

Admissions Guide and Timeline

College Admissions Timeline

Junior Year

- Start to think about your college choices. Make an appointment with your guidance counselor to talk about your options. Conduct a free college search online at www.fastweb.com.
- Take the ACT and/or SAT in the spring. High scores increase your chance of winning scholarships, so you may want to take the tests again next fall if you are not pleased with your score.
- Talk to your parents about college costs. Visit: www.fafsa4caster.ed.gov and www.finaid.org/calculators.
- Request applications and brochures from your top college choices and visit their websites.
- Visit prospective colleges over the summer. Ask college friends about their college experience.

Fall - Senior Year

- Organize applications by creating files for each of your target schools. List all requirements and deadlines.
- Retake the ACT and/or SAT if you are looking to improve your score.
- Request letters of recommendation as soon as possible from teachers and community leaders (at least one month before the application due date).
- Visit www.fastweb.com to find scholarships. Check out www.finaid.org to learn more about financial aid.

Winter - Senior Year

- Work on those college applications. Many applications are due in early January.
- Register for a PIN so you can complete and sign the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) online at: www.pin.ed.gov
- File the FAFSA: www.fafsa.ed.gov, ASAP after January 1st.
- Check with your prospective schools about additional financial aid application forms and requirements.

Spring - Senior Year

- Check email/mail regularly for admissions decisions.
- Compare your admissions offers. Ask your guidance counselor and parents to help you weigh your options.
- Review your SAR for any mistakes and report them to your prospective school. Your SAR should arrive approx. 3-5 days after you submit the FAFSA online, or 10 days after your paper FAFSA is received.
- Time for a decision! Most schools ask that you choose your school by May 1st.
- Check deadlines for housing, financial aid, etc.

Glossary: Key Terms You Will Encounter

Award Letter: A letter telling you what financial aid your college is offering to you (including types, amounts offered, specific program information, etc.). You may choose to accept some or all of what is offered.

Credit (or Credit Hour): A unit of measurement for fulfilling course requirements. Most colleges require that you complete a certain number in order to graduate.

Cost of Attendance: Includes all costs associated with attending college: tuition and fees, room/board, books and supplies, etc.

Enrollment Status: Indicates you attend school full-time or part-time. In general, you must attend at least part-time to qualify for financial aid.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): Amount students and their family are expected to contribute financially toward cost of attendance.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): Students must fill out the FAFSA each year to find out how much federal aid they are eligible to receive. www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Open Admissions: Students are admitted regardless of academic qualifications. Most community colleges have an open admissions policy.

Out-of-State Students: Generally applies to students attending a public university outside of their home state. Out-of-state students must pay a higher tuition rate unless they establish legal residency for the state where they attend school.

Rolling Admissions: There is no set admissions deadline date; qualified students are accepted until classes are filled.

Student Aid Report (SAR): This notifies you that your FAFSA has been processed. Your EFC also appears on the SAR.

Undergraduate Student: A student who has not completed a baccalaureate or first professional degree.

Financial Aid Questions to Consider

- What types of financial aid packages does the school offer?
- Are any tuition increases planned in the next few years?
- What kind of work opportunities are available on campus?
- What are the deadlines for submitting financial aid forms?
- How will outside scholarships affect my aid package?
- What state financial aid programs do I qualify for?
- Is there a payment installment plan?

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