

Registrar and College Counseling Policies 2020-21

The Transcript

We send **official transcripts** to colleges, the NCAA clearinghouse, and summer programs on your behalf. If you leave Westtown, we will send them to your new school. We do not give official transcripts to students or parents - this makes them unofficial. (The only difference between an unofficial and official transcript is that a student or parent is not the conduit for an official transcript. The information is identical. This is a common practice for academic institutions.) **Unofficial transcripts** will be available on MyWesttown. They are updated after each semester. When you need us to send your official transcript on your behalf, please contact Debra Weaver, Westtown's Registrar.

The Westtown transcript does not include standardized test scores. Students must send these directly to colleges from the testing agency or report them on their college applications. **We do not report GPA** on the transcript, but we can calculate an **unweighted Westtown GPA** out of 100 points for scholarship or college applications that require it. **Westtown does not calculate weighted GPAs. We do not rank our students or report class ranking. We do not combine our GPA with those of other schools, if you attended another high school or earned credits at another school.**

We note **advanced courses** on the transcript, and you should designate them as "advanced" on the Common Application. While Westtown courses are often more challenging than AP courses, **they are not AP courses** - even if you take a related AP exam - and it is inaccurate to call any Westtown course an AP course. Depending on the guidelines of a college application, our classes may be called "advanced," "honors," or "college prep." For instance, the Self-Reported Academic Record, Coalition Application, and University of California application all have different ways of labeling our regular and advanced courses. Ask your college counselor if you are unsure. We also review these details in Junior and Senior Seminar.

When you apply to college, **Westtown will submit your entire high school academic record.** This includes academic credits earned at previous schools, summer courses, and online classes. If you entered Westtown after the start of ninth grade, we will check that we have official (signed and dated) transcripts from your previous school(s).

When you take a **summer or online course for credit**, please let the Registrar, Debra Weaver, know that you intend to take the course and, upon completion, send her your transcript. We then report the course credit and grade alongside your Westtown transcript. You are required to report to us and to your colleges any course taken for credit during your high school years. We will also follow up with your previous, summer, and online schools to request your transcript(s). Colleges want all high school credits and transcripts represented in your application.

Add/drop period: This is the period of time at the beginning of the semester, typically three weeks long, during which you can make changes to your schedule. After this time, courses in progress may not be changed without a withdrawal notation on the transcript. **We will not send senior transcripts to any colleges until the conclusion of the add/drop period, typically October 1, but specified each year. Please be sure to make all second semester**

course changes by October 15. If you make changes after this deadline or after you have already applied to college(s), you need to notify the college(s) where you applied. If you have already been admitted to a college, you need to ask permission to make the change, because the college admitted you based on the courses you said you were taking.

Athletic recruitment: When college coaches contact us about a student athlete, we forward **transcript requests** to the student, copying your parent, advisor, and coach on an email. If you are interested, you can then send your unofficial transcript from MyWesttown to the coach. We do this so students can be informed and in control of their recruitment process. Occasionally, athletes will need an updated unofficial transcript before it is ready on MyWesttown. In this case, please contact Debra Weaver, Westtown's Registrar. Any student that wants to be eligible for NCAA Division I/II must register with the **NCAA Eligibility Center**. After you register, we will send your official transcript to NCAA at the conclusion of your junior year. Please note that every high school you attended must submit an official transcript following your junior year. Students must also submit official test scores from ACT or College Board to the NCAA.

College Application Process

Code of Ethics

Westtown School's college counselors are members of the Pennsylvania Association for College Admission Counseling (PACAC) and the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) and comply with the **NACAC Code of Ethics and Professional Practices (CEPP)**.

Highlights of CEPP:

- We will not endorse more than one **early decision** application per application cycle, and we will not support more than one **admission deposit**. Your final transcript will only be sent to the one college where you are enrolled. If you withdraw from your college and accept a waitlist offer at another school, we will need confirmation of your withdrawal before sending your final transcript to a second school.
- All students answer questions about their disciplinary and criminal history on their college applications. **Students who have been dismissed, suspended, or found guilty of a crime during high school are required to answer these questions honestly on their college applications and write a brief explanation.** The student's college counselor will write a statement of support on behalf of any senior in this situation. If the disciplinary event occurred before the student's transcript is sent to colleges, the statement is included in the counselor's letter of recommendation. If it happens after that time, then a separate letter is sent. The college counselor will also guide the student in responding to disciplinary questions and communicating with colleges.
- Students, families, and Westtown staff have a **shared ethical responsibility** in the college process. It is unethical to submit false, plagiarized, or fraudulent statements on applications or other documents. Students will sign statements on their college

applications stating that all of the information is honest and accurate and that all of the writing is their own.

Recommendations

Students will usually ask two teachers from their junior year to write recommendations, and will typically complete these requests by the end of junior year. (We will discuss this process in detail in Junior Seminar.) Teachers upload their recommendations to Scoir in the fall of senior year, and Westtown's college counseling staff will submit the letters, along with your transcript and Westtown's school profile, to colleges. We can only submit recommendations from Westtown teachers and college counselors. If you have **another recommender** from a job or internship, you can add that person to the "Other Recommenders" section of the Common Application, or the recommender can send their letter directly to the college on your behalf.

Deadlines

Seniors are responsible for keeping their college application lists on Scoir and Common App updated. Incorrect deadlines could mean materials aren't sent promptly. We meet all deadlines on time, often in advance, and encourage you to do the same. If we have already sent your transcript and recommendations and you change your mind about applying, you cannot remove the college from your application list on Scoir, but we can do this for you.

For January 1 deadlines, you must have all colleges in your application list by December 15. The last day to add colleges to your list is the last day before winter break. Please plan ahead - Westtown School, the Registrar's Office, and the College Counseling Office are all closed during winter break.

Learning Differences and Medical Disclosures

In cases of learning differences and medical issues, it is up to the student and their family to decide what information, if any, should be released to colleges. We must have permission to disclose any such issues to colleges in the school's letter of recommendation. Please discuss any concerns with your college counselor, who will help you make a good decision about whether to share personal information with colleges.

Testing

Westtown administers the SAT and ACT periodically through the school year. For all other test dates when school is in session, we offer rides for boarding students to [a specific testing site](#). Students need to register at the specified location, then [sign up in advance for a ride](#). Students are responsible for sending official score reports from testing agencies to colleges; we do not report test scores to colleges.

Testing with Accommodations

Westtown's Learning Center helps students apply to take the ACT or SAT with accommodations (such as extended time). The deadline for requesting accommodations can be as much as seven weeks ahead of the test date, so make sure to start early. Please contact the learning center well in advance for assistance.

Testing and Application Fee Waivers

Students who receive 75% or greater need-based financial aid at Westtown are eligible for fee waivers. Please see T. Debra Weaver for testing fee waiver assistance. This link at College

Board has more details:

<https://collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register/fees/fee-waivers>

For families who meet income guidelines and are eligible for ACT/SAT fee waivers, Westtown will also approve application fee waivers on Common App or other college applications. Please see T. Debra or your college counselor for assistance.

If your family is experiencing a financial hardship such that testing or application fees are challenging, please reach out to your college counselor.

College Admissions Visitors to Westtown

During the fall, Westtown hosts over 100 college representatives to help colleges learn more about Westtown and to help students learn more about colleges. These meetings are important, especially for colleges that track demonstrated interest, as you often get the chance to meet one of the people who will read your application and advocate for you in the admissions process. Juniors and seniors may ask to miss class to meet with college representatives. Students must complete a [permission form](#) with the teacher's signature. Juniors and seniors may miss no more than five classes to meet with college visitors and are responsible for making up any missed work. Ninth and tenth graders are not allowed to miss class for these meetings, but are welcome to attend during a free, study hall, or lunch period. In the fall of 2020, these meetings will be online, and we will communicate with students about permission to miss class for these meetings.

Missing School to Visit Colleges

Students are urged to schedule visits to colleges during weekends and breaks, especially spring and summer breaks of junior year. If it is impossible to visit a college at another time, students may complete a [pink form](#) to request permission to miss school. The form must be signed by all teachers and turned in to the USO in advance of the visit.

Independent College Counselors and Educational Consultants

We encourage you to work closely with your Westtown college counselor to address your concerns before hiring an outside counselor. We are best positioned to judge a student's likelihood of admission and to help a student prepare the strongest application possible, as we best know the details of the Westtown experience. Through our close work with students on their college applications, we get to know them very well, which strengthens our letters of recommendation. Working with an outside counselor can sometimes weaken our relationship with the student, thus making the counselor recommendation less compelling.

If you do choose to work with an outside counselor, please tell us so we can work in partnership in order to best serve the student. Your student is still required to meet with their assigned Westtown counselor regularly and attend Junior and Senior Seminar. Please also be very cautious about the kind and degree of assistance you are acquiring. Colleges are increasingly wary of students who get too much help and whose applications are not truly their own work. In turn, it can be damaging to students to suggest that they need help beyond full-time Westtown counselors and Junior and Senior Seminar to apply to college. Make sure your outside support is reducing stress and anxiety for your family, not adding to it.