

“Going-to-College” CALENDAR

Make your “going-to-college” planning easier by using this checklist. It offers helpful reminders for tasks to complete during the college planning process.

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

FRESHMEN & SOPHOMORES

- Get to know your high school guidance counselor.
- Plan a family college discussion.
- Develop good study skills.
- Explore careers you find interesting.
- Get a Social Security Number (visit www.ssa.gov).
- Evaluate your personality, interests, and skills.
- Take challenging courses.
- Participate in extracurricular activities.

JUNIORS

▶ January - February

- Identify characteristics you want in a college.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Run Sallie Mae’s FREE Scholarship Search.
- Register and study for the SAT and/or ACT.

▶ March

- Schedule and make campus visits.
- Narrow your college list to a reasonable number.
- Discuss ways to pay with each college on your list.
- Visit Sallie Mae’s College Advice section.
- Estimate how much each college will cost.

▶ April

- Compare college requirements to your course load.
- Select senior year courses.
- Visit colleges.
- Register and take the SAT, if necessary.
- Planning to attend a military academy or enrolling in an ROTC program? Meet with your high school counselor before leaving for summer vacation.

▶ May

- Register and take the ACT and/or AP tests.
- Ask about college prep programs and workshops offered during the summer.
- Search for scholarships and ways to pay for college.
- Get a summer job to save money for college.

▶ June - July

- Talk with friends who are home from college.
- Create a list of schools you would like to attend.
- Schedule college visits and interviews.
- Talk to people in career fields you find interesting.
- Search for scholarships.

▶ August

- Request college applications.
- Give thought to essay topics.
- Consider who to ask for letters of recommendation.
- Schedule a family meeting to discuss your college plans.

▶ September

- Plan a family college discussion.
- Review your courses with your guidance counselor.
- Prepare a list of questions to ask college reps.
- Make a list of schools you might want to attend. Use Sallie Mae’s School Search Tool.
- Collect college catalogs.
- Register for the PSAT.
- Create files to keep copies of applications and correspondence.
- Set up a calendar to track important dates and deadlines.

▶ October - November

- Print Sallie Mae’s College Fair Checklist.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- Take the PSAT.
- Search for scholarships and student financial aid.
- Learn the basics about federal and private loans.
- Print Sallie Mae’s Campus Visit Checklist.
- Schedule and make college visits.

▶ December

- Review your PSAT results with your counselor.
- Talk with friends who are home for college.
- Take both the SAT and ACT at least once.

SENIORS

► September

- Discuss your course load, college plans, and test scores with your high school counselor.
- Request college applications.
- Arrange campus visits.
- Register to take the SAT/ACT, if necessary.
- Search for scholarships and ways to pay.
- Run Sallie Mae's FREE scholarship search.
- Submit a CSS/PROFILE form, if required.
- Stay organized. File copies. Update your calendar.

► October

- Verify that your transcripts are accurate.
- Find out which financial aid applications are required at your choice colleges.
- Ask for letters of recommendation to include with your admissions and/or scholarship applications.
- Work on admission application essays.
- Attend college fairs and financial aid nights.
- "Early decision" candidates should complete college applications (deadline is often November 1 or 15).

► November

- Continue completing your college applications.
- Determine which financial aid forms your choice colleges require—when in doubt contact the financial aid office.
- Search for additional sources of student financial aid.
- Use Sallie Mae's Expected Family Contribution (EFC) Calculator to estimate how much your family could be expected to contribute to your education.

► December

- Complete school applications ideally by December 1.
- Print the "FAFSA on the Web Worksheet." This form can help you gather the necessary information to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Visit <http://fafsa.ed.gov>.
- Take standardized entrance tests for college, if registered.
- Stay organized and watch deadlines.

► January

- Submit your FAFSA via the Web as soon after January 1 as possible because some student aid programs award funds on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Fill out and submit required financial aid forms. Follow instructions carefully and make copies.

► February - March

- College acceptance and financial award letters begin to arrive.
- Watch the mail for your Student Aid Report (SAR).
- Carefully examine the results.
- Don't panic if you're selected for verification. Just provide the college with the documents they need.
- Stay on top of important financial aid deadlines.
- Respond quickly to college requests for additional documentation.

► April

- Use Sallie Mae's Award Analyzer to compare the award letters you receive.
- Make a decision—most colleges request your reply by May 1—and send your tuition deposit.
- Register for Advanced Placement (AP) tests, if necessary.
- Mark your calendar with important deadlines (housing, meals, transportation, financial aid, etc.).

► May

- Verify that your final transcripts have been mailed.
- Notify other colleges of your decision not to attend.
- Continue to search for scholarships.
- Look for a summer job and save money for school.
- Evaluate student loan lenders if a loan is needed.

► June

- Save some of your graduation money for school.
- Respond to requests from the college you will be attending. Keep copies of everything you send.
- Read and be familiar with your college catalog and semester class schedule.
- Talk with friends who are home from college.
- Make travel arrangements, if necessary.
- Send thank-you notes or postcards to those who helped you get into college.

► July - August

- If you still need money to pay for college, consider a student loan. Apply online at SallieMae.com.
- Register and attend a college orientation session.
- Confirm housing arrangements and meal plans.
- Finalize your college budget.
- Notify the financial aid office of loans you will receive.
- Consider taking out a renter's insurance policy.
- Return borrowed items, such as library books, rental videos and things borrowed from friends.
- Make note of tracking numbers of boxes you are shipping to school.
- Open a bank account near campus.
- Contact your roommate and coordinate what to pack.
- Pack for college. Use Sallie Mae's Packing for College Checklist.