

College Application Information and Procedures for the Class of 2020

Strake Jesuit College Counseling

Quick Information:

Official size of class of 2020: 289 students
SJCP School Code: 443-383
Graduation Date: May 24, 2020
Class Rank: Not Applicable (N/A): Strake Jesuit does not rank.
GPA: Weighted GPA, 4.0 scale

College Counseling Department

Mr. Jeff Fuller
Director of College Counseling
713-490-8220
jfuller@strakejesuit.org
[Schedule Appointment](#)

Dr. Richard Clinton
College Counselor
713-272-4374
rclinton@strakejesuit.org
[Schedule Appointment](#)

Mrs. Wendy Jimenez
College Counselor
713-490-8210
wjimenez@strakejesuit.org
[Schedule Appointment](#)

Mr. Tom Kulick
College Counselor
713-490-8132
tkulick@strakejesuit.org
[Schedule Appointment](#)

Mr. Jim Saltzman
College Counselor
713-490-8234
jsaltzman@strakejesuit.org
[Schedule Appointment](#)

Mrs. Cammie O'Hara
Assistant to the Counseling Center
713-490-8154
cohara@strakejesuit.org

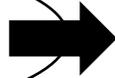
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General Outline and Timeline

1. **August:** Your college counseling staff will visit your counseling class to guide you through some important setup for your applications, including FERPA waivers, Naviance-Common App matching, and scheduling a meeting with your college counselor. Students, make it a priority to dialogue with your counselor, teachers, parents, and trusted mentors to determine the colleges that are the best fit for you.
2. By **September 15**, complete your prospective colleges list in Naviance and meet with your college counselor to move your colleges to the “active application” stage. You will need to indicate your degree of interest in each college, the timing of your application including Early Decision (binding) or Early Action (non-binding), and the program or school you are applying to (if applicable). Always remember to update Naviance Family Connection as you update your college choices, including requesting a transcript in the system. If you apply to a college without informing Jesuit, we will not know to send documents.
3. Begin applications! Admissions season opened on **July 1** at Texas A&M, though we recommend you do not rush this application! See the Texas A&M section of this handbook. Applications at other schools open in August or September. There are sections in this handbook that deal with the Common Application, Military Academies, NCAA Clearinghouse, and other unique cases.

In our experience, item #4 is the most common for students to forget!



4. Contact ACT and SAT to send your scores to all your colleges at least three weeks before any deadline.

5. Remember to have your essays reviewed—by your parents, your English teacher, Mr. Keogh ([Strake Jesuit's College Essay Writing Advisor](#)), a counselor or tutor, etc. Proofread one last time before submission!

6. **Strake Jesuit** will begin to deliver documents the week of **October 1**, and we assure you that documents are delivered before your college deadlines. On or around that date, we will deliver all of the school materials that complete your application file. We confirm every year that colleges are comfortable with this timeline.

There are a few exceptions to this timeline, especially with military academies and Texas A&M. Talk to your College Counselor if you have unique and pressing concerns about the timing of your application.

7. Keep track of your deadlines! Remember that *you want to beat, not meet, deadlines*. Your goal is to have all applications completed and submitted before you leave for the Thanksgiving holiday.

October 15 is the earliest deadline, though applying to military academies and athletic recruitment may require earlier processing.

November 1 is a common Early Decision/Early Action deadline.

8. Once you begin hearing from schools, you must update Naviance Family Connection with *all scholarship offers, admissions offers, denials, waitlists, and so on*. Your College Counseling staff will visit with you in Counseling Classes to advise you on this process.

Documents Required for College Admissions

Strake Jesuit Documents

Strake Jesuit will send the following documents. We use Common Application and NACAC forms unless otherwise requested by individual colleges.

1. Official transcript with senior courses listed
2. Up to two teacher letters of recommendation with teacher evaluation forms
3. One College Counselor recommendation with Secondary School Report (SSR)
4. Strake Jesuit College Preparatory School Profile
5. Mid-year transcript (in January)
6. Final transcript (after graduation)

Your college counselor sends the above documents electronically, except where schools require a printed copy. These documents will be sent to every college that the student lists in **Naviance Colleges' List**.

Student Documentation Responsibilities

- **Complete and submit all application materials online including; application fees, the actual application, a detailed resume when possible, and all required and/or optional essays.**
- **Send SAT and/or ACT w/Writing test scores.**
- **Send SAT Subject test scores if colleges require them.**
- **Send AP test scores to your enrolling college if the score is 3 or above.**

Please speak with your counselor about application fee waivers if you are eligible!

When planning to take the SAT, SAT subject tests, or ACT w/Writing, *send test scores at least three weeks before deadlines*, or you may need to rush scores. Scores must be received before deadlines.

Here are procedures for sending scores:

- <http://www.actstudent.org/scores/send/>
- <http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/send-sat-scores>
- <http://apscore.collegeboard.org/scores/>

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Supplemental Essays and Scholarship Application: Check the Common Application website and university websites to determine if your colleges have additional essays and scholarship forms that must be completed. Be sure to check due dates.

Resume: You must fill out the activities section on the Common App and the extracurricular activities, community service, awards and honors, and employment sections on Apply Texas. UT and A&M highly recommend uploading a more detailed resume, and many other colleges will accept a mailed, emailed, or uploaded resume as well.

Once your application is accepted, you will need to create a student account on each college website.

Remember to keep track of usernames and passwords!

Residence Hall Room Deposit: Check university requirements for details on deposits and refunds. You may only deposit at one college. You must deposit at a college by **May 1st** or you relinquish your acceptance slot. If you are on a wait list, you must still deposit at another college in order to secure a spot for attendance.

You must notify Mrs. O'Hara of all scholarship offers, admissions offers, denials, waitlists, etc., and your yield college, by May 8, 2020.

FERPA and FERPA Waivers

What is FERPA?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education. FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children's education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are "eligible students."

What is a FERPA waiver?

A FERPA waiver allows colleges to treat parts of your application as confidential. Colleges recommend and prefer that you waive FERPA rights to your application, and Jesuit requires that you do so before we collect your letters of recommendation. You will do so in several ways during the application process, including online waivers for colleges and services like Common App, and also on paper in your first grade level counseling class.

Letters of Recommendation

Our universal deadline for all letters of recommendation is Tuesday, October 1st, 2019, by 3:00pm.

This due date / deadline precedes the earliest formal deadline for any college admissions category in the United States—October 15th. Teachers and counselors can use this time to craft an excellent, personalized letter. While students may wish to communicate with their teachers about their letters, please be courteous and grateful for teachers who often complete many letters during the busy college admissions season.

NCAA Clearinghouse

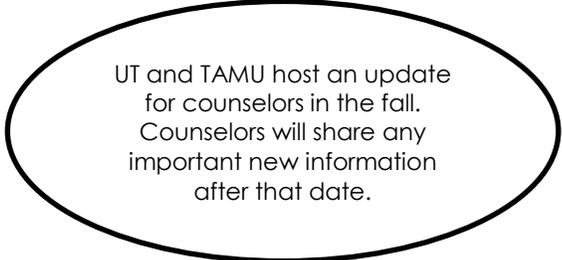
If you intend to play Division I or Division II athletics in college, you must add NCAA to your transcript request form so that an official transcript is submitted to them on your behalf. You must also order and send official test scores to NCAA Clearinghouse. Talk with your college counselor about this, and keep your eyes open for special College Counseling information events for prospective NCAA athletes.

ApplyTexas

ApplyTexas was created through a collaborative effort between the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the colleges and universities represented on the site. The goal of the project is to offer a centralized means for both Texas and non-Texas students to apply to the many outstanding postsecondary institutions available in Texas.

On ApplyTexas you can accomplish a multitude of tasks including:

- Apply for admission to any Texas public university, as well as other participating Texas colleges.
- Copy a submitted application to another institution.
- Submit your application essays online.
- Apply for scholarships from participating universities.
- Search for and view both general and university specific information.



UT and TAMU host an update for counselors in the fall. Counselors will share any important new information after that date.

Please read through the informational pages of the ApplyTexas.org website before you begin.

Jesuit hosts an ApplyTexas workshop in the fall. Listen for announcements to register.

Special ApplyTexas Reminders

When filling out an *ApplyTexas* application, do not check the box requesting that UT send your teachers online letters of recommendation. If you do so, your application will appear as deficient, even though it is not.

You must regularly check your application status online. Only by checking regularly will you be prompted to complete the section called “Self Reporting Transcript/Courses,” which is required of all applicants.

Campus Contact

Making regular, positive contact with your desired colleges can be helpful in your application process. Some colleges use detailed analytics and tracking to discern which students deserve the most positive attention when marketing, recruiting, and maybe even in admissions decisions. So read your colleges’ emails, call their offices, and follow them using your clean, respectable social media accounts. Being a “friend” to your colleges can’t hurt, and might make a small difference in your prospects.

College Representative Visits

Listen to SJET, log on to Naviance “College Visits” or check email announcements to view information regarding representatives visiting Strake Jesuit. Remember that you must obtain a Counseling PASS and teacher permission before attending a visit and bring this pass to your visit.

Make sure you add your name to the SIGN UP in Family Connection so that a record of your visit is documented. Most representative visits are held in the Counseling conference room or assigned classrooms on campus.

Other Opportunities for Contact

Email and/or call your prospective colleges and talk to the admissions representative assigned to our school. This is the person who may be reviewing your application, so it's a good idea to establish a dialogue with this rep.

Verify whether or not you need to complete any supplemental applications for scholarships and check on those deadlines. They may be different.

If you are able to visit these campus, set up appointments to:

- Meet with admissions,
- Sit in on a class and/or visit with a professor,
- Visit with the financial aid office,
- See the dorms,
- Eat in the cafeteria,
- Attend a campus or sporting event,
- Talk with current students.

Coalition Application

The "Coalition Application" was created by an "unprecedented coalition of diverse public and private colleges and universities" who sought to improve the college admission application process for all students. The Coalition has developed a free platform of online tools to streamline the experience of applying to college. The initial iteration of the platform is available for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors in high school, and 186 colleges began accepting the Coalition App. However, there are still many questions about the use of the Coalition App. **Following the trend in many Jesuit schools, and many of our peer schools in Houston, we do not recommend that students use the Coalition Application. We cannot offer support on your application using their system, unless you are applying to a university where Coalition app is their exclusive application.**

If you are applying to any of the following universities, they are Coalition Application exclusive and you should consult with your college counselor as soon as possible.

- **University of Maryland, College Park**
- **University of Washington, Seattle**
- **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)**

College Visitation Policy

While the school allows senior students to visit colleges, absences from classes for such visits are limited to three days per academic year, and students are excused only when the visit is directly related to a student's application process. Before making such a visit, a student should request a College Visit Request Form from his College Counselor or obtain it online off the [Strake Jesuit College Counseling webpage](#). The student should obtain teacher signatures, and take the signed and approved copy to the Dean of Students' Office. *The College Visit Request Form should be filed at least five class days prior to the anticipated absence to avoid disciplinary consequences.*

Common Application

The **Common Application** (informally known as the **Common App**) is an undergraduate [college admission application](#) students use to apply to nearly 900 colleges and universities. Its mission is to encourage the use of “holistic admission,” a process that includes subjective factors gleaned from essays and recommendations alongside more objective criteria such as GPA and standardized testing.

Member colleges may also require a Common App Supplement, and ask additional questions of applicants.

Common App makes the process easier for applicants, and we highly recommend using it. Talk to your college counselor for specific advice.

You can sign up to use Common App at www.commonapp.org.

Matching Common App with Naviance

- Step 1. Sign in to www.commonapp.org if you have already registered for an account. If you have not registered, click *Get Started* and create account. (It is best to check your Family Connection account BEFORE setting up your Common App account to make sure you are using the same name and email address. If you are signing up, use your Strake Jesuit email.)
- Step 2. After completing the necessary information & signing in, you should complete the most recent school segment of the *Education* section under the *Common App* tab (Choose Strake Jesuit as your current school and complete all following questions).
- Step 3. Go to the *College Search* tab, choose at least one college, and add it to your college list. Then, switch to the *My Colleges* tab, click on FERPA tab on the left, read and sign the FERPA Release Authorization. You must **waive your rights** for us to send your transcripts and letters of recommendation.
- Step 4. Sign in to Naviance Family Connection page and click on the *Colleges* tab. Click on the link named *Colleges I'm Applying To* and enter your Common App email address along with your date of birth, and click match. If you are not able to login, please contact Mrs. O'Hara at cohara@strakejesuit.org.
- Step 5. Review your *Colleges I'm Applying To* list in Family Connection. Indicate whether you will be using Common App to apply. Click the link in the Applying via Common App column to indicate your choice. **Remember you must apply to Common App schools through the Common App website!**

Ethical Considerations for Students

Reporting of disciplinary action

Many colleges will ask students to report their disciplinary record. At Strake Jesuit, we expect students to answer this question honestly and thoroughly. Please speak with your counselor if you have had any disciplinary action on your school record at school or if you have specific concerns about this issue. Strake Jesuit **does not report** disciplinary records; instead we rely on students to self-report honestly and ethically. Consequences are severe for students who do not honestly report this information; colleges may withdraw an offer of admission for any dishonesty.

Change in courses during senior year

If there is a change to your schedule during senior year, you are responsible for informing the colleges to which you have applied, whether or not a decision has been rendered. Colleges evaluate students' academic programs and need to be kept aware of changes. These also reflect personal responsibility and honesty.

Do your own work

Colleges want to admit students who are sufficiently mature and independent to be successful. To demonstrate your maturity and independence, your college applications must be your own work. Counselors, teachers, parents, independent college counselors, and others should only serve as resources and sounding boards. Admission officers are often able to tell when your application has been authored by someone else, and it is a poor reflection on you.

Early decision commitments

The Early Decision (ED) plan is a BINDING agreement between the student and the college. If you apply ED, you and your parents must sign a commitment form for the college and bring a copy of that form to your College Counselor. If you are accepted ED, you must attend that college, and you must withdraw your applications to other colleges upon acceptance. Please see your College Counselor to discuss this option.

Double deposits

Students are not allowed to submit an enrollment deposit to more than one college, a practice known as "double depositing." A final college choice must be made by May 1st – the National Candidate's Reply Date. Double depositing prohibits waitlisted students from having the opportunity to attend their first choice college. Students are encouraged to contact the colleges they will NOT be attending by letter or email. Strake Jesuit will send out only one final transcript for each student to ensure that students have not held a spot at more than one college after May 1st.

Financial Aid

FAFSA

FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Their website is www.fafsa.ed.gov.

FAFSA is required at EVERY postsecondary institution. Even if you don't qualify for federal aid, you may qualify for institutional aid which requires a completed FAFSA.

This year, FAFSA is available starting in October. This is one of several changes outlined [here](#). You will need your 2018 tax information to complete the form. It is wise to finish FAFSA as early as possible.

Parents and students should go online NOW and obtain a PIN number (www.pin.ed.gov). The Personal Identification Number (PIN) is the code that the US Department of Education uses to identify you online. Create a computer file and email this information to yourself.

A PIN allows you to do the following on a FAFSA:

- Check the status of your application
- Make corrections
- Fill out on an online renewal form next year
- Electronically sign to speed up the process

Filling out the Pre-Application Worksheet will help you collect and proofread the information for your application before you submit it.

PAY ATTENTION TO DEADLINES!!!

CSS Profile (College Scholarship Service)

Visit www.profileonline.collegeboard.com. Some private colleges require this form because they have more money to disburse, and they need more information from the student and parents to determine aid. A list of schools requiring the CSS Profile can be found online. This form costs a fixed amount per college and is completed online. If any of your schools require the CSS Profile, it can be accessed and completed online at www.profileonline.collegeboard.com.

Institutional Forms

Some schools require additional information beyond the FAFSA and the CSS Profile. Make sure to review the requirements for each school.

Net Price Calculator

The Net Price Calculator can be used to estimate your “net price” to attend a particular college or university. Net price is the difference between the “sticker” price (full cost), minus any grants and scholarships. Sticker price includes direct charges (tuition and fees, room and board) and indirect costs (books and supplies, transportation and personal expenses).

How does it work?

First, the Net Price Calculator looks at the sticker price.

Then, using the financial information you enter into the calculator, the Net Price Calculator estimates the amount of money your family would be expected to contribute to pay for college.

Finally, the Net Price Calculator evaluates your eligibility for financial aid at specific colleges by matching your financial and personal characteristics to the criteria that schools use to distribute financial aid (need-based grants and merit-based scholarships).

How can the Net Price Calculator help me?

Net price is the key to understanding what a specific college is likely to cost, and allows you to better compare your out-of-pocket expenses from one college to another.

It can help you widen your college choices beyond those institutions that you think you can afford. It is possible that your net cost will be lower at a college with a high sticker price or higher at a college with a lower sticker price. You may find that some colleges you thought were financially out of reach may be very affordable.

Remember, “financial fit” is just one of many factors you will want to consider in choosing a college.

US Military Academies

Military Academies may present an exception to some timelines and procedures above. Senators often require materials for congressional nomination requests, including letters of recommendation, to be delivered by **October 1**. If you will be applying to a US Military Academy, please notify your two teacher recommenders and your college counselor via email as soon as possible. Your college counselor can be very helpful in preparing and arranging the procedures for your application.

Standardized Testing

Each college and university sets its own policies about standardized testing, if any, they require. It is the student's responsibility to research the requirements and follow through. Almost all students will take the SAT and ACT with Writing at least once. Many students will take tests more than once.

The standardized testing landscape has changed considerably in the past year. Please consult with your college counselor for advice on testing according to your personal interests and strengths! The SAT and ACT remain the standard in college admissions. Here are the dates for both tests.

Date	Test	Register by	Receive Scores By	
			Web	Mail
* August 24	SAT & SAT Subject Tests	July 26 (8/13 with late fee)	September 6	September 16
* September 14	ACT	August 16 (8/30 with late fee)	September 24	October 4
**October 5	SAT & SAT Subject	September 6 (9/24 with late fee)	October 18	October 28
October 26	ACT	September 20 (10/4 with late fee)	November 14	November 24
* November 2	SAT & SAT Subject	October 3 (10/22 with late fee)	November 15	November 25
* December 7	SAT & SAT Subject	November 8 (11/26 with late fee)	December 20	December 30
December 14	ACT	November 8 (11/22 with late fee)	December 24	January 3
* February 8	ACT	January 10 (1/17 with late fee)	February 19	February 29
**March 14	SAT only	February 14 (3/3 with late fee)	March 27	April 6
* April 4	ACT	February 28 (3/13 with late fee)	April 14	April 24
May 2	SAT & SAT Subject	April 3 (4/21 with late fee)	May 15	May 25
* June 6	SAT & SAT Subject	May 8 (5/27 with late fee)	July 15	July 25
June 13	ACT	May 8 (5/22 with late fee)	June 23	July 3
July 18	ACT	June 19 (6/26 with late fee)	July 28	August 7

* Exam is administered at Strake Jesuit College Preparatory

** Exam is administered at Saint Agnes Academy

Score Choice

Score Choice is a score-reporting feature that gives students the option to choose which SAT and SAT Subject Test scores to send to colleges, and which to withhold from colleges. Consult your college's policies, and your College Counselor, for Score Choice information.

Standardized Testing with Accommodations

Both the College Board (SAT) and the American College Test Assessment (ACT) have provisions for accommodations on standardized tests based on disability. Each organization allows parents to send in a professional evaluation prepared by a psychologist or educational diagnostician. This report is then

evaluated by experts in the field of Learning Differences. A decision is made by these experts and reported to the parents and school. Families who are seeking special testing accommodations, can contact the counseling office. We will provide parents with a copy of the Student Eligibility Form (for the SAT) and/or a copy of the form called the Request for ACT Assessment Special Testing (for the ACT). Parents may complete either or both of these forms and send them in to the respective testing companies. Companies approve or deny requests for special accommodations exclusively on the basis of information provided in the diagnostic report prepared by a psychologist or educational diagnostician at the request of the parents. In the event of a denial, it will be necessary for the parents to take the matter up directly with representatives of the College Board or ACT Assessment Group. (Community Life 33-34)

Texas A&M and the University of Texas at Austin Admissions Timeline

Texas law offers eligible freshmen applicants automatic admission to public colleges and universities. The initial legislation, passed into law in 1997, offered automatic admission to eligible students in the top ten percent of their high school class. The [Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board](#) establishes the [rules](#) that govern which students are eligible for automatic admission.

By mid-September, the school will calculate “Top Ten Percent” using students’ updated cumulative Grade Point Average. The school will submit this list of students to the state public colleges and universities.

Students are still required to satisfy application procedures and deadlines for their chosen public colleges. Further, applications from students who are automatically admitted are often still subjected to holistic review to determine the major to which the applicant will be admitted.

GPA’s for “Top Ten Percent” admissions will be calculated in accordance with the GPA Exemption Policy described on Strake Jesuit’s [“Curriculum and Graduation Requirements”](#) webpage.

The University of Texas at Austin

UT Austin: Top Six Percent

In 2009, the law was modified for The University of Texas at Austin. Under the new law, UT Austin notifies schools every year of the class rank that allows students to be automatically admitted. **For Fall 2019 applicants, this rank is Top 6%.**

If a student is in the top 6%, he will be notified in early September.

Texas A&M University

NEW for 2020

SELF-REPORTED ACADEMIC RECORD (SRAR)

All freshmen applicants applying to Texas A&M **must** complete a SRAR. Applicants create the **Self-Reported Academic Record** (SRAR) using their official high school transcript. The SRAR lists the courses and associated grades that have been completed, or will be completed, for high school and/or college credit. It replaces the high school transcripts used by the Office of Admissions during the initial admission process in most cases

Families may have questions about the opening of the admissions season, especially Texas A&M’s opening admissions on July 1st. For the Class of 2020 seeking admission in Fall 2020, TAMU Admissions has confirmed for us that there is no admissions advantage to be gained by Strake Jesuit students completing their “Top Ten Percent” Guidelines

Students with qualifying GPA and SAT/ACT scores are [automatically admitted](#) to Texas A&M, but students are not guaranteed admission into the College of Engineering. Students who apply for Engineering will be holistically reviewed, and in case they are not admitted into the College of Engineering, will be offered the chance to select other degree plans during their admissions

process. Interest in A&M Engineering has grown very quickly, and the exact effect of this change is hard to predict. But generally speaking, Strake Jesuit students perform very well in holistic review at A&M, and we anticipate that that success will continue.

Transcript Procedures

What is a transcript?

A high school transcript is basically a record of your academic accomplishments in your high school curriculum. It is regularly updated with every class, the grade received, and GPA. Beginning in your senior year, we also list the TEA diploma endorsements you are projected to earn at graduation. Every high school student or high school graduate has a high school transcript.

There are two sorts of transcript: **official** and **unofficial**. The two versions look very similar in terms of content, but an official transcript is printed on security paper and imprinted with the school seal. This is so people reading an official transcript can be fairly certain that it is 100% accurate.

Most colleges require you to submit an official transcript when you apply. **Official transcripts** have to be sent directly from Strake Jesuit to your college, either by mail or through an electronic documents system like Naviance. You can request official transcripts through Naviance Family Connection, and we'll automatically know the best mechanism to deliver your transcript.

A transcript you print or copy yourself is always unofficial. If you just want to look at the information your transcript includes for your own personal use, an **unofficial transcript** is fine. **Important note!** Several colleges will accept student-submitted scans of your unofficial transcript during the application process. We call these "Digital Transcripts" and they are available in your NetClassroom portal. Using your digital transcript will help you expedite your application and keep your online application portal current.

Why Do You Need Your Transcript?

To Apply to College

Your high school transcript is probably the most important part of your college application, simply because it contains so much information about you: the classes taken, when you took them, how well you did in them, etc. Colleges will look over your transcript very carefully, so it's important to understand what they'll be looking for, which we'll cover in the next section.

But that's not all...

Strake Jesuit will check your transcript at several points to ensure you are on track to graduate. We look to make sure you have taken enough credits, completed each of the graduation requirements, and passed your classes. We also use your transcript to designate your TEA diploma endorsements.

If you transfer into or out of Strake Jesuit, your new school will use your transcript to determine the classes you completed and which classes you should enroll. When changing schools, you will end up having two transcripts. Jesuit also includes information about your previous school on our transcripts, marking those classes as transfer credits, and excluding your grades from our GPA calculation.

Some jobs require you to submit your high school transcript so they can look at your grades or make sure you have taken any classes they may require workers to have passed.

Where and when can you get your transcript?

Your digital transcript is online in PDF format on NetClassroom. Mr. Montroy and Mrs. O'Hara can also print your unofficial transcript for you by request.

An official transcript is created on request and requires seven days to print, sign, seal, and send. *College* transcript requests are always entered in Naviance Family Connection and processed within seven days. Requests for purposes other than college can be made by contacting the registrar.

Your transcript is automatically updated at key points in the year:

- after the add/drop deadline each semester,
- after final grades each semester, and
- in early July, when your next-year schedule is set and summer school grades are entered.

You can always ask the registrar (Mr. Montroy) to update and upload your transcript at any point if something has changed.

What Your Transcript Includes

Transcripts contain a lot of information, and at first glance it can be difficult to take it all in. This section will explain what a transcript includes, why this information is important, and ways for you to determine if you're on track for creating a strong one. The main components of a transcript are:

The Name of Each Course You Took in High School.

Why Is This Important?

This information is used to determine if you met graduation requirements for your high school and the college's entrance requirements.

It shows the difficulty of your schedule, including AC and AP classes.

It shows any "specialization" you've tried to achieve in high school. One way this is shown is via TEA Diploma Endorsements. Even outside that designation, though, colleges can look to see whether your chosen courses match your stated interests or talents.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Are you on track to meet your high school's graduation requirements?

What about entrance requirements for colleges of interest?

Have you or will you be taking classes in the subject you plan to study in college?

Actions to Take:

Talk to your counselor if you're unsure about graduation requirements.

Research different colleges to see the classes they require students to have completed in high school, and make sure those classes are on your transcript or will be before you graduate.

If you don't feel like your transcript includes enough courses in the subject you want to study in college, aim to take more classes in that field before you graduate.

The Grades You Got in Each Class

As well as providing the letter grade you got in each class you took, transcripts will include the letter grade in each class and your GPA.

Why Is This Important?

It shows schools and employers how well you grasped the material in each of your classes and how well you can be expected to do in future classes. This is very important information to colleges because they want to accept students they feel will succeed in college classes.

It allows colleges to compare your grades and GPA to other applicants and their school's average entrance GPA.

Colleges often pay special attention to your grades that relate most closely to the subject you plan to major in.

Class rank shows how well you did academically compared to the rest of your graduating class.

Notes about Grades and GPA

Remember that Strake Jesuit does not provide an unweighted GPA. Your counselor can help you calculate an unweighted GPA if it's absolutely essential.

Remember that Strake Jesuit does not provide class rank. Your class decile is roughly indicated on our School Profile, and certain students' ranks will be communicated in a very limited number of instances (like the Texas state colleges ten percent procedures). But your transcript will never include a rank.

Remember that some courses can be GPA exempted. The default "setting" for GPA exemption is that students with GPA above 4.05 will begin to see significant benefits from GPA exemption.

Questions to Ask Yourself

Is your GPA close to the average entrance GPAs of the colleges of interest?

If you know what you will major in, do you have strong grades in the classes that relate to that subject?

Actions to Take

Find colleges' average entrance GPA on their websites, and see how your current GPA compares.

If you want to improve your grades, concentrate particularly closely on the classes that relate most to your future major.

When You Took Each Class

The classes on your transcript are organized by date, with the classes you took first at the top left, and your most recent classes at the bottom right. Classes are grouped together by semester. Summer school grades are indicated with an asterisk.

Why Is This Important?

It allows colleges to see the progression of your courses. Did you move from regular English 1 to AC English 2? Did you sign up only for easy classes your senior year? Colleges use that information to help determine whether or not you challenged yourself each year of high school.

It lets colleges and others see if and how your grades changed over time. Did you stumble a bit at the beginning of high school, but managed to raise your GPA after that? Were there any semesters where your grades were significantly lower than other times?

Questions to Ask Yourself

Have you been continuously challenging yourself with the classes you take? Does your transcript show this (such as AC or AP classes)?

Were there any periods in high school when you got lower grades than usual?

Actions to Take

Make sure you continue to take challenging classes throughout high school, even during senior year, including AC and AP classes if possible.

If there was a period of time when your grades dropped, and you have an explanation for it (illness, personal issue, etc.) attach a note to your application describing the situation, and ask your college counselor to explain the situation in their letter of recommendation as well. Colleges can be very understanding about circumstances like that, especially if they see you made an effort to improve your grades afterward.

College Transition Notes about Transcript Timing

An early submission of your transcript is only valuable at schools with rolling admissions procedures. There are very few schools with truly rolling admissions.

Texas A&M does practice *rolling university admissions notifications*, which is not identical to rolling admissions. Still, admissions to your college or program at TAMU are done on a rolling basis for automatic admits, which gives an advantage to some earlier applicants. We have always been told by TAMU that this advantage persists *through September*. It's better to submit a great application in August or September than to rush an application in July.

Outside of rolling admissions, in the huge majority of cases:

- It is best to wait until the end of the drop period (September 15) to send;
- It is best to send transcripts and letters of recommendation together; and
- Everything submitted before your deadline is considered equal.

The earliest deadline for most Strake Jesuit applicants is October 15. Other typical deadlines are November 1, December 1, or January 1.

College Admissions Vocabulary

Accelerated Study - This program allows you to graduate in less time than usually required. For instance, by taking summer terms and extra courses during the academic year, you could finish a bachelor's degree in three years instead of four.

Admissions Decisions:

Admit - You're in! You are being offered admission to the college to which you applied. Let Mrs. O'Hara and your counselor know the good news.

Deny - You are not in. The decision is made by the college or university admissions committee and is sent to you. You should report this decision to Mrs. O'Hara and to your counselor.

Wait list - You are not in yet but have been placed on a waiting list in case an opening becomes available. Usually you have the option to accept a spot on the wait list or not. Some colleges admit many students from the wait list, some admit a few, and some admit none. Sometimes colleges will notify waitlisted students once they have finished drawing from that list.

Deferred acceptance - Your admissions decision is being moved to a later date. Usually you applied Early Action or Early Decision, but will be moved to the Regular Decision pool, and may be accepted or denied from there.

Award Package - This is the way colleges and universities deliver their news about student eligibility for financial aid or grants. The most common packages include Pell Grants, Stafford Loans, and Work Study (see below).

Bachelor or Baccalaureate Degree - The degree received after the satisfactory completion of a full-time program of study or its part-time equivalent at a college or university. The Bachelor of Arts (B.A) and the Bachelor of Science (B.S.) are the most common baccalaureate degrees.

"Best Fit" - The college search is not about getting into the best college. There is no school that is best for all students. Some students do best at large public universities; some do best in small liberal arts colleges; still others want to study far from home. Students should look beyond the big name schools or the ones friends are excited about and do their own research.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement (CRDA) - If admitted to a college, a student does not have to reply until May 1. This allows time to hear from all the colleges to which the student applied before having to make a commitment to any of them. This is especially important because financial aid packages vary from one school to another, and the CRDA allows time to compare packages before deciding.

College Scholarship Service (CSS) - The College Board created this program to assist postsecondary institutions, state scholarship programs, and other organizations in measuring a family's financial strength and analyzing its ability to contribute to college costs. CSS processes the PROFILE financial form that students may use to apply for nonfederal aid. This form is submitted to many private colleges and universities along with the FAFSA when seeking financial aid from these institutions. Participating colleges and universities indicate whether they require this form.

Common Application - The Common Application is presently accepted by nearly 700 independent colleges and some public universities. The colleges and universities that accept the Common App gives it equal weight with their own application forms; many colleges use only the Common App. Students complete the information on the Common App and then submit it to any of the schools listed as accepting it. Some schools will require supplementary information to be completed by the applicant; these supplements are usually accessed through the Common App. The Common App is online.

Cost of Education - This includes tuition and fees, room and board, books and supplies, transportation, and miscellaneous expenses. A student's financial aid eligibility is the difference between the cost of education and the Expected Family Contribution (EFC) as computed by the federal government using the FAFSA.

Course Load - The credit hours a student takes in each semester. Twelve credit hours is usually the minimum to be considered a full-time student. The average course load per semester is often 16 credit hours.

Credit Hours - The hours per week that college courses meet are counted as equivalent credits for financial aid and used to determine your status as a full- or part-time student status.

Double Major - Available at most schools, the double major allows a student to complete all the requirements to simultaneously earn a major in two fields.

Early Action (EA) - Many colleges offer the EA option. A student applies to a school early in the senior year, usually between October 15 and January 15, and requests an early application review and notification of admission. The answer usually takes three to four weeks after application. If accepted, the student is not obligated to attend that institution but can bank this admission and still apply to other colleges during the regular admission cycle. Some selective colleges offer Single Choice Early Action (SCEA) or Restricted Early Action (REA) which allow students to apply to only one college early. Please read the fine print to be sure you are in compliance with all restrictions, and discuss early applications with your counselor.

Early Admission - Some colleges will admit certain students who have not completed high school, usually exceptional juniors. The students are enrolled full-time and do not complete their senior year of high school. Colleges usually award high school diplomas to these students after they have completed a certain number of college-level courses.

Early Decision (ED) - Sometimes confused with Early Action, the Early Decision plan allows students to apply to an institution early in the senior year, usually between October 30 and January 15, and request an early notification of admission. The student and college counselor sign a contract with the school at the time of application that indicates that if accepted, the student is obligated to attend that institution. Some colleges and universities offer both ED and EA options.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC) - The amount of financial support a family is expected to contribute toward a child's college education. This amount is part of the formula used by the federal government to determine financial aid eligibility using the FAFSA form.

Federal Pell Grant Program - This is a federally sponsored and administered program that provides grants based on need to undergraduate students. Congress annually sets the appropriation; award amounts vary based on need, and the maximum award for is approximately \$6,095. This is "free" money because it does not need to be repaid.

Federal Perkins Loan Program - This is a federally run program based on need and administered by a college's financial aid office. This program offers low-interest loans for undergraduate study. Repayment does not begin until 9 months after the borrower drops to less than halftime enrollment status. The maximum loan amount is \$5,500 per year.

Federal Stafford Loan - This federal program provides low-interest loans for undergraduate and graduate students. The maximum annual loan amount depends on the student's grade level and on whether the loan is subsidized or unsubsidized. The interest is currently 4.66%. Repayment does not begin until 6 months after the borrower drops to less than halftime enrollment status. Several repayment options are available.

Federal Work-Study Program (FSW) - A federally financed program that arranges for students to combine employment and college study; the employment may be an integral part of the academic program (as in cooperative education or internships) or simply a means of paying for college.

Gap - The difference between the amount of a financial aid package and the cost of attending a college or university. The student and his/her family are expected to fill the gap.

Grants/Scholarships - These are financial awards that are usually dispensed by the financial aid offices of colleges and universities. The awards may be need- or merit-based. Most are need-based. Merit-based awards may be awarded on the basis of excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability, or special talent.

Greek Life – Fraternities and sororities organizations can have great impact on the campus social life of a college or university.

Honors Program - Honors programs offer an enriched, top-quality educational experience that often includes small class size, custom-designed courses, mentoring, enriched individualized learning, hands-on research, and publishing opportunities. A handpicked faculty guides students through the program. Honors programs are a great way to attend a large school that offers enhanced social and recreational opportunities while receiving an Ivy League-like education at a reduced cost.

Internship - This is an experience-based opportunity, most often scheduled during breaks in the academic calendar, whereby a student receives credit for a supervised work experience related to his or her major.

Major - The concentration of a number of credit hours in a specific subject. Colleges and universities often specify the number of credits needed to receive a major, the sequence of courses, and the level of course necessary to complete the requirements.

Merit Awards, Merit-Based Scholarships - More "free" money, these awards are based on excellence in academics, leadership, volunteerism, athletic ability, and other areas determined by the granting organization, which can be a college or university, an organization, or an individual. They are not based on financial need.

Minor - An area of concentration with fewer credits than a major. The minor can be related to the major area of concentration or not; for example, an English major may have a minor in theater.

Need Blind - Admissions decisions made without reference to a student's financial aid request, that is, an applicant's financial need is not known to the committee at the time of decision.

Non-Matriculated - A student who has either not been admitted, but is taking classes or has been academically dismissed. Under this category, a student may neither receive financial aid nor participate in an athletic program at that school.

Open Admissions - A policy of admission that does not subject applicants to a review of their academic qualifications. Many public junior/community colleges admit students under this guideline; that is, any student with a high school diploma or its equivalent is admitted.

Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) - Each branch of the military sponsors an ROTC program. In exchange for a certain number of years on active duty, students can have their college education paid for up to a certain amount by the armed forces.

Residency Requirement - The term has more than one meaning. It can refer to the fact that a college may require a specific number of courses to be taken on campus to receive a degree from the school, or the phrase can mean the time, by law, that is required for a person to reside in the state to be considered eligible for in-state tuition at one of its public colleges or universities.

Retention Rate - The number and percentage of students returning for the sophomore year.

Rolling Admissions - A college begins admitting students as soon as applications are received. There may or may not be an application deadline. This concept is used most often by state universities. Responses are received within three to four weeks. If admitted, a student is not required to confirm until May 1. Out-of-state residents applying to state universities should apply as early as possible.

Student Aid Report (SAR) - Report of the government's review of a student's FAFSA. The SAR is sent to the student and released electronically to the schools that the student listed. The SAR does not supply a real money figure for aid but indicates whether the student is eligible.

Student-designed major - Students design their own majors under this policy offered at some (usually private) colleges. It offers students the opportunity to develop nontraditional options not available in the existing catalog of majors.

Transcript - This is the official document containing the record of student's academic performance history. Strake Jesuit issues transcripts on request, and they are certified by the signature of the school's officer, and an official seal and stationery. For college-related transcripts, see Mrs. O'Hara in the Counseling Center.

Transfer Program - This program is usually found in a two-year college or in a four-year college that offers associate degrees. It allows a student to continue his or her studies in a four-year college by maintaining designated criteria set down at acceptance to the two-year program. It is not necessary to earn an associate degree to transfer.

Upper Division - This term refers to the junior and senior years of study. Some colleges offer only upper-division study. The lower divisions must be completed at another institution before entering these programs to earn a bachelor's degree.

Virtual Visit - This is the use of the Internet to investigate various colleges by looking at their home pages. A student can "tour" the college, ask questions via e-mail, read school newspapers, and explore course offerings and major requirements on line. It is not a substitute for a live visit.

Yield - The percentage of accepted students who will enter a college or university in the freshman class; these students have received formal acceptance notices and must respond by May 1 with their intention to enroll. The more competitive the school, the higher the yield percentage.