

HOMESTEAD HIGH SCHOOL

Submitting Your Senior Guidance Folder for Common Application Colleges

Use this checklist to make sure you have completed all the requirements:

- If your college does not require a counselor or teacher letter, you do not have to do the Brag Sheet and Parent Questionnaire. Check your college's requirements and deadlines.
- Match "Colleges I'm Applying To" with this form to ensure timely delivery. Notify IN PERSON with any changes. Indicate how you are applying on Naviance.
- Sign the FERPA waiver on the Common Application, then match with Naviance on "Colleges I'm Applying to". **Lists must match in order for HHS to send documents.**
- For Common App schools which require recommendation letters: **Print** Brag Sheet, **and** Parent Questionnaire for your letter writer. HINT: You can copy and paste in to a Google Doc.
- Senior Guidance Folder is due to College Career Center *before or on* the Homestead HS due dates listed below. This includes Brag Sheet, Parent Q's, and 2-ply Transcript Form.
- The first 10 colleges are free. \$3 per college after 10.

Other things to Consider for Common Application Colleges

- ✓ Teacher recommendations—ask early, 3 – 4 weeks in advance of application deadlines. Make sure you follow their procedures.
- ✓ If required by the college, send official score reports for your SAT or ACT from the websites.
- ✓ Check the colleges' websites for application deadlines and requirements, like SAT subject tests.
- ✓ Plan to submit early. Don't forget time zone differences.

Senior Guidance Folders are in the CCC on the following time line

(Dates Subject to change since the pandemic:

<u>HHS Deadlines:</u>	<u>University Deadlines:</u>
Wednesday, September 23	Early Decision/Early Action of Nov 1
Wednesday, October 28	December 1 to January 1
Wednesday, December 2	January 2 and later
Wednesday, December 9	Last day to add colleges

** IMPORTANT: If you have any changes to your college list after you submit your folder, notify the College & Career Advisor in person.*

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Counselor Letter: Once you have turned in your SSR Form, a folder is created and you will be assigned the letter writer. You will be contacted by them (Guidance Counselor or an Administrator) to set up an informal interview.

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Homestead High School uses Naviance to send all official documents. We cannot send documents to colleges if it is not on your list!

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APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOUR YEAR COLLEGES -- SEE THE FRONT PAGE OF THIS PACKET!

FOR COMMON APPLICATION SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES THAT REQUIRE AN SSR

- Add colleges to Naviance “Colleges I’m Applying to” and Common Application. Sign the FERPA waiver on Common App and go back in to Naviance to match your list of colleges.
- Fill out 2-Ply SSR Form found in the CCC. Provide a copy of your brag sheet, resume (optional) and parent questionnaire for the Counselor/Admin letter writer. Secondary School Report (SSR) may not be required. Check the requirements.
- If “Teacher Evaluations” are required, ask your teacher if they have a specific process and please follow their guidelines. Please give teachers 3-4 weeks to complete the letter. Request the selected teacher through Naviance as well.
- Send official test scores *as required by your college*, from ACT at www.act.org OR SAT Reasoning, from the College Board at www.collegeboard.com.
- Concurrent Enrollment transcripts may be required, check the requirements of your colleges.

CSU APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- No official transcript or SSR required at the time of application, \$70 per campus
- Add CSU schools to “Colleges I’m Applying To” on Naviance
- Explore the 23 campuses and create an account at <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply>
- Print out copy of your transcript from Infinite Campus to SELF-REPORT your grades
- Application submission window: October 1st to November 30th. Apply early!
- Send test scores from the ACT or SAT website directly. Use the code 3594 if possible.

UC APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- No official transcript or SSR required at the time of application, SELF-REPORT your grades, \$70 per campus
- Add UC schools to “Colleges I’m Applying To” on Naviance
- Browse each of the nine campuses and apply at www.universityofcalifornia.edu/apply
- Application available on **August 1st**.
- Application submission window: **November 1st to 30th**. Aim to submit before the Thanksgiving holiday to avoid technical problems.
- Personal Insight Questions. Choose 4 out of 8. Maximum 350 words each. Worksheet is available in the College and Career Center or ucal.us/personalquestions
- Send official test scores with essay (from the ACT or SAT website) to one UC campuses and authorize the UC to release your information to share with other campuses.

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COLLEGE PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR SENIORS

April through July while you're a Junior

- Take at least one SAT or ACT test. Create a timeline for your standardized tests
- Do your colleges require an SAT subject test?
- Students should start the college search and add to Colleges I'm Applying To (Naviance)
- Check out FUHSD College Planning & Essay Workshops via City of Cupertino
- Students interested in military academy or ROTC should contact regional representative
- Create a professional email dedicated to college applications

August

- Students applying Common Application should update the Brag Sheet & Parent Q's under the About Me tab in Naviance.
- How will you apply? (regular admission, rolling admission, open admission, or early application)
- Common App & UC Application becomes available on August 1st.
- Know the HHS deadlines to request letters of rec and School Reports/Counselor Evaluations
- Take advantage of individual college and career planning in the College & Career Center
- Look for scholarships year round. Naviance-Colleges-Scholarship List

September

- Students and parents should attend Financial Aid Night at Homestead
- Ask teachers/counselors to write recommendations
- Familiarize yourself with www.commonapp.org if they plan to apply to any private schools. Know the different application requirements.
- Attend the FUHSD College Fair at Cupertino High School in September
- The HHS deadlines for ED/EA schools is the end of this month, TURN IN TO THE CCC
- Pay attention to announcements for college application/search workshops in the CCC

October

- CSU application becomes available October 1 at www2.calstate.edu/
- File FAFSA application beginning October 1 if you have financial need
- Help with FAFSA is available at Cash for Colleges workshops around the Bay Area (<https://www.cash4college.csac.ca.gov/>)
- Submit CSS Profile (College Board) forms for schools requiring this financial document
- Plan college visits and interviews, compare colleges, reduce your list to 7 to 10 schools
- Attend college representative meetings held in the College & Career Center
- Send in "early decision" or "early applications"

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November

- Application filing period for CSU and UC will close Nov.30, submit early!
- Continue working on private school applications, turn in transcript request to CCC
- Check for Scholarships year round. College & Career Center has more info
- Send in SAT, SAT subject or ACT scores to colleges before the deadlines

December

- Check to see if your college will accept the December ACT/SAT test scores
- Continue working on private school applications, turn in transcript request to CCC
- Listen to announcements for scholarships and check the Scholarship List on Naviance
- Send thank you notes to your recommenders

January

- Students should finish any other college applications
- Check the portals of schools you applied to for your application status
- Continue to search for scholarships year round
- Request Mid-year transcripts from the College & Career Center, required by many Common App schools, after report cards are published.

February/March

- Students should file FAFSA by March 2nd to be enrolled in Cal Grant
- Check email and portals regularly to see if you were selected for verification
- Students enrolling in a Community College in the fall may attend events at HHS

April/May

- Take AP exams in May as recommended
- Send the "statement of intent to register" to the college of their choice by May 1st
- Apply for housing and submit deposit as required
- Sign and return all financial documents if you received an award
- Notify colleges you do not plan on attending, & release the slot to students on the waitlist
- Attend the college preview day where you are admitted
- Request final transcript form from College & Career Center

June

- Congratulations, Graduate!
- Attend orientation program or registration day offered by your college
- NCAA eligibility center student-athletes, submit transcript request form to Registrar
- Complete the Senior Checkout Survey by Homestead
- Send thank you notes for any scholarships you have received
- Enjoy your summer. You deserve it!

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Once upon a time, not so long ago, applying for college was simple. Now-a-days, students have many choices and finding out how to apply and what the colleges require for each application has become very difficult to navigate. Fortunately, the schools on the Common Application publish a matrix of dates, deadlines, and requirements. You can find it on-line or in the binder in the CCC.

TYPES OF COLLEGE ADMISSION

Early Decision vs. Early Action

You should be aware of the differences between early decision and early action before sending in your applications. The exact rules may vary somewhat by college. Check the college websites carefully before you decide to use this option.

- Early decision plans are binding. You sign a contract to attend the college if it accepts you and offers an adequate financial aid package. Although you can apply to only one college ED, you may apply to other colleges through the regular admission process. If you are accepted by your first-choice college early, you must withdraw all other applications. Usually, colleges insist on a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1.
- Early action plans are similar but are not binding, unlike early decision. If you've been accepted, you can choose to commit to the college immediately, or wait until the spring. Under these plans, you may also apply early action to other colleges. Usually, you have until the late spring to let the college know your decision.
- Single-choice or restrictive early action is a fairly new option offered by a few colleges. During the early action period, you may not apply to any other colleges early. The decisions usually come out by middle of December. You should be confident you will attend this school if you get accepted.

Advantages of Early Application/Decision	Disadvantages
<p>→ Learning of a favorable admission decision early may mean that you do not have to fill out as many applications</p> <p>→ By applying early, you let a college know that you are very interested, and if you have a competitive profile, it may increase your admission chances.</p>	<p>→ You have to be ready for the college application process much earlier senior year and have less time to consider options and complete requirements.</p> <p>→ Admission data can be misleading. The brand name colleges regularly deny students with a 4.0 GPA.</p> <p>→ ED does not always allow for financial aid considerations. Your family may not be able to afford the costs of attendance.</p> <p>→ Some seniors benefit from having senior year grades or achievements to report, but this information will not be available by the early deadline.</p>

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Rolling Admissions Deadline

Colleges/Universities that use a rolling admission deadline review applications and make an admission decision as soon as a file is complete. Schools with a rolling admission continue to accept qualified applicants until they reach capacity. Students are encouraged to submit the application in the fall and should list an actual deadline on the HHS SSR request form.

Priority Admissions Deadline

Some colleges and universities have established a priority admissions deadline earlier than the regular decision deadline. A priority deadline is not binding, but similarly to the early action process, allows students to submit an application early and, in some cases, students will be notified of a decision with a few weeks. Many admission counselors have noted that a large portion of their class is admitted through the priority admission deadline. Once the quotas are filled, they close the major or program. Applying after the priority deadline may limit your campus and major choices. A good example of this is Purdue University in Indiana.

Scholarship Consideration Deadline

In many cases, colleges are establishing an earlier deadline for students wishing to be considered for any scholarships or awards. For example, Michigan State University reports the following information in the scholarship portion of their website – *Students who apply for admission by November 1 of their senior year in high school will receive maximum scholarship consideration. Funding is limited, and awards cannot be guaranteed for students who apply for admission after November 1.*

Likewise, University of Southern California (USC) has a scholarship consideration deadline – *All first-year applicants who submit a complete application by the December 1 deadline will be considered for USC Merit Scholarships and will receive notification of their status in February.*

Once again, please check each college's website for their application requirements and deadlines. If you have questions, please feel free to check in the College & Career Center.

Facts to Keep in Mind When Applying

Getting in to college is easier than you think, and many schools offer you money based on your grades and test scores. Only 5 percent of students go to colleges and universities considered "highly" or "most" competitive and 9 percent to "very competitive" ones, the University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Education and Pell Institute for the Study of Opportunity in Higher Education found. Only 50 universities admit less than 30% of their applicants. Yet, there are over 1,800 great colleges and universities where opportunities abound. Be daring and go off the BRAND name track. The challenge is on!

We strongly recommend Frank Bruni's book, "Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be". And, here is a good read from 03/08/2017. <http://hechingerreport.org/good-news-for-college-applicants-getting-in-is-easier-than-they-think/>

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NARROWING DOWN YOUR COLLEGE LIST

Use Naviance's Super Match or Scattergrams to find out whether your academic profile matches a given college. Collegedata.com is also a good website for all kinds of statistics. Another tool is [College Navigator](https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/), <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>. Browse by program or location, etc. Try to narrow down your list to between 7 and 10 colleges. Once you have done your research on programs and other criteria, you will be quite **excited** if any of these colleges accept you. Your final list might look like this:

1-2 Safety: These schools meet most of your other criteria and your GPA and test scores are above the averages.

3 Target: The right fit for you, but are fairly selective with about 50% admission rate. In April, you may have the opportunity to compare financial aid or merit scholarships.

2 Reach: These are dream schools, who regularly reject 4.0 students. Remember, most of these schools do not give merit scholarships.

1-3 Lottery: Ditto as stated above, but these schools have a high volume of global applicants, and accept 90% of the top 10% of applicants, meaning your acceptance chance is reduced to a single digit rate. Google this article by Allen Cheng: "How to Get in to Harvard".

Common Considerations for Choosing a College

Affordability. Talk with your parents about how to pay for college. Use the [Net Price Calculator](#) for an estimate. Read Lynn O'Shaughnessy's blog [The College Solution](#).

Location. Close to home, outside of California or International

Size of undergraduate population. Do graduate students get the first choice for opportunities?

Activities on campus. Football team, sorority or fraternity, club sports, music groups, etc.

Academic offerings. Can you apply undecided? Do they have co-ops? Check the department websites to see what the professors' research.

Fit. Requires time and thoughtfulness. Visit the campus, spend time in the cafeteria, or attend an event or class. Don't decide because your boyfriend/girlfriend attends.

Housing and Food. How new are the dorms? How crowded? Reputation for food quality. Consider the hours and how many dining halls on campus.

Other opportunities. Do they have a career center, recreation facility, culture of campus, diversity, intramural sports, public transportation and proximity to an airport?

Check the data. All colleges have a Common Data Set for any statistical information you are trying to find whether it is enrollment data or financial aid info. Search Common Data Set on the school's website.

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How to Navigate Naviance*

BRAG SHEET

Complete the Brag Sheet if you are applying to schools that require a Counselor or Teacher Recommendation. The Brag Sheet is a survey found under the About Me tab. Begin entering information early, as this is a long questionnaire. *We suggest you do this in google docs and paste in to Naviance.* Print this out and include in the Senior Guidance Folder.

RESUME

The Resume is found under the About Me tab. This is optional, but a nice tool in Naviance.

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

These should be answered if you will have a teacher or counselor writing you a letter. Have one of your parents answer the four questions, using your log in. The questions are also found under the About Me tab and are provided in this packet as a separate handout. Print this out and include in the Senior Guidance Folder.

SCATTERGRAMS

The Scattergrams feature is one of the most helpful tools the program offers. It allows you to view the outcomes of previous HHS applicants, as they pertain to specific colleges. Your specific academic information will be plotted on the graph and circled in red (using your GPA and/or test scores). **Please note that your personal data will not be plotted on the graph until you have entered at least one set of standardized test scores.** The vertical axis of the graph plots cumulative grade point averages, while the horizontal axis plots old SAT scores. Each point on the graph represents the application result of a previous Homestead High School student to that school. The green squares represent a student who was accepted to the college, and the point at which it is plotted allows you to see his/her GPA and SAT score. The red “x’s” represent a student who was not accepted the college, and the blue diamond’s represent a student who was waitlisted or deferred. The blue lines that intersect on the graph represent the *average* GPA and the *average* SAT score of those accepted to the school from HHS. The red circle on the graph represents where your credentials would be plotted amongst the other results.

***** Remember that these plotted points on the graph and average accepted scores DO NOT represent the college’s minimum requirements, but are shown to compare your credentials to past HHS students and their application results.**

SUPERMATCH[™] COLLEGE SEARCH

Under the “College” tab you will find a link to the SuperMatch. Select this and then pick the criteria that is important to you. The list gets shorter as you answer based on size, location, academics, costs, or GPA.

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COLLEGE COMPARE

The “College Compare” feature allows you to view a comparison chart of several colleges in terms of the credentials of students from Homestead High School who previously applied to each college, and the result of their applications. To view a college comparison:

1. Under the “Colleges” tab, click on “College Compare.” (Or, if you are already in the Colleges tab, select “College Compare” from the left menu.)
2. Enter up to 10 schools to compare, using the same steps as you did to search for “Colleges I’m Thinking About,” using the “College Picker” and click, “Compare Colleges.” You will see a screen that shows a comparison chart for all the colleges you selected.
3. For a more personalized comparison, you may also view the comparison chart using the colleges you selected under “Colleges I’m Thinking About,” by clicking “Compare Me.”
4. The chart displayed will compare your credentials with those of past Homestead High School students who applied to each of your schools.

ACCEPTANCE HISTORY

Acceptance History is a function that allows you to view all colleges and universities across the country, how many Homestead High School students have applied there over the last five years, and how many students decided to enroll there. The Acceptance History function can be found under the “Colleges” tab, and under the “College Research” section. Homestead uses unweighted, cumulative GPA. Many colleges use weighted GPA, however.

SCHOLARSHIPS

To view the scholarship list, click on “Scholarship List” under the “Colleges Home” tab, in the “Scholarships and Money” section on the right. The Scholarship List is extremely helpful when looking for opportunities for financial aid. Each year, Homestead High School receives information and reminders from many national and local organizations offering merit based and need based scholarships. Each one of these scholarships, along with basic information like deadline dates, application requirements, and award amounts is posted on this list. *If you click twice on the Deadline tab, you will sort the scholarships by due date.*

Other resources include:

NAME	WEBSITE
Undocumented Student Resources for scholarships	https://www.thebestcolleges.org/resources/undocumented-students/ Immigrantsrising.org
Scholarships by Month (scroll down)	https://jlvcollegecounseling.com/
Financial Aid Info (all you need)	https://studentaid.ed.gov/
GoingMerry to apply to many	https://www.goingmerry.com/
Cost of College Blog	http://www.thecollegesolution.com/
FAFSA	Fafsa.ed.gov
Cal Grant Info and WebGrants	https://mygrantinfo.csac.ca.gov/

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PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE IN NAVIANCE

For Common Application colleges

Remember this is required only if the student applying to private schools. Check the requirements of the college.

The college application process is involved and highly personal; we want to write a letter that best reflects the personality of your child and demonstrates their college readiness. In answering the following questions be funny, serious, proud and honest. The colleges do not see this, and the answers are kept confidential.

The more we know, the better our ability to help write a personal letter to the admissions offices. Think of this as your opportunity to draft your own letter of recommendation for your student. Have your student log in to Naviance, and find these questions under the About Me tab, Parent Questionnaire. Or copy and paste these, then print for your child to turn in with the transcript request form. Do not email to the counselor.

Have your student check the website or Common App to determine if Counselor Rec or Teacher Rec is required.

- 1. What do you consider to be the outstanding accomplishments of your student during the past three or four years? Why do you believe these are the most significant?**
- 2. What does your student enjoy learning about? Have certain subjects and/or teachers been common topics at the dinner table?**
- 3. What does your student enjoy most and least about high school?**
- 4. What can you tell us about your student at home that we do not see at school? Their responsibilities? The most delightful things?**

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2020-2021 COMMON APPLICATION ESSAY PROMPTS (PICK ONE)

<https://www.commonapp.org/>

1. 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.
2. 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?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution.
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. 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?
7. 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.

The most popular essay prompt of the 2019-2020 application year is "Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth..." (23.7%), followed by "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?" (21.1%).

COVID-19 Question on 2020-2021 Common App

Next year, if you need it, Common App is giving you the opportunity to share how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted you personally and academically. This will be an optional "common" question that you will only have to complete once. Located in the Additional Information section of the application, the question will allow colleges and universities to better understand your experience. Your school counselor will also have space in the Common App recommender system to talk about how the pandemic affected your school. Learn more about what this means for you on our [blog](#).