

# **Timeline for College-Bound Students**

## **Freshman Year**

### *Fall*

Establish a set time for homework every night. Turn off TVs, cell phones, and other distractions.

Remember grades count. Often students think grades in 9th grade classes don't count for college admissions. Not only do they count, but success in those classes is the foundation for more challenging coursework later in high school.

Get involved in extracurricular activities. Colleges look for well-rounded students who volunteer, are employed, and/or are involved in school activities.

Work with your teachers when you need help and communicate with them.

### *Winter*

Keep homework a priority and work on time management skills.

Register for 10th grade classes. Explore MCIS to determine interests and what classes you should take that prepare you for potential careers. Another option is [www.actstudent.org/career](http://www.actstudent.org/career).

### *Spring*

Do a college campus visit either in person or virtually online.

## **Sophomore Year**

### *Fall*

Talk with your family members and other adults about their careers to get ideas about fields you may want to pursue.

Consider volunteer opportunities or other activities to stay involved.

Get to know your counselor by making an appointment to discuss your classes, questions, and goals.

## *Winter*

Consider different types of postsecondary options including two-year community colleges, technical colleges, and four-year colleges. Some factors to keep in mind are diversity, size of student body, city size/location, and average GPA for incoming freshman.

Register for 11th grade classes. Consider trying a class that offers college credit, such as Advanced Placement, College in the Schools, or PSEO if it is appropriate for you.

Check in with your counselor to make sure you are taking the right classes to meet college entrance requirements.

## *Spring*

Think about summer jobs or volunteer opportunities that could help you explore career options.

Visit a college campus.

## **Junior Year**

### *Fall*

Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October.

Attend college fairs.

Visit colleges and talk to admissions staff to see if a campus is the right fit for you.

Establish personal interests and college “must-haves.”

Research programs and career services at prospective schools.

Gather info about college costs and student aid. [www.getreadyforcollege.org](http://www.getreadyforcollege.org).

### *Winter*

Gear up for springtime exams using online test prep tools.

Register for the ACT or SAT: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) or [www.sat.collegeboard.org](http://www.sat.collegeboard.org).

Register for 12th grade classes. English, social studies, math, and science are important subjects to continue into 12th grade for college bound students.

### *Spring*

Talk with college reps, professors, and students if able to do college tours.

Plan a schedule for senior year with your counselor.

Update your list of potential schools.

Explore AP exam prep and other resources of early college credit and funding.

Exchange advice and information with other students and [www.CollegeConfidential.com](http://www.CollegeConfidential.com)

Look for summer jobs and internships.

If you plan to play sports in college, check with your coaches about programs and scholarships. Be sure to register at the NCAA Eligibility Center [www.ncaa.org](http://www.ncaa.org).

### *Summer*

Continue to visit potential schools. In person is best, but virtually is also a good option.

Begin drafting application essays.

## **Senior Year**

### *Fall*

Avoid the senior slump. Colleges consider the senior-year course load when making admissions decisions.

If you did not take the ACT/SAT or want to increase your score, register for an exam at least a month in advance: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org) or [www.sat.collegeboard.org](http://www.sat.collegeboard.org).

Register for necessary entrance exams.

Secure letters of recommendation. Make sure to personally ask recommenders at least three weeks in advance. Hand the recommenders detailed information about what you have done and who you are so they can write a thorough rec letter including traits not visible on your transcript.

Narrow down your list of colleges to five-ten schools.

Organize application materials, noting admission and financial aid deadlines.

Reach out to a teacher to review your essay so you can revise your final draft.

Use resources at your high school to continue researching local and national aid.

File the FAFSA [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) anytime after October 1 (the sooner the better).

Attend the FAFSA Completion Night offered by counselors at Shakopee High School.

If you have already chosen a school, begin the process of early admission.

Have test scores sent to the colleges.

Save copies of applications for yourself before sending.

### *Winter*

Submit completed applications in accordance with their due dates.

Schedule necessary admissions interviews.

Check that each school has received your application materials.

Complete and submit any remaining scholarship applications.

### *Spring*

Compare acceptance/financial aid packages.

If you're torn between a few schools, visit each campus before deciding where to go.

Choose a school by May 1 and confirm enrollment. Follow the directions in the acceptance letter for the school you chose. Often a tuition deposit must be sent to the school during the spring.

Send any college credits that you have earned to your chosen college through Parchment.

Tell your school counselor where you plan on attending.

### *Summer*

Send a final transcript to your college of choice through Parchment.

Make sure you read and respond to all information sent by the college. Pay attention to move-in dates and times. For air travel, book flights early for best pricing.

Plan a budget. Determine how much to spend on food, books, supplies, and entertainment. Most students will need debit cards. Make sure the bank you choose has an ATM machine close to campus.