Keep Track of Everything

College planning is not one big deadline. It is a dozen small ones spread across two years, and missing one can cost real money. The next few pages are your system for staying on top of them all: a junior year checklist, a month-by-month senior year checklist, and a calendar you can carry in your pocket.

Scan the code below at home, or type the link into your laptop, to open your College Roadmap: these checklists in tap-to-check-off form, plus one button that adds every deadline to your calendar, with reminders built in.

SCAN ▸ Your College Roadmap: every step as an interactive checklist, and every deadline added to your calendar in one tap.
learn.thefinancelab.co

Junior Year Checklist

Junior year is lower-pressure than senior year, but it is where the foundation gets built. Strong grades, a little exploring, and a few smart moves now make senior year calm instead of frantic.

WHEN	COLLEGE & CAREER	FINANCIAL AID
Fall (Aug–Oct)	☐ Take junior year seriously: these grades carry the most weight with colleges. ☐ Explore careers and majors; add anything interesting to your Running List. ☐ Go deeper in one or two activities you care about. ☐ Take the PSAT/NMSQT in October if offered (optional, good practice).	☐ Start learning how financial aid works. You have a full year before you file. ☐ Begin a scholarship list. A few are open to juniors.
Winter (Nov–Feb)	☐ Meet your counselor: confirm you are on track with A-G courses. ☐ Start a rough college list: reach, match, and safety schools. ☐ Talk to people doing jobs or attending colleges you are curious about.	☐ Try a net price calculator on a few college sites: real cost, not sticker. ☐ Keep adding scholarships and noting deadlines.
Spring (Mar–May)	☐ Decide about testing. UC and CSU don't use SAT/ACT; only some privates, out-of-state schools, or scholarships do. ☐ Ask one or two teachers about writing you a recommendation next fall. ☐ Visit colleges in person or online, especially over spring break.	☐ Finish strong: this year's grades are the ones colleges read first. ☐ Keep your scholarship list growing; apply to any open now.
Summer (before senior yr)	☐ Draft your personal statement and UC Personal Insight Questions. ☐ Finalize your college list. ☐ Community college path: map your plan now; apply in fall/winter.	☐ Create your FSA ID or CA Dream Act login so it is ready for October 1. ☐ Keep applying for scholarships.

Senior Year Checklist

⚠ **HEADS UP!**

Mark this now: March 2 is California's Cal Grant and priority financial aid deadline. Your FAFSA or CADAA AND your school-certified GPA must both be in by then, and the deadline is firm. But do not wait for March: submit the FAFSA or CADAA as early as possible after it opens October 1. Some aid runs first-come, first-served, and filing early leaves time to fix verification requests or mistakes before any deadline.

MONTH	COLLEGE & CAREER	FINANCIAL AID
August	☐ Build or finalize your college list (reach, match, safety). ☐ Taking the SAT/ACT? UC and CSU don't use scores at all. Take it only if a private, out-of-state school, or scholarship requires it.	☐ Create your FSA ID (FAFSA) or CA Dream Act login. Do it early; it can take days. ☐ Start a scholarship tracker (name, amount, deadline).
September	☐ Build your brag sheet and ask teachers for letters of recommendation. ☐ Start your UC and private-college applications. ☐ Draft your UC Personal Insight Questions and personal statement.	☐ Attend your school's financial aid night.
October	☐ Work on applications, personal statement, and essays. ☐ Applying early (EA/ED)? Finalize those this month. Start CSU apps.	☐ Submit the FAFSA or CA Dream Act Application (both open October 1). ☐ Complete the CSS Profile if a college requires it. Apply for Cal Grant.
November	☐ Submit your UC and CSU applications by November 30. ☐ Keep working on Common App and other privates (watch early deadlines). ☐ Follow up on your letters of recommendation.	☐ Apply for local, district, city, state, and national scholarships. ☐ Log in to StudentAid.gov and check your FAFSA Submission Summary.

Senior Year Checklist (continued)

MONTH	COLLEGE & CAREER	FINANCIAL AID
December	☐ Finish essays for privates. Many Regular Decision deadlines are January 1. ☐ Request your mid-year transcript if colleges will need it.	☐ If your FAFSA or CADAA isn't in yet, do it now (you need it for March 2). ☐ Keep searching and applying for scholarships.
January	☐ Submit remaining Regular Decision apps (many due Jan 1–15). ☐ Send a mid-year transcript if a college asks. Keep your grades up. ☐ Community college path: apply now; watch for spring priority registration.	☐ Make sure your FAFSA or CADAA is submitted. It's required for Cal Grant. ☐ Check each college's own financial aid priority deadline. Complete the CSS Profile if needed. ☐ Selected for verification? Respond right away. Keep applying for scholarships.
February	☐ Visit or revisit colleges you're seriously considering. Keep grades strong.	☐ March 2 is coming: confirm your FAFSA/CADAA and your Cal Grant GPA are both in.
March	☐ Decisions arrive. Many strong students get rejected. It is not a verdict on you.	☐ March 2: Cal Grant deadline. Compare your aid offers side by side. ☐ Offer too low at your top school? Revisit the appeal option in the book.
April	☐ Make your final college decision. Submit appeals if needed.	☐ Accept your admission and aid offer before May 1. Look at net price, not sticker.
May	☐ Submit your Statement of Intent to Register (SIR) by May 1. Choose housing. ☐ Take any placement tests your college requires.	☐ Accept work-study or loans only if you need them, and only what you need.
June	☐ Graduate! Send your final transcript to your college. Sign up for orientation.	☐ Don't disappear over summer. Watch for emails about aid, housing, enrollment.

Senior Year Calendar

This calendar is here to help you plan key reminders about college and financial aid. Fill in the blanks and write notes to personalize it based on your goals throughout your senior year!

AUGUST

	DURING THE WEEK	ON THE WEEKEND
Week 1		
Week 2		
Week 3		
Week 4		
Big Goals		