

DELAWARE STUDENT SUCCESS



Senior Workbook Your Path to Success



Preparing for college takes time. But when you break down the process into monthly steps, it becomes much more manageable. This Senior Workbook is your path for success. Take it one week at a time and keep checking off tasks.

Let's get started.

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Summer Before Senior Year

Prepare for the College Application

1. Think about careers

- Explore college majors. Many applications will require you to choose a major or specific area of study. See page 12 in this workbook.
- Use online tools to explore possible majors and careers. Go to bigfuture.collegeboard.org or careeronestop.org.

List careers that interest you and research how much education each requires. Visit roadtripnation.com/edu/careerfinder.

2. Research and identify the best colleges and program for you

- Identify four colleges or trade schools that you might want to attend. You can choose from hundreds of schools or colleges, which makes it important to answer questions about size, type, location and cost to find your best fit. Page 13 in this workbook has a list of questions to consider. To begin:
 - bigfuture.collegeboard.org
 - collegescorecard.ed.gov
 -

- As you explore college options, consider your preferences. See page 13. Your college list should include at least:
 - One college you are confident you can get into (Safety)
 - Two colleges that you are pretty sure you can get into (Good Fit)
 - One college that you have a chance of getting into, but it's a stretch (Reach)
- If you apply to four, you have a much better chance of being admitted. As you research each school, also take note of the application deadlines. Consider using a college comparison sheet like the one on page 14.

3. Visit colleges over the summer

- Tour colleges in person or virtually to see what it's like to be on campus. Check online to see when tours and information sessions are offered and plan to participate in both when you visit. You can look for student reviews online at unigo.com.

4. Prepare to fill out college applications

- Create a calendar of deadlines so that you know when the applications are due. List all application deadlines, including testing and financial aid requirements, for each program that interests you. Use a checklist to stay organized. See page 11 for a sample calendar of deadlines.



- Compile a list of all of the documents you will need.
- Identify the teachers, coaches and mentors who will write recommendation letters. Talk to them now, then remind them when school starts in the fall. Ask them early so they have enough time. Make sure they know you well and can speak about your strengths. Provide your resume to help them with specifics.
- Ask your school counselor about fee waivers. Use fee waivers for the SAT, SAT subject test, ACT and college applications. Many Delaware colleges waive the application fee during College Application Month.
- Make a list of all your accomplishments, activities in which you excelled and awards you received since ninth grade. You will use these in your application and essay.

5. Look into financial aid

- Estimate your financial aid. Use the FAFSA4caster (see studentaid.ed.gov/sa/fafsa/estimate) to compare the cost of colleges and estimate your financial aid eligibility.

- Explore scholarship opportunities. Use these links:
 - scholarships.delawarestudentsuccess.org
 - delawarestudentsuccess.org/state-aid
 - fastweb.com
 - bigfuture.collegeboard.org
 - myscholly.com
 - <https://studentaid.gov/understand-aid/types/scholarships>
 - salliemae.com/college-planning/college-scholarships

6. Connect with current college students

Connect with alumni from your high school who may be home on break or reach out to college students on social media. Ask questions about their college experience and what they wish they knew before they arrived. See page 15 for sample questions.

During the Academic Year

September: Imagine Your Future and Prepare

September is the time to make decisions about life after graduation.

Whether you're interested in college, an apprenticeship, a certificate program or the military, you will need to work now toward your goal.

1. Meet with your counselor or adviser

- Talk about your different opportunities. Many paths lead to similar careers. You could earn a certificate, complete an apprenticeship or earn an associate or bachelor's degree. Investigate what each one may cost and what salary you can earn with different credentials.
- Ask your counselor about fee waivers for college applications and SAT/ACT tests. Your parent/guardian can authorize your school to use your USDA Free and Reduced-Price Meals status for SAT/ACT and college application fee waivers. Not sure if you qualify? Check with your school.

2. Obtain necessary documentation

- Memorize your Social Security number. You will need it often. Don't have one? Talk to your school counselor.
- Apply for a driver's license or state ID card if you don't have one. You may need one for financial aid verification.
- Males have to register with Selective Service within 30 days (before or after) of their 18th birthdays. If you do not register, you will not be eligible for federal financial aid for college.

3. Be professional — it matters

- Control privacy settings on your social media accounts so your personal photos and posts don't jeopardize your chances of getting admitted or receiving a scholarship. After viewing the video *Cleaning Up Your Online Act* (bit.ly/OwnFuture), use the self-assessment on that web page to check out your online presence.



- Ensure that your email address is professional and appropriate for communicating with colleges, lenders and employers. Stick to using your name, such as firstnamelastname@gmail.com. Be sure to check your email often because this is how colleges, financial aid offices and scholarship administrators will communicate with you. Do not use your high school email address because it deactivates when you graduate.
- Request or follow up on letters of recommendation for your college applications. Provide your recommenders with a list of accomplishments or your resume. Don't forget to send thank-you notes.

4. Register and study for the SAT or ACT

- Check with your target colleges to see if they require the ACT or SAT subject tests. Take them in the fall. You can retake the SAT to improve your scores.

- Sign up for the ACT or SAT if you haven't taken it or want to retake it. Go to collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register for the SAT or actstudent.org/register for the ACT.

- Prepare online at actstudent.org/testprep or khanacademy.org/sat.

5. Finalize your essay

- Write an essay about you, your qualities and your aspirations. For inspiration, read the tips and watch the video prepared by the Princeton Review (bit.ly/UnforgettableEssay) and the College Board (bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/essays). Check out the Common Application essay prompts: bit.ly/TheCommonApp.
- Share your essay with parents, teachers or other trusted adults. They can offer feedback to craft the strongest essays possible.



October: Take the First Steps

October may be one of the busiest months in your college preparation.

1. Work on the FAFSA

- Start the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Complete the FAFSA between October 1 and March 1 to maximize the financial aid you may receive. Go to studentaid.gov. Add the schools that you are applying to on your FAFSA. This is a FREE application. You and your parent will each need a Federal Student AID (FSA) identification to get started (see page 16 for instructions on getting an FSA identification). You will need information from your parents, including tax returns.
- Check the FAFSA priority deadlines. Schools have different deadlines. Submit your FAFSA by those dates. Funds are limited and may be awarded on a first-come basis.

2. Continue to search and apply for scholarships

- Start at scholarships.delawarestudentsuccess.org. You should complete your FAFSA by March to meet most scholarship deadlines.

- Complete the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® (required by some programs and colleges) to see if you qualify for grants and scholarships. Check to see if you will need to complete this for where you are applying. Applications open October 1. Go to <https://cssprofile.collegeboard.org/>.
- Review SEED/Inspire Scholarship deadlines.
 - SEED Scholarship: You need at least a 2.5 GPA. You can go tuition-free for six semesters towards an associate's degree plus up to two semesters towards a bachelor's degree at the University of Delaware or Delaware Tech.
 - Inspire Scholarship: You need a 2.75 GPA and can receive full tuition for up to 8 semesters at Delaware State University. Go to delawarestudentsuccess.org/de-colleges-universities.

3. Start applying to colleges

- Designate time to work on college applications. Delaware College Application Month runs from mid-October through mid-November. All Delaware colleges waive their application fees during this month. Your school will hold events so you can learn more about college and will designate time for you to work on college applications during the school day. Be aware of college application deadlines. If you are applying Early Decision or Early Action to a college, those dates are earlier than regular application deadlines.
- Have all of your information available when applying. See pages 17-21 for a list of information that you will need.
- Consider the Common Application. More than 500 colleges use this form. Many colleges waive application fees if you have a fee waiver or explain that you can't afford it. Check commonapp.org for the programs and colleges you are considering.

4. Attend upcoming webinars and consider options

- Upcoming webinars are listed at delawarestudent.success.org/events/. Military, certificate and apprenticeship programs will be represented.
- If you are considering the military, talk to recruiters. You will need to consider branches, careers, time commitments and education offerings. You'll also need to take the ASVAB test. Plan to apply to a few colleges as a backup.
- If you are considering a trade or apprenticeship program, attend an info session. Learn what type of career the program will lead to the salary you can expect and what the cost will be. Meet with an adviser to schedule your entrance exam and complete other requirements. Remember to ask about job placement to choose the best option. For more information: bit.ly/ApprenticeshipDE.
- Be sure to track your research about each school, including deadlines.

November: Finalize Your College Choices

November is when you need to finalize which colleges and/or programs you will apply to. Choose colleges and/or programs that will challenge you but also help you succeed.

1. Continue applying to colleges

- Finalize your list of three to five colleges or programs and note the deadlines. Remember to think about Safety, Good Fit and Reach. Note what is required in addition to your essay and list of accomplishments.
- Continue to apply to Delaware colleges for free. All Delaware colleges are waiving application fees during October and November. Attend events at your school to learn more about college and fill out applications during your school's College Application Week.
- Check out the Academic Common Market. You may be able to pay in-state tuition at out-of-state universities. Learn more at delawarestudentsuccess.org/acm.

2. Remember, details count

- Ask your counselor about the process to send your transcript to your selected schools.
- Send your SAT, ACT and AP scores. These scores can help with scholarships, course placement, or selection for certain programs or majors.
- Check your email often (including your spam folder). Pay attention to deadlines and information about scholarships, financial aid, deposits, orientation, medical forms and housing. Deadlines are important.

3. Gather more information

- Attend a virtual information session. Visit delawarestudentsuccess.org/events.

December and January: Stay on Track

Enjoy your winter break, but remember to stay on track. Finish lingering applications, continue to apply for scholarships, submit the FAFSA, and start thinking about the summer.

1. Continue to apply

- Submit remaining applications for college, job training or other post-high school plans.
- Organize regular decision applications and financial aid forms. Pay attention to deadlines.

2. Search for more scholarships you may qualify for

- Submit your scholarship applications and watch for deadlines.

3. Reminder: Complete the FAFSA

- Submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid as soon as possible after October 1 to be eligible for federal grants, loans and work-study funds. The sooner you complete it, the sooner you will have an idea of your financial aid options.
- Attend a FAFSA Completion webinar. Visit delawarestudentsuccess.org/events for details.

4. Plan for the summer

- Start to think about how you will spend the summer after graduation. Consider applying for a summer camp or program at a university or an internship or job in a field you're interested in. Many college orientations take place in the summer, so include them in your plans.

5. Check with your counselor

- Make sure you're doing everything needed to graduate.
- Ask your counseling office to send first semester transcripts to schools where you applied.



February: Prepare for the Next Step

February is a month of uncertainty as you wait for acceptance letters and financial aid offers. Keep on track and continue working on your to-do list.

1. Stay focused in the classroom

- Keep your grades up. The college that you do attend will want to see your final transcript. Colleges expect you to finish 12th grade with strong grades.

2. Analyze your acceptance letters and financial aid offers

- Review your acceptances and compare financial aid packages.
- Make sure you understand what items in your financial aid package are grants (you don't have to pay back) and what are loans (you have to pay back). Use a chart to compare the offers you receive, as each financial aid letter will look different. Here's a chart: bit.ly/CompareAidCalculator or see the sample chart on page 21.

- Weigh the cost of attendance with the salary you might earn to choose the best fit academically and financially.
- Call the college with questions about what your financial aid will cover.

3. Take action if waitlisted

- Write to the admissions office if your first-choice college puts you on the waiting list. Explain that it is your first choice. Describe new activities that you have participated in or new accomplishments since you sent in your application.

4. Visit campuses

- Attend preview days for admitted students and get to know the campus and the people.

March: Consider Finances

March is when you need to compile all your income sources so you have a clearer picture of how you will pay for your education after high school.

1. Confirm FAFSA info

- Review the Student Aid Report, a summary of what you filled out on the FAFSA. Make sure that all of the information is correct and make any changes (like updating tax information) if necessary by March 15. Anytime you make a change to your FAFSA, you and your parents need to sign it again before submitting it.

2. Consider grants and work-study

- Look for grants, work-study opportunities and more scholarships before accepting a student loan.

3. Update your financial offers worksheet

- Continue to evaluate all financial aid offers carefully.

Contact the financial aid office at the colleges you are considering with any questions you may have.

4. Find out your college's actual cost

- Use the Net Price Calculator with your parents to find out the potential for financial aid and the true out-of-pocket cost — or net price — of each college.

5. Discuss long-term plans for financing your education

- Examine your and your family's budget and cash flow. Figure out how you will afford your intended college.

April: Make That Big Decision

In April, you should decide what school or program to attend. Look beyond the price tag. Consider intangible factors, such as the success of graduates of your program of study.

1. Decide on a school

- Think carefully about the pros and cons for each school – consider size, academics, cost, extracurricular options and more.

2. Respond to each school

- Respond in writing by May 1 with an accept or regret notification.
- Submit enrollment deposit.
- Use your college portal to accept and/or decline your financial aid awards.

3. Review your financial aid plan

- Review financial aid award letters. Determine if the financial aid package covers all anticipated costs. Plan to make up for shortfalls.
- Contact the school's financial aid office with questions. Know how much aid you will be required to repay. You will need money for non-tuition items: housing, meal plans, books, transportation to/from school, lab/art supplies and computer. Plan for these expenses.

May: Fulfill All Entry Requirements

May is when colleges send information that you need to fill out by certain deadlines. Stay on top of all correspondence and respond as quickly as possible.

1. Get things done

- Determine if the school you want to attend requires or recommends immunizations before enrolling. Make the necessary appointments.
- Order your final high school transcript for the college you plan to attend.

2. Enjoy graduation

- Celebrate your success.



Summer After Graduation

June and July: Get to the starting line at college

Now that you have been accepted, June and July are good months to prepare for that first day on your college campus. Give yourself plenty of time to complete each of these steps. If you hit a roadblock or need help over the summer, ask your parents, family, friends, high school counselors, teachers, or university admissions/financial aid officers for help. Be sure to keep track of deadlines and see the sample calendar.

1. Visit your college's student portal

- Create/reset your PIN, set up your email account, find forms, check your financial aid status and important deadlines. Your username and password are usually sent with your acceptance packet or in a separate letter or email. If you can't find them, contact your college's admissions office.

2. Check the status of your financial aid

- Check your most recent award letter and your college's custom student portal to see if you need to take additional steps for your financial aid.

3. Register for and attend your college's student orientation

- Many colleges hold mandatory summer orientations for all new students. Register as soon as possible and check what documents you will need to take to orientation.

4. Take any required placement exams

- Check with your college to determine what placement tests you need. Some tests must be taken during the summer; others take place when you arrive in the fall.

5. Complete housing forms

- Most require you to pay a deposit and complete a form to be eligible for on-campus housing. Do this as soon as possible because housing may be limited.

6. Check when tuition and student fees are due

- Talk with your college's financial aid office about how to pay any balance that remains after your financial aid award.

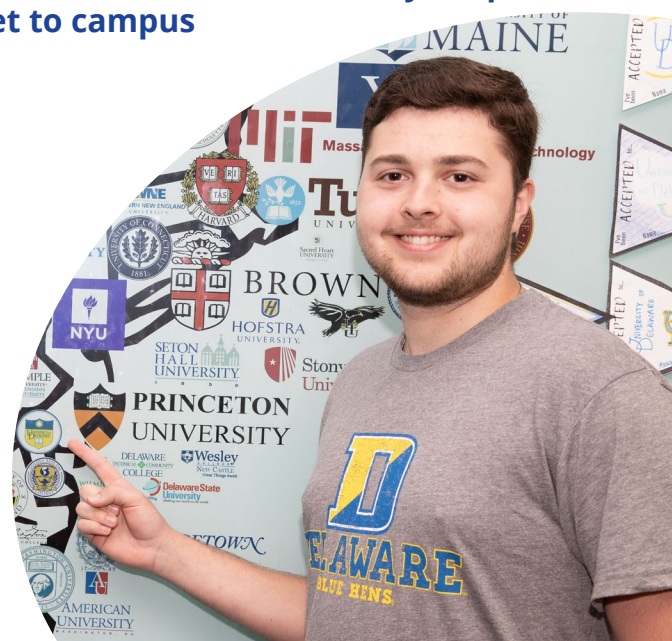
7. Check your college's policy on health insurance

- Each college has policies about student health insurance requirements.

8. Submit other required paperwork and documentation

- Complete and return medical/immunization forms. Confirm with your high school counselor that your final transcript was sent to the college. If you have taken college courses, request that those transcripts be sent as well.

9. Confirm move-in dates and your plan to get to campus



August: Prepare for Your New Environment

Prepare to start your life as a college student.

- **1. Look at the requirements for your major** and start planning your classes.
- **2. Buy your books** Search online for deals or used books. Consider renting books to save money (sites like [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)).
- **3. Purchase technology** You may want a laptop and other school supplies.
- **4. Stock up on the basics** Buy essentials, from toiletries to towels and sheets. Check to see if you need extra-long twin sheets because many dorms require this size.
- **5. Take care of your health**
- **6. Contact and get to know your roommates** Decide who is bringing what for common living areas, such as a microwave, TV and refrigerator.
- **7. Learn how to cook** basic meals and how to do laundry.
- **8. If you're taking a car to campus,** get a tune-up. Explore campus parking options.
- **9. If you are attending school in a city,** get familiar with its public transportation.
- **10. Check for student discounts** Technology (laptops, etc.), insurance, online newspaper subscriptions, and services such as Amazon Prime or Spotify may be cheaper for students.
- **11. Check out your college's extracurricular activities** Start networking with other students on social media.
- **12. Get familiar with your college town** Explore local restaurants, where to buy books, etc.
- **13. Save the contact information** for your family and friends so you can stay in touch.

Summer Before College Calendar

Activity	Deadline
Confirm receipt of final transcript by your college's admissions office	
Create your student account at your college's online portal	
Register for orientation	
Attend new student orientation	
Register for placement tests	
Return housing forms	
Return medical/immunization forms	
Register for classes	
Make payments for tuition/fees	
Arrive on campus	

College Application Workbook

This workbook aims to guide you through the college application and selection process. The worksheet pages will give you things to consider when choosing your major and potential colleges, items you need to complete the application, and charts and timelines.
Fill out the pages as you work through the school year.

Choose a College Major

Your major is the specific subject area you will study. Typically, between one-third and one-half of the courses you will take in college will be in your major or related to it.

Choosing a major can be daunting. These questions help narrow your choices:

1. What are your interests?

2. What type of work do you enjoy?

3. Which subjects did you enjoy studying the most in high school?

4. What type of career do you envision for yourself?

5. What careers are offered where you would like to live?

It's not uncommon for college students to change majors one or more times after they enroll in college. You might want to explore colleges that offer more than one of your preferred majors.

List your top three college major choices:

1st Choice: _____

2nd Choice: _____

3rd Choice: _____

Explore Post-Secondary Schools

You have the opportunity to apply to hundreds of colleges and universities, but it is important to answer questions to figure out the best fit for you. Consider these:

Size

Large or Small Campus?
Everybody Knows You or Anonymity of a Crowd?
On or Off-Campus Living?
Large or Small Class Size?
Professors or Teaching Assistants?
Lots of Extracurricular Activities or Just a Few?

Type

2-year or 4-year School?
Single Sex or Coed?
Religious Affiliation?
Public or Private?

Geography

City or Rural Area?
Close to Home or Far Away?

Cost

In-State or Out-of-State Tuition?
Scholarship Opportunities or No?
Work Study Programs Available or Not?

Do more research at: www.nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator or www.collegeresults.org or www.imfirst.org.

Use the table below and the chart on the next page to keep track of college admission requirements for your top four colleges. Aim for at least one college you are confident you can get into (**Safety-S**), two that you are pretty sure you can get into (**Good Fit-GF**), and one that you have a chance but it's a stretch (**Reach-R**). Based on your research, list your top four colleges and fit (Safety, Good Fit, or Reach).

	School Name	Deadline	S, GF, or R
1st Choice:	_____	_____	_____
2nd Choice:	_____	_____	_____
3rd Choice:	_____	_____	_____
4th Choice:	_____	_____	_____

Compare Colleges Chart

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Name				
Geographic Location				
Campus Setting				
Admission/Placement Test Requirements				
Number of Enrolled Students				
Student Graduation Rate				
College Housing Options				
College Transportation				
Application Fee Waiver Available?				
Tuition (yearly)				
Room and Board (yearly)				
Total Estimated Yearly Cost				
Grants (Does the school participate in federal/state grant programs?)				
Scholarships				
Work Study				
Loans				
Financial Aid Deadline				
% of Undergraduates Receiving Aid				

Track Key Information and Deadlines

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
Deadline for application				
Cost to apply				
Payment option				
Deadline for scholarship or institutional financial assistance				

Interview Alumni

You may want to talk to people who attended each of the schools on your list.

Questions:

What was your major?

Did you change majors?

What did you like/dislike about the school?

Did you stay on campus?

Were you the first in your family to go to college?

Were you involved in campus activities?

Do you think this school is a good fit for me?

When you want to start searching, visit bigfuture.collegeboard.org.

Apply for Your FSA ID

College can seem out of reach because of the cost. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) can provide grant and loan opportunities for students who qualify. Before you can submit a FAFSA, you need to apply for your FSA ID. It is highly recommended that you apply for your FSA ID at your College Application Week event. You will use your FSA ID to sign your FAFSA before submitting it. Any time you make a change to your FAFSA, you and your parent will need to sign it again before submitting it.

1. Go to <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch>.
2. Follow the prompts on the subsequent pages to confirm your identity, create your profile and to review your information. Note: Be sure to keep track of security questions that you establish to protect your account.
3. Click submit once all information has been carefully entered and reviewed.
4. You have successfully submitted your FSA ID application.
5. Keep your FSA ID and password in a safe location. Your FSA ID is considered a legal signature and should not be shared with anyone. You will need it to complete your Free Application for Federal Student Aid and to log onto FAFSA's website.
6. Your parent should also apply for an FSA ID as he/she will need it to sign your FAFSA.

College Application Info Worksheet

Complete this information before the College Application event and keep it in a safe place.

It is strongly recommended that you write your essays and personal statements well in advance of your school's College Application Week. Bring a final, edited electronic copy on a flash drive or email it to yourself.

Personal Information

Full name (first, middle, last) _____

Permanent address (where all mail will be sent) _____

City, State, ZIP _____

Home phone number _____

Mobile phone number _____

E-Mail address _____

Bring your Social Security number or memorize it.

Driver's license number _____

Date issued _____

Date of birth _____

Place of birth _____

Citizenship (check one)

U.S. Citizen Permanent Resident Other, give visa type _____

If not a U.S. citizen, are you a legal immigrant (permanent resident alien of the U.S.)?

Yes No

*If you answered "no," be prepared to answer the following:

Country of citizenship _____

Permanent residence _____

Resident Alien Number _____

Country of birth _____

Parent/Guardian Information

	Parent/Guardian #1	Parent/Guardian #2
Full name (first, middle, last)	_____	_____
Relationship to you	_____	_____
Street address	_____	_____
City, State, ZIP	_____	_____
Telephone number	_____	_____
E-mail address	_____	_____
Highest level of education completed (Unknown, K-8, high school, 2-year college, 4-year college, graduate school)	_____	_____
Institution/Degree	_____	_____

You also may want to familiarize yourself with your parent/guardian's job (company/organization name, occupation, and job title). Some applications may ask for a salary range.

Educational Information

Name of current high school _____

Mailing address _____

Telephone number _____

Date you entered high school _____

Anticipated graduation date _____

****If you have attended any other high schools, you will need the above information for those schools. ****

List any colleges you have attended for which you expect to receive college credit:

College name	_____	_____
City and State	_____	_____
Dates of attendance	_____	_____

List the courses you are taking during your senior year. Please indicate any that are Honors, AP, IB or Dual Enrollment (college courses):

Fall Semester:

Spring Semester:

Testing Information

SAT test date (month/year) _____

Critical reading score _____

Math score _____

Writing score _____

ACT test date (month/year) _____

Composite score _____

English score _____

Verbal score _____

Reading score _____

Science score _____

List your extracurricular, community and family activities, and hobbies. Be prepared to include specific events and major accomplishments, such as musical or artistic talent or volunteer services.

School	Grade Level				Approx. Time Spent		Dates	Positions Held
	9	10	11	12	Hours/Week	Weeks/Year		

List honors or awards that you have received.

Organization	Honor or Award

List work experience (employment, internships, etc.). Some colleges allow you to submit a resume in addition to the activity section of their application.

Position Held	Employer	Dates of Employment	Hours/Week

You may also need access to:

Official Transcript Your transcript is the record of all the courses you have taken for high school credit, your grades, and credits earned. Other information that might be included on a transcript: GPA, class rank, standardized test scores, courses in progress. This is normally sent directly from your high school to the college.

Essays Both short answer and longer personal essay(s)

Disciplinary Information

Application Fee or Waiver information Many colleges will accept fee waivers that can be obtained from your school counseling office if you are eligible.

Audition or Portfolio For certain majors, students might be required to audition or asked to submit a portfolio of artistic work.

Recommendation Forms/Letters

- Most colleges and universities will require at least one recommendation form or letter of recommendation. Some schools may stipulate that these should be completed by a counselor, teacher, or community member who knows you well.
- Colleges are not only interested in hearing from teachers who taught courses in which you received a top grade, but from teachers (and other individuals) who know you well and can talk about your work ethic, inquisitive nature and motivation to learn.

Offer Comparison Chart

School	Accepted or Waitlisted	Total Cost Per Year	Total Aid Offered

For more information on comparing college offers, visit: bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/financial-aid-awards/compare-aid-calculator

Delaware



*Department
of Education*

Delaware Higher Education Office
Delaware Department of Education
401 Federal Street, Suite 2
Dover, DE 19901

dheo@doe.k12.de.us
302-735-4120 or 1-800-292-7935
www.DelawareStudentSuccess.org

