

## Tips for Completing Your College Application

- Remember: **Plan early, be highly organized and follow instructions carefully!**
- Be sure to request application packets well in advance of deadlines. You can also usually download a paper application off the site, fill it out and then mail it in.  
Many colleges prefer that you submit your application online. It is much easier to read a typed application than a handwritten one. If you are planning to submit a paper application, be sure to write clearly and neatly. Check with some friends to see if they can read your handwriting before you submit your application. If they have difficulty reading, it will be in your best interest to submit an online application.
- Find out how many applications you need to complete. For most colleges, you usually need to complete a single application for general admission. However, you may be applying to a competitive program (for example: nursing, business, engineering) which may require that you complete a separate application. Sometimes, the deadlines for general admission and for your major program are different. You don't want to miss any of the deadlines!
- Many colleges use the Common Application where a student completes one uniform application that can be sent to multiple colleges.  
For a list of colleges that participate in the Common Application, go to:  
<https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/default.aspx>

In addition to the Common Application, some colleges may also require that you submit a Supplemental Application. The Supplemental Application might provide the college with additional information about you such as "Why do you feel that our college is a good match with your educational goals?" Always check with your college to see if you need to submit additional information.

A word of caution here: Since the items requested on the Supplemental Application vary from college to college, be sure that you are submitting the appropriate items or information to the correct school!

- Go to your school's website and print off a copy of the application. Be sure to read the instructions slowly and thoroughly and then follow the instructions. Do not assume anything! If you are unclear about a question or instruction on the application, it is in your best interest to contact the college directly for clarification.
- Once you have read through the entire application, *write on a separate piece of paper, a list of all the things you need to do.*  
For example: How many letters of recommendation are needed, if any, and who should write them? If letters of recommendation are required, be sure to plan ahead and give your writers ample time to write strong letters of support. You should also supply them with a resume and discuss with them your academic and personal goals. Be sure to provide a stamped envelope in the event that they have to send the letters directly to the college.

Do you need to submit a personal essay? If so, what should you include in your statement? Be sure to follow the directions carefully. How about the format and length of the essay? If the maximum length is three pages long, don't submit four pages! You should also give careful thought to writing a great personal statement and have someone proofread it before you turn it in.

Is an academic resume required? An academic resume highlights who you are and what you have done. For example, if you have received an award or contributed to your

community in a meaningful way, be sure to state this on your resume. You may also have participated in volunteer activities, clubs and organizations or in other academic and extra-curricular related activities.

How many college transcripts are required? Do transcripts have to be sent directly to the college from your current institution or can they be attached with your application?

Is there a priority application deadline? What is the firm deadline?

- Set realistic goals for yourself and be sure to allow for sufficient time to complete and present an application that looks professional. If you are applying to many schools, it is even more important for you to keep track of materials that are due each school, including the deadlines.
- Be sure to complete all areas of the form unless noted otherwise.
- Be sure to submit an application fee, if required. Do not send cash! Find out if you can pay by check, credit card or money order.  
Some colleges may be able to waive the application fee. Read through the application directions to see if this is an option. If so, find out what you would have to provide: for example, do you need an advisor's letter of support? Do you need to write a letter explaining your financial situation? You can also contact the Admissions Office of your college to see if you are able to have a fee waiver.
- Always sign your paper application with pen. Do not use pencil.
- Proofread! Proofread! Proofread! Make sure there are no spelling or grammatical errors. Recruit some of your friends to help review your application.
- If you are submitting your application by paper, mail it in at least two weeks before the application deadline.  
If you find yourself in a situation where you are unable to meet the deadline with a mail-in application, find out if you can hand deliver it or do an overnight delivery.
- Always keep copies of your completed application for your records, whether you are submitting by paper or online.
- A final reminder: It is **your** responsibility to ensure that the Office of Admission at your transfer college receives all required documents and that your application file is complete. Be sure to keep in contact with the school for an update of your application status.