

SENIOR YEAR COLLEGE APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Important college deadlines seem to dominate the senior year of high school, and with good reason; this year can heavily affect a student's future. In addition, many of these deadlines are inflexible; colleges will rarely make exceptions to their deadlines. College-bound students can use this checklist to orient themselves to major senior year milestones.

- **Continue taking rigorous courses.** Senior year grades matter. If you are applying regular decision, colleges will consider your first semester grades.

September

- **Narrow your list of preferred colleges down to a manageable number.** Include at least one or two safety schools (almost certain of acceptance), two likely schools (a good chance of acceptance), and one or two reach schools (unpredictable chance of acceptance). Aim for around eight schools to include on your list.
- **Request applications from each college to which you intend to apply and/or open online applications.** Check deadlines and application costs, and preview the essay questions and general formats of the applications.
- **Research scholarship opportunities available to you.**
- **Make a master calendar.** Include items such as:
 - College application due dates
 - Your high school's deadlines for application requests, such as transcripts, secondary school reports, and recommendations
 - College due dates for recommendations, secondary school reports, transcripts, and test scores
 - Deadlines for required financial aid applications and forms
 - Scholarship application deadlines
- **Draft your application essays and begin revisions.** You should continue working on your essay throughout the admissions process, and finalize around November or early December. Determine the extent to which you can use the same, or slightly modified, essays for different applications.
- **Re-take standardized tests (SAT/SAT Subject Tests/ACT) as needed.**
 - Depending on the admissions deadlines of the colleges to which you are applying, November may be the latest test date for which your scores can be considered by colleges. Registration for the November test is usually in late September or early October. Be sure to check whether colleges will accept scores from this test date.

October

- **Request recommendation letters** from your guidance counselor, teachers, coaches, or others who know you well starting in mid-October. As a courtesy, make your requests a month or more before the letters are due. Recommendation writers often appreciate being given a packet of materials to make their task easier, including each college's guidelines for recommendation letters, a list of your activities/achievements, a solid draft of your essay if possible, and stamped envelopes addressed to the proper recipients.
- **Turn in your Early Decision or Early Action application** if applicable. Most are due by November 1.

November

- **Request college application fee waivers** from your high school's guidance counselor.
- **Request that your high school send official copies of your transcript to the colleges.**
- **Order test score reports** and have them sent to the schools to which you are applying.

December

- **Remind/confirm with your counselors and teachers that all requested application materials are submitted.** It is *your responsibility* to make sure that recommendation letters and other materials are sent on time. Write a thank-you note to each recommender as soon as he or she submits their letter.