

Understanding the Common Application

**The NHHEAF Network Organizations'
Center for College Planning
888.7.GRADUATE x119
collegeplanning@nhheaf.org**



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What Is The Common App?

- Not-for-profit organization
- Provides an admission application students can submit to any of the 600 member institutions
- Serves students and member institutions who agree to make admissions decisions based on a review of the “whole student”



Why Use the Common App?

- Complete one online or paper application to send to many schools
- More time can be spent focusing on visiting colleges, writing essays, doing homework, participating in extracurricular activities or completing scholarship applications
- Sending forms (ie. transcript, letters of recommendation) is more streamlined
- It keeps track of which sections you have completed and which ones are pending



Which Colleges Participate?

- Roughly 600 colleges and universities, including a few international schools
- NH Colleges Using the Common App

Colby-Sawyer College*

Dartmouth College*

Franklin Pierce University

Keene State College*

New England College

Plymouth State University

Rivier University

Saint Anselm College*

Southern NH

University

University of NH*

* These colleges only accept the Common App and do not offer their own college application form.



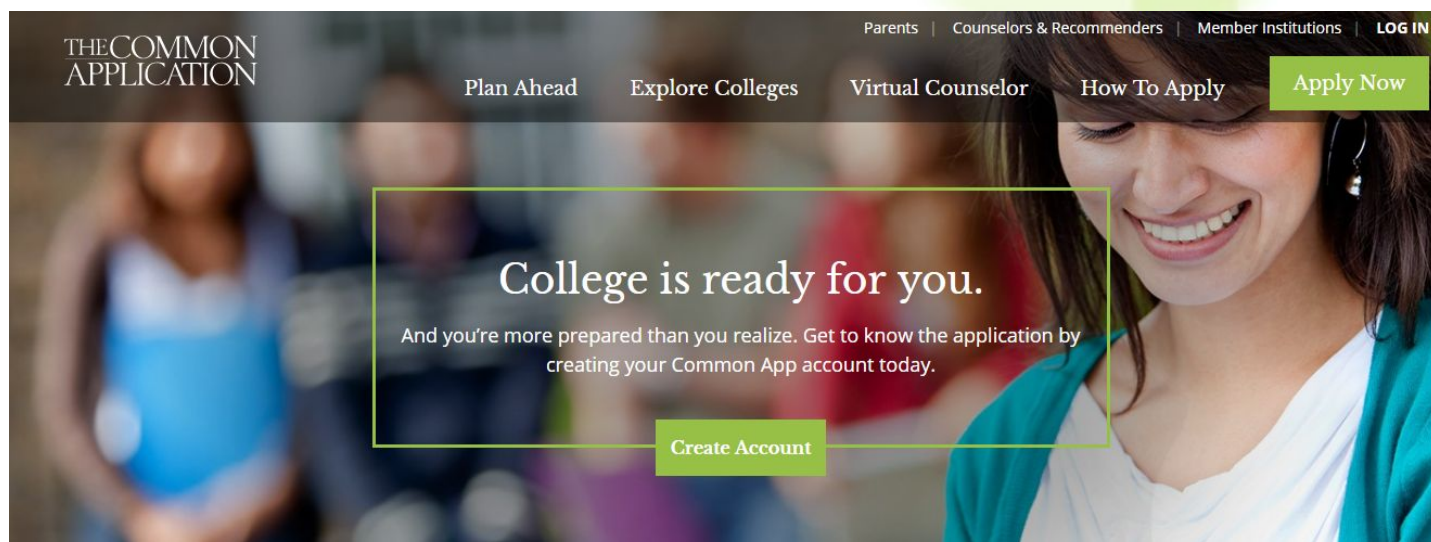
Common App vs. College's Own Form

- Supported by all member institutions
- Equal consideration given to Common App and school's own form
- Only available application for many colleges and universities



How Do I Get Started?

- Register online at www.commonapp.org
- Remember to declare yourself a “first-year” student
- Create a professional email account for all college correspondence
- Remember the email address used and password created



Already Have a Common App Account?

- If you created a Common App account prior to August 1, 2016, you can transfer your information into the current form
- Series of 4 screens of information you must answer
- Must choose if you are a student, school counselor or parent

Account Rollover

1 Welcome > 2 Affirmations > 3 College List > 4 Registration Type

Welcome to the New Season Valerie!

We are glad to see you back! Since you last logged in, we have made some important changes to get ready for the year ahead. Please take a couple of minutes to help us update your account. This process will also save you time, since we will retain much of the work you did previously.

Important Information

- Your account login will be the same. If you need to change it, you will be able to.
- Most of the answers you entered will still be available, but we will ask some different and new questions.
- You will invite recommenders so they can provide current materials for your application.
- Because colleges often change their questions from year to year, you will need to answer college specific questions.
- Any application you submitted in 2015-16 will no longer be in your account.
- Just a few steps and you can start working in your Common App!

I am applying as a: *

☐ First-Year Student ☐ Transfer Student [Clear](#)















Is Pembroke Academy your current or most recent high school? *

☐ Yes ☐ No [Clear](#)

[Cancel](#) [Continue](#)



Common App

Dashboard					
My Colleges Common App College Search					
My Colleges (4)	Writing Requirements	Deadline	Application	Writing Supplement	Remove
▶ Keene State College		—		—	
▶ Plymouth State University		—		—	
▶ Stonehill College	 	—		—	
▶ University of New Hampshire	 	—		—	



Searching for Colleges

Criteria

Application Requirements

School or City Name

Separate multiple search terms with a comma, e.g.: Washington, Boston

Country

Select

US State

Select

Distance from ZIP

Select

Select

Miles from

Term

☐ Fall 2016

☐ Spring 2016

☐ Other 2016

Applicant Type

☐ First Year

☐ Transfer

Deadline on or after

Clear

Search

- Multiple states
- Distance from home
- Application deadline
- Accepts transfer applications
- Term applying for



My Colleges

The screenshot shows a web application interface with a top navigation bar containing links: Dashboard, My Colleges, Common App, College Search, ACCOUNT, and PRACTICE ACCOUNT. The 'My Colleges' section is active, displaying a list of colleges on the left and detailed information for Keene State College on the right.

Colleges List:

- Dartmouth College +
- Keene State College -**
- Massachusetts College Of Pharmacy & Health Sciences +
- New England College +
- Plymouth State University +
- Rivier University +

Keene State College Details:

Contact Info

Phone: (800) 672-1909
Fax: 603-358-2767
Email: admissions@keene.edu
[View College Website](#)

229 Main St
Keene, NH 03435-2804
USA

Application
(0 of 3 Completed)

- ☐ Questions
- ☐ Recommenders and FERPA
- ☐ Review and Submit - Common App

Application Deadlines

Fall semester 2017 (Beginning Monday, August 28th, 2017)	Spring semester 2017 (Beginning Tuesday January 17th, 2017)
First Year Rolling Admission - 04/01/2017	First Year Rolling Admission - 01/02/2017

Other Deadline Information

First Year :
Keene State College reserves the right to close admissions when class capacity has been reached.

Required

- Track your progress on the application
- Check the deadline for admission at each of your schools
- Assign recommenders for each college
- View and answer questions asked by each college



Completing the Common Application Section by Section

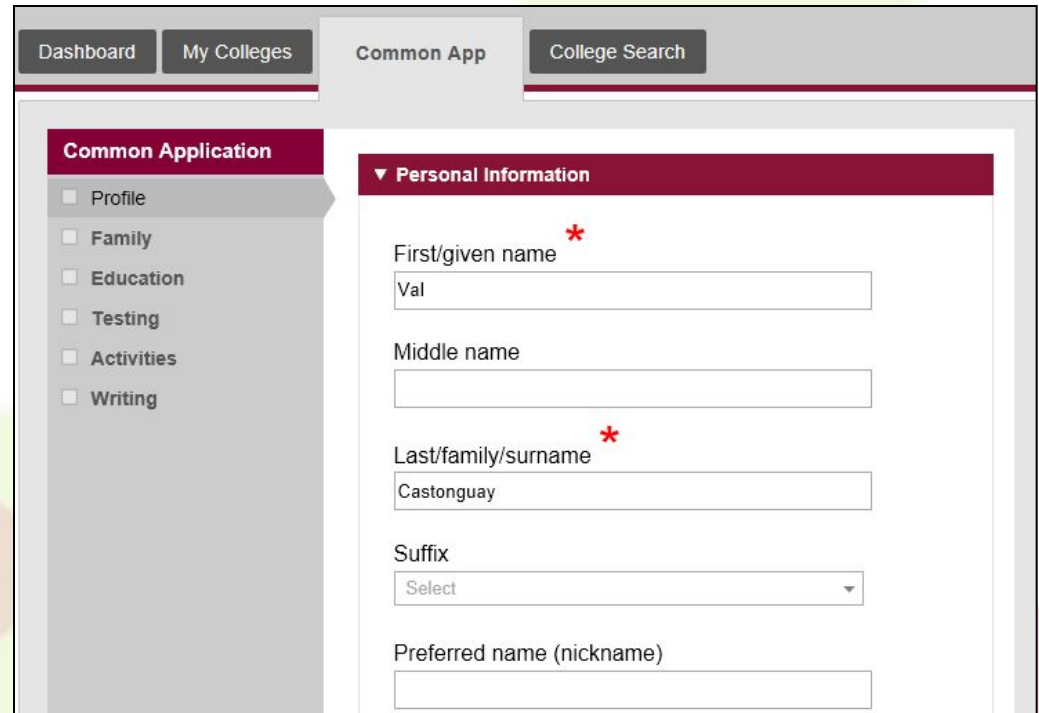


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Profile

- Personal information
- Address
- Phone/Email
- Demographics
- Country of birth
- Languages spoken
- Citizenship
- Fee waiver
- Scholarship Information



The screenshot shows the 'Common App' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App' (selected), and 'College Search'. Below these, a sidebar on the left is titled 'Common Application' and contains a list of sections: 'Profile' (selected), 'Family', 'Education', 'Testing', 'Activities', and 'Writing'. The main content area is titled 'Personal Information' and contains several input fields. The 'First/given name' field has a red asterisk and contains the text 'Val'. The 'Middle name' field is empty. The 'Last/family/surname' field has a red asterisk and contains the text 'Castonguay'. The 'Suffix' field is a dropdown menu with 'Select' chosen. The 'Preferred name (nickname)' field is empty.



Fee Waiver

▼ Common App Fee Waiver

Our member colleges want to make sure that application fees do not pose a barrier for any student who wishes to apply for admission. Do you feel that your financial circumstances might qualify you for an application fee waiver? (Your counselor will be asked to verify your response.)

☒ Yes

☐ No

[Clear](#)

You must meet at least one of the following indicators of economic need to qualify for an application fee waiver. Select all that apply:

- ☐ I have received or am eligible to receive an ACT or SAT testing fee waiver
- ☐ I am enrolled in or am eligible to participate in the Federal Free or Reduced Price Lunch program (FRPL)
- ☐ My annual family income falls within the Income Eligibility Guidelines set by the USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- ☐ I am enrolled in a federal, state, or local program that aids students from low-income families (e.g., TRIO programs such as Upward Bound)
- ☐ My family receives public assistance
- ☐ I live in federally subsidized public housing, a foster home or am homeless
- ☐ I am a ward of the state or an orphan

- Answer yes to fee waiver question to see requirements
- If student qualifies, he/she receives unlimited college application fee waivers through Common App



Family

- Read questions carefully and answer completely
- Complete questions about both parents, even if they are divorced
- Ability to add information about step-parents
- Choose the appropriate parent for where you make your permanent home

▼ Household

Parents marital status: (relative to each other)*

Divorced

Divorced date: *

Month

Year

With whom do you make your permanent home? *

Parent 1

Do you wish to list any step-parents? *

☒ Yes

☐ No

Education and Testing

- High school information
- School counselor
- College coursework
- GPA, class rank and honors
- Self-report multiple test scores
- Future plans
- Preview your app to be sure responses fit

Dashboard My Colleges Common App College Search

Common Application

- Profile
- Family
- Education
- Testing
- Activities
- Writing

Tests Taken ✓

SAT Tests

Number of times you have already taken the SAT *

1 x

Number of future SAT sittings you expect *

1 x

Future testing date 1 *

Month Year

Highest critical reading score *

Select

Critical reading date *

Month Day Year

Highest math score *

Select



Activities

► Activities ✓

▼ Activity 1

Activity type *

Select ▼

Position/Leadership, description and organization name, if applicable *

Details, honors won, and accomplishments *

Participation grade levels *

☐ 9

☐ 10

☐ 11

☐ 12

☐ Post-graduate

Timing of participation *

☐ During school year

☐ During school break

☐ All year

- Provide up to 10 activities in order of importance
- List extracurricular activities and work experience
- Provide details and accomplishments (i.e. varsity letter, captain of team, officer in club, etc.)
- Not all colleges accept resumes



Writing

- 250 – 650 word essay
- Must cut and paste essay or write directly in the space provided
- Word count feature
- Formatting carries over
- Space for additional information up to 650 words

▼ Personal Essay

Some colleges require submission of the personal essay with your Common Application. You may submit a personal essay to any college, even if it is not required by that college. If not required by a college, you will be given the option during submission to include your essay or not for that college. *

☐ I understand

Here is the current list of colleges on your Dashboard and whether they require the Personal Essay.

Required

- Keene State College
- Plymouth State University
- Stonehill College
- University of New Hampshire

Not Required

The essay demonstrates your ability to write clearly and concisely on a selected topic and helps you distinguish yourself in your own voice. What do you want the readers of your application to know about you apart from courses, grades, and test scores? Choose the option that best helps you answer that question and write an essay of no more than 650 words, using the prompt to inspire and structure your response. Remember: 650 words is your



Completing the College Specific Applications Section by Section



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General Information

- Preferred start term
- Type of admissions
- Preferred residence option
- Interested in need-based financial aid
- Intention to apply for merit-based scholarships
- Art supplement

The screenshot shows the 'General' section of the Common App interface. The top navigation bar includes 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', and 'College Search'. The left sidebar lists 'Keene State College' as the selected institution, with options for 'Questions', 'Assign Recommenders', and 'Submission - Common App'. Below this, other colleges are listed: 'Plymouth State University', 'Stonehill College', and 'University of New Hampshire'. The main content area is titled 'General' and contains the following information:

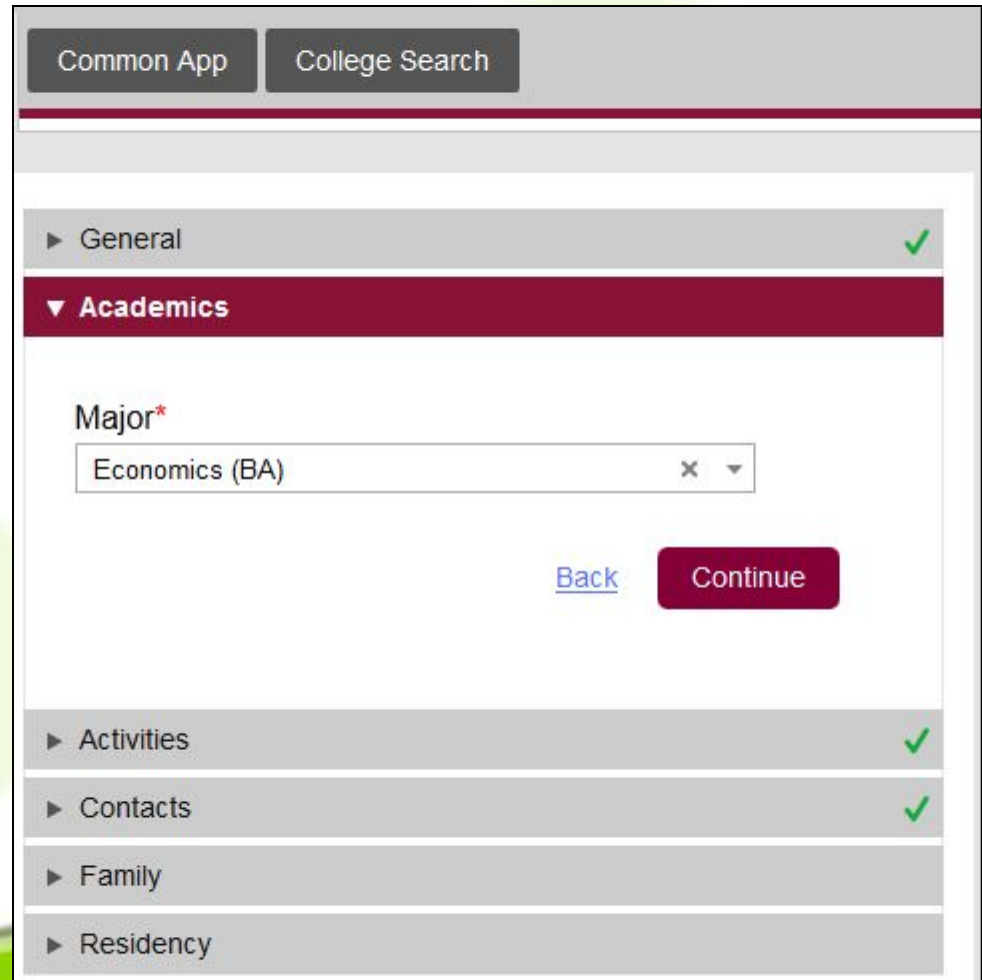
- Preferred start term***: Fall 2014
- Preferred admission plan***: Rolling Admission
- Preferred residence during your first year***: On-campus housing
- Do you intend to pursue need-based financial aid?***: Yes
- Do you intend to submit an art supplement so that your special talent in one or more of the arts will be considered as part of the admission process to Keene State College?***: No

At the bottom right of the form are links for 'Edit' and 'Back', and a 'Continue' button.



Academics

- Choose the major
- Undeclared is an option



The screenshot shows the 'Academics' section of the Common App. At the top, there are two tabs: 'Common App' and 'College Search'. Below the tabs, there is a navigation bar with 'General' (marked with a green checkmark) and 'Academics' (marked with a downward arrow). The 'Academics' section contains a 'Major*' dropdown menu with 'Economics (BA)' selected. Below the dropdown are two buttons: 'Back' (a blue link) and 'Continue' (a red button). At the bottom of the form, there is a navigation bar with 'Activities' (marked with a green checkmark), 'Contacts' (marked with a green checkmark), 'Family', and 'Residency'.

Common App College Search

► General ✓

▼ Academics

Major*

Economics (BA) x ▼

[Back](#) Continue

► Activities ✓

► Contacts ✓

► Family

► Residency



Activities

- Choose up to 5 activities that you're interested in
- Only offers choices available at that college
- List in order of preference

The screenshot shows a web form for selecting activities at Keene State College. At the top, there are three tabs: 'General' (with a green checkmark), 'Academics' (with a green checkmark), and 'Activities' (which is selected and highlighted in maroon). Below the 'Activities' tab, the text asks: 'What activities at Keene State College interest you? List in order of preference.' There is a dropdown menu with 'Baseball' selected. Below this, there is another section for adding more activities. It has a label 'Activity' and a dropdown menu with 'Leadership' selected. To the right of the dropdown are an upward arrow icon and a trash can icon. Below the dropdown, there is a link 'Add Another' followed by '(3 of 5 available)'. At the bottom right of the form area are two buttons: 'Back' (a blue link) and 'Continue' (a maroon button). At the very bottom of the page, there are four more tabs: 'Contacts' (with a green checkmark), 'Family', 'Residency', and an unlabeled tab.

► General ✓

► Academics ✓

▼ **Activities**

What activities at Keene State College interest you? List in order of preference.

Baseball x ▼

Activity Leadership x ▼ ↑

[Add Another](#) (3 of 5 available)

[Back](#) **Continue**


► Contacts ✓

► Family

► Residency

Contacts and Family

- List how you heard about the college
- Answer if any siblings are applying as well

► Activities 


▼ **Contacts**


How have you learned about Keene State College? List in order of influence.


College Fair

Date, if known

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

► Family 


► Residency 

► Parent/Legal Guardian Residency 




Residency

- Asks if student applying to a public college
- Answer if you believe you qualify for in-state tuition
- If yes, questions regarding parents/legal guardians appear

► Residency 

▼ Parent/Legal Guardian Residency

The questions in this section pertain to the parent or legal guardian who would qualify you for in-state status at this college. From the answers given on your application, please select the parent/legal guardian that best qualifies you for in-state tuition.*

Parent 1  ▼

Since when has this parent/legal guardian lived at his/her current address?*

Month ▼ Year ▼

Is your parent/legal guardian a US citizen?*

Select ▼

What is your parent/legal guardian's U.S. Armed Forces Status:*

☐ No relationship

☐ Currently serving

☐ Previously served

Supplements

- School specific questions
- Every college has the option to choose which questions, if any, to ask
- Must complete in order to submit application to the college

Optional Stonehill Question: Educating the mind, not at the expense of the heart. A liberal arts foundation. A culture of service. Experiential learning opportunities. Accessible faculty. Domestic and international internships. A vibrant campus life. Study abroad. Top-tier NCAA Division II athletics. Our Catholic & Holy Cross heritage. This is what's important to us, and what makes Stonehill the place we call home. When you think about your life and aspirations, what is important to you, and how does that make Stonehill home for you? (Optional - 250 word maximum)

Hint: File should be under 500 KB and one of these types:
.pdf .doc .docx .rtf .txt

 [Upload Document](#)



School Forms

- **FERPA Release Authorization**

You must complete the release authorization process, which will allow transcripts and recommendations to be submitted on your behalf through Naviance eDocs.
[release authorization](#)

Release Authorization

1 Instructions > 2 Form

☒ I authorize every school that I have attended to release all requested records and recommendations to colleges to which I am applying for admission. I also authorize employees at these colleges to confidentially contact my current and former schools should they have questions about the information submitted on my behalf.

Please select one:

☐ I waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.

☐ I DO NOT waive my right to review all recommendations and supporting documents submitted by me or on my behalf.

☐ I understand that my waiver or no waiver selection above pertains to all colleges to which I apply and that my **selections on this page cannot be changed once I invite my first recommender.**

Signature

Date 08/06/2014

- Read release authorization carefully
- If you do not waive your right to access letters of recommendation, some teachers may not wish to send them and some colleges may disregard letters submitted on your behalf



School Forms

- Invite your school counselor and teachers to submit school report form
- If your school uses Naviance edocs, that will be indicated here
- Check with your school counselor about the procedure at your high school


• Counselor

Your school is using Naviance eDocs for transcripts, school reports, and teacher recommendations. Please contact your counselor directly and they will provide instructions specific to your school regarding these documents. If your counselor wishes to submit forms via mail, you can download printable forms that can be completed on paper and mailed to each institution to which you apply.

Offline Forms

- [Fee Waiver](#) 
- [School Report](#) 
- [Optional Report](#) 
- [Mid Year Report](#) 
- [Final Report](#) 

✓ Teacher

Your school is using Naviance eDocs for transcripts, school reports, and teacher recommendations. Please contact your counselor directly and they will provide instructions specific to your school regarding these documents. Once your teachers submit their recommendations online you will see the status below. If your teacher (s) wish to submit forms via mail, you can download printable forms that can be completed on paper and mailed to each institution to which you apply. [offline form](#) 

Required: 0

Allowed: 1



Payment

- Click on each individual college to pay your application fee
- Payment methods vary from institution to institution
- Possible methods of payment
 - Online credit card or echeck
 - Fee waiver request

Application Submission

1 ✓ Final Review

>

2 Payment

>

3 Signature

You may pay the application fee for this institution using a credit card or echeck. Please note that all online payments are processed by a secure third-party payment service; you will be redirected to their site to enter your payment information. **Once you submit your payment you will be unable to change your payment method.**

Application Fee: \$50.00 First-Year Domestic Fee



Tips

- Cannot change your responses on an application once it has been submitted
- Can create a second version to send to additional schools
- The Application, Payment, and Supplement submissions are three distinct processes
- There may be additional forms required
- Preview your application BEFORE submission



Help is Available

- If experiencing technical difficulties, or need your username or password reset, contact Common App directly through their Help Center
- In the Help Center, families can view FAQ's or submit their own question, answered by email
- Cannot contact Common App via phone
- Call the Admission Office at the individual college for questions specific to their application and supplements
- Call the Center for College Planning for general Common App questions



Questions?

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