

Application Requirements

Applications vary from college to college, but most require some or all of the following parts:

Application Form

You can often apply online directly to an individual school or some schools use the Common Application, entering information just once.

Application Fee

The average college application fee is around \$25. (Some fees are as much as \$60, while other colleges don't have an application fee at all.) The fee is usually nonrefundable, even if your child is not offered admission. Many colleges offer fee waivers for applicants from low-income families. If your child needs a fee waiver, you or your child should call the college's admission office for more information.

High School Transcript

This form is filled out by an official of the high school; it comes with admission materials and should be given to the guidance office to complete as early as possible. Some colleges send this form directly to the high school after receiving his application.

Admission Test Scores

SAT or ACT test scores are requested by some colleges. Many universities and colleges require admission tests because they are a standard way of measuring a student's ability to do college-level work.

Letters of Recommendation

Many private colleges ask for letters of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or other adult who knows your child well. When asking someone to write such a letter, keep the college's deadline in mind.

Essay

College essay often plays a very important role. Whether you are writing an autobiographical statement or an essay on a specific theme, take the opportunity to express your individuality in a way that sets you apart from other applicants.

Interview

This is required or recommended by some colleges. 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 will have a voice in deciding whether or not you will be offered admission. If you are too far away for an on-campus interview, try to arrange to meet with an alumnus in your community.

Audition/Portfolio

If you are applying for a program such as music, art, or design, you may have to document prior work by auditioning on campus or submitting an audiotape, slides, or some other sample of your work to demonstrate your ability.

Remember, all parts of your application should come together to create an accurate portrait of who you are, of what you will bring to the college. If possible, there should be a theme running through it.