

## 2023-2024 Common Application Instructions

### Step 1: Getting Started - Go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

- **Preferred Device.** If you have access to a laptop/desktop computer, this is preferred. If not, an iPad can work. While it may be difficult to work on your Common App via your smartphone given the size of the screen, there is a [mobile app](#) to help make it easier.
- **Preferred Browser.** Google Chrome is the preferred browser.
- **Set-Up.** Disable all pop-up blockers. Ensure that your browser has JavaScript activated and cookies enabled
- **Emails from Common App.** All emails you receive from common app will be sent from [appsupport@commonapp.net](mailto:appsupport@commonapp.net) or [application\\_help@commonapp.net](mailto:application_help@commonapp.net). Please be sure to add these email addresses to your address book and/or safe list to prevent the messages from being blocked as “SPAM.”

### Step 2: How to Register for the Common App

Applicants must first register before applying to Common App to receive a username/password.

- Click on “Create on Account”
- All required fields are marked with a red asterisk
- Use your full legal name
- Be sure to provide a valid, appropriate email address (school email or personal email - either one can work)
- Your password must contain a capital letter, number and symbol.
  - **Important** - We recommend using something VERY simple like *#Depaul2024* or *Depaul2024!*
  - *Please DO NOT rely on your device to “remember” your password. Write it down, text it to yourself, save it somewhere. For example, enter it in the “Passwords” tab of your College Application Organizer.*
  - You will use this information anytime you need to access the Common Application. If you lose this information or forget your password, you will have to contact Common App’s Support Center - which can take some time.
- You are a **“First Time Student”**

- You are an **“Applicant planning to enroll 2024”**
- Your choice to check (we recommend saying “yes”) - The colleges that I am considering for application may communicate with me by email prior to submission of my application (you can subsequently change your response to this question in your account settings) - check all three boxes.
- Once your registration is complete, you can log in.
- You are now ready to begin completing the application and apply.

### Step 3: My Colleges Tab

You can add or delete colleges from this list at any time. We recommend adding a few schools now, but you can add and remove schools at any time. Only the college(s) you’ve selected will receive your application when you hit “SUBMIT.” Don’t feel pressure to complete this section right away - you can change this list as you go (Add and Delete schools).

- Click the **“College Search”** tab
  - Search for a college - Check the box next to the college you want to apply to, then click **“+Add”**
  - Click **“Dashboard”** to see the college on your list.
- The legend below describes what each colored symbol represents
  - **Green** check marks signify that work has been submitted to that college
  - **Yellow** circles indicate work that is ready to submit or is still being worked on
  - **Red** lines indicate that work is not required for that school
- In the Fall, during Senior Advisory, we will “link” your Maia and Common App accounts. The schools you have listed in CA will pop up in Maia, automatically - cool right?!

### Step 4: Common App Tab - Profile

Click on the “Common App” tab to begin completing the Common App form. This section of the Common App will be sent to each of your colleges.

- **Profile.** You will begin by completing the “Profile” section. Fill out each tab under this section which includes: Address, Contact Detail, Demographics, Language, Geography and Nationality

- **Application Fee Waiver.** You must select Yes or No.
  - **To select “Yes,” you must meet at least one of the following indicators of economic need:**
    - You have received or are eligible to receive an ACT/SAT fee waiver.
    - You are enrolled in or eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL).
    - Your annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service.
    - You are enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound).
    - Your family receives public assistance.
    - You live in a federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or are homeless.
    - You are a ward of the state or an orphan.
    - You can provide a supporting statement from a school official, college access counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader - see *your counselor if your family is economically disadvantaged and the application fee will be difficult to manage*
  - ***If you have financial need but are unsure as to whether you qualify for a fee waiver, then please discuss with your DCP College Counselor.***

## Step 5: Common App Tab - Family

You will likely need assistance from your family/parents in this section.

- **Household Information.** You will complete the following information:
  - **Parent Marital Status.** Indicate parents’ marital status.
  - **Permanent Home.** Indicate with whom do you make your permanent home.
- **Parent Information.** Answer questions about each parent:
  - Name, Address, Occupation, Education Level, College, Degrees Received and Year graduated are required.
- **Sibling Information.** Specify number of siblings you have (name, relationship, grade level required)
  - Indicate all siblings that you have, even if they do not live in your household. You may add siblings, half siblings, or step siblings only.

- For siblings who have not yet earned a degree, enter the degree they are expected to earn.
- If you need to enter more than five siblings, use the Additional Information section, located on the Writing page.

## Step 6: Common App Tab - Education

- **Current High School.** Search for and select DePaul College Prep in database (CEEB Code: 140850)
  - **Date of Entry:** August 2020 (unless you transferred into DePaul from another HS)
  - Select **NO** for boarding school
  - **Graduation Date:** May 2024
  - **Education Interruption:** If your progression through DePaul Prep was or will be delayed or interrupted in any way, you will need to provide an explanation for each incident you have selected. This would include *significant* leaves of absences, or full semesters off.
    - You will need to complete the following prompt: *“Please use the space below to provide details about the change in progression through secondary/high school that you indicated above.”* (Max 250 words).
- **Other Secondary/High School.** If you have attended **only** DePaul Prep during your 4 years of high school, then answer **ZERO**. If you have attended **more than one** high school, enter the number from the drop-down list. You will then need to:
  - Find the High School
  - Enter “Secondary From Date” and “Secondary To Date”
  - Complete the following prompt: *“Please provide details about why you left each of the above secondary/high schools.”* (Max 250 words)
- **Colleges & Universities.** If you have taken a college/university course beginning with 9th grade, please enter the number of colleges. If no, enter zero. If you have, you will need to indicate which college and course details.
  - This **DOES** include DePaul University Dual Enrollment courses (DePaul U).
  - This **DOES NOT** include AP or IB courses.
- **Grades.** Please see your DCP College Counselor for a copy of your transcript.
  - **Graduating class size (approximate):** 233
  - **Class rank reporting:** None
  - **GPA Scale reporting:** We are on a **4.0 scale**
  - **Cumulative GPA:** List **weighted** GPA after 6 semesters of work
  - **GPA weighting:** Indicate ***weighted*** as reported above

- **Current or Most Recent Year Courses.** List every class on your **SENIOR YEAR** schedule - first and second semester
  - Include course title (as it appears on your transcript)
  - Course level is “College Prep” unless indicated as Honors, IB, or AP
  - Course credit: 1.0 for full year courses, .5 for semester courses
- **Honors.** Indicate if you have received any academic honors beginning with the ninth grade. Include the definition with the honor. This is NOT “honors” classes - these are recognitions - like Language Scholar, State Scholar. Academic All-Conference, NHS, etc.
  - Since National Honor Society selection is done at the school level, you should designate it both as a school honor and a National level
  - National Merit Commended Scholar and National Merit Semifinalist recognition are both appropriately designated as State/Regional honors. National Merit Finalist and National Merit Scholar recognition are both appropriately designated as National honors.
  - IB Scholar is a National recognition.
- **Community-Based Organizations (CBO).** Indicate the number of community programs or organizations that have provided you with free assistance in your application process.
  - Examples of these types of community based organizations include Chicago Scholars, Daniel Murphy, High Sight, Posse, or Mercy Home, etc.
  - Answer questions pertaining to these organizations, if it applies.
- **Future Plans.** Indicate potential career interest and highest degree you intend to earn. Don't worry - this is **NOT** where you declare a major, it's simply demographic information. You will indicate major choices in a different section.

## Step 7: Common App Tab - Testing

Do you wish to self report standardized test scores? Yes or No (You DON'T need to)

- If **NO** (or you don't know yet) - We recommend that you **do not** share your standardized scores in this section. If you are unsure, or plan to submit scores to some, but not all, schools, you should leave this section blank.
- If **YES**, indicate all tests you have taken or expect to take (ACT, SAT, SAT Subject Tests, AP Subject Test, IB Test) that you want to share with your colleges
  - For example, indicate the number of times you took the ACT, report your highest individual composite score. Also report the highest subscores earned so far,

even if they are from different test dates - indicate test date. Please note that this reporting method is not meant to imply that colleges will compute a new composite "superscore" based on your individual subscores. Similarly, you should not attempt to calculate a new composite "superscore" based on your individual subscores.

- Previous ACT test dates:
- Previous SAT test dates:
- AP and IB - for PAST scores, indicate your score (if you want reviewed). For tests you've yet to take (plan to take as a Senior), simply list the course/test, and leave the score empty.
- If you intend to submit standardized scores - **You should also send official test scores directly to your colleges from ACT or SAT (College Board) in the Fall if required (please verify whether each college allows you to self-report scores or requires you to send official score reports directly from ACT or SAT/College Board)**
- **International Applicants.** Is promotion within your educational system based upon standard leaving examinations given at the end of lower and/or senior secondary school by a state or national leaving examinations board? No

## Step 8: Common App Tab - Activities

Complete this section as directed even if you plan on attaching a résumé

- **List Activities.** Indicate "Yes," that you have activities you would like to report. Put your activities in the order of interest to you. For example, the first activity should represent **your most important activity** (you can adjust the order by using the arrows in the upper right of each activity) and the last activity listed should be the least important to you..
  - Don't forget about your sports (school, club), clubs at DCP, your work experience (summer jobs, babysitting, etc.), and all of your non-school activities (avid reader, art and music pursuits, volunteer work, etc.). If you have family responsibilities - like caring for younger siblings, cooking dinner, translation for parents, etc. - you should definitely include these as well!
  - Don't feel obligated to use ALL 10 spaces. Better to highlight a few strong activities and interests than list too many without depth or purpose.
  - If you need more space to list activities, go to the "Writing" section of the Common App and then enter in the "Additional Information" section.

- **Activity Type.** Select the category that best describes the activity type (athletic; JV/Varsity, art, community service, etc).
- **Position/Leadership Description.** Write your role within the activity. Examples include Member, President, Treasurer, Sales Associate, Quarterback, Manager.
- **Organization Name.** Write the name of the club, team, place of employment, etc.
- **Description.** Be thoughtful in your description of activities. Use an active voice that demonstrates accomplishments, leadership, or growth. Since the limit is 150 characters, you do not need to use complete sentences. Below are examples:
  - Editor, *The Ram Page*. Began as a reporter, writing stories about topics like (insert example. Now, as editor, responsible for generating story ideas, assigning articles,, and editing.
  - Captain, DePaul Prep Varsity Boys Basketball. Three-year starter. As captain, lead warm-ups, mentor younger teammates, and serve as liaison between players/coaches. 2023 State Champions.
  - Cashier, Chick Fil-A. Greet customers, take orders, and process transactions. Employee of the Month in January 2023.
- **Participation Grade Levels.** Indicate which years you participated in the activity.
- **Timing.** Indicate when you participated in the activity.
- **Hours/Week.** Indicate how many hours per week and weeks per year you spend on your activities. You can estimate here, and use averages if the times vary throughout the year.
- **Participate in College.** Indicate whether you plan to participate in this activity during college.

### Step 9: Common App Tab - Writing

- **Personal Essay.** Select “I understand” that some colleges require a personal essay. You can also submit an essay even if it's not required (NOTE: In this section, there will be a list of which of your current colleges require the essay and which do not).
  - **Word Limit.** 650 words is your limit, not your goal. Use the full range if you need it, but don't feel obligated to do so. The application won't accept a response shorter than 250 words.
  - **Essay Prompt.** Select which [2023-2024 prompt](#) that your essay addresses.
  - **Write the Essay.** Your Personal Essay should be written in another app (like Google docs) and then uploaded/pasted. Don't attempt to write in this space - use the upload feature from Google Drive or cut and paste from your original document.

- After you have pasted/uploaded, please proofread to check for any spacing, formatting, or font issues.
- **Additional Information.** There are two **OPTIONAL** essays that you can choose to complete.
  - **Community Disruptions.** The 2023-2024 Common App will provide students who need it a dedicated space to elaborate on the effects of the pandemic, both personally and academically. Students should work directly with their DCP College Counselor on this section.
    - Prompt: *Please use this space to describe how these events impacted you. (Max 250 words)*
  - **Additional Information.** This section can be used to describe what happened with a decrease in grades, to include additional activities, explain a challenging life circumstance that impacted your academic performance, or simply to describe a situation that you feel is important for the admission committee to know. Students should work directly with their College Counselor on this section.
    - Prompt: *You may use the space below to provide any additional information you wish to share. (Max 650 words)*

### Step 11: My Colleges - Answering College-Specific Questions

- Go to the “My Colleges” section and select the college where you will be applying.
  - **College Information.** In this section, you will view links to the college website and find details related to their application including deadlines, application fees, testing policy, and application components, etc.
  - **Questions.** The questions in this section are specific to each college. You will see that this format varies from college to college. Some sections may include:
    - **General** - Basic questions about when you plan to enroll and whether you will submit test scores, etc.
    - **Academics** - This is where you will indicate what you plan to study. In **some** instances, you will be asked to respond to an essay prompt asking why you picked that particular program or major.
    - **Writing** - Some colleges will include their supplemental essay prompts in the “Questions” section.

### Step 12: FERPA Release Authorization **(VERY IMPORTANT)**



- **Click “FERPA and Assign Recommenders.”** You only need to complete the FERPA Authorization **ONE TIME**. Once you “sign” your FERPA statement, you DO NOT need to do this for other/additional schools - it will transfer to ALL schools in Common App
  - Under FERPA Release Authorization click **“release authorization”**
  - Click - "I have fully read and understood the FERPA Release Authorization explanation above..."
  - Click - “I authorize every school that I have attended to release all requested records and recommendations to colleges to which I am applying for admission. I also authorize employees at these colleges to confidentially contact my current and former schools should they have questions about the information submitted on my behalf.”
  - Click - “I waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.”
  - Click - “I understand that my waiver or no waiver selection above pertains to all colleges to which I apply and that my **selections on this page cannot be changed once I sign and click Save below.**

## Step 12: Recommenders

- **Counselor & Teacher Recommenders.** **DO NOT** request teacher or counselor letters of recommendation here. The DCP College Counseling team will upload your teacher letters to Maia. Please **SKIP** the part about requesting letters of recommendation from teachers or counselors. We **DO NOT** use this function in the Common App.
- **Other Recommenders.** Some colleges may allow students to submit letters of recommendation from a coach, work supervisor, mentor, etc. If you are thinking about including an “Other Recommender,” **please talk to your DCP College Counselor** about whether this additional letter of recommendation will add value to your application. The “Other Recommendation” should be requested in this section by completing these steps.
  - **Ask Recommender.** Before you request the Other Recommendation via the Common App, please ask the recommender in person first.
  - **Click “Invite Other Recommender” Button.** Select this button and a Pop-Up box will appear where you will enter the following: Email address of recommender, Relationship, First Name, Last Name, and then answer “Yes” to: Would you like this other recommender to complete a letter of recommendation for (name of college)? Click “Invite”

- The Common App will then send your Other Recommender an email inviting them to upload their letter. NOTE: They will only have to upload their letter once even if you want to send it to more than one college.
- If your other colleges accept “Other Recommender,” then you would go to the “Other Recommendation” section for each college and select that you want it sent to this college.

### Step 13: Advisor

In this section, you can invite an individual to view your application and track your progress towards completion. Inviting an advisor provides them with the ability to **view** your application only - they **cannot** edit or submit materials.

- A college will not be able to see who you have invited to be an advisor. You can invite up to three people, including your DCP College Counselor, to be an Advisor. We encourage you to invite your DCP College Counselor now.
  - Click “Invite Advisor”
  - **Invite.** Enter the person’s Email Address, First Name, and Last Name. Click “Invite”
    - If **Ms. Curtin** is your College Counselor, enter [kcurtin@depaulprep.org](mailto:kcurtin@depaulprep.org), Kelley, and Curtin.
    - If **Ms. Kaushal** is your College Counselor, enter [kkaushal@depaulprep.org](mailto:kkaushal@depaulprep.org), Kate, and Kaushal.
    - If **Mr. Minestra** is your College Counselor, enter [tminestra@depaulprep.org](mailto:tminestra@depaulprep.org), Tony, and Minestra.
  - **Enable Preview.** You will be taken back to the FERPA/Recommender section. Scroll down to the “Advisor” section and click on “Enable Preview.” Your Advisor will not be able to view your Common App until you click this button

### Step 14: Writing Supplement

- If a college/university has an additional essay that they want you to answer, **sometimes** it will be found on the *Dashboard* under each college/university’s tab titled *Writing Supplement*.
  - In August, not all colleges will have posted their supplements, check back periodically if they have not listed their school-specific questions

- Not every college/university will require a supplemental essay
- Also, as previously mentioned, some colleges will include their essay prompts in the “Questions” section.

### Step 15: Review and Submit

Once you are ready to submit a college’s application, you will be prompted to make a final review of your application, pay your application fee, and complete your signature.

- After each sub-section is complete, you will see a green check mark.
- Once you complete all of the *Member Questions and Writing Requirements* your application will be ready for review. Clicking Review and Submit will walk you through the three steps outlined below.
  - **Review.** Final review of your application
    - We recommend using the **preview** of your entire application to check for errors. Simply click Review and Submit to generate the PDF.
    - Ask your College Counselor, School Counselor or another trusted adult to proofread your application before you submit
    - You cannot cancel, correct and resubmit an application! Once you have hit submit, that is the version the college(s) see.
  - **Payment.** Application fee payment (if not waived)
    - Some schools waive the application fee if you apply online
    - You will have the option to pay online with a credit card; mail payment; or submit a fee waiver request (if you qualify for a fee waiver from ACT or SAT)
  - **Signature**

### Step 16: School Forms

- DePaul Prep uses Maia eDocs for transcripts, school reports, and teacher recommendations. Please contact your DCP College Counselor directly and they will provide instructions specific to your school regarding these documents. **Do not use Common application to request these forms!**

- We will walk all Seniors through this process during Advisory in the Fall of Senior year.
- See your DCP College Counselor if you have any questions!