

Financial Aid Planner Timeline

Presented by GAcollege411

In the financial aid process, TIMING IS CRITICAL. To ensure that you are in the best position to receive the ideal financial aid package for your needs, there are many tasks to be performed and deadlines to meet. The following timeline provides you an overview of some of the key tasks and dates that you need to be aware of. This is an "ideal" timeline and should be adjusted based upon your unique situation. However, school admissions and financial aid deadlines must be met.

Junior Year in High School

- Begin researching scholarships and grants. (See [Financial Aid Search](#)). Request applications and put application deadlines into your calendar.
 - Discuss with family, friends, teachers, and your high school counselor the educational programs or schools you might be interested in after high school.
 - Use [Career Info](#) to explore careers, and find schools that offer programs of study that would prepare you for those careers.
 - Attend your high school's financial aid night.
 - Take the SAT or ACT once. Be sure to use our [free college test prep](#).
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Senior Year in High School

Before September:

- Research schools using the [GA Colleges](#) module.
- Research the financial aid requirements of schools in [GA Colleges](#).
- Focus on your top college choices and schedule campus visits.
- Request scholarship applications from foundations, clubs, employers, and other organizations that award scholarships.
- Research early admissions guidelines for your top schools.

Before October:

- Discuss a college admissions plan with your high school counselor
- Register to take the SAT or ACT if you have not taken one already
- Request admissions applications if not available online (see our [Applications & Transcripts](#) section)

Before November

- Make a schedule for admission and financial aid deadlines for the colleges you want to attend
- Request high school transcripts for the college admissions offices (see our [Applications & Transcripts](#) section)
- Begin essays required for admission or scholarships
- Begin to complete admission applications, online or on paper
- Request letters of recommendation from teachers, employers, etc.

Before December

- Participate in [PROBE fairs and meetings](#) with college admission representatives
- Complete admission applications according to the schools' deadlines
- Go to www.pin.ed.gov to apply for a PIN

Before January

- Mail scholarship applications or apply online for those programs administered by GSFC.
- Obtain a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) if you are not planning to complete it on the Web
- Obtain any special forms required by your school to apply for financial aid

Before February

- Obtain your (and your parents') W2 forms
- At this point, you should begin to receive results of your scholarship applications
- Submit any other financial aid forms your school may require before their priority deadline

By mid-February

- **Complete your IRS Tax Returns (1040s). Ask your parents to do the same (or at least determine exactly what the income and taxes will be on the returns, so you can complete the FAFSA)**
- **File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) - [apply online](#)**

Before April

- Inquire into Advanced Placement exams for college credit
- Receive your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the U.S. Department of Education in response to your FAFSA
- Report any scholarships you have received from private sources to the school's financial aid office

- At this point, you should have received your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the U.S. Department of Education in response to your FAFSA

Before May

- Review your SAR and make any corrections that may have been identified
- Complete any additional financial aid forms sent to you by your school, including sending copies of IRS Tax Returns if requested for verification
- If you or your parents need to borrow funds for college, call the Georgia Student Finance Commission at 1-800-505-GSFC for information and assistance or [click here](#).
- Begin to research scholarships for your sophomore year in college
- At this point, you should have received
 - admissions notifications from the schools to which you applied
 - financial aid award notices from the schools to which you applied
 - your Student Aid Report (SAR) from the U.S. Department of Education in response to your FAFSA

Before June

- Compare financial aid award notices and school costs
- Make your final decision on what school you will attend
- Send final high school transcripts to the school you will attend
- Notify the schools you will not be attending
- Take Advanced Placement exams

Summer after High School Graduation

June

- Plan for college orientation, transportation, and housing
- Complete any additional forms requested by your school's financial aid office

July

- Finalize your transportation and housing
- Write thank-you letters to any organization that offered you a scholarship
- Complete any student loan promissory notes online or sent to you by your school or lender