

**NC STATE
UNIVERSITY**

PLANNING FOR COLLEGE GUIDE



Office of Undergraduate Admissions

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**It's never too early
to start exploring
your college
options!**

\$88,764

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

\$61,984

ASSOCIATE DEGREE
(OCCUPATIONAL PROGRAM)

\$51,896

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
(NO COLLEGE)

AVERAGE EARNINGS

**INVEST
IN
YOURSELF**



Start the Conversation

Identify Your Support System

Find a group of people who will help you navigate the college search and application process. Whether it's your school counselor, parents, family members, teachers, coaches or community supporters — they are the key to your success! Get to know them well as you want them to be able to highlight your strengths and abilities when the time comes to ask for letters of recommendation.

- › Have you met your school counselor?
- › What is your parent or family's familiarity with college?
- › Who would write your letters of recommendation when the time comes?

Research Institutions

With over 5,000 colleges and universities in the U.S. alone, your opportunities are endless. Where do you start? Start by identifying your interests and have honest conversations about how you plan to afford college to help you narrow down your options. From there you will also want to consider size, location, campus life and academics to find the best fit college for you!

- › Which colleges offer your major(s) of interest?
- › Do you want big city opportunities or a college-town feel?
- › Which colleges offer the extracurricular opportunities and resources that are important to you?

Consider Your Interests

High school is the time to think about your interests inside and outside of the classroom. Exploring your interests will help you choose a major that leads to a career you are passionate about. Ask your support network about their jobs and which industries may be the best match for your skills and talents.

- › What is your dream job when you grow up?
- › What's your favorite class?
- › What inspires you?
- › What are your talents and strengths?
- › What do you value?

Make a Financial Plan

College is likely one of the biggest investments you will make - financially and personally. Start conversations early about how you plan to afford college and financial aid opportunities. Learn the differences between grants, loans, work-study and scholarships.

- › Will someone help pay for your degree? Do you need to earn money while in college?
- › What financial aid deadlines do you need to meet? What about scholarships?
- › Would attending a community college before transferring to a four-year institution be a more affordable option for you?

studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types

12TH GRADE

College Applications

Now is the time to apply to the colleges you have identified you are interested in attending.

- Mark application deadlines on your calendar.
- Aim to apply by early application deadlines.
- Take the SAT/ACT again if required for admission. Make sure the scores will be available before college application deadlines.
- Reach out to your recommenders at least a month prior to the application deadline to request a letter of recommendation.
- Talk to your counselor about qualifying for an application fee waiver.
- **College Application Week** cfnc.org/apply-to-college/nc-countdown-to-college
- **Student athletes:** Register with the NCAA Clearinghouse for eligibility certification.

Financial Aid

To qualify for federal student aid including federal grants, work-study and loans, you should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Many institutions also use FAFSA data to award their own aid.

- **The FAFSA is available October 1 each year at studentaid.gov.**
- Be aware of colleges' priority deadlines for submitting the FAFSA.
- **Find assistance for completing the FAFSA at cfnc.org/pay-for-college/fafsa-assistance/.**
- **Scholarships:** Ask schools about scholarship application deadlines. Some require you to apply for consideration while others will automatically consider you for scholarship opportunities.
- Look for external scholarship opportunities in your community.

Finish Senior Year Strong

A final transcript will be required by the college where you choose to enroll.

- Take AP/IB exams.
- Compare colleges you are admitted to and the financial aid packages offered.
- Decide where you want to enroll and **celebrate!**
- Complete your new student checklist.
- Figure out housing arrangements, orientation dates and placement testing requirements.
- Send enrollment items to your future college (*i.e. official final transcripts, AP/IB test scores*).



Helpful Links

- **FAFSA** studentaid.gov
- **Common App** commonapp.org
- **Coalition App** coalitionapp.org



Mark Your Calendar

May 1

**National Enrollment
Confirmation Deadline**

11TH GRADE

Narrow Down Your College List

- **Tour schools:** Take time during school breaks to visit colleges you are interested in. If you aren't able to visit campuses in person, many colleges offer virtual tours for you to get a glimpse of what the campus is like.
- **Attend a college fair:** Talk to admissions representatives from a variety of institutions all in one place. If a college fair is not hosted at your high school, check college admissions websites to see when a rep may be in your area.

Did You Know? In the state of North Carolina, there are:

16 Public Universities **36** Private, Nonprofit Institutions **58** Public Community Colleges

- **Continue to focus on your academics:** Your junior year is your last full year of grades available on your transcript when you apply to colleges, although some may ask for your senior year schedule and grades before making a final decision.

Admissions Tip

It is encouraged that you take an English class and a math class each year.

- **Consider taking the ACT or SAT exam:** Many colleges and universities who use test scores in their admission review allow you to submit multiple exam scores and consider your highest score or "super score." To have multiple scores to submit by fall application deadlines of your senior year, you should take at least one exam your junior year.



i College Search Tools

- bigfuture.collegeboard.org
- cfnc.org

i NC Colleges and Universities

- **UNC System** northcarolina.edu
- **NC Independent Colleges and Universities** ncicu.org
- **NC Community College System** nccommunitycolleges.edu

10TH GRADE

Start Thinking Ahead

- **Inquire about AP, IB or dual enrollment courses offered at your high school:** Talk to your school counselor about your options to make sure you are on track to continue challenging yourself throughout high school.
- **Consider taking the PSAT or ACT Aspire exam:** These exams will help you prepare for the SAT or ACT.
- **Explore your college options:** You can choose to pursue a two-year associate degree or a four-year bachelor's degree after high school. Some students choose to pursue an associate degree at a community college before transferring to a four-year university.

Admissions Tip

We encourage you to create an email address for your college search that is not your school email.

- **Use your summers wisely – attend a college program or camp!** Explore colleges, discover your interests, make friends and maybe even gain some college credit through student enrichment programs hosted by colleges.
- Deadlines to apply or register to attend are typically in the spring. Learn more at www2.cfnc.org/StudentEnrichment.

Did You Know?

Over 1,000 four-year colleges and universities do not require ACT/SAT scores for admission. Ask about institutions' testing policies when researching!

See a full listing of **test-optional schools** at fairtest.org.



i Helpful Links

- **Student Enrichment** www2.cfnc.org/StudentEnrichment
- **Test-Optional Schools** fairtest.org

i Free Test Prep

- **ACT** act.org
- **Khan Academy** khanacademy.org/SAT

9TH GRADE

Make Connections

- **Start to identify your support system:** Tell your school counselor, parents/family, teachers, coaches, etc. that you want to go to college.
- **Meet with your school counselor:** Discuss courses required to graduate from high school and attend college to make sure you sign up for courses that will put you on the right track.

Admissions Tip

Course and grade point average requirements may vary depending on the type of institution you are interested in.

Add researching these requirements to your college search checklist!

- **Get involved in activities after school:** Join clubs, play sports, get a job or volunteer in your community. Balancing your academics and activities can be tough so just pick a few you are passionate about.



i UNC System Minimum Course Requirements

- Four units of English

- Two units of social studies

- Four units of mathematics

- Three units of science

- Two units of the same foreign language

View detailed information at:

northcarolina.edu/future-students/admission-requirements

Helping Your College-Bound Student Stay On Track

Use this *Planning for College Guide* to keep your student on track from the time they begin high school until they enroll at a college or university.

Getting Started

Gauge Their Interests

- › What classes do you most enjoy in school?
- › What are you most interested in outside of the classroom?
- › What's your dream job?
- › Where do you want to be in five years?

Discuss College Options

- › Are you interested in a two-year associate degree or a four-year bachelor's degree?
- › Are you interested in going to school close to home or far away?
- › Are you interested in a smaller college community or a large campus?

Make Connections

- › Work with your student to identify a support team, which will probably include their high school counselor. Your support will be extremely important to the success of your student.

Researching Colleges

Campus Tours

- › Colleges and universities offer both on-campus and virtual opportunities to help you explore academic programs and campus. Check out a school's website to learn more about visit options and relevant contact information for your student.
- › Schedule campus tours to help your student see what life is like as a college student. It's important for a student to be able to picture themselves on the campus before making a decision about where to enroll.

Paying for College

- › Talk to schools about financial aid and scholarship opportunities. Pay attention to deadlines for each institution or college your student is applying to so they can apply for as many opportunities as are available to them.
- › Be prepared to fill out the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) during the fall of your student's senior year.
- › Research external scholarships that may be available in your community.

