

THE COMMON APPLICATION

A Simple Tutorial for Completing The Common Application 2015-16

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What is the Common App?

The Common App is a single application that is accepted by most colleges and universities to which Northwood students will apply. Students fill out the Common Application online, and can submit it directly to their colleges. Look at your college list on Naviance (Family Connection) to see which of your schools use the Common App. If you see this icon:  then the school accepts the Common App.

How do you access the Common App?

The Common App is at www.commonapp.org. Logging in and beginning the registration process does not take any preparation, and everything you enter can be edited at a later date.

How to register?

- Go to www.commonapp.org
- Click “Create an Account”
- Enter your email address and select a password – be certain this is an email address you check frequently as it will be shared with the colleges to which you apply so that they can provide updates regarding your application – click “continue”
- Enter your “Registration Information” – identify yourself as a “first-year student” and an “applicant planning to enroll within the next 12 months” – even if you think you may take a year off or play junior hockey after Northwood. Check both boxes indicating that you agree to the terms
- Click “Create”

Once you register, you will see 4 tabs at the top of your page:

- **Dashboard** – will display all of your colleges and the status of your work for each major application component including deadlines and a quick overview of your progress
- **My Colleges** – provides a list of your colleges in the left hand column and indicates college information such as phone numbers, deadlines, fees, and requirements. This is also where you will complete any college specific questions including additional writing supplements.
- **Common App** – where you complete your general biographical information that is consistent and will be submitted to all of your colleges. This information should be completed first
- **College Search** – allows you to search for and add different colleges to your Dashboard.

Where to begin?

You should begin by completing the information in the “Common App” tab. Fields with a **red *** are required. Fill out the application sections with total completeness and accuracy. When you complete a section, click the **burgundy Continue** button and your information will automatically be saved as it moves you to the next screen. You will know you are done with a section when it has a **Green ✓** (You can click “Preview“ at the top of each section to review your work on that section.)

- **Profile** – includes your personal information, address, contact details, demographics, geography, language, citizenship, and fee waiver information (see Mr. Spear for specifics regarding your qualifications for a fee waiver).
- **Family** – indicate the individuals that make up your household including your parent/guardian information and siblings. Here is where you will need to input your parents’ education; if you do not know this information, please ask your family.
- **Education** – focuses on your high school experience.
 - *School:* you will be prompted to “look up” your high school name. Once you indicate Northwood School, the application will auto-populate the address and CEEB Code (which is 332760)
 - For Counselor information, please enter the information for your counselor:

Mr. John Spear Director of College Guidance spearj@northwoodschoo.com 518-523-3357	Ms. Anne Edwards Assoc Director of College Guidance edwardsa@northwoodschoo.com 518-523-3357
Ms. Andrea Kilbourne-Hill College Counselor kilbournea@northwoodschoo.com 518-523-3357	Mr. Stephen Reed College Counselor reeds@northwoodschoo.com 518-523-3357
 - *Grades:*
 - Class rank reporting – indicate “none”
 - Graduating class size – 65
 - Cumulative GPA – leave this blank
 - GPA scale – 4.0
 - GPA weighting – Weighted
 - *Current Year Courses:* be sure to include all senior year courses (first and second semester).
 - Full year courses have a credit value of 1 and semester courses have a credit value of 0.5
 - If your course is not honors or AP, leave the Course Level blank
 - Check PCR for official course names
- **Testing** – indicate whether or not you wish to self-report your standardized test scores
 - We recommend you do not self-report scores on the Common App
 - Remember, you must still request an official score report from the testing agency (ACT and/or College Board for the SAT) and send scores only to schools that you want to receive them.
 - International students: click “No” for the second question.

- **Activities** – use your resume to help you complete the fields in this area in order of most important to least important (to you). You are limited to 10 activities and there is a limit of 50 characters for each field (details, honors, accomplishments). You may also utilize the additional information section to include anything that will not fit in the Activities section. You will only be allowed to attach a resume if your college asks for it (you would upload the resume within the member questions area).
 - Within each activity, include your position/title and the organization’s name in the first blank
 - Give a description of what you actually did in this activity in the second field
 - Give your best estimate of hours per week and weeks per year in those fields; if the amount of time varies, give an average
- **Writing** – this will be for your FINAL essay only; do not enter drafts here! Once you are confident in your essay (after review by a college counselor or English teacher), you will be able to enter it into the required field and indicate the prompt used. Please remember, your essay must be between 250 – 650 words. Fewer or more will not be accepted. Also, be aware of any formatting issues when you copy and paste your essay into the essay field. You can check the formatting in the “print preview” when you get to the submission process.
 - This section will also ask about your disciplinary and legal history. If you think you have something to report here, please talk to your college counselor so that we can help you with this section.
 - You are given an “additional information” space. This text box will take up to 650 words. Most students will leave this blank, but if you think you have something else to mention (extended illness, unusual circumstances that affected your academic or extracurricular performance, etc.) you can use this space.

Adding Colleges

Once you have finalized your college application list, you should start to enter specific colleges into the “My Colleges” area using the “College Search.” You are limited to 20 colleges in your “Dashboard” (but no one should be submitting that many applications!) so you should only enter colleges that you are confident you will be submitting an application to for next fall. Under each college name in the “My Colleges” tab, you will find details about the application fee, deadlines, and requirements.

Member Questions and Supplements

Most colleges will ask additional questions, such as your application plan (Early Action, Regular Decision, etc.), your intended field of study, and whether or not you have any relatives who attended the college. Answer all required questions in these sections.

Some colleges will also ask for additional essays either in the Member Questions or in the Writing Supplement. These may be long essays or short-answer questions. Either way, you should take as much care with these essays as you do with your main essay – **DO A GOOD JOB ON THESE ESSAYS!**

FERPA Release Authorization and Naviance

In order to match your Common App account to your Naviance account, you’ll need to complete the FERPA Release Authorization in the Common Application. Click on the “Recommenders and FERPA” link under “My Colleges,” review the statement on the first screen (and check the box to acknowledge it) and then, on the second screen, indicate whether or not you waive your right to access your recommendation letters. All letters written by Northwood faculty and staff are confidential, so you should

check the box that you waive your right to access these letters. If you have questions about this policy, please see your college counselor.

- You will complete this agreement one time and your selection will be applied to all schools to which you apply using the Common App.
- Do not complete any other recommender assignments in the Common App and do not print out the forms on this screen.
- Once you have completed the FERPA Release Authorization, log in to your Naviance account, click on the Colleges tab, then click on “Colleges I’m Applying To.” You will be prompted to use your email address to match your Common App to your Naviance account.

Submitting an Application

There is a preview option available in the Common Application when you proceed through the submission menu. A PDF preview will be available at this time and show exactly what the colleges will see upon submission. If you are not satisfied with your PDF, click the X in the top right corner to close the preview and abandon the submission. The application will not be submitted until you sign, date, and click submit in Step 3.

What’s next?

Once you have submitted the application to one college, it is possible to return to the application and edit it for future submissions to other colleges; however, you may not edit your application to a college after you submit it.

You can track the status of each application in the “Dashboard” section of the Common Application.

Green ✓ = Submitted **Grey – = Not Applicable** **Red – = Not Required** **Yellow ● = Pending**

The dashboard allows you to view and sort by deadline. It will also indicate when a college application deadline is approaching or has passed. You can remove any colleges from the list by clicking on the trash can in the right hand column.