

Applying to Music School

A timeline for high school students to prepare for college applications.

Freshman & Sophomore Years

Study with a private teacher who has successfully guided students through the process of applying to music schools. Find someone who will push you and motivate you to be a better musician, singer, and/or composer. Practice!

Join local youth orchestras, choirs, and jazz bands. Audition for regional and state honors ensembles.

Talk to your parents, teachers, and directors about applying to music school. Ask seniors where they are applying. Start your college list.

Plan your classes with your counselor to allow more time during your senior year. This will give you time to prepare for auditions.

Apply to summer music programs. College faculty teach at many of these programs and it is a great way to introduce yourself. You will also meet students at different schools and hear about their experience.

Connect with your academic teachers, ensemble directors. They will be great advocates when you need to request recommendation letters.

Junior Year

Refine your college list. Do you want to go to a small college? A large university? Stay close to home? Major in music performance, education, or composition? Double major in a non-music area?

Performing arts college fairs are held in most major cities and college reps travel from across the country to meet you! Take advantage of this opportunity to learn about hundreds of schools in one place.

Participate in solo and ensemble competitions. Perform for your friends and family. Volunteer to play at retirement homes. Build practicing to your daily schedule.

Schedule campus visits and trial lessons. Speak with current students, admissions officers, and faculty members. Learn more about the school's community to understand how you would fit into it.

Review audition requirements with your teacher. Find pieces that display your ability and showcase your talent. Start learning this music early and perform it often!

Senior Year

Start your college applications. Reach out to faculty and finish trial lessons. Record videos for pre-screening, if required. Keep practicing!

Plan your audition schedule so your travel is consolidated but not stressful. Many schools prefer that you audition on campus, but some accept video recordings or hold regional auditions. Do not rule out a school simply because you cannot fly to campus.

Complete the FAFSA and CSS Profile with your parents. Apply for private scholarships and state funded financial aid programs.

Once you receive your admission decisions, talk to your teachers, family, and friends to determine the best fit* for your future. *Congratulations!*

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A UNIVERSITY AND A CONSERVATORY?

A University will have same general studies requirements for all majors, This means you are required to take Math and Science classes, even as a Music major. A Conservatory will not require Math or Science courses in your degree. Your electives will be humanities courses such as history, literature, and writing. At a University, you will experience college sporting events, be part of a large, diverse community, and have the opportunity to double major. At a Conservatory, you will be part of a small, creative community where your classmates will share your passion for the performing arts. You can focus your free time on practicing, rehearsing, and performing.

** The biggest identifier of fit for music students is your primary teacher. This will be the person you meet with every week for four years! Meet your prospective teachers and request trial lessons to learn about their teaching.*

WHAT ABOUT THE ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS?

For music schools associated to a University, you will need to meet the minimum academic requirements for the University to be admitted into the School of Music. This includes SAT and ACT scores and/or minimum GPA requirements. A Conservatory will not require the SAT or ACT. They will still review your academic history including GPA, but your audition will be the determining factor for admission.

DATES TO REMEMBER December 1: Applications Due January-March: Auditions April: Decisions Released May 1: Deadline to Commit