



Instructions for completing The Common Application when your high school is using Scoir

This guide shows students how to complete the **Recommenders**, **Fee Waiver**, and **Early Decision** sections of The Common Application when their high school is using Scoir to manage all application documents.

Recommenders

When completing the **Education** section of your Common App profile, you will be prompted to enter your Counselor's name and contact info. Since your counselor is using SCOIR to send your transcripts and recommendations, **be sure to leave Counselor's email and Counselor's phone fields <blank>**. This will prevent confusion and misrouting of school documents needed to complete your application.

The screenshot shows the 'Education' section of the Common App profile. The left sidebar lists various sections: Profile, Family, Education (highlighted), Testing, Activities, Writing, and Courses & Grades. The main content area is titled 'Education' and includes a 'Video Tutorials' button. Below this is a section for 'Current or Most Recent Secondary/High School'. It contains several fields and options: 'Date of entry' (with a date input field), 'Is this a boarding school?' (radio buttons for Yes/No), 'Did or will you graduate from this school?' (radio buttons for Yes/No), 'Graduation date' (with a date input field), and a list of checkboxes for progression options. At the bottom, there are fields for 'Counselor's prefix', 'Counselor's first name', 'Counselor's middle initial', 'Counselor's last name', 'Counselor's job title', 'Counselor's email', and 'Counselor's phone'. Red arrows point from the right side of the image to the 'Counselor's first name', 'Counselor's last name', 'Counselor's job title', 'Counselor's email', and 'Counselor's phone' fields. The 'Counselor's email' field is highlighted with a red box.

complete

complete

complete

LEAVE BLANK

optional

When completing your first college application, the **Recommenders and FERPA** section might require you to invite a Counselor recommender and one or more Teacher recommenders.

Dashboard **My Colleges** **Common App** **College Search** **Financial Aid Resources**

My Colleges

College Information

Application

Questions

Recommenders and FERPA

Review and Submit - Common App

Writing Supplement

Questions

Review and Submit - Writing Supplement

Recommenders & FERPA

✓ **FERPA Release Authorization**

[View Details](#) ▾

Invite Recommenders

Recommenders are people who will submit forms and information to colleges on your behalf. Check out our [video about recommenders](#).

Invite Recommenders

⚠ **Counselor**

You must invite a school Counselor who will complete the School Report and other forms for you.

Invite Counselor

⚠ **Teacher**

Please select and assign the Teacher(s) below whose recommendation will be submitted to this college on your behalf. You must invite a teacher with the Invite Teacher button before you can assign them to this college.

Required: 2 Optional: 0

Invite Teacher

Click "Invite Counselor" (if required) and complete the pop-up form. Be sure to **leave the email address field BLANK**.

The screenshot displays a web application interface with a top navigation bar containing 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. The left sidebar lists various sections: 'My Colleges', 'College Information', 'Application', 'Questions', 'Recommendations and FERPA', 'Review and Submit - Common App', 'Writing Supplement', 'Questions', and 'Review and Submit - Writing Supplement'. The main content area is titled 'Recommendations & FERPA' and includes a 'FERPA Release Authorization' section with a 'View Details' link. Below this is the 'Invite Recommendations' section, which contains a 'Recommendation' card for a 'Counselor'. The 'Counselor' card has a warning icon and the text 'You must invite a school Counselor'. A red dashed box highlights the 'Invite Counselor' button on this card. Below the 'Counselor' card is a 'Teacher' card with a warning icon and the text 'Please select and assign a teacher from a college on your behalf. You can assign them to this college or another college on your list.' Below the 'Teacher' card is an 'Invite Teacher' button. A red dashed box highlights the 'Invite Counselor' button in the 'Teacher' card. A pop-up form titled 'Invite Counselor' is overlaid on the right side of the screen. The pop-up form has a close button (X) in the top left corner. It contains the following fields: 'Title' (a dropdown menu with 'Choose an option' selected), 'First Name *' (a text input field with 'First Name' in red), 'Last Name *' (a text input field with 'Last Name' in red), and 'Email Address' (a text input field with '<<leave blank>>' in red). At the bottom of the pop-up form are two buttons: 'Cancel' and 'Invite'.

You'll then be instructed to provide various PDF forms to your counselor. **You do NOT need to provide these forms.** Your counselor will access and complete these forms within Scoir.

The screenshot shows the Scoir dashboard with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. The left sidebar has a 'My Colleges' section with a dropdown menu. The main content area is titled 'Recommendations & FERPA' and contains several sections: 'FERPA Release Authorization' with a 'View Details' link; 'Invite Recommenders' with a description and an 'Invite Recommenders' button; 'Counselor' with a description and a card for 'Mary Smith, School Counselor, Invited on 08/05/2019'; and 'PDF Forms' with a list of links: 'Fee Waiver', 'School Report', 'Counselor Recommendation', 'Optional Report', 'Mid Year Report', and 'Final Report'. A red box highlights the 'PDF Forms' section. To the right of the screenshot, red text reads: 'Ignore. Your counselor will complete these forms in Scoir.'

Recommendations & FERPA

✓ FERPA Release Authorization

[View Details](#) ▾

Invite Recommenders

Recommenders are people who will submit forms and information to colleges on your behalf. Check out our [video about recommenders](#).

[Invite Recommenders](#)

✓ Counselor

Your counselor has opted to submit paper evaluation forms instead of completing forms online. For any counselor form shown below, you will need to print and provide it to your counselor so that it can be completed on paper and mailed to each college to which you apply.

Mary Smith
School Counselor
Invited on 08/05/2019

PDF Forms

- [Fee Waiver](#)
- [School Report](#)
- [Counselor Recommendation](#)
- [Optional Report](#)
- [Mid Year Report](#)
- [Final Report](#)

Ignore. Your counselor will complete these forms in Scoir.

Click "Invite Teacher" (if required) and complete the pop-up form. Be sure to **leave the email address field BLANK**. Depending on the number of teacher recommendations required, you might need to invite multiple teachers.

The screenshot displays a web application interface with a top navigation bar containing 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. A left sidebar lists various sections: 'My Colleges', 'College Information', 'Application', 'Questions', 'Recommendations and FERPA', 'Review and Submit - Common App', 'Writing Supplement', and 'Questions'. The main content area is titled 'Recommendations & FERPA' and includes a 'FERPA Release Authorization' status, a 'View Details' link, and three sections: 'Invite Recommendation' (with an 'Invite Recommenders' button), 'Counselor' (with an 'Invite Counselor' button), and 'Teacher' (with an 'Invite Teacher' button). A red dashed hand cursor points to the 'Invite Teacher' button. An 'Invite Teacher' modal form is overlaid on the right, featuring a close button (X) and the following fields: 'Subject *' (dropdown menu with 'Select subject'), 'Title' (dropdown menu with 'Choose an option'), 'First Name *' (text input with 'First Name'), 'Last Name *' (text input with 'Last Name'), and 'Email Address' (text input with '<<leave blank>>'). At the bottom of the modal are 'Cancel' and 'Invite' buttons.

After “inviting” a teacher, you’ll still be prompted to assign specific teacher(s) to each individual application.

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search Financial Aid Resources

My Colleges

College Information

Application

Questions

Recommendations and FERPA

Review and Submit - Common App

Writing Supplement

Questions

Review and Submit - Writing Supplement

Recommendations & FERPA

✓ FERPA Release Authorization
[View Details](#) ▾

Invite Recommenders

Recommenders are people who will submit forms and information to colleges on your behalf. Check out our [video about recommenders](#).

[Invite Recommenders](#)

⚠ Counselor

You must invite a school Counselor who will complete the School Report and other forms for you.

[Invite Counselor](#)

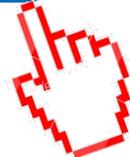
⚠ Teacher

Please select and assign the Teacher(s) below whose recommendation will be submitted to this college on your behalf. You must invite a teacher with the Invite Teacher button before you can assign them to this college.

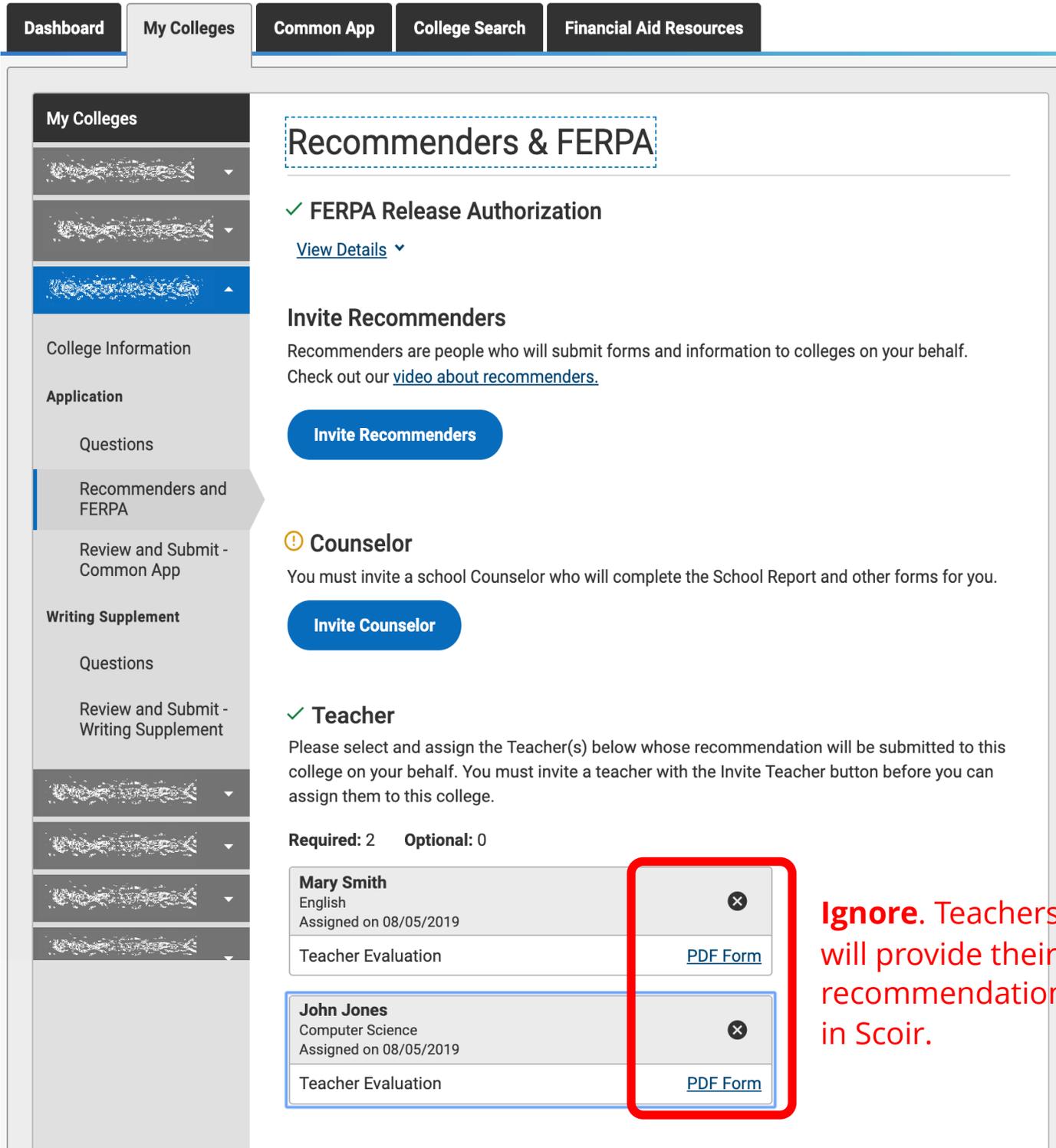
Required: 1 **Optional:** 2

[Assign](#)

[Invite Teacher](#)



You'll then be instructed to provide a Teacher Evaluation PDF form to your teachers. **You do NOT need to provide this form.** Your teachers will provide their recommendations within Scoir.



Dashboard **My Colleges** **Common App** **College Search** **Financial Aid Resources**

My Colleges

College Information

Application

Questions

Recommendations and FERPA

Review and Submit - Common App

Writing Supplement

Questions

Review and Submit - Writing Supplement

Recommendations & FERPA

✓ **FERPA Release Authorization**

[View Details](#) ▾

Invite Recommenders

Recommenders are people who will submit forms and information to colleges on your behalf. Check out our [video about recommenders](#).

[Invite Recommenders](#)

⚠ Counselor

You must invite a school Counselor who will complete the School Report and other forms for you.

[Invite Counselor](#)

✓ Teacher

Please select and assign the Teacher(s) below whose recommendation will be submitted to this college on your behalf. You must invite a teacher with the Invite Teacher button before you can assign them to this college.

Required: 2 Optional: 0

Mary Smith English Assigned on 08/05/2019	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher Evaluation	PDF Form
John Jones Computer Science Assigned on 08/05/2019	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher Evaluation	PDF Form

Ignore. Teachers will provide their recommendations in Scoir.

If inviting **Other Recommenders**, you can choose to either:

- (a) invite them via the Common App, in which case they will receive an email prompting them to upload their recommendations to Common App, which will deliver it along with your submitted applications.
- (b) ask them to provide the recommendation to your counselor, in which case your counselor will upload the document into Scoir, which will deliver it to all colleges to which you are applying (*provided they accept "other recommendations"*).

The screenshot shows the Scoir interface with a navigation bar at the top containing 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. The left sidebar has a 'My Colleges' section with several college entries, and a 'College Information' section with 'Application', 'Questions', 'Recommenders and FERPA', 'Review and Submit - Common App', and 'Writing Supplement' options. The main content area is titled 'Recommenders & FERPA' and is divided into two sections: 'Teacher' and 'Other Recommender'. The 'Teacher' section has a warning icon and a blue 'Invite Teacher' button. The 'Other Recommender' section has a checkmark icon and a blue 'Invite Other Recommender' button. A red box highlights the 'Other Recommender' section and the modal window. The modal window is titled 'Invite Other Recommender' and contains a dropdown menu for 'Title' (with the text 'Choose an option'), and text input fields for 'First Name *', 'Last Name *', and 'Email Address'. At the bottom of the modal are 'Cancel' and 'Invite' buttons.

Recommenders & FERPA

⚠ Teacher

Please select and assign the Teacher(s) below whose recommendation will be submitted to this college on your behalf. You must invite a teacher with the Invite Teacher button before you can assign them to this college.

Required: 2 Optional: 0

Invite Teacher

✓ Other Recommender

Please select and assign the Other Recommender(s) below whose recommendation(s) will be submitted to this college on your behalf. You must invite an Other Recommender using the 'Invite Other Recommender' link before you can assign them for this college.

Recommender types accepted by this college:

- Arts Teacher
- Clergy
- Coach
- College Access Counselor
- Employer
- Family Member
- Peer
- Other

Required: 0 Optional: 2

Invite Other Recommender

Invite Other Recommender

Title

Choose an option

First Name *

Last Name *

Email Address

Cancel

Invite

Login to Scoir, go to **My Colleges** and be sure to add your Common App colleges to the **Applying** section

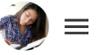
SCOIR

College Search

My Colleges

My Profile

13



Request Recommendation sort by **Deadline**

Suggested (5)
Schools you may like

- Arcadia University**
Glenside, PA
Avg SAT **1170** Avg ACT **25** Accept. Rate **62%**
Suggested by Dad McConahy
- Babson College**
Wellesley, MA
Avg SAT **1335** Avg ACT **28** Accept. Rate **24%**
Suggested by Counselor McCloskey
- Johns Hopkins University**
Baltimore, MD
Avg SAT **1525** Avg ACT **33** Accept. Rate **13%**
Suggested by Dad McConahy

Following (16)
Schools you like

- [Add a College](#)
- Adelphi University**
Garden City, NY
 - American University**
Washington, DC
Realist
 - Elon University**
Elon, NC
Stretch
 - Fayetteville State University**
Fayetteville, NC
Likely
 - Goucher College**
Baltimore, MD
Likely
 - High Point University**
High Point, NC
Stretch



Applying (7)
Applications in Progress

- [Add a College](#)
- University of Pennsylvania**
Philadelphia, PA
Regular Decision **Jan 5**
Pending Acknowledgement
 - Davidson College**
Davidson, NC
Early Decision **Nov 15**
Tasks complete **0/5** Docs sent **6/6**
Stretch
 - College of William and Mary**
Williamsburg, VA
Regular Decision **Jan 1**
Tasks complete **0/9** Docs sent **0/3**
Stretch

Applied (3)
Submitted Applications

- Where are you enrolling?**
Drop your choice here.
- Duke University**
Durham, NC
Regular Decision **Jan 2** **Pending**
Tasks complete **0/6** Docs sent **0/5**
Stretch
 - Bucknell University**
Lewisburg, PA
Regular Decision **Jan 15** **Accepted**
Tasks complete **4/6** Docs sent **0/4**
Stretch

Not Interested [View \(6\)](#)

While on the **My Colleges** page, click **Request Recommendations** and enter the name of your teacher(s) from whom you are requesting a letter of recommendation.



Request Recommendation

Teacher*

Type in teacher's name and select from list

Subject*

Request for Recommendation

Message*

Include personal note to your teacher

Cancel Send

Applied (3)

Submitted Applications

are you enrolling?
Drop your choice here.

Duke University
Durham, NC

Regular Decision Jan 2 Pending
Tasks complete 0/6 Docs sent 0/5
Stretch

Bucknell University
Lewisburg, PA

Regular Decision Jan 15 Accepted
Tasks complete 4/6 Docs sent 0/4
Stretch

Not Interested View (6)

Early Decision Applications

If you're applying Early Decision to a college, you will be required to acknowledge and agree to the terms of an Early Decision Agreement. This document also needs to be signed by a parent/guardian and your high school counselor. In Scoir, you can download an "ED Contract" document to sign and have a parent/ guardian sign, then deliver to your counseling office so they can easily send it along with all other application-related documents.

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search Financial Aid Resources

My Colleges

Questions Video Tutorials

General

The questions on this page are being asked by [redacted]

Entry term*

Fall 2020

Preferred admission plan*

Early Decision

Do you intend to pursue need-based financial aid?*

Yes

No

Clear Answer

If you are accepted under an Early Decision plan, you must promptly withdraw the applications submitted to other colleges and universities and make no additional applications to any other university in any country. If you are an Early Decision candidate and are seeking financial aid, you need not withdraw other applications until you have received notification about financial aid from the admitting Early Decision institution.*

Yes, I have read and understand my rights and responsibilities under the Early Decision Process. I wish to be considered as an Early Decision candidate at [redacted]. I also understand that with an Early Decision offer of admissions, this institution may share my name and my early commitment with other institutions.

ED Signature*

Do you intend to use one of these school-specific fee waivers?*

Choose an option

Continue

Fee Waivers

If you're applying to a college using a Common App Fee Waiver or a college-specific fee waiver, you must complete this section in your Common App profile so colleges know not to charge you an application fee. However, you must also request a Fee Waiver in Scoir so your counselor knows to send a copy of this document to the colleges to which you are applying.

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search Financial Aid Resources

Common Application

- Profile
- ✓ Family
- ✓ Education
- ✓ Testing
- ✓ Activities
- Writing
- ✓ Courses & Grades
1 college(s) require

Profile

Video Tutorials

- ✓ Personal Information
- ✓ Address
- ✓ Contact Details
- ✓ Demographics
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ Language
- ✓ Citizenship

Common App Fee Waiver

Our member colleges want to make sure that application fees do not pose a barrier for any student who wishes to apply for admission. Do you feel that your financial circumstances might qualify you for an application fee waiver? [Learn more*](#)

Yes
 No

Clear Answer

You must meet at least one of the following indicators of economic need to qualify for an application fee waiver. Select all that apply:*

- I have received or am eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver
- I am enrolled in or am eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL)
- My annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- I am enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound)
- My family receives public assistance
- I live in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or am homeless
- I am a ward of the state or an orphan
- [I can provide a supporting statement from a school official, college access counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader](#)

I certify that I understand and meet the eligibility requirements to request an admission application fee waiver. I also understand if I am a first year student my counselor will be asked to verify my eligibility.

Fee Waiver signature:*

Jane Doe

I would like to receive information from Strive for College (US residents only)

Yes
 No

Clear Answer

Continue

When submitting your application, you'll see this note informing you that no payment is required. However, **be sure to indicate in Scoir that you're applying with a Fee Waiver**. Colleges might consider your application *incomplete* without payment or a corresponding fee waiver.

The screenshot shows the Scoir application submission interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Dashboard, My Colleges, Common App, College Search, and Financial Aid Resources. The main content area is titled "Application Submission" and includes a progress indicator with three steps: 1 Final Review, 2 Payment, and 3 Signature & Submission. A modal window titled "Review and Submit" is overlaid on the page, containing an information icon and the text: "You have indicated in your application that you are requesting an application fee waiver. Please continue to the certification page to finish the application submission process." Below this text are "Back" and "Continue" buttons. In the background, a "Review and Submit" button is visible at the bottom right of the submission page.

HELP, I INCLUDED EMAIL ADDRESSES WHEN ADDING MY RECOMMENDERS

If you included an email address when adding your school counselor and/or teachers as *Recommenders*, that's OK. As long as they haven't submitted their recommendations, you can still uninvite them. You can do this by going into any application on your My Colleges page and clicking "**Manage Recommenders**".

The screenshot shows the 'My Colleges' dashboard with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area. The main content area is titled 'Recommenders & FERPA' and includes sections for FERPA Release Authorization, Invite Recommenders, and Counselor/Teacher management. A red hand cursor points to the 'Manage Recommenders' button. Below this, a table shows the status of recommendations for a counselor and a teacher. A red box highlights 'Not Started' for the counselor's 'Counselor Recommendation' and 'Started' for the teacher's 'Teacher Evaluation'.

Recommender	Role	Invited/Assigned On	Status
Mary Johnson	School Counselor	Invited on [redacted]	
	Fee Waiver		Started [redacted]
	School Report		Started [redacted]
	Counselor Recommendation		Not Started
	Optional Report		
	Mid Year Report		
	Final Report		
Jane Jones	Social Studies	Assigned on [redacted]	
	Teacher Evaluation		Started [redacted]

You'll then see an overlay pop-up window listing all your Recommenders. Go to your counselor's and/or teacher's tile a click the **"Delete" icon**. You'll then be prompted to confirm this action.

The image shows a user interface for managing recommenders. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Dashboard, My Colleges, Common App, College Search, and Financial Aid Resources. The main content area is titled "Recommenders & FERPA" and contains a "Manage Recommenders" pop-up window. This window lists four recommenders: Jane Jones (Teacher), Mary Doe (Parent), Mary Johnson (Counselor), and John Jones (Teacher). Each tile includes a status (Invited, Submitted, or Offline) and a "Delete" button. Red boxes highlight the "Teacher" and "Counselor" roles for Jane Jones and Mary Johnson, respectively. Red dashed boxes and arrows indicate the user clicking the "Delete" buttons for Jane Jones and Mary Johnson. A confirmation dialog box is overlaid on the interface, asking: "Permanently deleting this recommender will also remove them from any college to which they are assigned. Would you still like to delete this recommender?" with "Cancel" and "Delete" options.

Name	Role	Status	Action
Jane Jones	Teacher	Invited	Delete
Mary Doe	Parent	Submitted	Delete
Mary Johnson	Counselor	Invited	Delete
John Jones	Teacher	Offline	Delete

Confirmation Dialog:

Permanently deleting this recommender will also remove them from any college to which they are assigned. Would you still like to delete this recommender?

Buttons: Cancel, Delete

Now that your counselor and/or teacher is deleted from your list of Recommenders, you'll need to again click *Invite Counselor* and/or *Invite Teacher*. This time, **leave the Email Address field <<blank>>**.

Dashboard **My Colleges** **Common App** **College Search** **Financial Aid Resources**

My Colleges

Recommenders & FERPA

✓ **FERPA Release Authorization**
[View Details](#) ▾

Invite Recommenders
Recommenders are people who...
Check out our [video about reco](#)

Invite Recommenders

Counselor
You must invite a school Couns...
Invite Counselor

Teacher
Please select and assign the Te...
college on your behalf. You mus...
assign them to this college.
Required: 2 Optional: 0
Invite Teacher

Invite Counselor

Title
Choose an option ▾

First Name *
First Name

Last Name *
Last Name

Email Address
<<leave blank>>

Cancel **Invite**

You'll then be instructed to provide various PDF forms to your *Recommenders*. **You do NOT need to provide these forms.** Your counselor and/or teacher will access and complete these forms within Scoir.

Dashboard **My Colleges** **Common App** **College Search** **Financial Aid Resources**

My Colleges

Recommenders & FERPA

✓ **FERPA Release Authorization**
[View Details](#) ▾

Invite Recommenders
Recommenders are people who will submit forms and information to colleges on your behalf. Check out our [video about recommenders](#).

Invite Recommenders **Manage Recommenders**

✓ **Counselor**
Your counselor has opted to submit paper evaluation forms instead of completing forms online. For any counselor form shown below, you will need to print and provide it to your counselor so that it can be completed on paper and mailed to each college to which you apply.

Mary Johnson
School Counselor
Invited on [redacted]

PDF Forms

- [Counselor ED Agreement](#)
- [Fee Waiver](#)
- [School Report](#)
- [Counselor Recommendation](#)
- [Optional Report](#)
- [Mid Year Report](#)
- [Final Report](#)

Teacher
Please select and assign the Teacher(s) below whose recommendation will be submitted to this college on your behalf. You must invite a teacher with the Invite Teacher button before you can assign them to this college.

Jane Jones
Social Studies
Assigned on [redacted]

Teacher Evaluation **PDF Form**

Ignore. Your counselor and teachers will complete these forms in Scoir.

If your counselor and/or teachers login to Common App after you've uninvited them, they will see the following screen. (If they've been invited by other students, your name will just no longer show as one of their *Students*.)



Welcome, Jane!
2019-2020



Sign Out

About Your Account

This account is not yet associated with a Common App online recommender role. You will be invited to accept a recommender role as soon as the first student invites you from his/her Common App account (you will receive an email from us alerting you to this invitation).

If you are a teacher or counselor and your school uses one of our [partner solutions](#) for letters and transcripts, you will use that system instead of Common App to submit your teacher and counselor materials. You should only use this Common App account if a student invites you as an Other Recommender.

If you believe that you have reached this page in error, please contact the Solutions Center.

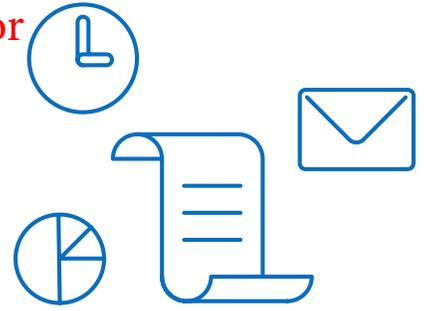
CONGRATULATIONS!

You're now able to complete and submit your Common Application without causing confusion for your counselors and teachers.

Have any questions or concerns?
Drop us a note and we'll get back to you ASAP!

SCOIR
support@scoir.com

Do not put counselor email or
teacher emails in Common
APP!



High school details information sheet

How to use this resource

In the Common App all students need to answer several questions about their high school and counselor. However, not all students know this information or where to find it. This sheet will help you collect and easily share these details with your students.

All you need to do is fill out the information in the fields that follow and distribute the sheet to your students.

FAQs

How do students report GPA scale in the application?

The GPA scale appears as a drop down menu in the application, with options of 4 through 20 and 100. If your school doesn't calculate a cumulative numerical GPA, or if it uses a GPA scale that is different than the options available, select "N/A". This information is not required in the application.

My school calculates both weighted and unweighted GPA. Which should students select?

In this case, students should report the weighted value.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

For more information, visit our Solutions Center at recsupport.commonapp.org or email us at sfsupport@commonapp.net.

Understanding the Testing section in Common App



The Testing section lets you self-report scores of any standardized tests you've taken. Standardized tests are any form of test that requires all test takers to answer the same questions in the same way, and that is scored in a "standard" or consistent manner.

Each college and university can choose their own testing policy. If you're deciding which tests to take (or which to report), double check the policies of the colleges you're applying to. College's testing requirements are listed on their College Information page. The Requirements Grid also shows you each college's and testing requirements.

College testing policies

Always required:

Standardized test scores are always a required part of the application.

Sometimes required:

Standardized test scores are sometimes required as part of the application. Check a college's College Information page for specific details.

Never required:

Standardized test scores are never a required part of the application.

Flexible:

This means alternatives to standardized test scores (like a graded paper) may be accepted. Colleges with this policy may also accept different types of tests, like AP tests. Be sure you check the college's website for more information.

Standardized tests you can report in Common App

College admission tests:

- ACT
- SAT

Subject tests:

- SAT Subject Tests
- AP Subject Tests
- IB Subject Tests
- Cambridge Tests

English proficiency tests:

- TOEFL
- PTE Academic
- IELTS
- Duolingo English Test

**Ignored:**

Standardized test scores are ignored if they are received.

If you do plan to report standardized test scores, keep in mind these scores are self-reported and not official. Official test scores will still need to be sent to colleges through the testing agency.

As you begin filling out your Common App, remember that you have some flexibility in the Testing section. You can choose how to complete this section and which colleges receive your test scores. This is especially useful if you are applying to colleges with different testing policies.

Did you know?

You can search for colleges based on their testing requirements.

To remove test scores all you need to do is go to the Tests Taken section and remove the test(s) you selected. If you don't plan on submitting any scores to a college, answer that "No" you do not want to self-report scores. That will complete the section and remove any information you had previously entered from any future submissions.

Don't worry! The information you entered won't completely disappear. To add your previously entered test scores, answer "Yes", you would like to report scores. Then, add back the test you had listed before. The sections will reappear, along with your answers.

For more information about filling out the Testing section, visit our help resources at commonapp.org/help.

Telling your story

How to approach the essay



The Common App essay instructions ask you what you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores. You have 7 prompts but endless possibilities to tell your story. Here are some ideas to inspire your thinking.



Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, please share your story.

Think about

- Your community, environment, family, and culture
- What you're deeply curious about and how you spend your time
- What makes you proud
- People and experiences that have shaped your life

Ask yourself

- What's missing from the rest of my application?
- Is there context to help colleges understand who I am?



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?

Think about

- All obstacles: big, small, personal, and societal
- Hardships faced by family or friends that also impacted you
- Unresolved challenges you're still struggling with

Ask yourself

- How did I cope? How did I grow?
- Who helped me?



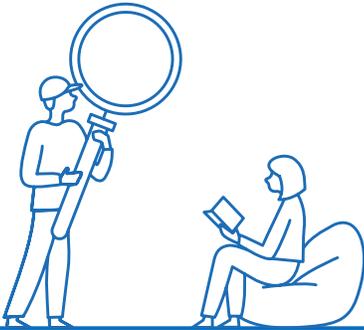
Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?

Think about

- Anywhere you spend time: school, clubs, work, home, place of worship
- Everyone you interact with: friends, teammates, family, teachers, coaches

Ask yourself

- Did the experience clarify or change my values?
- What was the impact on my relationships?
- Did I surprise myself—or anyone else?



Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?

Think about

- All types of interaction: Compliments, criticism, gifts, advice, support
- People who know you well and people who don't

Ask yourself

- What made the interaction surprising?
- How did I feel?
- How did I react?



Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.

Think about

- The full range of your achievements, both public and private
- Small or everyday experiences that had a powerful impact on you
- Times when you were surprised by what you learned or discovered

Ask yourself

- How did I change?
- How can I continue to grow?
- How can I share what I learned with others?



Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging 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?

Think about

- How you choose to spend your free time
- Your hobbies, your classes
- What you read, what you write, what you create

Ask yourself

- How did my curiosity start?
- What does this interest tell others about me?
- What does this interest tell me about myself?



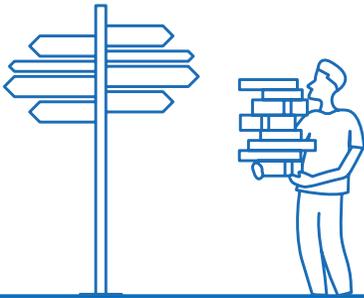
Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.

Think about

- What you want to share, not what you think colleges want to hear
- Topics that reveal who you are and what matters to you

Ask yourself

- Does this essay provide new information to my colleges?
- Is there anything left unsaid in my application?



Thank you to former high school college advisor Alice Kleeman and the Harvard Graduate School of Education's Making Caring Common Project for their inspiration and contributions to this resource.



Approaching the Activities section

The Activities section is one of the seven sections of the Common App tab. In it you have the chance to tell colleges more about who you are outside the classroom. You can use this section to highlight the activities that have been the most meaningful to you throughout high school.

Take a moment to reflect on what types of activities you may want to include. Did you have family responsibilities, a job, internship, or volunteer work? What about hobbies or sports?

Use this space to jot down an activity or two you might want to share.

You can add up to ten activities to your application, but that doesn't mean that you need to enter ten. On average, students applying through Common App report 6 activities.

Don't forget, this section is how colleges can get to know more about you. It can show what makes you unique: your pursuits, interests, and passions. Focus on what activities can best tell that story and not on the number you're reporting.

The Activities section is one of our team's favorite sections of the application. Activities add persona to an application; they demonstrate an applicant's interests outside of the classroom and allow us a glimpse into that applicant's passions, further demonstrating how that individual may enhance our student community.

—Adelphi University (Garden City, NY)



How it works

First, you'll select your activity type. If your activity type isn't listed, you can choose "other club/activity" from the dropdown menu. You can give more details in the position/leadership and activity description fields.

Next, you'll briefly describe the activity and your position. You have limited space in these fields, so you may need to abbreviate words and simplify your grammar.

Characters allowed:

- 50 characters – Position/Leadership description
- 100 characters – Organization name
- 150 characters – Activity details, honors won, and accomplishments

Example activity descriptions

Original

For two years I volunteered at my local animal shelter. I helped out where needed, but mainly walked dogs and monitored the front desk. Last year I was asked to take on more responsibility and have been volunteering as the receptionist during the weekends. (256 characters)

Edited

Volunteer at local animal shelter walking dogs and running front desk. Given more responsibility last year and now volunteer as receptionist. (141 characters)

The edited version fits the character limit and still gives the important details. The time spent on the activity has been taken out, because that information is reported elsewhere in the section.

For each activity you'll provide the hours spent per week on the activity, and then the weeks spent per year. If you can't remember the exact details, like the time spent on an activity, it's alright to give your best guess.

For more information, visit our Solution Center at appsupport.commonapp.org