

TEACHER RECOMMENDATION



INSTRUCTION GUIDE

FOR STUDENTS

Last Updated January, 2021

Recommendations can be invaluable when applying to college. Included in this document is a breakdown of the recommendation request process at Irvington High School. Please read through this document thoroughly. Don't hesitate to reach out to your counselor with any questions that may arise.

GUIDELINES FOR REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

All students must follow the IHS protocol to request teacher recommendations.

1. An official request must come from the student to the teacher. This can either be done in person or through email.
2. The student may be asked to submit a completed Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire form before the request is accepted. Please note: a teacher can request additional information from you at any time.
3. Once the teacher has accepted the request, the student must formally email the recommender thanking them. This will also serve as documentation that the conversation was had regarding the request. Students may not request recommendations directly through Naviance prior to speaking with the teacher. The teacher is asked to cancel any request immediately if this happens.
4. Once the student has indicated colleges they are applying to in Naviance, they must also put the teacher request in Naviance. Please remember to indicate the schools to which you would like the recommendation sent by the individual teacher. NOTE: TEACHER CANNOT SEND RECOMMENDATION UNLESS THEY ARE FORMALLY REQUESTED IN NAVIANCE.

WHAT IS NAVIANCE-FAMILY CONNECTION?

Naviance is a program designed to increase communication, organization, and accountability within the IHS community. Students can research colleges and careers, indicate college interest, register for events, and eventually will create a final list of colleges through this program. IHS can use this program to track student progress through the application process, send school documents online (including your recommendations), and obtain admissions statistics specific to our school. Naviance can be accessed through <https://student.naviance.com/irvington>. If you don't already have login information, please request a username through the Counseling Office.

REQUESTING RECOMMENDATIONS THROUGH NAVIANCE

Once you have your list of colleges added into Naviance, you must formally request your recommendation. A recommender does not know where to send your recommendation until you complete this step. You have the ability to select which teacher(s) send recommendations to which schools. This becomes crucial when a school has a maximum number of recommendations allowed for submission. Teachers can only send recommendations to schools that you have formally requested through Naviance. You will find the Teacher Recommendation Request function in the *My Colleges* frame under the *Colleges* Tab. Naviance also gives you the option of sending a note along with the request. You are strongly encouraged to write a short thank you before sending.

NOTE: Some schools limit the number of teacher recommendations they accept. For example, Binghamton allows for 1 teacher recommendation. So please make sure that you are confident in which recommendation you are requesting for those single request schools. Naviance locks their system for a single request school after the initial recommendation is requested.

MATCHING NAVIANCE AND THE COMMON APPLICATION

Another task that needs to be completed before teachers and counselors can send a recommendation is to match your Naviance account with your Common Application. Located under the tab “College to which I’m Applying” in Naviance, you must enter the email address used for the Common Application and submit it. Once the two platforms are connected, Naviance will automatically pull data from the Common Application and faculty can begin submitting recommendations.

NOTE: If you are not able to match the two accounts, you probably still need to complete the FERPA section of the Common Application.

COMMUNICATING WITH TEACHERS THROUGH THE PROCESS

It is your responsibility as the student to keep in communication with your recommender through the college process. The Counseling Department strongly encourages all students to send a thank you letter containing the first admissions deadline to each recommender. Both Naviance and the Common Application will indicate when your recommendation has been submitted.

Remember, there is a balance between being pro-active and overstepping boundaries when inquiring about the status of your recommendation. Please be thoughtful when you outreach to your recommenders.

THE IMPORTANCE OF UPDATING NAVIANCE

Keeping Naviance current is of utmost importance. It is the only way that teachers know which schools to send recommendations. It also is the only way that teachers will know the school deadlines. You must make sure that the correct application type is listed in Naviance. If you indicate a regular decision deadline in Naviance, and then apply through an early action

program, the teacher will not know of the change in deadline. It is your responsibility to make sure that all your recommenders are aware of deadlines at least two weeks in advance.

USING THE TEACHER RECOMMENDATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire is designed to assist teachers when writing your recommendation. The form provided is a generic version that you can use. Some teachers may prefer their own form. Please inquire with your recommenders about their preferences.

FEPRA LAWS & WAIVING YOUR RIGHTS

The Family Education Rights and Privacy Act is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Before any teacher or counselor can submit your recommendation, you must complete this waiver. Both counselors and admissions representatives alike strongly encourage students to waive their rights to review their confidential documents. Some admissions representatives have even noted that when the recommendation isn't confidential, they question the integrity of it and put less value in it. An additional note is that even if you do not waive your rights, you still will only have access to them once you are admitted and attending that school-assuming they have kept them. You will not have access to the documents at schools in which you are not a student.

WHAT TO DO IF A SCHOOL DOES NOT USE ELECTRONIC SENDING VIA NAVIANCE

There are a limited number of schools that do not use Naviance for recommendation submission. Most of these schools have their own process. Many times, those schools will request a direct teacher email to send instructions for uploading documents using their own program. Other times, they will have to submit them via the Post Office. For the latter, the student is responsible for giving the teacher an addressed, stamped envelope.

WRITING THANK YOU NOTES

Writing a thank you note to every person who submits a recommendation for you is customary. It's a nice personal touch that is greatly appreciated by recommenders. Here is a sample to use as a guide:

Dear Mr./Ms. _____

I wanted to thank you for taking the time to write my letter of recommendation. I know that it greatly enhanced my application and I will reach out once I receive my decisions.

Much appreciated,
John Smith

Please do not forget to inform your recommenders (and counselor) when you have been accepted into a college. They are an integral part of the process so it is important to keep them in the loop and show your gratitude.

BREAKDOWN OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT	★ Request recommendations from teacher. ★ Add the specific school requests to Naviance. ★ Submit addressed, stamped envelopes (if applicable). ★ Submit Recommendation Questionnaire (if applicable) ★ Write thank you notes!
TEACHER	★ Write the recommendation. ★ Upload the recommendation to Naviance. ★ Submit the recommendation to schools requested by student.
COUNSELOR	★ Educate students on the formal process. ★ Provide appropriate paperwork to students. ★ Provide support to faculty and staff.

Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire

Please complete this form for the teacher who will write a recommendation for you. In responding to the questions, provide as much detail as you can. You may have a maximum of two teacher recommendations; however, some colleges may require only one. Please check college requirements before requesting a second recommendation. Answering these questions fully can result in a more helpful recommendation and enhance your chances of admission.

Students must request recommendations at least three weeks prior to deadlines, not including school vacations

Teacher's Name _____ Date: _____

Student's Name _____ Email: _____

I will be applying to an Early Decision or Early Action college: ___YES ___NO

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What specifically about this class and or teacher made you decide to ask him or her for a letter of recommendation?

What areas did you work hard to improve during this class?

A teacher's recommendation usually concentrates on your academic performance. In general, how did you contribute to this class? More specifically, give two incidents or examples to illustrate your contributions.

**What out-of-class experiences have you had that are related to this subject area (e.g., summer courses, reading, activities, things you did but weren't required to do for the class, etc.)?**

**Describe a project, paper or activity in this class you were proud of or especially enjoyed?**

**What three (positive) adjectives could this teacher use to describe you? Give a concrete example for each of these qualities to illustrate how you display them.**

**Have your academic success and grades in this subject been affected by any personal or family obstacle (change of schools, illness, etc.)? If so, also mention how you have managed to overcome any difficulties.**

**Is there any additional information that you think your teacher should know before writing your recommendation.**

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