



GCA College Planning Timeline

Freshmen

- Create a system for tracking all high school activities and accomplishments with descriptions and dates to be used during the college and scholarship application process.
- Join and/or apply for multiple extra-curricular activities, leadership opportunities and service projects.
- Set goals and create a plan to stay focused on them throughout high school. Aim to achieve the highest grade point average possible.

Sophomores and Juniors

- Learn about available career options and educational paths. Make a list of majors and career fields of interest. Explore career and personality assessments to help narrow your focus. Schedule times to “shadow” professionals in fields of interest.
- Research colleges and universities you may be interested in attending by exploring their websites and participating in college representative visits at GCA and local college fairs.
- Consider taking the PSAT (<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/psat-nmsqt-psat-10>) during 10th and 11th Grades.
- Take ACT (www.actstudent.org) or SAT (www.sat.collegeboard.org/home) per your desired college requirements (see college websites). Testing early gives you time to prepare application documentation as well as improve your test results by studying and taking preparatory workshops.
- Make a list of your top college choices. Request information, visit campuses, and review all application requirements carefully.
- Sophomores interested in the Delaware Area Career Center for their junior and senior years should visit the DACC website for the dates of open houses in the fall of their sophomore year.

Seniors

- **Summer**
 - Start your college application essay. Topics can be found on your selected college websites. It is important that your essay is structurally sound and free from spelling and grammatical errors. Ask several qualified people (i.e., your L.A. teacher) to proofread your essay before submitting.
- **September**
 - Complete and submit your application by November 1 if you decide to apply for “early decision” consideration. Be aware of college/university early action deadlines for certain degree programs and financial aid deadlines. More than 300 colleges use the Common Application, which makes it easy to apply to multiple colleges. The college website will have a link if they are a member or visit www.collegedata.com.

- **October**

- Complete and submit a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to be considered for various scholarships, grants and financial aid. A good resource to help answer your financial questions is www.studentaid.ed.gov or call 1-800-4-FED-AID.
- Research and apply for other forms of financial aid. Information is available on your selected colleges' websites. Another good resource for scholarship information is www.fastweb.com. Compile a list of your high school extracurricular activities, achievements and relevant dates of accomplishments. Make sure to include work and volunteer experience.
- If your college requires letters of recommendation, ask a teacher or administrator who knows you well. Some colleges have a form to give your counselor or teacher (check websites). Include your list of achievements to help them write the best possible recommendation for you.
- Request an official copy of your transcript to be sent to the colleges of your choice.
- Make sure your highest ACT or SAT score is sent to all of the colleges to which you are applying.
- Write thank-you notes to individuals who wrote recommendation letters on your behalf.

- **November–January**

- Retake the ACT/SAT if necessary. Be sure to specify that your results be sent to all of your selected colleges.
- Keep your grades up. Colleges will request a final transcript prior to admission.
- Complete and submit your regular college application if you did not apply for “early decision.”