

Parent Checklist for College Applications

Gunn High School

Last Updated: February 2016

This checklist is a guide for the parents to track the college application process. More details are found in the “Junior Handbook”. It is updated each February and viewable year round.

There are four traditional pathways to colleges.

- 1) Community College: Foothill and De Anza will visit Gunn in spring semester of senior year.
- 2) California State Universities (CSU): Opens Oct 1 and closes Nov 30 midnight of senior year.
- 3) University of California (UCs): Opens Aug 1 and closes Nov 30 midnight of senior year.
- 4) Private Colleges and Universities: The Common Application opens Aug 1; closing dates vary.
(Colleges that do not use the Common App, will have their own application process.)

Junior Year Fall Semester:

- ___ Aug-Oct sign onto Family Connection with Naviance and become familiar with the tool. Talk to your student about post high school plans. Student can use Naviance to start a “Colleges I am thinking about” list.
- ___ Starting Sept/Oct look for invitation to schedule meeting with the counselor at the College and Career Center (C&CC). Parent may opt out; students must attend. Over 450 students must be scheduled. Appointments occur from Sept-March. For earlier appointments, email the counselor.
- ___ Schedule of college representative visits to Gunn can be found through Naviance (“colleges” tab). Student should check often and sign up. Juniors can sign up for five college rep visits. Help your junior decide. Colleges also often do presentations individually or at college fairs in the bay area.
- ___ Plan with student the SAT/SAT 2/ACT/AP testing timeline. Check college sites for testing requirements. Most students take the tests in spring. Sign up early to get a testing site close by. (Subject tests are best taken when course is completed - some prior to junior year.)
- ___ Student will take PSAT in October. Sign up for PSAT is automatically done by Gunn and the test is taken during school hours at Gunn.
- ___ The college fair occurs in October at Gunn/Paly. Encourage your student to attend.
- ___ Plan college visits with students. Visit nearby colleges during three day weekends and far away colleges during spring break. Visit when colleges are in session; not in the summer.

Junior Year Spring Semester:

- ___ Look for the current year “Junior Handbook” to become available. It is updated every February.
- ___ Plan jr/sr summer with your student. Check Naviance under “colleges”/“enrichment programs” for summer opportunities. Attend summer opportunities fair at Gunn usually held in January.
- ___ Two academic recommendations are required for most private college applications. If teacher letters of recommendation are required, student should touch base with the teachers to understand their availability to write recommendation letters and follow the teacher’s directions.
- ___ Most tests are taken in spring. Once test results are received, C&CC will help student to input their data into Naviance. You can look with your student on Naviance to see what GPA and test scores were provided by previous Gunn students entering into specific colleges in prior years.
- ___ Check with your student that they meet graduation requirements. Recheck the transcript for accuracy; be sure that all course work needed to graduate is accounted for the senior schedule.

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Junior/Senior Summer:

- ___ The student should finalize the “Colleges I am thinking about” list in Naviance. (20 max.)
- ___ Students can start working on college essays. Essay prompts are published in late spring.
- ___ UCs and Common Application become available on August 1.
- ___ The Common Application has a grid with deadlines for regular, “early action” and “early decision.” College sites have more details; create a spreadsheet to keep track.
- ___ Student and parents should complete the “recommendation request form” (brag sheet) on Naviance to request a recommendation from their counselor and teachers. Click on the “about me” tab and then the “recommendation request form” and fill out the information.
- ___ Understand the Gunn deadlines by looking at “College Application Checklist” (CAC) on the Gunn website. The deadline for the student to submit this form to the Gunn registrar could be well ahead of the actual application deadline.

Senior Year Fall Semester:

- ___ Seniors attend senior assembly which will give more details regarding college applications.
- ___ Seniors meet with their guidance counselor. They need to contact teachers to complete the recommendations and submit the CAC to the registrar.
- ___ “Early action” and “early decision”: If this applies to your student, ask them to set up meeting with their guidance counselor early, contact teachers early and submit the CAC early as well.
- ___ Student should complete SAT/ACT this semester if they have not already done so.
- ___ Check that the student requests the testing institution to send scores to all the colleges requiring this data at least 2 weeks before the application deadline. Keep a hard copy of test results.
- ___ Schedule of college representative visits to Gunn can be found through Naviance. Seniors should check often and sign up for up to ten college rep visits. Colleges also often do presentations individually or at college “fairs” in the bay area; Connecting to colleges via reps, fairs and onsite visits is called “demonstrated interest”; this is important during senior year.
- ___ CSUs open their application process in Oct/Nov.
- ___ Once application is underway, ask student to check on college portal weekly to see if the college indicates missing any parts of application and respond promptly.
- ___ Deadlines for college applications vary by college. Use spreadsheet to track.
- ___ Look at scholarship opportunities with your student. Naviance has a list.
- ___ Many private colleges may require an oral interview. Check college websites for requirements.

Senior Year Spring Semester:

- ___ Foothill and De Anza will visit and register students at Gunn. The student applying to community college may initiate the process by registering for the Math/English placement tests.
- ___ Financial aid application process starts. Parents complete the “FAFSA”. Private schools will require CCS profile. (See Junior Handbook for details on deadlines and links).
- ___ Student needs to request transcripts for fall semester to be sent to most Common App schools.
- ___ Student will begin receiving letters of admission. Plan trip to colleges to make final decision.
- ___ Student meets with counselor at Guidance Office or College and Career Center to discuss final choice, wait list options, gap year and financial aid as needed. May 1 is deadline for most college acceptance. It is strongly recommended that students interested in a gap year apply to colleges in their senior year and then defer.