

## Common Application and Naviance FAQ

1. What is the Common Application, and do I have to use it?

The Common Application is used by 900+ schools. Check the [Common Application Member Colleges List](#) to see if the schools you want to apply to use it. If any schools are members, you must use the Common Application, which is a unified online application. Most schools have a supplement to customize the application, but you will only have to fill out the basic information once.

2. What if the schools I want to apply to do not use the Common Application?

Then you must do each school's individual application. Most applications these days are online, but some are still mail-in only. Naviance knows which; look at the small icons in your "Colleges I am Applying To" list.

- A blank computer icon means an individual online application.
- A stamp means a mail-in application.
- A screen with "CA" means it is a Common App school.

3. Do I have to use Naviance?

Yes. Naviance is accessible on your student portal under "Additional Resources". Naviance is how you will request transcripts and letters of recommendation and is the way that the counseling office knows to send which of your materials to which schools. The school also sends a school profile with each application, and this is automatic when you use Naviance. It is the overall system for our counselors to keep track of seniors and the hundreds of applications that go out every school year.

4. What is the FERPA Waiver?

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives students the right to see their educational records. In this instance, the FERPA waiver refers to your right to see the recommendations submitted on your behalf. We strongly recommend that you DO waive your rights and check "Yes" you waive your right to access on the form. By waiving your right to access, you allow your teachers and counselor the freedom to write honest evaluations.

If a student has not waived the right, your choice may be interpreted as a red flag by the colleges you are applying to. Even if you are not hiding something, an admissions committee may wonder if you are, and so reject you from the pool of applicants based on a hunch.

5. Where is this FERPA Waiver in the Common App?

If any of the schools you are applying to use the Common App, you will fill it out in the Common App. It is, however, hard to find in the Common App.

Once you have added schools to your list in the Common App, there will be an "Assign Recommenders" tab on the left when you are in your application.

Under the "Assign Recommenders" tab, there is a "Release Authorization" link that will bring the FERPA up. Check "I waive my rights" and the box by "I understand that my... selections cannot be changed..." and provide your (the student's) electronic signature.

6. Where is the FERPA in Naviance?

If none of the schools you are applying to use the Common App, you will fill out the FERPA in Naviance. The blue FERPA form should pop up when you are on the Colleges I am Applying To screen. Check "Yes, I DO waive my right..." and the box by "I authorize all secondary schools I've attended to release all requested records..." You may be prompted to enter your Common App information on the same form; do so and then submit the form.

7. How do I use the Common Application and Naviance together?

First, you have to ensure that the systems connect. Students already have Naviance accounts. When you set up your Common App account, remember the information (email used, password). In Naviance, you will be prompted to enter that Common App access information. You will enter actual application information (classes taken, activities, possible majors, etc.) via [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org), yet will make transcript and teacher requests and track your applications through Naviance. Because there are possible snafus, we recommend that you complete your steps well in advance of your deadlines.

8. When should I ask teachers for recommendations?

As soon as possible, and please understand that some teachers get many requests and may not be able to write one for you. Some students ask in the spring of their junior year to be sure that they will be first in line. Ask at the beginning of your senior year, or at least four weeks in advance of your deadline, whichever is first. Complete the Letter of Recommendation Questionnaire available on Naviance under Surveys.

9. How many letters do I need?

Requirements vary; the average is two, but you need to check the requirements for each school. Many schools do not require letter or ask you to NOT submit extra letters.

10. How do I request transcripts?

In Naviance, look under "resources" on the left side of the page. Click on Transcripts and go through the steps.

11. What if the college due dates in Naviance are later than when I want to apply? Schools that have rolling admissions may have the last possible date listed, but we do not recommend waiting until then to apply. Or, you may be applying Early Action or Early Decision, and only the regular deadline is listed. Do two things: in the list of colleges, click the little pencil near the right-hand side. You should be able to change "Regular Decision" to another option. Also let your counselor know so that she or he can override the deadline listed. When you request transcripts, also specify on that page which app type (regular, early action/ early decision, etc.) you are doing.

12. How far in advance should I do all of this?

You should start the process as soon as your senior year begins, (the Common App comes online August 1 each year). Teachers need 2-5 weeks (or more, depending on the teacher) for letters of recommendation, and you should allow extra time for everything. You should request transcripts as soon as you add schools to the "Colleges I am Applying To" list in Naviance. We recommend you work ahead of your deadlines; you do not want to be tracking down letters of recommendation or finishing supplemental essays the day the application is due. If you plan to apply early, let your counselor know in September.