

# COLLEGE ADMISSIONS College Planning Checklist

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## *Freshman Year*

**YEAR OVERVIEW:** Select course curriculum that realistically challenges your academic abilities and college interests.

- Develop a four year “plan of work in-progress” encompassing rigor and personal success.
- Explore extracurriculars, from arts, to athletics, to service clubs to uncover your passion.
- Colleges look for engaged, active, and multi-talented applicants. Explore early and have fun!

## *Sophomore Year*

**FALL-WINTER:** Revisit and adjust the course curriculum tracks based on demonstrated strengths and interests.

- Maintain 5 academic courses (Math, Science, English, History, Foreign Language) in addition to courses required based on Michigan Merit Curriculum standards.
- Focus on strong grades, while continuing to challenge yourself. Easy A's limit your potential!
- Narrow extracurricular activities to just a few to highlight commitment, continuity, and leadership
- Take the PLAN (pre-ACT) and the PSAT (Pre-SAT) if offered, for practice and baseline feedback. Colleges do not use these tests for admission. Tests provide valuable career interest feedback and reduce test anxiety by familiarizing the student with the testing process and expectations.
- If taking any AP courses, register for subject-related June SAT II subject tests in early March, in addition to May AP exams.
- SUMMER: Begin to explore a variety of college campuses with casual “drive-bys” during family travels.
- Plan a meaningful local summer activity (job, camps, volunteer, service). • Summer is best time to begin test preparation for SAT,ACT,SAT II with a summer prep course.

## *Junior Year*

- FALL: Revisit and adjust the course curriculum based on demonstrated success. These are the grades that will best identify your college opportunities. Continued challenge is essential and GPA matters!
- Plan to visit college representatives who visit your high school.
- Register for a college search web site ([www.petersons.com](http://www.petersons.com)) and begin on-line exploration.
- Register for the PSAT (October test date), Register for an ACT (December test date) for practice.
- Begin touring college campuses, e-mailing for catalogs, utilize career center search resources.
- WINTER: Review PSAT and ACT results and decide if additional test preparation is needed. Look for test-prep companies that offer free repeat review sessions as needed.
- Sign up for ACT, SAT and SAT II's as needed. ACT and SAT have equal impact and are

universally accepted by all colleges.

- Meet with your high school counselor to review college choices, develop a college list, and plan senior course curriculum. It is important to continue to trend upward in grades and rigor your senior year!
- Prepare your college resume: academic, extracurricular clubs/service, athletics, and the arts.
- Explore college athletics at all levels and e-mail coaches of your interest. If needed, register with NCAA Eligibility Center. As of July 1, college coaches can contact you (D1-D2). D3 coaches have unlimited contact.
- Art and Music students should begin portfolio preparation and meet with HS department chair.
- SPRING: Plan college touring in mid-February or Spring break; incorporate into vacation plans if planned.
- Identify teacher, counselors, and key adults and ask for a commitment to write letters of recommendation
- Narrow down your college choices: include two foundational, match, and stretch schools.
- SUMMER: Begin College Application process. Essays questions available in early July for many schools.
- Visit college campuses on your list. Plan an interview and a tour.
- Plan for meaningful summer activity

## *Senior Year*

**LATE AUGUST:** Register for any September/October ACT/SAT tests should you choose to retake them.

- Prepare college applications, collect letters of recommendations and discuss financial parameters regarding college tuition.
- Discuss various application deadlines and application options (Rolling, Early Decision, Early Action, Regular).
- UM/MSU have rolling admissions and are first come-first served. UM has early notification. Apply early!
- Create a timeline and consider outside support to ensure student accountability, deadlines, quality application content and review.
- Visit with college representatives at your high school, visit schools in person, when possible, on your narrowed list.
- WINTER: File FAFSA [www.fafsa.org](http://www.fafsa.org) for financial aid. Check schools for additional forms (CSS) and scholarship opportunities.
- Review responses, if wait-listed, send midyear grades, additional accolades and letters of support.
- Sign up for AP exams scheduled for May.
- Midyear grades are sent to most colleges by the high school. Keep the GPA strong as colleges can rescind acceptances with cause.
- SPRING: Continue to visit schools to make an informed college decision by May 1. Pay all fees to guarantee your admission spot in fall.
- Be sure your HS sends final transcripts and have a safe summer. **Congratulations!**