Common Application Fast Facts

Purpose- To provide an online platform allowing students to apply to more than 1,000 colleges and universities through a single application. Instead of filling out separate applications for each institution, students can complete the Common App's core application and add specific requirements for each individual college.

Recommendation- Completing the Common App can be a tedious and time intensive exercise. It is recommended that it ONLY be completed if your college of interest REQUIRES it. In order to minimize pitfalls with the Common App and unless it is required, it is recommended that you apply to colleges directly through their college admissions websites. Of the top 20 colleges NCS grads attend, the following four require the Common App for admissions consideration: The Ohio State University – Columbus (not Newark), Miami University, Otterbein University, and University of Cincinnati. Always confirm your college of interest's requirements before proceeding.

When to begin the application- New edition of the Common App opens on **Aug. 1** every year. However, students can create an account at any time and transfer their information into the new app when it opens.

What is needed for every application:

- A copy of high school transcript
- A list of extracurricular activities in and out of school
- Test scores and dates from college entrance exams
- Parent/legal guardian information (education, occupation, employer information, etc.)
- Academic honors and achievements

How long does it take- The time it takes will vary based on a school's requirements. Starting it about 6 weeks before you would like to submit is ideal so you have time to submit any required documentation.

- In addition to any parental information that's needed – such as employer details and educational background – many schools also require first-year applicants to submit recommendation letters and transcripts. Students need to give teachers and counselors enough time to submit those materials to the Common App before deadlines. If possible, they **should ask teachers for recommendation letters at the end of their junior year** so they can be worked on over summer.

How many colleges can you add to the Common App- You may add and apply to up to 20 colleges. You may add and remove a college at any time prior to submitting an application. Once you submit an application, you will not be able to remove the college from your My Colleges list.

If there is a problem with the Common App- In addition to video tutorials throughout the application, the platform has year-round technical support available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Students can find answers to frequently asked questions or submit a question in the Applicant Solutions Center.

Is a practice account different than a student account? A practice account will show you the same information as a student account. The process, look and feel, and information are the same. The only difference is that you can't submit an application via a practice account.

Changing your Practice account to a Student account- To change your account type, simply email our 24/7/365 Solutions Center at appsupport@commonapp.net. In your message, please specify your full name, date of birth, and that you want to change your practice account to an applicant account.

Can you have a Practice account and a Recommender account? Yes, all recommenders can have both a recommender account and a practice account. However, if you would like to invite yourself as a recommender within your practice account, you will need to use a different email address for your practice account than the one used for your recommender account

Can students apply Early Decision using the Common Application? Yes.

- Early Decision is binding, meaning that if they apply to a school under this admission plan and are accepted, they agree to attend that school and withdraw any other applications they have submitted.
- Because Early Decision is binding, they **can only apply to one school under this admission plan using the Common App.**
- If they plan to apply Early Decision, their parent and counselor need to affirm the Early Decision Agreement, found in the member questions of their Common App account.
- **Before applying Early Decision, it is recommended that students seek extensive counsel. It is rare that this decision is in the best interest of the student.**

Here's how to select an Early Decision deadline in the Common App.

- Go to the college's Questions section in the My Colleges tab
- Select a Start Term (Fall 2026)
- Then select the Admission Plan (Early Decision)

Can they see if a school uses the Common Application before creating an account? Yes.

- Go to https://www.commonapp.org/
- Select Explore Colleges at the top
- Type in the individual school name, search by state or region.

Can they change answers after they already submitted an application? They can return at any time and change their answer to any question in the Common App tab for future submissions. Changes will not appear in applications they have already submitted, and they cannot make changes to submitted applications. If they need to change information on a submitted application, they must contact the college's admissions office directly to ask how to proceed.

How does a student link SchooLinks to their Common App account? They will need to log into SchooLinks> Colleges Tab > Select Colleges I'm Applying to > Type in the email used for Common App and Date of Birth > Select Match

If a student asks if fee waivers are available? Yes. If you feel that your financial circumstances might qualify you for an application fee waiver, you can request a fee waiver in the Common Application Fee Waiver section in the **Profile section**. Any of the following indicators of economic need can qualify you for a Common App fee waiver:

- You are enrolled in or eligible to participate in the federal free or reduced price lunch program (FRPL).*
- You have received or are eligible to receive an SAT or ACT fee waiver.
- Your annual family income falls within the income eligibility guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
- Your family receives public assistance.
- You are enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., GEAR UP, TRIO such as Upward Bound or others).
- You live in a federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or are homeless.
- You are a ward of the state or an orphan.
- You have received or are eligible to receive a Pell Grant.
- You can provide a supporting statement from a school official, college access counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader.

*You must enroll or be eligible for the FRPL. Students who attend schools where all students receive free lunch do not automatically qualify for a Common App fee waiver.

Your counselor will be asked to complete a Fee Waiver form to affirm your request for a fee waiver.