Get **PSYCHED** for senior year
- Make the most of your time in high school
- Get involved, try new things, make memories, and work hard
- Sign up for GEAR UP services like **GEAR UP Texting** and **Tutor.com**

Senior Brag Sheets - (see **Brag Sheet Form**)
- Ask for letters of recommendation

Create a calendar of admissions, scholarships, and financial aid deadlines
- Check out the deadlines for all colleges (see **Admissions & Enrollment Form**)
- Create your own list of specific deadlines for the schools to which you will apply
- Add these deadlines to a calendar/planner you already use, like your phone
- Set a reminder for yourself a week or two before big deadlines to keep yourself on track and prepared

Register to take or retake the ACT
- While not all schools require the ACT for admissions, most require a test score to be considered for scholarships
- Download the Magoosh ACT App on your phone for an easy study tool you can use anytime/anywhere
- Ask your GEAR UP Coordinator for other test prep materials available to you

Meet with HS counselor - discuss classes and college plans
- Your high school counselor is like a wizard when it comes to high school classes and college prep - use them!
- Talk to them about your class schedule, long term goals, college plans, and ask about scholarship opportunities

Create Federal Student Aid (FSA) ID (student and parent) - (see **FAFSA Prep Form**)
- Students and parents are required to have an FSA ID before the student can apply for Financial Aid – be prepared by creating your FSA ID ahead of time
- Financial Aid applications open October 1

Sign up for GEAR UP Texting (See **GEAR UP Texting Flyer**)
- We will send you helpful tips and reminders throughout your senior year – we’ll even send you scholarship application suggestions. You can ask questions too, since texting works both ways
- Text STUDENT to 801-407-9957
Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
• Attend the FAFSA Night with your parents (see FAFSA prep form)
• You and your parents will need the following things to apply:
  • An FSA ID to sign electronically (we recommend creating this prior to applying for FAFSA)
  • Your Social Security Number and driver’s license, and/or your Alien Registration Number (if you are not a US citizen)
  • Last years federal income tax returns, W-2 forms, and other records of money earned
  • Bank statements and records of investments (if applicable)
  • Records of untaxed income (if applicable)
  • List of schools you are interested in attending
• Start the process at studentaid.gov

Tour the colleges you are considering
• Talk to your GEAR UP coordinator to learn about campus visits that are already scheduled, or let them know if there is another school you’d like to visit that hasn’t already been scheduled

Complete early college applications (BYU, UofU, Westminster, & Weber)
• If you are hoping to attend any of these schools, you are encouraged to apply early to increase your odds of acceptance
• Fill out the Common Application for UofU and Westminster

Research and apply for private scholarships
• Private scholarship funding can be used at the school of your choice it’s never too early or late to apply
• Begin searching for scholarships in your area - local scholarships usually have less competition than scholarships found online
• Many scholarships go unclaimed every year - never pass up an opportunity to apply to find scholarships visit utahstars.usu.edu/student-and-families/paying-for-college

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Participate in Utah College Application Week
  • Ask for fee waivers
  • Join with other students in applying to colleges throughout the State of Utah

Talk with representatives from colleges who visit your school
  • When college representatives visit your school, ask questions about the college
  • Does your college have the major I am pursuing?
  • What is your favorite part of this college?
  • What makes this college unique?
  • What advice can you give me to help me succeed at this college?
  • If you’re lucky, the rep will give you some college swag for talking to them

Go on campus tours and attend college open houses
  • Talk to your GEAR UP Coordinator and get signed up
  • Tours and open houses will give you a better feel for these colleges to see if one would be a good fit
  • Schools often waive application fees when you visit
  • You may have the opportunity to meet with specific departments focused on majors you are considering
  • This is a good opportunity to look into housing, dining, involvement, etc.

Don’t forget that grades matter!
  • Grades can not only affect your admission into college, but also your scholarship opportunities
  • Practicing good study habits while in high school can prepare you for the rigor of college courses

Have a happy Thanksgiving with your family!
Submit applications in advance of deadlines
• Don’t procrastinate applying to schools - that’s a good way to miss a deadline, or submit a poor application

Apply for college/university scholarships
• Take a look at the different scholarship opportunities at each school:
  • Academic
  • Department - some specific majors and departments on campus offer scholarships for those studying within
  • Performance/Athletic
  • Diversity
  • Private

Narrow down college choices

Follow-up on letters of recommendation
• If you’ve asked someone for a letter of recommendation, follow-up and remind them if needed
• Write and deliver a thank-you note to those who have already given you a letter

Take winter break as an opportunity to research schools and scholarships
• While you’re cozied up on your couch with some hot chocolate, or watching your favorite movies, take time to research and apply for scholarships
• Visit a college close to home
Send fall test scores and transcripts to colleges to which you’ve already applied
  • Many schools will require your updated transcript before you can register for classes
  • An updated GPA could offer better placement or more opportunities for scholarships

Explore housing options
  • Many schools encourage students to live on campus for their first year
  • Ask alumni or current college students attending that school for housing recommendations if possible
  • Compare costs and benefits of places you’re hoping to live
  • It’s helpful to have a few places in mind since good housing goes quick

Explore extracurricular and leadership activities you may be interested in at college
  • Here are some extracurricular opportunities:
    • Clubs
    • Intramurals
    • Student Life
    • Fraternity and Sorority Life (FSL)
    • Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC)
    • Student Government
    • Volunteering/Service
  • By planning ahead you can better know what’s out there - you could become the president of the e-sports club or join an intramural ultimate frisbee team

Research and apply for scholarships
  • If you spend 40 hours applying for scholarships and only received one $500 scholarship, it would be like making $12.50 an hour

Clean up social media account
  • As you apply to schools, scholarships, and jobs, people will use your social media account to look you up
  • Be aware of what your profile could say about you and your character

Stay Connected
@USUGEARUP
Retake ACT if needed
• Getting a higher score can increase scholarship opportunities, and can allow you to get into certain classes with ACT score benchmarks, like certain math classes
• A higher score can cut down the number of classes you’ll need to take - ask the college academic advisor to walk you through your class options based on your test score

Finalize college choices
• Most applications should be in by now - continue to learn about the schools to which you applied to find your best fit

Watch out for senioritis - stay engaged in school
• Don’t forget to utilize free 24/7 online tutoring (tutor.com)
• Your grades from your senior year will weigh on your transcript and can affect your applications and scholarship opportunities
• Keep up those good study habits to ensure you keep them for when you enter college

Plan something fun for spring break
• You’ve been working hard - plan something fun for a good break

Order graduation announcements
• Share the good news with your family and friends - you’re going to graduate
Celebrate your offers of admission!
- Congratulations on being admitted! You put in a lot of hard work for this - stay vigilant in your efforts

Compare financial aid awards - (See Scholarship Tracking Sheet)
- Your Financial Aid awards will differ from school to school
- Weigh your offers against your expenses at each school to anticipate how much you would still need to contribute to attend

Visit colleges to help finalize your choice
- Each college has a different feel, and it's important to make sure you and the campus are a good fit

Confirm housing
- The good stuff disappears fast
- Putting it off may limit your options

Start researching majors
- If you’ve decided a major, begin to research what is expected of you
- If you’re still choosing a major, try to narrow down your interests
  - Online personality tests can offer some guidance into potentially good fitting careers you may not have considered
  - Knowing what you don’t like can help narrow down your search as well
  - Shadow professionals in areas that are of interest to you

Think of summer job/internship
- A summer job can help you to save for college
Finalize plans with college of choice
- Verify you’ve been enrolled
- Send in transcripts and updated scores
- Accept scholarships and financial aid
- Finalize housing - deposit, sign contract, etc.
- Complete other registration expectations

Meet with college academic advisor in person or virtually
- Navigating college can be a different experience than navigating high school
- Talking to someone familiar with the process will put you on the right track

Register for fall semester classes (See Admissions and Enrollment Form)
- Many schools include registration in their orientation process or have prerequisites that must be met prior to registration
- It is beneficial to be prepared for registration whenever you’re able to register

Fill out the GEAR UP Senior Exit Survey
- This must be completed before graduation
- Completing the GEAR UP Senior Exit Survey will help connect you to your GEAR UP college mentor

Accept financial aid/scholarship awards
- Review your financial aid award to ensure you receive your funding in time to pay for school - be sure to take note of grants vs. loans
- Grants are awarded without expectation of being paid back
- Subsidized Loans - with this type of loan, the government covers your interest until you graduate, then interest begins to build
- Unsubsidized Loans - These loans gain interest as soon as the money has been given to you

Prepare for AP/CE tests
- Do your best on these tests to get the college credit for the class
- There are plenty of free online resources to help you study
Senior Success

Schedule alumni interviews
• Ask your counselor if there are any students from your high school attending the same college you plan to attend
• Be prepared with a list of questions

Shadow professionals in your field of interest
• This is the best way to get a glimpse into the everyday life of any given career
• Be prepared with a list of questions

Stay in touch
• Confirm your contact information with GEAR UP coordinator
• Complete the GEAR UP SENIOR Exit Survey if you haven’t

Transfer CE/AP Credits
• Send transcripts from current CE/AP school, to college of your choice

Write thank you notes to those who have helped you along the way

Sign up for college orientation day
• Many colleges make attendance at orientation a requirement and prerequisite for registration
• If you are deferring (see Apply and Defer Form)

Verify summer job
• Make sure you’ve got everything lined up for your summer gig

Happy graduation! You’re a college student now!