21 months before applying – beginning of Year 11
• Start researching U.S. colleges/universities and academic programs that interest you
• Identify and prepare for standardized tests you will need to take - register to sit these exams as soon as possible
• Work hard in school to maintain good grades
• Talk to your school’s career practitioner so they can help you
• Build a timeline of your tasks and deadlines for the next two years

14-16 months before applying – mid-Year 11
• If you have not done so already - talk to your school’s career practitioner so they can help support your goals
• Continue to research and build a spreadsheet of U.S. colleges
• Identify if you’ll need to re-sit any standardized tests

11-12 months before applying – end of Year 11
• Request any forms and information, if necessary
• Identify who you would like to approach to complete your school recommendations
• Research U.S. colleges in more detail by visiting their websites to get information
• Take virtual tours of colleges you’re interested in - these can be found on the institution’s homepage or at Campus Tours or You Visit.
10 months before applying – beginning of Year 12 (January/February)
- Register to re-sit any standardized tests if you want to improve your scores
- Approach the two teachers you identified to write your school recommendations
- Identify your financing options
- Start a running record of all your extracurricular activities and awards—add any new achievements throughout the year
- Discuss your progress with your career practitioner
- Continue to research and refine information on your spreadsheet of shortlisted colleges

4-5 months before applying – mid-Year 12 (June)
- Narrow your college selections down to the 5–7 you’ll apply to
- Identify which application deadline you will use for each college on your list—consider applying through the Early Decision or Early Action options
- Start drafting your application and brainstorm ideas for essay responses
- Research scholarship opportunities and their closing dates
- Create any relevant accounts you’ll need to begin your applications, e.g. CommonApp

2-3 months before applying (August)
- August 1: CommonApp is released for the next application cycle
- Colleges will release admission materials online
- Download and begin completing applications for your target colleges
- Begin drafting your essay(s)/personal statement
- Follow-up with your teachers and career practitioner regarding their recommendation

1 month prior to application deadlines - late-Year 12
- Complete all financial aid application forms
- Ensure all aspects of your application have been completed—including items to be lodged on your behalf, such as recommendations
- Submit your applications well before the deadline

After applying - following year
- Receive notice of offer by April 1 (Regular Decision)
- Accept offer and provide deposit by May 1

Helpful terminology
- Freshman - Year 9 or first year at college
- Sophomore - Year 10 or second year at college
- Junior - Year 11 or third year at college
- Senior - Year 12 or final year at college