Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) About Applying to College

What To Do Before Ohio College Application Month

Applying to college can seem overwhelming, but it is manageable if you start early and work on it a little bit at a time. Before your school's Ohio College Application Month event, you can prepare by doing the following:

- Talk with your parents and school counselor about your plans to apply to college.
- To help you choose a major/minor and a college that would be a good match for you think about what subjects interest you. These sites may help you:

  – College Navigator http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/

  – BigFuture https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/

- Register with The Common Application site (https://app.commonapp.org/createaccount).

  – The Common App allows you to create one application and submit it to a number of colleges so that you don't have to fill out multiple applications.

- Start drafting your essay.

  – Most college applications require you to submit a personal statement essay. Colleges want to know who you are and why you would be a good fit for their school. Your essay should be unique and express your goals and interests. Be creative and be sure to ask family and teachers to proofread your writing. Have your essay ready for Ohio College Application Month and save it on a flash drive or as an email attachment. So that it is easily accessible. For additional help and guidance, please see your school counselor.

- Register/take the SAT or ACT.

  – Some schools require test scores for admission.

- To register for the SAT http://sat.collegeboard.org/register
- To register for the ACT: http://www.actstudent.org/regist/.
- Both sites have links to study resources and practice tests. There also are forms you can fill out to receive a fee waiver. Check with your school counselor for additional information on fee waivers.

Applying for College

College applications can range from one or two pages to ten pages. You'll be asked to provide details about your educational background and plans and your parents' education. You also may be asked to provide information to prove your residency in Ohio. Some colleges may ask for additional information such as an activities résumé or an essay.

College Information

What should I list for current college courses in progress or planned, including the term (to be) taken, course subject and number (example: BIO 1001), credit hours, and college/university?
List any courses you have taken on a college campus, through a college's online system, or a college course taught at your high school by a certified college instructor. Please note that dual enrollment (high school and college classes) should be added here; however, do not list AP or IB courses.

Enrollment Information

What is my entering term and year?
Most students will select the Fall semester following senior year; however, choose the summer option if you intend to attend summer school prior to Fall enrollment.

What is my entrance status?
The following are definitions for each status:

Freshman: This will be the first college or university in which you enroll after graduating high school. Check this even if you have advanced placement (AP) credit, or dual enrollment, or have earned college credit in high school.

Transfer: If you are graduating high school in the coming year and going directly to college, you are NOT a transfer student even if you have college credit.

Non Degree: You want to take college course(s) but are not seeking a degree.

What is my desired major?
Under "First Choice", you can choose your first choice of majors. You may check "Undecided." Please note that you can change your major during your college program.

Name and ID Numbers

I never go by my first name. Can I use a nickname?
You may not use a nickname. You must provide your full legal name on your college applications. This is one of the ways the admissions office matches up all the supplemental information (transcripts, test scores.) to your application form. Be sure to provide your full name, including your middle name. If you have ever legally used another name (for example, you have changed your last name through adoption), be sure to provide that name in the appropriate section.

Why do they want to know my Social Security Number?
You've been told to safeguard your SSN, and that's great advice! However, colleges and universities need a way to match your admissions application to your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and your social security number is the way to do it.

Why do they want to know my State Student Identification Number (SSID)?
Your State Student Identification Number (SSID) helps admissions offices match your application to other documents in your file. They must ensure they get the right transcript matched to your application.

Address

Can I list a Post Office Box?
You may list a PO Box, but you will need to provide a physical address even if you use a Post Office Box for your mailing address. Make sure this information is correct. The date the address became your permanent mailing address is the month and year you moved to this location which may even be your date of birth.

What if I am homeless?
If you do not currently live somewhere you can receive mail, ask your school counselor if you may use the school's address on your applications.

Citizenship Information

Am I required to answer the question about citizenship?
If the application indicates that the question is required, then yes, you must answer this question. This is the primary way in which an institution determines if you should apply as a US citizen or permanent resident or if you are considered an international student for admission purposes. If you are not a United States citizen but are a permanent resident and have a permanent residency card, you will be required to provide proof. Some colleges request that you simply provide the number on your card; others require that you submit a copy of the card. You should bring a copy of the card to your Ohio College Application Month event.

What if I am undocumented?
There is no federal or state law that prohibits the admission of undocumented immigrants to U.S. colleges, public or private. Federal or state laws do not require students to prove citizenship in order to enter college. Follow the instructions on each university's website and/or application to determine whether you should submit a domestic or international application.

If you are applying to a private college or university, contact them to ask whether you should apply as an international student or as a domestic student. Also ask if they have any special instructions or tips for completing the application form as an undocumented student. Ask to speak to a college staff member responsible for working with underrepresented students. You do not need to provide your name when you make this call, since you are simply gathering information.

If you are applying to a community college, check whether or not international students pay a higher rate for tuition. If so, you may be required to submit your application as an international student.

Family Information

What family information must I submit?
You will need to answer the following required questions:
• Are your father and/or mother living?
• What is the contact information for your parent(s) or guardian(s) in case of emergency?

Most colleges ask for information about parent or guardian educational history and current employment. You should answer these questions as fully as possible, as colleges and universities seek to enroll students from a wide variety of backgrounds. If neither of your parents completed a bachelor's degree, you are considered a "first generation student." Many colleges offer special programs for first generation students, and your application is the way they learn if you qualify for them. If you live with a legal guardian, you should answer these questions about your parent(s), rather than your guardian. Some schools will ask for the full legal name and year of graduation of any of your relatives — including brothers, sisters, cousins — who attended the college or university to which you are applying.

What if I am a foster youth or no longer live with my parents?
Colleges and universities want to ensure they can build a diverse student body, but more importantly, they want to make the best admission decision possible for you. The more they know about you, the better they are able to determine if their school has the resources necessary to be a good fit for you. Answer questions as fully and honestly as you feel comfortable. You may choose to list your biological parents or your current guardians. You may also use the "additional information" section of the application to provide details you want to share that don't fit in the "Family Information" section.

Other Requested Information

Do I have to list all my activities and interests for each college application?
If you have a significant number of activities and interests that you wish to include, you might consider putting them on a flash drive to cut and paste to your applications.

Do I have to provide all of my SAT or ACT test scores?
If you have taken both the SAT and the ACT, or if you have taken one of these tests two or more times, colleges will generally consider only your best scores. That's true even if you send all of your scores to them. In fact, many of them will combine the highest sub-scores from each test and add those together to give you the best possible score. As a result, it is often in your best interest to submit scores from the all the tests you have taken. Some schools do not require applicants to submit SAT or ACT scores to be considered for admission. Find a list of schools 4 year colleges and universities that are "test optional" and learn about their requirements at **Fair Test** (http://fairtest.org/).

What if I haven't taken the SAT or ACT yet?
Not all schools require that you take the SAT or ACT. Community colleges generally do not require them, and there are many four-year colleges and universities that don't. However, if you are applying to a college or university that requires one of these tests, you'll need to take it as soon as possible. Click here to find the next test dates and registration information for the SAT (http://sat.collegeboard.org/home?affiliateId=nav&bannerId=h-satex) or ACT exam (http://www.actstudent.org/regist/dates.html).

What additional information will I need to include for each college application?
This information varies by institution. Common additional items include a high school transcript, a personal statement or essay, a brief response to a question about why you are interested in that particular school, and letters of recommendation from teachers or other adults who know you. Students applying to art schools may be required to submit a portfolio of their work, and student athletes may be asked to submit a game tape or stats.

If I will not graduate from high school but have earned (or will earn) my GED, can I still apply to a four-year college or university?
Check the admissions websites of the colleges where you plan to apply. Be sure to bring a copy of your GED scores to the Ohio College Application Month event, as you will need to report those on your application.

What types of questions will I be asked about my past criminal activity?
Many colleges require students to answer questions about legal infractions. Answering "yes" to one or more of the questions will not necessarily keep you from being admitted. However, your failure to provide complete, accurate, and truthful information can be grounds to deny or withdraw your admission, dismiss you, or subject you to disciplinary sanctions after enrollment. A campus may spot-check records and obtain official court and/or school documentation to ensure accuracy. These campuses are allowed to share pertinent information as needed for the safety of others. Some campuses have a process for conducting criminal background checks on applicants.

What if I can't afford to pay the application fee?
Many colleges require an application fee to help them defray the cost of processing all the applications that come into their admissions offices. Fees may be as high as $150. Most colleges understand that not all students and families can afford the application fee, so they offer either a fee deferral or waiver to low-income students.

A fee deferral means that you don't have to pay the application fee when you submit your forms, but if you are accepted and decide to enroll, it will be added to your tuition bill.

A fee waiver means that you never have to pay the application fee. In general, your counselor must sign off on your request for a deferral or waiver to provide evidence that your family cannot afford the application fee.

Ask your school counselor for a fee waiver form.