



The Mechanics of Applying to College

1. Each student completes two reviews with a counselor. YOU DO NOT WANT TO MISS THESE MEETINGS. The junior review takes place in spring of the junior year and the senior review takes place in October of the senior year.
2. Make a list of colleges to which you intend to apply.
 - If you don't already have a list, see the webpage [Choosing a College](#) and/or the document [How to Compare Colleges by Quality of Academic Majors](#).
 - Enter your list of colleges on [Fairview Family Connection](#) by Naviance. Once in Naviance, use the "my colleges" link.
 - Check the [College Rep Visit Calendar](#) for visits from admissions officers from the colleges you have chosen.
3. Go to the website for your chosen college and study the admissions requirements. Make a list because *requirements differ greatly* for different colleges. (See the examples below for some of the differences.) You may want to request an admissions packet from the college; this can usually be accomplished with an on-line request.
 - Some colleges require letters of recommendation from two teachers but most do not require letters.
 - Some colleges require a letter from your counselor, others do not.
 - Some colleges have quick, "on-the-spot" on-line application forms, others use the "common application," and others have their own unique applications.
 - Testing requirements (SAT, SAT II, ACT, etc.) vary among colleges.
4. Application deadlines vary anywhere from October to March.
 - Early admissions programs are of two types: *early decision (ED)* and *early action (EA)*. Both require submission of application materials by an early date (often November 1) and deliver admissions decisions about mid December. A student can be admitted, rejected, or deferred. A deferred decision means that the student's application is considered again with the regular-admissions pool.
 - The main difference between ED and EA is that ED (early decision) admissions are *binding*. This means that if a student is admitted under early decision, then he or she is *obligated* to accept the offer of admission. Obviously, ED applications can be made to only one college. In contrast, EA (early action) admissions are non-binding. A student can know as early as December that he or she has an admissions offer, but can continue to consider other schools until the May 1 acceptance deadline.
 - Some EA policies allow students to apply to multiple EA schools. However other EA programs are called *single choice* or *restricted choice early action (SCEA or REA)*, meaning that only one early action application may be submitted. A list of about 300 colleges and whether they have ED, EA, or REA admissions programs can be seen at the [Common Application website](#).
 - Some colleges have *rolling admissions (RL)*, in which schools review and decide on applications as they are received, until all openings are filled. A list of almost 200 colleges with rolling admissions is available on the [Princeton Review website](#).
5. Fill out the required informational pieces about you and return them to your counselor. The answers you provide will be useful for organizing activity and award information required on each application. They are also useful for those applications that require letters from teachers and from the counselor.
 - [Student Self-Assessment](#)
 - [Parent Brag Sheet](#)
 - [Resume and Activities Form](#)

6. Request letters of recommendation from teachers if the college requires them. Guidelines and requirements for this process are detailed in the document [Checklist for Letters of Recommendation from Teachers](#). Print out and read this checklist carefully.
7. Request a transcript and letter of recommendation from your counselor if the college requires them. All the details for requesting such a letter are available in the document: [Transcript and Counselor Letter of Recommendation Form](#). Make sure to turn in the required materials to your counselor by the due date specified in the document. Typically the due date is *at least one month or more prior* to the letter due date.
8. To apply to colleges in Colorado, [CollegeInColorado.org](#) has everything you need to complete online applications to more than 40 four-year and two-year colleges in Colorado as well as allow you to sign up for the in-state tuition stipend for which all residents of Colorado are eligible.
9. To apply to colleges outside of Colorado, you can download applications from college websites, or consider using the [Common Application](#) (a standardized application form) accepted by more than 300 colleges and universities. Note: Often, the Common Application schools will require a "supplement" that is unique to the college. At the [Common App website](#), there is a list of the 300 schools that accept the application, along with links to their supplemental materials, and an indication of their EA, ED, or REA admission options.
10. The college essay that accompanies the application can make or break an application. See the document, "[Writing the College Application Essay](#)," for sample topics, tips, and general advice. Other opportunities to write an open-ended response should not be slighted. For example, responses to a question about why you are choosing to apply to a particular college gives you an opportunity to show enthusiasm about specific attributes of the college as well as to reveal information about yourself.
11. Many schools will accept *supplemental materials* such as an art portfolio, a music recording, or a writing sample with the application.
 - Read the requirements carefully -- mostly colleges want these materials only if they are of extremely high quality. The application supplement for these items usually specifies the exact format for the materials.
 - The supplements are frequently submitted for evaluation to the academic department directly, rather than to the admissions office.
 - Check the deadlines. A few schools require the supplemental materials one to two months *prior to* the admissions deadline.
12. Students need to specifically request that test scores and transcripts be sent to schools. This doesn't happen automatically.
 - SAT, SAT Subject, and AP scores are all handled by www.collegeboard.com.
 - Instructions for viewing and sending SAT reasoning test and subject test scores can be found [here](#). If you listed colleges to receive scores when registering for the tests, scores will be sent automatically. Sending to additional colleges requires your action. When you send SAT scores, *all* scores from *all* administrations of the reasoning test as well as the subject tests are sent.
 - Instructions for viewing and sending AP test scores can be found [here](#). For AP tests, grade withholding and cancellation can be requested for individual test scores.
 - ACT scores are handled by www.actstudent.org/. Instructions for viewing and sending ACT scores can be found [here](#). For ACT tests, students can request that only selected scores be sent, rather than all scores.
 - IB test scores will be sent to colleges during the summer after senior year. Requests for these scores are made through the IB dept at Fairview during spring of the senior year.

13. Keep track of the application process and the outcomes at [Fairview Family Connection](#) by Naviance.

14. Generalized college application calendar:

- See the [Testing Information Page](#) for testing schedules.
- Spring Junior Year
 - Write a practice essay in your LA class.
 - Speak to teachers about their willingness to write letters of recommendation.
- Summer after Junior Year
 - For each college to which you intend to apply, find out what their specific application requirements are. Request admissions packets from each.
 - Figure out why you think the particular school is a match for you.
- Fall Senior Year
 - End September - for EA and ED, materials to counselor and teachers who are writing for you.
 - November 1 - typical EA and ED application deadline.
 - Mid November - for regular admission, materials to counselor and teachers who are writing for you.
 - January 1 - typical regular admission application deadline.