

# YEARLY CHECKLIST

## 8th Grade

### **Start the conversation now**

- Talk to a parent or other adult about what you like to do, what you're good at, and what you want for your future.

### **Learn about yourself.**

- Explore careers through Sokanu on UtahFutures.org to learn where your strengths and interests lie.

Take the [Reality Check](#)

### **Make your high school plan.**

- Meet with your school counselor to develop a four-year high school plan.

### **Prepare for high school classes.**

- Some colleges require you to take certain classes. Be sure to research the admissions requirements at the colleges you're considering, including GPA, ACT/SAT scores, and specific high school classes they may require.

### **Start saving for college.**

- With the help of a parent or other adult, open a college savings account to save for your future. Consider a savings account through a bank, credit union, or a my529 account. Learn more at [my529.org](https://my529.org).

## 9th Grade

### **Do high school right.**

- Sign up for the UtahFutures newsletter at [UtahFutures.org](https://UtahFutures.org) to get college preparation and scholarship tips.
- Meet with your school counselor and develop a four-year high school plan.
- Review the Regents' Scholarship requirements at [Regent Scholarship](#)

### **Explore college options.**

- Read through the information on Utah colleges at [UtahFutures.org](https://UtahFutures.org) to discover what colleges in Utah may be right for you.
- Talk with your parents, friends, and community members about their college experience, and start thinking about what you want out of yours.

### **Get involved in your school and community.**

- Volunteer experience and getting involved with after-school activities can boost your resume and potentially earn you money for college, since some scholarships require a record of volunteer hours.
- Volunteer in your community. Find volunteer opportunities with [U Serve Utah](#) and [United Way 2-1-1](#).
- Sign up for at least one school club or after school program. Talk to your school counselor or a teacher about what opportunities are available.

### **Learn about the different ways to pay for college.**

- Read about the various ways to [pay for college](#), including scholarships, grants, work-study, and student loans.
- Make a plan to pay for college with your parents. For example, part-time work in high school and college can help you pay for college costs and start building your resume.
- Start to build a scholarship and college admissions resume to track your achievements.
- With the help of an adult, open a college savings account. Learn more at [my529](#). If you already have a savings account, contribute what you can to it.

## 10th Grade

### **Stay involved and continue to explore your interests.**

- Volunteer experience and getting involved with after-school activities can boost your resume and potentially earn you money for college, since some scholarships require a record of volunteer hours.
- Continue to be involved in school clubs, after school programs, and volunteering. Track your volunteer hours using a spreadsheet.
- Sign up for the [UtahFutures newsletter](#) to get college preparation tips and learn about scholarship opportunities.

### **Look into support and mentoring programs.**

- Look through the Access Network Search at [UtahFutures.org](#) to see what support for your college dreams you might be eligible for in your area, like AVID, TRiO, or GearUP programs.

### **Think about what certificate or degree you will need for your future career.**

- [Read about the differences](#) between a certificate, associate, bachelor's, and other advanced degrees.
- Use your Sokanu results to see what college majors you might be interested in.
- Find those [majors and the certificates and degrees](#) Utah colleges offer by exploring.

### **Take the right classes.**

- Meet with your school counselor to make sure you're on track to complete Math III no later than the end of 11th grade.
- Ask your counselor about Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Concurrent Enrollment (CE) classes available at your high school.

### **Start preparing for the ACT.**

- Study! Your ACT score will determine your eligibility for some scholarships and acceptance into some colleges.
- Get free ACT test prep materials at [UtahFutures.org](#).
- Download the free ACT app to get daily ACT test prep questions.

### **Research and apply for scholarships—yes, even before senior year!**

- Make sure you're on track for the Regents' Scholarship. Check the details and contact a scholarship specialist at [Regent Scholarship](#).
- Look for scholarships and apply to at least one this year. Keep your scholarship resume updated.

### **Learn how much college costs.**

- Use the net price calculators to estimate college costs.

### **Keep saving for college.**

- Add funds to your credit union, bank, or my529 savings account. If you haven't opened a my529 college savings account, do so. Learn more at [my529](#).

## 11th Grade

### **Focus on your classes.**

- Sign up for classes that stretch your mind, like Honors classes and classes that can earn you college credit, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB), and Concurrent Enrollment (CE). Talk to your school counselor for more information.
- Verify with your counselor that you are taking classes that will help you succeed in college.

### **Align your CTE pathway with your college plans.**

- See how your high school CTE classes could apply to college-level CTE career pathways. Getting a certificate in a technical field can help you pay your way through college.

### **Think about what math class you'll take your senior year.**

- Meet with your counselor to make sure you pick the right math class for your future. It's best to complete your college math requirements through Concurrent Enrollment while still in high school.

### **Take the ACT.**

- Take the ACT in the spring. Get free ACT test preparation materials at [UtahFutures.org](https://utahfutures.org) or download the free ACT app to get daily ACT test prep questions. A good ACT score can help you earn scholarship money for college and determine your acceptance into some colleges.

### **Consider your college options.**

- Make a list of your top college choices and get ready to apply during your senior year.

### **Learn about the many ways to pay for college.**

- Forecast how much financial aid you could qualify for by using the FAFSA4Caster at [fafsa](https://fafsa.gov).

### **Get organized for your final year.**

- Some colleges (and scholarships) require one or more letters of recommendation. Decide which teachers might be willing to write letters of recommendation next year and ask them in advance.
- Get a job over the summer to earn money for college and gain experience you can add to your resume.

### **Research possible careers.**

- Review your career interest profiles or take them again at [UtahFutures.org](https://utahfutures.org).
- Job shadow at a business/organization that interests you. Check to see if you could do an internship, which provides you with great real-world experience.
- Talk to professionals currently working in your area of interest.

### **Keep applying for scholarships.**

- Contact a scholarship representative to make sure you're on track for the Regents' Scholarship.
- Apply for as many scholarships as you can. See if your high school has a scholarship coordinator to help you find scholarships, and don't forget to also look in your community and search online.

### **Visit college campuses.**

- Go on a campus tour. Schedule one by visiting the college's website or calling.
- Attend a summer camp offered by a college near you.
- Attend a college fair to explore different college options.

## **12th Grade**

## **Stay focused.**

- Check-in with your counselor.
- Ask for letters of recommendation. Some colleges (and scholarships) require one or more letters of recommendation. Connect with teachers and counselors early in the fall of your senior year.

## **Take math during your senior year.**

- Be sure to take the right math for your future career.

## **Apply to college in the fall.**

- Apply to colleges during the fall of your senior year. Participate in Utah College Application Week at your school. Ask your counselor or college access advisor for more information.
- Apply to more than one college. It is important to keep your options open and compare the financial aid offers they may give you as well as other factors like class size, location, programs offered, and more. For help comparing colleges and universities, see the Facts at a Glance at [UtahFutures.org](http://UtahFutures.org).
- Check with the colleges you're applying to and see what ACT scores you should be aiming for. If you want to improve your score, study, study, study, and retake the ACT the fall of your senior year. Check college admissions deadlines to make sure your new ACT scores will be ready in time.

## **Fill out your FAFSA.**

- Complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as October at [fafsa.gov](http://fafsa.gov). Get help completing your FAFSA by attending a FAFSA Completion Open House during the school year. Even if you don't think you will qualify for federal grants, you should still fill out the FAFSA. The State of Utah and many colleges require it for scholarships and other aid.
- Visit [UtahFutures.org](http://UtahFutures.org) to find dates.
- If you are an undocumented student, see what options might be available for you at [educate-utah](http://educate-utah).

## **Continue applying for scholarships.**

- Apply for the Regents' Scholarship if you're pursuing it. Check deadlines at [Regent Scholarship](#).
- Research what scholarships are offered by the colleges you've applied to and check deadlines.
- Apply for as many scholarships as you can during your senior year.

## **Check on disability services.**

- If you have an IEP/504 or a disability that will need accommodation, start making arrangements now by contacting colleges' disabilities resource centers.

## **Narrow it down.**

- Visit the website or call any colleges you've been accepted to and ask about their first-year experience programs and summer bridge programs.
- Send in your final high school transcripts to your college once you graduate.
- Be sure to accept any financial aid you might have received. Talk with your college's financial aid office to make sure you're good to go.

## **Be proud. Celebrate!**

- Participate in your school's College Decision Day activities to celebrate your accomplishments.