

Understanding the Common Application

**The NHHEAF Network Organizations'
Center for College Planning
888.7.GRADUATE x119
collegeplanning@nhheaf.org**



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What Is The Common App?

- Not-for-profit organization
- Provides an admission application students can submit to any of the 600 member institutions
- Serves students and member institutions who agree to make admissions decisions based on a review of the “whole student”



Why Use the Common App?

- Complete one online or paper application to send to many schools
- More time can be spent focusing on visiting colleges, writing essays, doing homework, participating in extracurricular activities or completing scholarship applications
- Sending forms (ie. transcript, letters of recommendation) is more streamlined
- It keeps track of which sections you have completed and which ones are pending



Which Colleges Participate?

- Roughly 600 colleges and universities, including a few international schools
- NH Colleges Using the Common App

Colby-Sawyer College*

Franklin Pierce University

New England College

Saint Anselm College*

University of NH*

Dartmouth College*

Keene State College*

Plymouth State University

Southern NH University

* These colleges only accept the Common App and do not offer their own college application form.



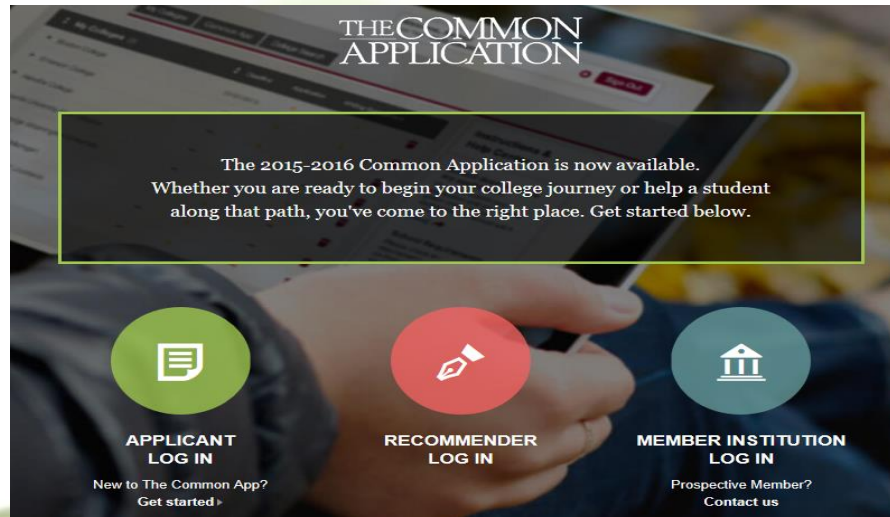
Common App vs. College's Own Form

- Supported by all member institutions
- Equal consideration given to Common App and school's own form
- Only available application for many colleges and universities



How Do I Get Started?

- Register online at www.commonapp.org
- Remember to declare yourself a “first-year” student
- Create a professional email account for all college correspondence
- Remember the email address used and password created
- All accounts are cleared each August



Common App

Dashboard					
My Colleges Common App College Search					
My Colleges (4)	Writing Requirements	Deadline	Application	Writing Supplement	Remove
▶ Keene State College	▶	—	●	—	🗑
▶ Plymouth State University	▶	—	●	—	🗑
▶ Stonehill College	▶ ▶	—	●	—	🗑
▶ University of New Hampshire	▶ ▶	—	●	—	🗑



Searching for Colleges

Criteria

Application Requirements

School or City Name

Separate multiple search terms with a comma, e.g.: Washington, Boston

Country

Select

US State

Select

Distance from ZIP

Select

Select

Miles from

00000-0000

Term

☐ Fall 2016 ☐ Spring 2016 ☐ Other 2016

Applicant Type

☐ First Year ☐ Transfer

Deadline on or after

mm/dd/yyyy

[Clear](#)

Search

- Multiple states
- Distance from home
- Application deadline
- Accepts transfer applications
- Term applying for



My Colleges

Keene State College —

Application
(0 of 3 Completed)
☐ Questions
☐ Recommenders and FERPA
☐ Review and Submit - Common App

Plymouth State University +
Stonehill College +
University of New Hampshire +

Contact Info
Phone: (800) 572-1909
Fax: 603-358-2767
Email: kscadmissions@keene.edu
[View College Website](#)

Application Deadlines

Spring 2016 First Year Rolling Admission - 12/18/2015	Fall 2016 First Year Rolling Admission - 04/01/2016
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Required
Application Fees :
First Year Domestic Fee- \$50
First Year International Fee- \$50
First Year Test Policy:
[Always Required](#)
Transfer Test Policy:
[Sometimes Required](#)
Recommendations Required:
School Report
[Counselor Recommendation](#)

- Track your progress on the application
- Check the deadline for admission at each of your schools
- Assign recommenders for each college
- View and answer questions asked by each college



Completing the Common Application Section by Section

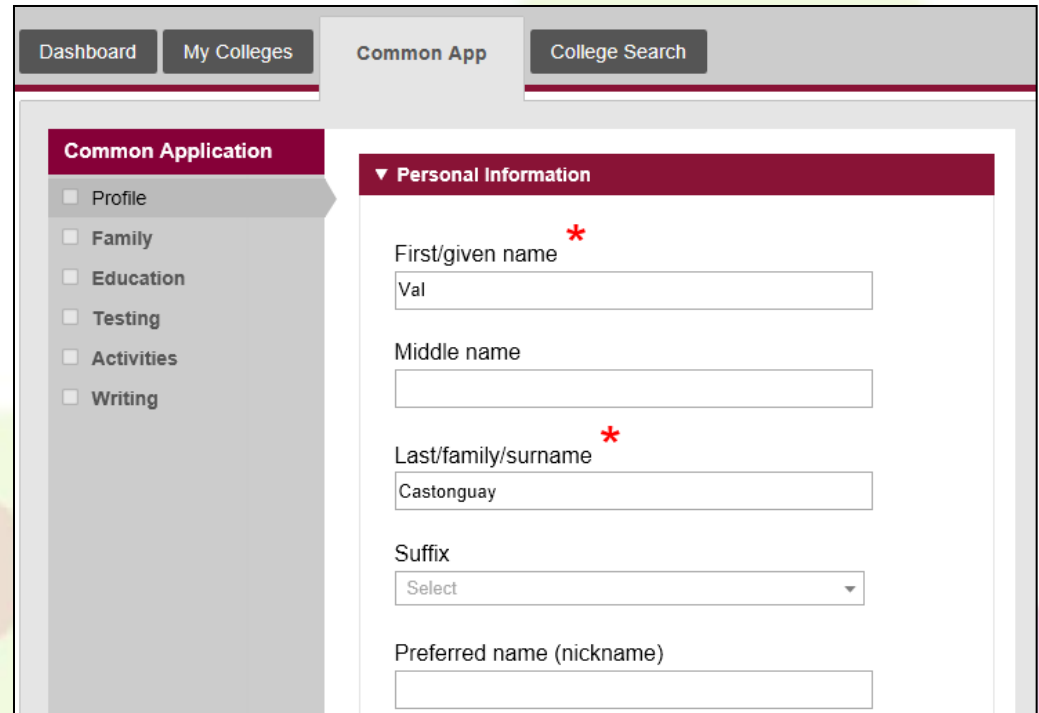


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Profile

- Personal information
- Address
- Phone/Email
- Demographics
- Country of birth
- Languages spoken
- Citizenship
- Fee waiver



The screenshot shows the 'Common App' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App' (selected), and 'College Search'. Below these, the 'Common Application' section is active, showing a sidebar with options: Profile (selected), Family, Education, Testing, Activities, and Writing. The main content area is titled 'Personal Information' and contains several input fields: 'First/given name' (with a red asterisk) containing 'Val', 'Middle name' (empty), 'Last/family/surname' (with a red asterisk) containing 'Castonguay', 'Suffix' (a dropdown menu showing 'Select'), and 'Preferred name (nickname)' (empty).



Fee Waiver

▼ Common App Fee Waiver

Our member colleges want to make sure that application fees do not pose a barrier for any student who wishes to apply for admission. Do you feel that your financial circumstances might qualify you for an application fee waiver? (Your counselor will be asked to verify your response.)

☒ Yes

☐ No

[Clear](#)

You must meet at least one of the following indicators of economic need to qualify for an application fee waiver. Select all that apply:

- ☐ I have received or am eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver
- ☐ I am enrolled in or am eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL)
- ☐ My annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- ☐ I am enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound)
- ☐ My family receives public assistance
- ☐ I live in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or am homeless
- ☐ I am a ward of the state or an orphan

- Answer yes to fee waiver question to see requirements
- If student qualifies, he/she receives unlimited college application fee waivers through Common App



Family

- Read questions carefully and answer completely
- Complete questions about both parents, even if they are divorced
- Ability to add information about step-parents
- Choose the appropriate parent for where you make your permanent home

▼ Household

Parents marital status: (relative to each other)*

Divorced

Divorced date:*

Month

Year

With whom do you make your permanent home?*"Parent 1"

Do you wish to list any step-parents?*"Yes"



Education and Testing

- High school information
- School counselor
- College coursework
- GPA, class rank and honors
- Self-report multiple test scores
- Future plans
- Preview your app to be sure responses fit

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search

Common Application

- ☐ Profile
- ☐ Family
- ☐ Education
- ☒ Testing
- ☐ Activities
- ☐ Writing

▶ Tests Taken ✓

▼ SAT Tests

Number of times you have already taken the SAT *

1 x

Number of future SAT sittings you expect *

1 x

Future testing date 1 *

Month Year

Highest critical reading score *

Select

Critical reading date *


Month Day Year

Highest math score *



Select



Activities

► Activities 

▼ Activity 1

Activity type *  

Select

Position/Leadership description and organization name, if applicable *

Details, honors won, and accomplishments *

Participation grade levels *

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

☐ Post-graduate

Timing of participation *

☐ During school year

☐ During school break

☐ All year

- Provide up to 10 activities in order of importance
- List extracurricular activities and work experience
- Provide details and accomplishments (i.e. varsity letter, captain of team, officer in club, etc.)
- Not all colleges accept resumes



Writing

- 250 – 650 word essay
- Must cut and paste essay or write directly in the space provided
- Word count feature
- Formatting carries over
- Space for additional information up to 650 words

▼ Personal Essay

Some colleges require submission of the personal essay with your Common Application. You may submit a personal essay to any college, even if it is not required by that college. If not required by a college, you will be given the option during submission to include your essay or not for that college. *

☐ I understand

Here is the current list of colleges on your Dashboard and whether they require the Personal Essay.

Required

- Keene State College
- Plymouth State University
- Stonehill College
- University of New Hampshire

Not Required

The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your



Completing the College Specific Applications Section by Section



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General Information

- Preferred start term
- Type of admissions
- Preferred residence option
- Interested in need-based financial aid
- Intention to apply for merit-based scholarships
- Art supplement

The screenshot shows the 'General' section of the Common App interface. At the top, there are tabs for 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', and 'College Search'. Under 'My Colleges', 'Keene State College' is selected. The left sidebar contains 'Questions', 'Assign Recommenders', 'Submission - Common App', and a list of colleges: 'Plymouth State University', 'Stonehill College', and 'University of New Hampshire'. The main content area is titled 'General' and contains the following questions and answers:

- Preferred start term*: Fall 2014
- Preferred admission plan*: Rolling Admission
- Preferred residence during your first year*: On-campus housing
- Do you intend to pursue need-based financial aid?*: Yes
- Do you intend to submit an art supplement so that your special talent in one or more of the arts will be considered as part of the admission process to Keene State College?*: No

At the bottom right, there are links for 'Edit' and 'Back', and a 'Continue' button.



Academics

- Choose the major
- Undeclared is an option

Common App

College Search

▶ General

▼ Academics

▶ Activities

▶ Contacts

▶ Family

▶ Residency

Major*

Economics (BA) x ▼

[Back](#)

Continue



Activities

- Choose up to 5 activities that you're interested in
- Only offers choices available at that college
- List in order of preference

► General ✓

► Academics ✓

▼ **Activities**

What activities at Keene State College interest you? List in order of preference.

Baseball x ▼

Activity Leadership x ▼ ↑

[Add Another](#) (3 of 5 available)

[Back](#) [Continue](#)

► Contacts ✓

► Family

► Residency



Contacts and Family

- List how you heard about the college
- Answer if any siblings are applying as well

► Activities

▼ Contacts

How have you learned about Keene State College? List in order of influence.

College Fair

Date, if known

[Edit](#) [Back](#) [Continue](#)

► Family

► Residency

► Parent/Legal Guardian Residency



Residency

- Asks if student applying to a public college
- Answer if you believe you qualify for in-state tuition
- If yes, questions regarding parents/legal guardians appear

► Residency

▼ Parent/Legal Guardian Residency

The questions in this section pertain to the parent or legal guardian who would qualify you for in-state status at this college. From the answers given on your application, please select the parent/legal guardian that best qualifies you for in-state tuition.*

Parent 1

Since when has this parent/legal guardian lived at his/her current address?*

Month

Year

Is your parent/legal guardian a US citizen?*

Select

What is your parent/legal guardian's U.S. Armed Forces Status:*

☐ No relationship

☐ Currently serving

☐ Previously served



Supplements

- School specific questions
- Every college has the option to choose which questions, if any, to ask
- Must complete in order to submit application to the college

Optional Stonehill Question: Educating the mind, not at the expense of the heart. A liberal arts foundation. A culture of service. Experiential learning opportunities. Accessible faculty. Domestic and international internships. A vibrant campus life. Study abroad. Top-tier NCAA Division II athletics. Our Catholic & Holy Cross heritage. This is what's important to us, and what makes Stonehill the place we call home. When you think about your life and aspirations, what is important to you, and how does that make Stonehill home for you? (Optional - 250 word maximum)

Hint: File should be under 500 KB and one of these types:
.pdf .doc .docx .rtf .txt

 [Upload Document](#)



School Forms

• FERPA Release Authorization

You must complete the release authorization process, which will allow transcripts and recommendations to be submitted on your behalf through Naviance eDocs.
[release authorization](#)

Release Authorization

1 Instructions

>

2 Form

☒ I authorize every school that I have attended to release all requested records and recommendations to colleges to which I am applying for admission. I also authorize employees at these colleges to confidentially contact my current and former schools should they have questions about the information submitted on my behalf

Please select one:

☐ I waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.

☐ I DO NOT waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.

☐ I understand that my waiver or no waiver selection above pertains to all colleges to which I apply and that my **selections on this page cannot be changed once I invite my first recommender.**

Signature

Date 08/06/2014

- Read release authorization carefully
- If you do not waive your right to access letters of recommendation, some teachers may not wish to send them and some colleges may disregard letters submitted on your behalf








School Forms

- Invite your school counselor and teachers to submit school report form
- If your school uses Naviance edocs, that will be indicated here
- Check with your school counselor about the procedure at your high school


• Counselor

Your school is using Naviance eDocs for transcripts, school reports, and teacher recommendations. Please contact your counselor directly and they will provide instructions specific to your school regarding these documents. If your counselor wishes to submit forms via mail, you can download printable forms that can be completed on paper and mailed to each institution to which you apply.

Offline Forms

- [Fee Waiver](#) 
- [School Report](#) 
- [Optional Report](#) 
- [Mid Year Report](#) 
- [Final Report](#) 

✓ Teacher

Your school is using Naviance eDocs for transcripts, school reports, and teacher recommendations. Please contact your counselor directly and they will provide instructions specific to your school regarding these documents. Once your teachers submit their recommendations online you will see the status below. If your teacher (s) wish to submit forms via mail, you can download printable forms that can be completed on paper and mailed to each institution to which you apply. [offline form](#) 

Required: 0

Allowed: 1



Payment

- Click on each individual college to pay your application fee
- Payment methods vary from institution to institution
- Possible methods of payment
 - Online credit card or echeck
 - Fee waiver request
 - Mail check

Application Submission

1 ✓ Final Review

 >

2 Payment

 >

3 Signature

You may pay the application fee for this institution using a credit card or echeck. Please note that all online payments are processed by a secure third-party payment service; you will be redirected to their site to enter your payment information. **Once you submit your payment you will be unable to change your payment method.**

Application Fee: \$50.00 First-Year Domestic Fee



Tips

- Cannot change your responses on an application once it has been submitted
- Can create a second version to send to additional schools
- The Application, Payment, and Supplement submissions are three distinct processes
- There may be additional forms required
- Preview your application BEFORE submission



Help is Available

- If experiencing technical difficulties, or need your username or password reset, contact Common App directly through their Help Center
- In the Help Center, families can view FAQ's or submit their own question, answered by email
- Cannot contact Common App via phone
- Call the Admission Office at the individual college for questions specific to their application and supplements
- Call the Center for College Planning for general Common App questions



Questions?

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