

Senior Tips

1. All seniors will have an individual appointment with their counselor at the beginning of the school year. Topics that will be discussed at that appointment:
 - Credits and required courses needed for graduation
 - College/Military Days/Career Exploration Days
 - College Rep Visits and signing up for them
 - Transcripts/GPA/Class Rank
 - SAT and ACT scores
 - Applying early & college application tracking form
 - Scholarships
 - Recommendation letters
 - FAFSA (FAFSA Mandate ISBE graduation requirement)
 - Responsibility
2. Google Classroom for the Class of 2026 will be the main area where information will be shared. Only senior students will be allowed to be a part of this classroom. Students need to share vital information with their parents/guardians. This classroom started the 2nd semester of junior year.
3. Students need to check their Central email often. It is suggested to be checked at least once every school day. Keep in mind that after graduation this email account will no longer be active. Make sure when applying for college or scholarships that your personal email is used.
4. Students are allowed to take **two** college/military/career exploration days throughout their last **3** semesters at Central. If a student took a day the second semester of their junior year, they will only have the remainder left to use. The student must make an appointment with the college/recruiter/or workplace in advance. Students need to pick up a college/military/career exploration day form from Ms. Lohman prior to the day of the appointment. In order for the absence to be counted as a college/military/career exploration day, a parent needs to call the office the day of the visit and let the office know their student is taking a college/military/career exploration day AND the form must be completed and returned to the office the next school day. NO EXCEPTIONS! Students need to get their classwork they will be missing in advance.
5. Sign up to meet with the college representatives that visit Central. This is a great opportunity to gather information from colleges that may be of interest as well as meet with the admissions counselor that will be the contact person for the school. Lists of dates and times will be in the announcements & posted on the classroom. Sign-up sheets will be posted in the google classroom in the Classwork section. If a student is interested in the military, check in with the recruiters who are here for lunch table setups.
6. Retake the ACT or SAT if desired. National Testing dates can be found on the [ACT](http://www.act.org) website (www.act.org) or (www.collegeboard.org). Always take advantage of sending test scores to 4 colleges for free when registering. Colleges will always take the best test score. **Several colleges are still test optional. If you have taken an ACT/SAT and feel good about that score, report it to the school.**
7. Apply to colleges of choice early. November 1st is a good general deadline to apply if planning on attending a 4-year university and want to be in consideration for academic scholarships. However, each college has different early application/scholarship deadlines so be sure to check with each college of choice. Once a student applies, they must fill out the Transcript request form in the google classroom for Miss Lohman to send an official transcript. A student's transcript will have their school-based ACT and any ACT/SAT score that the student requests on it. Some colleges require official scores from SAT or ACT. If they require this and the student did not include that school as one of their 4 schools to send to for free when filling out their registration, then they will need to pay SAT or ACT to send them to the school or eligibility center. This can be done through the College Board (SAT) or ACT website.
8. Use the Class of 2026 College Tracking form to keep track of applications/dates/offers etc. This will be used to calculate the \$ offered in scholarships to the entire Class of 2026.

9. Central's local [Scholarship list](#) starts every October. In the beginning, most scholarships are national online searches. More local ones will start in January and run through March/April. The list is available on the school's website, Miss Lohman's webpage, and the google classroom. The list is updated at the beginning of each month.
10. Complete the Recommendation form posted in the Classwork section of the google classroom. Miss Lohman will download it into a PDF and email it to the student for future use. There is also a Letter of Recommendation Tips sheet posted with the form. Make sure to ask the adult you would like to write you a letter before putting them down as a reference. If a college requires a counselor recommendation, the students must have this form turned in before it will be done. Many employers want letters of recommendations as well, so this is not just for college purposes. Do not ask at the last minute. Please allow a faculty member or any recommender at least 2 weeks before the deadline to write the letter.
11. Learn about and apply for financial aid for college.
 - a. Attend the Financial Aid Process Presentation that will be given by ISAC at Central (September 17th-6:00 Media Center). If the student/parent cannot attend, many colleges have Financial Aid presentations as well.
 - b. Complete the FAFSA as soon as possible after October 1st. Tax forms needed for the 2026-27 FAFSA will be tax returns from 2024. (Make sure you complete the correct FAFSA school year as the 2026-27 does not become available until October 1st. The FAFSA available until that date is for the current school year.) <https://studentaid.gov/>
 - c. Each student and parent will need create an account prior to completing the FAFSA. This can be done online by clicking on the Create Account near the top of the page. Make sure you use your personal email when creating these. <https://studentaid.gov/> Click on create account. Parents may already have an account if an older sibling has completed the FAFSA. You still many need to update a password when initially signing in again if it's been a while since the account has been used.
 - d. Attend FAFSA Completion night at Central if assistance is needed in completing the FAFSA. October 21st, 5:30-7:30 open computer lab. A list of documents needed will be posted in the weeks prior.
 - e. All seniors must have submitted a FAFSA before April 1st. If a student is not planning to continue their education, a parent must complete the FAFSA waiver. The FAFSA or Opt out form is an Illinois State Board of Education requirement. Please note that many colleges do require the FAFSA to be completed in order to earn any scholarship \$ from the school.
12. All Seniors will complete the Senior Final Plans form that will be posted in the google classroom in April. This form will be used for 2 main purposes:
 - a. Notify the counselor & principal final plans after graduation for all students and what college and/or eligibility center to send their final transcript to after graduation. Colleges require a final transcript.
 - b. Notify the school what scholarships the student has received from colleges and organizations not affiliated with Central for the purpose of Academic Awards Night and the graduation program. If a student does not report a scholarship, the school is unaware of it and therefore will miss out on being recognized at AAN and graduation which will be May 13th at 7:00 pm.
13. After graduation, each student who has taken any dual credit, KC JumpStart, or KC Now classes will need to go to KC's website and pay for your official transcript to be sent to the college or university you will be attending. <https://www.kaskaskia.edu/admissions/records/transcript-request/>
14. Parents can help students fill out college applications and scholarships but it is extremely important that the student is the one who actually fills out the forms and materials. Colleges and scholarship committees will know if a parent completes application and scholarship material and frowns upon this.
15. Submitting text or content generated by artificial intelligence (AI) as your own original work is highly discouraged on applications and scholarship essays.
16. Responsibility & Independence: As a senior, this is the year that students are making many big decisions about their future. This is also the year that seniors need to start doing and asking for things themselves if they are not already. If a student needs a transcript sent or have a question about what their Rank is, the student needs to ask or email Miss Lohman directly. This year is great to use as a transition year to help prepare for being more independent, self-assured, and responsible for college, military or the world of work. The student is the

responsible party in college/military/work. This can be scary but if the student uses their senior year to prepare, they will gain the self-confidence needed to be ready for this new endeavor.