

USEFP News

THE UNITED STATES EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION IN PAKISTAN

SEPTEMBER 01ST 2009

College Application Requirements

There's More than Just a Form

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

Application Form

In the old days (well, a few years ago), you had one application option—a handwritten or typed form. Today you can often apply online directly to an individual school or use the Common Application, entering your information just once.

Application Fee

The average college application fee is around \$35. (Some colleges charge up to \$60, while others don't have an application fee at all.) The fee is usually nonrefundable, even if you're not offered admission. Many colleges offer fee waivers for applicants from low-income families. If you need a fee waiver, call the college's admissions office for more information.

High School Transcript

This form is filled out by an official of your high school. If it comes with your admissions materials, you should give it to the guidance office to complete as early as possible. Some colleges send this form directly to your school after receiving your application.



Admissions Test Scores

At many colleges, you have to submit SAT[®], SAT Subject Test[™], or ACT test scores. Test scores are a standard way of measuring a student's ability to do college-level work.

Letters of Recommendation

Your entire application should create a consistent portrait of who you are. Many private colleges ask you to submit one or more letters of recommendation from a teacher, counselor, or other adult who knows you well. When asking someone to write such a letter, be sure to do so well before the college's deadline.

Essay

If you're applying to private colleges, your essay often plays a very important role. Whether you're 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

Although this is mostly not required for international students at the undergraduate level, it can be a good idea to try to set up an interview if possible, as it will give you a chance to make a personal connection with someone who will have a voice in

deciding whether or not you'll be offered admission. As an alternative to an on-campus interview, you could always try to meet with an alumnus in your community or see if you can set up a meeting via skype or online conference call.

Audition/Portfolio

If you're 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.

The Sum of the Parts

Your entire application should create a consistent portrait of who you are and what you'll bring to the college. The more the pieces of the puzzle support one impression, the more confident the admissions committee will be in admitting you. If the essay or interview contradicts information you gave on other forms, you may cause them to have doubts about accepting you.

If all the parts of your application are filled out honestly and carefully, with an attention to your conviction that each school is a good match for you, you will come across in the best light possible.

Why 20 Is Too Many: Understanding the Application Frenzy

Colleges and universities across the country have reported record-breaking numbers of applicants over the last few years. Is this phenomenon the result of a sudden surge in the number of high school graduates? No, the main reason for the application increase is that high school seniors are applying to 20 or more colleges rather than the traditional five to eight. The fact is, however, that 20 is way too many.

Why the Surge?

Why are your peers applying to more schools than ever before? The reasons are varied. They range from the ease of applying online to the use of the Common Application—now accepted by hundreds of schools—which enables students to apply to multiple colleges with just one standardized form. And because electronic applications are easier and less expensive to process, some schools waive their application fees for those who apply online—yet another incentive to apply to more and more schools. Another factor is the economic climate and how it may affect individual families.

The schools themselves are also responsible for the recent application surge. Despite the fact that reviewing so many applications creates more work for a school's administrative staff, many colleges use aggressive marketing strategies to attract applicants. Have you received applications by mail and email (known as "snap" and "fast track" applications) that you never requested? If so, you're not alone. Some schools also provide incentives to applicants they really want, such as waiving the essay, the teacher recommendations, or the application fee. In some cases, schools will even start the application for a student. With such enticements, who wouldn't want to apply?

Why Not to Overapply

As a student in the midst of the college search process, you know how overwhelming the competition is out there. It is therefore a natural reaction to want to apply to as many colleges as possible. By submitting many applications, at least you can count on getting into some schools. Right? Wrong! Do you really want to go to any old school—even one you haven't thoroughly researched—just because you've been accepted there? What if the school doesn't offer programs you're interested in? Or what if the location isn't ideal for you? Or what if the social scene isn't what

you are looking for? If it's not a good fit academically, geographically, and socially, then the likelihood that you'll drop out increases.

The college search process is not an easy one. It is challenging to create a list of schools that appeal to you in terms of size, location, programs offered, and so on and then to narrow that list down to include ones that range in admission competitiveness (reach, match, and safety schools). Suzanne Colligan, director of college counseling at Georgetown Visitation Preparatory School in Washington, D.C., advises her students

many applications, they naturally are sending out more rejection letters than ever before. College and universities often have a finite amount of facilities and resources; more students are competing for the same number of places.

Because of the surge in applications, colleges are working to improve methods of weeding out indifferent students.

Admission officers want to focus exclusively on students who show a genuine interest in attending their school. One way some colleges are attempting to weed out insincere applicants is by

making the writing portion of their application more challenging and thoughtful. If you are applying to ten or more schools, you can't possibly have a deep-rooted interest in all of them, and this will be clear to admission officers. This is yet another reason why it's so important to have genuine reasons for wanting to go to a school before you apply.

Applying to numerous schools won't allow you to bargain for a better financial aid package.

Jack Joyce, director of college-planning services at the College Board, explains that schools frown upon those who apply to

many schools to see which will offer the best financial package and then use that to bargain with other schools. Colleges resent the idea of negotiating, and trying to do so may put you in a difficult position. According to Joyce, negotiating is not effective because schools offer as much assistance as they can from the start according to a student's circumstances. Unless your financial situation changes or an extraordinary event occurs in your life, the offer will not be revised. Also, with the jump in applications, schools have no incentive or need to negotiate. Financial aid is understandably an important consideration for many college-bound students. When applying to colleges, however, Joyce advises making other factors, such as your needs and interests, higher priorities.

Spring semester of senior year should be a time when you can breathe a sigh of relief and enjoy the rest of high school with the security of knowing where you will be in the fall. Unfortunately, with the deluge of applications colleges are receiving, you could still be on waiting lists come spring and still have to deal with the anxiety of not knowing what the future has to offer.

From: www.collegeboard.com



to have good, well-researched reasons for why they're applying to every school on their list. To get to that point, she encourages students to complete self-assessments to identify their top three or four criteria for a school. Each school on a student's final list should meet those criteria. Colligan strongly advises students not to include schools on the list that they would never really consider attending.

In order to end up at a college where you will be happy and not feel as if you settled on a school just because you were accepted there, you must do your research before you apply, not after. If you do your work in advance, when it comes time to make a decision, you'll be excited about whatever choice you make because you'll already have good reasons for picking that school. While it may seem tempting to simply cast the net far and wide and then make the decision later, after the acceptances are in, that is not wise. Here are some more reasons why:

When application numbers are up, admission rates go down.

Because colleges are suddenly receiving so

Financial Aid Applicants

Don't be Disheartened, International Aid is Available!

Contrary to what you may have heard, there is still a large amount of international financial aid being awarded to students applying for admission in the United States. Although financial aid awards for international students are highly competitive, they do still exist for the right candidates who apply at the right time.

Make sure you have a strong application and competitive test scores if you are seeking a substantial financial aid package. Here are a few specific things you should consider:

- ◆ Make sure you read the financial aid application requirements carefully. Most schools will have early financial aid deadlines for international students or may require additional forms.
- ◆ For schools that you are thinking of applying to, research

the average number of financial aid awards given to international students in recent years, and the amount of tuition/expenses that these awards have covered. It is important to make sure your target schools are a realist match in terms of your academic background, financial constraints and aid expectations.

- ◆ Please note, It is very rare for universities to award a full or 100% financial aid package to international students, at least some portion of the costs do usually fall upon the student or student's guardian.
- ◆ Your performance on standardized tests such as the SAT General and SAT Subject tests can significantly impact your scholarship chances.

Below are a few highlights of **actual** per year financial aid awards that were made to individual advisees as collected and reported through our unique network of global advising centers:

- ⇒ University of Michigan Ann Arbor - \$64,000
- ⇒ University of Chicago - \$56,950
- ⇒ Tufts University - \$52,000
- ⇒ Brandeis University - \$50,000
- ⇒ Colgate University - \$48,000
- ⇒ Furman University - \$40,000
- ⇒ Trinity University - \$30,000
- ⇒ New York Institute of Technology - \$10,500
- ⇒ Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute - \$10,000
- ⇒ University of South Carolina - \$9,000
- ⇒ Brigham Young University - \$4,300

UPCOMING EVENTS AT USEFP, SEPTEMBER 2009:

USEFP Islamabad:

A General Undergraduate Presentation will be held every Wednesday of the month at 3:00pm
 A General Graduate Presentation will be held every Thursday of the month at 3:00pm
 A College Search Seminar is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, 30th September at 3pm

USEFP Karachi:

A Visa Seminar will take place every Wednesday of the month at 3:00pm
 A Graduate Education Presentation will be held every Thursday of the month at 3:00pm
 An Undergraduate Education Presentation will be held every Friday of the month at 3:30pm

Pease contact your local office to register for upcoming events and receive additional information:

Islamabad: advising@usefpakistan.org; **Karachi:** advisingkarachi@usefpakistan.org; **Lahore:** lahoreadvising@usefpakistan.org

Upcoming Test Dates for TOEFL, GRE, and SAT

SAT:

General and Subject Test

Test Dates:

October 10th, 2009

November 07th, 2009

December 05th, 2009

January 23rd, 2010

May 01st, 2010

June 05th, 2010

International Registration:

Please check for early registration options for international candidates.

iBT TOEFL:

Test Dates:

October 10th, 2009

October 18th, 2009

October 24th, 2009

October 25th, 2009

October 31st, 2009

November 01st, 2009

November 08th, 2009

November 14th, 2009

November 21st, 2009

November 22nd, 2009

December 05th, 2009

December 12th, 2009

December 20th, 2009

GRE:

The GRE Test is offered four days a week, Monday through Thursday, throughout the year.

Please visit our website or call in order to register for a particular test day.



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