

College Success Checklist

IT'S A PLAN

You may find college different from high school in many ways. Learn how to succeed in college.

ACHIEVE

Do your best in school.

Your grades matter for your future. They may also impact your financial aid. Continue good habits that help you be successful.

- Go to and participate in all of your classes.
- Stay on top of reading and assignments.
- Determine the place you study best.
- In college, your grades only come to you because of the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Talk with your family about their expectations about sharing your academic progress.

Take the right classes.

Talk to your advisor and make sure you're taking the classes you need to complete your degree on time.

- If you are planning to transfer colleges, make sure the credit will transfer.
- Take a class unrelated to your major or program that interests you.
- Consider spending a term studying in another country or at another college.

Get organized and get help.

In college you are in charge of your own time. Take advantage of people and programs that will help you succeed.

- Find a system that works for you to keep track of class material and assignments.
- Ask for help from your professors, advisor or classmates. Find a study partner or group, go to office hours and use tutors.

ENGAGE

Get involved.

College can be more than just classes. Extracurricular activities help you explore your interests and make friends.

- Join student groups, volunteer for an organization you care about, or get a part-time job. Try something new or start your own club.
- Make a plan for summer. Consider summer classes, internships or research, special programs or a job.

Spend time with good people.

Who you hang out with matters. Get a support system of people who want to see you succeed.

- Choose friends that share positive goals and interests.
- Find a mentor – a professor, advisor, former teacher, or older student that you can talk to.
- Stay connected with family and friends from home while focusing on new experiences on campus.

Make good choices.

Practice healthy, safe, and kind behaviors.

- Take care of your physical and mental health. Exercise, eat healthy and get enough sleep.
- Be responsible with risky behaviors like drinking, doing drugs, and having sex.
- Be kind; treat others with respect.



EXPLORE

Narrow your career interests.

Visit your college's career center to get help.

- Explore careers that match your degree and your interests.
- Consider volunteer opportunities, internships, research or a job shadow to learn more.
- Attend a career fair.

Do you want to transfer colleges?

Plan ahead and talk to advisors at both colleges. Plan ahead to make sure credit transfers.

- Review what is most important to you in a college.
- Research admission requirements to make sure you're on track.
- Get to know the colleges.
- Apply by the deadline. Be prepared with all the information you need before you apply.

Considering graduate school?

Explore your options for next steps.

- Talk to your advisor and professors about programs and careers that interest you.
- Research admission requirements. You may need to take an entrance exam before applying.
- Get to know the colleges and professors you might work with.
- Apply by the deadline. Be prepared with all the information you need before you apply.

PAY

Keep track of your money.

Talk with your family about managing college costs. You're the only one who can see your tuition bill and financial aid information because of FERPA.

- Make a budget and stick to it. Beware of credit card offers! Use them responsibly.
- Understand your student loans. Accept only the amount of loans you really need—remember, you will need to pay them back.
- If possible, make interest rate payments on unsubsidized loans while you still in school.

Apply for financial aid each year.

Get help from the financial aid office at your college.

- Re-apply for FAFSA or ORSAA every year.
- Apply for scholarships. You may be eligible for more scholarships now that you're in college.

Get help if there are changes to your financial situation.

Life happens. Contact your college's financial aid office if you or a family member lost a job or had unexpected medical expenses, childcare costs or other financial issues.

- Some colleges have emergency grants for current students.
- Ask for a review of your financial aid offer.

