



ReadySetCollege

Helping prepare you for Admission to College



SAGEScholars

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Proudly presents our 2019 edition of ReadySetCollege

Hi Students,

We get it. The college process is tough. You live in a world of high stakes standardized tests and people constantly asking you where you are applying to go to college and if you got it. The good news is that it will be over soon enough and in the meantime we are here to help.

So when you are looking at potential colleges, take a look at our nearly 400 diverse independent colleges, all of which are generous with “merit aid” and financial aid. Also, all schools that join our Private College & University Enrollment Consortium give merit aid (tuition discounts) to a proportion of their incoming freshman class.

Furthermore, SAGE member colleges often give students an aid package substantially greater than the Tuition Rewards points that you submit. Here’s how it works. Your points represent a “guaranteed minimum discount”. In other words, all of our participating students are guaranteed a scholarship if they submit their rewards points at time of application and choose one of our member colleges. So if you fall in love with one of our member colleges, which will expect that you will, it won’t cost you as much as a college somewhere else.

And guess what? People are catching on to this program. Every year we have more and more families submitting tuition rewards points. Participating High School seniors submitted Tuition Rewards points valued at \$82 million to member colleges during 2017. (1 point = \$1.00). We expect that that number will be over 100 million in 2018. Tuition Rewards points are divided evenly over a projected four years of attendance for undergraduate study at member colleges, beginning with the freshman year.) And like most things in life there are deadlines involved. We implore that you mark these two important deadlines to claim your scholarship.

1. Transferring Points - Family member(s) sponsoring you in Tuition Rewards must transfer points from his/her account to you before August 31st of the year that you begin 12th grade. Be sure that all sponsoring family members are aware of this and complete the transfer prior to this date.
2. Submitting Points - A sponsoring family member must submit an electronic copy of your Tuition Rewards statement within a few days of your application to any member college or university. This can be done by any family member sponsoring you in the program. Just be sure to make your sponsor(s) aware of what member colleges you will be applying to and when you actually apply.

Both of these are easily done through your sponsor’s Tuition Rewards account at www.tuitionrewards.com. If he or she has any questions about transferring or submitting rewards, please have them contact us at support@sagescholars.com.

We wish you the best of luck in your college experience and don’t stress too much!

Your friends,
SAGE Scholars

SAGEScholars tuition**rewards** FAQs

3 Very Important Deadlines

1st Deadline



Student must be registered by **August 31st** of the year that the student begins 11th grade

2nd Deadline



Students must receive Tuition Rewards points by **August 31st** of the year that the student begins 12th grade

3rd Deadline



Submit Tuition Rewards points to a member college within **10 days** of a student's application

There are 3 very important SAGE Scholars deadlines:








- 1) Student must be registered by August 31st of the year that the student begins 11th grade.
- 2) Students must receive Tuition Rewards points by August 31st of the year that the student begins 12th grade.
- 3) Submit Tuition Rewards points to a college within 10 days of a student's application (10 days before or after).

These are the deadlines in most cases. Some programs may have a later deadline to add a student (please refer to the program documentation or your welcome email for details). Check out our FAQs for more information. If you have further questions, contact us at support@sagescholars.com.









SAGEScholars tuitionrewards FAQs

SAGE Scholars is the nation's oldest and largest private college preparation and funding organization. Our goal is to bridge the gap between students who want an affordable private college education with colleges that will guarantee tuition discounts - all at no cost to the student, family or college. Through our Tuition Rewards® program, SAGE Scholars has been helping families secure the best possible private college education at a discounted price since 1995.

What are Tuition Rewards?

-  Tuition Rewards represent guaranteed minimum discounts off the list price of tuition at any SAGE member college or university.
-  You earn Tuition Rewards through affiliated organizations and the SAGE Scholars Student Direct program. To see if you are eligible visit tuitionrewards.com/sp
-  The number of points earned determine the minimum, guaranteed tuition discount the student can receive at a SAGE college. He or she may receive more — but cannot receive less.
-  Each Tuition Rewards point represents a guaranteed minimum discount equivalent to one dollar, with a maximum discount of up to one year's tuition, spread equally over 4 years of full-time undergraduate education.
-  Tuition Rewards are not hard dollars and cannot be redeemed for cash.
-  The Tuition Rewards program is valid only for first-time, full-time freshmen.
-  Colleges reserve the right to include Tuition Rewards as part of other institutional awards, such as institutional scholarships and grants ("blending"). Tuition Rewards are not required to be added on top of ("stacked") other awards.

What Else Does SAGE Scholars Offer?

-  SAGE Scholars College Fairs - National Events
-  ReadySetCollege.org - Search & Compare SAGE Colleges
-  Market Cap & Gown - Education News
-  College Funding Information
-  Timelines for Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors
-  Checklists for College Visits and College Fairs
-  How to Prepare for a College Interview
-  Visit sagescholars.com to stay up-to-date.

"Students enrolled in a Private college or university are 70% more likely to graduate in four years than students enrolled in a public college or university."

- HERI UCLA Study



The college search process is an opportunity to learn more about colleges, potential careers and yourself. To find your “best fit” college, take the time to learn more about what is important to you. Look at your interests, activities, values and personality.

The Best Fit College

1. Generate a list of reach, target and safety schools from SAGE Scholars member colleges. Participating schools list can be found at www.tuitionrewards.com.

- ✓ Reach Schools: are dream schools, perhaps your GPA or test scores are just below the school’s standard
- ✓ Target Schools: you really want to attend and your GPA and test scores match what the school is looking for
- ✓ Safety Schools: are schools that you are confident that they will accept you. Your GPA and test scores are above what the schools are looking for.

🎓 Private colleges are less expensive than most families realize; and not only because of the generous aid. Studies have shown that students at a private college are more than twice as likely to graduate in 4 years than at a state school. Go to www.collegeresults.org to find out graduation rates. If comparing colleges set graduation rate to 4 years.



2. Do Your Homework

- ✓ Visit the school’s website
- ✓ Contact the school for more specific information regarding visit and event dates
- ✓ Meet with an admission representative at your high school or local college fair.

3. Keep Good Notes and Get Organized

- ✓ Make timelines or lists to help keep you on track. (Don’t miss our High School Time line later in this booklet.)

4. Use the following Target List Questionnaire

Best Fit: Target List Questionnaire

Make your “long list” based on the SAGE Scholars’ Target List Questionnaire. Include as many schools as fit your needs. However, by the fall of your senior year, this list should be narrowed to a “short list” of the colleges where you plan to apply. Although there is no magic number for your “short list,” many students find 5-to-8 schools ideal.

1. Size

- ☐ Very small (under 1,500 students)
- ☐ Medium-small (1,500-to-2,500)
- ☐ Medium-large (2,500-to-10,000)
- ☐ Large (over 10,000)

2. Type Of Area

- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural

3. Distance From Home

- ☐ Less than 2 hours
- ☐ 2-to-4 hours
- ☐ More than 4 hours

4. College Setting

- ☐ Physical appearance/atmosphere of the college
- ☐ Buildings, green spaces, etc.
- ☐ Dorms – living conditions
- ☐ Food service
- ☐ Social life on campus
- ☐ Friendliness of student body
- ☐ Helpfulness of faculty/staff

5. Student Composition

- ☐ Single-sex vs. coed
- ☐ Religious affiliation
- ☐ Students from a wide range of states and countries
- ☐ A campus with a good racial & ethnic mix of students
- ☐ Students with backgrounds either similar to or different than yours

6. Academic Reputation

- ☐ Academic rigor and pressure
- ☐ Competitiveness of student body
- ☐ Smaller institutions vs. larger universities
- ☐ Educational caliber of professors
- ☐ Prestige

Visit ReadySetCollege.org to find your SAGE College match

7. Matching School With Your Ability

- ☐ Do you match the freshman profile for GPA and SAT/ACT scores?
- ☐ What are your chances for acceptance?
- ☐ Do you consider this school a reach, target, or a safety school?

8. Academic Programs

- ☐ What majors are offered?
- ☐ Is the school known for a particular academic discipline?
- ☐ How does the school counsel “undecided” students?
- ☐ Is there a clear path into graduate school?
- ☐ Does the school offer co-ops, internships or research opportunities with professors?
- ☐ What career services are available?
- ☐ Are classes taught by professors or teaching assistants?

9. Extras

- ☐ Study abroad
- ☐ Fraternity/Sorority Life
- ☐ Clubs/Student Organization
- ☐ Club sports or recreation and fitness programs
- ☐ Intercollegiate sports teams
- ☐ Volunteer and community service opportunities
- ☐ Academic support services for special-needs

10. Cost

- ☐ 4-year Graduation Rate.
- ☐ Submit your Tuition Rewards® points!
- ☐ Other Scholarships (“need” and “non-need” or “Merit”)
- ☐ “List” price of tuition and Total Cost of Attendance
- ☐ Need-based and non-need based aid



Why?

To help determine if a college is a good fit for you. Keep asking, “Do I see myself here?” There are certain intangibles for each school that can only be experienced through a visit. A successful college visit can also give you a competitive edge in gaining admission.

Who?

Use this time to meet with Financial Aid and Admissions officers.

Be curious and ask questions:

- ✓ What are the admissions requirements for the college or for a specific program?
- ✓ Does the college have Early Action and/or Early Decision?
- ✓ When are the important deadlines for admissions?
- ✓ Can you have a car on campus?
- ✓ Can credits be earned online or transferred from other colleges?
- ✓ What percentage of first-year students return the following year?
- ✓ What percentage of graduates are employed within one year?

When?

The ideal time to visit a college campus is when school is in session, when all students are on campus attending classes and when school personnel are available to meet with you. Realistically, Spring break and summer work best for most families; therefore, most admissions offices are geared up for visits. Campus life will be typical during your spring break and less busy during the summer. Either way, you will get a feel for the campus.

How Many?

If your target schools are all close to home, visiting all is strongly encouraged. If your list ranges from California to Maine, this may be more difficult. It is all about being able to make good comparisons, so you should try to visit as many of your target schools as possible before filling out the applications.

What Makes A Successful College Visit?

Make as many arrangements in advance as you can, including:

- ✓ A campus tour and information session
- ✓ A one-on-one interview with someone in the admissions office
- ✓ Meeting with someone in the financial aid office
- ✓ Attending a class and meeting with a professor in your area of interest
- ✓ Connecting with a coach if you are considering playing a sport in college

Make the campus visit your own: Find time to informally walk around the campus to feel the “chemistry” of the school, talk with students, go to the favorite eating spot, read bulletin boards to see what’s happening on campus.

Be Sure To: Use your cell phone to take lots of pictures!

Library, dorm rooms, fitness center, the Campus Green, special places... Whatever is needed to create and preserve an impression.

If You Cannot Visit:

- ✓ Take a virtual tour on the college website
- ✓ Email your admissions representative with any questions
- ✓ Schedule a visit with the college representative when he or she comes to your school
- ✓ Attend a local college fair that your college is participating in and connect at the fair

SAGEScholars College Visit: Campus Checklist

Use this Campus Checklist for each college visit. Circle or highlight items you particularly liked about the college. When you have completed your college visits, compare the checklists to help determine which college may be a “best fit” for you. Download additional copies at <http://www.tuitionrewards.com/CampusChecklist>

College: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Tour Time: _____

Tour Place: _____

Contact/Phone: _____



Places to visit:

- ☐ Student center/hangouts
- ☐ Library
- ☐ Classrooms
- ☐ Admissions office
- ☐ Dining facility
- ☐ Residence halls
- ☐ Career placement office
- ☐ Bookstore
- ☐ Off-campus stores
- ☐ The local community
- ☐ School/community papers
- ☐ Health center
- ☐ Greek Life

Academic items to evaluate:

- ☐ Class size
- ☐ Accredited Program
- ☐ Competition
- ☐ Workload
- ☐ Freshman orientation programs
- ☐ Academic advisors for students

Library items to evaluate:

- ☐ Hours
- ☐ Study rooms/areas
- ☐ Conducive to research

Housing items to evaluate:

- ☐ Quality
- ☐ Security
- ☐ Noise level
- ☐ Location
- ☐ Guaranteed?
- ☐ Students per room

Dining Options to evaluate:

- ☐ Dining hall
- ☐ Dining Card
- ☐ Quality of food
- ☐ Cleanliness
- ☐ Variety
- ☐ Special diet availability
- ☐ Local restaurants

Facilities to evaluate:

- ☐ Student center
- ☐ Classroom size, lighting
- ☐ Counseling services
- ☐ Placement office
- ☐ Disability access/services
- ☐ Tutoring

Sports items to evaluate:

- ☐ Fitness Center
- ☐ Gym
- ☐ Pool
- ☐ Track(s)- Indoor/Outdoor
- ☐ Stadium
- ☐ Skating/Hockey Rink
- ☐ Tennis courts
- ☐ Intramural sports
- ☐ Intercollegiate sports

Community/Area to evaluate:

- ☐ Overall impression
- ☐ Safety
- ☐ Local entertainment
- ☐ Shopping
- ☐ Activities/entertainment
- ☐ Relationship with college
- ☐ Transportation to/from campus
- ☐ Unusual weather conditions
- ☐ Other colleges nearby

Impression of students:

- ☐ Academic attitudes
- ☐ Backgrounds/ethnic mix
- ☐ Results from conversations

Impression of faculty:

- ☐ Accessible
- ☐ Teaching styles
- ☐ Dedication
- ☐ Openness

My overall reaction to this college:

- ☐ Better than before I visited
- ☐ About the same as before I visited
- ☐ Not as good as before I visited

Preparation for College Interviews



There are different types of college interviews

The three basic are:

1. **College Admissions Representative:** This is the person who will be reviewing your entire application. He/she is your direct connection to the admissions committee and are the expert about the college and the type of applicant the team is looking for. Know your information about the college so you are able to have an authentic and enthusiastic conversation. Be prepared to ask questions about information that is not available on the school website or college tour.
2. **Alumni:** The interviewer is someone who has graduated from the college. Ask him/her about his/her experience at the college and what drew him/her to this particular school. This type of interview allows you to gain a perspective on career opportunities after graduating.
3. **Informational Interview:** The interview will be with an admissions representative, student or perhaps a professor. Information gained from this interview does not go into your file for admission. This type of interview is useful for assessing a student's comfort level with the college from both an academic and social perspective, provides the student with more information about the colleges, and allows the college to get to know you better.

Typical Questions:

- ? Tell me about yourself?
- ? What is the most important thing that you learned in high school?
- ? What are your strengths and weaknesses?
- ? Why are you interested in our college?
- ? What is your intended major?
- ? What is your proudest achievement?
- ? What extracurriculars do you plan on getting involved with outside of the classroom?
- ? Who is your hero?
- ? What was the last, not-assigned, book you read?
- ? What will you contribute to our college community?
- ? How do you define success?
- ? If you could talk with anyone living (or deceased) person, whom would it be and why?
- ? What are three words that best describes you?
- ? What are your plans after graduating from college?
- ? Does your high school record accurately reflect you?

How to Prepare:

- ✍ Arrive early
- ✍ Dress business casual, no jeans or t-shirts
- ✍ Avoid inappropriate language and / or slang
- ✍ Be polite
- ✍ Be honest
- ✍ Be confident but not arrogant
- ✍ Most of all be yourself not what you think they want you to be
- ✍ Send a handwritten thank you note

Ten Minute Professor

What Admissions Officers Look For

What are the biggest factors in making a great impression?

Ask any admissions officer what 3 elements are the most important in the admissions process and the answer will likely be courses, courses, and courses. Their job is to bring to campus those students the faculty most want to teach. Although it doesn't always hold true, the consensus is that the best measure of a student's potential in college is their performance in high school.

The transcript

Most students think their transcripts are not a true reflection of their abilities. That's not what admissions officers think. Most admissions officers read the transcript as a dynamic, multi-dimensional document that speaks to your level of motivation. Have you taken advantage of the most challenging parts of the available curriculum? Have you demonstrated range, depth, and breadth in the courses you've taken and willingness to try new things? Most importantly, is there a trend? Are you maturing and gaining strength in the upper grades—or taking it easy? The transcript is like a relief map of your high school experience.

Test scores

Test scores may cause the most anxiety for college applicants. More than a million students take the SAT or ACT every year. What do admissions officers look for in reading your test scores? For the most part, test scores are just 1 element of consideration—often to raise questions or confirm the obvious. When a student has high test scores but mediocre grades, it raises questions about motivation. Is the student bright but lazy? If so, the admissions office must be satisfied that there isn't an inherent poor work ethic.

Conversely, the student with very high grades and low test scores raises questions. How does this school compare to other high schools? Is there grade inflation at the school? How demanding was the course load? Your test scores are part of interpreting your transcript.

The personal essay

The personal essay allows each applicant a terrific opportunity to help admissions officers read the map more accurately. In

addition to articulating your goals, dreams, and expectations, you can also explain any gaps or changes in your record. The essay is your chance to take some control in the admissions process and make your own case.

Admissions officers certainly look for writing ability. But they also look for originality and logic. They want to gain a fuller sense of your abilities and aspirations. The most effective essays convey an authentic voice, something that admissions officers recognize and appreciate. The authentic voice doesn't come from trying to satisfy the reader, counselors, or parents. It comes through when the writer conveys a true essence of personality and give the reader a deeper understanding of their individual strengths.

Extracurricular activities

Most applications ask you to list your accomplishments and extracurricular activities. Some students obsess about these and join lots of activities, especially in their senior year. Trying to improve the look of your application this way screams of superficiality!

Colleges are more interested in a sustained involvement borne from your true interests. A person with a singular interest, pursued with passion, is far more appealing than someone who touches lightly on many activities.

Recommendations

For recommendations, colleges want to hear from a few people who know you well and can write convincingly about your abilities, not a long list of important people with whom you've had limited interaction. A compelling recommendation may come from a teacher who gave you a B but speaks of your determination and tenacity in pursuing a subject that does not come easily to you.

A final point

Most institutions are looking for a reason to admit you, not keep you out. View the application, transcript, recommendations, and personal essay as instruments over which you have control. Use them to build a clear and convincing argument.



College

The Application Process


Application


More than 700 schools accept the Common Application (www.commonapp.org), a single application that can be completed and sent to numerous colleges. More than 100 schools accept the new Coalition for Access, Affordability and Success Application (www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org)


Mind The Timing


Deadlines vary from as early as September for some competitive programs to as late as July at rolling admission schools. Regardless, your application should be submitted two weeks prior to any deadline date.


Understand The Vocabulary

 **Early Decision:** Students apply to their FIRST CHOICE school before the regular admissions date, and generally receive a decision by January 1st. Early Decision is a binding agreement. If accepted, you are obliged to attend that college/university, and ALL other applications must be withdrawn. Students may only apply to one school Early Decision.

 **Early Decision II:** Same guidelines as Early Decision, except the deadlines are later.





 **Early Action:** Students apply to schools before the regular admissions date and generally receive a decision by January 1st. Unlike Early Decision, Early Action is not a binding agreement, and the student is not obligated to attend the college/university when accepted. Students are not limited to the number of schools that they may apply to through Early Action. There are a few school that have restrictive early action.

 **Regular Decision:** Students apply by January / February and receive a decision by early April. There is no restriction to the number of schools to which the student may apply, and acceptance is not binding.

 **Rolling Admission:** Applications are reviewed as they arrive, and applicants are generally notified within 6-to-8 weeks. Places in the incoming class may be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Some schools with rolling admission suggest submitting applications in September.

The Application Components

1. High School Transcript

-  Courses completed, grades earned
-  Cumulative GPA (weighted and unweighted)
-  Rigor and variety of courses taken
-  Consistency of performance

2. Sat/Act Test Results

All schools accept both tests

Students take the SAT / ACT during the spring of their junior year

Students should take both SAT & ACT, compare their scores on the test, then repeat the test they either performed better on or were more comfortable taking.

The SAT is offered 7 times / year. The ACT is offered 6 times /year

After you have received all of your test scores, have the scores from your best test date or combination of test dates sent directly to the

college / university. Most colleges / universities will “Superscore” your SAT. Superscoring means that colleges will consider your highest section scores across all SAT test dates that you submit. ACT generally does not superscore. NOTE: Students must have their official scores sent to their colleges directly from either CollegeBoard (SAT) or ACT.

Each college will have a defined range of scores that they will accept, including low, high and average.

Colleges look at compatibility.

Many colleges are “test optional,” which means they make admission decisions without using SAT or ACT scores (www.fairtest.org)

3. Essays / Personal Statements

The essay is an opportunity for the college to get to know you

Colleges will be looking at content, style, mechanics and sincerity

Write about a topic that matters to you

Be yourself in your essay - not what you think the colleges want you to be

Give yourself plenty of time to work on the essay / personal statement (brainstorm, write, re-write and edit)

Ask someone you trust to read the final document

4. Letters Of Recommendation

Colleges use letters to discover a student’s personal qualities, including academics, personal traits and contributions to school and the community.

Discuss with your teacher recommender how you excelled in class and what you would like him or her to share with the college

Your school counselor may give you a questionnaire to complete about yourself. Take time and fill it out thoroughly. This will help counselors write a general recommendation about you.

Ask your recommender’s in the late spring of your junior year

5. Resumé

Attach a resumé that includes school and community activities.

Don’t use abbreviations for clubs.

Neatness, organization and spelling count.

Be sure to post your name at the top of the resume.

Colleges look for quality of activities - not quantity. Depth of involvement matters more than breadth and provides evidence that an applicant knows the value of perseverance. Colleges like demonstrations of leadership.

6. Miscellaneous Items

Portfolio reviews for Art majors

Creative writing pieces for English majors

Laboratory reports for Science majors

Auditions for Music and/or Drama majors

Tips For Completing Applications

- ! Read the instructions thoroughly
- ! Make a checklist of everything that is required for each school
- ! PROOFREAD! There is no excuse for spelling or grammatical errors
- ! Be complete.
- ! If using the Common Application, check for supplemental information that may be required
- ! Know your deadlines
- ! Save a copy of your application on your computer as well as keeping a paper copy
- ! Be familiar with your high school’s procedure for processing and submitting student documents (transcript, school profile, letters of recommendation)

SAGE Scholars' High School Timeline for College Preparation

Freshman Year

Fall

- ☐ Meet with your school counselor—they'll be guiding you through the next 4 years.
- ☐ Find a mentor—a teacher, counselor, or coach.
- ☐ Create a 4-year plan for graduation to ensure your courses are ones that colleges will require.
- ☐ Take the most demanding classes for you.
- ☐ STUDY STUDY STUDY—GRADES COUNT. The grades you receive in 9th grade will go on your transcript and be calculated into your grade point average (GPA).
- ☐ Sign up for the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test (PSAT) at your school's counseling office.
- ☐ Participate in clubs, activities, and sports—in and out of school. Select a variety of activities that interest you.
- ☐ Keep a portfolio (file of records) of your accomplishments. Include report cards, awards, recognitions, group projects, and materials related to clubs, activities, sports, volunteer work, and work experiences.
- ☐ If you're planning on playing a sport in college, check out The Guide for College-Bound Student-Athlete (ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CBSA18.pdf).

You can do this. You're in the same boat as every other freshman. High school is your next great adventure!



Spring

- ☐ STUDY STUDY STUDY—stay on top of your grades.
- ☐ Do a career and interest inventory (mynextmove.org/explore/ip; mynextmove.org/find/browse?c=56).
- ☐ Start saving for college (studentaid.ed.gov/sa/prepare-for-college/choosing-schools/consider/costs).
- ☐ Plan for your sophomore year by signing up for challenging classes. Make sure classes align with your career interests.
- ☐ Research Advanced Placement (AP) courses, as well as dual-enrollment classes taken at the college level.
- ☐ Start thinking about college. Make a list of possible colleges. Visit local colleges.
- ☐ Think about summer opportunities. Have fun and get a job, volunteer, or join an enrichment program.

SAGE Scholars' High School Timeline for College Preparation

Sophomore Year

Fall

- ☐ STUDY STUDY STUDY—KEEP YOUR GRADES UP.
- ☐ Meet with your school counselor.
- ☐ Update your 4-year plan for graduation. Make sure you are on track with rigorous courses that will meet college admission requirements.
- ☐ Do a career and interest inventory (mynextmove.org/explore/ip; mynextmove.org/find/browse?c=56).
- ☐ Take the PSAT and/or pre-ACT.
- ☐ Attend college fairs: they're a valuable source of information (nacacfairs.org).
- ☐ Continue with clubs, activities, sports, and volunteering. Take on leadership positions. You don't need to join every club; just find a few that you really like.
- ☐ If you're planning on playing a sport in college, check out The Guide for College-Bound Student-Athlete (ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CBSA18.pdf).
- ☐ Continue saving for college.
- ☐ Advocate for yourself—seek out help when you need it.
- ☐ Add to your portfolio absolutely everything you do. Include report cards, awards, recognitions, group projects, and materials related to clubs, activities, sports, volunteer work, and work experiences.



Spring

- ☐ Plan for your junior year by signing up for challenging classes.
- ☐ Keep reading and writing. This will strengthen your verbal, writing, and critical-thinking skills.
- ☐ Visit colleges and collect information about schools that you may be interested in.
- ☐ Consider shadowing someone in a career of interest—ask your counselor for more information.
- ☐ Consider taking some SAT Subject Tests.
- ☐ Plan for your summer. Have fun and get a job, volunteer, or join an enrichment program.

You've got this! Keep up the good work.

SAGE Scholars' High School Timeline for College Preparation

Junior Year

Fall

☐ STUDY STUDY STUDY—KEEP YOUR GRADES UP.

☐ Meet with your school counselor often. Review your GPA, current courses, and activities to ensure you're following your college plan.

☐ Develop a master calendar which includes:

ACT/SAT/SAT Subject Test dates.

Personal deadlines for completing essays, resumes.

Local college fairs.

Dates college representatives are visiting your school.

Dates you plan to visit your schools of interest.

Application due dates for summer programs.

☐ Register for the PSAT/NMSQT(collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10) through the counseling office to be screened for the National Merit Scholarship Program. The top 1% of students generally qualify as semi-finalists.

☐ Attend meetings with college representatives.

☐ Attend college fairs: they're a valuable source of information (nacacfairs.org).

☐ Research colleges: consider location, major, size, required GPA, SAT/ACT score ranges, and athletics. Now is the time to explore, so make your list as long as you wish. Some useful college search sites are:

bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search

cappex.com

college-insight.org

chegg.com/schools

unigo.com

☐ Check your school calendar for special evening programs about college. Topics usually include Junior Night, College Panels, and Financial Aid.



☐ If you're planning on playing a sport in college, check out The Guide for College-Bound Student-Athlete (ncaapublications.com/productdownloads/CBSA18.pdf).

☐ Set up an organization system for all of your documents if you haven't already.

☐ Develop a testing plan: plot out when will you start test prep and take the SAT/ACT, AP, and SAT Subject tests. FREE sites useful for SAT/ACT/AP prep:

prepfactory.com

khanacademy.org

apppracticeexams.com

collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat-subject-tests/subjects

☐ Financial planning for college: every college website has a net-price calculator which was developed to help families plan for educational costs.



Spring

- ☐ Take the SAT/ACT/AP/SAT Subject Tests.
- ☐ Ask your teachers for letters of recommendation. Consult with your counselor. Colleges use letters to discover a student's personal qualities, including academics, personal traits, and contributions to school and the community. Discuss with your recommender how you excelled in their class and what you would like to share with colleges.
- ☐ Attend a college fair.
- ☐ Search for summer opportunities such as internships, specialty programs, and work.

Winter

- ☐ Register for the spring SAT and ACT tests, including the writing section. Students should take both tests, compare their scores, then repeat the test they performed better on or were more comfortable taking.
- ☐ Plan a junior-year meeting with your school counselor that includes your family. Discuss academics, college planning, and the high school's application process.
- ☐ Plan your college visits. Spring break and summer work best for most families and most admissions offices are geared up for visits. Campus life will be typical during spring break but less busy during the summer. Either way, you'll get a feel for the campus.
- ☐ Plan for your senior year by signing up for challenging classes. Update your 4-year plan for graduation. Make sure you are on track with courses that will meet college admission requirements.
- ☐ Stay involved with extracurricular activities. Colleges look for consistency, depth, and leadership.

Summer

- ☐ Visit colleges.
- ☐ Take on specialty summer programs, internships, and/or work.
- ☐ Start your college essay.
- ☐ Start to narrow down your college choices.
- ☐ Begin thinking about whether you'd like to apply to any colleges either early decision or early action.
- ☐ Start applying by using the Common Application or an individual college's application.

High 5! You are more than halfway through your high school career and you're handling the college search process like a pro. There are nearly 400 SAGE colleges out there—you can be confident that you'll find your perfect fit.

SAGE Scholars' High School Timeline for College Preparation

Senior Year

Fall

- ☐ STUDY STUDY STUDY—KEEP YOUR GRADES UP.
- ☐ Finalize your transcript with your counselor.
- ☐ Generate a list of SAGE Scholars member colleges that fit your criteria and that you would attend. The list should include reach, target, and safety colleges.

Reach colleges: dream colleges; perhaps your GPA or test scores are below the school's averages.

Target colleges: colleges you want to attend; your GPA and test scores match what the school is looking for.

Safety colleges: colleges where you can be confident of acceptance. Your GPA and test scores will blow away the admissions committee.

- ☐ Don't let list price discourage you from exploring what a college has to offer—actual cost is often different when a financial aid package is completed.
- ☐ Meet with your counselor to review your list, clarify the high school's application process, and discuss your counselor letter of recommendation.
- ☐ Develop a master calendar which includes:
 - ALL college application deadlines.
 - ALL college financial aid deadlines.
 - Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) deadlines. You may file starting October 1st.
 - Scholarship deadlines.
 - ACT/SAT/SAT Subject Test dates. NOTE: For early action and early decision, your deadlines are in October/November. Check with the colleges where you're applying.
 - ALL of your high school's college application deadlines.
 - Any special interest deadlines (auditions, portfolios).



- ALL NCAA athletic deadlines.
- Personal deadlines for completing essays, resumes, supplemental applications; check with recommenders about your letters of recommendation.
- Local college fairs.
- Dates that college representatives will be visiting your school.
- Dates you plan to visit your schools of interest.

- ☐ Check with your recommenders about the status of their letters. Share with them your deadlines. If you haven't asked your teachers for letters of recommendation, do so now.
- ☐ Complete your college essay and all supplemental essays.
- ☐ Complete early decision, early action, and rolling applications. Check deadlines with each college (they're generally between October 15th and November 15th).
- ☐ Complete at least 1 application by November 1st.



Winter

- ☐ STUDY STUDY STUDY. Colleges want to see that you're maintaining your grades.
- ☐ Request that your school send mid-year reports to all of your colleges.
- ☐ If accepted early decision, withdraw your applications from all other colleges.
- ☐ Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if you haven't already.
- ☐ Continue to research scholarships.
- ☐ Keep hard copies of all of your applications.

Spring

- ☐ Compare financial aid packages (award letters).
- ☐ Attend "Admitted Student Day" activities for every school you are considering.
- ☐ May 1st: time to commit to one and only one college.
- ☐ Send deposit to your selected college.
- ☐ Notify the remaining colleges that you won't be attending.
- ☐ If waitlisted, respond to the college with your decision about staying on or leaving the waitlist.
- ☐ Complete financial aid requirements.
- ☐ Review master calendar to ensure everything is complete.
- ☐ Take AP exams.
- ☐ Request that your high school submit your final transcript to the college that you're going to attend.
- ☐ Send thank-you notes to all of your recommenders.
- ☐ GRADUATE!

Congratulations, you've made it!
Hard work pays off. We know you
have a bright future ahead of you
and we wish you the best.

Sincerely,
SAGE Scholars

Keep up to date





ReadySetCollege.org

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