

COLLEGE READY CHECKLIST

Achieve more.



If you think college is in your future, it's important to start preparing during high school. Bank of North Dakota's Career Compass at careercompass.nd.gov has for more information on all of these topics.

RESEARCH

Throughout High School

- Visit RUReady.nd.gov to take interest tests, explore careers and plan your class schedule.
- Talk to an adult who works in the career in which you are interested. Ask questions about things that are important to you which may include hours in a typical week, pay, stresses, rewards, training and advancement opportunities.

During Your Junior and Senior Years

- Attend college fairs and ask questions about faculty-to-student ratio, expenses, majors and job placement. BND's Regional College Cost Sheet can help you compare costs at schools in North Dakota and surrounding states.
- Visit the campuses of the colleges you would like to attend. If possible, visit while school is in session to get a better feel for the culture.



Point your phone or tablet camera at QR Code to access more helpful information



CLASSES AND GRADES

Throughout High School

- ❑ Increase your exposure to different career paths and take a wide variety of classes. For example, even if you are sure you'd like to be a nurse, consider that accounting class because you may be in management someday and will need that skill.
- ❑ Pay attention in language arts classes since career success is often enhanced if you are a strong communicator.
- ❑ Include dual credit and Advanced Placement classes in your schedule. If you need help paying for the credits, you can apply for a student loan or, if eligible, dual credit assistance offered by BND.

During Your Freshman and Sophomore Years

- ❑ Visit with your school counselor to see if you are on pace to receive the North Dakota Academic/Career & Technical Education (CTE) Scholarship, valued at up to \$6,000!

During Your Junior Year

- ❑ Take the PSAT test to see if you qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.

During Your Junior and Senior Years

- ❑ Take an ACT® preparation course. The score on your ACT® can open the door for more scholarship dollars and may impact the options of colleges available to you. Students typically take the ACT® for the first time during their junior year. Note: College admission and scholarship guidelines may be adjusted as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic so understand your school's requirements.

OUTSIDE-OF-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Throughout High School

- ❑ Develop leadership and teamwork skills through extracurricular activities. These may include school-sanctioned activities like sports, music or drama; community-based activities like youth groups, churches and service organizations; working a part-time job; or volunteering in your community.
- ❑ Job shadow a career in which you are interested.
- ❑ Save money for college. If you don't have a College SAVE 529 account, ask an adult family member to start one. You may qualify, if you have not yet turned 16 years of age, for a \$300 BND Match which is based on your family's income. The plan also allows student loan repayment as a qualified expense up to \$10,000.
- ❑ Make good choices. A bad decision to break the law may change the course of your life, and things you post on social media could affect future opportunities for you.
- ❑ Create a North Dakota Dollars for Scholars profile at northdakota.dollarsforscholars.org and track all the activities you participate in. This will help you when it's time to apply for scholarships, college or jobs.

During Your Junior and Senior Years

- ❑ Take a self-defense course to help you stay safe on campus.
- ❑ Create an email account for college correspondence. The new address should be suitable and reflect professionalism.

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

During Your Sophomore Year

- ❑ Start researching scholarships.

During Your Junior and Senior Years

- ❑ Discuss your plan to pay for college with your family.
- ❑ Apply for at least two scholarships per month starting the summer after your junior year through your final year of college. Include North Dakota Dollars for Scholars when you apply.

During Your Senior Year

- ❑ Sign up for an FSA ID in the fall, so you can complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) starting October 1. Your parent or guardian will need one too.
- ❑ Attend school-sponsored events for help with completing the FAFSA. Bank of North Dakota's YouTube channel also has a series of videos you can watch.
- ❑ Participate in College Application Month in the fall to assist you with paying the application fee for one North Dakota school.
- ❑ Apply to colleges, and after you decide where you want to attend, you need to contact the others to let them know you won't attend there. You'll need to submit housing applications and fees to the college of your choice.
- ❑ Apply for student loans if you need them. Start with federal student loans, and if you need more, visit Bank of North Dakota's website at bnd.nd.gov to learn about its student loan program and calculate how much in student loans is reasonable for you to repay based on your future anticipated salary.