Applying to College and Future Planning

May 29, 2024

What can you do this summer?

- Visit colleges/schools (set up official visits with admissions offices, if possible) or do virtual tours/watch "the College Tour" on Amazon Prime, take notes!
- Start to become familiar with Xello, sign in using Clever (watch video)
- Extracurricular activities (sports, clubs, jobs, leadership positions, etc) – never too late to start!
- Create a professional email address for your future/college/career
- Community service (find something you're passionate about)
- Create/update your resume (use Xello for a template)
- Clean up your social media
- Work on your college essays (helpful links)
- Possible college athlete? Register at NCAA Clearinghouse/Eligibility Center
- Research majors/careers – make sure your senior year classes prepare you for them
- Finalize your college list

How to choose the right schools?

- Do your research/visit. College websites have lots of info and often have virtual tours.
  - College Comparison Worksheet
- Use the explore schools/majors tools in Xello - search by CRITERIA you'd like
- Focus on the right "fit" for you, *not the rankings*, and do not add schools that you wouldn't be happy to attend.
- Put together a combination of:
  - LIKELY SCHOOLS - your academic profile is significantly stronger than the middle 50 percent of students who are typically admitted
  - TARGET SCHOOLS - your academic profile is similar to the middle 50 percent
  - REACH SCHOOLS - your academic profile is not as strong as the middle 50 percent

  **Look at the Class of 2028 Admissions data or freshman profile for each school for best info

How do colleges evaluate students?

Academic record:

- Strength of schedule
- GPA
- Test scores (or apply test-optional)

Non-academic factors:

- Extracurricular activities
- Leadership and service
- Essays
- Recommendations
- Awards and Honors
- "Passion Projects"
- Demonstrated interest (college rep visits during PLT, on campus visits with admissions, follow up emails with solid questions that indicate you've done your research and are genuinely interested)

How and when to Apply

Most college applications open August 1! We recommend that you apply by November 1 (but early-to-mid October is even better to have a better shot at acceptance).

**It is YOUR responsibility to pay attention to deadlines for both applications and financial aid for each school (*they are NOT always the same*)

You will apply one of three ways:

- The individual college's website
- The Common Application (when applying to multiple colleges that use Common Application)
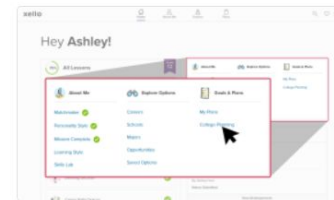- The Coalition Application (less common)

Transcripts, letters of recommendation, and school forms will be sent through Xello
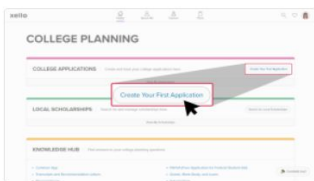

Create a College Application Tracker in Xello

The first thing a student must do to track their tasks, view their deadlines, request transcripts and recommendation letters be sent, is build an application tracker for each institution they're applying to.

How students create a College Applications tracker:

1. From their **Student Dashboard**, under **Goals & Plans**, students click **College Planning**.

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2. Under **College Applications**, they click **Create Your First Application**.

Click to enlarge

3. They choose one of their saved schools and click **Next**.

Click to enlarge

- If they don't have any saved schools yet, they search for the institution and click **Select**, then **Next**.

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4. They select an application method and admission type. If available, the application deadline will automatically populate. They can review and edit the application deadline, if necessary.

- The deadline is reported by the college, but students are encouraged to check the college website for any recent changes.

5. To finish building the application tracker they click **Create**.

https://help.xello.world/en-us/Content/Knowledge-Base/Xello-6-12/College-Planning/ColPlan_Students-Track-App.htm#CreateaCollegeApplicationTracker

How to use Common Application w/ Xello

https://help.xello.world/en-us/Content/Knowledge-Base/Xello-6-12/College-Planning/CA_Student-Integrate.htm

Letters of Recommendation

Not all colleges require letters of recommendation, but many do and specify from a teacher/counselor/etc.

STEPS:

1 - Ask them in PERSON (do not ask more than 3 individuals)

2 - Give them at least 1 month to complete the letter (not including summer or winter breaks from school)

3 - Complete the "Senior Information Questionnaire" survey in Xello for teachers to access

4 - Request letters in Xello

https://help.xello.world/en-us/Content/Knowledge-Base/Xello-6-12/College-Planning/LoR_Students-Request.htm

5- Write a "thank you note" or email for the individuals writing you a letter

**Letters of recommendation will not be accessible to the students for the purpose of validity. They will be uploaded directly to Xello or mailed/submitted directly to the requesting entity

Requesting Transcripts

STEP 1 - Make sure the college you're requesting a transcript for is added in Xello.
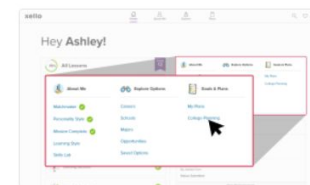
STEP 2 - Complete and have a parent sign the general Transcript Release Form and turn it into the Counseling Office if you have not done so already (you may sign it if you're 18).

STEP 3 - Complete this Transcript Request Form for EACH SCHOOL you apply to. You must include whether or not you want SAT or ACT scores included on the transcript and who you need letters of recommendations to be sent from so we can track them.

   **VERY IMPORTANT - if you are applying through the Common Application, you can only send a transcript WITH scores or WITHOUT scores for EVERY school you apply to. You CANNOT choose which schools you would like to have scores sent to.

Requesting Transcripts in Xello

1. From their **Student Dashboard**, under **Goals & Plans**, students click **College Planning**.

Click to enlarge

2. Under **College Applications**, they select the institution to which they'd like their transcript sent.

3. Under the **Application Checklist** they find **Transcript**.

4. To the right, they click **Request**.

   • A banner at the top of the screen will indicate the request was sent.

SAT/ACT and Test-Optional Admissions

- The majority of schools do have a test-optional admission policy for next year's admissions cycle
  - (see the entire list of schools at fairtest.org)
- To apply test-optional or not?
- How has the pandemic and the test-optional movement impacted college admissions?
- We will be offering the SAT School Day at TJ in October
- Test-optional has put more emphasis on things like:
  - College essays (especially supplemental essays where you've shown you've done your "homework" with in-depth research)
  - Demonstrated interest
  - "Passion Projects"

Different Types of Applications

ROLLING DECISION	Students can apply anytime during the application process and will get a decision back from the school quickly.
PRIORITY DECISION	Priority Decision is similar to Early Action. Schools with Rolling Admissions use Priority Decision. A student's application gets priority for admission as long as it is completed within the application window specified by the school
EARLY DECISION	A student can only apply to one school for Early Decision. Early Decision is binding; if you apply ED and are accepted, you must attend this school and pull all applications submitted to other schools
EARLY ACTION	Under Early Action a student can apply early and get a decision quickly, usually by the second week of December, with no requirement to attend. You can apply early action to more than one school
RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION	This option is a hybrid between Early Decision and Early Action. You are not required to attend the college if accpeted but you cannot apply ED elsewhere (you can apply EA to other schools)
SINGLE CHOICE EARLY ACTION	Applying Single Choice Early Action means that you may not apply anywhere else through ED or EA. Be sure this is your frist choice school so you do not miss out on applying early anywhere else
EARLY DECISION 2	This is a second round of ED that some schools offer that is binding. The deadline is usually January 1 with the decision coming in February. If you don't get into your first ED school, this is a good option to apply to your 2nd choice ED
REGULAR DECISION	Students apply during the regular application period. This is non binding and you can chose whether or not to attend. Deadlines vary by school

Why apply ED or EA?

Make sure you talk to your counselor if you are considering applying under any of these methods that are binding!

Work Study/Career Preparation

- Pursue opportunities related to the career field you'd like to enter
- Consider using tools to help figure out what you want to do
- Xello - Check out the Assessments
- ASVAB - Military Vocational Aptitude Battery - taking this test in October can set you up with opportunities within the military or just as additional information for career exploration

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Opportunities for free learning

- **Questbridge** - Highly qualified (great grades, test scores, leadership etc) students with a high level of financial need might be able to get matched with scholarships from different schools across the country
  https://www.questbridge.org/high-school-students/national-college-match
- **Job Corps** - Students looking to further their education in specific fields and who qualify for the Pell Grant, could pursue apprenticeship opportunities, two year programs, and other certification programs through CCAC for Free
  - Over 45 programs
  - Tuition assistance - free!!
  - Live at home and attend classes at CCAC or get set up with housing
  - Completion Bonus, Clothing Allowance, Dental and Vision Plan
- **ROTC Scholarships** - Scholarships of varying amounts as part of a military commitment
  - Available for all branches
  - Learn more here: https://myscholly.com/how-to-win-navy-army-rotc-scholarship/

SURVEYS TO DO NOW...

- "Junior Career Plan Survey" in Xello

- "Senior Information Questionnaire" in Xello