**DECIDING WHICH COLLEGE IS RIGHT FOR YOU**

Ask yourself about what characteristics, programs, services and facilities are important to you. Use these characteristics to develop a list of college possibilities. Share your needs and concerns with your parents, teachers, counselors and friends. The following questions will help you narrow the list of schools you are considering.

What do I hope to achieve with a college education?

Does the college have the educational program I want for my career?

Do I want a large or a small school?

Do I want a public or a private school?

Do I want a specialized school (technical) or a liberal arts college (4yr school)?

How far from home do I want to be?

Do I want to be in a large city, small town, rural or other setting?

What am I willing to spend?

Will I qualify for financial aid?

Does it offer extra-curricular, cultural, social or sporting activities that interest me?

How do I compare to the students on this campus? Academically? Socially?

**Applying to College Step by Step**

**Applying to college can be daunting, but taking a step by step approach will allow you to succeed.**

Specific [college admissions requirements](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/college-admission-requirements/) vary from college to college (always check with the ones you are applying to!), but luckily the basics are largely the same. There’s lots involved, so make sure you take care of all the details the college application requires.

**1. Fill out the application.**

As part of the admissions process, you’ll be required to [fill out some basic application paperwork](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/how-to-fill-out-a-college-or-us-universit-application/), which will include personal information about yourself and your high school career, like extracurricular activities you participated in. Most, if not all, applications are completed online at your college’s website.

**2. Write the admissions essay.**

You will also have to write an admissions essay when applying to college. Usually the school will provide a number of prompts for you to choose from. In some cases, you may be able to choose your own topic. Be sure to [proofread your college admissions essay](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/tips-for-your-college-admissions-essay/)carefully.

**3. Gather supplemental materials.**

Supplemental materials may include items like a portfolio of personal work or a supplemental essay. In some cases, supplemental materials can help your application, but in other cases they can hurt your chances of admission. Be sure to carefully consider whether the [supplemental materials or supplemental essays](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/supplemental-material-and-supplemental-essays-in-us-university-applications/) are a good idea for your application.

Some colleges also require [college recommendation letters](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/recommendation-letter/). These usually can come from teachers who are familiar with your work. Some students may also get recommendations from coaches, church leaders, community service organizers, or other adults who can attest to the student’s skills and work ethic.

**4. Request to send transcripts and ACT scores**

Schools require transcripts and ACT scores in order to select students for admission to their institution. You can request transcripts to be sent on the “Guidance and Counseling” page of the DEHS website. ACT scores can be ordered online at act.org; cost is $13.

**5. Receive your acceptance letter!**

Even if you’ve started [getting acceptance letters](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/getting-your-us-university-or-us-college-acceptance-letter/), the process of applying to college is not complete! Once you are done [deciding which university you would like to attend](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/deciding-which-university-to-attend/), you’ll have to let the school know that you have decided to accept its offer of admission.

After this, there will be even more paperwork to sort out, like filling out housing forms and signing up for campus meal plans. The school should send you all the information and paperwork you need.

# College Application Questions and Materials

# Common things to be asked:

# Cumulative GPA and class rank

# Your complete address

# A copy of your transcript for reference

# Test scores

# Intended major

# Parent’s information (name, address, phone number)

# Social Security number

# Date of birth

# Extracurricular’s you may be in

# Work experience

# Awards (academic, athletic, art, etc.)

# Volunteer experience

# Application Fee (range from $20-$50)

# Will need to submit OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL TRANSCRIPT

**College Essays**

## 1. Open strong. A strong opening paragraph that captures the readers’ interest is important. You want to make the admissions officer reading your essay curious about what you say next.

## 2. Show you can write. Colleges want to see that you have a command of the basics of good writing, which is a key component of success in college.

## 3. Be direct. Admissions officers also want to see that the student can give a direct answer to the essay question.

## 4. Make a point. When writing the essay, you should have a comprehensive argument or narrative. In other words—make your point and stick to it.

## 5. Stick to your style. Your style should be comfortable for you to write in, so avoid overusing the thesaurus to sound impressive. A writing style that is natural and appropriate for the subject matter is key.

## 6. Be authentic. Don’t stress trying to write what you think colleges are looking for—just focus on showcasing who you are.

## 7. Proofread. Correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling are essential, so proofread several times after you’ve finished. Then ask a teacher, parent, or college student to give it a quick read, too.

## 8. Keep track of length. Finally, admissions officers value succinctness. Remember to pay attention to the recommended essay length or word count.

## The US College Application Essay

Many colleges require two essays, or “personal statements,” a short one and a longer one. The [Common Application](http://www.universitylanguage.com/guides/the-common-application-and-us-colleges-and-universities/) requires one of 150 words or less, which elaborates on one of your extracurricular or work activities, and one of 250-500 words. The longer essay can essentially be about anything, since “topic of your choice” is an option. Other suggestions include writing about a person who has had a significant influence on you; an issue of significance (personal, local, national or global) and its importance to you; and how your personal background will add to the college’s diversity.

### **Write about something that's important to you.** It could be an experience, a person, a book—anything that has had an impact on your life.

### **Don't just recount—reflect!**Anyone can write about how they won the big game or the summer they spent in Rome. When recalling these events, you need to give more than the play-by-play or itinerary. Describe what you learned from the experience and how it changed you.

**Reciprocity**

Minnesota has agreements with neighboring states to provide lower tuition for Minnesota residents to attend public colleges and universities in those states. **This is called reciprocity**. Typically, non-resident admission fees and tuition are reduced (or eliminated) if you're a reciprocity student.

**Minnesota has reciprocity agreements** with [Wisconsin](https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=121), [North Dakota](https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=122), and [South Dakota](https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=123). It also has an agreement with the [Canadian province of Manitoba](https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=125), and a limited agreement with [Iowa Lakes Community College](https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?PageID=124) in northwestern Iowa.

The programs with Wisconsin, North Dakota, and South Dakota cover virtually all students, including full-time, part-time, undergraduate, graduate, and professional (some professional programs are excluded).

Students enrolled in programs that charge the same tuition rate to all students regardless of state of residence are not covered under any of the reciprocity agreements. Students taking distance education from a college in a neighboring reciprocity state while remaining in their home state are not covered under the reciprocity agreement with Wisconsin.

**When should I apply?**

First, apply for admission to the participating reciprocity college or university. You don’t apply for reciprocity at the same time. Once accepted to a school you will apply for reciprocity online via your school. Otherwise, talk to the financial aid office at your school to fill out a paper application. **Your best bet for receiving reciprocity tuition price at the time of registration is to apply during the spring or summer before classes start in the fall**. Your reciprocity benefits will automatically be renewed each year you are attending your school. Additionally, you can find an online application for reciprocity via the Minnesota Office of Higher Education website.

Source: https://www.ohe.state.mn.us/mPg.cfm?pageID=97