

Your Checklist for Applying to 4-year Colleges - SHS Class of 2026

Are you going to a 4-year college in Fall 2026? Here are your very detailed steps!

SEPTEMBER

- ❑ Update (or Create) your CFNC account at www.CFNC.org
- ❑ Applying to a college in NC? **Complete a Residency Determination Service interview** at www.cfnc.org
- ❑ Register and prepare for the first SAT (www.collegeboard.org) or ACT (www.actstudent.org) **offered in the fall, if needed.** (2.5-2.799 weighted GPA must have a SAT or ACT test score to apply to UNC schools) Are you eligible for an ACT/SAT/College Application fee waiver? Discuss with your counselor.
- ❑ Review courses, graduation requirements, scholarship opportunities w/ your counselor at your senior meeting
- ❑ Complete Senior Resume/[Brag Sheet](#) to share with counselor and teachers you ask to write recommendations
- ❑ Schedule college visits or attend Open House events virtually or in person.
 - ❖ Submit **Request for Excused Absence** form to attendance office for approval at least 3 days before visit.
- ❑ Track application and financial aid deadlines for your colleges of interest
- ❑ Start, or continue, working on your applications. **Applications can be found on college websites (Admissions), CFNC.org & Common Applications**
- ❑ Write, edit, proofread, and rewrite your admissions essays (SHS offers assistance; go [here](#).)
- ❑ Research scholarship opportunities - Check college websites (scholarships or financial aid) for school-specific scholarship information SHS Scholarship and Financial Aid site is [here](#).
- ❑ Prepare to complete the FAFSA by creating a **FSA ID** for you **AND** for one of your parents
- ❑ IF the colleges require the [CSS Profile](#) as part of the application, complete that.
- ❑ Potential college **student athletes** should register with the NCAA Eligibility Center (www.Eligibilitycenter.org).
- ❑ Interested in the military? Contact Ms. Williams about ASVAB info. - first ASVAB is December 16. Sign up through the [SHS Career Center](#).

OCTOBER is [Countdown to College Month](#) - and College Application Week!

- ❑ Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) @ <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>. **FAFSA opens on October 1, 2025.**
- ❑ Early Admissions and Early Decision deadlines begin this month. At many schools, meeting the early application deadline ensures you'll be in the applicant pool for their merit-based scholarships.
- ❑ Register for the SAT or the ACT, if needed. Are you eligible for an ACT/SAT/College Application fee waiver? Discuss w/ your counselor.
- ❑ CFNC.org College Application Week (www.cfnc.org) is **Oct. 20-26, 2025**— many NC independent colleges/universities waive their application fees during this special week. You must submit college applications through **your CFNC account** to get application fees waived!
- ❑ Don't let your schoolwork suffer! Colleges will review **all** senior year grades.
- ❑ Schedule a time to meet with the SHS Financial Aid Advisor, Ms. Norwood. Sign up in Student Services.

NOVEMBER

- ❑ Finish applications - schools with Regular admission deadlines
- ❑ Oh yeah -- did we mention the SAT & ACT? Take by December (latest) to meet admissions deadlines

DECEMBER

- ✂ Okay procrastinators: Winter break allows time to finish your essay, resume, & college applications. Regular admission deadlines are here!

JANUARY

- ❑ Are your college applications submitted? Are other due dates approaching? **Check your email/application portals** for decisions on early admission applications.
- ❑ **Do not change your schedule without first notifying the colleges you've applied to.**
- ❑ **Keep your grades and GPA going in a positive direction!**

FEBRUARY & MARCH

- ☐ Send your mid-year high school grade report to colleges, if requested. Counselors will upload to Common Apps.
- ☐ It's due! Regular admission deadlines for most colleges will be in Feb or March.
- ☐ Compare admission acceptance letters
- ☐ Review and compare Financial Aid Award letters from schools where you have been admitted. (They are likely in your admissions or college portal) Discuss with the *College Financial Aid office* if you have questions about the package.
- ☐ Submit copies of all college admission and/or scholarship award letters to Student Services for recognition at Senior Awards.
- ☐ APPLY for any and ALL scholarship \$ that you are eligible for.

APRIL

- ☐ Review and compare financial aid packages. Schedule an appointment with the College Financial Aid office if you need help understanding the package.
- ☐ Make an enrollment decision. Enrollment deposits are due May 1st Review/accept the financial aid package and send in the housing deposit, if required.
- ☐ If not accepted by your college of choice, use the CFNC College Redirection Module for new options.
- ☐ Submit copies of all college admission and/or scholarship award letters to Student Services for recognition at Senior Awards.
- ☐ APPLY for any and ALL scholarship \$ that you are eligible for

MAY

- ☐ **Enrollment deposit is due May 1st**
- ☐ Take exams for any IB, AP or college-level courses completed
- ☐ Complete your Senior Scholarship google form by the deadline for Senior Awards Day
- ☐ Review your “to do” list for the school you will attend. Start checking off your list!
- ☐ Send thank you notes to those who have helped you out along the way.

JUNE

- ☐ Using CFNC.org, send your final transcript to the college you will be attending *if in NC*. (If you sent your first initial transcript through CFNC, your final one will be sent automatically)
- ☐ Use SCRIBOrder for out of state colleges, any military, any scholarships: [WCPSS Transcript & Records Request \(scriborder.com\)](https://scriborder.com)
- ☐ Make sure you have registered for orientation.
- ☐ Working a summer job? Put some money away -- you'll need it!
- ☐ CELEBRATE your senior status at Awards Day, Sr Picnic, & GRADUATION – Congratulations!

YOUR college preparation has paid off! Get ready for your first year of college!