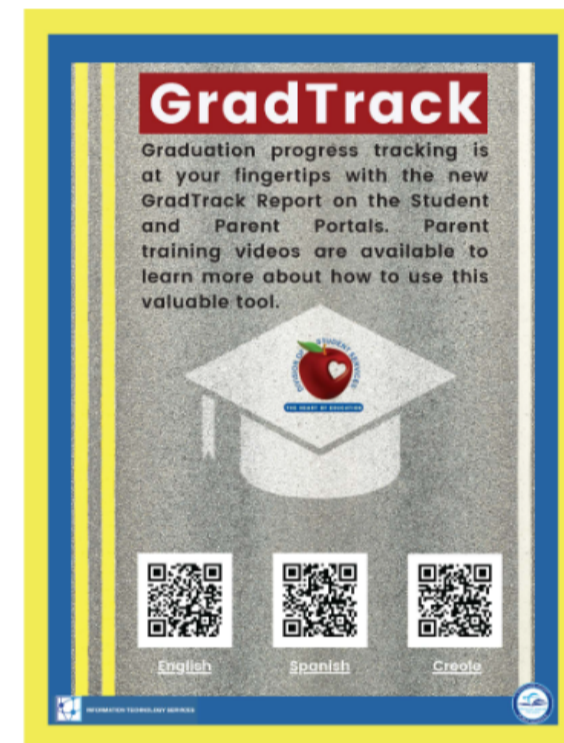
Third Quarter

Action Steps

- Review mid-year grades, reflect on your first grade point average (GPA).
- Familiarize yourself with the GradTrack Report, found in your student portal.
- Learn about weighted vs. unweighted GPA.
- Plan your 10th grade schedule with future academic goals and requirements in mind. Include courses based on rigor, interests and State University requirements (including the required two years of a foreign language).
- Prepare for any AP/IB/AICE exams by attending school site tutoring, workshops and/or visit AP Central for access to AP videos and other resources.
- Familiarize yourself with eligibility requirements for Dual Enrollment courses at local postsecondary institutions.
- Research academic summer programs, internships, and/or community service opportunities.

Resources

- [CollegeBoard AP Central](#)
- [FL SUS Requirements](#)
- [GradTrack Training Videos](#)
- [Unweighted and Weighted GPAs](#)
- [How to Take Your High School Classes to the Next Level](#)



Fourth Quarter

Action Steps

- Enroll in academic summer programs, community projects and/or internships that interest you to build your resume and enhance college and career skills.
- Update your RaiseMe profile to earn micro-scholarships.
- Continue to explore and "follow" postsecondary institutions on Scoir.
- Attend college visits, if possible.
- Explore financial aid and other opportunities to pay for college.

Resources

- [For Students: Create and Export a Resume - Scoir](#)
- [Summer Programs: What, Why and How](#)
- [Adding Extracurriculars to Your RaiseMe Portfolio](#)
- [Financial Aid Can Help You Afford College](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students

10th Grade



First Quarter

Action Steps

- Review your schedule to ensure it meets college entrance/scholarship requirements.
- Review your GradTrack report to view your updated grades and GPA. Pay special attention to your core subject grades for Bright Futures eligibility.
- Build/update your profile on Scoir.
- Be sure you have Scoir's mobile app downloaded on your device.
- Send your parent(s) an invite link to join Scoir if they do not have an active account.
- Make a plan to improve test-taking and time-management skills.
- Study, practice and prepare for the PSAT. (Use Khan Academy and/or other resources to practice).
- Participate fully in the PSAT testing process. This exam serves as a baseline for your college entrance exams and may assist in meeting the math graduation requirement.
- Access and update your RaiseMe account to continue earning micro-scholarships for college.
- Continue to build connections with your teachers and counselors.
- Stay involved in extracurricular activities that interest you.
- Seek additional community service opportunities and document the hours you serve.
- Monitor your core GPA and better understand NCAA Clearinghouse requirements if you are an athlete who hopes to receive an NCAA scholarship.
- Attend your school's College Fair to explore various postsecondary options.
- Attend M-DCPS' College Month Virtual Workshop series in October.
- Learn about the procedures for receiving testing accommodations for the SAT/ACT for students with IEPs and 504 plans.
- Connect with the school's ESE team to get support in exploring postsecondary opportunities that align with your postsecondary goals.

Resources

- [PrinciplesYou Career Assessment](#)
- [Florida Bright Futures Scholarship](#)
- [8 Ways to Take Control of Your Time - BigFuture](#)
- [General info about PSAT](#)
- [Studying and Practicing for the PSAT/NMSQT](#)
- [Transition Programs and Services](#)
- [College Board: How to Request Accommodations](#)
- [ACT Test Accommodations and English Learner Supports](#)



Second Quarter

Action Steps

- Review and reflect on your first quarter grades.
- Seek tutoring or assistance if necessary to improve academic progress.
- Connect your Khan Academy account to College Board to create a study plan targeting the skills to improve based on PSAT scores.
- Explore various career options available, including technical colleges and career pathways.
- Continue to seek community service opportunities during winter break.
- Use the time during winter break to research scholarship opportunities.
- Continue to engage in virtual tours on Scoir.
- Continue to build and update your Scoir "Following" college list.

Resources

- [M-DCPS Technical Colleges](#)
- [MDC Career Pathway Programs](#)
- [How Do I Link My Khan Academy Account to CollegeBoard?](#)
- [How to Choose a College: A Step-by-Step Guide](#)
- [M-DCPS CTE Career Pathways](#)

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
TECHNICAL COLLEGES**
➔ Get A Career In A Year!

Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students

10th Grade



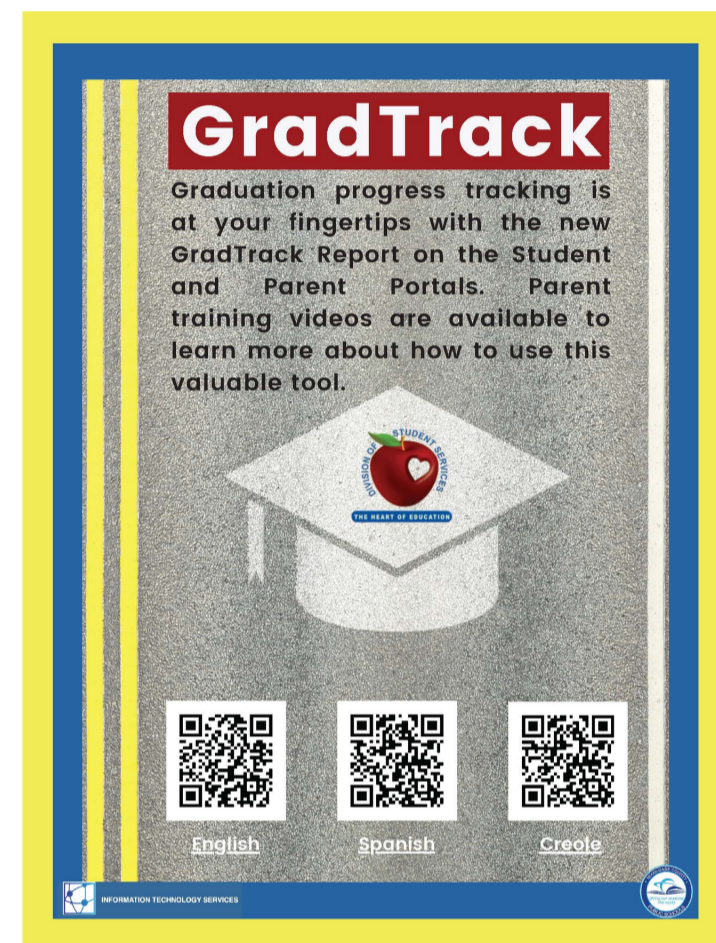
Third Quarter

Action Steps

- Review mid-year grades as this is your exact halfway point in high school. Reflect on your academic standing and set goals for the remainder of high school.
- Review your GradTrack Report, found in your student portal, and use the report to inform your decisions in choosing your courses for junior year and meeting your graduation requirements.
- Plan your 11th grade schedule with future academic goals and requirements in mind. Recognize that junior year courses round out the academic record you will be submitting as part of the application process during the fall of your senior year. This is an opportunity to demonstrate and reinforce rigorous coursework including dual enrollment and AP courses. Be sure to include courses based on rigor, interests and State University requirements (including the required two years of a foreign language).
- Prepare for any AP/IB/AICE exams you may have by attending school site tutoring, workshops and/or visit AP Central for access to AP videos and other resources.
- Stay committed to involvement in school and/or community projects.
- Complete the PrinciplesYou Career Assessment to discover career options that will enhance and focus your postsecondary research.

Resources

- [CollegeBoard AP Central](#)
- [FL SUS Requirements](#)
- [GradTrack Training Videos](#)
- [How to Take Your High School Classes to the Next Level](#)



Fourth Quarter

Action Steps

- Apply for summer academic programs, enrichment programs, community projects and/or internships that interest you, build your resume and enhance your college and career skills.
- Continue to apply for scholarship opportunities.
- Meet with your counselor to evaluate your academic review for the year to make last minute adjustments to your schedule for 11th grade or discuss courses you might be able to take over the summer such as Dual Enrollment or FLVS courses for advancement.
- Update your Scoir "Following" college list based on your PrinciplesYou Career Assessment results.
- Attend college visits, if possible.

Resources

- [For Students: Create and Export a Resume - Scoir](#)
- [Summer Programs: What, Why and How](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students

11th Grade



First Quarter

Action Steps

- Ensure that you are enrolled in recommended courses needed for college admission.
- Reflect on your grades thus far in high school and make a plan to earn the best grades possible to boost your GPA. Remember that colleges look at the cumulative GPA you have earned during the first three years of high school as you apply at the beginning of senior year.
- Update your college list on Scoir by adding schools to the "Following" tab to begin further research.
- Consider taking the PSAT to potentially qualify for the National Merit Scholarship Program.
- Attend college visits either in person or virtually. You may engage in virtual college tours on YouVisit on Scoir and follow-up with college representatives.
- Attend college/career fair to receive information on potential schools.
- Attend M-DCPS' College Month Virtual Workshop series in October to begin planning for next year's application process.
- Prepare to fully participate in your Transition Individual Education Plan (TIEP) meeting this year. The TIEP meeting will assist you in connecting with agency support like Vocation Rehabilitation and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities. This meeting will also include consideration of deferral of receipt of standard high school diploma for participation in postsecondary programs.

Resources

- [CollegeBoard- Why Take the PSAT Now](#)
- [Study Skills for Students](#)
- [Study and Practice for the PSAT/NMSQT](#)
- [4 Things to Consider in Choosing a College or Career School](#)
- [NCAA Guide for the College-Bound Student-Athlete](#)
- [National Merit Scholarship Program Guide](#)
- [Transition Programs and Services – Deferral of Receipt of the Standard High School Diploma](#)



Second Quarter

Action Steps

- Continue exploration of college and career options. Be reminded that you can complete and/or review the PrinciplesYou Career Assessment. Once this is completed you may want to update your college lists and adjust the schools you are "Following" on Scoir based on your results.
- Begin researching upcoming scholarship opportunities and your eligibility for them.
- Prepare and register for the SAT/ACT throughout spring and summer. Inquire about your eligibility for a testing fee waiver.
- Remember to use your PSAT results to identify your strengths and weaknesses as you prepare for the SAT.
- Use Khan Academy for free test preparation and to link prior PSAT scores for custom test preparation.
- Study for any upcoming AP exams.
- Consider which advanced courses you want to take next year that best meet the requirements of your college preferences.
- If you are exploring the possibility of joining one of the branches of the military, begin talking to recruiters and take the ASVAB exam.
- Make plans to attend the Miami National College Fair.

Resources

- [How Do I Link My Khan Academy Account to CollegeBoard?](#)
- [Take the PrinciplesYou Character Assessment](#)
- [CollegeBoard- Find Your Scholarship Matches](#)
- [CAP Paying for College Webpage](#)
- [The Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test \(ASVAB\)](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students

11th Grade



Third Quarter

Action Steps

- Complete college net price calculators using your parent's tax return to have a better idea of future tuition costs and financial aid eligibility.
- Continue virtual campus visits to learn about each college campus and student life.
- Update new careers of interest to you by reviewing the results of your PrinciplesYou Career Assessment.
- Research application decision types, such as Early Action/Early Decision, and review potential deadlines for each program.
- Develop or update your resume. Completing your "Personal Bio" in Scoir will allow you to "Export Resume" for later use.
- Start brainstorming for the first draft of your personal statement and college essay.
- Attend the Miami National College Fair to engage with a variety of national and international institutions.
- Ensure that you have all required documentation to receive testing accommodations for any SAT/ACT exam that you may be taking if you have an IEP or 504 Plan.

Resources

- [Estimate Your Federal Student Aid](#)
- [College Essay Resources](#)
- [Writing A High School Resume That Stands Out](#)
- [Picking Your College: Early Actions vs Early Decision](#)
- [College Essay Guy: College Application and Essay Resources](#)
- [Miami National College Fair](#)
- [College Board: How to Request Accommodations](#)
- [ACT Test Accommodations and English Learner Supports](#)



Fourth Quarter

Action Steps

- Begin moving colleges to your "Applying" tab in Scoir to plan for application requirements and upcoming deadlines.
- Update the "Personal Bio" in Scoir to maintain an accurate resume and provide background for any teachers needing information to assist with possible letters of recommendation.
- Review college application requirements and if needed, begin to ask teachers for recommendation letters through the "Application Documents" tab on your Scoir account.
- Start to compile application materials that may be needed such as personal statements, portfolios, essays, resumes, etc.
- Use your summer break to visit local colleges and other postsecondary institutions that interest you.
- Gain work experience by finding a summer job/internship.
- Create your FSA ID in preparation for upcoming FAFSA completion.
- Review scholarship requirements and deadlines, especially for the colleges to which you plan to apply.
- Begin the application process for military academies or ROTC scholarships this summer before senior year.
- Register with the [National Collegiate Athletic Association Eligibility Center](#) if considering college athletics.
- Attend a technical college fair to learn more about the many career pathways available in our local technical colleges.
- Update your RaiseMe account.
- Attend college visits, if possible.

Resources

- [CollegeBoard- Find Your Scholarship Matches](#)
- [9 Myths About the FSA ID](#)
- [Creating and Using the FSA ID](#)
- [M-DCPS Technical Colleges](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students 12th Grade



First Quarter

Action Steps

- Review your course schedule and course history to ensure all courses needed for graduation, scholarships, and postsecondary plans are completed.
- Create and maintain a postsecondary planning calendar with important deadlines and events.
- Narrow down your list of "Following" schools on Scoir to create a balanced college list with safety, target, and reach schools included. Update the "Preferences" section on Scoir to add or compare colleges to finalize your list.
- Review the net price calculators for each college you are interested in to assess actual financial affordability.
- Begin finalizing application plans for your balanced college list. Add your college choices to the "Applying" tab in Scoir to keep track of requirements and deadlines required of each application (Common App, Coalition through Scoir, institutional applications).
- Update the "My Profile" section on Scoir so that your resume is accurate for teachers needing information for letters of recommendation.
- Request letters of recommendation through the "Application Documents" tab on Scoir for the schools that require them.
- Gather documents and begin application submission (based on deadlines) for college applications.
- Be sure to have your SAT/ACT scores sent to the colleges to which you are applying IF they require test scores.
- Be aware of which schools require electronic transcripts (added through the Applying/Applied tab of Scoir) or separate student-submitted websites to input course and grade information. Most public schools in Florida use the [SSAR site](#) for students to enter their transcript information manually.
- Review Early Decision/Early Action options and deadlines for schools that offer them. Choose the deadline that allows you to submit the most competitive application possible.
- Be consistent in checking for scholarships and applying to scholarships for which you qualify. Many institutional scholarships have deadlines in early fall, even if their application deadlines extend later.
- Attend M-DCPS' College Month Virtual Workshop series in October.
- Prepare and register for upcoming SAT/ACT exams, if needed.
- Clean up your social media accounts as admissions officers often check your social media networking.
- Attend "Financial Aid Info" night with your parent(s). FAFSA and FFAA (used for Bright Futures) both open October 1st.
- Gather all important financial documents and file your FAFSA application soon after it opens on October 1st.
- Some schools require additional financial information (CSS Profile). If required, gather documents, and submit CSS Profile by deadline (usually specific to private schools).
- Complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) after October 1st for consideration for the Bright Futures Scholarship and other State of Florida scholarship opportunities. (Even if you are not yet eligible for these programs, you may complete the application and work toward eligibility throughout senior year.)
- Seek out additional information about postsecondary transition programs to assist students with IEPs in finalizing their plans after graduation. Be sure to learn about disability support services available at postsecondary institutions.

Resources

- [Glossary of Terms and Definitions Related to Student Financial aid.](#)
- [FAFSA Checklist](#)
- [7 Things You Need Before Filling Out the FAFSA Form](#)
- [15 Myths We're Busting About the FAFSA Process](#)
- [Coalition for College- Apply Coalition on Scoir](#)
- [Advice for First Generation and Low Income Students](#)
- [College Essay Resources](#)
- [Florida Financial Aid Application](#)
- [Resource Guide for Undocumented and Mixed Status Families](#)
- [CollegeBoard: Early Decision & Early Action](#)
- [Picking Your College: Early Actions vs Early Decision](#)
- [College Scorecard](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students 12th Grade



Second Quarter

Action Steps

- Continue submitting college applications and required components by December/January deadlines. (May include personal statements, essays, reporting test scores, or reporting transcript information.)
- Once you have completed the application process, move your college from "Applying" to "Applied" in Scoir to monitor decision updates.
- Complete your Florida Financial Aid Application (includes Bright Futures).
- Dedicate time to searching for scholarships for which you may qualify.
- Prepare and register for upcoming SAT/ACT exams, if you still need to attain a particular score for admissions or scholarship eligibility.
- Prepare thank you letters to teachers/counselors who completed your letters of recommendation.
- Review your first quarter grades and make plans to maintain healthy study habits and grades. First semester grades of senior year are important, and some schools may request updated grades as part of the admissions process. Do not fall prey to senioritis.
- Continually check your college portals/accounts (received after application submission) to ensure all required materials were received correctly.



Resources

- [College Admission Glossary](#)
- [CollegeBoard- Find Your Scholarship Matches](#)
- [CAP Paying for College Webpage](#)
- [Undergraduate College Financing Plan Template](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students 12th Grade



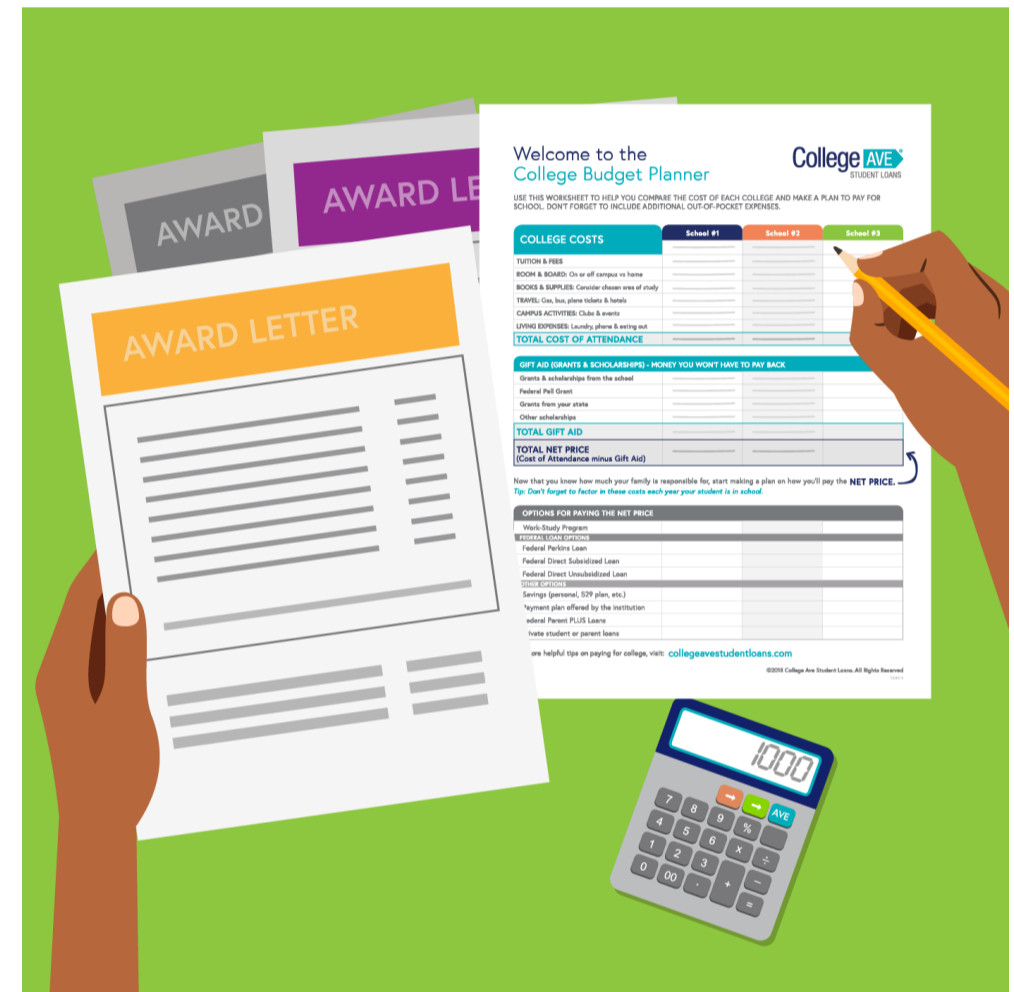
Third Quarter

Action Steps

- Complete the FAFSA, and inform your parents to complete it as well.
- Continue seeking scholarships for which you may qualify, including the CAP, Inc. last-dollar grant and other opportunities from The Miami Foundation.
- Check through mail or electronic notifications about general admission decisions which will be released around this time.
- As schools begin to release admissions decisions, update your Scoir profile to reflect your status of Accepted/Denied/Waitlisted/Deferred in the "Applied" tab.
- Research housing options and deposit deadlines for schools to which you were accepted.
- Review your financial aid award letter carefully with your parent(s). Wait until all school acceptances and financial aid awards are received before you commit to a school. Choose wisely based on preference and affordability.
- If waitlisted, follow directions from the admissions office to continue with the application. Seek ways to strengthen your application.
- Ensure you are still maintaining good study habits and grades as schools will review your final transcript.
- Continue with SAT/ACT testing, if needed for Bright Futures Scholarship eligibility.

Resources

- [After the FAFSA: What Happens Next?](#)
- [Your Financial Aid Award Letter - Review, Evaluate, Appeal Webinar - English](#)
- [College Waitlists: What to Do If You're Waitlisted](#)
- [The Miami Foundation Scholarships](#)



Postsecondary Planning Timeline for Students 12th Grade



Fourth Quarter

Action Steps

- Review your financial aid award letter carefully with your parent(s). Wait until all school acceptances and financial aid awards are received before you commit to a school. Choose wisely based on preference and affordability.
- Continue seeking scholarships for which you may qualify.
- Prepare for AP/IB/AICE Exams. Many schools award college credit for passing scores.
- Work with your advisor to resolve problems you may have with admissions, financial aid, or scholarship applications.
- Be sure to plan for all required housing and tuition deposits.
- Based on fit and affordability, accept your school! It is good practice to also notify the schools that you will not be attending.
- Indicate your chosen school by selecting "Enrolling" in the Applied section of your Scoir account. This will allow your high school to submit your final transcript and any other necessary documents to your college after graduation.
- Submit additional documents to your chosen school as needed. These may include residency forms, immunization documents, and orientation registration.
- Seek assistance to connect with disability support services at the postsecondary institution or program you will be attending if you have an IEP or 504 Plan.
- Take time to celebrate your journey and participate in decision day. You've earned it!



Resources

- [How to Choose a College](#)
- [13 Things to Know When Evaluating Your Financial Aid Award Letter](#)
- [Understanding Federal Student Loans for College or Career School](#)
- [OSFA's Federal Family Education Loan Program](#)





NAVIGATING JUNIOR AND SENIOR YEAR

There is A LOT to keep track of as students begin wrapping up their final years of high school and preparing for college, career, and beyond. Here are some touchpoints to make sure students are staying on course in their junior and senior years.

FALL JUNIORS

This is the time for juniors to begin laying the groundwork for their college or career plans. Starting off on the right foot with this checklist will help them feel confident from the start to finish.

Map out their junior year:

Using a paper or online calendar, pencil in **ACT test dates**, test prep opportunities, campus visits, and college fairs.

Plan a testing schedule:

Juniors who take the ACT test in the fall can **use their score report** to confirm strengths and uncover areas for improvement, which can lead to more confidence and improved performance if they test again.

- **ACT test prep materials**, including free practice tests, are available to practice skills and help students do their best.
- Choose a TIR date: **Test Information Releases** allow students to purchase a copy of their test questions, their answers, and correct answers — which can be a great study tool. TIRs are only available 3 test administrations each year (September, April, and June in 2023-2024).

Collect helpful information:

Students can sign up for the monthly newsletter at act.org/student for helpful articles and important dates sent directly to their inbox. Juniors can also **download the Junior Year eBook** to read helpful tips for the upcoming year.

Think beyond the classroom:

Encourage participation in **extracurricular activities** and taking on leadership roles, or **volunteering** with an organization whose mission is meaningful to them.

Connect with college and career mentors:

Students can talk with their parents about career goals, ask teachers about their college and career experience, and meet with you, their counselor, to learn more about the resources you have to offer.

Identify interests:

Free quizzes help students pinpoint their unique skills and better understand how their strengths align with plans after graduation.

- ACT offers a free Interest Inventory in MyACT to help students discover careers related to their interests, abilities, and values.

It's not early to think about financial aid:

Students should discuss **financial aid** and financing their college plans with parents early. Attend events or webinars about financial aid.



A4. (Aug) ACT Counselor Guide Navigating Junior & Senior Year

FALL SENIORS

With big decisions on the horizon, seniors have a lot on their to-do lists. Help them stay on top of their future planning this fall.

Map out their senior year:

Using a paper or online calendar, pencil in ACT test dates, FAFSA and scholarship application deadlines, college application deadlines, and other important dates.

Achieve their best score:

Increasing their score by even one point can help qualify for scholarships and boost admission prospects. Retaking the ACT in the fall will result in an **ACT Superscore**, combining the best score in each subject to put their best score forward and reflect their best abilities.

Apply for financial aid and scholarships:

Now is the time students should be talking to you and to their top colleges' financial aid offices, as well as getting all their financial aid application forms ready. Seniors should complete the **FAFSA*** as soon as possible after October 1, and continue to reasearch and apply for scholarships and grants.

- Review the free **eBook** and **Financial Aid Checklist** resources for more information.

*Due to changes to the FAFSA for this upcoming aid year, students will have access to the FAFSA on December 1, 2023.

Narrowing down their college lists:

We recommend that students **pare down their final lists** and apply to 5-10 colleges, making their final list based on college fit, application due dates, cost to apply, and likelihood of admission.

Apply for financial aid and scholarships:

Seniors can review the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** and submit applications to their top-choice colleges in the fall, keeping in mind **early decision and early action deadlines**, as well as rolling admissions.

- **Collect application materials** like application forms, transcripts, test scores, and **letters of recommendation**. Remind students to keep their calendars up to date with deadlines for applications, scholarships, test dates, etc.
- **Complete application essays and finalize resumes**. **Application essays** are an effective way for students to communicate unique strengths to admissions officials. Encourage students to keep an ongoing list of their accomplishments to help them **craft an application resume that stands out**.



WINTER JUNIORS

Winter months provide a time to reflect and reorganize for the coming year.

Assembling a college list:

Students can begin honing in on the factors that are important to them in choosing a college, and putting together their **college list** to help compare their options.

- Also consider **alternative paths** like technical school or the military.

College Fairs:

Help students be prepared to make the most of **college fairs** as they begin their college exploration.



Keep coursework on track:

Students should be **reviewing their coursework with counselors** and planning for the rest of high school, making sure to include core courses as well as any college prerequisites (particularly around foreign language and science) in their schedule.

Create a college email address:

Students are going to start receiving lots of emails from colleges already and they want to be best prepared through the application process in the fall. Remind them to set up a college application email address that is separate from the one they use for school.



SENIORS

Things are starting to fall into place for seniors, as they await admissions decisions

Finalize financial aid plans:

As **financial aid packages** are received, students should determine the net cost of attendance to **estimate the cost** of college and compare their offers. They should also review the SAR from their FAFSA.

Avoiding the senior slide:

Letting grades drop can affect scholarship opportunities and college admission decisions for seniors. Encourage students to **stay on track and finish strong**.

Get serious about scholarships:

Many scholarship deadlines are between February 1 and March 1—help your seniors identify opportunities they may not even know about with our list of scholarships that require an **ACT score** or help them complete a general search online.



SPRING JUNIORS

Spring of junior year is prime time to take the ACT and continue planning for their final year of high school.

Juniors should consider **taking the ACT in February or April:**

At this point in their high school experience, they should have completed all the coursework covered on the test. Testing now also gives them a baseline score and experience if they choose to retest in fall.

- Remember, ACT offers a **fee waiver program** for students who may be having trouble paying for the ACT test.

- Remind students to opt in to the **ACT Educational Opportunity Services (EOS)**, so they can get discovered by more colleges. EOS is a free service that can broaden college searches and improve financial aid opportunities.

Go on college visits:

As juniors begin assembling their school lists, college visits can help them narrow their choices and find the perfect fit.

- **Virtual College Visits:** Students can learn a lot about colleges **without leaving their homes**.
- **Campus Tours** offer a firsthand view of campus life; students can get the most out of in-person visits with **these quick tips** as well as an in-depth **eBook** from ACT.

Identifying support networks:

Getting help from the right people, including family members, mentors, and school counselors, can help students better navigate the college admission process and reach their future goals. This is also a great time to start **thinking about references and letters of recommendation**.

Plan ahead for college or career:

Whether they are thinking about continuing their education after high school or launching a career, students should consider taking the **ACT WorkKeys® Assessment** and earning their National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC).

- **Dual Enrollment programs** are also a great opportunity to get a head start on college credits.



SPRING

SENIORS

Acceptance letters and graduation preparations mark the home stretch.

Admissions decisions are on the way in March and April

Students should compare financial aid packages and make final campus visit to decide, if needed. Parents and counselors can help students solidify their decision before contacting their chosen college to confirm enrollment.

- **Finish enrollment papers** and send final HS transcript if required.

Remember that calendar they started in the fall?

New graduates should be sure to add orientation, registration, and other important dates for their first semester at college.

Remind them to check their email:

Colleges are beginning to reach out to your seniors about important payment deadlines and orientation information. Remind them to set up and check their personal student email account for that institution.



SUMMER JUNIORS

It's their last summer as a high school student. There's time to relax ... but they can also **avoid a summer slump** while they think about life after high school.

Take the ACT in June or July

It's not too late for students to get a baseline score if they didn't test in the spring (plus they can purchase their **Test Information Release** with the June test). Students who have already taken the ACT can consider more **reasons to retest**.

Continue learning about colleges

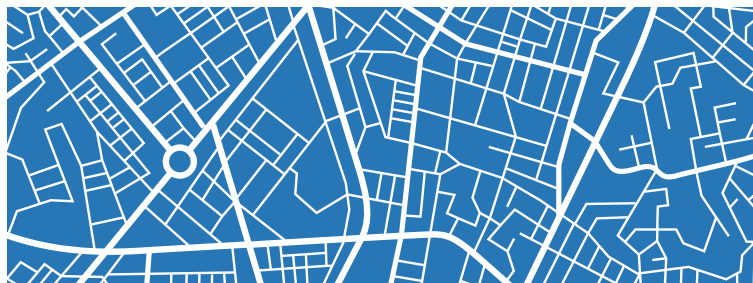
- Students and their families can use summer break to visit their top school choices and research to learn everything they can before application season.
- Current college students who are home for summer break are great resource for networking and getting first-hand information about college life.

Research admissions deadlines

Their senior year is going to go fast. It's important for them to understand **how college admissions deadlines work** so they don't miss an opportunity.

Start the application process

Over summer, students can begin brainstorming essay ideas, contacting potential references, and identifying people to ask for a written recommendation. Use the **Ultimate Guide to Applying for College eBook** as a guide.



SENIORS

Congratulations! Seniors are on their way to college and career success. Take a bow, counselor!



Standardized Testing

Standardized testing in college admission is just one of many factors that make up an applicant's overall file. Once a mainstay of the college admission landscape, admissions testing requirements and philosophies have shifted dramatically in the last two decades, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic and the limitations it put on access to testing opportunities. While a small subset of colleges or university systems still require the submission of the SAT or the ACT for admissions consideration, the vast majority of higher education institutions in the United States have made testing optional or wholly eliminated it as a factor in their review process. While testing can be an additional, quantitative data point in a student's application file, it is worth underscoring that the bulk of quantitative weight and emphasis in most review processes is put on a student's high school academic transcript and the rigor of their program of study. At most institutions, test scores alone do not exclude a student from admission, nor do scores alone guarantee admission. If submitted, they are but one piece of a much larger and nuanced application file.

Standardized testing in college admission is just one of many factors that make up an applicant's overall file.

The two main college admissions standardized testing companies in the United States are **The College Board** and **ACT, Inc.** They oversee a wide range of standardized testing options as well as other services, such as scholarship search engines, test preparation, and more.

A5. (Aug) Standardize Tests and Timeline NACAC

Types of Standardized Tests

Preliminary SAT 10 (PSAT10): A practice test designed to expose sophomores to the structure, pace, and content of the SAT. Individual high schools make the determination of whether to administer the PSAT10.

Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT): A practice test designed to expose juniors to the structure, pace, and content of the SAT. It is also used by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) in the selection of top scholars. The test is divided into two categories: evidence-based reading/writing and math. The evidence-based reading/writing section includes both a reading test and a writing and language test. The math section focuses on three areas: problem solving and data analysis, algebra, and advanced math. The minimum score to receive national recognition varies from year to year. PSAT scores are not used by colleges as admission criteria.

SAT: Originally, SAT was an acronym for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Now known simply as the SAT, this test is usually taken by juniors and seniors interested in including standardized testing in their application file. A multiple-choice examination designed to test a student's college readiness, the SAT is divided into two sections: evidence-based reading and writing and math, each worth a maximum of 800 points for a total possible composite score of 1600. SAT exams are typically offered in March, May, June, August, October, November, and December. Registration information and study materials from the College Board are often available in high school counseling offices and online at sat.collegeboard.org.

PreACT: A practice test designed to expose sophomores to the structure, pace, and content of the ACT test. The PreACT provides a predicted ACT score and offers insight into a student's academic and career-planning needs. Individual high schools make the determination of whether to administer the PreACT. PreACT scores are not used by colleges as admission criteria.

ACT: The ACT, originally an abbreviation of American College Testing, is usually taken by juniors and seniors interested in including standardized testing in their application file. The test includes four curriculum-based tests in English, mathematics, reading, and science. Each section is scored on a 36-point scale; the four tests are then averaged to provide a composite score out of 36. The ACT also has an optional writing component. ACT exams are typically offered in February, April, June, July, September, October, and December. Registration information and study materials from the ACT are often available in high school counseling offices and online at act.org.

A5. (Aug) Standardize Tests and Timeline NACAC

Advanced Placement (AP) Exams: The Advanced Placement program, created by the College Board, offers college-level courses and curricula for high school students if their school adopts the program. Each Advanced Placement course culminates in a standardized, cumulative Advanced Placement exam in May, which is scored on a scale of 1-5. Some colleges provide college-level credit, or the ability to place out of introductory courses, for students who score within a certain range on Advanced Placement exams. Each college sets their own criteria of which, if any, AP scores qualify for college-level credit. Unlike the SAT and ACT, AP exam scores often do not carry significant weight in the admissions review process. Their benefit is typically relegated to receiving college-level credit once you enroll. However, it is worth inquiring with your colleges of interest if AP exams play a role in the initial review process and, if so, how large of a role they play.

Some high schools that do not offer AP courses provide the opportunity for their students to take AP exams in May after self-studying or enrolling in similar rigorous courses, though this is not a universal policy. Check with your counselor if your high school does not offer AP courses but you are interested in taking an AP exam.

International Baccalaureate's (IB) Diploma Programme (DP): This is an academically challenging course of study that culminates in final examinations to prepare students for college. The program is a comprehensive two-year international curriculum that generally allows students to fulfill the requirements of their national or state education systems. The program focuses on six subject groups (studies in language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, science, math, and the arts). Students take written examinations at the end of the program. Scores for each course range from 1 to 7. Diplomas are awarded to students who earn at least 24 points. Some colleges provide college-level credit, or the ability to "place out" of introductory courses, for students who score within a certain range on their IB exams. Each college sets their own criteria of which, if any, IB scores qualify for college-level credit.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP): The CLEP is designed primarily for college applicants who have not been in school for some time, but who may have acquired considerable knowledge through a job or life experience. The CLEP follows a format similar to AP exams. It is advised to check admissions websites to determine if CLEP exam credit is accepted.

English Language Proficiency Tests: English language proficiency tests, including the TOEFL, IELTS, and Duolingo English Test, are designed for students for whom English is not a native language. For more information on English Language Proficiency Tests and requirements, see Chapter 14.

A5. (Aug) Standardize Tests and Timeline NACAC

Testing Policies and Terminology

Testing Required: Colleges that require standardized testing expect applicants to submit their results from the SAT and/or the ACT for their application to be reviewed. Both tests are weighted equally in the admissions process; one is not preferred or advantageous over another. In these cases, standardized testing will remain just one of numerous factors that go into rendering a final admissions decision.

Test-Optional: Colleges with a test-optional policy allow the applicant to decide whether or not they want standardized testing to be a part of their application file. Optional truly means optional in these circumstances, meaning the absence of testing will not negatively impact an applicant's review process. Instead, the quantitative portion of the review process will be entirely focused on a student's high school transcript and the rigor of their curriculum. It is important to check individual admissions websites and review their policies to see if there are exceptions to test-optional policies, sometimes including students who are applying for scholarship opportunities, students who have been home-schooled, students seeking admission into accelerated BS/MD or BS/DDS programs, international applicants, and more.

If you have taken the SAT or the ACT and are wondering if your scores should be submitted to a test-optional institution, the general guidance provided is that if your scores fall toward the upper end or exceed a college's published middle 50% range of testing, your scores may be a positive addition to your application. If they fall on the low end or below the published middle 50% range, then you should take advantage of their test-optional policy and not submit them. Since each applicant's circumstances are unique and nuanced, you should always discuss whether to submit your scores with your high school counselor.

Test-Flexible: Some institutions that either require testing or are test-optional allow for the submission of testing beyond the SAT or ACT to fulfill that requirement. The tests eligible for submission will depend on the institution, but examples include submitting AP Exam scores, International Baccalaureate (IB) Higher Level Exam results, A-Level results, and more. Be sure to check individual admissions websites to determine which types of standardized testing are acceptable.

Test-Free: Test-free institutions do not accept or factor standardized testing results into their admissions process at all. These institutions believe there is ample information included in the application process to make an informed decision on an application without the inclusion of standardized testing.

A5. (Aug) Standardize Tests and Timeline NACAC

Testing Fee Waivers: It costs \$60 to register for the SAT or the ACT without the optional writing section. It costs \$85 to register for the ACT with Writing. Both the College Board and ACT, Inc. provide fee waivers for eligible students through high school counseling offices. You can find the eligibility requirements on collegeboard.org and act.org.

Superscore: Superscoring is the practice of combining a student's highest section scores from multiple test dates to create a superscore. An example of superscoring is included below:

Test Date	EBRW Score	Math Score	Composite Score
March SAT	620	640	1240
October SAT	680	580	1260
Superscore	680	640	1320

Score Choice: Provided by both the SAT and the ACT, Score Choice allows students to submit standardized testing from individual test dates, instead of their entire testing record. For example, if you take the SAT three times and your best superscore comes from the combination of only two test dates, you can opt to only submit those two test results instead of all three. You cannot, however, choose individual sub-sections from a given test date to send. It is important to check individual admissions websites, as some colleges require or recommend that students submit their entire testing history.

Testing Accommodations: For students with documented learning differences, you may be able to receive accommodations on the SAT or ACT. It is important to review the College Board and/or ACT website to determine what documentation is required in order to be considered for testing accommodations and any associated submission deadlines. Discuss with your high school counselor whether the accommodations request process occurs through your school or if you are responsible for submitting the request yourself. Receiving accommodations through your high school does not guarantee approval for accommodations on the College Board or ACT exams.

A5. (Aug) Standardize Tests and Timeline NACAC

Standardized Testing Timeline

Freshman Year: There is no standardized testing required or recommended for 9th grade students.

Sophomore Year: Many students' first exposure to college admissions testing is taking the PSAT and/or the PreACT at their high school as a sophomore. For those where that is not an option and may want exposure to the tests on a practice basis, there are both online and hard-copy practice test booklets available for purchase. It is not typically recommended for sophomores to take an official SAT or ACT and you should consult with your high school counselor if that is being considered.

Junior Year: Most high school students will take the PSAT/NMSQT in the fall of their junior year. After that, most students do not begin official college admissions testing until the spring of their junior year—most typically March, April, May, or June. When possible, resist any pressure to take multiple rounds of official standardized testing during the spring of your junior year; there will be an opportunity for you to test again in your senior year if you so desire. With so many colleges adopting test-optional or test-free models, an increasing number of students are also opting to forgo standardized testing completely, focusing their college lists on institutions with that built-in flexibility. If you are considering this path, discuss this with your high school counselor and check admissions websites for their specific policies.

Senior Year: Some students choose to take the SAT or ACT again or for the first time during the fall of senior year. Tests are typically offered in August, September, October, November, and December, depending on which exam you'd prefer to take. As a senior, it is important to be mindful of your application deadlines and align your testing schedule accordingly, as some institutions will not accept test scores after their admissions deadline.

A5. (Aug) Standardize Tests and Timeline NACAC

A Note on Standardized Test Preparation and Tutors

Both the College Board and ACT, Inc. offer free test preparation resources on their websites through Khan Academy and MyACT, respectively. Test preparation books are also a low cost way to prepare and gain exposure to the format and pace of each test.

Some students and families may be curious about receiving more comprehensive, individualized support in preparing for or improving their score on the SAT and/or ACT, usually in the form of private or group tutoring sessions. If you are interested in pursuing tutoring, there are a couple of factors to keep in mind:

- **Ensure reputability:** With a seemingly endless, and growing, list of test preparation companies across the U.S. and world, it's critical that you do your due diligence in ensuring that a company is ethical and reputable. Search their website for information on how regularly and comprehensively their tutors are trained, their methodology and approach to teaching and counseling students, how you are matched with a particular tutor, and more. Avoid companies that make promises or guarantees about score increases or their ability to help get you in to certain schools, that are openly dismissive of test-optional policies, try to sell you on services you don't need, or generally appear like they are withholding information about their services or employees. Remember, receiving an education at a highly selective university does not automatically make someone a competent tutor. You may want to consider perusing NACAC's member directory to identify organizations that have been vetted by the association.
- **Ask about sliding scale or need-based discounts:** Tutoring for the SAT and/or ACT can be an expensive endeavor. When researching test preparation companies, make sure they are being transparent with their pricing and, if the information isn't readily available, ask if they offer sliding scale or need-based discounts if their services are unaffordable for your family.

Because your high school record is the single most important part of your admission folder, don't forget that strong grades in demanding courses are more important than standardized test scores. It is counterproductive to spend so much time trying to improve your ACT or SAT score that your grades and involvement in school suffer as a result.

A6. (Aug) Preparing for College Glossary.pdf

AVID Preparing for College **GLOSSARY**

ACT®: A college entrance exam that measures English, math, reading and science reasoning. Scores range from 1–36 along with a composite score. An optional writing test is offered.

Advanced Placement (AP®) Tests: Designed for students who have completed college-level work in high school, AP® tests are given in specific subject areas and are used to determine if a student may gain advanced standing in college.

Admission: The decision to allow a student to enter a college or university.

Application: A formal request for admission to a college or university; requires the submission of forms and other materials.

Aptitude: A natural ability or talent.

Associate’s Degree (A.A., A.S.): A two-year degree that generally prepares a student for further study at a four-year institution or may provide sufficient training for a specific career.

Award Letter: A financial aid letter or document indicating the amount and type of financial support the school is able to provide for the upcoming year.

Bachelor’s Degree: A four-year degree from a college or university for a prescribed course of study. Also referred to as Baccalaureate degree, B.A. (Bachelor of Arts), B.S. (Bachelor of Science), etc.

Certificate: Awarded upon successful completion of a short-term vocational or career training program.

Class Rank: A student’s approximate standing in her/his graduating class, based on grade point average (e.g., 72nd in a class of 410; in the “upper fifth” of the class).

College Entrance Exam: Standardized exam used in the admission process to predict the likelihood of a student’s success in college.

College Level Examination Program (CLEP): the College Board’s credit-by-examination program enabling students to demonstrate college-level achievement in 34 different subject areas and receive up to two years of college credit.

Common Application: A standardized undergraduate application used by more than 400 colleges (mostly selective, independent) for admission.

Credit Hour: Unit of value given to college classes that denotes the amount of time a student will invest in formal instruction. Credit hours may be used to determine part-time and full-time course loads. Specific numbers of credit hours in certain areas of study are required for graduation.

Deferral: When a student’s application for early decision or early action is postponed, and will be considered with the regular applicant pool.

Deferred Admission: Allows an admitted/accepted student to postpone enrollment for one year.

A6. (Aug) Preparing for College Glossary.pdf

Degree: The rank or title given by a college or university to a student who has met certain academic requirements.

Diploma: Certificate issued by a school, college or university to a student who has met coursework and graduation requirements.

Doctorate Degree (Ph.D.): One of the highest levels of an academic degree. Typically requires the completion of a Master's Degree plus advanced graduate courses in a specialized area.

Early Action (EA): Early action is a plan under which a student applies early in the fall and often receives an admission decision prior to January. EA allows the accepted candidate until May 1 to accept or decline the offer of admission.

Early Decision (ED): Early decision is a plan under which a student applies to the first-choice college early in the fall (usually by November 1 of the senior year) and *agrees by contract to enter that college if offered admission*. Early decision applicants are judged on the basis of their junior year test scores, class rank, and grades.

Educational Testing Service (ETS): A non-profit agency established by the American Council on Education (ACE), Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the College Board to produce a variety of educational tests and conduct research (www.ets.org).

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): An amount the student *and* student's family are expected to contribute toward his/her education. It is used in determining eligibility for federal student aid.

Extracurricular Activities: Any school activity, such as athletics, drama or music, that offers the student an opportunity to complement his or her classroom experiences.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid): A form required by the government for application to any federal education aid program. A FAFSA determines the specific federal student aid programs that contribute to a student's total college financial aid package and in what proportions. High school seniors should submit the FAFSA as soon as possible after January 1.

Financial Aid or Assistance: Any financial award to a student (e.g., grant, scholarship, work-study, or loan).

Grade point average (GPA): An indicator of the student's overall scholastic performance.

Grants: Awards are usually based on financial need and do not require repayment. Grants are available through the federal government, state agencies, private organizations and educational institutions.

Honors program: University programs offering the opportunity for superior students to enrich their educational experience through independent, advanced or accelerated study.

Letter of Recommendation (LOR): An assessment of the student's aptitudes, abilities, and interests, written by a teacher or counselor and used by colleges and universities in the admission process.

Major: The subject of study in which the student chooses to specialize; a series of related courses, taken primarily in the junior and senior years of college.

Master's Degree (M.S., M.A.): Bachelor's Degree plus graduate courses in specialized area. A Master's Degree usually requires two additional years of full-time study after completion of a Bachelor's Degree.

A6. (Aug) Preparing for College Glossary.pdf

Open admission (open enrollment): The policy of some colleges of admitting virtually all high school graduates, regardless of academic qualifications such as high school grades and admission scores.

PLAN®: a pre-ACT®, curriculum-based test and examination of interests and skills for 10th graders.

Post-secondary: Opportunities that are available after graduation from high school (secondary school); usually refers to colleges and universities in the admission process.

PSAT/NMSQT®: Preliminary SAT® and National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. Enables students to practice for the SAT® Reasoning Test and serves as the qualifying test for scholarship competitions conducted by National Merit Scholarship Corporation.

Regular Decision: The application process in which a student submits an application to an institution by a specified date and receives a decision within a reasonable and clearly stated period of time, but not later than April 15.

Rolling Admission: The application process whereby a college reviews an application when the application is completed and communicates the admission decision within a few weeks of reviewing the application.

SAT® Reasoning Test: College entrance exam designed to measure critical reading, math and writing skills needed for academic success in college. SAT® scores range from 200 to 800 in each of the three sections (writing, math and critical reading).

Scholarship: Financial aid based on merit and/or criteria set by the donor. This award money does not have to be repaid and is either paid directly to the student or deposited in a university account.

Standardized Tests: Tests such as the ACT™ and SAT® that provide college admission officers with a comparative standard for evaluating a student's academic aptitude and likelihood of success in college.

Student Aid Report (SAR): The information received after the FAFSA has been processed. The SAR summarizes the data in the FAFSA and reports the Expected Family Contribution (EFC).

Transcript: The official record of high school or college courses and grades; generally required as part of the college application.

Work-Study: Money earned in a job obtained through the help of the college's financial aid office. Hours and location of the job are compatible with academic life and school schedule.

SmartPath: College & Career Club Student Sign-In

Name of school: _____

Sponsor Name: _____

Date of Meeting: _____

Time of Meeting: _____

Sponsor Signature: _____

	Student Name	Student ID #	Grade	Did this meeting improve your interest & ability to apply for college or post-secondary training?		SPONSOR ONLY: Please provide a brief summary of the meeting and activity.
1				Yes	No	
2				Yes	No	
3				Yes	No	
4				Yes	No	
5				Yes	No	
6				Yes	No	
7				Yes	No	
8				Yes	No	
9				Yes	No	
10				Yes	No	
11				Yes	No	
12				Yes	No	
13				Yes	No	
14				Yes	No	
15				Yes	No	

SCOIR

Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Postsecondary Planning Platform



What is Scoir?

- Scoir is a secure, customized platform that supports postsecondary, college, and career planning.
- It is designed to assist students and their parents/guardians in making informed decisions about postsecondary opportunities and career choices.
- Scoir is also a communication and data collection tool for school counselors, CAP advisors, administrators and other school leaders and educators.



What is Scoir? (continued)

- On Scoir, students have the ability to:
 - research colleges,
 - view acceptance and enrollment trends at their high school,
 - build a resume,
 - take a career interest inventory,
 - view the schedule of college representatives visiting the high school,
 - compare colleges (admissions and costs),
 - begin the application process for select schools.



Scoir for All Students



**9: Search,
Follow, Explore**



**10: Self-Assess,
Research, Refine**



**11: Narrow and
decide**



**12: Apply and
communicate**

B. Resiliency Characteristics and Definitions

Characteristics of Resilience

<i>Characteristic of Resilience</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Resilience	Features of the person or setting that predict positive outcomes for all individuals regardless of risk (i.e., assets) or in the face of stressors (i.e., protective factors). These intrapersonal features include characters strengths that foster positive emotions and facilitate relationships as well as skills in forming relationships and regulating negative affect.
Empathy	Strength of humanity that involves social awareness, the ability to take the perspective of others, experience compassion, and show concern for others
Perseverance	Strength of courage that involves being hardworking, task-oriented, and undeterred by obstacles
Grit	Feeling of passion for and persistence toward one’s long-term goals involving a sense of purpose and hopeful thinking
Gratitude	Strength of transcendence that involves experiencing feelings of thankfulness, appreciation, and gratefulness in life and expressing those feelings to others
Responsibility	Strength of temperance that involves a sense of caution and exercised restraint to act in ways consistent with one’s long-term goals and the expectation of others
Critical Thinking	Strength of wisdom that involves judgment when thinking through and making reasonable choices based on gathering and weighing information from multiple viewpoints
Problem Solving	Skill that maintains positive relationships by effective communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, and seeking help when needed
Responsible Decision Making	Skill that promotes safe and healthy outcomes through making constructive choices daily and navigating problems by identifying and evaluating multiple solutions and their consequences
Self-Awareness	Skill that facilitates regulation of emotions by recognizing one’s thoughts, feelings, and values and understanding how they impact one's behavior
Self-Management	Strength of temperance that involves managing one’s feelings, thoughts, and actions across environments and stressors, including through use of adaptive coping strategies
Mentorship	Skill that involves offering or seeking social support and guidance to accomplish personal and relational goals
Citizenship	Strength of justice that involves a sense of social responsibility and behavior aimed at benefitting one’s community
Honesty	Strength of courage that involves authenticity and truthfulness in words and actions

THE GREAT COLLEGE APPLICATION ADVENTURE



DON'T KNOW WHERE TO BEGIN? THIS FLOWCHART WILL TAKE YOU THROUGH THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS FROM START TO FINISH! IT WILL TELL YOU WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR, AND MOST OF ALL, HOW TO GET ON YOUR WAY TO A COLLEGE DEGREE!



TIME TO BEGIN YOUR COLLEGE SEARCH! CHECK OUT BIGFUTURE.COLLEGEBOARD.ORG TO HELP DECIDE WHICH SCHOOLS TO APPLY TO.



SEND TRANSCRIPTS TO THE SCHOOLS YOU ARE APPLYING TO.



IF REQUIRED AND APPLICABLE, SEND ADMISSIONS TEST SCORES.



DOES YOUR APPLICATION REQUIRE LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION?



IF SO, REMEMBER TO WRITE A THANK YOU TO YOUR REFERENCES!



HAVE YOU COMPLETED THE PERSONAL STATEMENT OR COLLEGE ESSAY? MAKE SURE TO LOOK AT EACH SCHOOLS SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.



REVIEW APPLICATION AND MAKE SURE ALL COMPONENTS ARE FILLED IN CORRECTLY

PAY YOUR APPLICATION FEE

DONE

I CAN'T AFFORD IT

YOU MIGHT BE ELIGIBLE FOR AN APPLICATION FEE WAIVER.

FOR MORE INFO, ASK YOUR SCHOOL COUNSELOR.



WAIT TO HEAR FROM ADMISSIONS

YOU DID IT!



ACCEPT ADMISSION TO A SCHOOL.

NOTIFY THE OTHER SCHOOLS YOU'VE BEEN ACCEPTED TO THAT YOU WILL NOT BE ATTENDING!



SUBMIT APPLICATION!

* REMEMBER TO FILL OUT THE FAFSA (FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID). CHECK WITH YOUR SCHOOL'S FINANCIAL AID OFFICE FOR THEIR FAFSA DEADLINE.

PROOFREAD
REVISED
READY TO GO!
TIP: FOR A GOOD LOOKING ESSAY, CORRECT ERRORS AND ASK AT LEAST PEOPLE FOR FEEDBACK



B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

The Parts of an Application File

When you submit an application to a college, an electronic application file is created under your name, which becomes home to the application itself and all other supporting documentation. The main part of an applicant's file is based on quantitative data, while other parts provide important qualitative factors about your time in high school. The key to success in building your application file is to research the specific requirements laid out by your colleges of interest. Most institutions are very explicit about what they want and what they don't want as a part of your application—this is your opportunity to demonstrate that you know how to understand and follow directions.

Application: The application itself is the foundation of your admission file. It usually includes basic biographical and demographic information, such as your birthday, address, race and/or ethnicity, educational background, information about your family and more. Depending on which application(s) you fill out, there may be additional sections for you to complete, which are included below.

Academic Record: Your curriculum, courses, and grades are the foundation of your admissions review. While there are many nuanced factors that often go into rendering a final admissions decision, the primary question admissions counselors must answer is whether or not an applicant will be able to be academically successful at their institution. If they cannot answer that question affirmatively, the other components of an application cannot compensate for a transcript that does not meet an individual institution's academic standards. Each admissions office will have their own criteria and expectations when it comes to academic performance in high school, including grades and the level of rigor a student pursued.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

- **Transcript:** Regardless of a college’s admission policy, the most important factor in an applicant’s file is their academic record in secondary school, also called a transcript. This will include all courses you’ve completed and the associated grade and amount of credit you earned in the course (if your high school issues grades). Most high schools will calculate a grade point average (GPA) on a given scale (4.0, 5.0, 100, etc.), which provides a cumulative statistical summary of your academic performance and is updated any time official grades are issued and added to your transcript. Additionally, some high schools may provide both a weighted and unweighted GPA, with the weighted GPA providing extra points toward the average for grades earned in rigorous courses, such as honors, AP, accelerated, IB, and more. When high schools do not calculate grades or a GPA, they often provide admissions offices with narrative feedback from each of your teachers to contextualize your performance in their class. Some high schools may also provide a class rank, which assigns the students in a graduating class a numerical order based on academic achievement, though many schools have moved away from this practice.
- **Trends & Trajectory:** In general, colleges prefer a steady rate of performance over inconsistent spurts of academic performance; but if the entire record cannot consistently be at your best possible level of performance, the next thing is to show steady improvement from year to year, otherwise known as an upward trend. While typically all four years of high school factor into your review process, most admissions offices view your courses and grades from junior and senior (when available) year as most indicative of your potential success at their institution, since classes become more challenging as you move through high school. When you apply and what decision plans you choose will dictate whether an admissions office will see any official grades from your senior year.
- **Curricular Rigor:** Some institutions may simply require students to meet a minimum GPA requirement to be admitted, while more selective institutions may have higher and more extensive academic expectations of applicants. The more selective (competitive) a college is from an admissions perspective, the more likely they are to expect that you have both pursued and succeeded in a high level of rigor in your academic program. How rigor is defined depends on what types of courses and curricula your high school offers. If, for example, your high school offers an Advanced Placement program, more selective colleges will likely want to see that you’ve challenged yourself beyond the standard curriculum

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

and enrolled in AP courses. The same is true for students with access to honors-level classes, International Baccalaureate programs, high school-designed advanced study programs, and more. Your level of rigor will only be reviewed in the context of what you have access to at your high school; you will not be penalized or disadvantaged for not enrolling in classes that don't exist at your high school. The important thing to remember is that enrolling in rigorous classes is counterproductive if you are not able to keep up and be successful. This is why it is necessary for all students to find the appropriate academic balance that suits their individual needs and supports their success.

- **School Profile & Report:** Most colleges require high school counselors to submit a School Report and School Profile alongside every student's application. These documents provide important information and context about your high school, including curricular offerings, special programs or tracks, the size of your graduating class, and sometimes GPA and standardized testing distributions. It is up to the discretion of the high school what is and is not included on these forms. The ultimate purpose of them is to ensure admissions counselors are informed on what your high school offers academically and extracurricularly and a broad profile of the current senior class.

Academic success alone does not guarantee or ensure admission into more selective colleges, as they often have more qualified applicants than they do space in the admitted class. Those colleges have more flexibility to rely on the other, qualitative factors (included below) of the application when choosing which applicants to admit.

It is worth noting that the vast majority of colleges and universities in the U.S. accept the majority of their applicants and do not have extensive or prohibitive expectations when it comes to course rigor or grades.

The attention that is given to the most highly selective institutions in the U.S. can easily warp your perspective into thinking that being admitted is a herculean feat at every college, when the truth is quite the opposite. In fact, NACAC's research shows that universities across the US have become less selective over the course of the last decade. The focus on prestige, rankings, and perceived reputation can often leave students feeling discouraged and as though they don't have any path to higher education. Whatever your grades and level of rigor in your academic program, there are more than likely hundreds of colleges ready and willing to welcome you to their admitted class. As much as you can, try not to buy into the idea that prestigious = better, since rankings and name recognition tell us next to nothing about how fulfilled, happy, and supported any individual student would be at a given institution.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

Essays: Most colleges and universities, though not all, will also require you to submit written reflections that provide the admission committee with a larger window into your life—also known as college essays. Essays are the main opportunity in the application process for your voice, values, and personality as an applicant to truly be on display. While essays also allow colleges to assess your writing abilities, their primary purpose is to tell the admission committee something in depth about you and what you care about that isn't captured in another part of the application. Admission essays come in two main forms: The Personal Statement and College-Specific Supplements.

- **The Personal Statement:** When people refer to the college essay, this is the writing piece they're talking about—the Personal Statement. This is a general, longer-form essay about you; it should not be tailored to specific colleges. Unlike the academic writing you may be used to, this essay is written in the first person ("I" statements are okay!) and is less formal in nature. There is no necessity for a thesis statement or supporting evidence paragraphs—this isn't a traditional five paragraph essay. While you should always still proofread carefully, the structure, flow, and tone are much more personal and casual, while still maintaining appropriateness. You have the flexibility and freedom to write about any topic of your choosing, so long as the final product tells the admissions committee something about you, what you care about or value, how you spend your time, a meaningful experience you've had, how you've contributed to the communities you belong to, etc.

Some applications will provide you with a series of prompts to choose from, which may be helpful in brainstorming workable topics. Choose a topic or approach that feels genuinely meaningful to you. Your topic should always be focused and specific. Avoid the temptation to talk about every activity or experience you've had in high school in your Personal Statement. It should not serve as a narrative resumé. Rather, it provides you an opportunity to write in-depth about a specific topic or experience of significance to you.

The strongest personal statements are ones written from a place of authenticity, in your own voice. Instead of asking yourself "*what does that admissions committee want to hear?*", ask instead "*when they finish reading my application, what do I want them to know about me?*" Remember, colleges want to admit you, not someone you're trying to be or an identity you're trying to project.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

- **College-Specific Supplements:** In addition to the general Personal Statement, some colleges may ask you to write essay responses to prompts of their choosing, which are called supplements. These prompts can change from year to year, are unique to each college, and allow colleges to ask more targeted questions to gain insight into specific aspects of you that they care about. These essays are typically shorter than the Personal Statement, around 100–350 words a piece, but that does not mean they should be taken any less seriously or given any less effort than the Personal Statement. It can be tempting to rush through these prompts given their smaller word limit, but admissions counselors are paying attention to the time and care you put into these. Remember, these are the questions that colleges have deemed important enough to add to their applications—if they’re important enough for the college to ask, they’re definitely important enough for you to answer thoroughly, sincerely, and effortfully. Supplement prompts can take a variety of forms, some more straightforward and some more creative, many colleges will choose to ask some version of “*Why This College?*”, which will charge you with providing a thoughtful, personal, and specific articulation of why you think that college is a good fit for you and vice versa. This is an example of a supplement where your initial research will really come in handy. Avoid talking about the general criteria that may have initially put the college on your radar—size, location, weather, reputation, etc., as those are likely unifying draws for all applicants. Refer back to the notes you’ve taken throughout your research process and pull out those unique, specific tidbits and examples about the college that really resonated with you. That will make for a stronger, more memorable essay, as opposed to run-of-the-mill, boilerplate responses. This essay should be so specific and tailored to the individual school that it can’t be recycled from college to college. For the colleges that track demonstrated interest, a “*Why This College?*” is a key opportunity for them to assess your level of interest. Other common supplement prompts may ask you to expand on your academic area of interest or one of your extracurriculars, to discuss a meaningful or significant part of your identity, or to reflect on how you have contributed to your community. Additionally, colleges may have required essay questions for special programs, such as an Honors College, to which an applicant can apply directly.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

Some colleges take a more creative route with their supplement prompts. Some examples include:

- *If you could teach a college course on a topic of your choice, what would you choose and what would be included on the required reading list?*
- *Is there a particular song, poem, novel, or other work of art that you find particularly inspiring?*
- *If you could work on a social cause or movement that is important to you and impacting your community, what cause would you choose and how would you address it?*
- *Share a food dish that has helped to inform and shape your identity.*
- *You're presented with a block of marble and asked to create something that tells the viewer something important about you—what do you carve?*
- *What songs should your admissions counselor listen to while reviewing your application? or In the movie of your life, what song is playing when the credits roll?*

What is important to remember with creative supplemental prompts is that there is rarely ever a “right” or “wrong” answer to these questions, as long as your contribution is appropriate. The purpose of these types of questions is to get a better sense of your personality by allowing you to be creative. As with all things in this process, authenticity is key here. If they ask what you've been enjoying reading lately, don't say *Beowulf* if you've never read it (or have and didn't enjoy it) just because you think it might sound impressive. Admissions counselors know they are reading applications submitted by high school students, so they are expecting answers that are typical of a high school student's experience.

Extracurricular Involvement: In addition to your academic record and essays, your involvement in activities can be a significant supporting credential in this process. Most applications will give you the opportunity to provide a snapshot of your extracurricular involvement in high school with a brief description of your role and responsibilities. This can include membership in clubs and organizations, athletics, fine and performing arts, part-time employment, community service and engagement, familial responsibilities, hobbies, and more.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

While it can be tempting to think that more is better when it comes to activities, in reality most colleges are looking for depth and intentionality in your activities, not breadth. Consistent, sustained involvement in activities that you genuinely care about is what you'll hear most admissions counselors recommend. An extensive list of activities in which you were sparsely involved will not read as more impressive. Just like your essays, your activities list should not be built around what you think admissions offices want to see, but rather should be a genuine reflection of your interests and values.

On the application itself, activities should be listed in order from most meaningful and/or time consuming to least. In other words, the activities that take up most of your time and/or are most reflective of your interests should go at the top of the list and you can work your way down from there. Be as specific as possible with your descriptions in the limited space you're provided. Another common misconception is that you need to have been the president/leader/founder/captain of every activity in order to be admitted to college. While genuine, demonstrative leadership is certainly valuable, there are always ways to build and display strong leadership skills without holding a formal title. Avoid the inauthenticity and disingenuousness of seeking out leadership positions solely for the sake of your college applications. Again, consistency and sustained commitment to your real interests allows your high school experience to be defined by meaning and purpose, not by potential college outcomes.

When considering activities to add to your list, remember to think outside the box. Many students may not have the flexibility or resources to join organizations or activities with extensive time commitments or costly membership fees. That is why the definition of "activity" is quite broad in this context. It can include a part-time job, extensive family responsibilities like babysitting or caring for an elderly relative, cooking meals, household chores, etc. If you spend most of your time pursuing your interests in an unstructured setting, that counts as well. When in doubt, consult with your high school counselor.

Letters of Recommendation: Many colleges will require you to submit a certain number of letters of recommendation to support your application. What is most important is to follow the explicit directions provided by individual colleges on what type and how many letters of recommendations they accept. This is another area where more isn't always better; exceeding or ignoring their directions can be counterproductive in your review process.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

These letters typically come in five forms, included below:

- **Counselor/School Recommendation:** Most colleges will require a letter of recommendation or statement of support from your school-based counselor. You can think of the counselor letter of recommendation as a floodlight. The purpose is for your counselor to provide a broad narrative of your academic, extracurricular, and social-emotional experience throughout high school. Counselor letters are also often used to provide context to any part of your application that may need further explanation. For example, if you missed a few weeks of school due to illness or you had a loss in your family and your grades dropped slightly as a result, your counselor can provide that explanation in their letter so admissions counselors understand the broader circumstances in which you were learning at that time. Admission officers are aware that a school counselor may not always have the capacity to write a lengthy letter on a student's behalf. This is another area where you as an applicant will not be penalized based on what's available at your specific school.
- **Teacher Recommendations:** Many colleges will request 1-2 letters of recommendation from your classroom teachers. Unlike the floodlight counselor recommendation, teacher recommendations serve as a spotlight on you in an academic setting. Your teachers will speak to your presence and contributions in the classroom, work ethic, time management, ability to collaborate with your peers, and more. Generally speaking, it is recommended that your teacher recommendations come from junior year teachers, as they have taught you most recently for a complete school year prior to the application process, so can speak most relevantly to your current academic strengths and areas for growth. Some colleges may specifically request one letter from a STEM teacher and one from a Humanities, Social Studies, or World Language teacher in order to get the most well-rounded view of you as a student.
- **Creative Recommendations:** For students applying to fine, visual, or performing arts programs, you may be required to provide an additional creative recommendation from a teacher or mentor in your designated field of study. These recommendations will focus largely on your talents and potential within that specific creative realm.
- **Outside Recommendations:** Some colleges also accept additional, outside recommendations in addition to counselor and teacher letters of recommendations. Outside recommendations typically come from mentors or other significant adults in your life, such as a coach, religious leader, boss, supervisor, etc. The most important thing to

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

remember with outside recommendations is that the writer should actually know you well. That may seem obvious, but there is sometimes a temptation to have an alumnus or other well-connected person to a specific university write a letter on your behalf. Again, this is only helpful if that person has a longstanding relationship with you. If you are meeting them for the first time to discuss them writing you a letter, that's a good indication that said letter will likely not have any measurable positive impact on your application. Be thorough about reviewing directions from colleges about outside recommendations and whether or not they accept them in the first place.

- **Peer Recommendations:** Though far less common than the letter types listed above, a handful of colleges will ask you to have a peer (a friend or classmate, not family member) submit a recommendation on your behalf as well. Specific instructions typically accompany these requested recommendation letters.

Test Scores (if applicable): Most colleges in the U.S. have made the submission of the SAT and/or ACT optional. If submitted, the SAT and/or ACT are an additional quantitative factor on top of your academic record for admissions counselors to consider alongside the rest of your application.

It is worth noting that test-optional and test-free policies typically do not apply to English language proficiency testing requirements.

If you are submitting standardized testing, it is your responsibility as the applicant to determine how each college on your list wants to receive your scores. Some colleges require that you send your testing officially via your College Board or ACT account, which comes with an associated fee unless you have qualified for a fee waiver. Others may accept self-reported test scores, which can often be included on your application or uploaded into your application portal after you apply at no additional cost. Check the admissions websites for each college to determine whether they require official score reports or will accept self-reported scores.

Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR) (if applicable): An SRAR (or SSAR if you're in Florida) is exactly what it sounds like—a form that requires students to self-report their courses and grades from high school. Some colleges require you to complete an SRAR in addition to having your counselor send an official transcript. If the SRAR is required, your application will not be reviewed unless you complete it, so it is important to be aware of which schools on your list, if any, require it.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

Interview (if applicable): Some colleges offer evaluative interviews either on an optional, recommended, or required basis. Like your admissions essays, interviews provide the admissions office an opportunity to get to know you, your personality, your interests, and your values better on a personal level. In most circumstances, it is advised to take advantage of interview opportunities when offered, even if they are listed as optional or recommended but not required. Discuss these options with your counselor if you are unsure. For the colleges that track demonstrated interest, an interview is a key opportunity for you to demonstrate interest.

Creative Portfolios, Prescreens, and Auditions (if applicable): For fine, visual, and performing arts applicants, you may be asked to submit a creative portfolio or participate in a prescreen and/or audition process as a part of your review. Not all colleges require the submission of a supplemental portfolio, but those that do often have extensive and specific guidelines and expectations for you to follow. It is important to identify portfolio and/or audition requirements early in your research process, since these requirements are often time consuming and demanding. If a college does not require a portfolio submission, be sure to check their website to see if they will accept one as an optional submission. If they explicitly state that they do not accept these types of submissions, do not send them.

Additional Information (if applicable): Some applications have an optional writing section usually titled Additional Information. Unlike the Personal Statement and supplements, the purpose of Additional Information is to provide necessary or illuminating context to your application. Not dissimilar to the function of the counselor letter of recommendation, this allows you to inform the admissions committee of any disruptions or challenges that may have impacted your high school experience. Even if your grades did not suffer as a result of said circumstances, providing them with this information can be helpful as they evaluate your application. This can include physical or mental health struggles, family or social issues, learning differences, family relocations, and more. This section should not be used for a second Personal Statement. Consult with your counselor if you are considering including anything in the Additional Information section.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

Who Submits What In The Application Process?

There are two main sources who submit the components of an application file to colleges and universities: you, the applicant, and your school-based counselor.

Who Submits What?		
Application Component	Student/ Applicant	Counselor
Application (including essays, activities list, and additional information)	✓	
Transcript		✓
School Report & Profile		✓
Letters of Recommendation		✓
Standardized Testing	✓	
Financial Aid Applications	✓	
Creative Portfolios/Auditions	✓	

While not every college will require or accept each piece listed above, you can see that admissions offices are asking for components that give them as well-rounded and comprehensive a view of you as a student and community member as possible.

Types of College Applications

The Common Application: An online application platform that allows a student to fill out one standardized (common) application form and submit it to more than one college. Over 900 colleges and universities accept the Common Application. When applying with the Common Application, students will fill out the core, standardized portion of the application, which is sent to every college to which you apply through the platform. Additionally, specific colleges are able to add custom Member Questions and Writing Supplements, which will require you to provide more information on your academic and extracurricular areas of interest and, for some colleges, additional supplemental essay questions. You can learn more and create an account at commonapp.org.

B2. (Sept) Parts of the Application

The Coalition Application: Similar to the Common Application, the Coalition Application allows a student to fill out one application form and submit it to more than one college. The application platform is a service of the Coalition of Access, Affordability, and Success, which also offers a set of free online college planning tools that help students learn about and prepare for college. More than 150 colleges accept the Coalition Application, some of which also accept the Common Application. You can learn more and create an account at coalitionforcollegeaccess.org.

School/System-Specific Applications: Some colleges or larger university systems, such as the California and Texas public colleges, have created their own applications. For some, such as the state of California, Georgetown University, and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, this is the only way in which you can apply. For others, they may offer their own application in addition to accepting the Common and/or Coalition application. For colleges that accept applications from multiple sources, there is typically not an advantage or benefit to choosing one over another, but it is also worth checking the school's admission website to confirm if they have a preference. Some colleges may incentivize the use of their specific application by waiving application fees or providing an accelerated review process.



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DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION



National Association for
College Admission Counseling
Guiding the way to higher education

STUDENTS: WHICH COLLEGE ADMISSION PROCESS BEST SUITS YOU?

Non-Restrictive Application Plans

Regular Decision

DEFINITION:

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Rolling Admission

DEFINITION:

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Early Action (EA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Restrictive Application Plans

Early Decision (ED)

DEFINITION:

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

COMMITMENT:

BINDING

Restrictive Early Action (REA)

DEFINITION:

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

COMMITMENT:

NON-BINDING

Students are not restricted from applying to other institutions and have until May 1 to consider their options and confirm enrollment.

Students are responsible for determining and following restrictions.

Top Ten Tips for Writing the College Essay

1. **Start early.** The more time you have, the less stress you'll have. And you'll have plenty of time to give the essay your best effort.
2. **Be yourself.** Take a moment to think about what interests you, what you love to talk about, what makes you sit up and take notice if it's mentioned in class or on TV. Then write about it.

One of the biggest mistakes students make is "writing what they think others want to hear, rather than about an issue, event, or person that really had significance for them," says Richard M. Fuller, dean of admission and financial aid at Hamilton College (NY). An essay like that is not just boring to write-it's boring to read.

3. **Be honest.** You're running late (see #1), you can't think of what to write-and someone e-mails you a heartwarming story. With just a tweak here and there, it could be a great essay, you think. It's what you would have written if you'd just had enough time.

Don't be fooled! College admission officers have read hundreds-even thousands-of essays. They are masters at discovering any form of plagiarism. Adapting an e-mail story, buying an essay from some Internet site, getting someone else to write your essay-admission people have seen it all. Don't risk your college career by taking the easy way out.

4. **Take a risk.** On the other hand, some risks can pay off. Don't settle for the essay that everyone else is writing. Imagine an admission officer up late, reading the fiftieth essay of the day-yours. Do you want that person to nod off because he or she has already read ten essays on that topic?

"The danger lies not in writing bad essays but in writing common essays-the one that admission officers are going to read dozens of," says Scott Anderson, associate director of college counseling at Mercersburg Academy (PA). "My advice? Ask your friends what they are writing-and then don't write about that!"

5. **Keep in focus.** This is your chance to tell admission officers exactly why they should admit you. Unfortunately, some students try to list every single reason-their stellar academic record, their athletic prowess, their community service-all in a page or two. When that happens, the essay looks like a grocery list.

Instead, read the essay question carefully and jot down a few ideas. Then choose the one that looks like the most fun to write about. Stick to that main theme throughout the essay.

You don't have to list all your achievements-that's what the rest of the application is for. Use the essay to help the admission officers get to know you as a person.

6. **Write and rewrite.** Don't try to write a masterpiece on your first try. It's not possible-and all that pressure is likely to give you writer's block. For your first draft, write anything that comes to mind about your topic. Don't worry too much about grammar or spelling. Just get it down on paper (or computer screen). Then let it "rest" for a few hours or a few days.

When you come back to the draft, look for ways to make it more focused and better written. Some people are "fat" writers: they write long, wordy first drafts that need to be shortened later. Others are "skinny" writers: they write short and simple first drafts and then need to add details or examples to "flesh out" the skeleton. Either way, don't be afraid to make major changes at this stage. Are there details that don't really relate to the topic? Cut them. Do you need another example? Put it in.

Here are two other things to try, suggested by college counselor Marti Phillips-Patrick.

1. Remove the introductory and concluding paragraphs, and then see if your essay seems stronger. These paragraphs are often the most likely to have unnecessary detail.
 2. Go through the essay and cut out every "very" and every "many." Words like these are vague, and your writing is often stronger without them.
7. **Get a second opinion.** Even best-selling novelists ask other people to read their manuscripts before they're sent to the publisher. When you've rewritten the essay to your satisfaction, find someone who can give you advice on how to make it even better. Choose a person you respect and who knows something about writing-a favorite English teacher, a parent, a friend who writes for the school paper. Ask them to tell you what they like best about your essay-and what you can do to improve it.

Criticism of your writing can be tough to hear, but try to listen with an open mind. You don't have to make every change suggested-after all, it's your essay and no one else's-but you should seriously consider each suggestion.

8. **Proofread.** Finally, you're ready to send your essay. Not so fast! Read it over one more time, looking for those little errors that can creep in as you write or edit. If you're using a computer, also run a spell check.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to catch minor typos-you've read the essay so many times that you see what should be there rather than what is there. To make sure you catch everything, try reading your essay out loud or having someone else read it out loud to

you. Another strategy is to read the essay backward, from the last sentence to the first. That makes it just unfamiliar enough for errors to stand out.

9. **Don't confuse applying online with sending e-mail.** Applying online is just as serious as applying "the old-fashioned way." It may feel like you're sending e-mail, but you're not.

"One thing I've often seen is that students who apply online submit sub-par essays," says Palmer Muntz, director of admission at Oregon Institute of Technology. He has found that essays submitted online tend to be much shorter than those submitted on paper. In addition, students often use e-mail language-no capitalization, or abbreviations such as BTW or "thanx"-which are not appropriate to a formal document. Make sure that you put as much effort into an online essay as you would if you were sending it snail mail.

10. **Don't expect too much from an essay.** The application essay is important, but it's not the only thing that is considered. "Can [the essay] make a difference in getting the 'thin versus thick' envelope? Absolutely," says Fuller. "But that is the exception rather than the rule."

That's because admission officers look at the whole package-your academics, extracurricular activities, standardized tests, and other factors. A great essay rarely makes up for a weak academic record. On the other hand, a mediocre essay won't necessarily consign your application to the "deny" list. So make your essay as well-written as you can, but don't put so much pressure on yourself that the rest of the application fades in importance.

Getting Started with College Research

When it comes to college preparation, freshman and sophomore year should largely be focused on adjusting to high school, finding a level of academic rigor suitable to your needs, building strong study and work habits, and exploring extracurricular opportunities that genuinely excite you or serve an important purpose in your life. Again, this process cannot be rushed. High school is not simply a means or stepping stone to a collegiate end; it is an enriching and exciting opportunity in and of itself, and should be treated as such. Students who navigate high school with tunnel vision toward college often miss out on fulfilling and meaningful experiences as a result—there is an important balance to be struck between being forward thinking and allowing yourself to be in the moment. Leading with authenticity and exploring topics, subjects, and opportunities of interest to you in those first two years will naturally prepare you for what’s to come in the college search process.

Types of Colleges and Universities & Terminology

Before diving into identifying your college criteria and college-specific research, it’s important to know the different kinds of institutions of higher education available to you in the U.S. Below is terminology to help you navigate this opening stage of your college process.

Undergraduate Degree: Two-year (associate) or four-year (bachelor’s) degrees entered into after the completion of secondary school (high school).

Graduate/Advanced Degree: A degree completed after the bachelor’s degree. This can include Master’s Degrees and Doctoral Degrees (PhD, MD, JD, etc). Master’s Degrees typically take anywhere from the equivalent of one to three years of full-time study. Doctoral Degrees typically take anywhere from the equivalent of three to four years of full-time study.

B4. (Sept) Types of Post-Secondary Institutions

College: An institution at which students study toward two- or four-year undergraduate degrees after completion of secondary school. Colleges typically do not offer graduate or other advanced degrees.

University: An institution that usually offers both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Universities are typically made up of different undergraduate colleges or schools based on academic discipline.

Public College: An academic institution financed by tuition, endowments, and state or local taxes. Tuition for in-state students is reduced and programs and policies are state-regulated. Some public colleges have set guidelines on the percentage of in-state students represented in the student body.

Private College: An academic institution financed primarily by tuition and endowments that is not regulated by local or state government.

Community College: A public academic institution typically offering two-year Associate Degree and Certificate programs with open enrollment policies for students who have received a high school diploma or equivalent. Community colleges, also sometimes known as junior colleges, typically serve a local population as there are usually many community college campuses throughout a given state. Most community colleges do not offer on-campus residential living and may also have limited extracurricular opportunities. They are often a more affordable option and can have valuable, strategic transfer pathways to the public, four-year institutions in the same state for students interested in ultimately earning a Bachelor's Degree. Community colleges can also offer extensive workforce training and English language acquisition programs.

Trade or Technical Schools: Trade or Technical schools offer practical training and instruction for specific jobs and fields. Unlike community colleges, which leave room for exploration of different areas of focus, trade schools let you dive into hands-on training in a specific trade or skill of interest that usually culminates in a certificate or license in that area. Most trades schools have programs for aspiring electricians, plumbers, dental hygienists, chefs, pharmacy technicians, mechanics, information technology support staff, and more.

Research University: An academic institution with both undergraduate and graduate programs focused on educating students through research that its professors conduct and produce. Research universities are typically broken up into smaller sub-colleges organized by academic discipline that can include pre-professional courses of study, such as business, engineering, and nursing, in addition to traditional arts & sciences majors. Research universities are typically medium-to-large in size and can be public or private.

B4. (Sept) Types of Post-Secondary Institutions

Liberal Arts College: An academic institution with undergraduate degrees that focuses on providing a well-rounded, broad education across a variety of disciplines with an eye toward developing strong writing and critical thinking skills that can be useful across many professional fields. Liberal arts colleges are typically small in size (usually less than 5,000 students) and private.

Arts-Focused Institutions & Conservatories: Academic institutions focused specifically on the fine, visual, or performing arts that prepare students for professional careers in their artistic disciplines through intensive and dedicated instruction in theory and practice. Given the strong focus on professional artistic preparation, some conservatories and arts institutions may not offer the same breadth of extracurricular opportunities on campus as do traditional universities. For those that want the best of both worlds, some research universities have conservatories and/or Colleges of Fine Arts housed within them that provide the same intensive, pre-professional instruction but in a more traditional university environment. If you are passionate about your artistic endeavors but are not interested in pursuing them professionally, many liberal arts colleges have strong Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Fine Arts programs that still allow the flexibility to take classes across a variety of other disciplines.

Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs): As recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, HBCUs are academic institutions whose core purpose is, and has been, the education of Black Americans.

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs): As recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, HSIs are academic institutions where at least 25% of their undergraduate full-time enrollment is Hispanic students.

Tribal Colleges & Universities (TCUs): As recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, TCUs are academic institutions located on or near tribal reservation lands that predominantly serve Native American students and aim to preserve and celebrate traditional tribal cultures and provide accessible higher education to Native American students.

Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs): As recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, AANAPISIs are academic institutions where at least 10% of their undergraduate, full-time enrollment is American and Native American Pacific Islander.

B4. (Sept) Types of Post-Secondary Institutions

Women’s College: Academic institutions, most typically liberal arts colleges, whose undergraduate enrollment is entirely or almost entirely women. Many women’s colleges have moved, or are moving, toward more inclusive enrollment policies that welcome transgender and non-binary students in addition to cisgender women.

Military Service Academies: Undergraduate academic institutions that provide education and training to future members of the U.S. Armed Forces. The service academies include the U.S. Military Academy (West Point), the U.S. Naval Academy, the U.S. Air Force Academy, the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. Each military academy will have its own unique admission requirements.

Other Specialized Institutions: Academic institutions dedicated entirely to a specific discipline or area of study. Examples include colleges and universities exclusively focused on instruction in science and engineering or business.

First-Generation Student: A student whose biological parent(s) did not receive a four-year baccalaureate degree. First-generation students are often referred to as the first in their family to attend college. At many colleges, first-generation students have access to additional support programs and personnel to help navigate their undergraduate experience.

Application Decision Plans, Review Process, and Possible Outcomes

As you enter your senior year, the information gathering and list building are nearly finished. You've ideally compiled a manageable list of colleges that reflect your unique criteria and strike an appropriate balance between Challenge, Possible, and Likely schools. Every college on your list should be one that you'd be happy to attend if it is the only school to which you were admitted. Approaching your college list with this mentality will ensure intentionality and thoughtfulness.

Now begins the last and most crucial stage of the process: completing and submitting applications. Throughout the fall of your senior year, as you are completing the required steps of the application process, you may still be visiting colleges and sitting for interviews. Colleges will also be sending representatives to your high school to talk with you and other prospective students. All of these events occur during a fast-paced period of three or four months while you are still balancing your academics, extracurriculars, social life, and other responsibilities.

Organization is more important than ever during the fall of your senior year. Be diligent about keeping track of varying admission requirements, deadlines, events, visits, test dates, and other priorities. Some students find it helpful to have a calendar devoted to their college admissions process so that all of their important dates can be found in one place.

Be diligent about keeping track of varying admission requirements, deadlines, events, visits, test dates, and other priorities.

The following pages contain information on the timeline and terminology to know when you begin to submit your applications.

A Note on Application Fees

Many colleges charge a flat fee to submit your application for review. These fees typically range anywhere from \$35-\$120 per application, and are sometimes higher for international applicants. These costs can quickly add up as you consider applying to multiple colleges. High school counseling offices, colleges, and NACAC (via the *NACAC Request for Application Fee Waiver Form*) all offer processes to assist with application fee waivers if the fees would be financially burdensome to you and your family. Check in with your counselor about your eligibility and the best course of action for qualifying for application fee waivers.

Application Decision Plans

Now that you have a solid idea of *where* you're planning to apply and the components you need to complete in your application, the next step is to figure out when you're going to apply by selecting the application decision plan that makes most sense for your goals and workflow. Each college determines which decision plans and subsequent deadlines they want to offer, and those policies can shift and change from year to year. Below are the most common decision plans you'll encounter during the application process:

Open Admission: Some colleges do not practice selective admission and offer admission to virtually all students who apply.

Rolling Admission (RA): Applications are reviewed as they are submitted and admissions offices render and release decisions throughout the admission cycle. Typically, with rolling applications, the earlier you apply, the earlier you hear back. Some institutions may have a final cut-off deadline late in the spring or summer, but many institutions keep rolling admissions open and available until they have filled their incoming first-year class, sometimes up until the start date of the term for which you are applying.

Early Action (EA): Students apply by an earlier deadline—usually in November or early December—to receive a decision in advance of the college's Regular Decision notification date. Decisions for Early Action applications are usually released between December–February. Given the common deadlines, most Early Action applications will only include your grades from freshman, sophomore, and junior year. There are some exceptions where colleges may ask for mid-term or mid-semester grades from senior year with an Early Action application. If admitted under an Early Action plan, you will typically have until May 1 to make your final enrollment decision.

Restrictive/Single Choice Early Action (REA): Similar to Early Action, REA applicants apply by an earlier deadline—usually in November—to receive an admission decision in advance of the Regular Decision notification date. In addition to the earlier deadline, REA applications come with specific regulations and restrictions the applicant must abide by. The most common restrictions prohibit students from submitting either a) any Early Decision applications, b) any other Early Action applications, or c) both a and b. Given the application deadline, most Restrictive Early Action applications will only include your grades from freshman, sophomore, and junior year. There are some exceptions where colleges may ask for mid-term or mid-semester grades from senior year with an REA application. Very few colleges use REA plans and you should always consult their individual websites to confirm what their specific restrictions are. If admitted under a Restrictive Early Action plan, you will typically have until May 1 to make your final enrollment decision.

Priority Admission: Students submit their application by an earlier deadline—usually November or December—in order to be considered and prioritized for scholarship opportunities or admission to special academic programs, such as Honors Colleges. If admitted under a Priority Admission plan, you will typically have until May 1 to make your final enrollment decision.

Early Decision (ED): ED is a **binding** admission plan that requires you to commit to a first-choice college at the time of application and, if admitted, you agree to enroll and withdraw your other college applications. You, the student, a parent or guardian, and your high school counselor are all required to sign an Early Decision Agreement as confirmation that you understand the binding, restrictive nature of this decision plan and that you commit to the Agreement's components.

Colleges may offer ED I and II options with different deadlines. Most ED I deadlines fall in November and applicants will receive their decision by mid-to-late December, while most ED II deadlines fall in January and applicants will receive their decision by the end of February. You may only have one active Early Decision application at a time. If admitted under an Early Decision plan, your deadline to officially enroll will be approximately two to four weeks after you receive your acceptance letter.

Given the common deadlines, Early Decision I applications may only include your grades from freshman, sophomore, and junior year. It is more common for colleges to ask for mid-term or mid-semester grades from senior year with an Early Decision I application.

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Given the binding commitment it requires, applying Early Decision is essentially the ultimate demonstration of interest for those schools that track it, and can sometimes (not always) come with an advantage as a result. That being said, you should **not** apply Early Decision for the potential advantage alone. **An Early Decision application should be the result of a thorough research process and thoughtful conversations with your family and counselor where you have determined that this particular school is indeed your first choice and that you are comfortable not being able to compare other offers of admission or financial aid packages.** If you are uncomfortable with a binding commitment, it is important to your family to be able to weigh different offers and financial aid packages, or you just simply don't have a clear first choice, Early Decision may not be the appropriate decision plan for you.

Regular Decision (RD): Students submit their applications by a specified deadline—usually in January or February—and are typically notified of their decision by the end of March or in early April. If admitted under a Regular Decision plan, you will typically have until May 1 to make your final enrollment decision.

How Applications are Reviewed and Decisions Are Made

As with most facets of the college admission process, there is not one set way that applications are reviewed and final decisions are made; those processes are unique to each individual college and university. Even so, there are some unifying themes when it comes to application review to be aware of as you begin submitting yours.

Some colleges and universities have explicit GPA and/or standardized testing (if required) thresholds that, if met, you will be admitted. These colleges may not require essays, extracurricular lists, or letters of recommendations; their review process is entirely quantitative. This is most common at large public universities that admit the majority of their applicants.

Conversely, colleges that are more selective in their application process often employ a practice called **holistic admissions review**. Holistic review tasks admission counselors with considering the whole student when reviewing applications. In a holistic admission process, decisions are not made solely based on grades and testing, rather, all of the qualitative factors mentioned previously, including essays, extracurriculars, interviews, letters of recommendations, etc., are considered as an admission decision

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is weighed. Remember, college admissions offices are hoping to admit a class of vibrant and diverse students, and a holistic approach allows them to see and consider students beyond just the numbers and statistics associated with their application. If you are considering applying to selective colleges that have more qualified applicants than they do space in their admitted class, your application could be strong, compelling, and meet all of the college's criteria and you still may not be admitted.

There may also be different admissions standards and levels of competition for individual schools or programs within one university, in which case your application will be considered alongside others for the same college (i.e. business, engineering, arts & sciences, nursing, etc.). For example, it may be less competitive applying as a potential history major as it would be as a potential computer science or engineering major.

An additional factor that often plays a role in the admission review process include **institutional priorities**, which are goals and benchmarks typically set out by the university President, Board of Trustees, and other senior university administrators. The admission office is then tasked with meeting these goals as they determine who to admit from the current applicant pool. Institutional priorities are programmatic and strategic visions as the college identifies areas for growth in the coming years. Examples of institutional priorities could include increased enrollment in a certain major or academic discipline, increased racial, ethnic, gender, socioeconomic, or geographic diversity, development and fundraising, athletic recruitment, legacy considerations, and more. Though they are first and foremost institutions of higher learning, colleges are also functioning businesses, meaning that part of the admission process for most colleges is securing the necessary tuition revenue to ensure the continued financial health and stability of the institution.

While You Wait...

The waiting period between when you submit your application and when you receive your admission decisions can sometimes feel endless. The good news is, there are tangible steps you can take while you wait to ensure your review process is as streamlined and smooth as possible.

Application Portals: After you submit your application, nearly every college will send you directions on how to set up your online application portal. These portals are specific and unique to each college to which you apply, and will serve as your homebase for the remainder of the admissions and enrollment process.

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Admissions portals nearly always include a live checklist of which required materials the college has and has not received. It is crucially important to be patient with both your high school counselor and admissions offices during busy times of the process, especially around major application deadlines. It can sometimes take up to three weeks for required materials submitted by your counselor to be electronically linked to your application file in the admissions office. If items on your checklist are marked as missing, take a deep breath, ensure that you have followed the necessary steps laid out by your counselor to inform them you've submitted an application, and exercise patience. Chances are, the documents have been submitted and are enqueued to be linked to your file. If you are at all concerned, reach out to your counselor, but always from a place of respect and assuming best intentions. At most institutions, as long as the application itself is submitted by the posted deadline, supporting documents can trickle in after the deadline date, though always check the admissions website to confirm.

It is important to be diligent about regularly checking your email and application portals throughout this waiting period. These are the two primary ways colleges will communicate with you if they are missing anything from your application or need additional information from you. They will also typically post your actual admission decision on your application portal, and notify you via email when that happens. Building strong email etiquette as a high school student will only prepare you better for your college experience, where email remains the primary form of contact between you and your professors and administrators. Colleges will rarely communicate with your parents or guardians—since you are the applicant, you are the primary contact.

Stay Focused: Just because you have submitted your applications does not mean you get to check out for the rest of your senior year. All college acceptances are conditional on your continued academic performance, meaning they expect you to stay focused and keep your grades as consistent as possible. The college at which you enroll will receive a final high school transcript including your senior grades from spring. All colleges reserve the right to rescind your admission if your academic performance declines significantly. You have agency over whether or not that happens.

Possible Application Decisions and Outcomes

After submitting your applications and navigating the subsequent waiting period, you'll begin to receive the results—or admission decisions—of your applications. When you hear back will depend on the decision plan which you chose to apply under. Listed below are the possible admission decision outcomes you may receive. Make sure to update your counselor and other supporters with every decision you receive.

Admit: Congratulations! This is the news every applicant hopes for. Students admitted in the Rolling, Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, Priority, and Regular Decision rounds will not be required to make a final decision on enrollment until at least May 1.

Defer: If you applied Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, or Early Decision I and/or II, it is possible your application could be deferred. Unlike students who have been denied, deferred applicants receive another round of review during the Regular Decision round. Deferrals are usually an indication that the admissions office wants more information from an applicant before rendering a final decision, typically in the form of official senior grades from your first term or semester, which were not available during the early round of review. Always follow the explicit directions provided by the college as a deferred applicant, as you may need to opt-in to being moved to the Regular Decision pool and/or be asked to submit a statement of continued interest or additional application updates and materials. Let your counselor know of your deferral as soon as possible so they know to send your senior year grades.

Early Decision applicants who are deferred to Regular Decision are no longer bound by the Early Decision Agreement, meaning that if you are admitted after being deferred, you are no longer required to attend that institution and can weigh your other options before making a final decision. Additionally, if you are deferred as an Early Decision I applicant, you are free to apply Early Decision II to a different college.

Some colleges offer deferred Early Action applicants the opportunity to switch their application plan to Early Decision II. This should only be done if the college is truly your first choice and you have followed the guidance listed above under the Early Decision description.

Deny: This means your application process is over at that particular college or university. Most colleges and universities do not accept admission decision appeals, and those that do typically only do so if there was a tangible, clerical error made on behalf of the college, rather than a philosophical disagreement about the outcome itself.

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In some cases, you may be disappointed, but don't let a college's admission decision have a negative impact on your life. There are a lot of colleges and many paths leading to the same objective. The important thing is to set goals and work toward them. If you are denied admission, don't take it personally or feel you've failed. Take a deep breath and turn your attention to the other options available.

Waitlist: A waitlist offer is a maybe, not an acceptance. By placing a student on the waitlist, an institution does not initially offer or deny admission, but extends to a candidate the possibility of admission in the future, prior to the conclusion of the institution's admission cycle. Waitlisted students are typically given the option of opting in or out of the waitlist. If interested in remaining on the waitlist, follow the specific instructions provided by the college. It is essential to understand that if you choose to remain on any waitlists, you should also submit an enrollment deposit at a college to which you were already admitted by May 1, as most colleges will not know if or how they will use their waitlist until after the May 1 deadline.

Spring/Special Program Admit: Some colleges may offer you admission to the spring term instead of the traditional fall start term. Usually it is not possible to appeal to start in the fall if you've received spring admission. Some colleges that offer spring admission may also provide you the opportunity to study in a special program, sometimes earning college credit, during the fall term prior to officially enrolling. These programs are often destination experiences abroad or in different cities throughout the United States and may or may not be directly affiliated with the university in which you intend to enroll in spring.

Guaranteed Transfer Admission: Some colleges may also offer you a guaranteed transfer pathway to their institution. This decision is essentially a denial for the term for which you applied, but gives you the opportunity to enroll elsewhere, meet a minimum GPA and credit requirement, and be guaranteed admission as a transfer student typically after your freshman year.

Conditional Admission: These are acceptances that come with certain conditions you have to meet in order to fully enroll as a degree-seeking student. Conditions may include participating in a specific summer or school-year program to improve English language, writing, or math skills, taking specific remedial courses, or simply sending your final senior year grades for confirmation that you successfully completed the year.

Timeline of the Application Submission and Review Process

With the above information in mind, included below is a general timeline for the application submission, review, and decision process. Since each college has the agency to set their own deadlines and release dates, this timeline is not representative or exhaustive of every college in the U.S., but rather a broad overview that captures the majority of institutions' approaches.

August: Most application platforms update and open for the rising senior class.

October: The two main financial aid applications—the FAFSA and CSS Profile—open for the current application cycle.

November: Early application deadlines fall most commonly on November 1 or 15.

December: Admission results from all Early Decision applications and many Early Action and Priority applications are released.

January–February: Most Regular Decision and Early Decision II application deadlines fall in January through early February, most commonly on January 1, 5, and 15.

Admission and results from remaining Early Action and Priority applications and Early Decision II applications are typically released from mid-January through late February.

March: Admissions results from nearly all Regular Decision applications are released throughout March, by April 1 at the latest.

April: Most colleges will host on- and off-campus programming for their admitted students.

May: May 1 (or the first weekday in May) is typically the deadline to confirm your enrollment at your college of choice, otherwise known as the **National Candidates Reply Date**. Many colleges will require a monetary deposit alongside your confirmation of enrollment.

A solid and balanced college list begins with an authentic and reflective list of criteria

Typically, the post-secondary search and research process begins in earnest during a student's junior year (11th grade). With the support of your high school counselor, a community-based organization, or other support systems, you will explore the range of opportunities available to you, whether that's a gap year, a four-year institution, community college, military service, full-time work, and more. For those with an eye toward higher education, you will begin developing a college list that reflects your wants and needs. The foundation of this exploration is self-reflection and authenticity—without those factors, your list may not be representative of what works specifically for you.

Developing a list of specific criteria should always come before choosing colleges to add to your list. To decide on specific schools without a solid sense of your wants and needs is a backward and unhelpful approach, often leading students to focus solely on colleges they have already heard of. You likely wouldn't purchase an item of clothing before knowing your size, your style preferences, what fabrics are most comfortable to you, your budget, and more—the same logic should be applied to the college search. As much as you can, avoid the temptation to gravitate only to what is already familiar. Open-mindedness is the key to a balanced and effective college search process. Start by making a list of what's important to you and discuss it with your counselor. Some students have a strong sense of what they want from the start, while others may need more time and exploration to determine what is truly important to them. What is most important to remember is that criteria can grow, change, and evolve throughout this process. What you want at the beginning of your junior year might look very different from the beginning of your senior year, and that is normal. As long as you remain flexible and self-aware, you will be able to build a list of colleges reflective of your needs. Use these prompts to get started:

- Why do I want to go college? What are my long-term goals?
- Do I want a two- or four-year institution?
- What adjectives would I use in describing my ideal student body and campus culture?

- How important will costs be in my final choice? What kind of financial assistance will I need? Are opportunities for part-time jobs important? What qualifications do I have for scholarships? How will travel to and from school impact affordability?
- Do I want to stay near home, or am I prepared to visit my family only a few times each year?
- What kind of setting is most appealing to me? Urban, suburban, small town, or rural?
- How do I learn best? In a smaller classroom environment or larger lecture setting? With hands-on or experiential learning opportunities, a more traditional approach, or a combination? Do I benefit from additional academic supports?
- Is there a special area of study that I'm particularly interested in, or do I want to pursue more general studies? Do I want an open curriculum or am I okay with a range of distribution requirements? Are there certain academic requirements that are wholly unappealing to me?
- Do I want to attend a small, medium, or large institution?
- What career(s) am I considering?
- Am I interested in a diverse student body? What kinds of diversity are most important to me?
- Do I want a demanding academic environment? Do I plan to go to graduate school? Am I comfortable with a curriculum that offers a great deal of independent study? Do my academic interests require specialized facilities?
- What type of mental health support is available on campus?
- Are there certain activities or opportunities it's important to me to have access to (i.e. a strong music or arts scene, a certain type of cuisine, outdoor and wilderness, etc.)?
- Do I prefer on- or off-campus housing? Am I interested in fraternities or sororities? How important are intramural or intercollegiate athletics? Do I want a campus that regularly offers cultural events? How important is school spirit to me?

Feel free to add and consider your own questions and don't be reluctant to express your true feelings. Perhaps you're unsure about some of the questions and answers or need more information before answering thoughtfully. Maybe you think you're not ready to go away to school. It's OK to be apprehensive or uncertain. Not everyone knows exactly what they want at this time and many of these answers evolve and change over the course of your junior and senior years.

College Application Checklist

Keep Track of Your Applications

Use this application checklist and stay on top of your application tasks, paperwork, and deadlines.

Application Checklist	College 1	College 2	College 3
Applications			
College Admissions Representative Name			
Phone Number			
E-mail Address			
Request info./application – go to college website			
Early Decision application deadline date			
Early Action application deadline date			
Regular application deadline date			
Safety? Regular? Reach?			
Grades			
Transcript or SSAR? https://ssar.selfreportedtranscript.com			
Request in progress transcript - date sent			
Request midyear grade reports sent – date			
Request final transcripts – June – date			
Test Scores			
SAT / ACT required (yes/no)			
SAT Subject required (yes/no)			
Release SAT Scores -			
Send SAT Subject Scores – date			
Send ACT Scores – date			

Letters of Recommendation

Request recommendations - (yes/no) – date			
Send Thank You notes to writer - date			

Essays

Essay/s Required? – date			
Write essay/s – date			
Have two people read your essay/s – date			

Interviews

Interview at college – date			
Alumni interview – date			
Send Thank You notes to interviewer/s – date			

Send and Track Your Application

Make copies of all application materials – date			
Apply online – date			
Send Florida residency verification to state universities - date			
Include application fee			
Sign application			
Mail via certified mail – date			
Confirm receipt of application materials – date			
Send supplemental material, if needed – date			

Financial Aid Forms

Priority financial aid deadline (FAFSA / PROFILE) – date			
Regular financial aid deadline (FAFSA / PROFILE) – date			
Complete FAFSA on-line at www.fafsa.ed.gov date			

Complete FFAA for Bright Futures & everything else FL offers www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/			
Complete CSS PROFILE, if required by your college – www.collegeboard.com date			
Mail institutional aid form, if needed – date			
After You Send Your Application			
Admission letter received/posted to college acct – date			
Financial aid award letter received posted to college acct – date			
Send housing / admissions deposit (determine if refundable)			



YOUR Responsibilities

College Information	College A	College B	College C	College D
Name of College				
Website Address				
Phone Number				
Name of College Representative				
Date of Visit				
Time of Information Session				
Deadlines				
Application				
Transcript				
Recommendations				
Test Scores Due				
Financial Aid—Federal				
Financial Aid—College				
Interview				
Required?				
Date of Interview				
Location of Interview				
Application				
Essay Completed				
Date Application Submitted				
Date Test Scores Sent				
Date Financial Aid Submitted				
Date School Report Submitted				
Teacher Recommendations				
#1 Given to				
Date Submitted				
#2 Given to				
Date Submitted				
#3 Given to				
Date Submitted				

Important Dates: 2024-25 School Year



B8. (Sept) SAT Test Dates Flyer 2024-2025

FALL 2024 TESTING

WEEKEND TESTING

SAT® Weekend

sat.org

Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

Registration deadlines are listed below test dates. Late registration deadlines appear in parentheses. Students who do not register by the initial deadline will be charged a \$34 late fee.

AUG 24	OCT 5	NOV 2	DEC 7
Aug 9 (Aug 13)	Sept 20 (Sept 24)	Oct 18 (Oct 22)	Nov 22 (Nov 26)

Sunday test dates immediately follow Saturday test dates. However, to avoid conflict with a religious holiday, the Sunday test date in October will be Oct. 13.

Fall 2024 Weekend Score Release Dates

Test Date	Scores available to students	Scores available to educators
AUG 24	→ SEPT 6	→ SEPT 9
OCT 5	→ OCT 18	→ OCT 21
NOV 2	→ NOV 15	→ NOV 18
DEC 7	→ DEC 20	→ DEC 23

IN-SCHOOL TESTING

SAT School Day

sat.org/schoolday

PSAT/NMSQT®

psatnmsqt.org

PSAT™ 8/9

psat8-9.org

Testing Window

**OCT
1-31**

Schools may also choose to offer the PSAT/NMSQT or the PSAT 8/9 on Saturday, Oct. 12, 2024 or Saturday, Oct. 26, 2024.

Fall 2024 In-School Score Release Dates

Testing staff submit assessments by	Scores available to educators	Scores available to students
OCT 11	→ OCT 22	→ OCT 24
OCT 26	→ NOV 4	→ NOV 6
OCT 31	→ NOV 12	→ NOV 14

SPRING 2025 TESTING

SAT Weekend

sat.org

Test Dates and Registration Deadlines

Registration deadlines are listed below test dates. Late registration deadlines appear in parentheses. Students who do not register by the initial deadline will be charged a \$34 late fee.

MAR 8	MAY 3	JUN 7
Feb 21 (Feb 25)	April 18 (April 22)	May 22 (May 27)

Sunday test dates immediately follow Saturday test dates.

Spring 2025 Weekend Score Release Dates

Test Date	Scores available to students	Scores available to educators
MAR 8	→ MAR 21	→ MAR 24
MAY 3	→ MAY 16	→ MAY 19
JUN 7	→ JUN 20	→ JUN 23

SAT School Day

sat.org/schoolday

PSAT™ 10

psat10.org

PSAT 8/9

psat8-9.org

Testing Window

**MAR APR
3-30**

For spring 2025 in-school testing score release dates, visit the [In-School Educator Experience](#).

AT A GLANCE

Fee Waiver Benefits



SAT® fee waivers do more than just waive test fees. Make sure your students know about all the ways fee waivers can make the college application process more affordable.

WAIVED

SAT Registration Fees

- Eligible students in grades 11–12 can register for **2 free SAT administrations**.
- If a fee-waiver-eligible student takes the SAT as part of SAT School Day, they can still register for **2 free SAT administrations**.

WAIVED

Non-U.S. Regional Fees

- U.S. students who test abroad won't pay any regional fees for tests they register for with a fee waiver.

WAIVED

Subject Test Registration Fees

- Eligible students in grades 9–12 can take up to 3 SAT Subject Tests™ for free on two separate test dates, for a total of up to **6 SAT Subject Tests at no cost**.

WAIVED

Late Registration Fees

- If a student uses a fee waiver for an SAT or SAT Subject Test date and misses the regular registration deadline, they **won't have to pay a late fee**.

Applies to administrations in the U.S. and U.S. territories only.

If you indicate that an 11th-grade student is eligible for fee waivers during the PSAT/NMSQT® invoicing process, you'll unlock all the above fee waiver benefits for that student.

Remind students to check their College Board online account to accept their benefits.

Once a student uses a test fee waiver, they automatically get these additional benefits:

FREE UNLIMITED SCORE SENDS

Eligible students **never pay a fee to send scores to colleges**—from any SAT or SAT Subject Test administration.

FREE SAT ANSWER VERIFICATION REPORTS

Eligible students get up to **2 free Question-and-Answer Service or Student Answer Service reports**. These reports show students details about how they answered each question on the SAT.

FREE COLLEGE APPLICATIONS


Eligible students can apply to over 2,000 participating colleges with the college application fee waivers they'll see in their College Board online account.

FREE CSS PROFILE™ APPLICATIONS

Eligible students can apply for financial aid online for free from hundreds of participating colleges.

A SUGGESTED TIMELINE

Fee Waivers in Action

 This step unlocks all fee waiver benefits.

Junior Year



FALL

Student takes PSAT/NMSQT. **Counselor indicates that the student is eligible for fee waivers.**



WINTER

Student uses first SAT fee waiver to register for an SAT. **Counselor gives fee waiver cards to eligible students.**



SPRING

Student participates in SAT School Day. **Counselor indicates that the student is eligible for fee waivers.**

SPRING

Student uses **fee waiver** to register for up to 3 SAT Subject Tests.

Senior Year

FALL

Student uses second **SAT fee waiver** to register for another SAT.

FALL

Student uses **fee waiver** to register for up to 3 more SAT Subject Tests.

FALL

Student uses **college application fee waivers** to apply to participating schools.

FALL

Student uses **unlimited free score sends** to send test scores to colleges.

FALL

Student submits **free CSS Profile application** for financial aid at participating schools.



What can the ACT do for you?

Show colleges that you are ready to succeed

More and more selective schools are realizing the value of test scores and again requiring them for admissions. An ACT score can show schools that you are prepared to tackle their curriculum from day one.

Do your best with the testing format you prefer

Depending on what you are more comfortable with, you can choose **paper and pencil** or **online** testing.

Connect with colleges and scholarship programs via EOS

The [ACT Educational Opportunity Service](#) helps match you with colleges and other career-related resources aligned with your background and interests.

Sketch out your educational and career plans in MyACT

The results from your [ACT Interest Inventory](#) create your personal [College Major Map](#) and [Career Map](#) to narrow down options that align with your interests, abilities, and values.

Put your best score forward with an ACT Superscore

If you take the ACT more than once, your best subject score from each test will be used to create an [official superscore](#) to showcase your best performance.

Give your application an extra boost with the optional writing test

Demonstrating your writing skills and ability to understand and explore ideas can help you stand out for competitive programs.



Interested in a STEM program?

The ACT is the only test that includes a unique STEM score, a measure of preparedness for courses in STEM-related majors.

Colleges want data they can trust — submit your applications with the confidence that comes with including your ACT score.

The ACT is more than an admissions exam

In addition to being a college admissions exam, the ACT includes a profile and education/career planning section to help you plan for life after high school. In [MyACT](#) you can complete your interest inventory and see how well your interests align with your planned major. You can also explore schools and majors, or find free online practice tests to help you do your best on the ACT and beyond.

How to prepare for the ACT

- Take challenging courses
- Study hard
- Visit act.org/prep to explore test prep options.
- Stay positive - *you've got this!*

Go to actstudent.org for free resources:

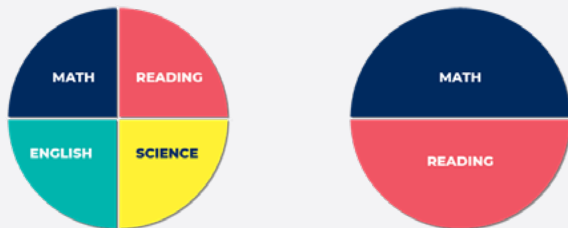
- Practice questions
- Testing tips for each subject
- *Preparing for the ACT* downloadable test prep booklet

The ACT can help save money on tuition

Your ACT score can increase your chances of earning scholarships that can fuel your future and help with college costs. Even schools that are test optional may still require or recommend an ACT score to qualify for merit awards.

The ACT shows the range of your knowledge

The four sections of the ACT test — English, math, reading, and science — each make up 25% of the test and 25% of your score, providing a broad and balanced view of your abilities. Other tests have just two sections, with Math and Reading each being 50% of your score.



Wish you could see your answers alongside the correct answers after taking a test?

With the ACT, you can order your Test Information Release (TIR) question and answer key for three test dates a year. Learn more at act.org/tir.

Only the ACT offers support for English Language learners

If you are enrolled in your school's English Learners (EL) program, you may qualify for additional support when taking the ACT. Work with your school counselor to request EL accommodations after you register.

The ACT offers fee waivers for eligible students

Every student deserves the chance to chart their own course for success. If you have trouble paying for the ACT test, the ACT Fee Waiver Program can help with registration fees, test prep, and more. Check with your school counselor to find out if you are eligible to apply.

Demonstrating Interest In A College

The College Campus Visit

Visiting a college campus is among the more helpful ways to determine whether you want to spend several years there. Walking the campus and interacting with current students can provide a perspective on the school not captured in written materials or on the website. Most students do not start visiting colleges until their junior year of high school, often corresponding to a winter or spring vacation, though some students may begin earlier than that. As you discuss this option with your family, be cognizant and realistic about the time and fiscal resources at your disposal. If you are only able to do one round of visits, sometimes saving those until your senior year when you know you've been admitted is the wisest choice.

In-Person Campus Visits

Most college and university admissions offices offer a variety of on-campus opportunities for prospective students and their families to explore and gather information. Even if you are not able to travel extensively to visit colleges, attending visits at institutions closer to home can provide helpful exposure to different types of schools, even if you are not specifically interested in that college. Not every college will offer the same type or breadth of visit experiences, so your first stop should always be the admissions website of the specific schools you're considering visiting to see what's available. Most colleges require or strongly recommend that visitors sign up for a session prior to coming to campus, though some can accommodate walk-in visitors. While visiting colleges while school is in session is ideal, visiting in the summer will still provide you with a valuable sense of the campus and surrounding area. As with most facets of the college process, you, the student, should be taking the lead on identifying the colleges you want to visit and signing yourself up for events—this is one of many opportunities to demonstrate agency and autonomy.

- **Campus Tours:** Typically led by a current student, campus tours allow you to walk the grounds and see the facilities a school has on offer up close and personally. Tour guides will usually provide a broad overview of academic, extracurricular, dining, and housing opportunities and are, of course, open to questions along the way. If there is a certain area of campus that is not covered on the tour (i.e. athletic or theater facilities), you can always ask if you can visit them on your own time. Take advantage of your time with a current student; even more so than admissions counselors as they are the resident experts on the actual student experience! As you move through campus, be sure to check out bulletin boards or digital monitors displaying announcements and upcoming events—this is a great way to get a sense of what’s happening on campus and what students care about. Prospective students should always be in the driver’s seat of asking questions and interacting with the tour guide.
- **Information Sessions:** Many colleges that have great numbers of prospective students visiting their campuses each year have instituted group information sessions to provide accurate information to several prospective students and their families at the same time. They are often led by a member of the admissions staff or students who work in the admissions office and provide a broad overview of their specific admissions and financial aid review process, academic programs, campus life, and more as well as an opportunity to ask general questions. Combined with campus tours, group information sessions are excellent resources to use in researching and evaluating colleges.
- **Attending a Class:** Some colleges may offer the opportunity to sit in on a class during your visit, which provides a unique and tangible window into the academic experience. Instead of only hearing about the academic values and approach the college takes, you get to see it play out in real life surrounded by potential future classmates. If this is an option, be sure to be flexible with the admissions office when scheduling. They may not be able to provide a class perfectly aligned with your area of interest, as they have to work within the confines of the current academic schedule, but any exposure to the teaching and learning that’s happening on campus can be helpful data.

- **Prospective Student Events:** Many colleges also hold large visit days specifically designed for prospective students and their families. Sometimes called open houses or preview days, these events combine the regular visit offerings (campus tours, information sessions, classroom visits) with enhanced opportunities for research and engagement. Some include panels with current students or faculty members from specific disciplines, admissions and financial aid workshops, and more.
- **Lunch with a Student:** If given the opportunity, it can be great to grab lunch on campus with a current student. Not only does this give you an idea of the school's meal plan and offerings, but it also gives you unstructured, non-evaluative time with a current student to talk in a more relaxed atmosphere. Even if this isn't a formal option through the admissions office, it is worth asking if you can still eat in the dining hall on your own and sample the food!
- **Overnights:** Some colleges may offer the opportunity for prospective students to do a full shadow day and overnight stay hosted by a current student when visiting campus. In many ways, an overnight provides the most unfiltered visit experience—you're essentially navigating the authentic life of a current student with the support of your host. For some populations, such as recruited athletes, an overnight may be required.
- **Meet with an Admissions Counselor:** If you still have specific questions after your tour and information session, some admissions offices will allow you to meet individually with an admissions counselor on staff. Different from a formal interview, this is an opportunity for you to ask them questions, not the other way around. Do not think of this as a necessity or something to do to improve your chances of admission if you do not have anything additional to ask; these are usually informal, unstructured conversations that have no bearing on your admissions process.

Fly-in Opportunities

An increasing number of schools are beginning to offer fully funded visit opportunities, typically specifically for students from underrepresented and/or low-income backgrounds, where the university will cover the cost of travel, accommodations, and meals for the duration of your stay. If offered, college admissions websites will provide details on how to apply or put your name on an interest list and any associated requirements and deadlines. Since these programs are fully funded, they are often competitive and may require an extensive application process.

Virtual Visit Opportunities

Since not every family has the time, budget, or flexibility to visit campuses in person, increasingly there are virtual ways to visit campus from the comfort of your own home. Many of the in-person options listed above have a virtual version available. Some options may be pre-recorded and can be watched on your own time, while others might be live events. For live virtual events, you will sign up on the same area of the admissions website as you would for an in-person visit. Be sure to make note of any time differences between where you'll be logging on and what time zone the event is being hosted in so you don't miss it accidentally. Some colleges also partner with one another to provide virtual sessions together so prospective students can hear from multiple schools at once. Just like with in-person events, the admissions office will be able to see if you miss a virtual event, so be sure to only sign up if you're confident you'll be able to attend.

Off-Campus Engagement Opportunities

In addition to visits and events hosted on campus and virtually, there are also a variety of opportunities for engagement in person, but off campus.

- **On-the-Road Information Sessions:** Many colleges will host information sessions in cities and towns across the country as a part of their recruitment travel, providing the same information as they would on campus, but in a more accessible, convenient location to applicants who live farther away. At times, colleges might even partner to conduct these on-the-road information sessions together, so prospective students can hear from and ask questions of multiple schools in a single event.
- **High School Visits:** Throughout the fall and sometimes spring, admissions counselors from most colleges travel to high schools across the country and provide prospective applicants with the same information as they would on campus, but in the comfort of your own high school. Sometimes, though not always, the admissions counselor visiting will be the staff member responsible for the initial review of your application, as many admissions offices divide application review by geographic territory. High school visits are an easy and convenient way to get information, explore colleges you may never have heard of, and ask important questions along the way. Your counseling office will keep a calendar of upcoming visits and will have their own policies and processes for who is allowed to attend visits and when.

- **College Fairs:** One way to interface with a large number of colleges at once is to attend a college fair. At these events, which can range in size from a handful to hundreds of colleges, admissions counselors will set up their own table or booth that prospective students and families can visit to receive information, get on mailing lists, and ask questions. These events are typically more fast paced than others, where you only have a few minutes at most to chat with the admissions representative to ensure every attendee can get their questions answered. College fairs may be hosted by high schools, community-based organizations, non-profits, or regional or national organizations, such as NACAC (read more about NACAC's National College Fairs in Chapter 4).
- **Case Studies:** Case Study events are a more focused engagement opportunity where students and/or parents and guardians participate in a mock application review committee, typically overseen by current admissions counselors and/or high school counselors. As a participant, you will be tasked with reviewing a series of fake applications and agreeing on an admissions decision with your fellow committee members with guidance from your facilitator(s). Case studies can provide helpful insight into general admissions review practices, though it's always important to keep in mind that each individual college has its own process and set of criteria that may not be universal. Case studies can be hosted by colleges, high schools, community-based organizations, non-profits, or regional or national organizations like NACAC.
- **Portfolio Review or Pre-Screen Days:** For fine and performing arts applicants, colleges or organizations, such as NACAC, host events devoted to providing feedback on the required creative components of your application, whether that's an artistic portfolio or a monologue you are rehearsing. Most of the time these events are organized like college fairs, where you can approach specific colleges' booths or tables for a quick feedback session. Some events may provide more comprehensive programming like panels with artistic faculty on the review committee or creative workshops.

Making the Most of Your College Field Trip & College Fair Experience

Asking the right questions will make you feel more prepared and confident when choosing a college or university.

ACADEMICS	What are the most/least popular majors?
	What is the average class size? What is the percentage of classes taught by graduate students instead of professors?
	Is there a set teaching style? Are classes generally more discussion-based or lecture-based?
	On average, how many years does it take students to graduate?
	If I'm struggling academically, what support services are provided? What tutoring programs are offered?

FINANCIAL AID	What scholarships, grants, and loans are available? What was the total amount awarded to students last year?
	Do you offer work-study or job programs?
	How do I apply for financial aid? What deadlines are imposed by the school? How and when will I be notified of my financial aid package?
	What are the course/credit load and GPA requirements for financial aid?
	Does living off campus affect financial aid?

HOUSING & TRANSPORTATION	Do most students live on campus or commute? Will I be guaranteed on-campus housing? Are there separate dorms for underclassman and upperclassman? Are dorms co-ed or single-sex?
	Are students required to live on campus for a certain amount of time?
	When do freshman move in? When do other students move in?
	Do the dorms close over breaks? If so, when will I have to move out?
	How are roommates assigned, or can I choose my own roommate? What if my assigned roommate and I do not get along?
	How much crime is there on campus and in the surrounding neighborhood? Does the campus have 24 hour security? How secure are the dorms?
	Are there quiet study areas? Is there a quiet time/curfew enforced ever night?
	What transportation is available, both on and off campus? Are freshman allowed to have cars? What are the parking fees?

Making the Most of Your College Field Trip & College Fair Experience

INTERNSHIPS, STUDY ABROAD & CAREERS	What internship programs are available? What are the eligibility requirements? Do students receive credit and/or payment for internships?
	What study abroad programs are available? What are the eligibility requirements? What are the average costs of a study abroad program?
	Is there a career center on campus? What about job placement services for graduating students?
	What is the job placement rate/percent of recent graduates?

ACTIVITIES & SPORTS	What student groups/clubs exist on campus?
	Are there sororities and fraternities? Do they play a large part in the school's social life?
	What are the most popular social events on campus?
	What kind of sports (including intramural) are available?
	Has the school won any recent competitions or division titles?
	Are athletic scholarships available?
	What sport and fitness facilities are available for student use?
	What physical education classes can I take along with my core curriculum classes?



F L O R I D A
S U S
2023-2024

COUNSELOR GUIDE

THE STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA





FLORIDA

#1

IN THE NATION FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION
FOR THE 7TH
CONSECUTIVE YEAR

U.S. News & World Report

B12. State University System (SUS) of Florida Admission





FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY

Founded October 3, 1887, **Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU)** is a public, historically Black university located in Tallahassee, Florida. FAMU is currently ranked as the #1 Public HBCU (U.S. News & World Report 2019-current) for four consecutive years. FAMU offers 13 schools and colleges in which students can choose over fifty undergraduate majors. FAMU is a leader in STEM and is ranked #1 for Research and Development by the National Science Foundation. FAMU is also a leader amongst HBCUs for Fulbright Scholars. What distinguishes FAMU from other universities is its legacy of providing access to a high-quality, affordable education with programs and services that guide students toward successfully achieving their dreams. In addition to the main Tallahassee campus, FAMU has several satellite campuses across Florida. These include the College of Law in Orlando and the College of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, Institute of Public Health, which has sites in Crestview, Tampa, Jacksonville, and Miami.

Semester/Term	Application Availability	Application Deadline
Fall 2024	August 1, 2023	April 1, 2024
Early Action/ Scholarship Priority Deadline	August 1, 2023	November 1, 2023
Scholarship Notification Period	January 2024	November 1, 2023

- ▶ Official transcript required.
- ▶ Official test scores required.
- ▶ Essay and letters of recommendation for scholarship only.





FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY

Florida Atlantic University calls to the innovative and ambitious as a leader in research and opportunity. Our main campus is in Boca Raton, 1.8 miles from the Atlantic Ocean. Here, students can connect with resume-building experience in South Florida’s lush business landscape, participate in award-winning undergraduate research programs, and find solutions to real-world issues such as climate change and healthcare. Or explore an all-honors curriculum with world-class scientific internships at the Wilkes Honors College on the Jupiter campus. Florida Atlantic boasts one of the most affordable tuition rates in the state and an above average starting salary, which means students start their career with less debt and an increased probability of success.

Application Type	Summer	Fall
Priority Application Completion	November 1	November 1
Merit Scholarship (Admissions Application Completion)	January 15	January 15
Final Application Completion	April 1	April 1
Priority Housing Contract Completion	April 1	April 1
Deposit Deadline	May 1	May 1





FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY

Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), located in beautiful Southwest Florida, has approximately 16,000 students. FGCU is one of the best values in U.S. Higher Education. We have kept the cost of tuition the same for nine years! The majority of our students (59%) graduate with zero debt. We award \$118 million in financial aid & scholarships annually. We are dedicated to student success. Our 64 undergraduate majors and 22:1 student-to-faculty ratio guarantee you'll get an education with a personal touch and have the support, advising, and guidance to complete your degree on time. FGCU holds the highest employment rate for graduates getting jobs in Florida.

Semester/Term	Application Opens	Application Closes	Deposit Deadline
Spring	January 2	December 1	December 15
Summer	August 1	March 1	May 1
Fall	August 1	November 1	May 1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Freshman Early Action Date (decisions available in December) Supplemental Items Due November 15 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Freshman Regular Decision Date 		March 1	

▶ *Freshman merit scholarships are competitive and not guaranteed. Preference is given to students who apply by the early action date of November 1st.



FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Florida International University is a top public university that drives real talent and innovation in Miami and globally. Very high research (R1) activity and high social mobility come together at FIU to uplift and accelerate learner success in a global city by focusing in the areas of environmental resilience, health and technology and innovation. Today, FIU has two campuses and multiple centers. FIU serves a diverse student body of more than 56,000 and 300,000+ Panther alumni. U.S. News and World Report places dozens of FIU programs among the best in the nation, including international business at No. 2. Washington Monthly Magazine ranks FIU among the top 20 public universities contributing to the public good.

Application Type	Early Fall	Fall
Application Opens	July 1	July 1
Deadline 1	October 23	October 23
Notification Date 1	November 15	November 15
Scholarship Application Due	December 1	December 1
Deferred final review	March 1	March 1
Final Application Deadline	March 25	March 25
Deposit Due	May 1	May 1





FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY

Florida Polytechnic University is the state’s only all-STEM public university, leading the way toward a high-tech future with project-based education in engineering and applied science. Florida Poly is recognized by U.S. News and World Report as the top public college in the Southern U.S. for the second straight year, and a top-30 engineering program without a Ph.D. With small classes and laser-focused degree plans, graduates are qualified for the high-wage, high-demand jobs needed throughout the state. The University is a powerful economic engine for Florida, combining scientific research with industry partnerships to give students a top STEM education with real-world relevance.

Application Plan	Application Deadline	Scholarships
Early Action	November 15	Alexander & Provost Scholars
Regular Decision	March 1	Florida Poly Merit / Out-of-State
Late Decision	May 1 *space available basis	Florida Poly Merit *If funding still available

- ▶ Unofficial transcripts accepted.
- ▶ Unofficial test scores accepted.
- ▶ Essay is no longer required.





FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Designated as a Preeminent Research University, **Florida State University** consistently delivers an affordable, high-quality education and was named the No.1 Best Value College in Florida according to U.S. News & World Report. With more than 280+ degree programs and 50+ combined Bachelor’s/Master’s Pathway Programs, our students have access to a robust selection of academic options.

FSU is the largest research university in the country to adopt an experiential learning requirement for undergraduate students. This requirement gives students the opportunity to learn from hands-on, real-world experiences by participating in internships, service-learning, research or creative activity, international study, and more.

Application Plan	Application Deadline	Decision Release Date
Early Action (Florida only)	October 15, 2023	December 14, 2023
Regular Decision (All Students)	December 1, 2023	February 15, 2024
Rolling Decision (All Students)	March 1, 2024	Released on a Rolling basis in April

Deadline for the University Honors Program and automatic scholarship consideration: December 1.

- ▶ Self-report all test scores.
- ▶ Link the SSAR.
- ▶ Upload an essay.
- ▶ Upload a list of activities.



NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA

Founded in Sarasota in 1960, **New College of Florida** is the #5 public liberal arts college in the country and the Honors College of Florida. New College provides students with a highly individualized education that integrates academic rigor with career-building experiences and is the place for the growing population of students looking to explore their intellectual curiosity, pursue their passions, and gain a better understanding of the world without having to abandon who they are and what they believe. New College offers more than 50 undergraduate majors in arts, humanities and sciences; a master's degree in data science; and certificates in technology, finance, and business skills.

Application Plan	Application Deadlines	Notification Dates	Deposit Deadlines
Early Action	November 1	Rolling	May 1
Regular Decision	February 1	Rolling	May 1
Final Deadline	June 1	Within 2 weeks of completion	Within 2 weeks of decision

- ▶ Self-reported transcripts are acceptable for admissions. Official transcripts required for enrollment.
- ▶ Self-reported test scores are acceptable for admission. Official test scores required for enrollment.
- ▶ Essay required.
- ▶ No separate scholarship application is required for most NCF scholarships.





UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

UCF is a public, metropolitan, research university invested in unleashing the potential within every individual, enriching the human experience through inclusion, discovery and innovation, and propelling broad-based prosperity for the many communities we serve. Located in Orlando and designated as an Hispanic Serving Institution, UCF offers more than 220 degree programs in 13 colleges. Named one of the top 20 universities in the nation for innovation by US News & World Report, UCF is comprised of four campuses – the main campus in east Orlando, the Rosen College of Hospitality Management campus, the Academic Health Sciences campus and UCF Downtown.

Application Plan	Summer	Fall
Priority Application Completion Deadline for Scholarship Consideration	November 1	November 1
Final Application Deadline	March 1	May 1
Notification Date	Early December then Rolling	Early December then Rolling

- ▶ SPARK required.
- ▶ Official test scores required.

B12. State University System (SUS) of Florida Admission

NAME OF INSTITUTION	SUMMER SEMESTER					
	Total Enrollment	Total Undergraduate Enrollment (2022)	Number of FTIC Applications	Number of FTIC Admits	Average or middle 50% FTIC GPA	Middle 50% Admit FTIC SAT
 FLORIDA AGRICULTURAL AND MECHANICAL UNIVERSITY	7,803	4,933	1104	520	3.53	990 – 1140
 FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	29,614	23,067	6,292	4,280	3.58	1010 – 1150
 FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY	16,004	14,481	1,796	1,112	3.57 – 4.39	1020 – 1180
 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	55,687	45,442	7,810	5,923	3.9 – 4.4	1060 – 1170
 FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY	1,593	1,531	N/A	161	3.8 – 4.5	1120 – 1220
 FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	44,161	32,936	12,775	4,614	4.1 – 4.5	1230 – 1320
 NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA	689	669	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
 UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	68,406	58,721	11,600	7,640	3.9 – 4.3 / 4.10	1170 – 1240
 UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA	60,795	38,011	See Fall for combined	2,964	4.4 – 4.6	1240 – 1390
 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA	16,517	14,282	1,982	1,359	3.11 – 3.74	950 – 1120
 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	49,766	36,948	13,849	9,067	3.90 – 4.29	1100 – 1200
 UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA	13,504	9,280	673	271	3.81	970 – 1150

B12. State University System (SUS) of Florida Admission

FALL SEMESTER								
Middle 50% Admit FTIC ACT	Number of FTIC Applications	Number of FTIC Admits	Average or middle 50% FTIC GPA	Middle 50% Admit FTIC SAT	Middle 50% Admit FTIC ACT	SSAR/SPARK	Self-Reported Test Scores	2+2 Program
19 – 24	21,415	4,186	3.91	1070 – 1240	22 – 27	Yes	No	FAMU IGNITE
20 – 24	30,337	17,727	3.70 – 4.30 / 4.0	1090 – 1250	22 – 28	Yes	Yes	Link to FAU
19 – 24	17,949	11,265	3.76 – 4.51	1080 – 1230	21 – 26	No	No	Destination FGCU
21 – 24	16,487	5,373	4.1 – 4.7	1240 – 1370	26 – 30	No	No	Connect4 Success
25 – 27	2,483	1,120	4.0 – 4.7	1250 – 1390	28 – 32	Yes	Yes	South Florida State College & Polk State College
26 – 30	62,046	14,128	4.3 - 4.6	1340 – 1450	29 – 33	Yes	Yes	Aspire TCC2FSU
N/A	2,782	1,511	4.03	1100 – 1310	22 – 29	Yes	Yes	NCF Transform
23 – 26	43,332	16,157	4.1 – 4.5 / 4.30	1260 – 1380	26 – 30	Yes	No	Direct Connect
27 – 31	66,866	12,742	4.4 – 4.6	1370 – 1510	31 – 34	Yes	Yes	Gator Engineering @ Santa Fe and State College of Florida
21 – 27	17,749	12,562	3.80 – 4.44	1060 – 1250	21 – 27	Yes	No	Transfer2UNF
22 – 25	51,348	17,648	4.10 – 4.59	1250 – 1390	27 – 31	Yes	No	FUSE
19 – 24	9,397	5,212	3.95	1050 – 1230	21 – 27	Yes	No	2UWF

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA



As a preeminent research institution, the **University of Florida (UF)** pushes the world forward by challenging convention and ourselves. Our 11 colleges offer more than 120 undergraduate and 200 graduate degrees. We also offer training within our five professional schools: dentistry, law, medicine, pharmacy, and veterinary medicine. With limitless opportunities for undergraduate research, involvement with over 1,000 student organizations, mentoring from world-class faculty, and residential living-learning communities, students can create a college experience as unique as they are.

Application Plan	Application Deadline
Summer B & Fall	November 1, 2023
Merit Scholarship	November 1, 2023
Space Available	March 1, 2024
Application Notification	February 2024
Space Available Notification	Late March 2024





UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA

The **University of North Florida (UNF)** is a public institution situated on a beautiful campus in Jacksonville, FL, a short distance from miles of beaches and downtown Jacksonville. UNF has an enrollment of nearly 17,000 students and offers over 100 bachelor's degree programs. Approximately 85% of our students participate in internships and other real-world experiences by graduation, and UNF ranks first in the State University System in the percentage of graduates employed in Florida. In addition, our students' participation in study abroad is in the top five in Florida. UNF has been ranked among the top public institutions by U.S. News & World Report, and one of the best in the southeast by The Princeton Review

Application Plan Application Deadline

Priority Application Deadline	November 1
Priority Decision Release	November 15, then Rolling
Priority Scholarship Deadline	January 15
Final Application Deadline	April 1
Commitment Deadline	May 1

- ▶ Self-reported transcripts are acceptable for admissions. Official transcripts required for enrollment.
- ▶ Official test scores required for admissions and enrollment.





UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

The **University of South Florida** is located in the vibrant and diverse Tampa Bay region, with campuses in Tampa, St. Petersburg, and Sarasota-Manatee. Together, our campuses serve more than 50,000 students pursuing undergraduate, graduate, specialist, and professional degrees. Across our 13 colleges, undergraduates choose from more than 200 majors, minors, and concentrations, from business and engineering to the arts and USF Health.

USF is the fastest-rising university in America, according to U.S. News and World Report's (U.S. News) 2023 Best Colleges rankings. Also in 2023, USF became the first public university in Florida in nearly 40 years to be invited to join the Association of American Universities (AAU), a prestigious group of the leading universities in the United States and Canada. High-impact global research is central to USF's mission as one of only three Preeminent Research Universities in Florida.

Application Plan Application Deadline

Application opens	August 1
Priority application deadline	November 1, 2023
Notification	Mid December (Rolling admissions thereafter)
Priority application completion deadline for admissions and merit scholarships	January 15
Final application Deadline	March 1
Admissions Deposit Deadline	May 1

▶ SSAR required.

▶ Official test scores required.





UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA

The **University of West Florida** promotes an innovative, student-centered culture. Ranked among the “Best Regional Universities South” by U.S. News & World Report, the 1,600-acre Pensacola campus serves a student body of 13,500, with more than 100,000 alumni, and offers 70 undergraduate programs. UWF provides a personalized and engaging experience through small class sizes, supportive faculty, and active student organizations, and promotes undergraduate research and scholarly activities in the classroom and beyond. UWF offers an affordable, high-quality education and generous scholarship opportunities that enable students from varied backgrounds to meet their career and life goals.

Application Plan	Summer/Fall Deadlines	
Scholarship Consideration	December 1	Must be admitted by this deadline to be automatically considered for merit-based scholarships.
Final Deadline	June 1	
Notification Date	October 15 then Rolling	



U.S. News & World Report ranks Florida's Higher Education #1 in the country! With 12 members of the State University System and 28 members of the Florida College System, Florida offers a wide range of programs, degrees and experiences. Please visit floridashines.org.

The Talented Twenty Program: The Talented Twenty Program is part of the Governor's Equity in Education Plan. The purpose is to guarantee admission to students who succeed in their respective K-12 public schools, and to encourage students to strive for better grades and a rigorous curriculum. The Florida Department of Education and Florida Board of Governors has created a frequently asked questions document to assist public school counselors with navigating the process. Please visit www.fldoe.org/schools/family-community/activities-programs/talented-twenty-program/ for details and step-by-step instructions.

Florida Student Scholarship & Grant Programs: Students must submit a completed Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) to the Office of Student Financial Assistance for programs such as the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, Jose Marti Scholarship and Scholarships for Children and Spouses of Deceased or Disabled Veterans. Please visit floridastudentfinancialaidsg.org.

AA degrees for graduating seniors: A high school student earning dual enrollment credit and/or an AA degree in high school is considered a first-time in college student and should submit an application as a first-year student, not as a transfer. Earning the AA while in high school does not guarantee admission into a specific state university.



RESOURCES:





Florida Shines: floridashines.org

Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook:
dlss.flvc.org/florida-counseling-for-future-education-handbook





Florida College Access Network: floridacollegeaccess.org

2023 FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM (SUS) APPLICATION GUIDELINES & INFORMATION





**Upon submitting any application via CommonApp, within about 1-3 days, an applicant will receive an email instructing them to create an account/portal at each institution's own website. It is there that essays are submitted, test scores updated, SSAR linked, etc.

	Application Type	Scores	Transcripts/Coursework	Essay Required	Deadline(s) (Priority = \$\$)	Further Details
 FAMU #1 ranked PUBLIC HBCU	FAMU online & CommonApp**	MUST send from SAT (5215) and/or ACT (0726)	SSAR Click here to learn more	For scholarship (and letters of rec also required)	-Priority: 11/1 -For Merit \$ Consideration: 11/1 -For Pres. Scholars Consideration 10/1 -Final Deadline: 4/1	
 FAU	FAU online & CommonApp**	OPTIONS: • Send from SAT (5229) and/or ACT (0729) OR • Self-report on SSAR	SSAR Click here to learn more	NO	-Priority: 11/1 – notification early Feb - For Merit \$ Consideration: 1/15 -Final Deadline: 4/1	If applying to FAU's College of Nursing applicant must send OFFICIAL score reports from SAT/ACT.
 FGCU	FGCU online & CommonApp**	MUST send from SAT (5221) and/or ACT (0733)	<i>Transcript must be sent via state electronic system (FASTER/SPEEDE) Ms. Gilman will if listed in APPLYING in Scoir</i>	YES	-Priority/Early Action: 11/1 - For Merit \$ Consideration: 11/1 -Final Deadline: 3/1	
 FIU	FIU online & CommonApp** STRONGLY encourage to do FIU's online app	MUST send from SAT (5206) and/or ACT (0776) * MUST be recv'd by 10/23 to meet Deadline 1	<i>Transcript must be sent via state electronic system (FASTER/SPEEDE) Ms. Gilman will if listed in APPLYING in Scoir</i>	NO	-Deadline 1 – 10/23, w/notification of 11/15, then rolling -Scholarship Apps – 12/1 -Final Deadline: 3/15	

B13. SUS Summary Chart

	Application Type	Scores	Transcripts/Coursework	Essay Required	Deadline(s)	Further Details
 <p>Florida PolyTech</p>	FLPoly online & CommonApp**	OPTIONS: • Send from SAT (7303) and/or ACT (2869) OR • Email/Text picture Click here to learn more	SSAR	NO	-Early Action & Alexander & Provost Scholars: 11/15 -Regular Deadline & FLPoly Merit: 3/1	
 <p>FSU</p>	FSU online & CommonApp**	Self-Report in your FSU App Status Check Click here to learn more (see FURTHER DETAILS for more info)	SSAR Click here to learn more	YES Click here to learn more	-Early Action for FL Residents Only: 10/15 w/notification 12/14 -Regular Decision: 12/1 w/notification 2/15 -Final Deadline: 3/1	Test scores for EA deadline of 10/15/23, by 12/1/23; Test score Reg. deadline of 12/1/23, by 1/1/24
 <p>New College of Florida</p>	New College online & CommonApp**	OPTIONS: • Self-report OR • Send directly from SAT and/or ACT Click here to learn more	SSAR	YES	-Early Action: 11/1 -Regular Decision: 2/1 -Final Deadline: 4/1 Notifications are rolling	
 <p>UCF</p>	UCF online & CommonApp**	MUST send from SAT (5233) and/or ACT (0735) *MUST be recv'd by 11/1 to meet Priority Deadline	Must complete UCF's own self-reported academic record SPARK...must submit PRIOR to 11/1 to access SPARK & complete by 11/1 Click here to learn more	Optional (= YES) Click here to learn more	-Priority & Merit: 11/1 w/notification 11/15, then rolling FINAL Deadline: 3/1 for summer; 5/1 for fall	Top Ten Knight program has been discontinued.

B13. SUS Summary Chart

	Application Type	Scores	Transcripts/Coursework	Essay Required	Deadline(s)	Further Details
	CommonApp ONLY**	OPTIONS: • Self-report by 12/1 OR • Send directly from SAT and/or ACT Click here to learn more	SSAR BY 11/15 Click here to learn more	YES	-11/1 w/notification 2/23 -For Merit \$ Consideration: 11/1	Application Options include fall, summer, spring, Innovation Academy , Honors Program PACE ; Test scores by 12/1/23
	UNF online & CommonApp**	OPTIONS: • Send directly from SAT (5490) and/or ACT (0711) OR • Upload PDF of score report into your UNF portal Click here to learn more	SSAR Click here to learn more	NO	-Priority 11/1 w/notification of 11/15, then rolling -For Merit \$ Consideration: 1/15 -Final Deadline: 4/1	
	USF online & CommonApp**	MUST send from SAT (5828) and/or ACT (0761)	SSAR by 1/15 Click here to learn more	NO	-Priority: 11/1 w/notification in mid-December, then rolling -For Merit \$ Consideration: 1/15 -Final Deadline: 3/1	
	UWF online app & CommonApp**	MUST send from SAT (5833) and/or ACT (0771)	SSAR Click here to learn more	NO	-Rolling -For Merit \$ Consideration (& must be admitted by this date): 12/1 -Final Deadline: 6/1	













Below you will find links to the HONORS PROGRAMS/COLLEGES at each institution:

- [FAMU Honors Program](#)
- [Honors at FAU](#)
- [Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College @ FAU](#)
- [FGCU's Honors College](#)
- [FIU's Honors College](#)
- FL Polytech: True to polytechnic philosophy, Florida Poly offers all students a rigorous education with small class sizes, hands-on learning and unique capstone and internship opportunities, taught by exceptional scholars. Therefore, currently, the University does not have a separate honors program
- [The FSU University Honors Program](#)
- New College of Florida: As the State of Florida's legislatively designated “honors college for the liberal arts,” New College is the only public college or university in the state whose sole mission is to provide an undergraduate education of the highest caliber to leading students from around the country.
- [Burnett Honors College @ UCF](#)
- [Honors Program @ UF](#)
- [Hicks Honors College @ UNF](#)
- [Judy Genshaft Honors College @ USF](#)
- [Kugelman Honors Program @ UWF](#)

Below are links to guide you through some special programs/opportunities at many of our SUS institutions. EVERY institution has an array of wonderful programs and opportunities, and you are encouraged to visit the admissions page of each school you are interested in to learn more.

- **Golden Promise @ FIU** – guarantees 100% tuition & fees to Florida residents with a 0 EFC: <https://onestop.fiu.edu/finances/types-of-aid/golden-promise/>
- **Connect4Success** (C4S) is a guided transfer pathway that helps students transition seamlessly to FIU. Many high school and college students choose to get an associate’s degree (AA) at a state or community college as a first step before earning a bachelor's degree. By enrolling in C4S, you can attend any Florida public or community college and get automatic admission to FIU at the end of your AA. Anyone planning to earn their AA, whether you are a high school graduate or a college student, can sign up for C4S. Just earn your AA degree within 3 years, reactivate your application, and you are on your way to FIU.
- **FIU Pathway Tool:** [First Year Pathways | Admissions | Florida International University \(fiu.edu\)](#)
- FAU offers a variety of pathways to admission: <https://www.fau.edu/admissions/pathways/>
- **FAMU's Ignite 2+2 Program** Through our FAMU Ignite Program, students who attend a [Florida College System \(FCS\) institution](#) are guaranteed general admission into FAMU after completion of an Associate of Arts (AA) degree. Note: Limited access programs may require additional admissions and prerequisite requirements. Florida A&M University currently has articulation agreements with nineteen (19) Florida College System institutions throughout Florida. [View the full list of our current partnerships.](#)
- Overall, first-year admissions at UF: <https://admissions.ufl.edu/apply/freshman/>
- **The Innovation Academy at UF**, which you must apply for (spring/summer schedule): <https://innovationacademy.ufl.edu/>
- **Gator Engineering at Santa Fe:** <https://www.eng.ufl.edu/students/gesf/>
- Gator Engineering at the State College of Florida (same as above): <https://www.eng.ufl.edu/students/gescf/>
- **UF's PaCE program** (online for first 60 credits or AT LEAST two semesters/15 credits): <https://admissions.ufl.edu/learn/pace/>
- **FSU's CARE** (Center for Academic Retention & Enhancement) provides preparation, orientation and academic support programming for students who are among the first in their family to attend college and may face unique challenges in college because of education or economic circumstances: <https://care.fsu.edu/>
- **FSU's Seminole Pathways - *Students selected by the Office of Admissions*** to participate in this program will be able to join us on the Tallahassee campus after completing one of the four pathways outlined: <https://admissions.fsu.edu/first-year/pathways>
- **Destination FGCU** Destination FGCU, the FSW/FGCU Transfer Program, provides students with the tools and guidance they need to easily and successfully move from FSW upon completion of their Associate in Arts degree (AA) to FGCU. Visit [FGCU's transfer student webpage](#) for more information.
- **NCF Transform** Through the NCF Transform program, students who attend a partner college are guaranteed admission to New College after completion of an associate in arts (or associate in science, in some instances) degree. New College has articulation agreements with colleges throughout the U.S.
- **DirectConnect to UCF** DirectConnect to UCF guarantees admission (consistent with university policy) to UCF with an associate degree (A.A.) or articulated (A.S.) degree from one of our partner state colleges. Benefits: shorter time to complete your degree, personal Success Coach, smooth transition and enrollment assistance, & access to UCF transition services, activities, and events.

SENDING COLLEGE APPLICATION FEE WAIVERS TO FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITIES

FL UNIVERSITY	HOW TO SEND THE FEE WAIVER
 FLORIDA A & M UNIVERSITY	Student indicates they qualify for a fee waiver by clicking the check box in Common App.
 FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY	Student emails waiver to FAU Admissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student emails waiver it to admissions@fau.edu
 FLORIDA GULF COAST UNIVERSITY	Student emails waiver to FGCU Admissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student emails waiver to undergrad@fgcu.edu
 FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY	Student uploads waiver through myFIU student account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student uploads fee waiver to myFIU student account.
 FLORIDA POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY	Student emails waiver to Florida Polytechnic University Admissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student emails waiver to Laura Pita: lpita@floridapoly.edu
 FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY	Student indicates they qualify for a fee waiver by clicking the check box in Common App.
 NEW COLLEGE OF FLORIDA	No application fee
 UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA	Student indicates they qualify for a fee waiver by clicking the check box in Common App.
 UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA	Student emails waiver to UCF Admissions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student emails waiver to admission@ucf.edu
 UNIVERSITY OF NORTH FLORIDA	Student uploads waiver through myWings student account <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student uploads fee waiver to myWings student account.
 UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA	Student uploads waiver through myUSF student account. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Counselor checks fee waiver eligibility on Scoir • Student downloads Scoir fee waiver • Student uploads fee waiver to myUSF student account.
 UNIVERSITY OF WEST FLORIDA	Student indicates they qualify for a fee waiver by clicking the check box in Common App.

C. Perseverance & Gratitude- Definitions & Exploration

Perseverance: Strength of courage that involves being hardworking, task-oriented, and undeterred by obstacles.

Gratitude: Strength of transcendence that involves experiencing feelings of thankfulness, appreciation, and gratefulness in life and expressing those feelings to others.

Example:

Exploration:

Requesting a Recommendation Letter

Teacher's Name: _____

Course(s) with this Teacher: _____

Sample messaging:

Thank you so much for agreeing to write this letter of recommendation on my behalf. I asked you because I think you are someone who knows me well and who can accurately speak on my potential for academic success in college. This information may be helpful as you write the recommendation. For each recommendation being mailed, I have attached a stamped, addressed envelope for your convenience. I appreciate the time and effort you will take in writing this recommendation for me.

STUDENT INFORMATION FOR COLLEGE RECOMMENDATION

STUDENT NAME: _____

GRADE IN SCHOOL: ___ junior ___ senior GPA: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

1. List colleges to which you are applying and due dates:

_____	_____	Online option: ___ Yes ___ No
_____	_____	Online option: ___ Yes ___ No
_____	_____	Online option: ___ Yes ___ No

2. College major/interests: _____

3. Career goals: _____

(Include the Highlights Sheet on the next page with your request.)

Highlights Sheet

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Extracurricular Activities (clubs, sports, etc.):

Activity	School Years	# of hours per week	Description
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		

Awards & Honors:

Name of Award	School Years	Organization & Responsibilities
	_9 _10 _11 _12	
	_9 _10 _11 _12	
	_9 _10 _11 _12	
	_9 _10 _11 _12	

Leadership Positions:

Position	School Years	Organization/Activity & Responsibilities
	_9 _10 _11 _12	
	_9 _10 _11 _12	
	_9 _10 _11 _12	
	_9 _10 _11 _12	

Community Service:

Activity	School Years	# of hours per week	# of weeks per year
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		

Work Experience:

Position, Place of Employment	School Years	# of hours per week	Responsibilities
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		
	_9 _10 _11 _12		

Hobbies and Interests:

Other:



Ready, Set, Resume: Have You Got the Skills?

LESSON 5: STUDENT ACTIVITY SHEET

Knowing what to put on a resume can be tricky. The key is to think about the skills, education and experience that are required for your desired job, and to cater your resume to that job. In researching your dream career, what skills, education and experience did you discover are necessary? Use that information to create a “perfect” resume for that job on the next page, relying on the sample resume and information below as a guide.

John Smith | jsmith@ucdavis.edu

100 Alvarado Avenue | Davis, California 95616 | 530.753.0000

OBJECTIVE

A laboratory research internship with ABC Company.

EXPERIENCE

Shift Leader, In-N-Out Burger, Davis, CA - (10/13 - present)

- Provided outstanding customer service and handled customer complaints
- Acted as cashier; recorded and delivered bank deposits
- Trained and supervised ten personnel
- Maintained inventory count of all products
- Ensured proper food sanitation procedures were followed

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science in Biological Sciences - (June 2013)

University of California, Davis

Related Course Work: General Chemistry (Lab), Microbiology (Lab),
Organic Chemistry (Lab), Zoology (Lab), Biology

SKILLS

- Familiar with buffer preparation, titrations, pipetting, pH meter, and analytical balances
- Ability to keep accurate laboratory records
- Experience using Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access in both PC and Mac platforms

Contact information allows potential employers to reach you. Just make sure to use a professional email address that includes your name.

The **objective** succinctly states your career goals and employment focus by articulating a target industry or job category.

The **experience** section highlights your work history, including specific job titles, start and end dates and a brief description of responsibilities held. If you do not yet have employment experience, volunteer work and internships can be included.

List your **education** level and degrees obtained beginning with the most recent. Include the name of the school, dates attended and education level completed.

Skills define the talents that make you a desirable candidate for the position. Make sure to align your skill sets to the target job.



Ready, Set, Resume: Have You Got the Skills?

LESSON 5: STUDENT ACTIVITY TEMPLATE

Name:

email:

address/phone:

OBJECTIVE

EXPERIENCE

-
-
-
-
-

EDUCATION

-
-
-
-

SKILLS

-
-
-
-

JESSE MARTINEZ

LOCK HAVEN, PA 17745 (555) 555-5555 EXAMPLE@EXAMPLE.COM

CAREER OBJECTIVE High school student experienced in customer service and retail service looking for a job position to take on new challenges while applying leadership skills. Excellent phone etiquette, organizational skills and client satisfaction techniques using solutions tailored to their needs.

WORK HISTORY

NOVEMBER 2020-DECEMBER 2020

Seasonal Retail Sales Assistant | Trader Joe's | Lock Haven, PA

- Restock shelves and display merchandise in an orderly way to boost customer interest.
- Assist customers in finding products, suggesting product choices after assessing their needs.
- Use POS system to process transactions, returns, and discounts

JUNE 2020-AUGUST 2020

Part-time Cashier | Costco | Lock Haven, PA

- Monitored self-checkout systems and provided assistance or intervention.
- Worked closely with the shift manager to solve problems and handle customer disputes.
- Increased sales by 50% after upselling items and cross-selling.

JUNE 2020-AUGUST 2020

Part-time Cashier | Walmart | Lock Haven, PA

- Helped lead cashier balance the till upon request and solve discrepancies.
- Boosted profits by 40% after upselling items according to customer needs.
- Provided recommendations to clients to ensure satisfaction.

SKILLS

- POS systems
- Sales
- Teamwork
- Product knowledge
- Collaboration
- Analytical skills

EDUCATION

06/2022

High School Diploma

Central High School, Lock Haven, PA

Step Into Your Future!

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program has helped more than 917,000 Florida students attend a postsecondary institution. Bright Futures awards include: Florida Academic Scholars award (FAS), Florida Medallion Scholars award (FMS), Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award (GSC) and the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award (GSV).



Go to www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org/SAPBFMAIN/SAPBFMAIN to find out how to qualify for a Bright Futures Scholarship.



Go to www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org and submit a completed, error-free Initial Student Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA) no later than August 31 after high school graduation. The ACT®/SAT® must be taken no later than June 30 of your high school graduation year.



Make the grade, earn the score...and graduate! The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program was created to establish a lottery-funded scholarship program to reward any Florida high school graduate who merits recognition of high academic achievement. The graduate must enroll in a degree program, certificate program or applied technology program at an eligible Florida public or private postsecondary education institution.



Know your responsibilities...apply, meet the requirements before graduation and throughout your college career. (Requirements are subject to change with each Florida Legislative session.)

Office of Student Financial Assistance website: www.FloridaStudentFinancialAidsg.org

Customer Service: 888-827-2004

Email: OSFA@fldoe.org



Verification of Receipt (This is not the application for the scholarship.)

I verify that I have received this notice and will read the initial eligibility requirements of the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program for the 2022-23 academic year.

NAME (please print) _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

Please return this verification portion to your high school counselor.

**Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program
Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) / Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)
2024-25**

Initial Eligibility Requirements: (As determined by the Florida Department of Education)

1. Submit the [Florida Financial Aid Application \(FFAA\)](#) no later than August 31 after high school graduation.
2. Graduate from a Florida high school with a standard high school diploma or its equivalent.
3. Complete the 16 college-preparatory courses required for admission to a state university.
4. Achieve the required weighted GPA in the 16 college-preparatory courses per the chart below.
5. Achieve the required composite ACT[®] score, Overall Score on the Classic Learning Test (CLT), or combined SAT[®] score. Tests are accepted through August 31 of the student’s graduation year (or through January 31 for mid-year graduates), per the chart below.
6. Complete the required number of volunteer service hours, paid work hours, or 100 total combined hours per the chart below.

Type	16 High School College-Preparatory Course Credits ¹	High School Weighted Bright Futures GPA	College Entrance Exams by High School Graduation Year (ACT [®] /CLT [®] /SAT [®])	Volunteer Service Hours ²	Paid Work Hours ²
FAS	4 - English (three must include substantial writing)	3.50	2024-25 Graduates: 29/96/1340	100 hours	100 hours
	4 - Mathematics (at or above the Algebra I level)		2025-26 Graduates: 29/95/1330		
FMS	3 - Natural Science (two must have substantial laboratory)	3.00	2024-25 Graduates: 25/84/1210	75 hours	100 hours
	3 - Social Science 2 - World Language (sequential, in same language)		2025-26 Graduates: 24/82/1190		

¹ The required coursework aligns with the State University System admission requirements found in Florida Board of Governor’s Regulation 6.002. Additional information regarding high school coursework can be found within the [Florida Counseling for Future Education Handbook](#).

² Students must earn the required volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination that totals a minimum of 100 hours.

Requirements to Receive an Award: (As determined by the postsecondary institution)

1. Be evaluated by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) as meeting initial eligibility requirements.
2. Be a Florida resident and U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
3. Enroll as a degree- or certificate-seeking student at a Florida institution in at least 6 non-remedial semester credit hours.

Renewal Requirements: (As determined by grade and hours submitted by the postsecondary institution)

1. Students must earn the number of credit hours based on the student’s enrollment type per term.
2. The renewal cumulative GPA requirements are outlined in the table below.

	Florida Academic Scholars (FAS)	Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS)
Minimum Cumulative GPA (unrounded and unweighted)	3.0	2.75

For detailed information, including other ways to qualify, please refer to the [Bright Futures Student Handbook](#).

Eligibility requirements are subject to change with each legislative session.

Students are responsible for tracking their application and award status online and ensuring that funding for an academic year is accurate by contacting their institution’s financial aid office.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars (GSC) 2024-25

Initial Eligibility Requirements: (As determined by the Florida Department of Education.)

1. Submit the [Florida Financial Aid Application \(FFAA\)](#) no later than August 31 after high school graduation.
2. Graduate with a standard high school diploma or its equivalent.
3. Earn a minimum of five (5) postsecondary credit hours through CAPE industry certifications that articulate for college credit.
4. Complete at least 30 volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination that equals a minimum of 100 total hours.

Eligible CAPE Certifications: Active Articulation Agreements Summary
www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7525/urlt/active-articulation-summary.xlsx

Requirements to Receive an Award: (As determined by your postsecondary institution.)

1. Be evaluated by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) as meeting initial eligibility requirements.
2. Be a Florida resident and U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
3. Enroll as a degree- or certificate-seeking student at a Florida institution in at least six (6) non-remedial semester credit hours.

Scholarship Restrictions:

Until a student has earned an eligible associate degree, Gold Seal CAPE (GSC) scholarships may only be used at postsecondary institutions that offer an applied technology diploma, technical degree education program (associate in applied science or associate in science), or a career certificate program.

Upon completion of an eligible associate degree program, a GSC Scholar may also receive an award for a maximum of 60 credit hours toward an eligible baccalaureate degree.

Renewal Requirements: (As determined by grade and hours submitted by your postsecondary institution.)

1. Students must earn the number of credit hours based on the student's enrollment type per term.
2. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative 2.75 GPA (unrounded and unweighted).

For detailed information, please refer to the [Bright Futures Student Handbook](#).

Eligibility requirements are subject to change with each legislative session.

Students are responsible for tracking their application and award status online and ensuring that funding for an academic year is accurate by contacting their institution's financial aid office.

Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV) 2024-25

Initial Eligibility Requirements: (As determined by the Florida Department of Education.)

1. Submit the [Florida Financial Aid Application \(FFAA\)](#) no later than August 31 after high school graduation.
2. Graduate with a standard Florida high school diploma or its equivalent.
3. Achieve the required weighted 3.0 GPA in the non-elective high school courses.
4. Complete at least three (3) full credits in a single Career and Technical Education program.
5. Achieve the required minimum 3.5 unweighted GPA in the single Career and Technical Education program.
6. Complete at least 30 volunteer service hours, 100 paid work hours, or a combination that equals a minimum of 100 total hours.
7. Achieve the required minimum scores on one of the college entrance exams per the chart below no later than August 31 of the year the student graduates from high school.

Exam Type	Sub-test	Required Score
ACT®	Reading	19
	English	17
	Mathematics	19
SAT® <small>(March 1, 2024, and thereafter)</small>	Critical Reading or Evidence-Based Reading and Writing	490
	Mathematics	480
SAT® <small>(Prior to March 1, 2024)</small>	Reading	24
	Writing and Language	25
	Math Test	24
PERT <small>(Only applies to the GSV Scholarship)</small>	Reading	106
	Writing	103
	Mathematics	114

Required test scores follow those established by Rule [6A-10.0315](#), Florida Administrative Code.

Requirements to Receive an Award: (As determined by your postsecondary institution.)

1. Be evaluated by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA) as meeting initial eligibility requirements.
2. Be a Florida resident and U.S. citizen or eligible noncitizen.
3. Enroll as a degree- or certificate-seeking student at a Florida institution in at least six (6) non-remedial semester credit hours.

Scholarship Restrictions:

The GSV award may only be used at postsecondary institutions that offer an applied technology diploma, technical degree education program (associate in applied science or associate in science), or a career certificate program and not toward the completion of an associate in arts or a baccalaureate degree.

Renewal Requirements: (As determined by grade and hours submitted by your postsecondary institution.)

1. Students must earn the number of credit hours based on the student’s enrollment type per term.
2. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative 2.75 GPA (unrounded and unweighted).

For detailed information, please refer to the [Bright Futures Student Handbook](#).

Eligibility requirements are subject to change with each legislative session.

Students are responsible for tracking their application and award status online and ensuring that funding for an academic year is accurate by contacting their institution's financial aid office.



BIGFUTURE SCHOLARSHIPS

Qualify to win \$40,000 just by planning for your future

Open to all students in the class of 2025, and 2026, BigFuture® awards hundreds of \$500 scholarships and at least two \$40,000 scholarships each month to students who take steps toward their career and education after high school. There is no required essay, minimum GPA or test score. You qualify yourself by taking steps to get ready for life after high school. If your family's income is less than \$60,000 per year, you will get extra chances at these scholarships and earn double the entries for every drawing.

- 1 Start Your Career List**
Explore careers that match your interests.
Start: December of sophomore year
Deadline: By the end of February of your senior year
- 2 Build Your College List**
Find two or four-year colleges that interest you.
Start: December of sophomore year
Deadline: By June 30 of your junior year
- 3 Start Your Scholarship List**
Find other scholarships to help you pay for college.
Start: July 1 before your senior year
Deadline: By the end of February of your senior year
- 4 Strengthen Your College List**
Make sure your college list has a mix of reach, match, and safety schools.
Start: July 1 before your senior year
Deadline: By October 31 of your senior year
- 5 Complete the FAFSA**
Fill out the free government form to apply for financial aid.
Start: October 1 of your senior year
Deadline: By the end of February of your senior year
- 6 Apply to Colleges**
Apply to the schools you want to attend.
Start: October 1 of your senior year
Deadline: By the end of February of your senior year

Get started at: bigfuture.org/scholarships



*The "Start Your Career List" step is only open to the class of 2025 and 2026.

Scholarship Opportunities and Search Tools

Florida Department of Education – Scholarships & Grants

The FL Department of Education, Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA), administers a variety of state-funded grants and scholarships (including Bright Futures) to assist Florida residents with the cost of their postsecondary education. Visit the following website for more information and eligibility requirements:

Website: <http://www.floridastudentfinancialaid.org/SSFAD/home/uamain.htm>

The Miami Foundation – Scholarships

Scholarships vary year to year. Visit the following website for more information and eligibility requirements:

Website: <https://miamifoundation.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=429>

The Miami Herald Silver Knight Awards – Scholarships

The purpose of this Awards program is to recognize outstanding students who have not only maintained good grades but have also unselfishly applied their special knowledge and talents to contribute significant service to their schools and communities. Visit the following website for more information and eligibility requirements:

Website: <http://www.miamiherald.com/site-services/miami-herald-events/silver-knight/>

Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute (CHCI) – Scholarships

The CHCI Scholarship Program provides financial assistance that will increase graduation rates among Latino students in post-secondary education. Visit the following website for more information and eligibility requirements:

Website: <https://www.chcinextopp.net/scholarships#.VTfAuonwtaQ>

Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) – Scholarships

The RMHC network offer scholarships to students in financial need who have demonstrated academic achievement, leadership and community involvement. Visit the following website for more information and eligibility requirements:

Website: <http://www.rmhc.org/rmhc-us-scholarships>

FastWeb – Scholarship Search Tool

Search for scholarships, get student financial aid and find money to pay for college.

Website: <http://www.fastweb.com/>

Department of Labor – Scholarship Search Tool

Search more than 7,000 scholarships, fellowships, loans, and other financial aid opportunities.

Website: <http://careerinfonet.org/scholarshipsearch/ScholarshipCategory.asp?searchtype=category&nodeid=22>

Big Future by The College Board – Scholarship Search Tool

Find scholarships, financial aid and internships from more than 2,200 programs, totaling nearly \$6 billion.

Website: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>

For more scholarship information, schedule a visit with your CAP Advisor or Counselor!

Scholarship Opportunities and Search Tools

CollegeNET – Scholarship Search Tool

A scholarship search engine and social network where students create topics, participate in discussions, and vote on scholarship winners.

Website: <http://collegenet.com/elect/app/app>

Scholarships.com – Scholarship Search Tool

A scholarship search engine to find money for college and learn about the entire financial aid process.

Website: <https://www.scholarships.com/about-us/>

Raise.me

Micro scholarship offered at participating post-secondary institutions. Create an account and keep it up-to-date.

Website: <https://www.raise.me/>

CareerOneStop

Search nearly 9,000 scholarships, fellowships, and other financial aid opportunities.

Website: <https://www.careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx>

TheDream.org

Scholarships for highly motivated undocumented students.

Website: <https://www.thedream.us/scholarships/national-scholarship/>

Scholarships 360

Get Matched! Use this site to search for a variety of scholarships.

Website: <https://scholarships360.org/>

For more scholarship information, schedule a visit with your CAP Advisor or Counselor!

When it comes to researching potential schools, try planning a **College Visit!** Many students change their school of choice after visiting a college campus.

Get the most out of your college visit with these tips:

Review the school calendar.

Schedule your visit while college classes are in session. You won't get a realistic idea of student life in July or during winter break.

Meet the experts.

Talk to the current students – they may soon be your peers. Specific questions will provide you with far more interesting (and helpful) answers. Don't forget to contact your school alumni attending each specific school.

Meet the other experts.

Stop by the admissions office and introduce yourself. Let them know what interests you about the school so they can direct you to the best place for further information. Collect contact information and send a brief, friendly email thanking them for taking the time to talk to you.

If there is a sign-up sheet, add your name! Colleges do keep track of which applicants have demonstrated genuine interest in the school. A visit is a great way to demonstrate your interest.

Take the campus tour...

Register for the official campus tour. While you're walking around, check out the flyers and bulletin boards and pick up a school newspaper to get a sense of what's going on. If there are any facilities that are important to you, ask your tour guide for more information. Don't forget to take a look at the freshmen dormitories!

Be a student for a day (or night).

Some schools sponsor overnight programs in which you can stay with a current student. This is a great opportunity to get a deeper sense of campus life and interact with your potential future friends and roommates. Even if you don't stay over, most schools will allow you to sit in on lectures. Browse the course catalogue before you arrive or ask the admissions office what classes are in session that day.

Save the best for last.

You'll get better at visiting colleges with practice. As you compare schools, you pick up on the aspects you like and dislike. You should also figure out the right questions to ask and the best campus spots to gauge student life.

Keep a record of every college visit.

If you visit many schools, your memories of them are bound to overlap. Keep track of the details you like and dislike. When more questions arise, you can call or send an email for an answer rather than visiting a second time.

Interested in Virtual Campus Tours? Visit the following websites for more information:

<https://www.flvc.org/>
<http://www.youvisit.com/>
<http://www.campustours.com/>



HIGH DEMAND, HIGH PAYING CAREERS in 1 to 2 years

Your future starts now!



HIGH DEMAND, HIGH PAYING CAREERS in 1 to 2 years

- Learn at your own pace, hands-on training
- Accredited by The Council on Occupational Education
- No Student Loans to Repay
- Financial Aid and Veterans' Educational Benefits (at approved centers for those who qualify)
- Day and Evening Classes
- 7 Locations in Miami-Dade County

CONVENIENT LOCATIONS

George T. Baker Aviation Technical College
3275 NW 42nd Avenue
Miami, FL 33142
305.871.3143
bakeraviationtechcollege.com

Miami Lakes Technical College
5780 NW 158th Street
Miami Lakes, FL 33014
305.557.1100
miamilakes.edu

D. A. Dorsey Technical College
7100 NW 17th Avenue
Miami, FL 33147
305.693.2490
dadorseytech.edu

Robert Morgan Technical College
18180 SW 122nd Avenue
Miami, FL 33177
305.253.9920
robertmorgantech.edu

The English Center
3501 SW 28th Street
Miami, FL 33133
305.445.7731
teciami.com

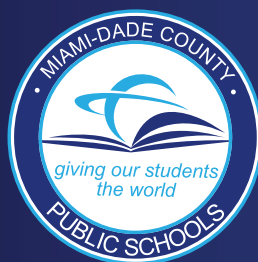
South Dade Technical College
28300 SW 152nd Avenue
Homestead, FL 33033
305.247.7839
southdadetech.edu

Lindsey Hopkins Technical College
750 NW 20th Street
Miami, FL 33127
305.324.6070
lindseyhopkins.edu

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL
305.558.8000
careerinayear.com

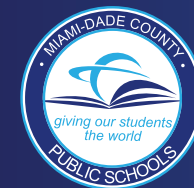
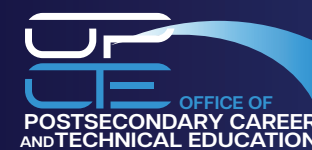
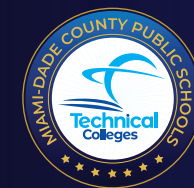
THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA

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M-DCPS does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, ethnic or national origin, religion, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, social and family background, linguistic preference, pregnancy, citizenship status, FMLA or any other basis prohibited by law in its educational programs, services, activities, admissions or in its hiring and employment practices. Please refer to School Board Policies 1362, 1362.02, 3362, 3362.02, 4362, 4362.02, 5517 and 5517.02 for more information. For additional information about Title IX or any other discrimination/harassment concerns, contact the U.S. Department of Education Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights and/or: Executive Director/Title IX Coordinator, Office of Civil Rights Compliance, 155 NE 15 Street, Suite P-104E, Miami, Florida 33132; PH: 305-995-1580; E-mail: crc@dadeschools.net; Website: <http://hrdadeschools.net/civilrights>. The District also provides equal access to its facilities, as required by the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act.

Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Jose L. Dotres



M-DCPS
YOUR BEST CHOICE



careerinayear.com

AVAILABLE PROGRAMS	HOURS	GEORGE T. BAKER AVIATION TECHNICAL COLLEGE	D.A. DORSEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE	THE ENGLISH CENTER	LINDSEY HOPKINS TECHNICAL COLLEGE	MIAMI LAKES TECHNICAL COLLEGE	ROBERT MORGAN TECHNICAL COLLEGE	SOUTH DADE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
COMMERCIAL ARTS & 3D ANIMATION								
Commercial Art Technology	1500				C		C	
Digital Design I	600			C				
Digital Design II	600			C				
Fashion Technology & Production Services	1050				C			
3D Animation Technology	1050						C	
COMMERCIAL FOODS, CULINARY ARTS & BAKING								
Baking & Pastry Arts	600						C	
Dietetic Management and Supervision	300				C			
Nutrition and Dietetic Clerk	300				C			
Professional Culinary Arts & Hospitality	1200				C	C	C	
CONSTRUCTION & APPRENTICESHIP								
Air Conditioning, Refrigeration and Pipefitting - APPR	5 Years		A					
Electrician - APPR	5 Years		A					
Electricity	1200				C			
Heat and Frost Insulators - APPR	4 Years		A					
Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning/Refrigeration (HVAC/R)	1350				C			
Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning/Refrigeration (HVAC/R) I	750			C		C	C	C
Heating, Ventilation, Air-Conditioning/Refrigeration (HVAC/R) II	600							C
Plumbing - APPR	5 Years		A					
Plumbing	1080						C	
Sheet Metal - APPR	4 Years		A					
HEALTHCARE OCCUPATIONS								
Central Sterile Processing Technician	650				C			
Dental Assisting	1230				C	C	C	
Hemodialysis Technician	600							C
Medical Assisting	1300		C			C	C	C
Medical Coder/Biller	1110		C					
Patient Care Assistant	290		C		C			
Pharmacy Technician	1050		C			C		C
Phlebotomy	165				C		C	C
Practical Nursing	1350				L	L	L	
Professional Nursing (LPN-RN)	900				COMING SOON			
Surgical Technology	1330				C			
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY								
Computer Systems and Information Technology (A+ & N+ Certificate)	900		C		C		C	
Network Systems Administration (Microsoft Technologies Focused)	1050			C				
Network Support Services (CCNA & CCNP)	1050						C	

AVAILABLE PROGRAMS	HOURS	GEORGE T. BAKER AVIATION TECHNICAL COLLEGE	D.A. DORSEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE	THE ENGLISH CENTER	LINDSEY HOPKINS TECHNICAL COLLEGE	MIAMI LAKES TECHNICAL COLLEGE	ROBERT MORGAN TECHNICAL COLLEGE	SOUTH DADE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
LICENSED CHILDCARE								
Child Care Center Operations	45			C	C			
Early Childhood Education	600			C	C		C	
PERSONAL SERVICES								
Barbering	900							L
Cosmetology	1200			L		L	L	L
Facials Specialty	220			L	L		L	L
Nails Specialty	180			L	L		L	L
MANUFACTURING								
Biomedical Equipment Repair Technology	1140				C			
Electronic Systems Technology	900					C		
Major Appliance and Refrigeration Technician	1200					C	C	
Welding Technology (SMAW, MIG-TIG)	1050					C	C	
Welding Technology - Advanced (Specialty Welding)	750					C	C	
TRANSPORTATION								
Advanced Automotive Service Technology (Honda PACT)	2400					C ¹	C	
Advanced Automotive Service Technology (Toyota T-TEN)	2400					C	C ²	
Automotive Collision Technology Technician	1400					C	C	
Automotive Service Technology	1800				C	C	C	
Automotive Service Technology I	1050			C				C
Automotive Service Technology II	750			C				C
Automotive Service Technology I & II (Braman)	1800				C ³			
Automotive Service Technology (Warren Henry)	1800					A		
Aviation Airframe Mechanics	1350	L						
Aviation Powerplant Mechanics	1350	L						
Avionics Systems Technician	1200	C						
Commercial Vehicle Driving (Class A)	320					L		
Commercial Vehicle Driving (Class B)	150		COMING SOON					
Diesel Systems Technician	1800					C	C	
Heavy Equipment Operations Technician	600					C		
Marine Service Technologies	1350				C			

Note: C = Certificate | L = License | A = Apprenticeship

¹ Register at Robert Morgan Technical College for the HONDA PACT off-campus training. ² Register at Miami Lakes Technical College for the TOYOTA T-TEN off-campus training.

³ Specialty Training - Braman Automotive Training Center. ⁵ Specialty Training - Warren Henry Automotive Service Technology.

Professional Nursing - This program is designed to prepare students who currently hold a valid, unencumbered Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) license issued by the Florida Board of Nursing.

** Students must finish the first six levels of Patient Care Technician before completing the last level which is the exit point of the program.

Grit: Feeling of passion for and persistence toward one's long-term goals involving a sense of purpose and hopeful thinking.

Responsibility: Strength of temperance that involves a sense of caution and exercised restraint to act in ways consistent with one's long-term goals and the expectation of others.

Example:

Exploration:

The College Interview

In addition to the engagement opportunities listed above, some colleges also offer the opportunity for a one-on-one interview. Though some interviews are purely informational in nature, most of the time admissions interviews are evaluative. You can find out whether or not a college offers interviews, and whether they are recommended or required, on their admissions website. Even if they are not required, strongly consider taking advantage of interview opportunities when they're available—they are one of few moments in the admissions process where your voice and personality are on full display.

Admissions interviews can be conducted by a current student, an admissions staff member, or a graduate of the institution. Typically, there is not an advantage to interviewing with one of those options over another, and some schools limit your interviewer options specifically to students or graduates. If the interview is an important part of the college admission at a college, all interview types will be given equal weight and all interviewers will be trained and prepared to represent the institution.

An interview with a senior staff member, such as the Dean or Director of Admission, is not essential. If you are considering colleges that strongly recommend or require an interview, be sure to research when and how you sign up for those opportunities or if the opportunity is assigned to you by the admissions office.

Interviews allow you to showcase your talents, interests, curiosities, and personality to a welcoming and receptive audience.

It is natural to be nervous or apprehensive given their evaluative nature, but try to reframe interviews as an opportunity for them to get to know you beyond what is written in your application, where you have a limited capacity to express yourself. As cliché as it may sound, and you will hear interviewers echo this sentiment regularly, admission interviews really are supposed to be a conversation, not an interrogation. Interviews allow you to showcase your talents, interests, curiosities, and personality to a welcoming and receptive audience. It is just as much an opportunity for you to ask probing questions as it is for them. For a list of sample interview questions, see Appendix A.

Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

Interview Etiquette

Though admission interviews are rarely formal events, there are still guidelines you should follow to demonstrate a level of seriousness and maturity in an interview setting:

- **Prepare.** You will almost certainly be asked why you are interested in the school at which you're interviewing, and providing a detailed, authentic, and specific answer requires prior research. Do not go into an interview setting having only just learned about a school, make sure you can answer the "why this college?" question ahead of time. This is one of the many areas in which your extensive research will come in handy!
- **Be on time.** Whether your interview is in-person or virtual, be sure to leave plenty of time to be punctual. For virtual interviews, try to find a quiet place where you won't be interrupted or distracted.
- **Turn off your cell phone and any digital devices to avoid interruptions.** If you're interviewing virtually, be sure to mute pop-ups or notifications.
- **Dress appropriately.** You do not have to dress formally, but presentability is important. If you are interviewing virtually, make sure your background is appropriate.
- **Answer questions completely and thoroughly.** It is okay to ask for a moment to collect your thoughts after a question has been posed if needed. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know something. Avoid a simple 'yes' or 'no' response—the interviewer shouldn't be working harder than you to gather information.
- **Lead with kindness.** Show appreciation to those supporting you, from the receptionist to your family to the interviewer.
- **Be proud.** Interviews are an opportunity to highlight your strengths and skills. This may take practice if you're not used to talking about yourself, especially in a praiseworthy way. Be mindful of boastfulness though, and avoid comparisons to other students. This interview is about you, no one else.

Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

- **Don't be scripted.** It is encouraged and beneficial to practice and prepare for an interview by talking through your potential answers to commonly asked questions. However, your answers should not sound scripted or robotic in the actual interview—that means they're not experiencing your genuine personality. If you are interviewing virtually, do not have your answers to questions written out next to you off camera. It will be very obvious to your interviewer if you are reading from a prepared script.
- **Ask questions.** Have a few questions ready for your interviewer, as this is an opportunity for you to learn as well. Coming with no prepared question may unintentionally send the message that you are not that invested in their school. When possible, leverage the expertise of your interviewer's experience—if they attend or attended the college, ask them about their experiences, their pros and cons, and what they wish they'd known.
- **Say thank you,** both at the end of the interview and in a follow-up thank you email.

It is worth noting the admissions interview is designed for the prospective applicant. Parents, guardians, or other family members should not expect to sit in or be a part of the interview process, whether in person or virtual, and insisting on doing so could be to the detriment to the student's application. There is often an opportunity for parents and guardians to ask questions after the interview has been conducted.

Asking Thoughtful Questions During Visits and Interviews

An important piece of advice to remember when asking questions during a campus tour, information session, interview, college fair, etc., is to prepare ahead of time and really consider what information you are seeking. In these venues, there is such a thing as a good and bad question, and much of how it is categorized has to do with the thought and intention behind it. In general, avoid the following types of questions:

- **Questions that can be answered on the website.** If you're genuinely wondering about the student-to-faculty ratio, average class size, or whether or not a college has a Biology major, that is all information that can be easily found through a few minutes of research online. These are not valuable or helpful questions to ask in a structured visit setting, as they demonstrate to the recipient that you haven't done your due diligence or do not care to.

- **Questions too broad for a succinct answer.** With questions like this, sometimes it takes a simple reframe to remind yourself of the information you're really seeking. Instead of asking "how is your psychology program?" (what admissions counselor will ever say, "it's bad, thanks for asking!") think about what specifically you're curious about learning about in their psychology program. Do you want to know about hands-on, practical opportunities in the department? Try "when can undergraduates start conducting research with a professor?" or "what internships have psychology students had in the past?" instead. Even if your admissions counselor or interviewer doesn't know the answer, the specificity of those questions make it far easier for them to follow up with you once they've tracked down the answer.
- **Questions focused on rankings or other flawed methodologies.** Inquiring as to why a college isn't ranked more highly or isn't as seemingly prestigious as others reveals a level of superficiality or materialism that most admissions counselors aren't interested in engaging with.
- **Questions comparing institutions.** Similar to questions about rankings, asking admissions representatives to compare themselves to their peer schools or other schools in the same geographic area is uncomfortable and rarely necessary. Oftentimes, you can determine which schools might be a better fit for you without tasking your admissions counselor with that work. Admissions counselors respect their colleagues at peer institutions and know that every school has something unique and important to offer; it's not their job to minimize another school in favor of their own.

Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC)

What to Do Before and After Your College Interview

Use this checklist to prepare for your college interviews and to take care of details afterward. Being prepared will help you stay calm and confident. It's also important to be honest about who you are and what you've done. You'll be more convincing — and appealing — if you stick to what's real.

Before

- Make an interview appointment with one of the colleges I want to attend.
- Mark the date and time on my calendar.
- Research the college by checking out its website, brochure and course catalog.
- Make notes about why I want to attend this college.
- Make notes about my academic background and high school experiences.
- Make notes about my life outside the classroom, including activities, community service and hobbies.
- Get familiar with common interview questions and do some [practice interviews](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies) ([/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies)) with a friend or family member. Take turns being the interviewee and the interviewer.
- Prepare questions about the school to ask the interviewer.
- Get directions to the interview.
- Choose appropriate clothes to wear for the interview.
- Gather documents I might need, such as test scores and my high school transcript.

After

- Make notes about the interview.
- File away any business cards with contact information that the interviewer and other admission staff offer.
- Send a thank-you note to the interviewer. Thank the person for his or her time and refer to something specific we discussed.

Related Articles

College Interviews: The Basics [\(> https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-the-basics\)](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-the-basics)

College Interviews: Practice Questions and Strategies [\(> https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies\)](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/your-college-application/prepare-for-interviews/college-interviews-practice-questions-and-strategies)



Typical College Interview Questions

If you have the opportunity for an interview with a college admission representative, take advantage of it. This is a chance for you to answer questions about yourself—your interests and accomplishments, your future goals and your reasons for applying to a particular College. It is also a great opportunity for you to ask questions. Remember, you are trying to decide if this college is a good match for you!

Some typical questions you might be asked:

1. Tell us about yourself.
2. What are your favorite classes?
3. What do you want to study in college?
4. What are the extracurricular activities you have been most involved with during high school?
What were your contributions?
5. What do you see as your strengths and weaknesses?
6. Your greatest accomplishments?
7. How would your friends describe you?
8. Why are you considering our college?
9. What special programs are you interested in?
10. What characteristics are you looking for in the college you will attend?
11. Is there anything else you want us to know about you?
12. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS?

This last question is important—be prepared. Get specific information about the things that interest you most AND show the interviewer you have done your research. Some topics you may want to consider asking about:

1. The admission process at that school
2. Specific majors you are interested in
3. Special programs such as freshman seminars, study abroad, etc.
4. Social life—clubs and organizations, athletics, sororities and fraternities, community service.
Who participates?
5. Dorm Life—types of housing, food/meal plans
6. School traditions?

Remember, BE YOURSELF!

Source: National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), Step by Step, College Awareness and Planning

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

BUSINESS CASUAL

BUSINESS PROFESSIONAL

BUSINESS CASUAL



LIGHT BUTTON-UP SHIRT

PORTFOLIO

PRESSED SUIT

APPROPRIATE LENGTH SKIRT

POLISHED, CLOSED-TOE SHOES

NATURAL LOOKING MAKEUP

NO BULKY JEWELRY



NICE BLOUSE

PRESSED SUIT



FRESH HAIRCUT

CLEAN SHAVEN

APPROPRIATE TIE

PORTFOLIO

POLISHED SHOES



BUTTON-UP SHIRT

MATCHING BELT AND SHOES

PRESSED SLACKS

What to wear?

This guide demonstrates acceptable Business Professional and Business Casual Attire for your upcoming career events.

NOTE: For Interviews, always choose Business Professional attire.



What is an Internship?

An internship is a learning opportunity that gives you on-the-job training in a specific occupation. You will gain real-world experience, make contact with professionals in your field and gain relevant experience to add to your resume. Internships are typically part time and can last between three to six months.

What are the Benefits and Advantages of Internships?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Gain Work Experience & Transferable Skills</p> | <p>All students have their educational experience in common. Stand Out to an employer by also having work experience throughout high school and college. Why is this important?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work experience makes you more marketable; from an employer's perspective, you'll require less training and have already proven you can handle more responsibilities ✓ Transferable skills are generally required for any job and include communication and interpersonal skills, computer proficiency and team work |
| <p>2. Earn Course Credit</p> | <p>Some college degree programs incorporate a work/internship opportunity into the requirements for graduation. Other programs may have internships as an elective course for credit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Start early, check with your high school counselor/CAP advisor for more information on available opportunities |
| <p>3. Possibly Earn Money</p> | <p>Internships can be paid or unpaid; it depends on the position and company</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ If an internship unpaid, be sure to request a written letter of recommendation from those who know your work the best |
| <p>4. Experience a Prospective Career Path</p> | <p>Many students enter college with an idea of their major or career path...and many students end up changing their minds. Working for a company or industry can give you valuable insight into whether or not a career path is right for you, potentially avoiding the costs of obtaining a college degree in a field you're not interested in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Find an internship in a field/career that is of interest to you. By the time you graduate, you will have gained the experience you need to successfully (and confidently!) pursue the right career for you |
| <p>5. Gain Practical Experience</p> | <p>Many students learn best by being hands on. Everyone can benefit from learning how their classroom knowledge applies to real situations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ This will help reinforce the content, strategies and tactics taught in class |

D3. The Benefits of Internships

6. Network

It's all about who you know. Internships allow you to build your network of professional contacts in your field for references or future job opportunities

- ✓ An internship is an opportunity to learn from everyone around you. Ask questions and be eager to learn. These people could be your future colleagues or can be the connection to your first job

7. Develop New Skills

Internships allow you to learn more about your own strengths and weaknesses

- ✓ Create learning objectives and ask for feedback from your supervisor
- ✓ Embrace mistakes, ask questions, observe and gain confidence in your abilities....practice makes perfect!

When looking for an internship, *remember to consider:*

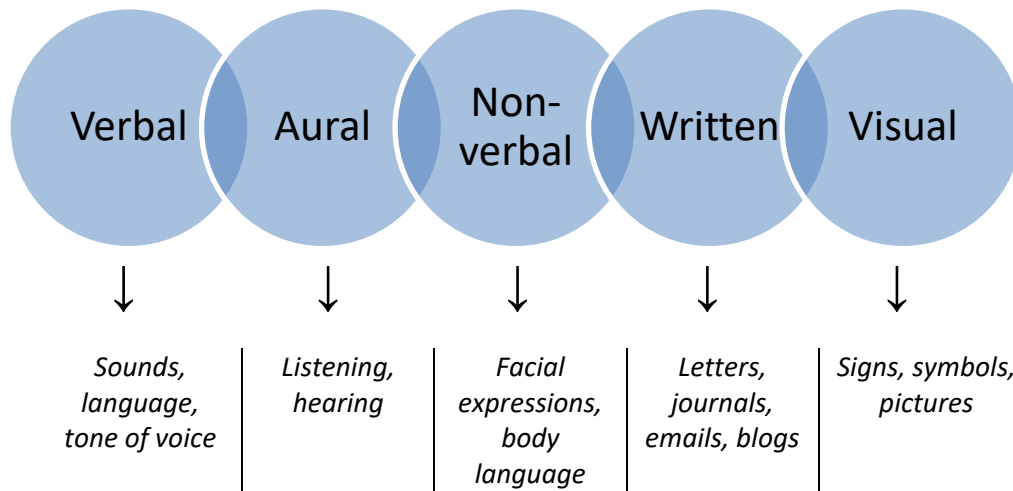
- **Your Availability**
 - How much free time do you have each week to dedicate towards an internship? (Think about your current class schedule and responsibilities at home or work)
 - How long will the internship last?
- **Location of the Internship**
 - Do you have adequate transportation to get to/from your internship?
 - Will you need to budget additional costs for transportation?



Source: CareerOneStop, U.S. Department of Labor

D4. Enhancing Your Communication Skills

Communication skills are important to everyone. They are how we give and receive information and convey our ideas and opinions with those around us. Communication comes in many forms:

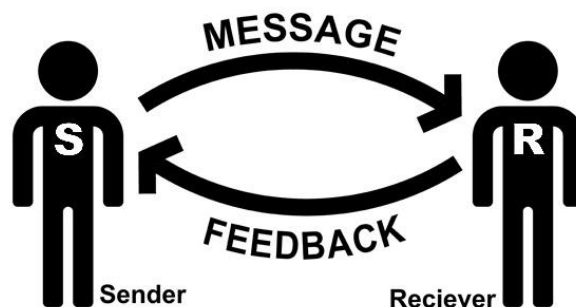


To an employer, good communication skills are essential. In fact, employers consistently rank good communication skills at the top of the list for potential employees.

During an interview, for example, employers are impressed by a job candidate who answers questions with more than one-word answers. This demonstrates that he or she is listening, and shares information and ideas (by asking questions for clarification and/or follow-up).

Remember, non-verbal communication is also critical in an interview. Employers expect good eye contact, good posture, and “active” listening.

It is important to develop a variety of skills for both communicating **TO** others and learning how to interpret the information received **FROM** others. Knowing our audience and understanding how they need to receive information is equally important as knowing ourselves. The activities on pages 2-5 will help students practice these skills.





Activity 1 – ROLE PLAY

About the Activity: This activity helps students understand the importance of being specific when offering and receiving communication. Often times our meaning gets lost, twisted, or misunderstood because we haven't been specific enough in our communication or we haven't asked clarifying questions. These role plays are designed to demonstrate the value of being specific in communication: TO others and in what is received FROM others.

Student Participation: Students can pair into small groups for role play or one group can volunteer to role play for the entire class. Sample scenarios and names can be adjusted based on your student group.

Sample Role Play Scenarios, 1-4: *Encourage students to improvise the discussion.*

1. (2 students required; 'Matt' and 'Mrs. Smith')

Matt has a job mowing lawns and receives some not-so-positive feedback from Mr. Smith, a client. Mrs. Smith is upset about the cost of Matt's service and would like a discounted rate. How can Matt address the feedback of Mrs. Smith?

a. Follow Up Discussion:

- i. How did Matt handle Mrs. Smith's feedback?
- ii. Was Matt's communication clear, effective and professional?
- iii. What non-verbal communication did you observe?
- iv. What could Matt or Mrs. Smith have done differently?

2. (2 students required; 'Ana' and 'Mr. Smith')

Ana missed the bus and is now running late for work. She has an important meeting with her boss, Mr. Smith, to request additional work hours and responsibilities. How should Mary handle this situation?

a. Follow Up Discussion:

- i. How did Ana handle this situation?
- ii. Was Ana's communication clear, effective and professional?
- iii. What non-verbal communication did you observe?
- iv. What could Ana or Mr. Smith have done differently?

Activity 1, Role Play Scenarios Continued...



3. (3 students required; 'Matt', 'Ana' and 'Laura')

Matt, Ana and Laura have been assigned a group project to complete for their college freshman English class. They must write a ten page paper and design a visual poster for a class presentation. Laura has missed three out of four meetings with Matt and Ana to help prepare the work. Matt and Ana are now concerned that their project will not be completed on time. Their English professor has already expressed that each group must handle any issues/problems themselves. How can Matt and Ana address this concern with Laura?

a. Follow Up Discussion:

- i. How did Matt, Ana and Laura handle this situation?
- ii. Was Matt and Ana's communication clear, effective and professional?
- iii. What non-verbal communication did you observe?
- iv. Did Laura listen to/hear the concerns of Matt and Ana? How do you know?
- v. What could Matt or Ana have done differently?

4. (2 students required; 'Ana' and 'Professor Smith')

Ana is upset about receiving a "C" on her final paper for her Science class with Professor Smith. Ana worked very hard on this paper and spent many hours in the library researching. How can Ana address her concern with Professor Smith?

Follow Up Discussion:

- i. How did Ana handle this situation?
- ii. Was Ana's communication clear, effective and professional?
- iii. How was Ana's tone of voice with Professor Smith?
- iv. What could Ana have done differently?

Additional Items for Discussion

1. What are some strategies you can use that will help you to "keep your cool" in difficult situations?
2. What are some strategies you can use that will help you to convey your message clearly?

Activity 2 – INTERVIEW ROLE PLAY

About the Activity: This activity helps students understand the importance of being specific when offering and receiving communication during an interview.

Student Participation: Students can pair into small groups for role play or one group can volunteer to role play for the entire class. Sample scenarios and names can be adjusted based on your student group.

Sample Role Play Scenarios, 1-3: *Encourage students to improvise the discussion.*

1. (2 students required, “Mary” and “Interviewer”)

Mary is interested in a career in hospitality and tourism. She has an interview with the Loew’s hotel for the position of front desk associate. She has been learning about hospitality/tourism in her academy classes and has had one internship with another local hotel where she completed a lot of administrative/office work.

Role Play Questions: Interviewer Asks Mary...

- Tell me about your education and experience
- Why are you interested in working here?
- Describe a time when you faced a hurdle or setback (either in school or at work) and the steps you took to overcome this?
- What qualities do you have that make you right for this position?
- Why should I hire you?

Follow Up Discussion:

- How did Mary handle the interview and questions?
- Was Mary’s communication clear, effective and professional?
- What non-verbal communication did you observe?
- What could Mary have done differently to improve her interview skills?

2. (2 students required, “Carlos” and “Interviewer”)

Carlos is interested in a career in medicine. He has an interview with a local hospital for an internship position. Carlos has taken some medical courses in his academy classes but has no work or internship experience.

(continued on page 5)

Role Play Questions: Interviewer Asks Carlos...

D4. Enhancing Your Communication Skills

- Tell me about your education and experience
- Why are you interested in working here?
- Describe your most interesting class; what have you enjoyed learning about?
- What qualities do you have that make you right for this position?
- Why should I hire you?

Follow Up Discussion:

- How did Carlos handle the interview and questions?
- Was Carlos' communication clear, effective and professional?
- What non-verbal communication did you observe?
- What could Carlos have done differently to improve his interview skills?

3. (2 students required, "Laura" and "Interviewer")

Laura is unsure of her career interests. She has an interview with a local real estate office for the entry level position of receptionist. Laura has no work experience but does have volunteer and community service experience.

Role Play These Questions: Interviewer Asks Laura...

- Tell me about your education and experience
- Why are you interested in working here?
- Tell me about a volunteer or community service project that you're most proud of and why?
- How would you handle a rude customer on the phone?
- Why should I hire you?

Follow Up Discussion:

- How did Laura handle the interview and questions?
- Was Laura's communication clear, effective and professional?
- What non-verbal communication did you observe?
- What could Laura have done differently to improve his interview skills?

Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Labor, Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success

Critical Thinking: Strength of wisdom that involves judgment when thinking through and making reasonable choices based on gathering and weighing information from multiple viewpoints.

Example:

Exploration:



Planning a FAFSA Workshop

*Remember, the FAFSA application will not be available until **December**.*

I. **Planning & Logistics (October & November)**

- Contact your local Miami Dade College Campus and speak with the Financial Aid Director to secure their participation and assistance in FAFSA workshops
 - Discuss MDC availability/schedule
 - Will there be a bilingual audience? A need for a bilingual presentation?
- Identify workshop logistics according to the needs of your students and parents
- You may need to space out workshops, January through April, to ensure parents have enough time to complete their taxes
 - Consider during school hours, evening and Saturday workshops
 - Workshop length, 1-3 hours
- Secure a workshop location; utilize the media center or lab with computers and internet access
 - Be sure to inform your MDC financial aid team of final workshop logistics

II. **Staffing:** Secure school staff and school partners to attend the workshop and assist students/parents

III. **Promotion:** Promote the workshop in school, to parents and the community

- Create school posters to promote the workshop to Seniors, create fliers to send home to parents, send emails to student/parents
- Inquire about posting fliers in local churches and community centers
- Utilize your school website, mobile application and social media pages to further promote the workshops
- Offer giveaways and/or food to encourage student and parent attendance
- Remember to provide information on what documents will be required in order to complete the FAFSA

Financial Aid for College

An Introduction

As college costs continue to rise in the U.S., the conversation around financial aid is as important as ever. With the cost of attendance at many institutions surpassing \$80,000 for one academic year, it is critical that you and your family are open and honest about what is affordable and informed early on on how to access different forms of financial support and aid. The cost of college is a source of stress or overwhelm for many students and families, and the process for applying for financial aid can be confusing and cumbersome in and of itself. All the more reason to make cost and affordability a built-in part of your initial research process so you are as informed as possible when it comes time to apply. Though discussing family finances may seem uncomfortable, it is far better to go into the application process knowing what is affordable for your family, rather than being surprised or disappointed after you've already received your admission results.

Most colleges have generous and robust financial aid budgets that aggressively cut down costs for families in need of support. Sticker price alone should not be a deterrent to whether you choose to apply to a certain school or not. Rather, use the resources available from the college, the federal government, and your high school counselor to assist you in determining whether you may receive an aid package that would make that institution realistic and affordable for you and your family. There are certainly circumstances that a university with a much higher sticker price than another comes out to similar or better affordability after financial aid is factored in. The student and parents/guardians are responsible for paying what they can; financial aid is intended to supplement such efforts, not substitute for them. Financing a higher education can be thought of as a partnership among the family, the federal and state governments, and the college or university.

(NACAC)

E2. Financial Aid Types and Terminology

The most expensive schools often also have the most aid to give. During the application process, it is a good strategy to add colleges to your list with a range of costs, including some that are within your reach financially. Since colleges are not obligated to provide financial aid to all accepted students (though most want to and do), it is crucial to have colleges on your list that are within your reach without substantial aid. It's just as important to find a good financial fit as it is to find a good academic and social fit.

It is only after you are admitted that the financial aid staff will review your aid application and make its decision. A favorable admission decision will not guarantee you financial aid. This chapter deals with financial aid as an aspect of the admission process. Before making any decisions about college selection, read this chapter and talk to your counselor, who has access to the latest and most complete information about financial aid programs. The U.S. Department of Education's College Affordability and Transparency Center is also a helpful resource when exploring financial aid and affordability: collegecost.ed.gov

Types of Financial Aid

Generally speaking, there are two main forms of financial aid: need-based financial aid and non-need-based financial aid (also known as merit aid).

Need-Based Financial Aid: This type of financial support is provided to families who, as a result of submitting the required financial aid applications and supporting forms, have demonstrated a level of financial need that requires support to meet the total cost of attendance. Academics, testing, or extracurricular accolades have no bearing on whether you qualify for need-based financial aid or how much aid you receive. Need-based financial aid packages usually include monies from the federal government and the institution itself. At public colleges they may also include monies from the state government for residents. Need-based aid can come in the following forms:

- **Grants:** a form of aid that does not need to be repaid and can be offered by the federal and/or state government and the institution.
- **Loans:** a form of aid that allows students to borrow money for the cost of their college education that eventually must be paid back, usually with interest. Loans can be offered by the federal and state government, the college itself, or can be borrowed from banks and private lenders. Accepting or taking out loans is a significant commitment, so it's important to fully understand the components

(NACAC)

E2. Financial Aid Types and Terminology

and conditions set out by the lender. Generally speaking, federal loans will have the best and fixed interest rates and are more beneficial than loans from private lenders. It is rare to receive a financial aid package that doesn't include loans. It is up to the student to decide whether or not they want to accept any loans offered to them.

Non-Need Based Financial Aid/Merit Aid: This type of financial support is typically available to every admitted student at colleges and universities that offer these kinds of programs, regardless of financial need. Sometimes referred to as merit scholarships, these awards are distributed by the college or university at their discretion and schools have their own unique methodology for determining eligibility. This means you may qualify for merit aid at some schools and not others. Since they are merit-based in nature, most of these scholarships are awarded based on academic or extracurricular achievement and may have GPA requirements in order to maintain your eligibility. Usually, students are automatically considered for this type of aid by virtue of submitting an admissions application; they usually do not require a separate application of their own. There are, however, notable exceptions of colleges that do require an application, essays, or both in order to receive merit aid consideration. Always check the admissions website to determine whether or not the college offers merit aid and, if so, how an applicant can be considered. Merit aid is also sometimes referred to as a tuition discount, and can be used as an incentivisation strategy by colleges to attract talented students to their school. Not every college offers merit aid; some direct their financial aid budget exclusively to need-based support. The more selective an institution is, the less likely they are to offer merit aid.

The Terminology of Financial Aid

FAFSA: Every student must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if they want to be considered for need-based financial aid. The FAFSA is created and overseen by the U.S. Department of Education. This is the only financial aid application required by many colleges, and should be filed as soon as possible after it becomes available in Dec. of your senior year. Both students and parents/guardians have their own component of the FAFSA to complete. You do not need to wait to submit financial aid applications until you have submitted your admissions applications, they can and usually should be submitted ahead of time. As the name says, this application is free to complete, so do not be misled by websites that attempt to charge you to complete the FAFSA! Get started and create an account at studentaid.gov

(NACAC)

Federal Methodology (FM): Created and set by the federal government, FM is the procedure that colleges that only require the FAFSA use to determine a student and family's financial need. FM uses a variety of information collected from the FAFSA to determine need, including family size, number of children enrolled in college, income and assets of both parents/legal guardians and the student, and the age of the older parent. Colleges can use FM to award available federal, state, and institutional monies.

Student Aid Index (SAI): The factors listed under Federal Methodology, that are included in the FAFSA, determine a family's Student Aid Index, or SAI (formerly known as Estimated Family Contribution or EFC). The SAI is a monetary amount that represents a family's approximate financial resources to contribute toward the student's college costs for a single academic year. The SAI is a fixed number that does not change, even if costs differ from college to college.

CSS Profile: The College Scholarship Service (CSS) PROFILE application, which is offered through the College Board, is an additional financial aid application required by around 300 mostly private colleges in the United States. At colleges where the CSS Profile is required, you and your family will submit *both* the FAFSA and the CSS Profile for financial aid consideration. The CSS Profile can provide colleges with a more detailed and comprehensive view of your family's finances than the FAFSA alone. There is a fee for this form, but fee waivers are available through school counseling and college financial aid offices.

Institutional Methodology (IM): The IM is used in combination with FM by colleges that also require the CSS Profile to award institutional-specific grants and scholarships. Since the CSS Profile captures additional financial information about the family on top of the information provided by the FAFSA, IM allows colleges more flexibility and ownership over how to allocate aid and can tweak the IM formula to their and the students' individual needs. Based on the information included in IM, colleges may adjust the SAI provided by the FAFSA as they prepare your financial aid package.

Demonstrated Need: Simply put, you can calculate your demonstrated need by subtracting your SAI from the college's Cost of Attendance (COA). Financial aid packages are then built toward providing support for as much of that demonstrated need as is possible for the college. Some colleges commit to meeting 100% of a family's demonstrated need in their financial aid package. A fewer number of schools commit to meeting 100% of need without including loans in the package.

$$\text{COA} - \text{SAI} = \text{Demonstrated Need}$$

(NACAC)

Financial Aid Package/Award: This is the culmination of the financial aid application process and provides a comprehensive overview of the financial support for which you have qualified. Financial aid packages are unique to each college and university. Financial aid packages usually include a combination of federal aid, sometimes state aid, and institutional aid.

Gapping: When a student's financial aid package does not meet 100% of their demonstrated need, meaning there is a gap in support that the student and family are responsible for filling on top of the original determined contribution provided by the SAI. For example, if a student's demonstrated need is \$25,000, but the financial aid package only provides \$20,000 in aid, the family would be responsible for paying the gap of \$5,000 in addition to the amount determined by the Student Aid Index.

Net Price Calculator: All accredited colleges and universities in the United States are federally mandated to provide Net Price Calculators on their financial aid websites. These calculators are not perfect tools, but do provide families with a general estimate of potential aid at that particular institution. You can search for individual colleges' Net Price Calculators by using the U.S. Department of Education's search tool: collegecost.ed.gov/net-price.

Federal Student Aid Programs

Eligibility for federal student aid programs—except the PLUS loan and unsubsidized Stafford Loan—is primarily based on financial need. Families demonstrate need for federal student aid by completing and filing the FAFSA. You can get an early estimate of your Federal Student Aid by using the Federal Student Aid Estimator at studentaid.gov/aid-estimator/ or the Department of Education's NetPrice Calculator at nces.ed.gov/ipeds/netpricecalculator.

Federal Pell Grant: The largest source of free money for college from the federal government, Pell Grants, are awarded to undergraduate students who demonstrate a high level of financial need. To be considered, the student must file the FAFSA. The award varies annually, according to the level of federal funding. For the 2022–23 filing year, the maximum award was \$6,895.

Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG): A federal campus-based grant awarded to students with exceptional financial need at participating schools. Filing the FAFSA is all that is needed, and students who qualify for a Pell Grant will be given priority consideration. The grants range from \$100 to \$4,000 per year.

Federal Work-Study (FWS): A form of self-help aid, this program provides part-time jobs for students with financial need. Jobs are usually available on- and off-campus, and are typically listed through the school's financial aid office. In a federal work-study position you will earn, at minimum, the federal minimum wage and usually work between 10-15 hours per week.

Federal Direct Subsidized Loan: awarded to undergraduate students with demonstrated financial need. The U.S. government covers the cost of the loan's interest while you are enrolled more than half-time and for the first six months after you complete your undergraduate degree.

Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan: awarded to undergraduate students regardless of financial need. You are responsible for covering the cost of the loan's interest from the start of its disbursement.

Federal Direct PLUS Loan: awarded to parents of dependent undergraduate students to support higher education costs not covered by other financial aid. Eligibility is not based on financial need, but a credit check is required. PLUS loans allow parents to borrow up to the total cost of attendance, less any other aid the student receives. These loans are unsubsidized, so the parent is responsible for paying the interest.

Institutional Aid Programs

Institutional Scholarships and Grants: Non-federal gift aid programs administered by the college. Institutional grants are generally based on financial need. Institutional scholarships are often awarded based on particular abilities or skills in areas such as athletics, music, or academics, also referred to as merit scholarships. These scholarships are often renewable each school year, usually contingent on the student's continued engagement in the activity that prompted the award, or, in the case of academic achievement, maintenance of a certain GPA.

Institutional Loans: Non-federal loan programs administered by the college. These loans usually bear low-interest rates and have favorable repayment terms. In many cases, loan payments are deferred while the student is enrolled in school. Colleges have individual application requirements for institutional loans. Applicants should contact the college to learn the types of loans that are available, qualifying criteria, terms, and conditions. Note that institutional loans offered by for-profit institutions do not have low-interest rates or favorable terms.

Institutional Student Employment: On- or off-campus employment programs, similar to the Federal Work-Study program. These positions may be awarded based on financial need, the student's job qualifications, or a combination of the two. In some cases, these positions may be related to the student's field of study. Contact the financial aid office to learn what types of student employment are available through the school

State Aid Programs

Various states have financial aid programs for their residents. To determine the programs available to you, consult your school counseling office or visit the website of your state's education department.

Private Aid Sources

Private Scholarships: Non-federal scholarships that originate outside of the college, and generally require students to file a separate application. Although academic standing or financial need may be conditions for some private scholarships, funds may also be awarded based on field of study, religious affiliation, racial or ethnic background, leadership skills, place of residence, skills and talents, or other criteria. Because these scholarships are funded by private sources, the criteria can reflect whatever qualities their benefactors wish to reward or encourage. High schools, churches, local businesses, and civic service organizations frequently have scholarship programs. Be sure to be an informed and vigilant consumer and make sure the sources you're using are reputable; unfortunately, there are many scholarship scams out there that seek to take advantage of students and their families. Generally speaking, you should avoid anything that requires you to pay to submit an application for a scholarship. It is also worth noting that you should not rely on outside, private scholarships alone to cover the entire cost of your college education. In addition to many private online search engines, The U.S. Department of Labor provides its own scholarship search engine here: careeronestop.org/toolkit/training/find-scholarships.aspx.

Private Loans: Private loans originate outside of the college and federal government and usually require a separate application. They can help pay for college if families come up short after exhausting all other sources of financial aid. Private loans usually carry a higher interest rate than federal loans, and they may not have as favorable of repayment terms.

Applying for Financial Aid

Now that you have a working background in the terminology, types of financial aid, and associated applications, it's time to actually apply!

The instructions that accompany the FAFSA and CSS Profile are very explicit. Read these directions carefully. Follow them step by step, and begin early enough to allow for some inevitable delays as you seek answers to your questions. Be thorough and organized.

Deadlines: It's important to be just as aware of financial aid deadlines as you are of your admission deadlines. Again, financial aid applications can be submitted prior to admission applications, you do not have to wait. Though financial aid is not first-come, first-served, it is beneficial to submit your FAFSA (and CSS Profile if required) as early as possible in case colleges have follow-up questions or require you to go through a verification process. Your aid package may be impacted if you miss the published deadline.

Required Forms: In order to successfully complete financial aid applications, you will need copies of certain forms to provide accurate financial information. Many financial aid offices require a copy of the federal income tax forms filed by the family and/or student to confirm FAFSA data. If there are significant differences between the tax return data and the data on the FAFSA, your original financial aid offer may be revised.

Applying for financial aid can seem complex and confusing, but the reward of an education is too great not to give the process a chance.

Help is available. Your high school counselor can answer questions. Additionally, just as there are admissions counselors to support you in that portion of the application process, financial aid offices have specific counselors as well to provide assistance. Finally, you can contact the Federal Student Aid Information Center for help via phone (1-800-433-3243) or visit studentaid.gov to have your questions answered via chat or email. Think of your college education as an investment that will repay its cost to you many times over during your lifetime.

How Does Financial Aid Impact Admissions?

While it is common for admissions and financial aid offices to be separate entities, they work closely and in collaboration with one another. If and how your demonstrated need may impact your admission decision is entirely dependent on the individual college, their financial budget, and their institutional priorities in a given application cycle. Colleges typically adopt one of the two following policies when considering the impact of financial aid on admissions:

Need-Aware/Conscious Institutions: Colleges that may consider financial need in their admissions decisions in order to meet budgetary goals. This does not mean that you are automatically disadvantaged at these colleges if you apply for financial aid; remember, most applicants do! Most colleges in the U.S. are need aware on some level, because most do not have unlimited financial aid budgets. To that end, some colleges are able to use their need-aware policies to ensure they meet 100% of all admitted applicants' demonstrated need. However, not all need-aware colleges meet 100% of demonstrated need. It is important to check admissions and financial aid websites to determine a college's policy.

Need-Blind Institutions: Colleges that do not consider an applicant's financial need when making admissions decisions. It is important to note that need-blind institutions are not guaranteed to meet 100% of your demonstrated need, and if they do, are not guaranteed to meet it without packaging you with loans. It is worth noting that need-blind institutions may be need-aware specifically for international applicants.

Advice for Undocumented Students

Undocumented students, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, are not eligible for any federal financial aid programs. However, undocumented students, including DACA recipients, may be eligible for state, institutional, and private sources of aid, including in-state tuition rates in certain states.

DACA recipients with a Social Security Number are able and eligible to complete the FAFSA. Keep in mind, completing the FAFSA does not provide DACA recipients with access to federal financial aid. Rather, it provides them with the opportunity to receive a Student Aid Report that can be used by institutions to grant state and institutional financial aid. If you are not a DACA recipient, or you are and do not have a Social Security Number, you will not be able to complete and submit the FAFSA.

(NACAC)

If you live in a state that provides financial aid to undocumented students, regardless of their DACA status, there may be an application instead of the FAFSA for you to complete that will give you access to state financial aid resources. Currently, these states include California, Washington, Texas, Oklahoma, and New Mexico. It is important to note that, whether you are completing the FAFSA or a state-specific financial aid application, your parents do not need to be citizens in order for you to apply for financial aid.

Private college and universities may also have designated financial aid fund for undocumented applicants. In order to be eligible, you may need to complete the CSS Profile or a school-specific financial aid application. For more information about financial aid opportunities for undocumented students, consult with your high school counselor, check the policies at the colleges to which you plan to apply, and review your state's educational resources and policies.

Student Debt

Many students and their families use loans to help cover college costs, but before agreeing to any loan terms, consider your potential for debt. Have a conversation with your family about the cost of higher education at the beginning of your college search to ease stress and frustration later in the process.

A commonly cited rule of thumb is to not borrow more than your expected starting salary after graduation. The average debt in 2019–2020 for graduates who borrowed money for college was around \$26,000 at public, four-year colleges and around \$34,000 at private, nonprofit colleges, according to data compiled by the College Board.

Federal loans are always a safer alternative to private loans, but any loan requires a careful eye and an understanding of financial limitations.

Check with your high school's counseling office for further information about financial aid, including loans. Consider attending one of NACAC's National College Fairs to learn more about college costs. Many of the fairs include workshops offering unbiased information about student borrowing.

Other helpful sources of information on this topic include:

- Federal Student Aid Office: studentaid.ed.gov
- The Institute for College Access & Success: ticas.org
- FinAid: The SmartStudent Guide to Financial Aid: finaid.org.



E3.7 Things you Need to Complete the FAFSA Form

7 Things You Need Before Filling Out the FAFSA® Form

FAFSA® TIPS · FINANCIAL AID



SHARE



FAFSAGuide

If you need financial aid to pay for college, complete the *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form. The 2023–24 FAFSA form is now available. Fill it out as soon as possible on or after Oct. 1 at the official government site, fafsa.gov.

It's easier to complete the FAFSA form if you gather what you need ahead of time. Here are a few items to help you fill it out.

1 Your FSA ID

If you haven't done so already, create an FSA ID, which is your account username and password. The FSA ID is a digital legal signature that lets you complete and update the FAFSA form, so create your own and keep it safe. Parents of dependent students will need to use their own FSA ID to complete the FAFSA process.

We recommend creating your account early—even before you're ready to complete the FAFSA form. This extra step can avoid delays in the process especially since it can take [up to three days before you can use your FSA ID](#).

Create an FSA ID

For step-by-step instructions, watch [How to Create an Account and Username \(FSA ID\) for StudentAid.gov](#).

Important: Do **not** create an FSA ID on someone else's behalf. This includes parents. A parent should not create an FSA ID for their children and a student should not create an FSA ID for their parents. It may cause issues signing and submitting the FAFSA form and lead to financial aid delays. (Also, it's against the rules.)

2 Your Social Security Number

You can find your Social Security number (SSN) on your Social Security card. If you don't have access to it or you don't know where it is, [you can request a new or replacement SSN card](#) from the Social Security Administration.

If you are not a U.S. citizen but [meet other eligibility criteria for federal student aid](#) as an eligible noncitizen, you'll also need your Alien Registration number. Both parents and students need this information for the FAFSA form.

3 Your Driver's License Number

You'll need to enter your driver's license on the FAFSA form. If you don't have a driver's license, then don't worry about this step.

4 Your Federal Income Tax Return

On the 2023–24 FAFSA form, you (and your parents, if you are a dependent student) will report your 2021 income.



E3.7 Things you Need to Complete the FAFSA Form

Since you probably filed your 2021 income tax return by the time the FAFSA form is available, you may be eligible to transfer your tax information into the FAFSA form right away using the [IRS Data Retrieval Tool \(DRT\)](#).

- Not everyone is eligible to use the IRS DRT
- The IRS DRT does not input all the financial information required on the FAFSA form. Therefore, you should have your 2021 tax return and 2021 IRS W-2 available for reference.

The IRS DRT is the fastest, most accurate way to input your tax return information into the FAFSA form. To address security and privacy concerns related to the IRS DRT, the tax return information you transfer from the IRS will not display on [fafsa.gov](#). Instead, you'll see "Transferred from the IRS" in the appropriate fields on [fafsa.gov](#).

You **cannot use** your 2022 tax information. We understand that for some families the 2021 income doesn't accurately reflect your current financial situation. If you experienced a reduction in income since the 2021 tax year, you should complete the FAFSA form with 2021 tax information. Then, contact the school where you plan to attend and explain and document the change in income. School officials can assess your situation and adjust your FAFSA form if warranted.

You cannot update your 2023–24 FAFSA form with your 2022 tax information after filing the 2022 tax return. The 2023–24 FAFSA form requires 2021 information.

5 Records of Your Untaxed Income

The FAFSA questions about untaxed income, such as child support, interest income, and veterans' noneducation benefits may apply to you. On the 2023–24 FAFSA form, you'll report 2021 tax or calendar year information when asked these questions. Find specific details for [parent's untaxed income](#) and [student's untaxed income](#).

6 Records of Your Assets (Money)

This section includes savings and checking account balances, as well as the value of investments, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate (excluding your primary residence.) Report the current amounts as of the date you sign the FAFSA form, rather than reporting the 2021 tax year amounts.

Note: Misreporting the value of investments is a common mistake on the FAFSA form. Please carefully review what is and is not considered a [student investment](#) and [parent investment](#) to make sure you don't over- or under-report information. You may be surprised by what can (and cannot) be excluded.



7

List of the School(s) You're Interested in Attending

Be sure to add any college you're considering, even if you haven't applied or been accepted yet.

Even if it's only a slight chance you'll apply to a college, list the school on your FAFSA form. You can always remove a school later if you decide not to apply, but if you wait to add a school, you could miss out on financial aid.

The schools you list on your FAFSA form will automatically receive your FAFSA results electronically. They will use your FAFSA information to determine the types and amounts of financial aid you may receive.

If you add a school to your FAFSA form and later decide not to apply for admission to that school, that's OK! The school likely won't offer you aid until you've been accepted anyway.

You can list up to 10 schools at a time on your FAFSA form. Find out what you can do if you're [applying to more than 10 schools](#).

Tip: Several states require you to list schools in a particular order to be considered for state aid. For instance, you might need to list a state school first. Find out whether your state has a [requirement for the order you list schools](#) on your FAFSA form.

Ready to start?

Once you're ready, you have [several ways to complete the FAFSA form](#), including the [fafsa.gov](#) website.



Paying for College

How do I Pay for College?



What Will College Cost? It Depends!

Where You Go

- **Private schools** tend to cost more than **state schools**.
- **State universities** tend to cost more than **state colleges**.
- If you qualify as a **Florida resident for tuition purposes**, you will be eligible to pay a lower in-state tuition rate at Florida schools

What You Get

- Many schools offer generous **school-based aid and scholarships** based on need and merit.
- Be sure to check schools' **priority admission/scholarship deadlines** so you can be considered for the most aid possible.

Consider All the Costs

- Yearly tuition/cost per credit hour.
- Books, supplies, and other fees.
- Housing, internet, meals, and transportation.
- Summer courses (keep in mind that Florida state universities require students to complete 9 credit hours of summer courses).

Florida's 2+2 Program

All Florida state colleges are open admission, meaning they guarantee admission to almost all students.

Students who complete an associate degree at a state college are guaranteed acceptance to a state university to complete their bachelor's degree.

In other words, you can start the first two years of your bachelor's degree at a state college, and then complete the second two years at a state university. This could help you save money!

Where will the money come from?

Options for Funding

- **Grants and scholarships** - these do not need to be repaid (federal, state, college-based and private sources like education foundations).
- **Savings** – which can include savings from the student and/or parent, and gifts from extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, and uncles).
- **Federal and state loans** - must be repaid when you graduate.
- **Work** – can include a part-time job, participating in a federal work study program, working over the summer and breaks, and a parent's work earnings.

Complete the FAFSA!

- Completing the [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) is the best way to qualify for state, federal, and college-based scholarships, grants, and loans.

Qualifying for In-State Tuition

If you are applying to a Florida school and qualify as a **Florida resident for tuition purposes**, you will be eligible for lower in-state tuition rates. Here is what you need to know about qualifying as a Florida resident and residency requirements:

Who is a “Florida Resident for Tuition Purposes”?

- If your parent has lived in Florida for at least 12 consecutive months, then you are likely a Florida resident for tuition purposes.
- To claim residency, you must complete a residency form or affidavit. Admissions staff will review this form and related documentation to determine your eligibility for in-state tuition.

What documents can verify Florida residency?

- A copy of a Florida driver’s license or Florida state identification card
- Voter’s registration
- Florida vehicle registration

Speak with the school’s admissions office for guidance regarding other acceptable documents.

Special residency cases

- Members of the armed services stationed in Florida, as well as their spouses and dependent children, may qualify as residents for tuition purposes.

Resources for Undocumented Students

Students who are not citizens or whose parents are not citizens may be eligible for lower in-state tuition rates instead of the more expensive non-resident tuition rates.

To qualify for in-state tuition:

- You must have attended high school in Florida for 3 consecutive years immediately prior to high school graduation.
- You must apply to a Florida college or university within 24 months of high school graduation.
- You must submit an official Florida transcript to verify attendance and graduation.

After you have applied and are admitted to a school, you will need to submit an HB 851 Out-of-State Fee Waiver (ask an admissions officer where you can access this form). DACA students can use their workforce authorization number in place of a social security number to complete the FAFSA. They are not eligible for federal aid but will receive a Student Aid Report that demonstrates financial need and can be used to apply for college-based and other scholarships.

Visit the following college/university webpages for more resources and support: [FAU](#), [FGCU](#), [FIU](#), [FSU](#), [UCF](#), [USF](#), [UF](#), [New College of Florida](#), [Santa Fe College](#), and [Valencia College](#).

Resources for Foster Care Youth

If you have been in foster care, programs are available to help you continue your education beyond high school. You can pay for college through exemptions that cover the cost of college tuition and fees. View FCAN's [handout](#) for students in foster care for more support available.

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) hosts a Postsecondary Education Services and Support (PESS) program that provides a stipend for living expenses to students attending a Florida Bright Futures-eligible institution, including vocational training. You are eligible for this program until your 23rd birthday.

Many colleges and universities provide campus coaches for on-campus support for current and former foster youth. You can find lists of foster care student advisors below:

- [State University Foster Care Liaisons & Coaches](#)
- [State College Liaisons & Coaches](#)
- [Campus-based Programs focused on students from foster care](#)

In some cases, you may also qualify for waived tuition and fees, which is available to you until you reach 28 years of age. Check with your school counselor on accessing the tuition fee waiver and your institution on other financial resources that are available to you as a foster youth.

Applying for Financial Aid

To qualify for financial aid, you must apply. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the most important step to take to access most forms of financial aid. All federal financial aid, some state aid and most aid offered by colleges require you to complete and submit the FAFSA. If you do not have a Social Security number or have Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status, you should complete the Florida Financial Aid Application (FFAA). Some financial aid dollars are limited and are awarded on a first-come, first-served basis so apply as soon as possible.

Types of Aid

Very few students get all their financial aid for college from one source. When you are searching for financial aid, consider a wide variety of options and apply to as many programs as possible.

- **Grants:** Grants do not have to be repaid if you successfully complete the courses in which you were enrolled. Most grants come from the federal and state governments. The Pell grant is the largest federal grant program and is designed to help students from low-income households attend college.
- **Scholarships:** Scholarships do not have to be repaid if you successfully complete your coursework. They are awarded for a variety of criteria: good grades, cultural or religious background, sports, and special talents. Most scholarships come from the college you plan to attend and community organizations like community and education foundations.
- **Work-study:** Work-study helps you to earn money to pay for your education by working a part-time job offered through the college.
- **Loans:** Loans for students have lower interest rates than most other types of loans. Unlike grants or scholarships, loans must be repaid with interest when you finish college, even if you do not graduate. Student loans are offered through colleges, banks, and other institutions.

You can complete, submit, and track your FAFSA application [here](#). However, if you do not have access to the internet, you can request a paper copy by calling 1-800-4-FED-AID (433-3243). There is also an online chat function to answer any questions that students or parents might have.

You should complete the FAFSA every year that you attend college.

What Do You Need to Complete the FAFSA?

- ❖ Student and parent(s)' driver's license number(s)
- ❖ Student and parent(s)' social security number(s)
- ❖ (Alien registration number if you are not a U.S. citizen)
- ❖ Parent(s)' date(s) of birth
- ❖ Parent(s)' federal income tax return from 2 years ago (if filed)
- ❖ Student's federal income tax return from 2 years ago (if filed)
- ❖ Parent/student income information (if tax return was not filed)
- ❖ Your current bank statements
- ❖ Student & parent FSA ID (username & password). If you have lost your information, visit studentaid.gov

Your Federal Student Aid ID (FSA ID)

Creating an FSA ID is the first step to completing your FAFSA. Your FSA ID serves as your legal signature when completing the FAFSA. Create an FSA ID using your own personal information and for your own use.

To create your FSA ID, go to studentaid.gov. This information should be kept confidential and stored in a safe place; you will need this every year when you file your FAFSA.

FSA ID Reference Sheet:

Username: _____

Password: _____

Email address: _____

Cell phone number: _____

For your records only—keep in a safe place!

FAFSA Checklist



Go to studentaid.gov/ to create your FSA ID before starting the FAFSA!

Student

Documents/Information Needed

- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number/Alien Registration Number
- Email address
- 2021 and 2022 Tax Return & W2's
- Driver's license number
- Savings/checking account balance
- Investments excluding home and retirement accounts
- Additional Financial Information
 - Untaxed income
 - Federal work study earnings
 - Money received or paid on your behalf

Parent (Contributor)

Documents/Information Needed

- Date of Birth
- Social Security Number/Alien Registration Number
- Email address
- Date parents were married, remarried, separated, divorced or widowed
- 2021 and 2022 Tax Return & W2's
- Savings/checking account balance
- Investments excluding home and retirement accounts
- Current business value
- Current value of investment farm and/or rental properties
- 2022 Child Support paid or received
- 2022 Workers' compensation benefits
- 2022 Housing/food/living allowance for military and clergy
- Veteran's noneducation benefits



Provided by Miami-Dade County Public Schools' Division of Student Services

How to Read a Financial Aid Award Letter

A financial aid award letter or notification details the types and sources of funding available to a student. It is important to understand how to read your award letter so you can make responsible decisions. Your actual educational expenses and funding amounts will vary by institution. The following is a sample financial aid award letter with estimated cost and funding amounts:



Cost of Attendance (COA)
The total dollar amount needed to attend school for one year including tuition, fees, room and board, transportation, and child care. These numbers are calculated based upon your FAFSA form.

Net Cost
The total COA minus grants and scholarships equals your net cost. This is the cost you or your family are expected to cover for the academic year.

Dear Jayda,

We are pleased to offer you the following financial aid package for the 20xx-20xx academic year:

NATIVE PATHWAYS UNIVERSITY: FINANCIAL AID AWARD LETTER

COST OF ATTENDANCE	FALL SEMESTER	SPRING SEMESTER
Tuition & Fees	\$5,250	\$5,250
Room & Board	\$5,400	\$5,400
Books & Supplies	\$1,000	\$1,000
Transportation	\$2,500	\$2,500
Other Education Cost(s)	\$1,750	\$1,750
TOTAL	\$15,900	\$15,900
TOTAL COST OF ATTENDANCE		\$31,800
GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS		
Federal Pell Grant	\$3,750	\$3,750
Grants:		
School	\$3,750	\$3,750
State	\$250	\$250
Tribal	\$3,000	\$3,000
Scholarships:		
School	\$1,500	\$1,500
Other	\$1,000	\$1,000
TOTAL	\$13,250	\$13,250
TOTAL GRANTS & SCHOLARSHIPS		\$26,500
NET COST= COA minus Grants & Scholarships		\$5,300
OPTIONS TO PAY NET COST		
Work-study:	\$1,500	\$1,500
FEDERAL, STATE, OR INSTITUTIONAL LOANS		
Direct Unsubsidized Loan	\$1,500	\$1,500
Direct Subsidized Loan	\$1,750	\$1,750
Direct Parent Loan	\$5,000	\$5,000
TOTAL WORK-STUDY & LDANS	\$9,750	\$9,750

To accept this financial aid package as presented, please log in to your student account. After accepting the award, the financial aid process for the academic year is complete. To decline or reduce student loan amounts, log in to your student account and make the changes on the loan page. It is recommended you accept your financial aid award by June to receive your financial aid refund check before the first day of class. If you have questions or need assistance, please visit our website or visit the financial aid office and speak to a specialist.

Grants and Scholarships
Grants are need-based and scholarships are merit-based. Neither has to be repaid. If you withdraw early from classes, you may have to pay all or part of the aid received back to the school.

Options to Pay Net Cost
Work-study is a federal program that employs students part-time to assist with education expenses. A loan is borrowed money you will have to repay with interest when you graduate or leave school.



Welcome to "My Financial Aid"

Sample Student '21

July 1, 2020

This is your most recent 2020-21 financial aid award.

Parent Contribution
Student Contribution
Other Resources

\$22500
3500
0

Tuition
Residential College Fee
Room
Board
Books and Personal
Travel Costs
Student Health Plan
Other

\$54070
0
10520
9550
3500
300
0
0

Total Family Contribution

\$26000

Total Student Budget

\$77940

Financial Need

\$51940

Financial need is the difference between the family contribution and student budget

The family contribution includes parent and student components

The budget includes billed and non-billed costs

Award Information

University Grant

\$51940

Princeton meets full demonstrated need with grant aid

Total Award

\$51940

An explanation of how we determined your eligibility for financial aid and the basic rules of Princeton's aid program is included in the brochure "[Terms of Your 2020-21 Award](#)".

For information about payment arrangements and to view your bill, click here for the Student Accounts Office Web site:

<http://web.princeton.edu/sites/TreasuresOffice/LandR/StudentAccounts/>.

You are encouraged to contact the Undergraduate Financial Aid Office by calling 609 258-3330 or e-mailing pfaa@princeton.edu if you have any questions.

Sincerely,
Robin A. Moscato, Director
Undergraduate Financial Aid



Scholarships360



2022-2023 Financial Aid Offer



Office of
Student Financial Aid
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Student Name: Buckingham U. Badger
Date Issued: 02/04/2022

Campus ID: 90X XXX XXXX
Offer Type: [Bucky's Tuition Promise](#)

COST OF ATTENDANCE

ESTIMATED COSTS		FALL	SPRING	ACADEMIC YEAR TOTAL
Estimated Direct Costs	Tuition & Fees ¹	\$5,499	\$5,499	\$10,998
	Housing & Meals (on campus)	\$6,447	\$6,447	\$12,894
Estimated Additional Expenses ²	Books & Supplies	\$575	\$575	\$1,150
	Transportation	\$400	\$400	\$800
	Personal	\$1,177	\$1,177	\$2,354
ESTIMATED Total Cost of Attendance		\$14,098	\$14,098	\$28,196

¹ Tuition and fees are estimated with the assumption of full-time enrollment.

² Students need to budget for these expenses as they are not billed through UW (except for those living in UW housing). Our estimates are to help you plan, but your expenses will vary depending on your particular needs and lifestyle.

ESTIMATED FINANCIAL AID OFFER³

Grants & Scholarships (Automatically Accepted, Not Repaid):	Fall	Spring	Total	
Buckys Tuition Promise	\$3,499	\$3,499	\$6,998	
UW-Madison Resident Grant	\$2,000	\$2,000	\$4,000	
Total Amount of Grants & Scholarships	\$5,499	\$5,499	\$10,998	
ESTIMATED NET COST (Cost of Attendance minus Grants & Scholarships)	\$8,599	\$8,599	\$17,198	
Student Loans (Accept or Decline in Student Center, Must be Repaid):	Academic Year	Fall (minus fees)	Spring (minus fees)	Total (minus fees)
Direct Subsidized Fed Loan	\$1,457	\$722	\$721	\$1,443
Direct Unsubsidized Fed Loan	\$4,043	\$2,001	\$2,000	\$4,001
Total Amount of Loans		\$2,723	\$2,721	\$5,444
Cost of Attendance minus Grants, Scholarships, & Loans		\$5,876	\$5,878	\$11,754

³ These offers are contingent upon continued funding from federal, state, and institutional sources, as well as state legislative decisions regarding tuition. Offers are subject to change and rescinded or reduced if funding is insufficient or discontinued, or if tuition amounts change.

806 x 822

How to Read a Financial Aid Award Letter (With Examples) -
Scholarships360

[Visit](#)

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What is included in the cost of college?

College costs include more than tuition and room and board. Below are common costs:

Item	Description
Tuition	The cost of taking courses. Course costs vary by school.
Room and Board	Lodging and food costs vary by school.
Books and School Supplies	Books can be expensive! School supplies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • books • book bags; • notebooks/binders; • pens and pencils; • paper and computer paper; and • desk accessories such as folders, trays, and pen holders.
Fees	Fees depend upon your school. Examples include activity fee, athletic fee, lab fee, parking decal fee and health fee. Schools can provide a list of fees.
Equipment and Room Materials	This category might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a computer and printer; • a microwave and refrigerator; and • sheets, towels, etc.
Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses	If you commute to school, include transportation costs. (public transportation, car, gas, insurance) If you live on campus, include travel during school breaks. You may also want to include clothing and cell phone costs.

Next: Work on a budget to calculate how much money/financial aid you'll need to cover all school expenses. (see page 2)

E7. Breaking Down the Costs of College

Item	Cost/Budget
Tuition	\$ _____ (per semester or per year)
Room and Board	\$ _____ (per semester or per year)
Books and School Supplies	Estimated Costs: (per semester or per year) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Books: \$ _____ 2. Book bag; \$ _____ 3. Notebooks/binders; \$ _____ 4. Pens and pencils; \$ _____ 5. Paper and computer paper; and \$ _____ 6. Desk accessories \$ _____
Fees	Fees depend upon your school. (per year) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Activity fee: \$ _____ 2. Athletic Fee: \$ _____ 3. Lab fee: \$ _____ 4. Parking decal fee: \$ _____ 5. Health Fee: \$ _____
Equipment and Room Materials	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Computer/laptop and printer; \$ _____ 2. Microwave and refrigerator; and \$ _____ 3. Sheets, towels, etc. \$ _____ 4. Other \$ _____
Travel and Miscellaneous Expenses	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Car purchase; \$ _____ 2. Car insurance per month; \$ _____ 3. Gas per month; \$ _____ 4. Public transportation per month. \$ _____

Next, add all of your estimated costs together. \$ _____

Parents Guide to Getting Financial Aid



COLLEGE BOARD

March 3, 2022 |

Last Updated June 12, 2023

(/author/college-board)

Most families pay for college using a combination of savings, income, and financial aid (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics>). To be considered for financial aid, your child has to apply for it.

There are four main types of financial aid: grants, scholarships, loans (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/scholarships-grants-loans/basics/the-basics-on-grants-and-scholarships>), and work-study programs (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/work-study>). Financial aid can come from the federal or state government, the college, or private organizations.

Fast Facts

- Most full-time college students receive some kind of financial aid.
- Applying for financial aid isn't the same as applying for admission to college. The financial aid application process has its own forms, deadlines, and requirements.
- The most important step in applying for financial aid is filling out the FAFSA (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/fafsa/how-to-complete-the-fafsa>). Your child may also have to fill out other forms, such as individual colleges' financial aid applications.
- To get nonfederal financial aid from many colleges and scholarship programs, your child needs to fill out the CSS Profile™ (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-basics/css-profile/how-to-complete-the-css-profile>).
- Don't wait for your child to be admitted to a college before applying for financial aid.

Look Into Scholarships and Grants

Grants and scholarships are types of financial aid that your child doesn't have to pay back (unlike loans, which they do have to pay back). For that reason, they're called "gift aid." Gift aid can come from the government (federal and state), colleges, and private organizations. Scholarships from private organizations are sometimes called outside scholarships (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/scholarships-grants-loans/basics/how-outside-scholarships-affect-your-financial-aid>) because they're not part of a college's financial aid offer.

The terms "scholarship" and "grant" are often used interchangeably, but there are usually differences between these two forms of aid. Most grants are need-based, and most scholarships are merit-based.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The [FAFSA](https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa) (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>) is the form you need to fill out to apply for federal and state grants, loans, and work-study funds to help you pay for your child's college tuition. The form asks questions about your family's financial status to determine the amount of aid you qualify for. You must submit a FAFSA to receive any federal aid.

You can submit your FAFSA starting in December 2023, as it is currently undergoing a redesign and simplification. We will share more information in 2024 when we know about future application opening dates. Each state and college may have their own, earlier deadlines, so be sure to add those to your calendar.

CSS Profile

There's also nonfederal financial aid available from colleges and scholarship programs. Many schools and programs require your child to complete the [CSS Profile](https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/) (<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>) online application to be eligible for aid.

The CSS Profile gives colleges and scholarship providers more information about your financial circumstances and helps them determine how much financial aid they'll offer. If your child qualifies for an SAT fee waiver or meets other requirements, there's no CSS Profile application fee.

Your child can fill out the CSS Profile beginning October 1 to receive aid for the following school year.

Read More About It

- [Scholarship Search](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/scholarship-search>)
- [The Basics on Grants and Scholarships](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/the-basics-on-grants-and-scholarships) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/grants-and-scholarships/the-basics-on-grants-and-scholarships>)
- [How to Complete the FAFSA](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/how-to-complete-the-fafsa) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-101/how-to-complete-the-fafsa>)

Know Your College Loan Options

Many students and/or parents borrow money to help pay for college when their income, savings, and grants and scholarships don't cover college costs. If you're careful to choose the right loan, borrowing for college can be a smart decision.

Remember that all loans have to be paid back with interest, unlike gift aid. However, with need-based federal loans, the government pays the interest while the student is in college. These are called subsidized loans. With unsubsidized loans, the borrower is responsible for paying the interest both before and after graduation.

Most federal loans are for students, but there's also a federal loan specifically for parents, called the parent PLUS loan, that can help pay college costs.

Read More About It

- [Types of College Loans](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/loans/types-of-college-loans) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/loans/types-of-college-loans>)
- [Borrowing: The Parent's Role](https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/loans/borrowing-the-parents-role-college-financial-aid) (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/loans/borrowing-the-parents-role-college-financial-aid>)

Understand Financial Aid Awards

After your child applies for financial aid and is accepted by a college, they should receive a separate financial aid award letter (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/understanding-your-financial-aid-award-offers>) from the college explaining the financial aid award, or package, the institution is offering.

The package usually includes scholarships and grants, loans, and in some cases, a work-study program. It gives you an overview of all the aid your child will receive from the college and from federal and state sources, but not outside scholarships.

Sit down with your child and compare all the financial aid offers they've received. This will help them choose a college that's the best all-around fit for them—academically, socially, and financially.

Read More About It

- Your Financial Aid Award Explained (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/your-financial-aid-award-explained>)
- Comparing Financial Aid Awards (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/comparing-financial-aid-awards>)

Quick Calendar

Spring of junior year

- Start researching scholarships online at BigFuture's Scholarship Search.

Summer of junior year

- Find out your real costs for each college by using each school's net price calculator (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/calculate-your-cost/net-price-calculator>).
- Gather your tax records and financial aid documents to prepare for filling out the FAFSA.
- Go to fafsa.ed.gov (<https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>) and get your and your child's FSA IDs (you'll each need your own). You won't need this until you fill out the FAFSA, but it's fine to get it early.

Fall of senior year

- Help your child find and apply for scholarships. They can ask their school counselor (<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/plan-for-college/college-prep/get-advice/working-with-your-high-school-counselor-for-college-success>) and use online scholarship searches to find scholarships to apply for. Then help them get the scholarship applications and understand application deadlines.
- Fill out the FAFSA beginning October 1.
- If your child needs to submit the CSS Profile (<https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>) to a college or scholarship program, find out the college or program's priority financial aid deadline and submit the Profile by then.

Winter of senior year

- Have your child contact the financial aid offices at the colleges they're interested in to find out if there are any additional forms students need to submit to apply for aid.
- Make sure your child completes and submits all necessary financial aid applications—the ones that their colleges and outside scholarship programs require—by their deadlines.

Spring of senior year

- Help your child review their financial aid letters. Compare the offers and make a decision. The letters will explain how to accept an offer and tell you when you need to respond by.

Problem Solving: Skill that maintains positive relationships by effective communication, collaboration, conflict resolution, and seeking help when needed.

Example:

Exploration:

General information

F5

How do I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA)?



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced that certain people who came to the United States as children and meet several key guidelines may request consideration of deferred action for a period of 2 years, subject to renewal. Those granted deferred action are also eligible for work authorization.

Only individuals who can prove through verifiable documentation that they meet these guidelines will be considered for deferred action. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis under the guidelines in the Secretary's memorandum.

How do I know if I may request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

You may request consideration if you:

1. Were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012;
2. Came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
4. Were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request with USCIS;
5. Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012, which means that:
 - You never had a lawful immigration status on or before June 15, 2012; or
 - Any lawful status or parole that you obtained prior to June 15, 2012, had expired as of June 15, 2012.
6. Are currently in school, have graduated or obtained a certificate of completion from high school, have obtained a General Education Development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or U.S. Armed Forces; and
7. Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more other misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

How do I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

You must submit **Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals**. This form must be completed, properly signed, and accompanied by a **Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization**, and a **Form I-765WS, Form I-765 Worksheet**. Failure to submit a completed Form I-765, accompanied by the correct fees, will disqualify you from consideration for deferred action. While there is no filing fee for Form I-821D, you must submit the \$380 filing fee and \$85 biometric services fee for Form I-765, for a total fee of \$465. Please read the form instructions to ensure that you submit all the required documentation to support your request. See www.uscis.gov/I-821D and www.uscis.gov/I-765 for complete filing instructions. See www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals for additional information on the deferred action for childhood arrivals process.

Please Note: Once you receive a receipt confirming that your request is properly filed, you will be sent an appointment notice to visit an Application Support Center for biometric services (photograph and fingerprints). Please make sure you read and follow the directions in the notice. Failure to attend your biometrics appointment may delay processing or result in a denial of your request.

Where do I file my request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

Requests for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals will be filed by mail to the USCIS Lockbox. Please visit www.uscis.gov/I-821D or contact the USCIS National Customer Service Center at **(800) 375-5283** for the most current information and instructions on where to mail your request.

What evidence should I submit with my initial request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

For initial requests, the evidence should show that you meet the guidelines outlined above in "How do I know if I may request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?" This includes evidence that you:

1. Were born after June 15, 1981;
2. Arrived in the United States before the age of 16;
3. Have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time;
4. Were present in the United States on June 15, 2012;
5. Had no lawful status on June 15, 2012;
6. Are currently in school, have graduated or received a certificate of completion from high school, obtained a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, or are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or U.S. Armed Forces; and
7. Are at least 15 years of age at the time of filing if you have never been in removal proceedings or if your case was terminated before you submit your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals.

For information about specific documents that may satisfy these guidelines, please read the instructions to Form I-821D at www.uscis.gov/I-821D and the frequently asked questions at www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals.

Does this process apply to me if I am currently in removal proceedings, have a final removal order, or have a voluntary departure order?

Yes. This process is open to any individuals who can demonstrate that they meet the guidelines, including those who have never been in removal proceedings as well as those in removal proceedings, with a final order, or with a voluntary departure order (as long as they are not in immigration detention). If you are not in immigration detention and want to affirmatively request consideration of deferred action, you must submit your request to USCIS. You do not need to be 15 years of age or older at the time of filing if you are in removal proceedings, have a final removal order, or have a voluntary departure order. All cases will be considered on an individual basis.

Submit a copy of the removal order or any document issued by the immigration judge or the final decision from the Board of Immigration Appeals, if available. This requirement applies only to people who have been in removal proceedings.

Do brief departures affect my ability to satisfy the continuous residence in the United States since June 15, 2007, guideline?

A brief, casual, and innocent absence from the United States will not interrupt your continuous residence. Any absence will be considered brief, casual, and innocent if it occurred before August 15, 2012, and was:

1. Short and reasonably calculated to accomplish the purpose for the absence;
2. Not because of an order of exclusion, deportation, or removal;
3. Not because of an order of voluntary departure, or an administrative grant of voluntary departure before you were placed in exclusion, deportation, or removal proceedings; and
4. The purpose of the absence and/or your actions while outside the United States were not contrary to law.

Any unauthorized travel outside of the United States on or after August 15, 2012, will interrupt your period of continuous residence and you will not be considered for deferred action under this process.

F5—General information...How do I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?M-1079B (June 2014) N

For information about specific documents that may show your absence was brief, casual, and innocent, please read the instructions at www.uscis.gov/I-821D and the frequently asked questions at www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals.

Will USCIS conduct a background check when reviewing my request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

Yes. You must undergo background checks before USCIS will exercise prosecutorial discretion. You will not be considered for deferred action for childhood arrivals, unless there are exceptional circumstances, if you have been convicted of:

- Any felony;
- A significant misdemeanor offense;
- Three or more misdemeanor offenses (not occurring on the same date and not arising out of the same act, omission or scheme of misconduct); or
- You otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

What happens after I submit my request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?

After receiving your Form I-821D, Form I-765, and Form I-765WS, USCIS will review them for completeness, including the required fees, initial evidence, and signatures. If the request is complete, USCIS will send you a receipt notice. USCIS will then send you a notice scheduling you to visit an Application Support Center for fingerprinting and photographing. You may choose to receive an email and/or text message notifying you that your form has been accepted by completing a **Form G-1145, E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance**. Please see www.uscis.gov/G-1145 for instructions.

Each request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals will be reviewed on an individual, case-by-case basis. You will be notified of USCIS' determination in writing. USCIS may request more information or evidence, or may request that you appear at a USCIS office. There is no appeal or motion to reopen/reconsider the denial of a request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals.

Can I renew the period for which removal action will be deferred in my case?

Yes. You may request consideration of renewal of your deferred action for childhood arrivals. Your request for a renewal will be considered on a case-by-case basis. If USCIS renews its exercise of discretion under deferred action for childhood arrivals for your case, you will receive deferred action for another 2 years, and if you demonstrate an economic necessity for employment you may receive employment authorization throughout that period.

How do I know if I may request a renewal of my deferred action for childhood arrivals?

You may request consideration of renewal of deferred action for childhood arrivals if you met the guidelines for initial deferred action for childhood arrivals (see above) and you:

1. Did not depart the United States on or after August 15, 2012, without advance parole;
2. Have continuously resided in the United States since you submitted your most recent deferred action for childhood arrivals request that was approved up to the present time; and

F1.Learn About Consideration for DACA

- Have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety.

Requests for renewal should be submitted to USCIS around 120 days (but no more than 150 days) before the expiration of the current period of deferred action. To request renewal of your deferred action for childhood arrivals, submit Form I-821D, Form I-765, and Form I-765WS along with the \$380 filing fee for the Form I-765 and a \$85 biometric services fee, for a total of \$465.

You do not need to provide any additional documents at the time you request renewal of deferred action for childhood arrivals unless you have **new** documents related to removal proceedings or criminal history that you did not submit to USCIS in a previously approved deferred action for childhood arrivals request.

If USCIS does not exercise deferred action in my case, will I be placed in removal proceedings?

If your request for consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals is denied, USCIS will apply its policy guidance governing the referral of cases to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the issuance of Notices to Appear. If your case does not involve a criminal offense, fraud, or a threat to national security or public safety, your case will not be referred to ICE for removal proceedings except in exceptional circumstances. For more detailed information, visit www.uscis.gov/nta.

Does this process result in lawful status for people who receive deferred action for childhood arrivals?

No. Deferred action under this process is only a discretionary determination to defer removal action. It is an act of prosecutorial discretion and does not provide you with a lawful status.

What protections are in place to protect the information I share in my request from being used for immigration enforcement purposes?

The information you provide in your request is protected from disclosure to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) for the purpose of immigration enforcement proceedings unless you meet the criteria for the issuance of a Notice to Appear or a referral to ICE under the criteria explained in USCIS' Notice to Appear guidance at www.uscis.gov/nta. Individuals whose cases are deferred under the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals process will not be referred to ICE.

The information may be shared with national security and law enforcement agencies, including ICE and CBP, for purposes other than removal. These other purposes could include: for assistance in the consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals, to identify or prevent fraudulent claims, for national security purposes, or for the investigation or prosecution of a criminal offense. This information-sharing clause covers family members and guardians, in addition to the person requesting deferred action.

This policy may be modified, superseded, or rescinded at any time without notice. It is not intended to, does not, and may not be relied upon to create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law by any party in any administrative, civil, or criminal matter.

F5—General information...How do I request consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals?M-1079B (June 2014) N

Key Information

Key USCIS forms referenced in this guide	Form #
Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals	I-821D
Application for Employment Authorization	I-765
I-765 Worksheet	I-765WS
E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance	G-1145

Key USCIS Web sites referenced in this guide	Web site link
Information about Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals process and frequently asked questions	www.uscis.gov/childhoodarrivals
Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Form	www.uscis.gov/I-821D
Application for Employment Authorization	www.uscis.gov/I-765
E-Notification of Application/Petition Acceptance Form	www.uscis.gov/G-1145
USCIS Notice to Appear Policy	www.uscis.gov/NTA

Other U.S. Government Services-Click or Call	
General Information	www.usa.gov
New Immigrants	www.welcometoUSA.gov
U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement	www.ice.gov

For more copies of this guide, or information about other customer guides, please visit www.uscis.gov/howdoi.

You can also visit www.uscis.gov to download forms, e-file some applications, check the status of an application, and more. It's a great place to start!

If you don't have Internet access at home or work, try your local library.

If you cannot find what you need, please call

Customer Service at: (800) 375-5283
TDD for hearing-impaired: (800) 767-1833.

Disclaimer: *This guide provides basic information to help you become generally familiar with our rules and procedures. For more information, or the law and regulations, please visit our Web site. Immigration law can be complex, and it is impossible to describe every aspect of every process. You may wish to be represented by a licensed attorney or by a nonprofit agency recognized by the Board of Immigration Appeals.*

CONSIDERATION of DEFERRED ACTION for CHILDHOOD ARRIVALS

F1. Learn About Consideration for DACA

Deferred action for childhood arrivals (DACA) allows certain individuals, who meet specific guidelines, to request consideration of deferred action from USCIS. Individuals who receive deferred action will not be placed into removal proceedings or removed from the United States for a specified period of time unless terminated. If you receive deferred action, you may be eligible for employment authorization. You may request deferred action for childhood arrivals if you meet the following guidelines:

Can I be considered? Review Guidelines



You came to the United States before reaching your 16th birthday

You have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007, up to the present time



You were under the age of 31 as of June 15, 2012



You never had a lawful immigration status on or before June 15, 2012, or any lawful immigration status or parole that you obtained had expired as of June 15, 2012

You are currently in school, have graduated or obtained your certificate of completion from high school, have obtained your General Educational Development certification, or you are an honorably discharged veteran of the Coast Guard or Armed Forces of the United States



You have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety

You were physically present in the United States on June 15, 2012, and at the time of making your request for consideration of deferred action with USCIS



» How do I file? «



Collect documents as evidence you meet the guidelines



Complete USCIS Form I-821D, I-765 and I-765 Worksheet



Mail USCIS forms and fees (total \$465)



Visit your local USCIS Application Support Center for a scheduled biometric services appointment



Check the status of your request online

Renew your DACA



Find your DACA expiration date

On your Form I-797, Notice of Action



OR



Form I-766 - The date your Employment Authorization Document (EAD) expires

SUBMIT renewal request

4 months or 120 days before your current period of DACA expires.

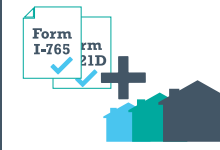
Ensure you meet the following



You met the initial DACA requirements



You did not depart the United States on or after August 15, 2012, without advance parole



You have continuously resided in the United States since you submitted your most recent DACA request that was approved



You have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, and do not otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety

Complete and mail forms to USCIS

- 1 Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
- 2 Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization
- 3 Form I-765WS, Worksheet

REMEMBER: Read instructions carefully • Sign the forms • Pay \$465 fee



CONSIDERACIÓN DE ACCIÓN DIFERIDA PARA LOS LLEGADOS EN LA INFANCIA

La Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia permite a ciertas personas que cumplen con requisitos específicos, solicitar a USCIS diferir acción en su caso. Las personas que reciben acción diferida no enfrentarán procedimientos de deportación ni serán removidos de Estados Unidos por un período de tiempo específico, a menos que les sea revocada. Si se le concede acción diferida, usted puede ser elegible a la autorización de empleo. Puede solicitar Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia si cumple con los siguientes requisitos:

¿Puedo ser considerado a Acción Diferida?

Revise los requisitos



Vino a EE.UU. antes de cumplir los 16 años de edad

Ha residido continuamente en EE.UU. desde el 15 de junio de 2007 hasta el presente



Tenía menos de 31 años de edad al 15 de junio de 2012



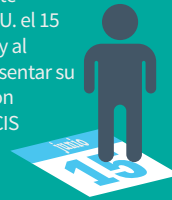
Usted nunca tuvo estatus migratorio legal en o antes del 15 de junio de 2012, o cualquier estatus migratorio legal o permiso adelantado que obtuvo caducó al 15 de junio de 2012

Está actualmente en la escuela, se graduó u obtuvo su certificado de finalización de escuela superior, ha obtenido un Certificado de Desarrollo Educativo General, (GED, por sus siglas en inglés) o es un veterano retirado honorablemente de la Guardia Costera o las Fuerzas Armadas de Estados Unidos



No ha sido convicto de un delito grave, delito menos grave de carácter significativo, o tres o más delitos graves, ni representa una amenaza a la seguridad nacional o a la seguridad pública

Estuvo físicamente presente en EE.UU. el 15 de junio de 2012 y al momento de presentar su solicitud de acción diferida ante USCIS



¿Cómo presento mi petición?



Reúna los documentos que evidencian que cumple con los requisitos



Complete los Formularios I-821D, I-765 e I-765WS (Hoja de Trabajo)



Envíe a USCIS los formularios y el pago de tarifas (\$465 en total)



Asista a su cita programada en el Centro Local de Asistencia en Solicitudes de USCIS para la toma de datos biométricos



Verifique electrónicamente el estatus de su petición

Cómo renovar su DACA



Verifique la fecha en que caducará su DACA

En su Formulario I-797, Notificación de Acción



En su formulario I-766. Documento de Autorización de Empleo (EAD por sus siglas en inglés) caducará

Presente una petición de renovación

4 meses o 120 días antes de que caduque su periodo vigente de DACA.

Asegúrese de que cumple con los siguientes requisitos



Cumple con los requisitos iniciales de DACA



No salió de EE.UU. sin un permiso adelantado de viaje a partir del 15 de agosto de 2012



Ha residido continuamente en los Estados Unidos desde que presentó su más reciente petición de DACA aprobada.



No ha sido convicto de un delito grave, delito menos grave de carácter significativo, o tres o más delitos graves, ni representa una amenaza a la seguridad nacional o a la seguridad pública

Complete y envíe sus formularios a USCIS

1 Formulario I-821D, Consideración de Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia

2 Formulario I-765, Solicitud de Autorización de Empleo

3 Formulario I-765WS, Hoja de Trabajo

RECUERDE:

Lea las instrucciones cuidadosamente, firme los formularios, y pague la tarifa de \$465.



Learning to use a bank account is an important step in handling your personal finances.

Here's what you need to know about bank accounts:

Checking Account

Benefits:

- Safe place to keep your money
- Helps you track your spending
- Your employer may be able to direct deposit your paychecks
- You can track account activity online or by the bank's mobile app
- Provides you access to checks, ATM machines and debit card purchases

What to look for when opening a Checking Account:

- Zero or low monthly account maintenance fees
 - Check if your parents have an account at the same bank, this may lower or eliminate bank fees
 - Let the bank know you are a student; they may have promotional rates available for you
- Low minimum balance requirements
 - Some banks require a large deposit that must remain in the account at all times in order to avoid fees
- Banks with locations and ATM's that are convenient to where you live, work and go to school
- Fraud protection in case someone illegally gets a hold of your bank account information or ATM/debit card

Savings Account

Benefits:

- Developing a habit of saving will help you out in case of an emergency, or if you're planning on making a large purchase in the future (i.e. buying a car, renting an apartment, college fee's/expenses)
- Many banks allow you to automatically transfer a certain amount from each paycheck or deposit into a linked checking account
- Savings accounts earn a small amount of interest, which over time will help your money grow
- You can track account activity online or by the banks mobile app

Debit Cards

Do's and Don'ts:

- DO keep your debit card and PIN secure in a safe place. Never leave your card with a stranger
- DON'T confuse your debit card with a credit card. When you pay for something with a debit card, the money must be available in your checking account at the time of purchase
- DON'T forget to track your debit purchases so you always know the amount of money available in your checking account. Most banks will charge fee's if you write a check or use your debit card for an amount greater than what is in your account
- DO ask if your bank offers security features such as a photo on your card for identification purposes

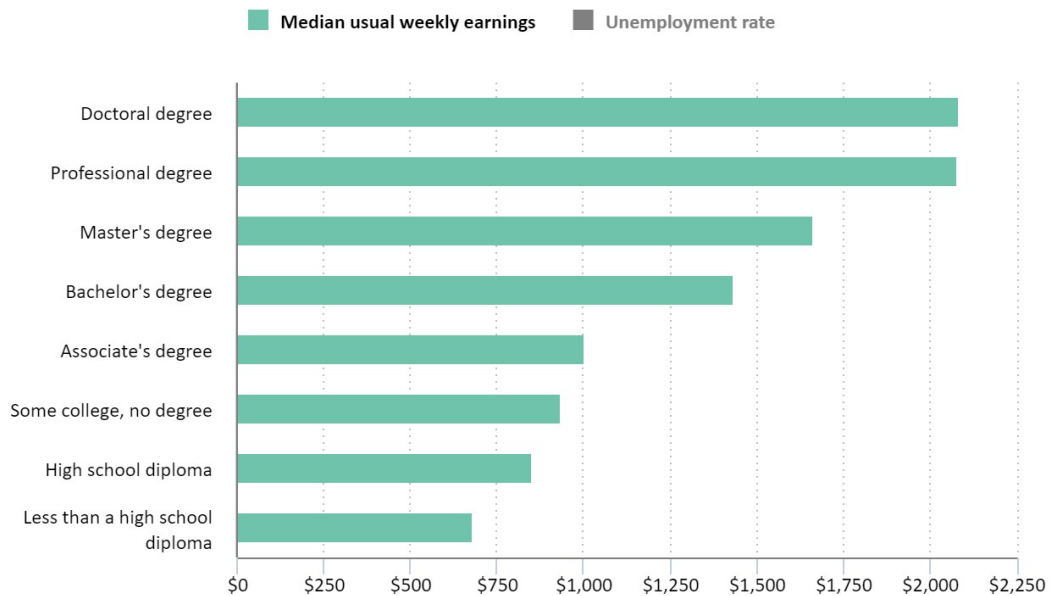
Source: Florida Trend's NEXT, Your Future After High School, <http://www.floridanext.com>

Career Outlook

Wondering if it pays to stay in school? Here’s one reason to continue: workers’ earnings increase as educational attainment rises, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) (BLS).

In 2022, for example, workers age 25 and over without a high school diploma had median weekly earnings of \$682. Workers whose highest level of education was a diploma made \$853 per week, or just over 25 percent more than those who didn’t finish high school—and earnings improved with every level of education completed. (See chart.)

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2022

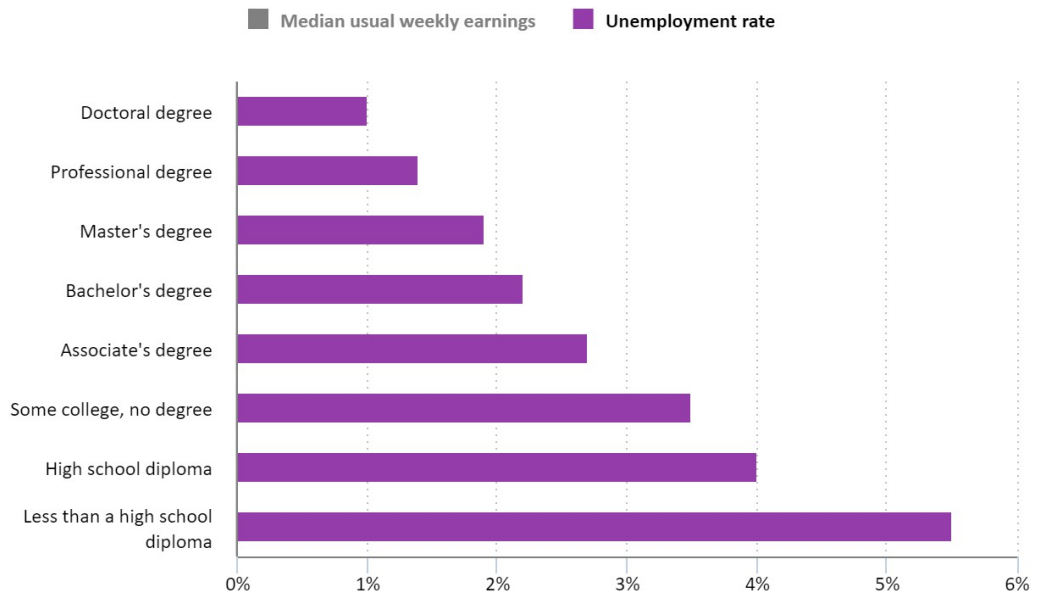


Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
 Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.



If that’s not a compelling enough reason to stay in school, here’s another: BLS data also show that more education means less **unemployment**. In 2022, people without a diploma had the highest unemployment rate (5.5 percent) among those at all education levels, with unemployment rates decreasing as education increased. (See chart.)

Earnings and unemployment rates by educational attainment, 2022



Click legend items to change data display. Hover over chart to view data.
 Note: Data are for persons age 25 and over. Earnings are for full-time wage and salary workers.
 Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey.



For career outlook information, please visit <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/home.htm>

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

About Their 1st Semester or Year College In College

1. Did you feel prepared for your college courses?
2. How did homework assignments and time spent on studying differ than high school?
3. How large were your classes? Did class size affect your learning?
4. How often did you meet with an academic advisor? Did you receive a lot of support?
5. Did you find it easy or difficult to make new friends?
6. What is it like living in a dorm? Did you get along with your roommate?
7. What is life like on campus, aside from school-work? Were you involved in activities, events or clubs?
8. Did you ever feel lonely or homesick? How did you handle this?
9. What were your professors like? How did they differ from high school teachers/faculty?
10. Did you work during your first year? Was it difficult to balance school/work/life?
11. How much technology was available to students in classes and on campus? (computers, labs, wifi)
12. Did you take classes in your major/area of interest your first year? What was this like?
13. Did you feel safe on campus?
14. Did you find the financial aid office helpful? What services and support did they provide?
15. Did you encounter any problems with debt during your first year?
16. Did you feel college exposed you to diverse opinions, cultures, and values?
17. How often did you get to see your family/friends from home?
18. Did you experience any peer pressure? How did you handle this?
19. Would you recommend your college to others?
20. What is the biggest misconception you had about college?
21. What is the best piece of advice you can offer high school students to be prepared and successful in college?

Self-Awareness: Skill that facilitates regulation of emotions by recognizing one’s thoughts, feelings, and values and understanding how they impact one's behavior.

Responsible Decision Making: Skill that promotes safe and healthy outcomes through making constructive choices daily and navigating problems by identifying and evaluating multiple solutions and their consequences.

Example:

Exploration:

G1. National College Fairs, Miami National College Fair

National College Fairs

The National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) is a nonprofit organization of more than 26,000 professionals from around the world dedicated to serving students as they make choices about pursuing postsecondary education.

Many NACAC services are geared toward school counselors and admission officers and help students indirectly. But one service—the National College Fairs program—is offered annually to directly benefit students.

Each year, NACAC sponsors National College Fairs in cities throughout the country.

Fairs provide high school students, parents, and adult-learners with free access to information about college programs, financial aid, admission requirements, tests, campus life and much more.

Admission representatives from hundreds of colleges and universities are at each fair to provide information about their respective institutions and programs. NACAC National College Fairs are open to the public and free of charge.

Registering is easy. Follow this three-step process:

1. Submit your name and answer a few short questions at nacacattend.org/fairs. You can also add registration information for any family members who plan to attend.
2. After submitting the online form, a barcode identification will be created. This can be printed or displayed on your smartphone.
3. Once at the fair, college representatives will scan your barcode to access information about you, including your expected major and graduation date.

NACAC fairs also include an exciting feature called MatchMaking. At the time of registration, students will select the attributes that are most important to them in a college. They will then receive an email that best matches them to colleges and universities based on the criteria they provide. They will reference this email on the day of the fair to connect with their best matches! Students should be sure to register early to take advantage of this great feature.

In addition to the National College Fairs, a high school or community may have a college night program, or a state/regional affiliate of NACAC may sponsor a regional college fair.

Before attending any type of college fair, do some homework:

- Establish criteria for choosing the colleges you wish to visit at the fair. Think about majors, the size of the colleges, and their locations.
- Meet with your school counselor and use your criteria to decide which colleges represented at the fair best fit your needs. If you can't meet with your school counselor before the fair, there are qualified counselors available for consultation at every NACAC National College Fair.
- Research the colleges on your list and brainstorm questions to ask their representatives. Be organized. Pack a notebook so you can jot down the answers to your questions. Grab a locator guide as soon as you arrive and take a few minutes to determine the booth locations of the colleges on your list. Form a plan that will allow you to meet with all the representatives on your list. If you haven't yet composed a list of prospective schools, make the fair's counseling center your first stop.

The National College Fairs are for you, so take advantage of them! Don't be afraid to ask questions.

In addition to providing a chance to receive information about specific colleges, National College Fairs offer many other services.

- Visit the college advising center to have college admission questions answered by local school counselors.
- Find information on gap year, summer and veteran programs.
- Attend a workshop covering college admission topics, such as financial aid and crafting a college essay.

Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs

NACAC also sponsors Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs—free events for college and high school students interested in pursuing undergraduate and graduate programs in the areas of music, visual arts, dance, theater, graphic design, and other related disciplines.

To attend a Performing and Visual Arts College Fair, visit nacacattend.org/fairs and follow the registration steps listed earlier in this chapter for National College Fairs.

At the Performing and Visual Arts College Fairs, students can discuss admission requirements, financial aid, portfolios, audition and entrance requirements, and more with representatives from colleges, universities, conservatories, festivals, and other educational institutions with specialized arts programs.

Visit nationalcollegefairs.org to learn more about the National College Fairs and the Performing and Visual Arts National College Fairs, including dates, locations, directions, and exhibiting universities.

STEM College and Career Fairs

STEM College and Career Fairs are another NACAC offering, providing students interested in science, technology, engineering, and math an opportunity to gather college and career information. And like all NACAC fairs, the events are free and open to the public.

To attend a STEM College and Career Fair, visit nacacattend.org/fairs and follow the registration steps listed earlier in this chapter for the National College Fairs.

At the fairs, students meet with industry and college officials to learn about STEM-related degrees, scholarships, internships, mentoring initiatives, after-school/summer programs, or other STEM activities.

Visit nacacfairs.org to learn more about all of NACAC's National College Fairs, including dates, locations, directions, and exhibiting universities.



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Military options

Thinking about a career in the military?

You have plenty of options in the five branches of the U.S. armed services and reserves. Each has a unique mission.

- [U.S. Army](#) - Defends U.S. interests and those of its allies through land-based operations anywhere in the world. Army personnel work in jobs ranging from general administration to the operation and maintenance of weapons, vehicles, aircraft carriers, and electronic systems. The [Army National Guard](#) can be called to active duty as a reserve of the Army. The National Guard also assists during times of natural or other state emergencies.
- [U.S. Navy](#) - Defends the right to travel and trade freely on the world's oceans and protects U.S. interests overseas during times of international conflict. They serve on ships, submarines, in aviation positions on land and sea, and at shore bases around the world.
- [U.S. Air Force](#) - Flies aircraft, such as long-range bombers, supersonic fighters, and many others, to protect the interests of America and its allies. Find U.S. Space Force opportunity information as well.
- [U.S. Marine Corps](#) - One of the most elite fighting forces in the world. Marines fly planes and helicopters, operate radar equipment, drive armored vehicles, and gather intelligence. Training programs emphasize the development of mental strength and physical prowess.
- [U.S. Coast Guard](#) - Protects U.S. coastlines and inland waterways by enforcing customs and fishing laws, combating drug smuggling, conducting search and rescue missions, maintaining lighthouses, and promoting boat safety. In times of war, the Coast Guard is under the command of the Navy.
- [Military Reserves](#) - Each military branch has a reserve component. Participation in the reserves provides valuable benefits without giving up your civilian employment or schooling.

Becoming an enlisted personnel or warrant officer

Enlisted personnel carry out the fundamental operations of the military. Their roles are like those of company employees and supervisors. Each service of the military has different enlistment programs and offers training and employment in more than 2,000 enlisted specialties.

General eligibility. High school graduation is one requirement for enlisted personnel who are between 17 and 35 years of age (varies by service). Recruiters can explain eligibility differences based on what training and assignments match the applicant's interests. Applicants are sent to a Military Entrance Processing Station (MEPS) for a physical examination. They then take the [Armed Services Vocational](#)

G2. Military Option

[Aptitude Battery \(ASVAB\)](#). The results of these determine basic eligibility and training program qualifications.

Training. Recruits go to basic training (also known as recruit training) to gain physical conditioning and essential knowledge and skills. Recruits are trained by other enlisted personnel in groups of 35 to 80. Daily routines are rigorous. Most days start at 5 a.m. and last until 9 p.m. and include classes, meals, athletics, and field training. Little free time is available and travel is limited. Vacation time is not authorized until the recruit has completed basic training and enters advanced training.

Advancement. Enlisted personnel can progress through nine pay grades during their careers. Each service sets minimum standards for the length of service and time required in a pay grade before being eligible for a promotion to the next higher one. Factors for promotion include:

- Length of service
- Time in present pay grade
- Job performance
- Leadership ability
- Awards or commendations
- Job specialty

Enlisted personnel in the Army, Navy, and Marines can apply to become warrant officers, who are the technical experts in the military. They are generally selected from active-duty enlisted personnel in a competitive selection process and receive specialized advanced training in their technical area. Each service also has programs that allow selected enlisted personnel to become commissioned officers.

Becoming an officer

Officers are the leaders of the military, similar to corporate executives or managers. They work closely with more senior officers to supervise groups of enlisted people. As officers advance in responsibility and rank, they direct more enlisted personnel, begin to lead other officers, and may eventually become the senior leaders and managers of the military.

General Eligibility. Minimum age varies by service. For service academies, like the U.S. Naval Academy, enrollees must be between the ages of 17 and 22. Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) enrollees must be between the ages of 17 and 21. Officer Candidate School (OCS) enrollees are between the ages of 19 and 29. The National Guard may choose to enroll soldiers in the OCS program up to age 35.

Training. Officers usually begin their careers gaining experience in a chosen occupational field. They are generally college graduates. They also complete basic physical training while completing their education or afterward (varies by service).

Advancement. Officers can progress through 10 pay grades. Individual performance is compared with the performance of all other officers in similar pay grades. A selection board reviews every aspect of each officer's career performance to select those best qualified for promotion. Factors for promotion include:

- Career-long performance of job duties, leadership, and management
- Pursuit of, and success in, positions of increasing responsibility
- Successful completion of required qualifications and professional military education
- Appearance and behavior

What is Dual Enrollment?

It is a program that allows eligible high school students currently attending accredited Miami-Dade County public or private high schools, or home school to simultaneously enroll in a college course. The credits that students earn must be used toward both a high school graduation and are acceptable toward a college Associate or Baccalaureate degree, or Technical Certificate.

What are some of the benefits of Dual Enrollment?

- Enriches the course opportunities for outstanding high school students
- Shortens the time to attain a college degree
- Saves students and parents money, as dual enrollment students are exempt from paying application, registration, tuition, laboratory, and special fees if the class(es) taken are being used toward high school graduation
- Provides students with college credit that is transferable to a college or university
- Grades earned through dual enrollment will become part of the students' permanent high school and college transcripts

Who is eligible for the Dual Enrollment program at Miami Dade College?

Students in the 6-12 grades that are enrolled in Miami-Dade County public, private, home or Charter Schools are eligible to participate in the MDC Dual Enrollment programs.

Students must have:

- A minimum 3.0 high school unweighted grade point average (GPA)
- Passed the appropriate Reading and Writing sections of the College's Basic Skills Assessment Tests (PERT or Accuplacer NG), or submitted adequate SAT/ACT scores, or submitted adequate PSAT/NMSQT scores. For more information, go to <https://www.mdc.edu/highschool/dual-enrollment/counselors.aspx#readiness>
- Permission from the parent/guardian, high school principal and counselor
- Met with the College Dual Enrollment Coordinator at the Campus he/she plans to attend
- An understanding that the amount of work necessary to succeed in dual enrollment courses will be greater than in high school courses

NOTE: Students participating in dual enrollment must earn a grade of "C" or higher in their college-level courses to continue participation. Students whose College GPA falls below 2.0 are ineligible to continue dual enrollment.

When and where may Dual Enrollment courses be taken?

The courses may be taken before school, after school, and during the summer. Courses may be offered at the high school, on the college campus, or other approved locations. Students are responsible for providing their own transportation to the college campus.

What is the cost of Dual Enrollment?

- **There is NO cost. ALL** students enrolled in the dual enrollment or Early Admission program are **exempt** from the payment of application, registration, tuition, and laboratory fees. Miami-Dade County public school students will receive their books at no cost. Students are issued a dual enrollment book voucher from their high school.

If you'd like to apply for Dual Enrollment with Miami Dade College, speak with your counselor or CAP Advisor for information on the application process.

Source: Miami Dade College, Dual Enrollment, http://www.mdc.edu/asa/dual_enrollment.asp



Self-Management: Strength of temperance that involves managing one’s feelings, thoughts, and actions across environments and stressors, including through the use of adaptive coping strategies.

Example:

Exploration:

STUDENT GUIDE TO CREATING A SUCCESSFUL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

HOW STUDENTS EXPERIENCE COLLEGE MAKES A DIFFERENCE



The *Gallup-Purdue Index (GPI)*, a recent survey of more than 30,000 U.S. college graduates, found that graduates who were emotionally supported during college, and who had participated in experiential and deep learning opportunities, were more likely to have high well-being and engagement with their jobs later in life. These graduates were more likely to have had a mentor during their undergraduate experience that encouraged them to pursue their goals and dreams. They also were extremely active in extracurricular activities. Importantly, they graduated with lower levels of student debt. **Find the full report at www.gallup.com.**

This guide is designed to help college students get the most out of the college experience. Review the list every semester and integrate the Gallup-Purdue Index findings into your college plan.

GET TO KNOW YOUR INSTRUCTORS

- **Introduce yourself early in the semester.**
- **Ask questions.** Go to class early or stay afterward to talk with the instructor.
- **Go to office hours.** Ask about material that you're curious about, not only what you're not sure you understand. Ask your instructor about her/his areas of interest and research.
- **Ask your instructors about undergraduate research opportunities.** You might invent a new product or make a scientific discovery.
- **Arrange an independent study experience.**
- **By the middle of the semester, ask yourself:**
 - Do all of my instructors know who I am?
 - Do I feel that my instructors care about me as a person?
 - Have I developed a mentor/mentee relationship with one or more of my instructors?

GET INVOLVED, BECOME A LEADER

- **Work part-time on campus.** The GPI survey showed that if graduates had an internship or job where they applied what they were learning in the classroom, their odds of being engaged at work doubled. On-campus work also provides additional mentoring opportunities, allows you to practice skills that enhance your resumé and helps with college expenses.
- **Co-curricular activities** are a great way to explore your interests and meet new people. (WARNING: Don't let your campus involvement, leadership positions, and volunteering get in the way of your academics!)
- **Get involved in your residence hall,** with people who share your major, or do something just for the fun of it.
- **Volunteer.** It's a great way to do something for you while doing something important for someone else. You also can apply what you learn in class as you give back to the community.
- **Consider an internship.** Visit the Career Center to learn about options.
- **Consider study abroad.** Increase your world view. Many opportunities exist to visit other countries — from semester abroad programs to faculty-led spring break trips.



63%

OF COLLEGE STUDENTS
HAD **AT LEAST ONE**
PROFESSOR WHO EXCITED
THEM ABOUT LEARNING

GALLUP-PURDUE INDEX

Practice your leadership skills.

Employers are looking for people who can lead from day one. College gives you many opportunities to build your skills so you can be ready when it's time for a job.

Q&A

- Am I involved in activities that help me explore and express my interests?
- Am I in a leadership role or will there be an opportunity to grow into a leadership role?
- Am I using my time outside the classroom in a way that will help me after graduation?

GOOD STUDY SKILLS TO ENSURE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Succeeding in the classroom isn't necessarily hard, but it does take hard work. Here is the formula for success:

- **Read the syllabus** to find out when assignments are due, when tests are scheduled and how grades are determined.
- **Go to every class.** Never miss.
- **Sit near the front** in class. It will help you stay focused.
- **Find a study partner** or group in every class.
- **Take good notes.** After every class, rework/rewrite/reorganize your notes to increase your retention of the information. Start studying for every exam at least 7 days in advance. Don't cram at the last minute — it usually doesn't pay off.
- At the beginning of each semester, ask yourself:
 - Do I understand what is expected of me in each class?
 - Do I have contact information for someone in every class to study with or contact in case I'm sick?

WELL-BEING

- Success means more than just good grades. **Make sure you take care of your overall well-being** with a complete approach to health and development.
- **Utilize campus resources** to support all of your needs — academic, social, emotional and financial.
- **Make friends and share** your collegiate experiences together. These friends become your support network and can be lifelong connections after college.
- **Don't forget to keep up with the right amounts of sleeping, eating and exercise.**

GRADUATE IN 4 YEARS

- Time is money, both in college costs and delayed earning power.
- In most cases, students will need to successfully complete a minimum of 15 credits per semester in order to graduate in four years. The typical degree requires 120 credits, which is 15 credits over eight semesters.
- Work to identify the best major for you by the end of your first year — and once you have a plan, stick with it.

STUDY 2 HOURS FOR EVERY HOUR YOU ARE IN CLASS

- Manage your time wisely.
- Never let a week go by where you don't understand the content in your courses.
- If you are confused or lost in a class, visit your professor, go to a help lab or study with a friend. Use your campus resources — they are there to help you.

Q&A

- Do I know what resources are available to me in general?
- Do I need any specific support or resources for a particular class?

SPEND AND INVEST WISELY

- Your financial aid office is a great resource not only for understanding your financial aid package, but also for financial literacy resources to help you make wise spending and borrowing decisions.
- Remember that if you are receiving need-based aid and/or taking out loans, you need to apply for financial aid EVERY year.



Q&A

- Do I have a well-designed degree plan that takes me through graduation in four years or less?

\$2.3 MILLION VS. \$1.3 MILLION

LIFETIME EARNINGS POTENTIAL FOR COLLEGE BACHELOR'S DEGREE VS. HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA

LUMINA FOUNDATION

The College Board's Paying for College website bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college provides great information, as does FinAid www.finaid.org/. The American Institute of Certified Public Accounts provides a terrific online money management resource 360financialliteracy.org/Life-Stages/College-Students.

GALLUP

PURDUE
UNIVERSITY

www.purdue.edu



Lesson One

The Art of Budgeting





phase 1: Assess your personal and financial situation (needs, values, life situation).

phase 2: Set personal and financial goals.

phase 3: Create a budget for fixed and variable expenses based on projected income.

phase 4: Monitor current spending (saving, investing) patterns.

phase 5: Compare your budget to what you have actually spent.

phase 6: Review financial progress and revise budgeted amounts.



well-written personal and financial goals SHOULD:

- **be realistic**

A student working part-time is not likely to be able to afford a new car every couple of years.

- **be specific**

“I want to save \$5,000 for a down payment to buy a house.”

- **have a timeframe**

“I want to pay off my credit card within the next 18 months.”

- **state the action to be taken**

“I want to start an automatic deposit savings account with monthly withdrawals from my checking account.”



setting up and maintaining a budget

income	budget	actual	difference
Job #1	\$	\$	\$
Job #2	\$	\$	\$
Other	\$	\$	\$
total monthly income	\$	\$	\$

expenses	budget	actual	difference
fixed regular expenses			
Rent	\$	\$	\$
Car insurance	\$	\$	\$
Car payment	\$	\$	\$
Credit card	\$	\$	\$
fixed irregular expenses			
Savings	\$	\$	\$
Food	\$	\$	\$
Utilities	\$	\$	\$
transportation			
Bus fare	\$	\$	\$
Gas and oil	\$	\$	\$
Parking and tolls	\$	\$	\$
Repairs	\$	\$	\$
other			
Medical expenses	\$	\$	\$
Clothing	\$	\$	\$
Entertainment	\$	\$	\$
Household items	\$	\$	\$
Personal items	\$	\$	\$
Tuition	\$	\$	\$
School expenses	\$	\$	\$
total monthly expenses	\$	\$	\$

Mentorship: Skill that involves offering or seeking social support and guidance to accomplish personal and relational goals.

Empathy: Strength of humanity that involves social awareness, the ability to take the perspective of others, experience compassion, and show concern for others.

Example:

Exploration:



Being on a college campus is fun but it's easy to gain a false sense of security and feeling of safety when surrounded by your peers.

Whether you're going to college for the first time or are returning for another year, it's important to review and remember top safety tips to ensure you're taking the right precautions.

The following college safety tips can help you avoid dangerous situations or help you should you find yourself in a risky situation.

1. Don't allow technology to make you unaware of your surroundings

Everyone with headphones, a smartphone and an MP3 player knows – the minute you're plugged in, you zone out! You stare at your phone/device, not fully aware of what is going on around you.

- When you start to find yourself becoming unaware of what's going on around you is the time you need to consider turning the music down, putting your phone away and opening your eyes to what's happening.
- The key to getting out of a potentially dangerous situation is to recognize it as such. This is nearly impossible if you aren't even aware of the situations you're walking into.

2. Never walk alone at night

Walking around alone, especially at night, may not be a safe option.

- There are times that you need to get from point A to point B, which may occur at night, but you should always abide by the buddy system so that, should something happen, you're not on your own.

3. Utilize locks

While it's easy to become relaxed in college life, there are some habits that should always remain standard.

- Locking your doors and windows, especially when you're alone or asleep, should be one of them.
- Aside from allowing yourself to be vulnerable, it's also much easier for theft to take place if you leave a door or window unlocked.

4. Carry some emergency cash

It's good to have some cash on you at all times, just in case.

- Perhaps your credit card won't work or your debit card gets lost. You never want to be stuck in a scary situation because you don't have the necessary funds to get out of it as quickly as possible.



5. Locate the emergency system areas on campus

Most campuses have emergency call buttons or phones scattered throughout campus for students to utilize in the event of an emergency.

- Find out what your campuses system is and locate the areas in which the systems are placed. Should you ever find yourself in trouble, it will be much easier if you know where you can call for help.

6. Know your way around campus

In addition to paying attention to your surroundings; you should know your surroundings as well.

- Take time to become familiar with campus landmarks and streets so that you are able to navigate your way around or call for help, should you need to.

7. Never stay at a party when your friend leaves

No, you don't need to call it an early night just because one of your friends does. But, what you should do is ensure you always have a minimum of one person with you that you know (and know you can trust).

- Being alone in a party setting isn't smart – go home if you're going to be alone because it is not worth the risk to stay – no matter how nice everyone there seems.

8. Avoid becoming inebriated and losing control

If you're getting to the point that you don't have control of yourself or your surroundings, you need to stop and think about the types of situations you're putting yourself in.

- It's far too easy for others to take advantage of you or a situation if you can't think or act rationally.

9. Always have emergency contacts on you or in your device

If you have a smartphone, program emergency numbers into it.

- Emergency contacts is one of the first spots hospitals check if you're admitted alone
- List your important emergency contact numbers and information in your planner, if you carry one. Whatever items you have on a regular basis are good spots to keep emergency information.

10. Consider carrying pepper spray or taking a self-defense course

The hope is certainly that you'd never need to make use of these defense mechanisms, however, having them with you can make a life-saving difference in harmful situations you otherwise might not be able to get out of.

Source: FastWeb, <http://www.fastweb.com/student-life/articles/top-10-safety-tips-for-college-students>

Choosing and Enrolling in a College

The waiting period is over! You have submitted your applications, diligently stayed on top of your email and portals, and received your admissions results from all of the colleges to which you applied—congratulations! Take a deep breath and pat yourself on the back for successfully navigating the most challenging and overwhelming part of this journey. Now that you have your admission decisions and financial aid packages in hand, the ball is officially in your court. At this stage, instead of hoping colleges will see value in your application, colleges are hoping you see enough value in them to enroll. These pages will include information on your next steps in making a final enrollment decision.

Trust your instincts and return to the list of criteria that you put together throughout your search. Which school of the options you have meets that criteria most closely? You may have attended admitted student programming either on campus or in your local area that helped you narrow down your options as well. It can be helpful to chat with current students about their experience if you are having difficulty making a final decision. Do not be afraid to ask the admissions office to connect you to resources like students, professors, and support offices on campus if you have questions that will help you determine your decision.

Confirming Enrollment: When you're ready to officially enroll, you will likely be required to complete a form via your application portal confirming your enrollment. This often comes with the requirement of submitting an enrollment deposit as well. The money (also known as an admission deposit, commitment deposit, or commitment fee) is usually applied to your tuition charges for the upcoming academic year. Colleges that are members of the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) allow accepted applicants the opportunity to learn the decisions of all colleges they have applied to before requiring deposits, provided that all decisions are made before May 1. The student, in turn, is obligated to submit a tuition deposit to only one college before the required deadline (typically May 1).

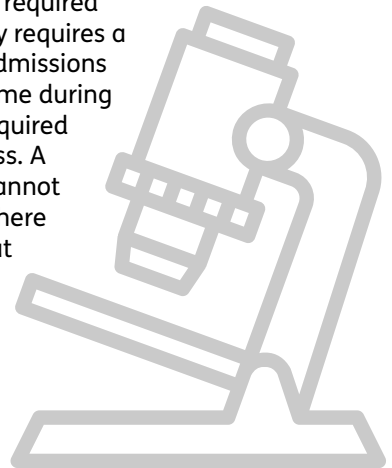
12. Enrolling In a College

Colleges view dual or multiple deposits by students as serious violations of trust. They may revoke a previous offer of admission from any student who is found to have sent tuition deposits to more than one college.

Withdraw Other Acceptances: Once you have officially enrolled, notify the other colleges to which you were admitted that you have decided not to enroll. If done in advance of May 1, this practice gives colleges the opportunity to more quickly assess if they will use their waitlist and in what capacity.

Stay on Top of Enrollment Requirements: After enrollment, be diligent about continuing to check your application portal or whatever system is available to enrolled students. Throughout May and June you will likely be asked to complete a series of tasks which can include housing applications, orientation forms, pre-registration for courses, and more. The last required supporting document to submit will be your final high school transcript, which includes your final senior year grades. Your counselor will send this to your college of choice once your grades are finalized. Remember, all acceptances are conditional on your successful completion of your senior year.

Deferring Enrollment: Many colleges offer an opportunity for a student who has been admitted to delay or defer enrollment for a year or a semester. Students who defer an offer of admission may choose to work, travel, pursue special programs, or complete required military service. Requesting a deferral usually requires a written explanation, to be reviewed by the admissions committee, of how you plan to spend your time during the deferral period. A deposit is also often required by the college to hold a place in the next class. A student who defers admission to a college cannot attend another college or earn credits elsewhere during the time off, unless the institution that extended deferred admission is notified in advance and agrees.





Citizenship: Strength of justice that involves a sense of social responsibility and behavior aimed at benefiting one's community.

Honesty: Strength of courage that involves authenticity and truthfulness in words and actions.

Example:

Exploration:

Roadblocks Most College Freshmen Will Face

Ready to start your journey?

For many freshmen, going to college is often an exciting and fun experience, though it is possible to suffer from common college freshman problems.



College is the first time many freshmen experience living away from home and a large amount of freedom. Though freshmen often enjoy this freedom, it may come with increased responsibilities and the many problems college students face.

If you are a college freshman looking for help with college problems, keep reading this article to find advice on dealing with the many common challenges college students face.

Common College Freshman Problems

There are a variety of common problems college freshmen may face when starting school. Below you'll find a list of those common problems:

- [Anxiety](#)
- [Depression](#)
- [Financial Problems](#)
- [Homesickness](#)
- [Roommate Issues](#)

- [Sleep](#)
- [Social Problems](#)
- [Staying Healthy](#)
- [Stress](#)
- [Time Management](#)

While these problems may be common among freshmen, we offer various ways to combat these challenges. By knowing ahead of time about the challenges you may face, you may be able to set yourself up to avoid these roadblocks or have coping methods readily available.

Anxiety



As a college freshman, your newfound responsibilities may seem overwhelming, which can lead to mild to severe anxiety.

A college semester moves fast, making it easy to become overwhelmed by the homework you are assigned and the tests you must take. At the same time, you may be dealing with other issues such as roommate problems, a lack of friendships on campus, picking a professor that you will relate to, and developing a sense of self.

Anxiety may overwhelm college freshmen, making life extremely tough. Learning how to manage anxiety may be key to improving your mental health as a college freshman.

Solution: There are many ways to deal with anxiety in college. To keep track of your schedule and ensure you are turning in your assignments on time, you may want to try acquiring and using either a paper or online planner may work well.

At the same time, try to approach others and not stay isolated. Avoidance of situations may end up making problems worse. It's a good idea to ask for help from your professors if you need to and approach other students to make friends. Also remember it's important to practice self-care and leave time for your own mental health.

Depression



The stress and anxiety you may face as a college freshman may lead to the development of depression. Developing depression is common among many freshmen. The stress from balancing both academics and your social life may lead to feeling extremely overwhelmed.

Depression can take a toll on college freshmen, hampering their ability to function as good students and isolating them from their friends. Not properly addressing depression as a college freshman may lead to you becoming withdrawn.

Solution: One thing you can do for yourself is to visit your school's counseling services. These trained professionals may be able to help you overcome the adversity you face.

At the same time, make sure you have a support system in place. Talking to your parents and other family members to check in on your mental health may be crucial to finding comfort as a freshman. Consider pursuing hobbies or other activities that are not academically related. Whether it is going to the gym, hanging with friends, or joining clubs and other campus groups, make sure you leave enough time for yourself.

Financial Problems



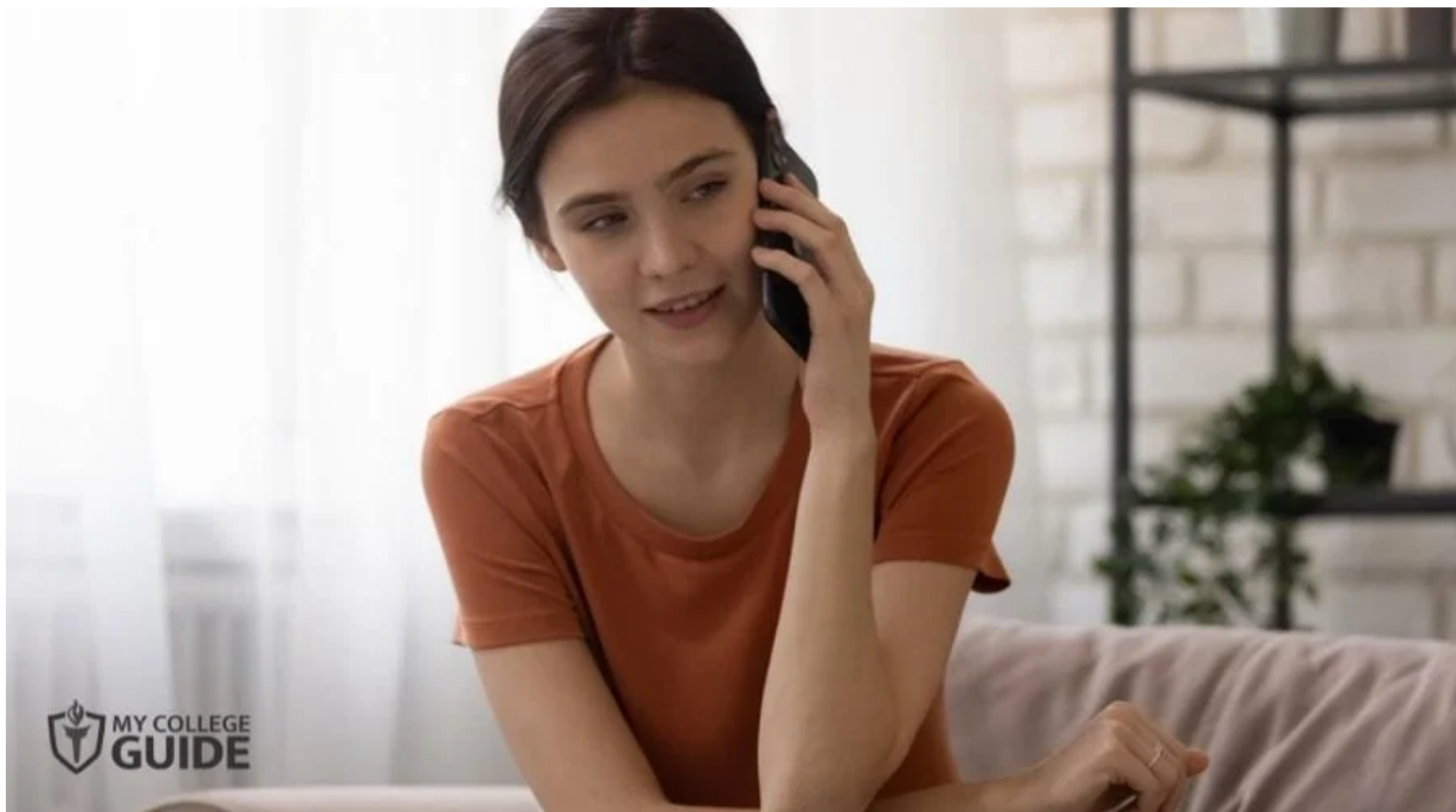
A potentially tough problem for freshmen is the reality of financial stress. This could be the first time in your life that you're dealing with the cost of something so large as tuition and other financial responsibilities.

The extreme commonality of college students facing financial problems has led to the development of the stereotype of the broke college student. Money issues may contribute to increased anxiety and stress, and may be part of the reason why you fall behind on your schoolwork.

Solution: One solution for money troubles for college freshmen is to get a job, either on-campus or off. If you do decide to seek a job during college, make sure you are able to balance it with your academics. Remember to always put school first as you do not want to fall behind in class.

It's also helpful to try to save money by limiting your purchases and the times you eat out. Either eating at the campus cafeteria or buying groceries and cooking for yourself may be cheaper alternatives to eating out.

Homesickness



For many college freshmen, moving to college is the first time they have lived away from home and their families. This transition, though bringing with it many benefits such as increased freedom, may lead to developing homesickness.

This is not an uncommon feeling. Living away from home is a big change in your life, especially if you have never spent much time away from your family. This feeling of disconnection between the place you used to live at and where you currently live can be tough, though not impossible to overcome.

Solution: A good way for college freshmen to handle homesickness is to stay in touch with family. Holding weekly phone calls with those closest to you at home can help alleviate these feelings of missing home. If a phone call is not enough, you may want to consider planning a trip home during your breaks. Another option may be to attend an online college until you learn to balance to demands of school with your own needs.

At the same time, there are many things you can do in college to help. Try and join your college's community by joining clubs and participating in on-campus activities. In addition, decorating your dorm room like your room at home may help you fight homesickness.

Roommate Issues



Unless your room with someone you knew beforehand, being assigned a complete stranger as your roommate is likely one of the most intimidating things a college freshmen can deal with.

After living for years with your family, living with a stranger may bring many problems due to clashes of personality or other reasons. Sharing such a small space, such as a dorm room, may lead to clashes in terms of behavior and routines. What is normal for you may not necessarily be normal for your roommate.

Solution: As your roommate inhabits the same space you do, working through any issues that arise is extremely important. Communication is key when dealing with roommate issues. You need to clearly communicate your expectations of privacy and personal property. The setting of rules for any common space you may have is also important.

Make sure you and your roommate have clear policies in place in regard to guests, sharing kitchen or other equipment, and the level of noise that's acceptable during the night. If all else fails, reach out to your university's housing services to see if you or your roommate can move dorms.

Sleep



Getting a good night's sleep is one of the most important things you can do to excel academically. Unfortunately, many college freshmen fail to get a good night's sleep, leading to increased tiredness and irritation throughout the day.

Many students start skipping class, making their grades suffer, due to lack of sleep. In addition, a lack of sleep may make you less social, meaning you may not have the energy to participate in activities or hang out with friends.

Solution: It is extremely important for a freshman in college to develop a solid sleep schedule and stick to it through the semester.

As a general rule, you want to aim for 8 to 9 hours of sleep every night in order to feel refreshed when you wake up. In order to ensure you keep to a good sleep schedule, cut down on late-night partying, especially on school days. Additionally, consuming less caffeine helps you sleep for the full 8 hours needed. Try to manage your time wisely to ensure you have enough time to sleep every night.

Social Problems



Though you will likely make many friends in college, there may still be times when you find yourself in an interpersonal conflict with someone else.

These types of conflicts can be hard to deal with, especially if you are not used to encountering adversity of this kind. On the other hand, as a freshman, you may be intimidated to walk up and talk to people. Shyness and a lack of confidence in yourself can be very detrimental to meeting others.

Solution: If you are having an interpersonal conflict with someone, whether it is your roommate, a classmate, or just an acquaintance, it's a good idea to try and work it out. Try to engage in conversation to find out the problem, both sides' grievances, and if there is a possible resolution.

If your issue is lacking social skills and confidence to talk to others, then you may want to consider practicing these skills. It is fine if you do not succeed at first. Keep trying to talk to others and you may see your confidence and conversational skills increase.

Staying Healthy



Staying in good health is important as a college freshman. Before college, when you lived with your guardians, your life was dominated by their rules. This structure helped you to live healthier as there were people there to keep you on track.

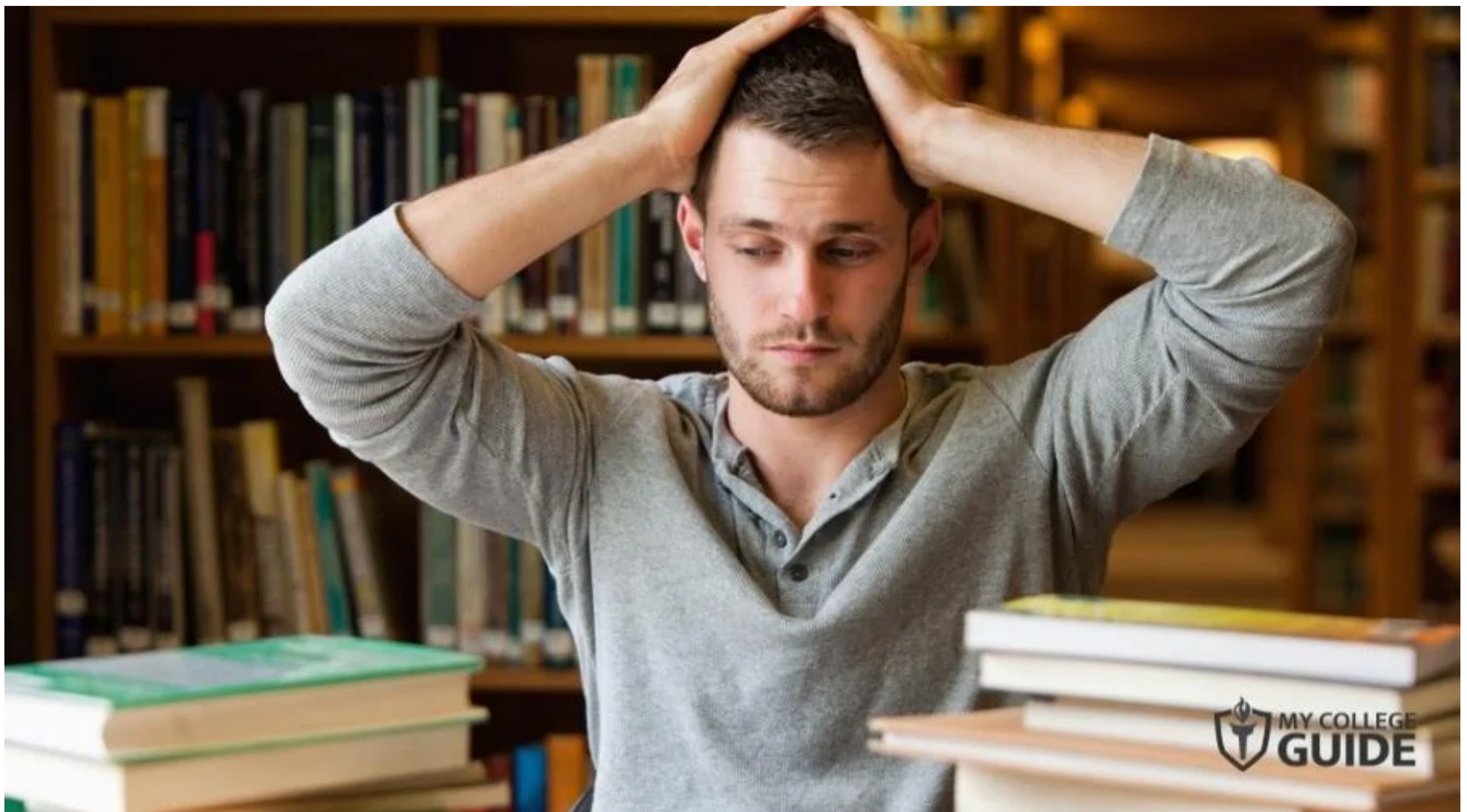
Living by yourself means you have to auto-regulate. This means taking care of yourself and your health. Decisions you previously did not have to make are now fully under your control and you have to discern the correct choice from the wrong one.

Solution: Think of staying healthy in college as a triangle with the three points being good sleep, good nutrition, and exercise.

As discussed before, getting a good night's sleep of around 8 to 9 hours a night is essential to functioning properly and ensuring good health. At the same time, it is extremely important to eat well. The freshman 15 is a very real thing, meaning you have to select the foods that are going to give you the most nutritional value.

Lastly, exercising regularly, even if just for a short period each day, is essential to maintaining good health. Going to the gym, running, or playing sports are great ways to do physical activity each day.

Stress



Stress is by far one of the largest problems college freshmen face. Moving to a new place, not knowing anyone there, and the classwork – it can all build up and create a lot of stress for new college students.

Not dealing with stress can be extremely detrimental to both your academics and social life. Constant worry about your GPA or class assignments may have a harmful effect on your coursework, reducing its quality and in turn, your grade.

By the same token, unaddressed stress may lead you to become more irritable, lashing out at others when there is no need to.

Solution: Thankfully, there are many ways college freshmen can address their stress levels. A good way is to simply talk to others. Whether family, a close confidant or your university’s counseling services, talking through your feelings is always worth it.

At the same time, you may seek to join a club or participate in fun college activities. This help alleviates stress by taking your mind momentarily off the stressors surrounding you. Regular exercise may also help relieve stress, providing you with an outlet to clear your mind and work on your physical and mental health.

Time Management



One of the largest differences between high school and college is the less-structured environment colleges foster.

Unlike high school, where you have clearly defined class periods and a very strict structure to your school day, colleges allow their students to have more freedom. This means that as a college freshman, you must be willing to manage your time correctly, as not utilizing proper time management may lead to first year college student problems.

Unless you learn to balance classes, study and homework time, and your social life, you may be constantly chased by all your responsibilities and be left with no time to accomplish them all.

Solution: Learning how to manage your time wisely is an incredibly invaluable skill that anyone can learn. A good way to manage your time is by using a planner, whether a physical or digital one. Writing down the tasks you need to accomplish in the planner, and sticking to it, may be crucial for you to learn how to organize your time.

Though you may not have needed to schedule your life in high school, the freedom that college gives students, and the added responsibility that comes with the freedom, may require you to now.

Is Going to College Worth it?

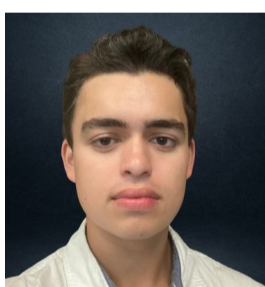


Yes, going to college is worth it for many students. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the median annual wage for bachelor's degree holders across all professions is \$78,580 as compared to the median annual wage for high school graduates with no college degree, which is \$38,290.

In addition, college is a great place to meet people, for friendships and romantic relationships but also for networking and career purposes. Many colleges often hold career fairs when they invite employers to meet with students. These types of events are often invaluable for advancing your professional goals.


Think carefully about going to college. It is a big commitment, both financially and time-wise and you do not want to be stuck with debt and wasted time.

Finally, if you are currently enlisted in the military or even interested in enlisting, it may be worth noting that there are [military friendly online colleges](#) that may be of interest to you.




WRITTEN BY

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Reflect on What You've Learned & Achieved

Think about the activities you've participated in over the past year and what you have learned. Use the chart below to track your achievements and the things you have learned along the way. It will be helpful to have this information in one place when it comes time to fill out college applications and to apply for jobs and/or internships.


<i>Year</i>	<i>Activity/Organization</i>	<i>What I Achieved/Learned</i>
<i>Freshman</i>		
Goals for Next Year: 		
<i>Sophomore</i>		

J2. Reflect on What You Learned and Achieved

<p>Goals for Next Year:</p> 	
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<i>Year</i>	<i>Activity/Organization</i>	<i>What I Achieved/Learned</i>
<i>Junior</i>		
<p>Goals for Next Year:</p> 		

J2. Reflect on What You Learned and Achieved

<p>Senior</p>		
<p>Goals for Next Year:</p> <p>(College, Work, Life)</p> 		

The Transition to College

The college or university environment differs greatly from that of high school. The academic work will be more rigorous and demanding. Residence hall living will be a dramatic change from life at home. And you'll be surrounded by an array of new people—new friends, new classmates, and new professors.

Possibly the most significant difference will be the new independence you find as a college student. What you do, when you do it, and how things get done will be entirely up to you. That means new responsibilities and challenges.

On the Academic Front

Higher education entails what the title implies—higher standards, more difficult subject matter, and greater expectations of you as a student.

Remember, students are admitted to their college or university based upon an appraisal of their ability. If you weren't capable of meeting the academic challenges, you wouldn't be there.

Budgeting time and establishing priorities are among the most difficult challenges new college students face.

College classes follow a different schedule and structure. Some meet every day. Others meet only one, two, or three times a week. You may also have evening or online courses. Depending on the college, some lecture-oriented subjects may be taught in an auditorium setting, with more than a hundred students in attendance. In general, classes are longer and more intensive and the volume of work required by college instructors will likely be greater than what you are accustomed to in high school. Allow several hours outside of class to complete the required readings and other assignments.

Establishing good habits—and arranging your time to allow for study, leisure, and rest—will serve you well throughout your college career.

If you're struggling in a course or have questions about the material, make sure to talk with your professor, teaching assistants, and/or your academic advisor.

Take advantage of your college's support services, academic and otherwise.

Seek the assistance of the professionals in the counseling center, health center, or student services department if you experience any difficulty making the adjustment to school.

Navigating Campus Life

The independence you gain as a college student comes with new responsibilities.

Arranging for housing, managing money, and making new friends are all part of the college experience for students who move away to school.

As a freshman, you will likely live in a dorm or apartment. In most instances, you will share these spaces with a roommate. It is your responsibility to work with your roommate to maintain an environment that is comfortable for both living and studying. Many freshmen go in expecting to become best friends with their roommate. Sometimes it happens; often it doesn't. Try to develop a positive relationship built on open communication, trust, flexibility, and understanding.

You will be extremely fortunate if you find a roommate who shares your philosophy of neatness and taste, and who operates according to a clock and calendar similar to yours. In most cases, you will need to make compromises. Be polite, open-minded, and willing to meet in the middle.

Money management is another responsibility you'll take on. If you've had summer or part-time jobs, you've been exposed to the process of earning, saving, and spending. As a college student, you must manage your spending over time. Make sure you know the items, like books and supplies, which you will need to pay for on a regular basis. Like the monitoring of your time, money management requires discipline.

Get as much practice as you can while still in high school. Learn to handle a checkbook and/or debit or credit card. Practice allocating money for the things you need first, while conserving some for nonessential items and leisure.

Making new friends is another vital part of your transition from high school to college.

You may be going to a college with some high school acquaintances. You may have relatives or friends who are upperclassmen. Or you may be starting from scratch, and have to begin making friends all over again.

It's important to remember that your quest for new friends is one that you share with just about all other freshmen. A little bit of initiative on your part is likely to be appreciated and result in the creation of new relationships.

Student organizations—including sororities; fraternities; and special interest groups such as drama, athletics, music, community service, and more—offer opportunities for you to meet people with similar interests and expand your social contacts beyond your roommate and fellow dorm residents.

Approach your first year of college with enthusiasm, anticipation, and willingness to adapt.

It's an exciting time in your life. By taking charge of the changes that lie ahead, you can eliminate or minimize pressures and go forward with confidence.

Have a great freshman year and a great college career!

