

Letters of Recommendation

Tips & Strategies 2022

Why it Matters

TABLE 7. PERCENTAGE OF COLLEGES ATTRIBUTING DIFFERENT LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE TO FACTORS IN ADMISSION DECISIONS: FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN, FALL 2017

Factor	N	Considerable Importance	Moderate Importance	Limited Importance	No Importance
Grades in All Courses	220	74.5	15.0	5.5	5.0
Grades in College Prep Courses	220	73.2	16.8	5.9	4.1
Strength of Curriculum	219	62.1	21.9	8.7	7.3
Admission Test Scores (SAT, ACT)	221	45.7	37.1	12.2	5.0
Essay or Writing Sample	220	23.2	33.2	24.1	19.5
Student's Demonstrated Interest	218	16.1	23.9	28.0	32.1
Counselor Recommendation	218	15.1	40.4	26.6	17.9
Teacher Recommendation	219	14.2	40.2	26.5	19.2
Class Rank	220	9.1	29.1	34.1	27.7
Extracurricular Activities	219	6.4	42.9	32.0	18.7
Portfolio	219	6.4	11.9	26.9	54.8
Subject Test Scores (AP, IB)	219	5.5	18.3	35.2	41.1
Interview	219	5.5	16.4	28.3	49.8
Work	217	4.1	28.6	36.9	30.4
State Graduation Exam Scores	218	2.3	8.7	18.8	70.2
SAT II Scores	216	1.9	5.6	14.8	77.8

SOURCE: NACAC Admission Trends Survey, 2018–19.

Overall Importance

- Approx. 15% of colleges consider recommendations to be of “considerable importance”
- Approx. 40% of colleges consider recommendations to be of “moderate importance”
- Approx. 27% of colleges consider recommendations to be of “limited importance”

Overall Importance

- “Considerable importance” + “moderate importance” = 55% of colleges
- More important than demonstrated interest, class rank, or extracurricular activities

When it Matters

- Private colleges place more importance on recommendations than public colleges
- Smaller colleges give more weight to recommendations than larger colleges

When it Matters

Between you and a similarly qualified applicant a rec letter can make the difference

Teaches a core subject
Recent teacher (JR yr
ideal)
Knows you well (& likes
you)

General rule for 2 recs:
1 Humanities & 1 STEM

Check college
requirements
(is certain subject
needed?)

How to Choose the Right Teacher(s)

How to Choose the Right Teacher(s)



If you need more than 1 letter pick teachers who can expound on different strengths (should know your personality & your abilities)



If you haven't gotten to know any of your teachers it's not too late to start

Ask questions during group sessions, have a dialogue about class, life, work, etc. **Visit your teacher in tutorial or if available during lunch.**

How to Ask for a Teacher Letter

- Ask politely & IN PERSON.
 - Do NOT add teacher's name to Naviance without teacher commitment
- Ask in advance. Deadlines: Oct. 1 for EA/ED applications; Nov. 1st for Regular Decision.
 - The more time you give teachers the more they will have happy feelings while writing your letter (hint, hint)
- Do not ask multiple teachers at once.
 - You should only ask one teacher at a time (no group emails)

How to Ask for a Teacher Letter

- Do not ask while with friends/peers.
 - No teacher should feel obligated to say yes to everyone (not a happy feeling).
- Follow Interlake's process (ie: add teacher to recommendation letter section in Naviance).
 - If snail mail is required bring an addressed envelope to the teacher
 - Use Naviance as opportunity to confirm & thank for teacher's commitment
 - Deadlines: Oct. 1 for EA/ED deadlines; Nov. 1 for Regular Decision deadlines
- Follow teacher's process: do they need an interview? A filled out questionnaire?
- Be gracious. Rec letters can take hours to write and are not required of teachers.
 - Plan to write thank you notes

Sample Dialogue

You: “Ms. Smith, do you have five minutes to talk?” *(This is key. You’re inviting her into the conversation, while also giving her a quick out if she needs one.)*

Ms. Smith: “Sure, Johnny. What’s up?”

You: “Well, I’m in the throes of applying to college. I’ve got some deadlines in about three months, so I’m trying to be proactive and organized before all hell breaks loose. *(She’ll love you for thinking ahead.)* That’s why I’m here. Of all the teachers I’ve had, I think you know me the best, and I’m wondering: Would you be willing and able to write me a **strong** letter of recommendation?” *(The word “strong” gives teachers a polite out if they feel like they don’t know you well enough or don’t have time to take on your letter.)*

Ms. Smith: “Oh Johnny, I thought you’d never ask.” *(She probably won’t say this, but you can dream.)*

You: “Really? That would be wonderful/epic/lit. Tonight I’ll email you all the relevant information — my resume, my list of colleges and their deadlines, and some bullet points with stuff I’ve done in class. Is there anything else you’d like from me?”

Ms. Smith: “Wow, no, I think that about covers it. Thanks, Johnny.”

You: “Thank you, Ms. Smith!”

SOURCE: <https://www.collegeessayguy.com/blog/how-to-ask-for-a-letter-of-recommendation?rq=recommendation>

Common App or Coalition?

DO NOT USE Coalition if you need a Letter of Recommendation

Coalition and Naviance DO NOT speak to each other which causes complications

DO NOT USE Coalition if you need a Letter of Recommendation

When should you use Coalition? If you're applying to UW Seattle—they DO NOT accept Letters of Recommendation

DO NOT USE Coalition if you need a Letter of Recommendation

Match Common App Account to Naviance

1

Create Common App account

2

Complete the Education section

3

Add one college and click on that college

4

Go to Recommenders and FERPA (see next slide)

5

Go to your Naviance account

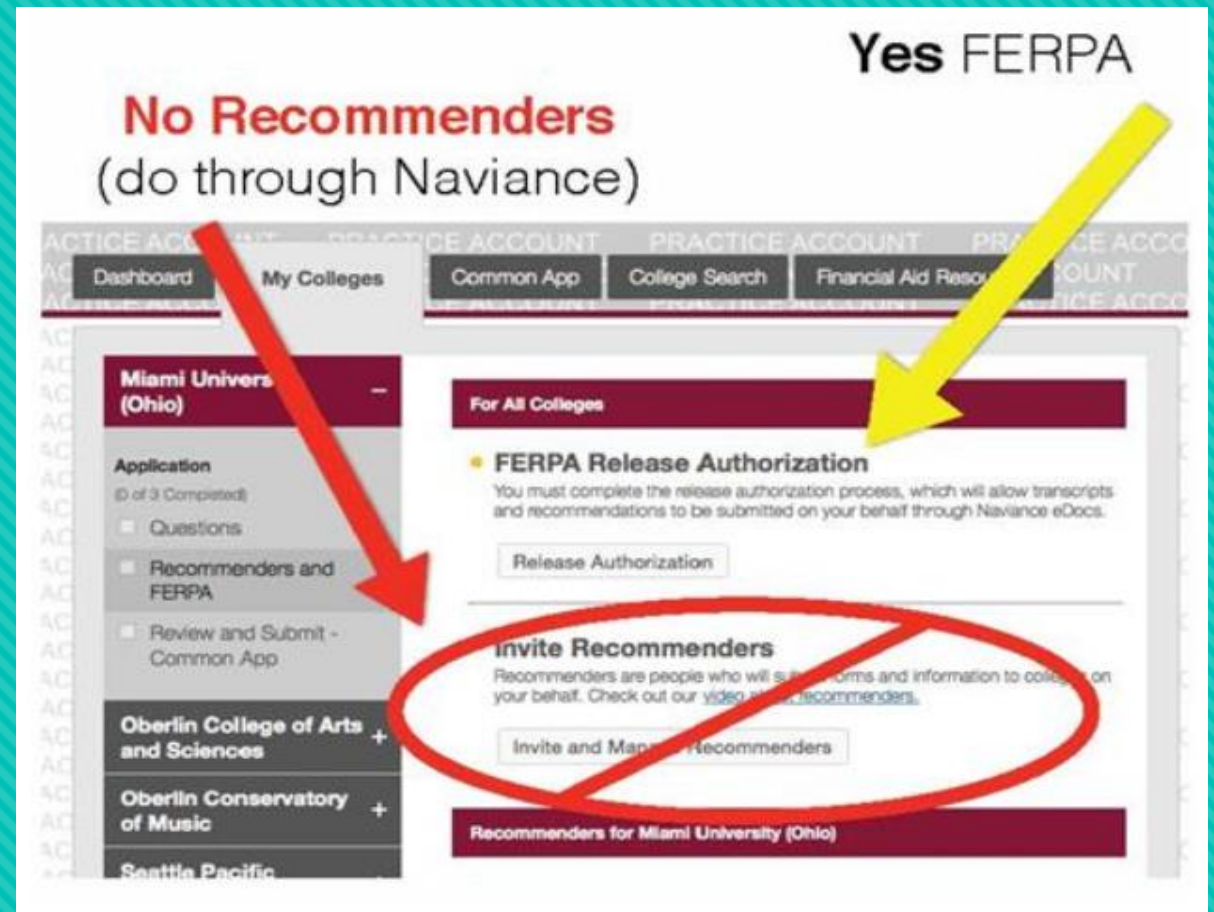
6

Go to Colleges I'm Applying To

7

Click "Match" near the top of the page

Common App
FERPA & BSD
FERPA must be
signed first



You MUST waive your rights

FERPA Information

- Cannot send letters without FERPA waivers
- When you sign a FERPA waiver you are saying that you are OK that we send letters about you without you first seeing them (ensures colleges that you didn't influence our letter)
- TWO FERPA processes are required
 - Complete the Common App FERPA waiver
 - Fill out, sign, and email or hand in the BSD FERPA waiver emailed to you (& parents) in the fall

Naviance

(don't add teachers through Common App directly)

Colleges I'm applying to

Colleges I'm applying to

Search for colleges

✓ Your Common App account has been matched.
Your FERPA status is waived. You're ready to apply to colleges using Common App.

Manage Transcripts

Application Milestones

Compare Me

+

= extended profile available

+ REQUEST TRANSCRIPTS

REMOVE

	College	Type	Deadline	Expected Difficulty*	Transcripts	Office materials	Submission Type <div>i</div>	Application	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gonzaga University	RD	Regular Decision 1	N/A	no request	Pending		Unknown <div>▼</div>	<div>EDIT</div>

College that I'm attending:

N/A

▼

Update

Letters of recommendation

Some colleges require letters of recommendation to be submitted with your application. Please visit the letters of recommendation section, accessible from the main colleges page, for more information

Should I assign teachers to colleges?

You get to decide! If some colleges only allow one teacher rec, make sure you assign the correct teachers to the correct college via the Naviance dropdown menu.

If all colleges allow for two, you can say “all”.

Teachers will just submit when they're done and can't control where they're sent,

Teacher Letter Process Summary



Ask early – Oct. 1st for EA/ED deadlines; Nov. 1st for Reg. Decision



Ask **in-person (when possible)**, and be ready to provide your resume and other relevant information



Add the teacher (and assign colleges) **in Naviance** from the drop down menu



Follow-up with a sincere thank you note

Counselor Letters of Recommendation

Need

Private/Common
App schools
Scholarship
Applications
Specialty
Programs

Make

Request by
email/chat/in
person, etc.

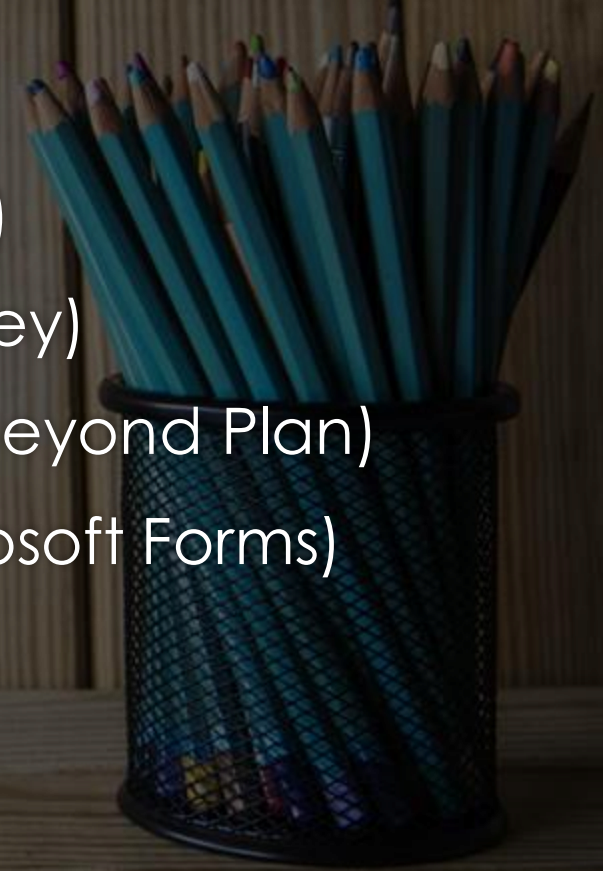
Complete

The following (in
Naviance):

- Academic Resume
(part of HS & Beyond
Plan)
- Brag Sheet Survey
- Teacher Feedback
Forms

Counselor Letter Checklist

- ❑ FERPA waiver (paper copy & in Common App)
- ❑ Brag Sheet, incl parent portion (Naviance survey)
- ❑ Resume uploaded to Naviance (part of HS & Beyond Plan)
- ❑ Teacher Feedback Forms (3 teachers via Microsoft Forms)
 - ❑ ***NOT a teacher writing you a rec letter***



Deadlines

Brag Sheet Survey in Naviance

21 June

1 October

Resume & Teacher Feedback Forms

FERPA Waiver process applies for teachers and counselors

Common App FERPA & BSD
FERPA must be signed first

You MUST waive your rights!

Yes FERPA

No Recommenders
(do through Naviance)

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search Financial Aid Resources

Miami University (Ohio)

Application
(0 of 3 Completed)

- Questions
- Recommenders and FERPA
- Review and Submit - Common App

Oberlin College of Arts and Sciences +

Oberlin Conservatory of Music +

Seattle Pacific

For All Colleges




- FERPA Release Authorization**
You must complete the release authorization process, which will allow transcripts and recommendations to be submitted on your behalf through Naviance eDocs.
[Release Authorization](#)
- Invite Recommenders**
Recommenders are people who will submit forms and information to colleges on your behalf. Check out our [video about recommenders](#).
[Invite and Manage Recommenders](#)

Recommenders for Miami University (Ohio)


Brag Sheet: Due June 21st

- Naviance
 - login with Clever—no password needed!
- About Me
- Surveys From Your School
- My Surveys
- Letter of Rec Brag Sheet

[Home](#)[Self-Discovery](#)[Courses](#)[Careers](#)[Colleges](#)[Planner](#)



AS

[About Me](#) 

LOG OUT

My Surveys

Filter by

All progress

 **Gifted Sop**

COMPLETE

 [About Me Home](#)

Account

[My Account](#)

You are logged in as  at
Interlake High School

Documents and Notes

[Resume](#)

[Goals](#)

[Portfolio](#)

[Journal](#)

[Test Scores](#)

[Documents Shared with Me](#)

Surveys

[Surveys from Your School](#)

[Game Plan Survey](#)

Brag Sheet

About Me – Surveys from Your School– My Surveys– Letter of Rec
Brag Sheet

Brag Sheet Question Examples



If you were not born in the US, when did you immigrate? Discuss any challenges moving to the US you feel are important to share.



What are the 3 most important things you want in your future college and why?



Colleges want personal stories about you. Please share 3 adjectives that best describe you and provide a SPECIFIC situation that describes each adjective.

Resume in Naviance



Naviance

login with Clever—no password needed!



About Me



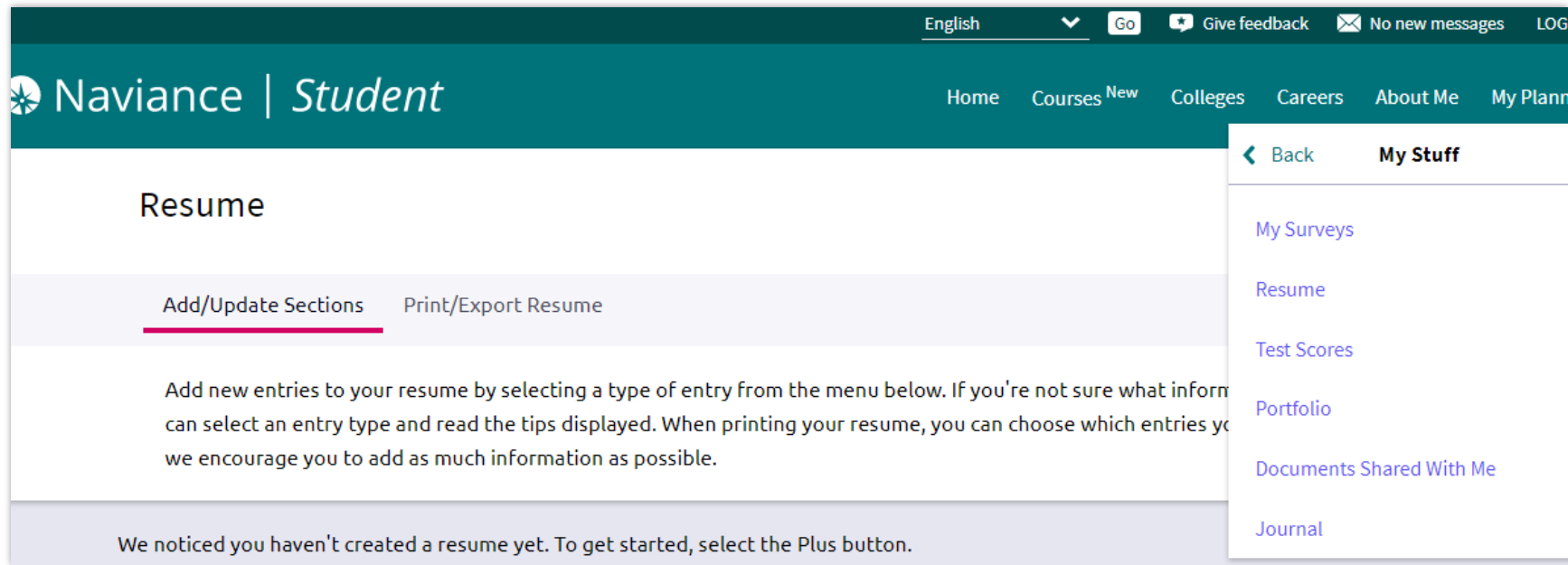
My Stuff



Resume



Upload OR Add/Update Sections



Resume in Naviance

About Me – Resume–Add/Update OR Upload in Tasks Assigned to Me

Teacher Feedback Forms (available in Sept)



3 teachers (may include one coach, spiritual mentor, instructor, or another non-family member who knows you well)



NOT already writing you a letter of rec



Personal and academic qualities (or what makes you “tick”)



Teachers from previous years OK

Teacher Feedback Forms

Microsoft Forms

Recommend keeping track
of whom you asked (college app
spreadsheet)

Counselor needs by Oct. 1st
for EA/ED & Nov. 1st for
Regular Decision

Access this information anytime!

- This presentation will be in the Class of 2023 Counselor Corner Teams Channel
- The PPT and video will be found under the Letter of Rec Information channel FILES
- The video will be found under the Letter of Rec Information channel as a Microsoft Stream