FALL APPLICATION CHECKLIST: HS SENIORS

September

- [ ] Finish your college essays and proofread them carefully.
- [ ] Finalize your college list to ensure you have a balanced range of schools.
- [ ] If you need to take standardized tests again, register as soon as possible so scores make it to colleges in time.
- [ ] Work on your applications, finalizing those with the earliest deadlines first.
- [ ] If you haven't asked any teachers for recommendation letters, now is the time to speak with them.
- [ ] Prepare your financial documents because the FAFSA will open next month.

October

- [ ] Register for a PIN at fafsa.ed.gov and work with your parents to complete your FAFSA form.
- [ ] Continue working on college applications, with particular focus on supplemental essays and activity sections.
- [ ] Complete Early Action and Rolling applications ASAP.
- [ ] Work on Early Decision applications (if applicable) and be sure to watch deadlines from your school guidance office.
- [ ] Have ACT or SAT scores sent to the schools to which you're applying.
- [ ] Send transcripts to the colleges on your list.
- [ ] Remember that many colleges are tracking your demonstrated interest. Talk with admission reps, follow up with emails, click on links from colleges.
- [ ] Schedule interviews, when applicable.
- [ ] Complete your CSS Profile, if required by colleges.
- [ ] Save all usernames and passwords for application portals in a safe place.
- [ ] Check your email daily.

November

- [ ] Check the status portals regularly for the colleges to which you've already applied. Make sure you have sent your test scores and transcripts, and monitor the portals for important communication from your colleges.
- [ ] Keep working on essays for your colleges with deadlines in December and January.
- [ ] Begin working on scholarship applications.
- [ ] Apply to honors programs at your colleges, if applicable.
- [ ] Say thank you to your recommenders once they finish your letters of recommendation. As you earn acceptances, remember to celebrate your successes with all the people who have helped you along the way.

December

- [ ] File any additional college applications before deadline dates. Don't wait until the last minute.
- [ ] Keep an eye on your admissions portals to ensure that colleges aren't missing any recommendation letters, transcripts, test scores or other items.
- [ ] If you haven't yet completed your financial aid applications, now is the time to do that.
- [ ] If you don't get good news from the colleges where you applied early, start working on your applications for your "Plan B" schools.

College Confidential

For advice about the college admissions process, test prep tips, and career advice, visit CollegeConfidential.com.

SPRING APPLICATION CHECKLIST: HS SENIORS

January

- [ ] Continue filling out applications if you aren't finished yet and ensure that you don't miss any important deadlines.
- [ ] Once you apply, check your application portals frequently so you can make sure schools aren't missing any vital documents.
- [ ] If you haven't filled out the FAFSA or the CSS profile (when applicable), complete those now.
- [ ] If private scholarships are on your radar screen, begin searching for them and filling out the appropriate application materials..
- [ ] Focus on your classes to ensure that your grades don't dip.
- [ ] If you've been accepted at a college you plan to attend, consider signing up for housing before the dorms get full if your school allows you to do that before paying your deposit.

February

- [ ] If you are on the fence about which school you should attend, consider making another round of college visits.
- [ ] Continue filling out your scholarship applications and submit them by the deadlines.
- [ ] Finalize your FAFSA or CSS profile (when applicable) and submit them as soon as possible.
- [ ] If you've sent in your college deposit, make sure you apply for housing (when applicable) as soon as possible.
- [ ] If your application process is complete, it's a good time to send thank you notes to those who helped you along the way.
- [ ] Check your application portals frequently for important communications.

March

- [ ] Review the financial aid packages from schools that have sent them and discuss the information with your parents.
- [ ] If you're still waiting to hear from any colleges, stay on top of communications from the schools.
- [ ] If you have any scholarship applications left, fill those out as soon as possible.
- [ ] Apply for housing at the school you plan to attend, if you've already made that decision.
- [ ] Stay on top of your current high school classes — you're in the home stretch, but you still should do well in school. Remember: Colleges will request your final transcripts!

April

- [ ] Study for AP tests even if you don't think your colleges will accept the credits, since some schools use the results for college placements.
- [ ] If you plan to attend your college's "admitted student day" or summer orientation, sign up now.
- [ ] Make an appointment with your doctor to complete college health forms.
- [ ] If you aren't happy with your financial aid package, consider appealing it to see if you might be able to get a better offer.
- [ ] For students on waitlists, ensure that you're on top of communications with the school and submitting all requested information.
- [ ] Continue filling out scholarship applications, if applicable.

May

- [ ] Commit to a college by the May 1 deadline.
- [ ] Secure your college housing if you haven't already.
- [ ] Prepare for your AP exams.
- [ ] Register for your college's summer orientation sessions — these often fill up quickly.
- [ ] Select a college roommate using the online system or register to be matched to a roommate.
- [ ] If your college requires health forms or immunization records, gather those.
- [ ] Get ready to send your college of choice a final transcript.

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SUMMER APPLICATION CHECKLIST FOR RISING HS SENIORS

June

- [ ] If you hope to play a sport in college, begin researching the requirements to join a team and contact coaches when appropriate.
- [ ] Determine whether you're going to take the SAT or ACT one more time -- if so, now is the time to register.
- [ ] Set up college tours if you plan to visit schools this summer.
- [ ] Make this summer count -- if you don't have a job, find a volunteer or extracurricular activity.
- [ ] Make sure your college resume includes all of your high school activities, including those you expect to pursue senior year.
- [ ] If your college list isn't ready, now is the time to lock it down.
- [ ] Begin working on your college essays.

July

- [ ] Try to visit as many colleges you're interested in as possible, especially the colleges further from home.
- [ ] Finalize your college list, especially if you plan to apply Early Action or Early Decision.
- [ ] Consider an internship or a summer job, especially one that might be related to a future career.
- [ ] When you see your fall course schedule, make sure there are no classes missing from what your goal colleges require you to take. Many schools have curriculum requirements for applicants.

August

- [ ] Register for a Common App account if you don't have one, and begin adding colleges to your list so you can see which supplemental essays you'll need to complete.
- [ ] Flesh out your high school resume so it includes your interests, extracurriculars and paying jobs.
- [ ] Show demonstrated interest in your goal schools -- this can include visiting a campus, scheduling an on-campus interview or emailing your regional admissions representative.
- [ ] If you haven't started on your college essay drafts, you should consider doing so before school begins.
- [ ] Some public college and universities have released their applications, and the Common App is open, so start on your applications.
- [ ] If you did not ask teachers for recommendation letters last year, make a list of teachers you want to approach when school begins.

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