

COLLEGE AND CAREER PLANNING TIPS - 9TH GRADE

TIPS FOR THE SCHOOL YEAR

- ☐ Explore extra-curricular activities at school or in your community. Joining a club, team sport or other group is a great way to meet new people and to learn more about your college and career interests.
- ☐ Talk to your parents about your academic strengths and weaknesses. Look into tutoring options at school or in the community for extra help.
- ☐ Start talking about the importance of college. Ask friends, family, counselors and teachers about the benefits of getting a higher education.
- ☐ Meet with your counselor to begin exploring different careers. Ask about the tools and resources available to you such as skill and interest inventories, career shadowing, career fairs and online programs, etc.

FALL SEMESTER

GET INFORMED

- ☐ Meet with your high school counselor to learn your school's graduation requirements.
- ☐ Attend the Hawaii College and Career Fair to learn more about local colleges and companies.

STAY ORGANIZED

- ☐ Write down important activities and dates into your personal calendar as a reminder. Check your school's website for upcoming events and testing dates.
- ☐ Start a college information folder or binder for materials on college-related topics. Include handouts and brochures that you collect at college fairs and financial aid information nights.
- ☐ Set up a separate e-mail account to receive all college-related correspondence.

TAKE ACTION

- ☐ Work with your counselor to develop a four-year class schedule that includes challenging courses in math, science and English. Colleges look at more than just your grades, they also look at the level of difficulty of the courses that you take.
- ☐ If your school administers EXPLORE, sign up to take it. The test will let you know how college and career ready you are, help you to decide what courses to take in high school and can help you to begin planning for life after high school.

SPRING SEMESTER

GET INFORMED

- ☐ Explore summer academic enrichment opportunities. Many application deadlines are in March or earlier.
- ☐ Look for summer jobs or internships. Consider those that develop leadership skills or explore a career pathway that interests you.
- ☐ Attend the National College Fair to find out information about colleges nationwide.

STAY ORGANIZED

- ☐ Don't toss out all of your papers during spring cleaning! Create a file to hold your important documents including report cards, awards, community service log, etc.
- ☐ These documents will be helpful when you need to apply for a job, for scholarships and for college.
- ☐ Update your college information folder with the handouts that you collected at the National College Fair.

TAKE ACTION

- ☐ Create a summer reading list. Ask teachers, counselors or your local library for recommendations. Reading can help you to continue to improve comprehension skills as well as build your vocabulary.

It's never too early to start preparing for college and career. Early planning and preparation will help you feel more informed and in control of the bright future ahead!

WHERE TO GO FOR HELP:

» Ask your counselor for information about educational outreach or college readiness programs such as Upward Bound or Educational Talent Search to see which programs are available at your school.

» Access free testing and tutorials in reading and math at <http://educationinhawaii.com>.

» Visit a public library near you. It's a quiet place to study and may also have free internet access, teen nights, teen job fairs and more.

» Visit college fairs in your community.
Hawaii College and Career Fair:
<http://hawaiiccfair.org/>

» National College Fair:
<http://www.nacacnet.org/EVENTSTRAINING/COLLEGEFAIRS/Pages/default.aspx>

» Begin to explore career options at http://careerconnections.hawaii.edu/career_connections/gallery.php.

» For more college and career preparation information and resources go to www.stepuphawaii.org.



COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS VOCABULARY

Academic Enrichment: These opportunities reinforce and improve basic academic skills, prepare students for more challenging coursework, and provide academic experiences that go beyond those available through the normal school curriculum.

ACT Exam: A 3 ½ hour national college admissions exam that tests your knowledge in English, Math, Reading and Science. The ACT Plus Writing Exam includes a 30-minute Writing Test. Most colleges require that students take the ACT Exam or the SAT Reasoning Exam as a college entrance requirement.

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses: College-level courses in a variety of subject areas you can take while in high school. You can boost your high school GPA by doing well in AP courses because you will earn more grade points in AP classes. When completed, you have the option of taking the corresponding AP Exam and with a qualifying score, can potentially earn college credit.

Best “Fit” School: A college that best meets your academic, financial and social needs. Only you can determine which school will be right for you—be sure to weigh all of your options carefully.

College Entrance Requirements: These include completion of specific academic coursework, entrance exams such as the ACT and SAT, and a scholarship requirement (combination of GPA and standardized test scores). Required coursework and testing may vary at different colleges.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): The portion of your family's financial resources that should be available to pay for college which is based on a federal formula using the information provided on your FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid).

Extra-Curricular Activities: Activities that happen outside of the school day, including jobs (whether paid or unpaid), school-based activities (such as student government, service clubs, yearbook, etc.) or activities affiliated with a community organization or faith-based community.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): The form used by the government to determine the amount of money your family is expected to contribute towards your post-secondary educational expenses. The amount of aid you are eligible to receive in student grants, work study, and loan amounts will be based on the information that you provide on this form.

Internship: An opportunity to gain experience in a career field by working under the supervision of a professional. You can learn first-hand about the realities of working in particular job and can make connections with potential mentors, references or future employers. Take note that internship programs can be set up as either compensated (paid) or non-compensated (unpaid).

Letter of Recommendation: A letter that a teacher, counselor, mentor, coach or supervisor writes in support of your application for college, for a scholarship, internship or job. Letters should be written by someone who knows you well and has knowledge about your educational background, work or volunteer experience, skills and your awards and accomplishments.

Personal Statement: A student essay that is an important part of many college applications. Colleges use such essays to learn more about you. Give yourself ample time to write, revise and proofread your personal statements.



Source: University of California, Early Academic Outreach Programs



Preliminary SAT (PSAT): This test measures skills you have developed over the course of your education. You usually take the test in the eleventh grade, but benefit from taking the test in the tenth grade or sooner because you will receive personalized feedback on the academic skills needed for college. By taking the test early, you have more time to develop these skills and to begin the college-planning process. The PSAT is a good way to prepare for the SAT.

Reach School: A college that you're interested in attending, yet you don't quite meet the admission requirements.

Realistic School: A college where you have a good chance of being accepted since your grades, coursework and test scores are within the right range, yet you might not be at the top of the admittance list. May also be known as a “match” school.

Resume: A document that lists your work experience, educational background, knowledge and skills as well as your awards and accomplishments. You will often be required to submit this document with your application for a job or internship.

Running Start: It's a program that allows high school students to enroll in college classes and earn credit toward high school graduation and a college degree. For more information see your counselor or visit the website <http://www.hawaii.edu/runningstart>.

Safe School: A college to which you have a strong chance of being accepted since your grades, coursework and test scores meet or exceed the admissions requirements.

SAT Reasoning Exam: The SAT is a 3 ¾ hour test that measures critical thinking, mathematical reasoning and writing skills. Most colleges require that you take this or the ACT as a college entrance requirement.

SAT Subject Exams: Many colleges require SAT Subject Exams. You should take the exam as soon as possible after completing the corresponding course.

Student Aid Report (SAR): It is a report that you will receive after completing the FAFSA. It's a summary of the information that you provided on the FAFSA. Review it, make any necessary changes and return.

Target School: A college in which you have interest in attending. This college has the characteristics you are looking for in terms of geographic location, campus size, support resources, student demographics and degrees offered, etc.

Transcript: An official record of your performance at a school including all of the courses you've taken, the grades you've earned in each course and the type of degree you were awarded.