



# A College Planning Checklist: FOR SENIORS

It's senior year and you have to make sure you're staying on top of your college applications. Use this checklist to stay organized and keep track of all the tasks you've completed.

## FALL SEMESTER

### DRAFT AND FINALIZE COLLEGE LIST.

- Conduct research on colleges by visiting websites, speaking with admissions officers, etc.

Review college "Average Admitted Student Profiles". Do a comparison of yourself versus their average admitted student to make an accurate judgment on your chances of being admitted. Your college list should comprise of the following:

- Safety schools** - These are schools in which you meet or exceed the average admitted student profile.
- Match schools** - These are schools in which you meet the average admitted student profile.
- Reach schools** - These are schools in which the average admitted student profile exceeds your own or is a highly competitive school. All Ivy League and highly selective universities such as MIT and Johns Hopkins University are reach schools for every single student.
- Diversify your college list by including both liberal arts colleges as well as large state universities both in-state and out of state.

### BEGIN APPLICATION

- Decide which application platform you will use to send applications. You can use either Common App, Coalition App, or through the school's private application portal.
- Complete preliminary information (name, birthday, address, demographic information, etc.) on the Common App or Coalition App.
- Create and keep an organizer to map out which colleges are being applied through which portal so as not to confuse information.



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### GATHER APPLICATION MATERIALS

- Request transcripts to be sent to schools on your list.
- Ask recommenders for letters of recommendation.
  - Provide them with a brag sheet and a résumé.
  - Formally thank them after they have sent out your letters of recommendation.
- Draft a high school résumé.
  - Résumé should include the following headings:
    1. Education
    2. Experience (internship, volunteering)
    3. Extracurriculars
    4. Awards and Recognitions
    5. Skills

### BEGIN WRITING PORTIONS OF APPLICATION

- Complete the first draft of your personal statement.
  - Review the prompts provided on the common app.
  - Determine the story that you wish to be told to the admissions officers.
  - Have multiple individuals edit and revise your personal statement before submitting it.
- Complete drafts of supplemental essays for each college.
  - Stay organized determining which supplemental essay goes for which college.
  - Make each supplemental essay unique to the school and the question
  - Get essays edited and revised and make appropriate changes.



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## COMPLETE FAFSA/CSS PROFILE

- Retrieve tax information from the prior year.
- Create a login ID.
- List all of the schools you want your financial information to be sent to.
- Fill out demographic, dependency, and financial information.
- Sign form.

## REVIEW TEST SCORES

- Sign up for retesting to improve scores if necessary.
- Determine if some schools on your list require SAT Subject Tests for admissions.
- Send test scores to schools on your college list.

## SUBMIT APPLICATIONS

- Submit Early Action (non-binding contract)/Early Decision (binding contract in a competitive application pool) applications before November 1st.
- Submit Regular Decision (non-binding contract and larger application pool) applications before January 1st.
- Complete any Rolling Admissions applications.
- Call schools to confirm that your materials have been received and you are not missing any information they might need to make an admissions decision.



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## SPRING SEMESTER

### REVIEW APPLICATION DECISIONS

- If deferred, send a deferral letter to admissions officers further explaining what you've accomplished since applying.
- Compare school acceptances.
- If you received financial aid packages, compare packages to determine which schools are giving you the best aid.
  - Best aid is subjective but your aid packages should one or more of the following:
    1. Grants
    2. Loans
    3. Scholarships

### VISIT SCHOOLS

- Attend admitted student weekends.
- Visit all campus resources and qualities that are important to you (gymnasium, library, proximity to dorms, weather, diversity).
- Speak with current students that attend the schools to get a real opinion of the campus.
- Conduct virtual tours online if you are unable to visit the campuses in person.
- Reach out to admissions officers with questions ready to ask. Make sure you are receiving all the information necessary to make a decision on which school to attend.



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### MAKE A DECISION

- Submit a deposit to secure a spot to enroll. If you're a low-income student you might be able to qualify for a fee waiver. Contact the financial aid office to find out more about fee waivers.
- Let other colleges you were accepted to that you will not be attending.
- Sign up for new student orientation.
- Secure housing. Housing options will depend on the school you choose to attend.
- Use College Boards' "Off to College Checklist" to track what you will need when starting college.

 Prepory