



A JUNIOR'S GUIDE TO COLLEGE PREP





HIGH SCHOOL COURSEWORK

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR OPTIONS!

When you have options, make the most of them! You can select high school courses that **support your career interests**, provide additional **scholarship opportunities**, and **save time and money** — all while fulfilling high school graduation requirements!

HIGH SCHOOL DUAL CREDIT

High School Dual Credit (HSDC) courses give high school students who meet admissions standards the opportunity to enroll in public technical colleges and universities in South Dakota while still in high school. Students taking HSDC courses simultaneously earn credits for both their high school diploma and college degree or certificate.

Thanks to a program approved by the South Dakota Legislature, high school juniors and seniors in South Dakota receive a special discount for dual credit courses—paying only \$50.84 per credit hour. That's a deal that saves you time and money toward your college degree!

NEW! GATEWAY TO TEACHER EDUCATION

Students can now take the first steps toward a rewarding career in education at a fraction of the price. Designed for students with a career interest in PK-12 teacher education, this program includes four HSDC courses that helps them further explore the career field while accomplishing coursework that can apply toward an undergraduate teacher education degree. Successful completion of this coursework also satisfies requirements for an undergraduate certificate that will appear on the postsecondary transcript.

Additional HSDC career exploration opportunities in Agriculture, Engineering, and more are coming soon!



**LEARN MORE ABOUT HIGH
SCHOOL DUAL CREDIT &
CERTIFICATES HERE**

ourdakotadreams.com/high-school/dual-credit-2

COLLEGE READINESS COURSEWORK

College Readiness Coursework is coursework that specifically supports high school students with a “college ready” academic preparation, helping them avoid remedial classes in college.

While there are several ways to prepare to be college ready, reaching the total high school units below not only prepares you to be successful in college but also meets the curriculum requirements for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, helping you qualify to earn up to \$7,500 for college!

- Language Arts – 4 units
- Social Studies – 3 units
- Mathematics – 4 units
- Science – 4 units
- World Language / Career and Technical Education – 2 units
- Fine Arts – 1 unit
- Personal Finance / Economics – 0.5 unit
- Physical Education – 0.5 unit
- Health or Health Integration – 0.5 unit

Learn more about the specific coursework needed to be eligible for the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship.

sdbor.edu/scholarships



In short, when you register for your senior year, make sure to push yourself toward this coursework – it will pay off. ***We highly advise a fourth year of math and science!***

If you don't feel quite ready for a college-level math class yet, that's okay. You can take a course during your junior or senior year specifically designed to get you prepped for college.

Year-Long College Algebra

- Offered by the Northern State E-Learning Center.
- Students complete this blended coursework during the school day.
- One semester of College Algebra Prep, followed by one semester of High School Dual Credit College Algebra (MATH 114) with the same teacher.
- Successful completion of both semesters qualifies as high school credit and earns a student three college algebra credits (recognized at any college).
- Dual credit tuition scholarships available.

Talk to your school counselor to see if the Year-Long College Algebra Course is right for you.

ourdakotadreams.com/high-school/college-readiness-coursework



CREATE SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Don't miss the opportunity to align your course choices with scholarship opportunities! For instance, you can earn up to \$7,500 (over four years) through the South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship, but you need to take the right courses to be eligible. See page 3.

At a bare minimum, these are the top five scholarships every South Dakota student and family should know about.

- **Build Dakota Scholarship Fund**
- **Dakota Corps Scholarship**
- **South Dakota Opportunity Scholarship**
- **Freedom Scholarship**
- **Critical Teaching Needs Scholarship**

**LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE AND OTHER
SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOLARSHIPS HERE.**

ourdakotadreams.com/paying-for-college/sd-scholarships



SUPPORT YOUR CAREER INTERESTS

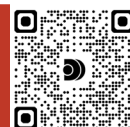
Choose high school courses that prepare you for your future career! You don't have to know exactly what college major you will choose, but taking classes in your career interest areas will give you a good foundation to build upon in college. For instance, if you are considering nursing, you could take anatomy, physiology, or statistics – courses often necessary for a nursing degree.

Visit with your school counselor for ideas on how to align your career interests to coursework.

Not sure of your career interests? Take the Career Matchmaker and Skills Lab assessments on SDMyLife. SDMyLife.com is a free career exploration and academic planning resource for all South Dakota students in grades 6-12. It can assist students in better understanding themselves and how their interests, skills, and knowledge relate to real-world academic and career opportunities.



To login to SDMyLife.com, use your K12 email address
(username) and K12 email password (password).



sdmylife.com

COLLEGE PREP TIMELINE

As you cross tasks off your list, Our Dakota Dreams will be by your side every step of the way. There are plenty of things you can do in high school to position yourself for a successful college career before you ever complete the application or step onto campus.

JUNIOR YEAR

Use Your Resources

Talk with your school counselor about your options and plans for life after high school. They can help you be strategic by connecting you with the right coursework, scholarship opportunities, work-based learning, and volunteer experiences – to make you more marketable for the future.

Prepare, Register and Take the ACT

Explore ACT prep courses and register for the test up to six weeks in advance. The ideal time to take the ACT is February or summer.

Explore Colleges and Academic Programs

Consider how college programs of study align with your interests and familiarize yourself with college admission requirements.

Attend College Fairs

Learn as much as you can about the colleges that interest you.

South Dakota English Language Arts, Math and Science Assessments

Work hard on your state assessments — your scores may come in handy with college admissions. (doe.sd.gov/assessment)

Explore Financial Aid Options

- Take note of scholarship deadlines and plan ahead.
- Get an estimate of how much federal aid you will receive by completing the Federal Student Aid Estimator. (studentaid.gov/aid-estimator)

Consider Coursework Opportunities

Visit with your school counselor on coursework opportunities that save you time and money in college and prepare you for potential career plans — look into dual credit coursework and college readiness courses.

College Visits

The best way to get to know a college is by scheduling a visit.

COLLEGE PREP TIMELINE

SENIOR YEAR

Stay on Track

Visit with school counselors to make sure you're on track to graduate and fulfill college admissions requirements.

Apply to College (Ideal Time: Oct. – Nov. 2025)

Apply to South Dakota's technical colleges and public universities. Pay attention to priority deadlines for college-specific scholarships and the requirements for particular academic programs.

Talk to College Admissions Representatives

College admissions representatives are here to help you navigate the process of entering college. They can give you tips on what scholarships you should consider applying for as well as connect you with on-campus resources.

Complete FAFSA (Ideal Time: Typically October)*

The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is necessary to determine your eligibility for federal financial aid as well as funding from state or local programs. Find out if your high school hosts a financial aid event to help you complete your FAFSA.

* The ideal time for current seniors is December 2024 due to availability of the federal form.

Apply for Scholarships

Research and apply for scholarships. The Statewide Scholarship Bulletin Board on ourdakotadreams.com is a great place to start.

Decision Time (Ideal Time: April)

With your college applications and FAFSA® submitted, now compare financial aid offers from different colleges. Decide which college you want to attend.

Take Advantage of Coursework Opportunities

Visit with your school counselor on coursework opportunities that save you time and money in college, such as dual credit and college readiness courses.

Early Registration (Ideal Time: May)

Attend your college or university's early registration or new student orientation programs.

GRADUATE & CELEBRATE!

When one chapter ends, another begins. Good luck in college!



LET'S LEARN ABOUT FAFSA®

When you complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), you are taking an important step toward achieving your college and career goals.

If you need money to help pay for college (and who doesn't), the FAFSA is necessary to determine your eligibility for federal financial grants and loans as well as funding from state or local programs and scholarships.

This gives you access to the largest sources of financial aid to help pay for college.

Use the Federal Student Aid Estimator to see how much federal student aid you may be eligible to receive after completing the FAFSA your senior year.

**Learn more about
completing the FAFSA.**



ourdakotadreams.com/paying-for-college



STUDENT AID ESTIMATOR

This tool gives you an important glimpse into your federal aid eligibility. It helps students understand their options for paying for college by providing an early estimate of how much federal student aid they may be eligible for. (studentaid.gov/aid-estimator)



EXTRA ASSISTANCE

Families and students can get the answers to college planning and financial aid questions free by contacting Mapping Your Future via email (feedback@mappingyourfuture.org) or phone (1-800-374-4072). Mapping Your Future is a nonprofit organization funded by the South Dakota Community Foundation. (southdakota.mappingyourfuture.org)





EXPLORE SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOLS

One of the keys to succeeding in college is to find the right fit. Think about your ideal college environment and explore South Dakota's public universities and technical colleges.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Find a major to launch your career
- Find a place that feels like home
- Find student experiences that meet your interests





SOUTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Location: Brookings, South Dakota

Enrollment: 12,065 students

Top Majors: Nursing, Business Economics,
Mechanical Engineering, Animal Science, Human Biology



South Dakota State University offers a rich academic experience in a welcoming environment through student-focused education, creative research and activities, innovation, and community engagement that enhances the quality of life in South Dakota, the region, the nation, and the world. Students come from almost every state and more than 75 countries, and can choose from 88 majors, 37 specializations and 106 minors.

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA

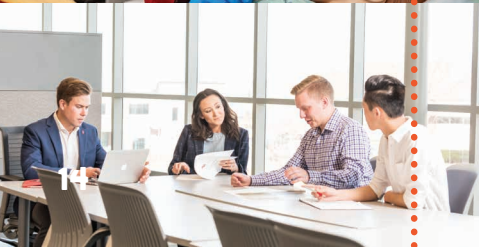
Location: Vermillion, South Dakota

Enrollment: 10,619 students

Top Majors: Nursing, Teacher Education, Health Sciences,
Business Administration, Kinesiology and Sport Management



The University of South Dakota is proud to offer a wide range of undergraduate and graduate programs designed to give students a world-class education and set them up for success in a variety of career paths. USD is also home to South Dakota's only medical school and law school. USD students can attend the main campus in Vermillion for a traditional student life experience and the greatest range of programs or can explore other options at USD – Sioux Falls; both campuses provide enriching academic experiences and support to help you achieve your best life. Whether you're considering a future in business, health care, education, data sciences, the arts or another career – or if you're still deciding your next steps – USD has a path for you!





NORTHERN STATE UNIVERSITY

Location: Aberdeen, South Dakota

Enrollment: 3,708 students

Top Majors: Business Administration, Elementary Education,
Human Performance, Nursing, and Biology

Northern State University offers graduate and undergraduate programs that promote excellence in teaching, support research and creative activities, while providing service to the state of South Dakota, the region and the nation. Northern is recognized for its mission-driven expertise in E-learning and HyFlex Delivery and provides quality programs through various flexible methods and scheduling options designed to accommodate students' unique needs.



DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Location: Madison, South Dakota

Enrollment: 3,774 students

Top Majors: Cyber Operations, Computer Sciences,
Cyber Defense, Network & Security Administration, Teacher Education



As a STEM University, Dakota State University's mission is to prepare cyber-savvy graduates who are lifelong learners, problem solvers, innovators and leaders to live lives of positive purpose and consequence. DSU does this through cutting-edge courses and emerging research programs that impact the student experience and advance the nation's workforce. While Dakota State University serves as a primary university in the STEM field, it also meets a critical need in education.





BLACK HILLS STATE UNIVERSITY

Location: Spearfish, South Dakota

Enrollment: 3,346 students

Top Majors: American Indian Studies, Business Administration, Communication & Media, Early Childhood/Special Education, Environmental Physical Science

Black Hills State University offers undergraduate and graduate degrees and prides itself on fostering a culture of student support and success. The campus maintains top academic programs in business, education, exercise science, natural sciences, social sciences, the arts, mass communication and health sciences. BHSU leads the region in sustainability efforts and offers many outdoor recreational opportunities. BHSU-Rapid City also offers academic programs and is home to the West River Health Science Center, which was created to meet the nursing workforce needs of western South Dakota through shared recruiting, student support, and industry partnerships.



BLACK HILLS
STATE UNIVERSITY

SOUTH DAKOTA MINES

Location: Rapid City, South Dakota

Enrollment: 2,579 students

Top Majors: Mechanical Engineering, Civil Engineering,
Computer Science, Biomedical Engineering, Chemical Engineering



At South Dakota Mines, we don't just teach STEM—we prepare you to lead in it. Our students dive into hands-on experiences from day one, whether through design projects, co-ops, or internships. These real-world opportunities allow you to apply what you've learned in the classroom and build a strong foundation for your future career. The result? Exceptional career placement in your chosen field and a significant return on your investment in education. You'll join a vibrant, diverse community with students from across the US and over 40 countries, all united by a passion for innovation.





SOUTHEAST TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Location: Sioux Falls, South Dakota

Enrollment: 2,659 students

Top Majors: Business, Construction, Early Childhood, Engineering Technology, Healthcare, Horticulture, Industrial Trades, Information Technology, Law Enforcement, Media, Sports Turf Management, Transportation, Veterinary Technician

Southeast Technical College provides a hands-on education in more than 65 career paths, taught in skills-relevant facilities by instructors with real-world experience who support and empower their students.



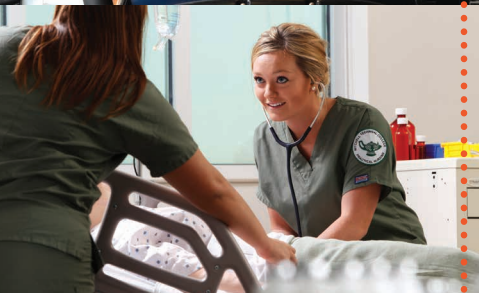
MITCHELL TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Location: Mitchell, South Dakota

Enrollment: 986 students

Top Majors: Power Line Construction and Maintenance, Progressive Welding Technology, Agriculture Technology, Electrical Construction and Maintenance, Architectural Design and Building Construction, Licensed Practical Nursing, Radiologic Technology

Mitchell Technical College is best known for its strong focus on technical and career-oriented education. The college offers a variety of programs and degrees designed to prepare students for careers in high-demand fields. Mitchell Technical College has a unique combination of agricultural, healthcare, technical and renewable energy programs.





LAKE AREA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Location: Watertown, South Dakota

Enrollment: 2,600 students

Top Majors: Agriculture, Business, Nursing, Advanced Manufacturing, Dental Assisting, Aviation, Diesel Technology



Lake Area Technical College is highly regarded for its commitment to all students by offering the most up-to-date training in state-of-the-art facilities. Partnerships with business and industry give students valuable access to employers who provide coveted internships and employment opportunities after graduation. Lake Area Tech students realize their return on investment with 99 percent employed right after graduation and the majority earning between \$55,000-\$74,000 in entry level salaries, computing to only five months to earn back the cost of their degree. Lake Area Technical College has consistently been recognized as one of the top two-year colleges in the United States and has received numerous accolades for its student outcomes.

WESTERN DAKOTA TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Location: Rapid City, South Dakota

Enrollment: 1,199 students

Top Majors: Automotive and Diesel Technology, Business, Construction, Computer Science, Electrical Trades, Farm and Ranch Management, Practical and Registered Nursing, Radiologic Technology, Welding and Fabrication

Western Dakota Technical College is recognized for providing students with the skills they need, in two years or less, to earn a high-demand, great-paying career. The national award-winning college offers nearly 40 programs in Business and Computers, Construction and Manufacturing, Energy and Environmental Technologies, Health Sciences, Legal and Public Services, and Transportation Technologies. Success Coaches provide academic and personal support resources.



COLLEGE PREP RESOURCES

SETTING YOU UP FOR SUCCESS

You can find even more college prep resources at OurDakotaDreams.com like:

COLLEGE PREP CHECKLISTS

Taking the right steps in high school will put you on the right path toward a successful college career.

SCHOLARSHIP BULLETIN BOARD

Applying for scholarships can help you make your Dakota Dream come true! Stay up to date on recent scholarship opportunities and learn more about South Dakota's premier scholarships.

EVENTS CALENDAR

Learn more about upcoming college prep events at state institutions across South Dakota.

COMING SOON! CAREER & MATH PATHWAY ADVISING TOOL

Strategically prepare for success in college math by aligning your math coursework options to career interests and relevant programs of study in college.

INDICIA

ADDRESS
AREA

COLLEGE IS COMING UP

Your junior year is an excellent time to set the groundwork for your future. Everyone approaches college exploration a little bit differently, in fact, there's no wrong way to begin. Our advice: just start! Our Dakota Dreams has several resources available to help you begin this journey.

WWW.OURDAKOTADREAMS.COM

