

College Planning Checklists

Planning for higher education should be a process that begins long before students graduate from high school. The checklists below are to be used by students and parents as a guide to help plan for higher education while students are still in high school.

For All Students:

There are a number of items students and parents need to consider in order to make the most out of high school. All students need to be taking classes recommended for college preparation. Talk to your high school counselor or the Upward Bound Academic Services Coordinator if you are unsure about which classes you should be taking to prepare for college. In addition, examine your test scores and take extra courses or get tutoring assistance for weaker academic areas. Furthermore, set goals for each academic year and explore careers through research and experiences. Try an internship or job shadowing in a career area you are interested in pursuing. Surf the internet for information on education, colleges and universities, and career planning. Most importantly, never stop learning.

Freshman Year:

- Enroll in a college preparatory curriculum—ask your counselor or UB staff for assistance if needed
- When possible, write papers, do projects, and research different colleges
- Enter essay and speech contests for scholarships
- Get involved in extra curricular activities
- Volunteer in your community
- Explore careers and job opportunities in the areas you volunteer
- Learn keyboarding and computer skills
- Study hard and do well in school—grades count toward college and are on your permanent record
- Start attending events on college campuses if possible (plays, sporting events, concerts etc.)
- Get to know your high school counselor and let them know your goals, career aspirations, colleges/universities you are considering attending, etc.

Sophomore Year:

- Take the PLAN Test—October/November
- Take the PSAT Test—October/November
- Use the internet to start looking at colleges through their web sites
- Start attending college fairs
- Get a job
- Start a bank account and a savings account and save as much as possible for college
- Get involved in extra curricular activities

- Volunteer in your community
- Explore careers and job opportunities in the areas you volunteered
- Learn keyboarding and computer skills
- Job shadow someone who does what you think you'd like to do (this means follow them around for a day-even a Saturday or Sunday)

Junior Year:

This year's academic record will go a long way toward either helping or hurting your chances of gaining admission to schools of your choice. You can make up ground if you've been slacking and you can keep up the hard work you've already exhibited.

- Take the PSAT-October (this one is to qualify for National Merit Scholarship Competition). It can be very important.
- Attend an ACT/SAT preparation workshop-ask your counselor or UB staff member for more information. Purchase practice books, software, etc. to prepare if you can afford it.
- Take the ACT/SAT-spring semester. This gives you one score going into your senior year. This also gives schools you are considering significant information.
- Research possible colleges and request information from them
- Visit college campuses (campus tour, visit with advisors/faculty, pick up an admissions packet, stop by the financial aid office and get information packets)
- Take solid elective courses (extra math, science, foreign language, computers, etc.)
- Talk to family and friends to gather ideas on colleges
- Run for leadership positions in the organizations you are involved in
- Ask you high school counselor or UB staff for suggestions as to colleges you should consider but might not have thought of on your own (based on major, scholarships, location, etc.)
- Continue to explore careers and job opportunities

Senior Year:

- I. General items
 - Continue to challenge yourself and take solid elective courses
 - Attend college fairs, if possible
 - Visit college campuses, if possible
 - Talk to people whose opinions you respect about the schools you are considering
 - Attend events at the colleges you are interested in, if possible

- II. Early Fall
 - Gather applications to the schools you are considering (note deadlines for admission, scholarships, housing, etc. on your college prep calendar)
 - Sit down with everyone who has a stake in your college decision and solicit their input. Listen to what everyone has to say.

- Line up key people to write letters of recommendation for you later in the year. This gives them plenty of notice and time to think about it.
 - Borrow/Ask for scholarship information from your school counselor, UB staff, seniors that received scholarships last year, etc.
 - Get to know the admission criteria for your top schools. Know where you stand in relation to those requirements and work toward changing what you can (if you are falling short)
 - Take the ACT/SAT (repeat as necessary or as desired)
 - Apply for admission (if seeking early admission)
- III. Mid-Fall
- Talk to your high school counselor about local scholarships and get the applications. Keep checking back for information on the latest scholarships every few weeks-don't drive them nuts!
 - Take AP/CLEP/IB/SAT II tests if applicable
 - Apply for admission (if not seeking early admission)
 - Apply for scholarships before Christmas break (verify the arrival of your application, transcripts, etc.)
- IV. Early Spring
- Attend a financial aid workshop-ask your school counselor or a UB staff member for more information
 - Apply for financial aid (as soon after January 1st as possible)-see your high school counselor or UB staff for assistance filling out forms if needed
- V. As Soon as You Choose a School
- Apply for housing
 - Get familiar with your college and what you will need when you get there.
 - Learn about housing options and course selection/scheduling
 - Do you need a car, bike, etc.?
 - Are computer labs available, or do you need to buy one? Desktop or laptop?

Summer Before College:

- Enroll in the UB Bridge Component (UB pays for two college courses at the KSU Salina campus, textbooks, and room and board)
- Enroll in college as early as you can
- Attend a summer orientation program. Also be sure to enroll in a freshman orientation class, even if it isn't required
- Make a list of what you will need to take to college (if you have a roommate, communicate so you don't have two of everything)
- Carpet, refrigerator, microwave, phone, computer, etc.?
- Work with parents on a financial plan or budget. Where will your money come from? Who pays for what? How/When to ask for more? What constitutes an emergency (consider a credit card for this)
- Make a list of personal care items and go price shopping.
- Get an email address if you don't already have one
- Convince your parents to get a call-me card, calling card or other plan aimed at them paying for you to call home (and only home). You should pay for other calls

- Make sure to take a tour of YOUR classes before school starts so you won't get lost on the first day of class

Parent List:

- Plan ahead for college finances (save for college). Make plans for how your students should determine if an emergency has occurred and how/when they should request financial help. Many states have a tax deferred savings plans (go to <http://www.collegeprep.okstate.edu> and click on the This N' That page for a link to participating states)
- Consider a credit card for your student to be used for emergencies, and be clear about what an emergency is.
- Discuss options with your student, but let them make the decisions
- Visit schools with your student, but let them visit again without you, if possible
- Join the parents' club at your student's college, if applicable
- Make your student(s) do the work. Help them with remembering deadlines, but don't do it for them (applications, essays, etc.)
- Do taxes ASAP after January 1 so you can get financial aid applications in early (you don't have to submit your taxes, just fill them out-the FAFSA does require some information from your taxes)
- Arrange for access to a computer and email so you can keep up with your student by email (that way they can send you an email at 3 a.m. when it's convenient for them and you can reply at 8 p.m. when it's convenient for you)
- Sign up for a calling card or other plan aimed at you paying for your student's calls home.