
The College Application Process

Presented by
College OPTIONS

Basic Overview

Fall

- Research campuses and Apply to 4-year universities
- Apply to Community Colleges as soon as applications are available
- Begin looking for and applying for scholarships

Winter

- Complete FAFSA online to be considered for Federal and State Financial Aid
- Continue the scholarship search through spring

Spring

- Receive admissions decisions from 4-yr Universities
- Receive Financial Aid award Letters
- Decide where you will attend by May 1st
- Take any required placement tests
- Accept financial aid at the school you will attend
- Attend orientation and meet with counselor if attending community college
- Apply for housing

Summer

- Request final high school transcript to be sent to the school you will be attending
- Attend orientation and register for courses

When to apply?

- **Community College:**
 - Some applications available in the fall, others become available throughout the year
- **CSU: October 1 – November 30**
 - Initial filing period
 - Absolute deadline
- **UC: November 1 – November 30**
 - Available August 1, submitted Nov 1-30
 - Absolute deadline
- **Private Colleges/Universities:**
 - Varies – check with school
 - Generally November – February



Before You Begin...

- Obtain your transcripts from high school Counselor/Registrar (allow 2-3 days)
- Obtain your test scores (allow 2 weeks)
 - SAT Reasoning and Subject: www.collegeboard.com
 - ACT: www.act.org
- Write your essay in a word processing program (UC and private applications)
- Decide which campuses and which majors/programs you want to apply to
- Request letters of recommendation (private/independent schools)

Calculate Your GPA

It is a good idea to calculate your GPA to determine which campuses you will be eligible to apply to. Also, most applications will ask you to self report your GPA, but they will do their own calculation as well.

- “Academic 10-12 GPA”
 - Grades from A-G approved courses only
 - Will included courses taken during
 - Summer after 9th grade, 10th grade, summer after 10th grade, 11th grade, and the summer after 11th grade
 - Cal Poly includes 9th grade A-G courses
 - +/- does not count
 - Designated honors and AP courses may be weighted. Follow directions included in the online application tutorial.
- Not required for Community College applications
- Private/Independent Colleges-Follow directions on the application



How to Apply



ON-LINE

- Community College: <http://www.cccapply.org>
- CSU: <http://www.csumentor.edu>
- UC: <https://admissions.universityofcalifornia.edu>
 - Advantages:
 - College Prep (“a-g”) courses “pre-loaded”
 - CSU and UC: One application, multiple campuses
 - Receipt of application assured
- Private: Check with individual campuses

Private College/University

- 250 schools use the *Common Application* (one generic form)
 - Available on-line at <http://www.commonapp.org/>
 - Deadlines and admissions requirements vary by school
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College Entrance Exams

- Community College: None required
 - The SAT Reasoning or ACT can be used for placement purposes at some schools
- CSU: SAT Reasoning or ACT
 - Taking the tests earlier is better.
 - Can be taken as late as December of your senior year, but check with colleges to be sure.
- UC: SAT Reasoning or ACT (*with* writing).
 - OPTIONAL: SAT Subject Tests in different subject areas
 - December test dates at the latest
- Private: varies
 - Typically SAT Reasoning or ACT (some also need SAT Subject Tests)

Listing high school courses

- Not required for Community College applications
- List all high schools attended
- CSU/UC: List ONLY A-G approved courses
 - <https://doorways.ucop.edu/list/>
 - Compare list with your transcript
 - Community college classes: one semester = two high school semesters (you will enter the grade you received twice)
 - You are still considered a student at the high school you currently attend even if you have taken college courses.

Personal Statement/ Biographical Essay

(UCs, Private Universities, Scholarships)

- Content is most important – *Address the prompt*
- Proofread for spelling and grammar
- Have at least 2 people review your essays
- On-line apps: write essays in Word for editing, then cut and paste into your application
- University of California
 - 2 Separate questions
 - 1000 word limit for both questions
 - 250 word minimum
 - UC's have specific questions, but most schools/scholarships ask the same type of questions (educational experience, background information, what is unique about you?)

Personal Statement/Scholarship Essays

■ DO

- Write clearly and concisely
 - Be very specific and do not abbreviate
 - Do not assume they know what CSF, FFA, or FBLA stands for
 - Focus on high school years
 - Focus on the positive
 - Start early
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- This is not a creative writing sample

Additional Application Materials...

- Letters of recommendation
 - Community colleges, CSU and UC – not required
 - Private schools – typically required
 - Common requirement for scholarships
 - Allow letter writers at least 3 weeks
 - Follow directions about whether to include with application or send directly to the school
 - Be sure to give a thank you note to anyone who writes a letter of recommendation for you

Additional Application Materials...

- Sending transcripts
 - UC and CSU – send in July after graduation requirements are verified or sooner (but only if they request them from you)
 - Private – follow application directions
- Test Scores
 - Request test scores to be sent directly to the schools at time of application



Pay Special Attention to...

- Educational Opportunity Program (EOP)
 - UC: check box “yes”, discuss why in personal statement; no additional application
 - CSU: check “yes” on EOP question, go to EOP section on csumentor.edu website, complete separate application to each CSU campus you are applying to
- Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS)
 - Community College version of EOP-separate application required
- UC application is also the scholarship application
 - Can indicate up to 16 scholarships; look at descriptions carefully
 - A few require an additional application-be sure to check with your department/major

How Do They Decide?



■ Community College

- 18 years old or High School Diploma or pass the CAHSEE

■ CSU

- GPA in 10th and 11th (Cal Poly 9-11th) grades
- ACT or SAT Reasoning test scores
- Decision notification by March 15th

■ UC

- GPA in 10th and 11th grades
- ACT or SAT Reasoning; SAT Subject test scores
- Information presented in essays and list of activities, awards, employment (“Comprehensive Review”)
- Every application is read by 1-3 people
- Decision notification by March 15th

■ Private

- Entire application is considered
- Grades from 9th-11th or 10th-11th (varies), tests, activities, essays, letters of recommendation

For more help...



- High School Guidance Counselors
- English teachers (for essay)
- College admissions offices
- Pre-college program counselors (AVID, ETS, GEARUP, etc)
- College OPTIONS – personal statement workshops and individual appointments

Remember –
don't wait until the last minute and Good Luck!
