

Focus on Your Future!

College Application Process

The process for applying for college admissions varies from one college to another. It is the applicant's responsibility to know the steps to follow for a particular school. Simply stated, applying means sending an application form, high school records, and entrance exam scores to the college. It is the sequence, forms, and deadlines that vary. To begin the application process, you must first request an application. Check the College/Career Center for catalogues from specific colleges.

How to get the Application

- Most colleges will send an application to you upon request. A **Sample Letter** for this purpose is in this handbook.
- Ask your counselor for a copy of the Texas Common Application that is required at all public colleges and universities in Texas or go to www.applytexas.org and apply on-line.

Completing the Forms

- Complete the application forms accurately and completely. **PRINT NEATLY. A TYPED APPLICATION IS EASIER TO READ.** Online applications are easy to correct.
- Consistently use your full legal name and social security number.
- Read each question carefully. Do not leave anything blank. If a question does not apply to you, write "does not apply," or "N/A."
- Spend considerable time on essays and statements (consult your English teacher and counselor). This is your chance to shine and to show your creativity and uniqueness.
- Always be truthful on an application of any kind. Do not try to over-compensate for a weakness by inflating activities or leadership roles.
- Set up a file system to keep track of important information and copies of all correspondence.

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College Application Process Continued

- Distribute the appropriate parts of your application to the right people at least two weeks prior to the deadline.
- You may want to make a copy of the application, make a rough draft copy, and then copy the answers onto the **ORIGINAL** application form. This may save you from having to send for another application!!
- Make copies of ALL completed forms.
- Be sure to mail all forms by the deadlines.

Requests for Transcripts

- Requests for copies of a student's transcript should be made through the Registrar's Office.
- Allow at least 24 hours to process. College and scholarship applications usually require an **OFFICIAL** copy of a transcript. An official copy carries a special seal and is either given to a student in a sealed envelope or mailed directly. The transcript should stay in the envelope to be mailed to its final destination.
- In other cases, the transcript will accompany the counselor recommendation form.
- Read the instructions from the college carefully.
- Please remember the high volume of requests made daily to the registrar and make transcript requests **WELL** in advance (two weeks is good) of the necessary date.

Applying for Housing

- Since many colleges require on-campus living for freshman students, it is important to know the procedure for housing arrangements at the school of your choice.
- An application form and a deposit are usually required to reserve housing.
- Write to the Housing Office for the proper forms and other information.

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- Some colleges only accept housing applications from students who have been accepted for admission.
- **Other universities have specific early deadlines.** Check the college catalog carefully.

Looking for Financial Aid

- Each school must be contacted.
- Refer to the *Financial Aid* section of the handbook.
- Be sure you make a note of the financial aid officer's name with whom you talk.

Awaiting an Acceptance

- Once you have made copies of all forms and mailed all papers, wait for further correspondence from the college.
- Some colleges have a “rolling” admissions, and you may hear a response in four to six weeks.
- Some colleges have a notification date (i.e., April 15). Again, check your college information bulletin.
- **Respond to the school of your choice by May 1st.**

The Texas Common Application

The *Texas Common Application* can be used to apply for undergraduate admission to any public university in Texas. This is a time saver for students applying to several Texas public universities. Complete one application and send a copy to as many Texas public universities as you wish. Paper copies are available in your counselor's office. You can also apply electronically at www.applytexas.org.

The Common Application

The *Common Application* is the recommended form of 230 selective, independent colleges and universities in the United States. Students complete one Common Application form, photocopy it, and send the form to any of the participating institutions. Use “Common App Online” to complete the forms and submit them electronically or in hardcopy. The website for the Common Application is www.commonapp.org

A decorative banner with a light blue background and a dark blue border. The text "Focus on Your Future!" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. There are two stylized blue stars on either side of the banner.

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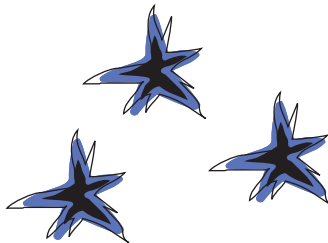
HB 1403

Section 2 of HB 1403 enables certain foreign students, including students out-of-status with INS, to qualify as residents. For students to qualify under this section, he or she must meet the following four provisions:

- ✦ have graduated from a public or private high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma (GED) in this state;
- ✦ have resided in this state for at least three years as of the date the person graduated from high school or received the equivalent of a high school diploma;
- ✦ register as an entering student in an institution of higher education not earlier than the 2001 fall semester; and
- ✦ provide to the institution an affidavit stating that the individual will file an application to become a permanent resident at the earliest opportunity that he or she is eligible to do so.

In addition, the student must have resided with a parent or legal guardian or conservator during at least a portion of the 3 years leading up to high school graduation or the receipt of a GED certificate.

For more information, go to
www.collegefortexans.com/residency/foreign.cfm



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NCAA Guidelines for Athletes

If a student wishes to compete in intercollegiate athletics as a freshman at a Division I or II institution, he/she should apply for initial eligibility after the junior year in high school.

Academic Eligibility: Division I Schools

In order for a student to be eligible for Division I schools, they must do the following:

1. Graduate from high school.
2. Successfully complete a core curriculum of at least 14 academic courses.
 - four years of English
 - two years of math (Algebra I or higher)
 - two years of social science
 - two years of natural/physical science (1 year of lab if offered by high school)
 - One year of additional English, mathematics or natural/physical science
 - three years of additional academic core courses must be from courses in the above areas or foreign language, or nondoctrinal religion/philosophy.
3. Have a grade point average and a combined score on the SAT verbal and math sections or a sum score on the ACT based on the following qualifier index scale.
4. In order to graduate from high school in the State of Texas and be eligible to compete for the **TEXAS Grant**, you must graduate on the Recommended High School Program or Distinguished Achievement High School Program.

***Please Note:** Students entering college on or after August 1, 2005, may not use any computer science courses in meeting the core-course requirements.

Please see www.ncaa.org for more information and to review the *2005–2006 Guide for the College-Bound Student Athlete*.

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NCAA Qualifier Index

Core GPA	ACT (sum of scores)	SAT
3.550 or above	37	400
3.525	38	410
3.500	39	420
3.475	40	430
3.450	41	440
3.425	41	450
3.400	42	460
3.375	42	470
3.350	43	480
3.325	44	490
3.300	44	500
3.275	45	510
3.250	46	520
3.225	46	530
3.200	47	540
3.175	47	550
3.150	48	560
3.125	49	570
3.100	49	580
3.075	50	590
3.050	50	600
3.025	51	610
3.000	52	620
2.975	52	630
2.950	53	640
2.925	53	650
2.900	54	660
2.875	55	670
2.850	56	680
2.825	56	690
2.800	57	700

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NCAA Qualifier Index Continued

Core GPA	ACT (sum of scores)	SAT
2.775	58	710
2.750	59	720
2.725	59	730
2.700	60	730
2.675	61	740-750
2.650	62	760
2.625	63	770
2.600	64	780
2.575	65	790
2.550	66	800
2.525	67	810
2.500	68	820
2.475	69	830
2.450	70	840-850
2.425	70	860
2.400	71	860
2.375	72	870
2.350	73	880
2.325	74	890
2.300	75	900
2.275	76	910
2.250	77	920
2.225	78	930
2.200	79	940
2.175	80	950
2.150	80	960
2.125	81	960
2.100	82	970
2.075	83	980
2.050	84	990
2.025	85	1000
2.000	86	1010

Additional information concerning Division I and eligibility for Division II may be obtained in the 2005-2006 NCAA Guide for College-Bound Student Athlete located in the Counseling Office or go to www.ncaa.org.

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Teacher and Counselor Recommendations

Teacher and counselor recommendations are important aspects of many application materials. Keeping this in mind, carefully consider the teachers whom you select to complete your recommendations.

1. Complete a personal resume/brag sheet on yourself and make copies so you can give them to anyone you ask for a recommendation. (See the “Parent and Student Brag Sheets” in the *Appendix*.)
2. When you have decided which teachers you will ask to write your recommendations, be sure that you give all forms to them as soon as you receive them. Add a note telling the teacher the exact date the recommendation is due to the college or scholarship committee.
3. Be sure that **YOU** have filled out all applicable sections on the teacher form before delivering it to the teacher.
4. Provide the teacher with a stamped and properly addressed envelope for mailing the recommendation.
5. On most teacher/counselor recommendation forms, you will be asked whether you waive your right to view the recommendation. It is generally better to indicate “yes” so admissions officers know that teachers’ or counselors’ comments are completely candid.
6. Deliver the recommendation personally to the teacher along with information about yourself. Do NOT leave it on a desk, in the teacher’s mailbox or depend on someone else to deliver it for you.
7. Give plenty of notice! **TWO WEEKS is the minimum acceptable time period to give a teacher or counselor. Do not wait until December 18th for a January 1st deadline. Teachers and counselors like their holiday break, too.**
8. It is appropriate to follow up a teacher recommendation with a thank you note. They have given you a gift!

Photographs

Some applications (particularly scholarship applications) may ask for a photograph. Order a sufficient number of pictures with that thought in mind.

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The Campus Visit and College Evaluation

The Campus Visit

It is very important to research colleges of interest. You can use the College/Career Center and the library at your school and/or go on a college visit. Also, refer to the list of resources in this handbook.

There is no better way to learn about a college or university—the faculty, facilities, spirit, atmosphere, academic atmosphere, student values—than to visit the campus when college is in session. It is better to see through your own eyes rather than rely upon the word of a friend or the school’s promotional materials.

The campus visit can be considered “educational insurance”

1. You are more likely to choose a college that is “matched” to your needs.
2. You will have an opportunity to evaluate what students wear, how they live, etc.
3. You will be able to observe where you will eat, sleep, study, attend classes, and take part in campus activities.
4. You are likely to do better work if you are in an environment which is congenial to your value system and needs.

Preparing for a college visit

1. Arrange your visit in advance. Avoid being a “drop-in.”
2. Your counselor will assist you in planning your visit. **Many schools have special weekend events and tours;** some send brochures and registration materials to your school.
3. Allow sufficient time for a college visit. Preferably a full day—not less than half a day at each college.
4. Familiarize yourself with the college catalog/bulletin before you arrive on campus.
5. Inform the college about your areas of interest, curriculum, activities, etc. Indicate whether you have applied for admission.

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The Campus Visit and College Evaluation Continued

6. Know something about your own high school before visiting.
(Example: four-year, public, enrollment, class size, course offerings)
7. Summarize your personal interests, awards, activities, etc.
8. Give careful attention to your appearance, grooming, and conduct. The campus interview facilitates “putting a face with a name.” Often notes are kept and placed in your application file. Remember to put your best appearance forward. You are representing your high school and future applicants as well as yourself.

Try to do the following

1. Visit several classes.
2. Talk to the college students. Ask them about the academic and social life on campus.
3. Take a notebook. After you have visited, make some notes while the information is fresh in your mind:
 - impression of facilities and campus
 - impression of faculty and students
 - instructional program and regulations
 - names and titles of officials with whom you visited

College Evaluation—What to learn and what to ask on a campus visit

Classes

1. What is the average size of class for freshmen?
Upperclassmen?
2. Who will teach freshmen courses, graduate assistants or full professors?
3. What is the faculty advisor system? How easy is it to meet with the advisors? How are they assigned? (By department major, randomly, etc.)

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Campus

Does the campus appeal to you? Size? Is it easy to get around? Will you need a car? Are freshmen permitted to have cars? Is parking a problem?

Housing

- 1.** Is on-campus housing a problem?
- 2.** Are freshmen required to live in a dorm?
- 3.** How is housing assigned? Is there a separate housing application? Deadline? Deposit?
- 4.** How are roommates assigned? Can you request a particular roommate?
- 5.** How many students per room? Are singles available?
- 6.** Are the study facilities of the dorm satisfactory? Are there study hours or “quiet rooms”?
- 7.** Are dining facilities of the dorm satisfactory? Is it required or optional to purchase meals?
- 8.** What percentage of students live on campus? Off campus? Commute?
- 9.** Are rooms “wired” for personal computers?

Admissions Criteria

- 1.** How will the college/university be evaluating the student? What criteria is used in the process? (test scores, GPA, rank, area of study, recommendations, activities, other factors)
- 2.** Application deadlines and procedures? (Refer to college application process section of this handbook.)

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The Campus Visit and College Evaluation Continued

College Costs and Financial Aid/Scholarship Opportunities

1. What are the school's basic costs (tuition, room, board, fees)?
What other costs are involved in attending (books, personal, etc.)?
2. What kinds of financial aid programs are available? What is the procedure for applying? Deadlines? Work opportunities? Loans?
3. Merit or no-need scholarships? Athletic or talent awards?

Services for Students with Disabilities

1. Does the college offer a comprehensive LD program?
2. Is subject-area tutoring available?
3. Are the following aids and services provided?
 - alternative exam arrangements
 - textbooks on tape
 - note takers
 - counseling

After the Campus Visit

- A. Write thank you notes to the Director of Admissions and to any other staff or faculty who interviewed you and extended courtesies while you were on campus. This should be done promptly upon returning home. Also, thank persons from your school who have helped you.
- B. See your counselor—discuss what you have learned.
- C. Begin completing the “College Comparison Checklist” on page 45 to compare and contrast your choices.
- D. Review evaluations and impressions; begin ranking the colleges on your list.

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College Search Websites

For those of you who enjoy using computers to access information, the following are internet addresses for doing college searches:

★ www.c3apply.org **American College Testing Program**

You can search for a college, view photos or even take “virtual tours” of many colleges, apply to participating colleges, access information about the ACT Assessment (and register online), and use free Financial Need Estimator.

★ www.collegeboard.com **College Board Online**

This site connects you to a college search program with a database of more than 3000 two-year and four-year colleges. You can choose from among 800 features to create a profile of your ideal college, and in seconds, get a list of the colleges that fit the bill.

★ www.collegenet.com **CollegeNet**

This is a searchable database of colleges, scholarship opportunities, and academic resources. It offers a comprehensive college/university index with good graphics and some interesting resources for financial aid and scholarships.

★ www.collegeview.com **College View**

By combining a database of 3300 two- and four-year colleges with multimedia tours, College View gives students and parents a general overview of a college, plus a direct e-mail option for requesting additional information.

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College Search Websites Continued

 www.collegexpress.com **CollegeXpress**

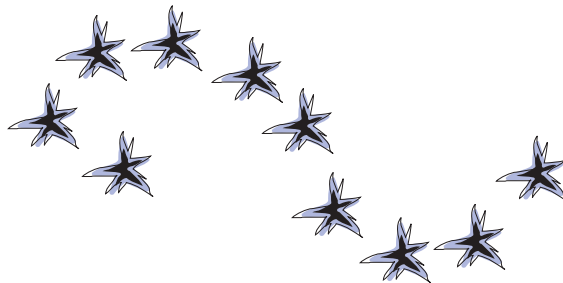
Search colleges by state, major, and a host of other factors. Take a virtual tour of some colleges and ask their experts questions about the college admission process.

 www.petersons.com **Peterson's Education Center**

Peterson's college database is available on this home page as is other educational and career information.

 www.review.com **The Princeton Review**

You can search the site by a college's name, region, state, and cost. Princeton Review also gives you their rating of hundreds of colleges.



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College Comparison Worksheet

COLLEGE NAME	College 1	College 2	College 3
LOCATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distance from home 			
SIZE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enrollment • physical size of campus 			
ENVIRONMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • type of school (2-yr, 4-yr) • school setting (urban, rural) • location & size of nearest city • co-ed, male, female • religious affiliation 			
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deadline • tests required • average test scores, GPA, rank • special requirements • notification • contact person 			
ACADEMICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your major offered • special requirements • accreditation • student-faculty ratio • typical class size 			
COLLEGE EXPENSES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tuition, room & board • estimated total budget • application fee, deposits 			
FINANCIAL AID <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • deadline • required forms • % receiving aid • scholarships 			
HOUSING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • residence hall requirement • availability • types and sizes • food plan • costs • deadline 			
FACILITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • academic • recreational 			
ACTIVITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clubs, organizations • greek life • athletics, intramurals • other 			

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Sample Letters

Admissions Information

Your Name
Your Street Address
City, State, Zip
Date

Office of Housing
Name of College
City, State, Zip

Dear Housing Representative:

I am applying for entrance at your school (or have applied for entrance) in the fall of 20____ and will need on-campus housing.

Please send me an application for a room reservation and a list of the dormitories at the school.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Your address
City, State, Zip
Date

Name of College
Office of Admissions
Address
City, State, Zip

Dear Admissions Representative,

Please send me a copy of your college catalog, an application for admission, and financial aid information (or scholarship information, if applicable). Since my major area of interest is _____, I would also appreciate any specific information about that field that you have available.

Presently, I am a senior at _____ High School, Austin, Texas, and I plan to attend college in the fall of 20____.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Your Signature

Housing

This is a suggested form letter requesting an application for housing. If you want to request a specific roommate, colleges generally try to accommodate your request. Housing space at some colleges is hard to get.

ADHERE TO HOUSING APPLICATION DEADLINES.