



Please review the following information to help you better understand and anticipate the transition towards completing the college application process.

Like students, the college admissions process is not “one size fits all”. Students should refer to the college website for specific instructions, guidelines, and timelines for each college/university to which they plan to apply. Students should refer to the college-specific websites for updated admissions information and thoroughly read application instructions. It is critical to carefully review application instructions as admission procedures, requirements, and deadlines can change from year to year.

Summer is a great time to review the application requirements, create an applicant portal, work on the college essay, and determine a 'to-do' list and timeline for each application. Students are encouraged to start working on the college applications; however, we recommend students wait until after their individual senior conference to submit an application. Most college applications will be available by August 1st, including the Common Application. Online applications are very convenient but you must be certain to pay close attention to the directions and details of each application. Each school will have specific application requirements and it is up to the student to know and follow the specific directions for each college application.

All students will be provided detailed instructions during the Senior Seminar regarding the process for submitting applications and requesting letters of recommendation and an official transcript. After attending the Senior Seminar, students will meet with their school counselor for an individual senior conference. Please note that official high school transcripts and letters of recommendation are not available for processing until after the student's senior conference. We understand that some students are eager and anxious to send materials over the summer and often feel pressure from the college admissions office. Please note we have a systematic process in place that supports students complete the process accurately and efficiently. This will be reviewed with all students at the beginning of senior year.

## SENIOR SEMINARS

Senior Seminars are held during the second week of school. Specific dates/times will be communicated at the beginning of the school year. College admissions processes can change from one application year to the next and it is critical that students adhere to the directions carefully. Updated instructions for processing college applications and requesting teacher letters of recommendation electronically will be provided at the Senior Seminars. **DO NOT** send electronic requests for letters of recommendations until you are provided step-by-step instructions at the Senior Seminar. Students who are applying to college(s) are required to attend a Senior Seminar and an individual senior conference. Senior conferences will only be scheduled after a student attends the Senior Seminar. Counselors are not able to process college application materials/transcripts until after students attend a Senior Seminar.

## SELF-REPORTED ACADEMIC RECORD

The world of college admissions is constantly looking for ways to enhance and streamline the college application process. The practice of Self- Report of Academic Records in the college application process at certain colleges and universities allows students to self-report courses and final grades. This update has increased the rate at which colleges can process student data and the college application process for students. We expect even more colleges and universities to provide this option for the upcoming admission cycle.

An unofficial high school transcript will be sent to each student's school Gmail account. Parents will also receive a copy of the unofficial high school transcript via the email address listed in Powerschool. Students can use this transcript to self-report grades or scan the unofficial transcript and upload it directly into the application, if this is an option, per each application. Please review the transcript carefully to ensure all demographic and academic information is correct. **UHS is on a weighted 4.0 grade scale and only final grades are reported on the transcript.**

Self-reporting of academic records is not standard or required practice at all colleges, and it is the student's responsibility to review the college application instructions carefully for each individual college.

## LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

School counselors will send letters of recommendation through Naviance for the majority of colleges. Specific instructions to request letters of recommendation will be provided to students at the Senior Seminar. Students should **NOT** input any teacher/counselor email addresses in the Recommendation Letter Request sections within their college applications (including the Common Application and Coalition) until after attending the Senior Seminar.

**Requests for letters of recommendation forms should have already been submitted to counselors and teachers. If students have not already done so, they should complete the request forms ASAP** and submit the forms to their counselor or selected teachers. All forms can be downloaded from the School Counseling section of the UHS website- select College Planning - Resources and Documents, UHS Forms. Counselor Request for Letter of Recommendation forms are required for students who request a school counselor letter of recommendation.

The Parent Information Sheet is not required; however, parent feedback and input are greatly appreciated. Forms can be emailed directly to your school counselor. Teacher letter of recommendation request forms can also be downloaded from the School Counseling section of the UHS website and returned to the teacher directly.

## **STANDARDIZED TESTS:**

Many colleges have announced changes to their standardized testing policies and requirements for the Class of 2023. You should refer to each college website for the most current and accurate information regarding all aspects of the admissions process and policies.

### **SAT**

Registration for the 2022-2023 SAT will open in July. All students must register online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org). The College Board website had a plethora of resources to help students practice and prepare for the test. Make sure to check the College Board website for these great tools. The anticipated SAT test dates for 2022-2023 are:

- August 27, 2022
- October 1, 2022
- November 5, 2022
- December 3, 2022
- March 11, 2023 (UHS is a test center)
- May 6, 2023
- June 3, 2023

Additional information and registration deadlines can be found online at [www.collegeboard.org](http://www.collegeboard.org).

### **ACT**

All students must register online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org). The ACT test dates for 2022-2023 are:

- September 10, 2022
- October 22, 2022
- December 10, 2022
- February 11, 2023 (UHS is a test center)
- April 15, 2023
- June 10, 2023
- July 15, 2023

Additional information and registration deadlines can be found online at [www.act.org](http://www.act.org).

## **COLLEGE ESSAYS:**

College Admissions Officers read thousands of essays every year, so they want them to be interesting! Some colleges provide tips and recommendations to help applicants with this task. Be sure to look online and see if the college(s) you are considering have resources. Here are a few examples:

- UHS College Admissions Seminar Series #2 (February 23, 2022) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKiQtIQM4Go>
- Johns Hopkins University- Essays That Worked <https://apply.jhu.edu/application-process/essays-that-worked/>
- Connecticut College- Essays That Worked <https://www.conncoll.edu/admission/apply/essays-that-worked/>
- Hamilton- Essays That Worked <https://www.hamilton.edu/admission/apply/college-essays-that-worked>
- Tufts- Essays That Worked <https://admissions.tufts.edu/apply/advice/past-essays/common-application-essays/>
- UPenn- a section on the website designed to help students with the essay <https://admissions.upenn.edu/admissions-and-financial-aid/what-penn-looks-for/essays>

Below is the full set of essay prompts for the 2022-2023 Common Application:

- Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
- Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
- Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?
- Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
- Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?
- Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

# COLLEGE TERMS

**TYPES OF COLLEGE APPLICATIONS:** There are different applications that colleges can utilize and the available options are determined by the college. Some colleges offer a combination of these options, whereas other colleges exclusively use one type of application.

- **The Common Application:** An application that many colleges subscribe to, which is filled out once and can be used to apply to one or multiple colleges. [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
- **College-Designated Application:** An application that has been created by that specific school. The student creates an account on the college website to complete the application.
- **Coalition Application:** An application that some colleges subscribe to, which is filled out once and can be used to apply to one or multiple colleges. <http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/students.html>

## COLLEGE DEADLINES TERMS

- **Rolling Admissions:** Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis once the applicant's entire application file is complete. Students typically receive an admissions decision four to six weeks after the application is received, sometimes sooner. A college could ask for additional information as well, which could delay the turnaround time of the decision. Submitting a rolling application early is advisable.
- **Priority Decision:** This is similar to Early Action and colleges with Rolling Admissions may establish a Priority Decision deadline. A student's application gets priority for review as long as it is completed within the application window specified by the college.
- **Early Action (EA):** This is a nonbinding application deadline that requires you to submit your application in the early Fall. The college lets you know whether or not you're accepted, denied, or deferred by mid-December. Students may apply to multiple EA colleges. Some colleges will require students to apply by the Early Action deadline if they want to be considered for merit awards.
- **Single Choice or Restrictive Early Action (EA):** This is a nonbinding process, but students may not apply to an early program at any other private college or university. Students can still apply early to any public institution or service academy, or any college or university with a rolling admissions decision, as long as the decision is nonbinding.
- **Early Decision (ED):** This is considered a "binding," decision. By applying under an ED plan, you have committed to attend that college if you are accepted. Application deadlines are typically early in the Fall (November 1st, November 15th).
- **Early Decision II:** This is a second round of ED that some colleges offer that is binding. The deadline is usually January 1 or January 15. If you apply to a college in the first Early Decision round and you are not admitted, you are allowed to apply EDII to your next top choice college.
- **Regular decision:** This application will have a deadline and set time for review. Notification of a decision will generally arrive home in the first week of April.

## OTHER RELEVANT TERMS

- **Associate's degree:** A two-year degree, students may apply for credits from a two-year program to a four-year program
- **Bachelor's degree:** A four-year degree
- **CSS Profile:** Some colleges, universities, and scholarship programs use the CSS Profile as part of their financial aid process for some or all of their financial aid applicants. Check specific college's website to determine if required.
- **Deferred:** An EA or ED application may be deferred for review with the regular applicant pool
- **FAFSA:** Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Completing and submitting the FAFSA® form is free and quick, and it gives you access to the largest source of financial aid to pay for college or career school. FAFSA is available for completion starting October 1st.
- **Liberal Arts College:** A liberal arts college is an institution of higher education found in the United States, offering programs in the liberal arts at the post-secondary level. They encourage and often require their students to take a substantial number of classes in topics that may not directly relate to their vocational goals, to provide a "well-rounded" education.
- **SRAR (Self-Report):** The SRAR allows you to enter, track, and submit your academic record electronically to participating colleges and universities. Some colleges allow students to self-report their academic records and only require the official transcript if the student accepts the offer to attend. Colleges will verify the accuracy of the self-report with the student's final transcript. <https://srar.selfreportedtranscript.com/Login.aspx>
- **Supplements:** When using the Common Applications, schools may require, in addition to the electronic application, supplementary materials- Teacher Evaluation, School Report, Mid- Year Reports, or an additional form for the student to complete.
- **Undergraduate degree:** It is the first level of university degrees, for example, a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Business Administration, or Bachelor of Science. Higher levels of university degrees are the master and doctoral levels also referred to as graduate degrees. ([www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm](http://www.nipissingu.ca/documents.cfm))
- **Waitlist:** A regular applicant who cannot be offered acceptance at decision time, but could be offered an acceptance at a later date.

# THE COLLEGE VISIT

Visiting the college is probably the most important factor in this entire process. The purpose of visiting a campus is to see the real-life version of the institution and gauge whether or not you could “see” yourself there. Colleges are looking for qualified students who “fit” their institutional priorities. As a student, you need to find a college that matches your personal and academic priorities. A visit provides a reality check. We have developed this guideline to help you remember all the qualities and characteristics of a campus which may impact whether or not it could be an eventual fit for you. Remember that just as a school is reviewing your qualities for admission, you are reviewing the college’s qualities for applying and possibly enrollment. It is highly recommended that you limit the number of schools you visit within the same day. Be sure to allocate enough time to absorb all of the aspects necessary to make a sound and insightful decision. Do some preparation work. Consider doing a virtual tour prior to your visit and make note of the specific areas which you would like to see. Make sure to read the college website FAQ’s. Avoid asking questions which you should have already researched and know the answer to. Some schools will request that you bring an unofficial transcript with you to the college visit. Unofficial transcripts are available in the Counseling Center. Decide what you want to learn about and put together a list of questions. For example:

- What majors are offered and what are the course selection requirements?
- What is the average class size?
- Are there freshman orientation programs?
- What is the role and availability of academic advisors?
- Does the college have up-to-date technology and facilities? (For example, science labs, theatres, smart classrooms?)
- What are the operating hours of important places such as the library and computer labs?

## HOW TO SCHEDULE A VISIT

Many colleges and universities have available days to visit listed on the Undergraduate Admissions website. Students can often schedule a visit directly on the college website or by contacting the college directly.

*Follow the  
Office of Admission  
social media!*

## THE ACTUAL VISIT

When on campus, there are several formal and informal ways to evaluate the college.

### Formal

- Take a campus tour
- Have an interview with an admission officer
- Participate in a group information session at the admission office
- Sit in on a class (or two!)
- Talk to a coach in your chosen sport
- Talk to a student or counselor in the career center
- Spend the night in the dorm with a current student
- Attend an event on campus
- Talk to a professor (or two) in your prospective major(s)

### Informal

- Dining facilities- can I eat here? Eat at the cafeteria if possible.
- Ask a student why he/she chose this college
- Walk around the campus by yourself - See if you can imagine yourself at this college
- Read the student newspaper- even the ads. Try to find other student publications, department newsletters, alternative newspapers, or literary reviews. What interests the student body? What is the climate of the community?
- Read the bulletin boards in the student union. What is the “talk” on campus? Read the bulletin boards in the academic department you’re interested in. Is it useful and relevant? Anything exciting or resourceful?
- Ask a student what he/she does on weekends? Check out the Student Event Calendar, what type of entertainment do they bring to campus?
- Library- What are the hours and resources available to students? Search for your favorite book in the library.
- Classrooms- are they up to date and user-friendly?
- Dorms- can I live here? Try to see a dorm that you didn’t see on the tour
- Career placement office- what services are provided for students before and after graduation?
- The local community- is there a positive relationship between the school and community? Walk or drive around the community surrounding the campus.
- Browse in the college bookstore
- Listen to the college’s radio station

### PLACES TO SEE

Dorm Room Options  
Financial Aid Office  
Student Union Center  
Athletic Facilities  
Health Center (hours and services)  
Counseling and Disability Services Office  
Bookstore  
Off campus stores  
Places of Worship  
Fraternity/Sorority houses



## POST-VISIT FOLLOW-UP:

- Take notes on what you saw or what you didn’t see
- Make a pro and con list
- Send a handwritten thank-you note to a specific person (for example, the admissions tour guide, coach, admissions officer).



## FINANCIAL AID

If you are planning on going to college, whether it's a four-year institution or community college, you are encouraged to fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). The first step in completing the FAFSA is to create an FSA ID. Both the student and parent need an FSA ID (as long as you are a dependent). Go to <https://studentaid.gov/fsa-id/create-account/launch> to get started. You will need your Social Security Number and your own phone number and/or email address. After applying for an FSA ID, you should be approved to begin the FAFSA application within approximately 3 days. The FAFSA application will open on October 1, 2022, but you can certainly create your FSA ID prior to October 1, 2022.

FAFSA: <https://studentaid.gov/>



PHEAA: <https://www.pheaa.org/>

## RESOURCES

- Common Application- [commonapp.org](https://commonapp.org)
- FAFSA- <https://studentaid.gov/>
- College Board- <https://www.collegeboard.org/>
- ACT- [www.act.org](https://www.act.org)
- NAVIANCE- <https://student.naviance.com/auth/fclookup> (students can log in by using the "Continue with Clever" button)
- Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education- <https://www.passhe.edu>

Check the [Links to College Resources page](#) on the College Planning & Resources section of the UHS School Counseling website for more resources, including military options and helpful parenting resources.

## AND ABOVE ALL ELSE, REMEMBER TO...



*enjoy  
every  
moment.*