



Common Application Guide

Careers Counselor & Teachers

Note: This guide is designed to familiarize students with the information they will be asked to report and is not intended to be a comprehensive collection of all questions within the application.

What is the Common Application?

The Common Application is **used by over 500 American universities**. It saves time by allowing the applicant to complete information and essays that can be submitted to multiple universities. However, bear in mind that approximately **two-thirds of universities ask for supplemental information and/or essays**.

Completing the Required Documents

1. The student will register you as a **counselor (in Australia, known as the careers counselor)** or **teacher** within the School Forms section of their application. Be sure to give all students the same email address so that you can manage forms from one login.

Recommender Invitations

Type * First Name *

Subject * Last Name *

Title * Email Address

Type	Name	Email	Status	
Counselor	Annette Brush	[REDACTED]	Invited	
Teacher	Beatrice Melnick	[REDACTED]	Invited	
Teacher	Louisa Tuff	[REDACTED]	Invited	

2. The student can choose **two teachers** and one **guidance/careers counselor** per university. Most students would use the same three individuals for each university. Note the teacher and careers counselor cannot be the same person. They will have access to different forms. It is important that the student knows which school official will serve in which capacity.

Careers Counselor: is responsible for the **school profile, school report, transcript, optional report, mid-year report and final report**.

Teacher References: Two teachers complete the teacher reference. Teachers will submit a **more specific recommendation letter** about the students’ academic and extracurricular potential than the careers counsellor whose evaluation will provide the overall picture of the student.

Ideally, the student **should also waive the right to see their reference** to maintain credibility of the letter in the eyes of the university.

3. **You will receive an email as soon as the student adds you to their School Forms section.** This email will ask what action you would like to take next –submit your recommendation form online, by post **or** if you would like to decline as a recommender. In the email (as noted by the circle in the example email below) it will say whether the student chose you to be their “counsellor” or their “teacher” recommender.

Dear Annette Brush,

You are receiving this email because the following student indicated that you are a **Counselor and** will be providing a Common Application college recommendation on the applicant's behalf.

- **Name of student:** Roger Morgan
- **Email Address:** [REDACTED]
- **Student Type:** First Year

Submitting Online: If you plan to submit online recommendation for this and other Common Application students you can access the free online system here:

[Access the Common Application online system](#)

Your login username will be this email address: [REDACTED] By registering with the online system you will be able to submit recommendations for this and all other students who invite you via this email address.

Important: when using the online system, you must use a supported browser as described in the [systems requirements](#); older browsers such as Internet Explorer 8 are not supported.

Submitting via Mail (all students): If you would like to submit all recommendations for all students through the mail, you can click the link below to opt out of the online process. This decision will be permanent and apply to all students who invite you as a recommender. If you choose to opt out, each student will be instructed to access hard copies of the recommendation forms from within their account, and provide them to you for completion and mailing. Opt Out [here](#)

Declining to Recommend: If you do not plan to submit a recommendation for this student, please [click here](#)

If you need assistance please contact us via the Common Application [website](#).

Sincerely,
The Common App Support Team

4. If you click on “Access the Common Application online system” under the “Submitting Online” option in the email, you will be prompted to create an account with the Common Application website.

Recommender Account Creation

Welcome to the Common Application for student Recommenders.
Please begin by creating a password that you will use to access your account.

Email Address *
edadvysyd@gmail.com

First Name *
Annette

Last Name *
Brush

New Password *
.....

Re-type New Password *
.....

To help protect the security of your account, passwords must meet the following requirements:

Password

- Length between 8 and 16 characters
- At least one upper case alphabetic character
- At least one lower case alphabetic character
- At least one numeric character
- At least one of the following characters: ! @ # \$ % ^ & *
- No space characters

Create Account

5. After you have created a password, you will be taken to the Common Application homepage. Sign in using your new password under the “Recommenders” tab.

SIGN IN

Applicants Members **Recommenders**

Recommender Email Address
edadvysyd@gmail.com

Password
.....

HELP CENTER Go

[Forgot your Password?](#)

Sign In

6. You will then see a screen which asks which role you would like to fill. You will want to make sure you are in agreement with your student. If they thought you should be a “counselor ” but you feel you should be a teacher recommender or vice versa, talk to them about switching so they know to find a replacement recommender.

Role Selection

Select the role in which you would like to work. You can switch your role anytime by clicking .

[Counselor](#) [Teacher](#)

Why am I seeing this screen?

- You have been invited to act as a student recommender in more than one capacity.
- You may access the students who have invited you in each differing capacity by choosing a "Role" above.
- Each Role provides you access to the forms you need to complete for each student based on the responsibilities of the Role.
- You need to choose the Role you would like to use each time you log in, but you may also change your role by clicking the Role selection icon at the top of the screen.

We have provided guidance for (section A) Careers Counselors and (section B) Teacher Recommenders below.

A. The Counselor Forms

- [School Profile](#)
- [School Report](#)
- [Written Evaluation](#) (Recommendation Letter)
- [Transcript](#)
- [Optional, Mid-Year and Final Reports](#)

1. First you will be asked to fill in your details, name, contact information, etc. You will then be asked to fill in the school's details. This involves looking up the school on their online database.

Narrow your choices

Choose your School

Name	Location
<input type="radio"/> Abbotsleigh	Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Alice Springs High School	Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
<input type="radio"/> All Saints College	Bull Creek, Western Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> American International School Australia	Carlingford, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Anglican Church Grammar School	East Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Annesley College	Wayville, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Ascham School	Edgecliff, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Australian Christian College - Southlands	Albany, Western Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Australian Christian College: Moreton Distance Education	Caboolture, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Barker College	Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Bob Hughes Christian School	Chester Hill, New South Wales, Australia

Continue

If your school is not on the list, you can select “I don’t see my high school on this list.” If your school would like to be added in future, you should follow the advice in the “Helpdesk” button on the right of the screen.

Narrow your choices

Choose your School

Name	Location
<input type="radio"/> Sunrise Christian School - Marion Campus	Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Sydney Grammar School	Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Sydney Jacaranda College	Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> The Southport School	Southport, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Toowoomba Christian College	Highfields, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Trinity College Gawler	Evanston South, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Westminster School	Marion, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Woodcroft College	Morphett Vale, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Xavier College	Kew, Victoria, Australia
<input checked="" type="radio"/> I don't see my high school on this list	
<input type="radio"/> I was/am home schooled	

Continue

You will then fill in the school's name and contact information. **Note**, in the US “public school” is equivalent to “state school,” and a “charter school” would be most similar to an “academy” or “free school” in Australia.

School Information

High school name *
NSW High School

Country *
Australia

School Type *
Please complete this required question.
Select
Public
Charter
Religious
Home school
Independent

City

State or Province

Postal code

[Back](#) Done

2. You will then be able to fill in questions about the school.

- Graduating class size is the number of students in the pupil's year group.
- Note the percentage of students from your school who complete (Bachelor's) degrees or TAFE Certificates.
- Australian schools do not tend to offer AP (Advanced Placement) courses, so enter 0.
- Note whether you provide students with a Class Rank or GPA. It is OK to leave these blank if your school does not normally provide these to students.
- Australian schools are not on block schedule. (Block scheduling in the US means pupils take 3 – 4 subjects in the autumn semester and sit exams and then take 3 – 4 new subjects in the spring, as opposed to 5 – 6 subjects throughout the year.)
- Be sure to select that you are an international school as you will be prompted to answer additional questions based on this response.

3. You will also be asked to upload a school profile.

The school profile provides contextual information about the school the student attends. Unlike the transcript (see below), the school profile is not student specific, but instead school specific.

Purpose of the School Profile:

- To supply important contact and other basic information for the school to US universities
- To provide information on the school curriculum options available to the student (IB, HSC).
- To provide context about the school the student attends

Important Components of the School Profile:

- School contact information, important personnel contact information and School Mission Statement
- Description of the school and community
- **Type of School (state, independent/private, etc.):** Note “public” means state-funded in the US. Is there anything unusual about your school or program (i.e. serves mostly low income and minority students, has a high percentage who attend university, etc.)
- School’s Curriculum Options and Student Academic Information
- Grading Scale and Distribution
- Admissions Process (if applicable)
- **Typical Student Results:** What qualifications do most students at your school complete? How do students tend to perform on these? Where do your pupils tend to go to university? What type of university do your pupils typically attend?
- The School Profile should use official school letterhead at the top

4. After you have finished with the school profile section of the website. You can then move on to completing the components needed for each student.

Student name	Next deadline	Forms						
↕	↕	↕ED1	↕ED2	↕SR	↕FW	↕OR	↕MR	↕FR
Morgan, Roger	-	-	-	●	-	●	●	●

School Report

1. You will be asked to fill in information about the student and further questions about the grading and ranking system of the school. **Class Rank, GPA and Curriculum:** Note whether you provide students with a Class Rank or GPA. It is OK to answer no.

Profile Students Workspace

Roger Morgan

Incomplete

- School Report
- Optional Report
- Mid Year Report
- Final Report

▶ Class Rank

▼ GPA

Do you report GPA (Grade Point Average)? *

Yes

No

[Clear](#)

[Back](#) [Continue](#)

▶ Curriculum

▶ Ratings ✓

▶ Disciplinary History ✓

▶ Written Evaluation

▶ Transcripts

2. Curriculum: US universities want to see applicants working hard in their final year of high school / college, and the most competitive universities will want to see students have selected the most rigorous options available to them, so be sure to answer this question. An important factor for US universities is the difficulty of a pupil's chosen qualification/curriculum relative to other students at your school.

3. Rating students: If you are assisting several students from your school, try to differentiate ratings between applicants to maintain your credibility as a recommender (i.e., do not list all applicants as one of the top few you've encountered, **unless** this is really the case). If your student body is particularly competitive, rank applicants accurately within the options but note the nature of your student body, any admission criteria and achievements/post HSC/IB plans of school leavers in your school profile.

Roger Morgan Incomplete

- School Report
- Optional Report
- Mid Year Report
- Final Report

- ▶ Class Rank
- ▶ GPA ✓
- ▶ Curriculum

▼ Ratings

Compared to other students in his or her class year, how do you rate this applicant in terms of academic achievements.

- No basis
- Below Average
- Average
- Good (above average)
- Very good (well above average)
- Excellent (top 10%)
- Outstanding (top 5%)
- One of the top few encountered in my career

5. Disciplinary History: Note that disciplinary action can come into play in the admissions decision. However, it is important to be upfront about this information.

▼ Disciplinary History

Has the applicant ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at your school, whether related to academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct, that resulted in the applicant's probation, suspension, removal, dismissal, or expulsion from your institution?

Select

To your knowledge, has the applicant ever been convicted of a misdemeanor, felony, or other crime?

Select

Would you prefer to discuss this over the phone with each admission office?

- Yes
- No

Written evaluation:

1. In the written evaluation, explain how well you know the student and why you are well-placed to comment on their academic and extracurricular achievements and potential.

▼ Written Evaluation

How long have you known this student and in what context?

What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student?

Please provide comments that will help us differentiate this student from others. We especially welcome a broad-based assessment and encourage you to consider describing or addressing: · The applicant's academic, extracurricular, and personal characteristics. · Relevant context for the applicant's performance and involvement, such as particularities of family situation or after-school obligations, either positive or negative. · Observed problematic behaviors, perhaps separable from academic performance, that an admission committee should explore further.

Hint: A .pdf file under 500 KB in size will be accepted.

OR In the space provided below provide a short evaluation.

2. Describe the applicant: Be strategic in which words you choose, considering what US universities are looking for in applicants.

3. Upload an evaluation letter. We recommend submitting an evaluation, as a third recommendation (point of view) alongside the two teacher recommendation letters. US guidance counselors would assist many students applying to university and would therefore be able to make broader statements on students' potential relative to peers and to comment on their overall performance and extracurricular involvement. Note that if you enter your response into the text box, the word limit is 1,000. Print preview your submission to ensure your text was not cut off before submitting. If you upload the written evaluation, your text will not be cut. This only happens when typing directly into the online form.

Transcript:

1. Upload a **transcript**.

Note, “Junior Year” refers to a US student’s penultimate year of high school. This would roughly be equivalent to Year 11 in Australia.

We have heard from several universities, that what you necessarily check in the question “Please indicate the most recent grades included on the transcript accompanying this form” does not matter, since it is not an exact translation between educational systems.

Please indicate number of official transcript you can provide for the applicant.*

1

Current or most recent transcript*

Hint: A .pdf file under 500 KB in size will be accepted.

Upload Document*

Transcript Affirmation*

I affirm that I have uploaded a transcript to this School Report. I understand that failure to do so (by, for example, uploading a blank document or uploading a document promising to mail the transcript at a later time) will result in my Common App Online account being closed.

Please indicate the most recent grades included on the transcript accompanying this form*

Please complete this required question.

Select

Final junior year grades

1st Quarter senior year grades

2nd Quarter/1st Semester senior year grades

3rd Quarter senior year grades

1st Trimester senior year grades

2nd Trimester senior year grades

Correction/update other than a new transcript

2. Once you have reviewed the information fully, click “submit”. At this point you will be shown a pdf version of the school report.

Note: **If after submitting the forms you realise you made a mistake**, Common Application’s Helpdesk has provided the following information.

“The Common Application Support Team is not permitted to make updates to any submitted forms.

The Common Application organization evaluated the issue of counsellors and teachers who want to retrieve or edit previously submitted online forms because they addressed their recommendations to specific institutions without realizing it (despite the instructions). They also evaluated the issue of counsellors submitting updated or incorrect documents. Unfortunately, in these cases, the Common Application organization must reiterate the policy that documents cannot be retrieved or edited once submitted. Schools are aware that mistakes happen and students are not penalized.

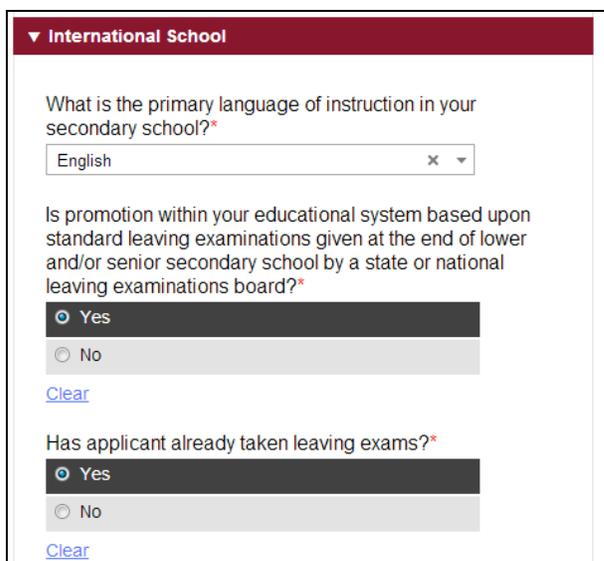
Teacher Recommenders: You may mail corrected versions of the forms directly to the schools in order to submit changes. You can find a list of addresses by clicking the name of the school on this page:

<https://schoolforms.commonapp.org/CommonApp/MemberRequirements.aspx>

Counsellors : You may mail corrected versions of the forms to submit changes or use the Optional Report online. The Optional Report may be used at any point in the academic year to submit updated grades and/or transcripts, as well as to correct errors previously submitted on any report, but it should not be used as a substitute for the Mid Year or Final Report.

Keep in mind that this form can only be submitted once during the school season. If mistakes are made at a later date, forms will need to be mailed to the schools.”

Note: The International Supplement. Previously, counsellors at international schools were required to submit an additional separate International Supplement. However, this supplement is being discontinued with the new version of the Common Application that was launched on 1 August 2013. Therefore, it is important in the school profile to indicate you are an international school. Instead, you will be asked to fill in **additional “International School” questions as part of the school report.**



The screenshot shows a form section titled "International School" with a red header. It contains three questions:

- Question 1: "What is the primary language of instruction in your secondary school?*" with a dropdown menu showing "English".
- Question 2: "Is promotion within your educational system based upon standard leaving examinations given at the end of lower and/or senior secondary school by a state or national leaving examinations board?*" with radio buttons for "Yes" (selected) and "No".
- Question 3: "Has applicant already taken leaving exams?*" with radio buttons for "Yes" (selected) and "No".

Each question has a "Clear" link below it.

For the “International School” section – it asks “Has the applicant already taken leaving exams?” **From the university perspective, they would likely consider the HSC/IB to be the official leaving exams.** If the student is on a gap year, and would have the exam results available, then tick “yes” and upload those results. Check with the university if you are unsure how to respond.

Note about the Optional Report:

There is an option to submit an **additional grade report**, but it is **not required**. This is for schools that wish to send updated grades at a point in the year other than Mid and Final Reports (ie for Early Decision and Early Action students). You may also report any changes to the original school report and have the option to update your evaluation. **It is unlikely you will need to complete this unless there has been a significant change in the student’s performance or circumstances.** Please note that this form can only be submitted once throughout the school year.

Complete the Mid-Year Report:

This form is based on the US semester system, by which American students would likely have grades and an updated GPA/class rank to report in January. Additionally, those on block scheduling would have 3 - 4 classes in the first semester and a new set of classes to report for the second semester.

Please note you will have to submit a transcript. **If there are no updates to what you submitted for the School Report, that is OK.** If possible, in the evaluation, comment on the students' academic performance and extracurricular involvement during the autumn and any achievements or improvements the student has made.

Note: US universities have asked us to suggest not to submit all of the school forms at once. They may delete your forms, assuming you submitted them early in error. **The exception is gap year/mature students** – if you are not regularly in touch and will not have updates, note this in the School Report. In this instance, you may want to ask the university if you can skip sending the Mid-Year and Final Reports.

In order to submit a Final Report in the Common Application system, you need to submit a Mid-Year Report.

Complete the Final Report:

Again, this form is based on the US semester system, by which American students would likely have grades and an updated GPA/class rank to report in early summer (June).

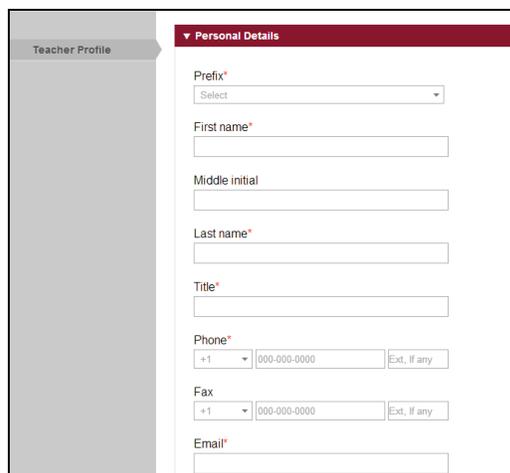
The questions are very similar to the School and Mid-Year Reports. You should submit the Final Report in December/January when students get their HSC/IB (or equivalent) results.

If possible, in the evaluation, comment on the students' academic performance and extracurricular involvement during the academic year.

Please note you will have to submit a final transcript including the student's actual results.

B. Teacher Recommendation

1. After you have logged into your Common Application account, fill in your information such as name, job title, contact information, etc.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Teacher Profile" with a "Personal Details" section. The form includes the following fields:

- Prefix* (dropdown menu with "Select" option)
- First name* (text input)
- Middle initial (text input)
- Last name* (text input)
- Title* (text input)
- Phone* (text input with a dropdown for country code "+1" and a field for area code "000-000-0000", plus an "Ext. If any" field)
- Fax (text input with a dropdown for country code "+1" and a field for area code "000-000-0000", plus an "Ext. If any" field)
- Email* (text input)

2. You will then be asked to fill in the school's details. This involves looking up the school on their online database.

Narrow your choices

Choose your School

Name	Location
<input type="radio"/> Abbotsleigh	Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Alice Springs High School	Alice Springs, Northern Territory, Australia
<input type="radio"/> All Saints College	Bull Creek, Western Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> American International School Australia	Carlingford, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Anglican Church Grammar School	East Brisbane, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Annesley College	Wayville, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Ascham School	Edgecliff, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Australian Christian College - Southlands	Albany, Western Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Australian Christian College: Moreton Distance Education	Caboolture, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Barker College	Hornsby, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Bob Hughes Christian School	Chester Hill, New South Wales, Australia

Continue

If your school is not on the list, you can select “I don’t see my high school on this list.” If your school would like to be added in future, you should follow the advice in the “Helpdesk” button on the right of the screen.

Narrow your choices

Choose your School

Name	Location
<input type="radio"/> Sunrise Christian School - Marion Campus	Adelaide, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Sydney Grammar School	Darlinghurst, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Sydney Jacaranda College	Sydney, New South Wales, Australia
<input type="radio"/> The Southport School	Southport, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Toowoomba Christian College	Highfields, Queensland, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Trinity College Gawler	Evanston South, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Westminster School	Marion, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Woodcroft College	Morphett Vale, South Australia, Australia
<input type="radio"/> Xavier College	Kew, Victoria, Australia
<input checked="" type="radio"/> I don't see my high school on this list	
<input type="radio"/> I was/am home schooled	

Continue

- You can now move on to completing the evaluation for each student who has indicated you as a recommender. As noted in the counsellor section, ideally, the student should also waive the right to see your reference to maintain credibility of the letter in the eyes of the university.

Profile		Students		Workspace						
Student name	Next deadline	ED1	ED2	SR	FW	OR	MR	FR		
Morgan, Roger	-	-	-	●	-	●	●	●		

Rating students:

- If you are assisting several students from your school, try to differentiate ratings between applicants to maintain your credibility as a recommender (ie do not list all applicants as one of the top few you've encountered, **unless** this is really the case).

Teacher Evaluation

▶ Subject Area ✓

▼ Ratings

Academic Achievement

No basis

Below Average

Average

Good (above average)

Very good (well above average)

Excellent (top 10%)

Outstanding (top 5%)

One of the top few encountered in my career

[Clear](#)

Intellectual Promise

No basis

Below Average

Average

Good (above average)

Very good (well above average)

Excellent (top 10%)

Outstanding (top 5%)

Written evaluation:

1. Be strategic in which words you choose to describe the applicant, considering what US universities are looking for.

What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student?*

B / U

Words entered: 0

In which grade level(s) was the student enrolled when you taught him/her?*

- 9th
- 10th
- 11th
- 12th
- Other

2. Note, the Common App Online School Forms system does not permit counsellors or teachers to customize recommendations for individual colleges.

Please upload a document describing what you think is important about this student, including a description of academic and personal characteristics, as demonstrated in your classroom. We welcome information that will help us to differentiate this student*

Hint: A .pdf file under 500 KB in size will be accepted.

[Upload Document*](#)

[Back](#) [Save](#)

Note: If the student would like to **submit an extra reference letter** (example: from a work experience or extracurricular activity) in addition to the guidance/careers counselor and two teacher letters, you may wish to first confirm with the university how they would like it submitted. Typically the referee can mail the additional letter directly to the university undergraduate admissions office.

Adapted from UK Fulbright
With thanks

Annette Brush
EducationUSA Sydney
August 2014