



Common Application Workshop

www.commonapp.org

Important things to remember when creating account

- Use your personal email (gmail, yahoo, etc.) NOT your smusd account
- Record your user name and password in your senior folder
- Deadlines vary greatly for admissions and scholarships- check your Dashboard
- You can start Common App and add colleges later. Don't need to know all your choices now
- PLEASE DO NOT FORGET TO APPLY TO A RANGE OF SCHOOLS- not just selective schools (Reach, Safety, Target)
- Research average GPA, test scores, admit rates
- Apply to some schools you would like to attend whose average GPA and test scores are lower than yours

Each university has different app requirements

- Financial aid application requirements vary with each university (FAFSA/Dream Act and/or CSS Profile)
- Writing Requirements vary per campus (essay, long, short or one-word responses). See your Dashboard
- Letters of Recommendation - number and from whom vary. See My Colleges tab
- **Must complete the FERPA Release Authorization and waive rights to view recommendations (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act = you're granting the right to your school to send information about you to colleges). Colleges don't value letters without waived rights.**

Letters of Recommendation

- Select recommenders on My Colleges tab. Provide email address for teacher(s) and counselor (may go to last year's counselor)
- MUST have brag packet completed and MUST ask recommender before providing their email to Common App
- **Counselors will assume you do not want/need a letter if counselor receives Common App email without request from you**
- Must provide brag packet at least 10 school days in advance of deadline (not including vacation, weekends). Brag packet is on the counseling page
- All requests for counselor letters of recommendation due before December 1
- Don't forget to waive your right to read letters (FERPA)

Application Decision Options (see handout)

- **EARLY DECISION** - a **binding** option where applicants receive an admission decision much earlier than others.
- If admitted through this option, the applicant will **immediately accept that offer** of admission and **withdraw all other applications**. **MAKE SURE YOU CAN AFFORD TO ATTEND REGARDLESS OF AID AMOUNT**
** Students can only apply Early Decision to one college*
*** This is usually the most competitive application pool*
- **EARLY ACTION** - usually a **non-binding** option where applicants receive a decision much earlier than others, but with no obligation to enroll or withdraw applications from other colleges.
- **REGULAR DECISION** - the general deadline for all applications (not including Early Decision or Early Action). The majority of applications are submitted through this option
- **ROLLING ADMISSIONS** - An admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information has been received (transcripts, test scores, etc.). The colleges usually provide students with admissions decisions fairly quickly with this option.

Fee waiver

- If you click “yes,” be sure to check how it applies to you (free and reduced lunch, SAT/ACT fee waiver, homeless, etc.)
- Also check the box to receive information from “Strive for College.” Non-profit that provides extra aid and college support at no cost to student

Counselor's role

- We will upload a transcript to your application(s)
- We will provide a letter of recommendation if requested before receipt of counselor email invitation (with brag packet)
- We will provide our school profile
- We will fill out the Secondary School Report
- We will answer your questions and help you
- We will provide a mid-year report by the end of January 2019 (transcript with first semester grades)

Filling out coursework

- List in descending order of difficulty (AP courses first, then honors, then college prep)- start by impressing admissions officers
- For second semester courses, you **MUST** notify each school to which you applied if you drop something or change any coursework
- You **MUST** notify colleges if you earn any Ds or Fs (senior year). You do not want your admission rescinded in June/July
- List courses to match transcript titles

Transcripts

- Counselor will upload initial and mid-year
- Final transcripts must be requested through Parchment online (goes through SMHS registrar, not counselors)



- Most schools have July 1 deadlines for second semester grades
- If you completed a course outside of SMHS (such as Palomar College), you must have transcripts sent directly from those schools

Reporting SAT/ACT scores on Common App (please note: different from UC)

- Different from UC (= report all), Common App does not ask you to enter all scores, just your best scores for now - “Put best testing foot forward”
- However, eventually you will send all official scores and each school will evaluate differently
- Include future SAT/ACT test dates (don't take later than November 2018)
- Can enter best scores from each section, even if different test dates

Reporting Subject Tests and AP scores

- Some advisors recommend not reporting scores lower than 500 on a Subject Test (unless the test is a requirement for admissions)
- 700+ Subject Test scores are common in applications to highly selective universities
- AP Exams: list your highest test scores first (best testing foot forward)
- If you have more exams than space, list in additional information section
- Do not have to report them all on Common App
- List exams you plan to take in May 2019

Honors and Activities (hobbies too, if important to you)

- If you received more than five (5), list most important to you.
- List national or state-level awards first
- Spell out acronyms, especially if unique to school or state. Example: CSF = California Scholarship Federation
- Describe the context of any award that a college may not understand. Example: AP Ambassadors or Excalibur Knights
- Only use universally understood abbreviations. Example: Senior Class Vice President can be listed as “Class VP: 12”
- Only list activities with significance to you. Example: don’t list 9th grade Spanish club if you never went back in grades 10-12.
- Make sure to describe your role and contribution in activity

Essay

- What do you want admissions to know about you apart from your courses, grades and test scores?
- Avoid cliches
- Don't repeat information already listed in application
- Don't make excuses- if there is a failure, own it, take responsibility and say what you learned

Disciplinary History

- Counselors required to report suspensions and expulsions
- You should address it first
- Tell what you learned- that is what colleges will look for
- Be honest, take responsibility, don't blame others, don't complain
- If you can give an example of how you put the lesson to use in life, that helps

You will need this information

- CEEB code: 050883
- Counselor's job title: School Counselor
- Senior class size: 745
- Graduation date: June 12, 2019

Counselor information

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SMHS COLLEGE AND CAREER CENTER (C3)

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Learn **all things financial aid**: FAFSA, CSS profile,
SAR and so much more.

Don't let \$\$\$ keep you from your goals!

Tuesday October 9th

6:00-7:30pm

English (Cafe) Español (C3)

