

SAMPLE COLLEGE APPLICATION PREPARATION CHECKLIST

General Tasks:

- Administer the new student questionnaire and insert relevant portions into the master activities list and personal statement as necessary
- Identify the types of colleges that the student and family are targeting (e.g., ivy league, local, state, etc.)
- Review current transcript and set goals for improvement (including, but not limited to, grades, tardies, absences, lack of advanced coursework, and any other such factors)
- Undertake subject-specific academic support/tutoring as needed
- Start a master list of extracurricular activities with roles, dates, time commitments, and detailed descriptions (if band was optional, and yet you are taking it, ensure that fact is clearly stated on the activities list -- even though band may appear on your transcript and colleges may think it was required). Also, make sure that your present hours do not add up to significantly more than 35 hours per week
- Register for and take SAT/ACT and SAT II Exams (ensure that you take the SAT or ACT at a site that will administer the essay)
- Set up your common application account (also research if the Coalition Application or the Universal College Application are needed)
- Start the side-by-side college comparison list with each school's requirements, deadlines, etc. Use: bigfuture.collegeboard.org, Cappex, and US News
- Ask your high school guidance counselor for a list of colleges that accepted last year's seniors and enrollment rates
- Begin to brainstorm ideas for the personal statement and write it
- Sign up for as many upper-level and/or AP/IB classes as possible to take during the next academic term
- Apply for internships/fellowships
- Apply for college-level coursework at a college or university
- Take steps to assume at least one leadership role in an extracurricular activity, preferably community service
- Ensure that you are actively involved in at least two community service endeavors
- Create an action plan for independent work if the student is traveling abroad for the summer
- Visit schools on your target list: sit-in on classes, meet professors and students, and take notes so you can reference this information in your application

SAMPLE COLLEGE APPLICATION PREPARATION CHECKLIST CONTINUED

- Email at least 3 professors for each target school:
 - Dear Dr. [name of prof],
I hope this note finds you well. I am a prospective student interested in applying to [name of school]'s _____ program. I would love to learn more about your research regarding _____ and campus life. Would you have a few minutes on [insert dates of availability] to chat in-person [if you will be on/near campus]? If not, would you be available for a brief phone call? I would so greatly appreciate the opportunity. Thank you.
Sincerely,
[Your name]
[Your phone number]

Remember to follow-up with a phone call the next day.

Sample questions/considerations for professors:

- Get to know the professor on a personal level and in terms of the professor's career path
 - Read the supplemental essays that the school requires on its application and tailor your questions to professors in ways that answer those questions
 - Read the professor's research and think of questions about the research in which you are genuinely interested
 - Ask about school culture
 - Ask about opportunities for undergraduates to help in the professor's department or with the professor's own research
 - What do students with your prospective major typically do upon graduation?
 - If the professor was in your shoes now, what would be the recommended course of action (i.e., what are common mistakes and missed opportunities)?
 - Is there anything I didn't ask?
- At the end of Junior year: Request your complete transcript before summer begins so you can send it to recommenders over the summer
 - Refine target school list creation based on revised interests, scores, campus visits, requirements, etc. Aim for 5+ safety, 8+ match, and 7+ reach. Formulate and update this information in the side-by-side college comparison list.