



## 9th Grade

### FALL

- Create your FREE CFNC.org account to help plan for career and college.
- Explore careers that interest you.
- Start learning about colleges and entrance requirements.



### WINTER

- Review high school classes to stay on track with graduation and college requirements.
- Talk with parents & family about the cost of college and plans for paying.
- Talk with your school counselor about challenging courses, such as Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) or dual enrollment courses.

### SPRING

- Log into CFNC.org to find and take free SAT and ACT practice tests.
- Look into summer opportunities, such as camps, classes, or volunteering to help prepare for college.
- Update your CFNC.org profile with this year's activities and courses.

## 10th Grade

- Use the CFNC.org College Search tool to find colleges that interest you.
- Consider signing up for the October PSAT – good practice for the SAT. (Free SAT and ACT practice tests on CFNC.org.)
- Talk with friends and family about their career and education choices.

- Register for challenging courses such as AP and IB to meet graduation requirements and discover new interests and possible careers.
- Look into the possibility of dual enrollment with Career and College Promise (CCP) to earn college credit while in high school.



- If you've taken AP classes, register for the AP exams. May give you extra credit for college.
- Check the fall SAT and ACT dates. Register well in advance to save money.
- Look for college prep, community service, or part-time work summer opportunities.
- Continue exploring career fields that interest you.
- Plan to visit college campuses in the summer to get a sense of those that interest you.

## 11th Grade

- Consider the college programs, activities, and locations that interest you most.
- Start narrowing your list of colleges.
- Meet SAT and ACT registration deadlines to avoid late fees.
- Attend free College Fairs and Financial Aid Workshops at your school or in your area.

- Stay involved in challenging courses to meet graduation and college admission requirements.
- Get familiar with financial aid terms, such as FAFSA, FSA ID, the College PROFILE, scholarships, grants, federal and private loans.

- Look into scholarship and grant options.
- Take SAT and ACT as scheduled.
- Plan your senior year courses carefully.
- Schedule college visits and admission interviews on campuses in which you are interested.

## 12th Grade

- Attend free College Fairs and Financial Aid Workshops.
- Check all deadlines: applications, scholarships & aid.
- Request recommendations, if needed.
- Plan and proofread carefully any college application essays.
- Use CFNC.org Application Hub to complete applications & send free official high school transcripts to any NC college.
- Use NC Residency Determination Service (RDS) to see if you're eligible for state grants and in-state tuition
- Get your FSA ID & complete the FAFSA early. You may be eligible for federal and state grants for college.

- Use CFNC.org to find multiple ways to help pay for college.
- Talk with your counselor about local area scholarships and grants.
- Check if the colleges to which you've applied have received all your information.
- Watch for admission letters and financial aid offers.
- Keep studying. Your senior year grades are important for final acceptance!



- If you are in AP courses, do your best on final exams for possible college credit.
- Weigh financial aid offers & how cost fits the family budget.
- Make your decision! Let your first choice school know & notify rest you are not enrolling.
- If you didn't get into your preferred colleges, use the College Redirection Tool at CFNC.org (opens April 1) to find other options.
- Community college? Check with campus about placement tests.
- Celebrate your high school graduation and look forward to a bright future!

# Navigating FAFSA and RDS to Prepare for College

Both FAFSA and RDS are required and need similar information for completion. Below is a breakdown of what these two items are and the information needed to complete them.



**FAFSA:** Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) to determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid.

**RDS:** Use RDS (Residency Determination Service) to receive an RCN (Residency Certification Number) to determine your eligibility for in-state tuition and state grant awards.

<b>What?</b>	Possible eligibility for federal and state financial aid for college	Possible eligibility for in-state tuition and state grants
<b>Where?</b>	<a href="https://fafsa.gov">fafsa.gov</a>	<a href="https://ncresidency.org">ncresidency.org</a>
<b>First Step?</b>	Get FSA ID (Federal Student Aid Identification) – student and parent/legal guardian	Complete RDS online
<b>When?</b>	FSA ID before Oct. 1; FAFSA as soon as possible after Oct. 1	Ideally before student applies to NC colleges and universities
<b>INFORMATION REQUIRED</b>		
<b>Student's Personal Identifying Information</b> (SSN, ARN, USCIS or TIN)*	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Parent's Personal Identifying Information</b> (SSN, ARN, USCIS or TIN)*	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Student-filed Federal Taxes</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian-filed Federal Taxes</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Student-filed State Taxes</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Parent/Legal Guardian-filed State Taxes</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Address of Permanent Residence</b>	<b>YES</b> , for state grant eligibility	<b>YES</b> , for in-state tuition and state grant eligibility
<b>Driver's License or Vehicle Information</b> (if available)	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>Military Information</b> (if applicable)	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Documentation</b> (if applicable)	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>
<b>What to Save After Completing Form?</b>	<b>FSA ID</b> - Keep it safe.	<b>RCN</b> - (Residency Certification Number) Keep it safe.
<b>Apply Again?</b>	<b>YES.</b> Use FSA ID to complete the FAFSA each year in college.	<b>NO.</b> RCN never changes, but you may need to reapply if you transfer to a different institution.

\*SSN = Social Security Number; ARN = Alien Registration Number; USCIS=US Citizenship and Immigration Services;  
ITIN = Individual Taxpayer Identification Number

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