



The College Application Handbook

A Resource Guide to help students plan and prepare for the college application and admission process.



COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS CHECKLIST

Any student applying to college must complete the following steps. Detailed instructions on each step are included in this handbook:

- ☐ **Complete the Record Release Permission Form**
 - Parents gives consent electronically through the Genesis Parent Module
- ☐ **Finalize your list of schools**
 - Must be updated in Scoir
- ☐ **Update your Resume**
 - Must be updated in Scoir
- ☐ **Request Teacher Letters of Recommendation (Two)**
 - Make an informal request in-person or via email
 - Add Teacher Name(s) in Scoir to make formal request
 - Complete the Student Brag Sheet Survey in Scoir
- ☐ **Request a Counselor Letter of Recommendation**
 - Complete Counselor Recommendation Survey in Scoir
 - Ask a parent to complete the Parent Brag Sheet in Scoir
- ☐ **Complete the Common App FERPA Waiver**
 - When you log into your Scoir account in August, you will have to sign off on your **FERPA Waiver**
- ☐ **Be advised, transcripts are not sent directly to colleges. Students must send them themselves via their Coalition Application locker**
- ☐ **Submit Electronic Transcript Requests**
 - All steps above must be completed PRIOR TO submission of requests!
 - Requests must be submitted through Scoir no less than 3 weeks in advance
- ☐ **Register with the NCAA**
 - Student athletes should be registered. If you are not registered visit www.eligibilitycenter.org.
- ☐ **Complete all applications online.**
- ☐ **Send SAT/ACT scores to colleges**
 - Must have them sent directly from collegboard.com or actstudent.org
- ☐ **Provide addressed, stamped envelopes to Counseling Office**
 - Only for schools that do not accept electronic submission
- ☐ **Meet all Deadlines!**



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Important Note:

The School Counseling Office uses Scoir to manage and send all school documents to colleges and scholarship programs.

ALL students MUST use Scoir to manage the college application process.

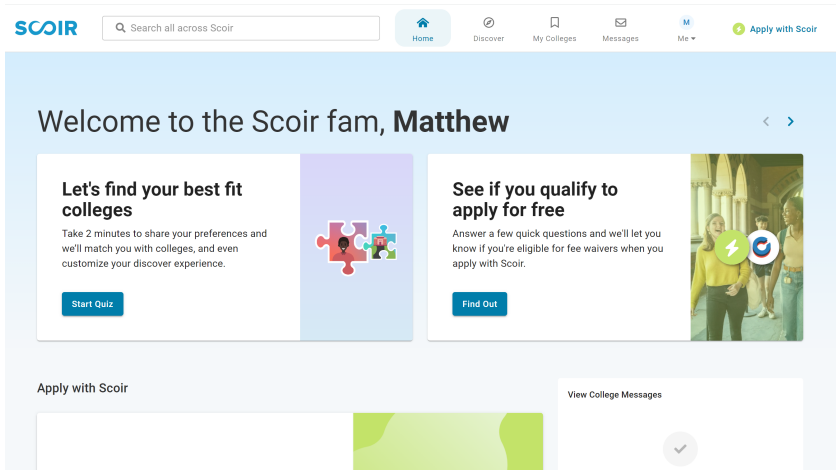


CHECK SCOIR FOR ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION

app.scoir.com/signin

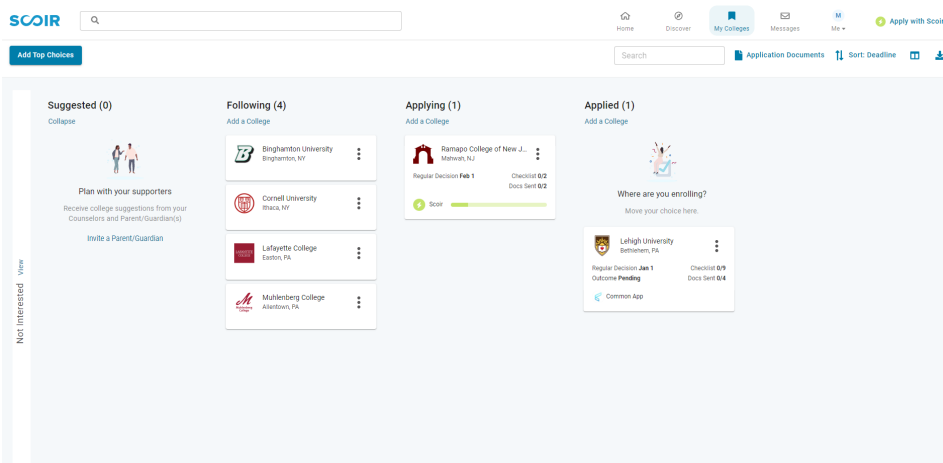
THE HOMEPAGE:

Find important instructions, valuable resources, timely bulletins, and necessary documents.



THE MY COLLEGES TAB:

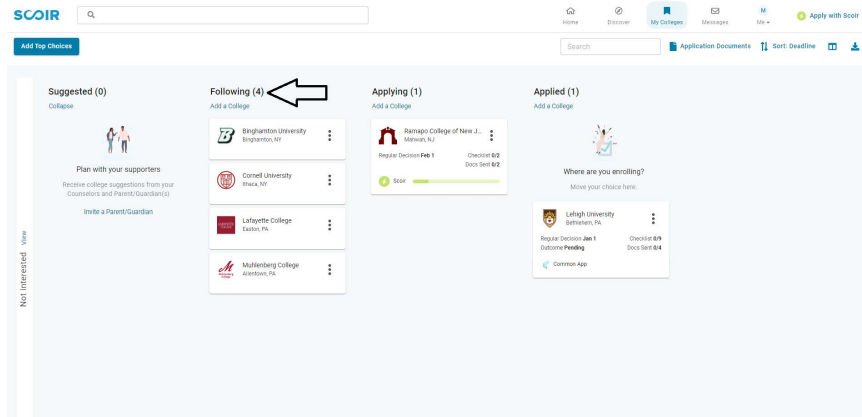
Find all of the links for managing the application process.





FINALIZING YOUR LIST OF SCHOOLS

Update Your List > Colleges I'm Following: *Keep an updated list of all the schools you are considering. Finalize your list after conferencing with your counselor and after discussing your choices with your parents.*



ADMISSION PROSPECTS: *Make sure that your list includes mostly targets, a few reaches and at least one likely. Use the scattergrams/graphs on Naviance for assistance.*

Reach = Research of admissions data indicates that your scores are a little below the school's averages, and/or the school is highly selective and only admits a small percentage of applicants.

Target* = Research of admissions data indicates that your scores are in line with the average scores of students who have been accepted in the past.

Likely = Research of admissions data indicates that your scores are significantly higher than the school's averages, and/or the school has open enrollment.

DELIVERY TYPE:

You **MUST** indicate how you are applying to the college when moving your school from "Following" to "Applying"

Electronic Submission through Common Application: Complete the Common App for this school. You will create an account at www.commonapp.org, complete the application, and add the school name to the My Colleges list on the site.

Electronic submission (non-Common App school): Find and submit the schools online application on the school's official website.

Traditional Mail: The school does not accept electronic submission of school documents and MHS must physically mail all documents. **A stamped, addressed envelope is required.**

APPLICATION DEADLINES: Check for Early Decision, Early Action, Priority and Regular deadlines. *Apply on time for the early deadlines and early for the regular deadlines.*



REQUESTING TEACHER RECOMMENDATION LETTERS

All teachers will be submitting their letters of recommendation through Scoir. Please follow the steps below to ensure that your letters are processed in a timely manner.

1. **Make all requests via email** (in person is best but not practical while we are remote/hybrid)

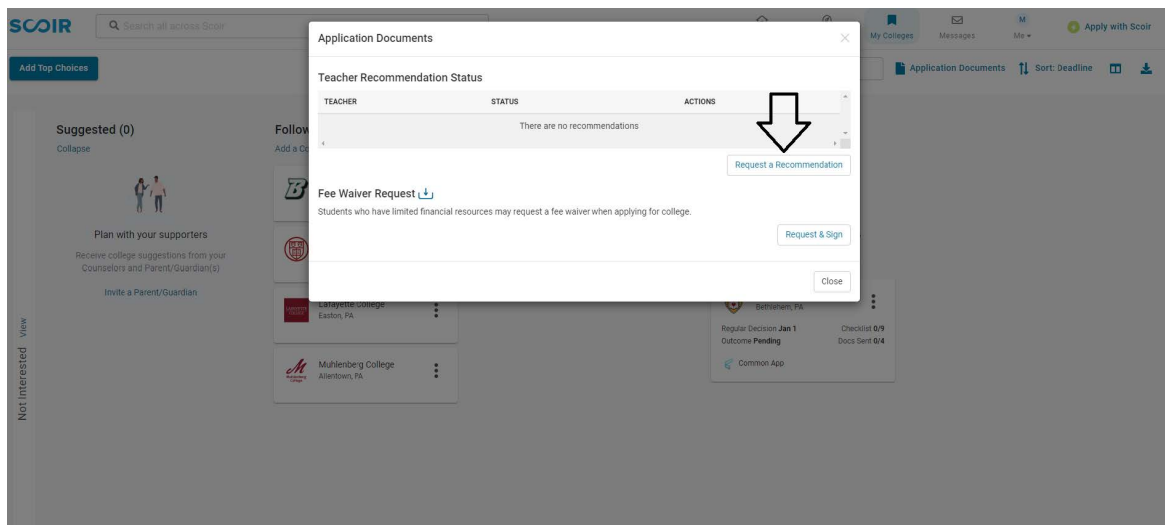
- Requests should be made as early as possible, allowing the teachers no less than **2-3 weeks** to compose and load the completed letter. **The more advanced notice you provide the teachers, the better!**

2. **Complete the Teachers Recommendation Questionnaire**

- Find in Scoir under "Me" and "Surveys."

3. **Identify teachers in Scoir by ‘Requesting a Recommendation’**

- *Once you have made your request in-person, you MUST add the teacher name(s) to Scoir so that the Counseling Office knows who to expect letters from.*
- From the My Colleges tab in Scoir, students will click on the Application Documents link and will click "Request Recommendation."



- **Step 1:** The student should type in the teacher name under "Teacher." *It is important to note that teachers will only be available in this section if they have been added to Scoir, given a user account, and had the box checked to appear in this teacher drop-down list. If the teacher is missing from the text box, students should contact their school counselor or teacher to notify them.*
- **Step 2:** If the student is sending to specific colleges, make sure to click the "Requesting for a Specific College Box" and choose which college. If no specific college, the teacher's recommendation will go to all in the student's "Applying" list.
- **Step 3:** Students can add a personal note to the teacher, highlighting any important aspects of their applications (such as first choice schools, early decision applications, intended major or degree of study), that they may want the teacher to consider when writing a letter of recommendation.
- Students should click the **Send** button at the bottom of the screen which returns them to their "My Colleges" page.

Write a Thank You Note/Email, indicating the date the letter needs to be submitted to the Counseling Office – the date should be prior to the date that the office is scheduled to submit your first set of school documents to colleges.

Sample Thank You Note:

Thank you for agreeing to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf. I am applying Early Action to several schools and all my school documents will need to be prepared no later than October 25th. If you could upload your letter by that date, I would greatly appreciate it. Also, I am applying via the Common App, so please complete the Teacher Evaluation in Naviance as well. Thank you again.



REQUESTING A COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION LETTER

The following items are **'required'** for Counselor Letter of Recommendation preparation and **MUST** be completed or submitted online through Scoir:

1. Counselor Student Brag Sheet/Questionnaire
2. Updated Resume
3. Parent Brag Sheet

Complete Counselor Student Brag Sheet/Questionnaire:

- Find under **Me > Surveys**
Answer all required questions and be as detailed as possible in your responses.

Update Your Resume

Your resume should be updated to include all extracurricular activities, work experience, community service/volunteer work, and special awards or recognitions.

Go to **Me > View Profile > Fill out all Personal Details > Download Resume**

The screenshot displays the Scoir user interface for a student named Matthew Metuchen. The top navigation bar includes the Scoir logo, a search bar, and links for Home, Discover, My Colleges, Messages, and a user profile dropdown. The main content area is divided into two sections: Personal Details and Academic Overview.

Personal Details:

- Matthew Metuchen (He/Him):** 400 Grove Ave, Metuchen, NJ 08840, (123) 456-7890, Oct 14, 1986.
- Parents:** + Invite a Parent. I will be a first-generation college student. (Radio buttons for Yes/No).
- Account:** ikurtin86@gmail.com (Primary), + Add Alternate Email.
- FERPA:** Release Authorization (Granted), Waiver of Rights (Granted).
- Application ID:** Common App ID: --

Academic Overview:

- High School:** Metuchen High School (Active), Metuchen, NJ, Class of 2023. Counselor: Elizabeth DeMott.
- Test Scores:** Your School will add your test scores.



ADMISSION PLANS

Every college and university has its own admission requirements, policies and procedures with unique deadlines, plans and programs for admitting students.

To ensure the admissions process goes smoothly, follow these steps:

- Utilize the College Application Tracker to write down all the deadlines, admission plans, and admission requirements for the schools you plan to apply to.
- Make a list of all the admission requirements, like teacher recommendations and transcripts.
- Set a date with your counselor to go over your planning timeline.
- Start with the earliest college admission deadline and tackle the easiest application in each deadline category first.
- Move to the top of the pile by submitting your finished application well before the published deadline.

College Admission Plans

College admissions plans are structured plans for how colleges are going to admit your class. Depending on how selective the college is and how it makes admission decisions, your work and the application process will need to shift to meet the deadlines.

Early Decision

Early Decision is a plan under which a student applies to his/her first choice college early in the fall (usually by November 1st) of the senior year, and if accepted, the student agrees by contract to attend that college. Decisions are rendered to applicants in mid-December, and if accepted, the student must give in a tuition deposit and withdraw their application at the other colleges. A student may choose to apply to only one college through Early Decision. They can submit applications to other schools under normal application procedures, but agree that they will withdraw all those applications if they are accepted to the early decision school. As this is a binding decision, the student needs to be 100% sure that this is the college for him/her. **An early decision application requires a parent as well as counselor signature.** Students can seek release from an early decision obligation on the grounds of financial hardship, if the financial aid package they are offered is genuinely inadequate; however, the burden of proof in these cases is on the student. (A drawback to early decision admissions is that they leave applicants with no leverage to negotiate a better financial aid package)

Early Action

Early Action follows the same application/notification timetable as Early Decision but does not obligate the candidate to accept the offer of admission. Students can apply to other colleges under Early Action and do not need to notify the college of a decision until the typical notification deadline of May 1st. Students are free to apply to other schools and to compare financial aid offers.

Rolling Admission

A college using Rolling Admissions reviews applications as they are received, and on a continuous basis throughout the application cycle. Once a student's completed application materials are received by the college, a decision is made within approximately 4-8 weeks. However, there are some schools that accept applications under a rolling-admission policy and then send out decisions all at once. Students are encouraged to apply earlier to colleges that use rolling admission, as spots are filled up as the applications are received. The later you apply, the more competition there may be for fewer spots. Procrastinators beware!

Single Choice Early Action

(SCEA) programs specifically require students not to make EA applications to other schools, although they are free to apply elsewhere under the regular admissions round.

Instant Decision Days

Instant Decision Days offer the opportunity for qualified freshmen applicants to participate in a quick, easy and personal admissions process. Students meet with admissions staff, interview with faculty, tour the campus and interact with current students. Additionally, you will receive your admissions decision and preliminary financial aid information and possibly a scholarship all in one day. Students applying to attend an Immediate Decision Day must ensure they meet the minimum qualifications (if applicable).

Important Note

Apply Early! Applying to any school late in the game can impact your financial aid offer. The early bird gets the worm!



REQUESTING TRANSCRIPTS

Once you know where you want to apply, you will need to start the application process and request that MHS send your transcript and other school documents to the schools prior to the deadline you are trying to meet.

Important Note: All Transcript Requests for colleges, scholarship programs or NCAA eligibility MUST be made online, **no less than 15 school days prior to any deadlines.**

- Transcripts are requested by you and sent from us electronically to all schools that accept electronic submission, and are mailed to all others schools or organizations.
- **Don't forget: A stamped, addressed envelope is required for each school not accepting electronic submission of school documents! Adhere 3-4 stamps.**

Fee Waivers

If you receive free/reduced lunch, see your counselor for more info.

- Waivers provided for participating schools to students how have used fee waivers for SAT/ACT
- See your counselor for more information
- For students not on Free or Reduced Lunch or who haven't used a fee waiver for SAT/ACT, investigate whether the school has special days or circumstances under which you can apply for free.



ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE REQUIREMENTS

If any school on your list in Scoir only takes paper transcripts, this is an indication that the Counseling Office must mail school documents to that school. These schools do not accept electronic submission from high schools.

Student's Responsibility:

Students must provide all envelopes and prepare each for mailing, by filling out the sending and receiving address and affixing 3-4 postage stamps.

FROM: <u>Print your name and address here</u> _____ _____ TO: OFFICE OF UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS <u>Print school's name and mailing address here</u> _____ _____ _____	Add 3 or 4 First Class Stamps
--	--

Please use a large 9 X 12" Envelope.



COMPLETING THE COLLEGE APPLICATION

Read all application instructions carefully. Check all college admission requirements and deadlines. Make sure to complete all parts of the application, including any supplements.

PARTS OF AN APPLICATION

The Application Form

- Applications are completed online, either on the college's website or, if the school accepts the Common Application, through commonapp.org.
- This form includes your basic identifying and demographic information, as well as your intended major (if applicable) and a list of your extracurricular activities.

The Application Fee

- College application fees vary.
- Many colleges accept fee waivers for applicants from low-income families. If you are on free/reduced lunch, ask your counselor or a School Counseling Office Secretary for more info.

School Documents

The following documents are sent as a bundle to all schools, when a transcript request is submitted through Scoir.

- **Transcript**: A transcript is your academic record, which includes all of the classes you have taken, and the grades you have earned. The Counseling Office will send your transcript directly to colleges on your behalf when you submit a request.
- **School Profile**: The office will also send a school profile, which helps the colleges interpret your transcript — explaining the available courses and levels, etc.
- **Secondary School Report**: This report is completed by your counselor and includes your ranking/decile, courses in progress, and a rating scale. The counselor will use the Common App SSR or a standard SSR to send to all schools.
- **Counselor Letter of Recommendation**: Students must complete a questionnaire online through Naviance, submit a resume to assist the counselor in preparing a personalized letter and have your parent/guardian complete the Brag Sheet.

Sent after 2nd Marking Period grades are posted, see page for more info:

- **Mid-Year Reports**: Some colleges want to see that you are keeping your grades up during senior year. If you are not, this may affect your admission prospects.

PARTS OF AN APPLICATION (*continued*)

- **Final Transcript (required by the attending school):** MHS will automatically send a final transcript, at the end of your senior year, to the college you identify as the one you will be attending.

Teacher Letters of Recommendation (also school documents)

- Many colleges ask for one or two teacher letters of recommendations.
 - Follow the instructions on page 6 to request teacher letters.

Admission Test Scores (Sent by YOU from collegeboard.com or actstudent.org) See page 24 for more information.

Essay

- Your essay plays an important role by helping the admission officers get a sense of who you really are, so invest time in writing a strong essay. Check for spelling and grammar errors and ask someone to proofread your work.

Interview

- If the colleges you are considering offer interviews, you should consider scheduling one. Requesting a college interview signifies that you are very interested in the school, and that can count in your favor during the admission process.
- Even if it's not required, it's a good idea to set up an interview because it gives you a chance to make a personal connection with someone who has a voice in deciding whether or not you are offered admission.
- If you're too far away for an on-campus interview, try to arrange to meet with an alumnus in your community.
- The interview is also a good time to ask questions, so you can make sure the college is right for you.
- If you are anxious about the interview process, feel free to schedule a mock interview with your counselor.

Audition or Portfolio

- If you're applying for a program in music, art, theater or similar subject, you may have to provide samples of your work to demonstrate your ability. This may mean sending a portfolio, auditioning on campus or submitting a video.

Some of the content in 'Parts of an Application' was copied from:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/student/apply/the-application/115.html>



THE COMMON APPLICATION

Many colleges accept the Common Application, and some schools only accept the Common Application. Using this shared application will help you to save time in the application process. To get started, you will need to set up an account on the website.

www.commonapp.org

Create an account and make note of your username and password

- You will need this information to match your Common App account with your Scoir account for school document transmission.
- Complete all REQUIRED sections of the Common Application
- Failure to complete required sections will interfere with your ability to complete next steps, such as assigning recommenders or completing the FERPA waiver.

IMPORTANT NOTE

- *There is no need to print out any of the school forms. Your counselor and teachers have access to all Common App forms through their own Scoir accounts.*

Completing the Common App FERPA Waiver

- Applicants will submit the FERPA decision within the Common App account.
- The FERPA question is found within the '**Assign Recommenders**' tab of your application. There is a 'release authorization' link to click on to make your FERPA decision. Note: you must complete the Education section of your application before you will be given access to this waiver.

We strongly recommend that you waive your right to access:

- Waiving your right to access your recommendations communicates that you have no concerns with what might be written about you.
- Opting to not waive your rights would give you the option to view your recommendations only after you are admitted to a college, and only if the college saves the documents.
- No student will be given access to view teacher or counselor recommendations before submission to the college.

Common Application Resources:

www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/common-app

www.commonapp.org/counselors-and-recommenders/common-app-ready

www.affordablecollegesonline.org/college-resource-center/understanding-common-application/



THE COALITION APPLICATION

The Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success is an organization of schools that came together to improve the college application process for all students by offering a single, centralized resource for students to research schools; collect and organize application materials; collaborate with counselors on school lists, essays and materials; and finally to assemble and submit applications to the Coalition member schools on their college list.

Here is a short overview of the steps you can take to begin -- and complete -- the entire application process. You can start with any of the steps listed below but finalizing and submitting your applications will depend on completing certain steps. There are help and guidance resources with more information on each of the steps along the way – but this Quick Start walks you through the whole process.



All of the pieces in the process are accessible in the menu at the top of your home page, pictured above. Menu options are:

1

Home – Your Dashboard

Set up contacts, check your college list or track your progress toward completing different sections of your profile. The home page provides quick access to key parts of the application process.

2

Your Profile - Enter information about yourself

The Profile Sections were designed by members of the Coalition to make it easy for you to enter and organize basic information about yourself, your family, your interests, extracurricular activities, and your academic record in a single place. The information you provide becomes part of your application for each of the Coalition schools to which you apply – without additional work in your part.



You can begin working on your profile as early as your first year of high school and continue to add to it, and edit it, until you start submitting applications to Coalition Colleges.

Your Locker – Start storing images, documents, and projects

Use the locker for finished products or works in progress. You can ask your counselor for feedback on an essay or an image of your art project. Your locker is secure and private unless you choose to share one of the items you've stored. When it's time to submit your applications choose from materials in your locker, for example, an essay you want to submit to one school or an art project for another. The system knows how to assemble your profile information and all of the companion materials you've selected to complete your application to a specific Coalition school.

Your College List – Research and select your top college choices

As early as your first year of high school, you can start researching colleges and adding those that interest you to your personal list of colleges.

A Start Application button either on a Coalition member's landing page or next to the school's name in your college list tells you which schools are ready to receive your application for admission.



You can search the entire list of colleges and universities on the Coalition site. Just click on the school's name to visit its website, or for Coalition members, a landing page listing application requirements and a link to start the application process. You can create and store your entire college list here for review with your counselor, but you can apply only to Coalition institutions using this application platform. See the Coalition web site for a list of member schools lists all the colleges currently associated with the Coalition

Completing and Submitting Applications

You can begin college applications once you have started your senior year of high school. The more work you do beforehand researching colleges and adding information to your Coalition profile and locker, the easier the application process will be. Each college asks its own application questions, and may require different essays, recommendations and official documents.

Here's your application checklist:



Finalize your **college list** – make sure you know where you want to submit applications and have included those schools in your college list



Check the **application requirements and deadlines** for each of the Coalition schools on your list. You can find them on the schools' landing pages. All of them will have different requirements, will ask you to request official documents from your high school and recommendations from teachers or counselors, and will want you to fill out supplemental questions as part of each institution's own application process.



Request official documents and recommendations as soon as you know they are required. Before starting any college applications, you can request letters of recommendation, and other official documents (such as a high school transcript) which are submitted to colleges on your behalf by others. All documents and recommendations that you've requested are listed in your locker so you can see their status (in progress, complete, and so on). When you apply to a college, you'll be able to select the documents and recommendations from your locker that you want to submit with your application. You can ask several teachers, counselors, and other adults for recommendations.



Check for completeness and accuracy of your **profile**. Your home page shows you the status of each section at a glance, but read through each section again for safe measure.



Run through the items that you've stored in your **locker** – make a list of which ones you want to submit to which schools.



Start your application by clicking the button next to the school's name in your college list or go to the school's landing page and click the 'start application' button. Choose from the application types offered, follow the directions and you're on your way.



Help – Get more help if you need it

Check for a whole library of articles accessible from the Help link to guide college selection, provide a better understanding of financial aid or answer questions about a profile section. If you need more assistance, contact the help desk via the link at the top of every article.



APPLYING TO RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

*It is **NOT** necessary to submit a Transcript Request for Rutgers University.*

*Rutgers requires students to **self-report** Transcript information. Complete the steps below.*

Application Deadlines:

First Year, Early Action	November 1 st
First Year, Regular Decision	December 1 st

Step 1: Complete the Rutgers online application

Go to www.admissions.rutgers.edu and complete the application.

- **Application fee:** Pay the \$70 online or by mail. If you are using a fee waiver, please see your school counselor.
- **State ID #:** Students will need their individual **State ID #** to complete the application. Your State ID # can be found on Naviance Family Connection under About Me > Profile. **Do not confuse this with your Student ID#!**
- **The personal essay:** is required for all students. Personal essays **MUST** be included in the space provided on the online application. They cannot be sent separately.

Step 2: Complete Self-Reported Academic Record (SRAR)

- Go to <https://www.ugadmissions.rutgers.edu/srt/Login.aspx>
- **Use a reference copy of your transcript:**
 - Students are required to self-report their courses, grades, grade point averages and rank-in-class with this online form. The SRAR **MUST** include all courses and final grades earned from grades 9 through 11.
 - Discrepancies between a student's SRAR and official transcript may result in a student's admission to Rutgers being rescinded.

Step 3: Add Rutgers to 'My Colleges' and 'Applying' List

- This will inform your counselor that Rutgers is an active application on your list.



MANAGING "MY COLLEGES" & "APPLYING" IN SCOIR

Once you move your schools from "Following" to "Applying" list, the schools will be considered your **active applications**.

REQUIRED: Indicate if Applying via Common App!

You **MUST** indicate whether you are using the Common App. Some Common App schools also offer the school's own online applications as an option. **It is imperative that the Counseling Office knows whether you are choosing to use the Common App, as this directly affects our electronic submission process.**

Indicate if you have applied.

Move your school from "Applying" to "Applied."

Office Status:

- You will be able to see that the school counseling office has sent your information to your colleges/universities.



REQUESTING MID-YEAR GRADE REPORTS

Some colleges will request mid-year grade to review before making a final admissions decision.

Step 1: Determine which schools require mid-year grades

Check the school's website to determine if this report is required. Keep a list for your reference when the time comes to make the request.

Step 2: Complete Mid-Year/First Semester Report Card Request AFTER 2nd Marking Period Report Cards Have Been Released

Mid-Year grades will be automatically sent.

Mid-Year grades are submitted via Scoir.



FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS

FAFSA filing starts October 1. If a college you are applying to requires the CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE to be completed, be sure to complete it at least two weeks before the college application deadline.

There are several ways for students and parents to learn more about the financial aid process. Each is listed below.

Parent Program: Financial Aid Information Night

TBD - keep an eye on the [School Counseling homepage](#).

Scholarship Search

Visit the [School Counseling Scholarship](#) page

Local Scholarship Packet

In the spring of each year, the School Counseling Office compiles a list of local scholarships available to all seniors.