



GRADUATE READY GUIDE

THE SUMMER BEFORE SENIOR YEAR

In preparation for senior year, it's time to think and talk more seriously about your student's postsecondary plans. In their junior year seminar course, your student learned about the 16 different career clusters and how they intersect with the various pathways available to them – including two- or four-year college, workforce development, and military – and created an initial list of the paths that most excite them. This planning guide should support you as you help your student think through their options.

Regardless of pathway, an essential task for every family is to develop a postsecondary financial aid plan.

It is no secret that postsecondary programs can be expensive. Even after receiving grants and scholarships, the average Mastery student attending college or a technical trade program has a bill of \$2,000 to \$8,000 per year.

- **Discuss with your student how much you can contribute to their postsecondary education.** Consider having your student set aside a portion of their summer job paycheck in a savings account.
- **Begin gathering your tax and financial documents, which you will use to complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) in the fall.** The FAFSA will determine your student's eligibility for federal student financial aid. This aid is based on various factors, particularly your family's income and assets, which help assess how much you may be able to contribute to your child's college education.
- **Encourage your student to explore scholarships that can help make their postsecondary education more affordable.** Their postsecondary advisor can provide resources to help them get started.

If your student is considering attending a two- or four-year college...

- ✓ **Schedule college or school visits:** Take some time to get to know the colleges your student is most interested in, either virtually or in person. Don't forget about Camden Community College and the Community College of Philadelphia. Visiting the campus of your student's top choices and engaging with admissions representatives not only gives them a better idea of where they want to go but also shows "demonstrated interest" to the school, which can contribute to their admissions application.
 - **How will they get there?** Encourage your student to think through the location of their top choices. If a school is outside the Philadelphia or Camden area, consider how students would get to and from school. Some schools offer transportation to major cities – this is a great question to ask during admissions visits!
 - **Discuss majors** with your student by exploring their top three choices and the reasons behind their interest in each. Keeping an open mind about schools and majors at this stage will help your student consider different possibilities for their next step.
 - **If your student is an athlete** and plans to play in college, contact the coaches at the schools to which you are applying to inquire about their intercollegiate and intramural sports programs and athletic scholarships.
- ✓ **Study for the SAT:** If your student still needs to take (or retake) the SAT, the summer is a great time to do some test prep. Your student's postsecondary advisor can provide resources for test prep before the end of the school year.

If your student is thinking about the military...

- ✔ **Review qualifications for enlistment:** Recruits must be U.S. citizens or legal residents and be on track to graduate from high school within the following year. In addition, recruits must meet the following criteria: no criminal felony charges or convictions, no more than three dependents, no history of serious medical conditions, and no more than four tattoos.
 - ✔ **Meet with a recruiter:** The best way to find out which military career path is right for your student is to talk to a military recruiter. Remember, military careers aren't limited to being a soldier. There are opportunities for doctors, engineers, pilots, computer specialists, communications professionals, and more!
 - ✔ **Prep for entry tests:** The Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) tests your student's mental qualifications and determines their job placement. The higher their score on the ASVAB, the more jobs they qualify for once they enlist, so practice is key. Recruits will also need to pass an extensive physical exam – summer is a great time to get in shape!
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If your student is thinking of a technical or career training program...

- ✔ **Discuss career options** by determining which technical or trade programs are best suited for your student based on their interests, skills, and personality. Do they like being outdoors? Enjoy building things? Interested in healthcare or IT? There are trade and technical programs that can turn these interests into lifelong careers.
 - ✔ **Explore programs:** Check out the existing programs in the Philadelphia and Camden area. Your student's senior seminar advisor can provide a list of high-quality programs as a starting point.
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If your student is undecided...

- ✔ **Explore, explore, explore:** Encourage your student to actively explore the many college and career options available to them after graduation! In addition to visiting schools or programs, consider asking a friend or family member who works in a field that interests your student if they would be willing to do a job shadow for a day or help set up an internship.

If you have any questions over the summer, reach out to your student's postsecondary advisor.

Their contact information can be found on the Graduate Ready page

masterycharter.org/graduateready on Mastery's website.



Mastery Schools