HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE
ROAD MAP

In today’s world, you need more than a high school diploma to get the jobs you want and reach your goals for the future. It really is important for you to attend a public, private, or community college — or pursue some type of advanced technical training — after completing high school.

But you need to plan ahead and pay close attention if you want to make a smooth transition to college. Navigating the route from your first day of high school to graduation becomes more complex when it’s filled with decisions, responsibilities, and deadlines related to finding the right college and gaining admission.

Beginning with your freshman year, you can be sure that you’re on the right path by following the “road maps” included here. The things you’ll need to do along the way — begin researching colleges, take the SAT or ACT, apply for financial aid — are sequenced throughout your freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years.

This college advisement guide was developed by the Sonoma County Office of Education to support you and your future! By mapping out an educational plan that leads past high school, you are assured of greater success.

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Steven D. Herrington, Ph.D.
Sonoma County Superintendent of Schools
Helpful research sites:
Community Colleges • www.cccco.edu
Independent CA Colleges • www.aiccu.edu
Western Undergrad Exchange • www.wiche.edu/wue
UC • www.universityofcalifornia.edu
CSU • www.calstate.edu

Sophomores – Sign up for the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship test. This exam will test your college-level skills. Get a good night’s sleep before the exam and remember to eat breakfast!

Sophomores – You’re in the most important year of high school, so make the most of it! Colleges will review what you did this year when deciding about admission.

Freshmen – Develop an education plan with your counselor.

Learn about your school’s career pathways and the academic classes that fulfill the a-g requirements for college admission.

Sophomores – Review your scores from the Preliminary SAT.
Determine which skills to practice prior to taking the SAT or ACT.

Sophomores – Talk to past graduates about their college experiences when they’re home for the holidays.

Sophomores – Talk to older friends about their college experiences. Explore the SRJC and SSU campuses. Visit some colleges and technical schools.

Freshman – Find out if your school has a college/career office and see what’s there.

Begin the research process. Make a list of what you’ll look for in a college — size, location, majors, competitiveness, sports, etc. Look online or visit the guidance office, career center, or library.

Select courses for next year, then talk with teachers about your selections. Check with your counselor to be sure your choices are preparing you for college entry. Have at least 4-5 solid academic courses to ensure that you’re meeting the a-g requirements.

Review course work from your first semester. Ask teachers what you can do to improve in second semester.

End the year in good academic shape.

Look for interesting things to do over the summer to broaden your experiences. For example, consider applying for a summer enrichment program at a college. (Financial assistance may be available.)

Read from a recommended English reading list or get other suggestions for academic reading.

Get to know your public library. Learn how to do research in the library and on the Internet.

Investigate careers by talking to your parents’ friends and your friends’ parents.

Sophomores – Find out what you did this year when deciding about admission.

It’s important to develop more than your academic skills, so look over your extracurricular activities. Remember, quality (depth of involvement) is more important than quantity (number of activities).

Attend college and career information events at your school.

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- Western Undergrad Exchange • www.wiche.edu/wue
- UC • www.universityofcalifornia.edu
- CSU • www.calstate.edu

**FRESHMEN / SOPHOMORES**

It's important to develop more than your academic skills, so look over your extracurricular activities. Summer to broaden your involvement (important for college admissions). Look for activities.

Plan your senior year. Match your course selections to the entrance requirements of your college choices.

Attend the Spring College Fair at Sonoma State University.

Visit campuses over Spring Break. Refine the list of colleges and technical schools that interest you.

Put together a list of ten schools you’d like to attend. Find out about costs.

Take SAT Subject Tests, if needed.

If you hope to participate in college athletics, you need to be certified by the NCAA Clearinghouse. See your counselor.

Apply for summer enrichment programs at community, public, and private colleges.

Write your representatives in Congress to request applications to military academies.

Attend the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship test. This exam will test your college-level skills and prepare you for the SAT/ACT.

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Register with FastWeb (www.fastweb.com) to begin searching for possible scholarships.

Meet with college admissions counselors if you visit your school.

Open an email account with a professional address if you don’t already have one.

Participate in extracurricular activities (important for college admissions).

Review your Preliminary SAT results with your counselor. Look into taking an SAT/ACT Prep class to improve your scores.

Attend your school’s financial aid workshop and learn as much as you can about financial aid.

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Review course work from your first semester.

Ask teachers what you can do to improve in second semester.

Register and take SAT/ACT exams.

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Financial aid sites:
- Cal Grant • www.calgrants.org
- Dream Act • www.caldreamact.org
- FAFSA • fafsa.ed.gov

**JUNIORS**

START

Attend the Sonoma County College & Career-Ready Fair held at Windsor High School in early September.

Take advanced math, science, English, and foreign language classes.

Visit campuses. Select your top six and bookmark their online applications.

Look for interesting things to do over the summer. Volunteer or get a part-time job to broaden your experiences.

SUCCESS!

SUMMER

FAFSA • fafsa.ed.gov

My high school code is

Get your school code from your counselor or at www.actstudent.org/regist/lookups

SUCCESS!

FINISH!

FINISH!

FINISH!

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Check progress in fulfilling application requirements:
- Get deadlines and forms for rolling admissions at independent colleges.
- Obtain necessary recommendations.
- Give teachers/counselors any forms to complete two to three weeks before they're due.
- Write essay for entrance requirement.

Don't slack off!
Set a grade-point average (GPA) goal for the remainder of the year. Colleges look unfavorably on failing grades.

High School to College Road Map

Seniors

Fall

Check the websites of your chosen schools for information about financial aid.

UC • www.universityofcalifornia.edu
CSU • www.calstate.edu

Know your social security number for FAFSA (not necessary for California Dream Act).

Review your transcripts. Stay on course! For an early decision application, begin the process no later than October.

Review and take SAT/ACT tests in September or October. November is the last opportunity.

Check the websites of your location, academic program, or chosen schools for information about graduation requirements.

If you are applying to more than one college, rank your preferences by location, academic program, or other characteristics. Does the ranking match your gut feeling?

Set up a WebGrants account.

www.webgrants4students.org

UC/CSU applications are available.

Look for private scholarships. Apply early.

ATTEND INFORMATION NIGHT.

Prep your SAT/ACT exam if you want to improve your score.

WINTER

Check application deadlines related to finding the right courses.

It’s filled with decisions, responsibilities, and changes from your first day of high school to graduation becomes more complex when your high school experience is complete. Navigating the route to college must also receive your transcript.

Don’t get senioritis.
Colleges want to see a strong second semester.

Spring

Have your first semester grades sent to any colleges that request them.

If qualified, register for AP exams.

www.collegeboard.org

Keep track of acceptances, denials, and financial aid awards.

Take AP Exams in May, if qualified.

Do you have a college exploration list? Organize a file for each college that interests you. Check application deadlines.

Don’t slack off!
Set a grade-point average (GPA) goal for the remainder of the year. Colleges look unfavorably on failing grades.

Summer

File for FAFSA, California Dream Act, and Cal Grants by March 2.

www.fafsa.ed.gov
www.californiaact.org
www.calgrants.org

If you are considering the military, sign up for the ASVAB test.

www.official-asvab.com

Request that your final transcripts be sent to the college you’ll attend in the fall. If you are a prospective college athlete, NCAA must also receive your transcript.

www.ncaa.org

Compare costs! Make final decisions and send deposit by deadline.

Once you have decided which college to attend, notify your counselor and all colleges that accepted you. Be fair to the college and to other students by responding by May 1.

Keep track of acceptances, denials, and financial aid awards.

Take AP Exams in May, if qualified.

Interested in SRJC? Sign up to meet with a community college counselor for admissions information. Take the English and Math placement exams. Participate in a college orientation class.

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FOR AP EXAMS.

Have your first semester grades sent to any colleges that request them.

If qualified, register for AP exams.

www.collegeboard.org

Apply for local and national scholarships.

www.fastweb.com

Look for scholarships.

Apply early.

Keep track of acceptances, denials, and financial aid awards.

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