

# College Application Tip Sheet

**When:** You can access applications beginning August 1, the summer before your senior year. In early summer, you will likely have access to essay topics if you'd like to get an early start on those. Most "early action" deadlines are early November.

**How:**

## 1. The Application

Access **college applications** by going to the schools' websites. Take time to investigate what each university is asking for. For example, some require one or more essays, some ask for letters of rec., while some only want an application and a high school transcript. Applications are not considered complete without **all** components (including test scores and transcripts). Transcripts will not be released until senior meetings (one week into the school year). You may want to wait until you meet with your counselor in fall before submitting your app.

## 2. Which Application? (if given a choice)

If a school offers the choice between doing their application (ex. MSU, WSU) vs. the **Common Application or Coalition Application**, we recommend students use the school's application as the university-specific applications are less involved (yet looked at equally). The exception to this suggestion is if the student is applying to any other schools which **require** the Common App or Coalition App. Then it makes more sense to choose the Common App or Coalition App.

## 3. Transcripts

Transcripts are the official record of your course work. Your high school transcript is usually required for college admission and for some financial aid packages.

All transcript requests are completed online by creating an account and making a request through Parchment ([www.parchment.com](http://www.parchment.com)). Be sure to supply the correct year of graduation (2024), the school you currently attend (Rochester Adams), and each school to which the transcript needs to be sent. If you are applying to a school using the Common Application (for example, U of M), request that your transcript be sent to the Common Application.

No requests should be made before **August 1<sup>st</sup>**. Also, please be aware that although you may *request* your transcript in August, it will not be released by our registrar before the senior meeting during the first week of school.

## 4. Test Scores

Test scores may be optional for your application year. Check school websites for requirements. Send **official copies** of **test scores** directly from the testing agency to the colleges to which you are applying. SAT scores: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com) & ACT scores: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org).

## 5. Letters of Recommendation

Before asking a teacher for a letter of recommendation, make sure you know what your college is asking for. How many letters are they looking for (**if any**) and from whom? Universities that want them often ask for **one** teacher recommendation and sometimes a counselor recommendation. Please **do not** ask for multiple letters if you don't need them! If you do need a letter, ask a teacher who knows you well and who will write a positive letter of rec. You may want to ask a teacher *before* summer break to give them the option to write it early. Otherwise, a week or two after we return to school in the fall is acceptable, but always allow recommenders *at least* two weeks to write your letter. Letter of rec request forms are available in counseling.

# Glossary of College Application Terms

## **Coalition Application**

A standard application form accepted by members of the Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success. You can use this application to apply to any of the more than 90 colleges and universities that are members of the Coalition.

## **Common Application**

A standard application form accepted by all colleges that are members of the Common Application association. You can fill out this application once and submit it to any one — or several — of the nearly 700 colleges that accept it.

## **Early Action (EA)**

An admission application option that allows a high school student who just entered his/her senior year of high school to file for early admission to his/her top choice college (or colleges). However, in this case, the student is *not* committed to accepting admittance to a particular college, even if he/she gets accepted to his/her top choice school. Early action plans allow a student to decide if they wish to accept an offer of admission until May 1st. Applying by the early action deadline is simply a way to receive a decision on your application earlier than usual. Another benefit to applying early is that it allows you to be considered for any scholarship money the college may be giving out.

## **Restrictive Early Action (REA)**

Restrictive early action is similar to an early action plan in that you can apply earlier than other applicants and receive your decision early. It differs, however, in that you are not allowed to apply to other early decision or early action universities with the exception of public universities. REA is a nonbinding, noncommittal way to let a college know it is your number one choice.

## **Early Decision (ED)**

This is a good plan for applicants who know exactly which college they want to attend and are confident that they will be accepted. An early decision application is initiated by the student who is then notified of the college's decision earlier than usual (generally by the 15th of December of senior year). Keep in mind that by submitting an early decision application, you are automatically agreeing to accept the school's offer of admission. This decision is binding.

## **Rolling Admission**

An admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information (such as high school records and test scores) has been received, rather than setting an application deadline and reviewing applications in a batch. Colleges that use a rolling admission policy usually notify applicants of admission decisions quickly.