

How to Apply to College: A Step-by-Step Guide for the Class of 2011



San Juan Diego Catholic High School

School Code:
440350

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Application

Today, most colleges prefer that you fill out an online application; although, it is still possible to complete paper applications.

Obtain an application by following ONE of these three steps:

1. For Texas public schools and some private Texas colleges, you will need the **ApplyTexas** application at www.applytexas.org.
2. For many private colleges and out-of-state universities across the country, use the **Common Application** at www.commonapp.org. Many colleges that use the Common Application also require a supplemental application with additional essays, short answer questions, etc. Make sure you have all of the application materials you need for each college on your list. You can double check what you will need by looking at the Common Application website or the college's website.
3. About 85 colleges accept the Universal College Application, www.universalcollegeapp.com.
4. Log onto the college's website to access its own online application, or call the college for a paper application.

When you begin an online application, WRITE DOWN YOUR USER NAME AND PASSWORD and keep them in a safe place. On the first page of the application, make sure you check the box for the Fall 2011 semester. **Ignore any box that mentions a short semester or term.**

As you work on your online application, you can save it and go back to it as often as you wish, as long as you do not click "SUBMIT" at the end of the application. After you fill out the application, print a hard copy to review it for any mistakes. **IMPORTANT:** Have a parent and/or the college counselor proofread it before you submit it. Make any final changes and print a final hardcopy to keep for your records.

All the information on your application must be **accurate, thorough, and professional**. Colleges will not review your application unless it is complete. Be sure to capitalize letters when necessary, and use correct grammar and punctuation. Your application is not a text message!

Never leave a section blank. You must still fill out the application's "Activities and Awards" section fully even though your résumé will be sent to the college with your transcript.

Apply early! Even if the admissions application deadline is in February, the scholarship deadline for most colleges is in early December. You must submit your application by the earlier scholarship deadline in order to be considered. Don't pass up a scholarship opportunity because you applied too late!

Before you submit an application, be prepared to use your parent's credit card for the application fee. If you think you qualify for a fee waiver, see Mrs. Figer.

Fee Waivers

If you qualify to receive fee waivers, you will have the opportunity to take the SAT and ACT twice without paying. When you register for the SAT, you are able to send your scores to eight schools without paying an additional fee; but you **MUST** choose the schools at the time of registration or within a week of taking the exam. You will have to pay about \$9 for each additional score report after you take the exam. For students that do not have fee waivers, you are able to send scores to four schools during registration. Additional score reports cost about \$9.

Students who receive fee waivers will also receive "Request for Waiver of College Application Fee" forms. These forms are mailed to the college along with your transcript. Colleges may choose to waive the application fee, but they are not required to do so. You may still have to pay the application fee if the college asks you to do so.

Standardized Test Scores

Register **NOW** for the SAT, ACT, or both. Every senior should take a test in the fall semester.

To register online:

SAT: www.collegeboard.com

ACT: www.actstudent.org

For a paper registration form, see Mrs. Figer.

Some colleges require students to take SAT subject tests. You can find out if it is required by checking the college's website.

Testing dates are posted on or near Mrs. Figer's office and in the downstairs display case above the water fountain.

Ordering official score reports from testing agencies (SAT and/or ACT)

Colleges now require SAT and ACT scores to be mailed directly from the testing agencies. You must go to the test websites to send your score reports to colleges. Please order early, as it takes the testing agencies a few weeks to send score reports to colleges.

Scores sent from San Juan Diego are not considered official scores. Some local colleges, however, will still accept them. If you would like Mrs. Figer to send your unofficial scores to a college, check the appropriate box on the transcript request form.

Essays

If your college requires an essay, begin to work on it as soon as possible. Type it in a word document, then proofread, edit, revise, peer-edit, and show it to adults (teachers, parents, and/or college counselor).

When you are completely done and your essay is the veritable picture of perfection, cut and paste it onto your online application. Be very aware of your word length – you are not allowed to go over your word limit.

Your English teacher and college counselor will give you guidelines for writing a good essay.

Official Transcript

Your official transcript must be sent to each college to which you apply. Transcript request forms are located in Mrs. Figer's office. You must complete a separate transcript request form for each college.

Requests for transcripts should be submitted to Mrs. Figer at least **three weeks** before the application deadline.

Instructions for completing the transcript request form are printed on the form itself. If you leave any parts blank or do not attach the appropriate forms, the transcript request will be returned to you, which could result in an unnecessary delay in getting the materials sent to your college.

In January, as soon as the first semester grades have been turned in, Mrs. Figer will send an updated transcript of your grades to the colleges you have applied to. (This is another reason why you need to make good grades as a senior!)

Résumé

Keep your résumé updated! If you join a new club, receive an award or get a new job, add the necessary information to your résumé. Give the updated résumé to Mrs. Figer. She keeps them in your senior file and sends them to colleges whenever she mails transcripts, letters of recommendations, or other forms to the colleges.

SSR and/or Counselor Recommendation Form

Some colleges require the college counselor fill out a report, write a recommendation letter, or both. Generally speaking, the more selective the college, the more forms the college requires of the counselor. Check your application instructions carefully to see if additional forms are required. If they are, print the form, complete any student portions,

and give it to Mrs. Figer at the same time you submit a transcript request form. Secondary School Reports (SSR) and Counselor Recommendation Forms are mailed with your transcripts.

Teacher Recommendation Letters

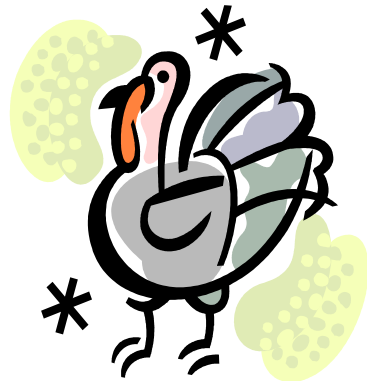
Not all colleges require teacher recommendations – but many do – so be sure you know whether you need them and how many you need.

Be as considerate as possible to your teachers when requesting recommendation letters. As you know, teachers are very busy, and writing a good rec letter can take hours and is usually done in their spare time at home. Request your recommendation letter at least **THREE WEEKS** in advance of your deadlines.

Teacher rec letters are never returned to the student. However, after you know that the teacher has written and mailed it, write a nice thank-you note!

Mrs. Figer, College Counselor
Phone: (512) 804-1935
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**Finish your applications by
Thanksgiving!**



**Transcript Request Deadline:
Friday, December 11**