

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 College Handbook is available at **bnd.nd.gov** for more information on all of these topics.

Research

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

Classes and grades

- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Take the PSAT test during your junior year to see if you qualify for the National Merit Scholarship.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Visit with your school counselor to see if you are on pace to receive the North Dakota Academic/Career & Technical Education (CTE) Scholarship.

Outside-of-school activities

- ☐ 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 loans 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.
- ☐ Take a self-defense course to help you stay safe on campus.
- ☐ Create an email account for college correspondence between your junior and senior years of high school. The new address should be suitable and reflect professionalism.

Paying for college

- ☐ Discuss your plan to pay for college with your family.
- ☐ Start researching scholarships in your sophomore year. 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.
- ☐ Sign up for an FSA ID in the fall of your senior year, 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 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.





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QR Code to
access more helpful
information

