

# The Application Process

## The College Application

While the counselors and College Career Center staff are here to support JHHS seniors with the college application process, it is the **STUDENT** who is responsible for knowing which application materials are required for each college and submitting all applications, fees, essays, official test scores, and supplemental materials. An application generally consists of the following:

### Required materials:

- ✓ The application itself (paper or online)
- ✓ Application fee or fee waiver
- ✓ Transcript
- ✓ Official test scores (ACT or SAT)

### Supplementary materials required by some colleges:

- ✓ Secondary School Report or Counselor Form
- ✓ Teacher or counselor recommendations
- ✓ Personal statement or essay(s)
- ✓ Activities Resume
- ✓ Interview

## The Application

Most colleges have proprietary applications found on the admissions tab of their website. Some colleges are also members of the Common Application or Coalition Application, sharing an application with other schools. There are over 625 colleges and universities that accept the “Common Application”. If you are applying to more than two Common Application Schools, you can fill out the Common Application one time and use it to apply to multiple colleges. Some of these schools may require supplemental questions and essays in addition to those on the Common Application. For a complete list of Common Application Schools, visit the website: [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). In the fall of 2016, the Coalition Application will debut, with 90 colleges sharing this application. Since this application is new this fall, at the time of publication it was not clear exactly which schools would accept this application in 2016 or how easy it will be to submit application pieces. For this reason, we discourage its use.

### ***Regardless of the type of application you file, please:***



- Make a careful list of the materials required to complete the application, such as transcripts, test scores or counselor recommendations. Be sure to request these supplemental materials with plenty of time for them to be completed and sent by the application deadline date.
- Fill out the application carefully and completely. If you are working online, save your application regularly, so you do not lose your work.
- Pay close attention to the application deadlines and be sure to submit ALL materials by the deadline date.

## *Application Fee or Fee Waiver*

Most applications require a fee with the application. If you file electronically, you may need to provide a credit card payment. Students on Free and Reduced Lunch or public assistance are eligible to have application fees waived and should stop by the College Career Center (CCC) for the fee waiver application.

## *Transcript*

Most college applications require a student's official transcript sent directly from the high school's Registrar. You will need to request the transcript by filing an Application Notification and Request Form (ANR) in the CCC. While transcripts are usually sent electronically, at peak periods it can take weeks to process requests. Please allow at least a month for a transcript to be sent.

## *Official Test Scores*

**John Hersey High School does not send standardized test scores or include them on the transcript. It is the student's responsibility to send official test scores to colleges directly from the testing services.** At the time of registration for the ACT, SAT, or SAT Subject Tests, you may specify up to four colleges to receive your scores as part of your test registration fee. After the test is taken, you can request to send ACT or SAT score reports to additional schools at a cost of \$11.25 - \$12 per school through the websites:

For ACT: [www.actstudent.org](http://www.actstudent.org)  
For SAT or SAT Subject Tests: [www.collegeboard.com](http://www.collegeboard.com)

When reporting ACT scores, you can choose to submit test scores from a specific testing date or submit all of your test scores. Students often prefer to send only their tests with the highest composite scores. However, some selective schools require ALL scores to be sent. Other colleges use the highest test score when multiple scores have been sent. And other colleges combine the highest sub scores from multiple tests to compute a higher composite score, known as a “**superscore**”. For these reasons, it may be a good idea for students to send all test scores. Check with each college to determine their policy. All SAT scores are automatically sent to colleges unless you pay extra for Score Choice at the time of registration.

## ***Secondary School Report, Counselor Form or Recommendation***

Your application may require a Secondary School Report, Counselor Form, or letter of recommendation (rec) from your counselor. Complete the Counselor Rec Survey in Naviance BEFORE asking your counselor to complete these documents so that your counselor has the information needed to write a strong letter of recommendation. Print Secondary School Reports and Counselor Forms from the online college application, attach them to the Application Notification and Request Form (ANR) and turn them into the College and Career Center. Use the checkboxes on the ANR to indicate if a letter and/or a counselor form are needed for the application. These documents will be prepared by your counselor and sent with the transcript.

## ***Teacher Recommendations***

Some colleges require teacher recommendations and for those that do, it is an essential part of the application. ***Here are a few tips:***

**Select a teacher of a core academic subject or class related to your career interest or major. Colleges prefer Junior or Senior year teachers. It is best if the teacher knows you very well as a student – your interests, abilities and motivation.**

**Ask the teacher in person if they can honestly give you a positive recommendation. You can ask one teacher to provide a recommendation for multiple schools. If they hesitate or have reservations, ask someone else.**

**After talking with the teacher, log into Naviance to list the teacher for each college needing recommendations, the due dates and whether you are applying using the Common Application.**

**Ask the teacher what they need to write you a letter or recommendation. They may interview you or ask you to complete a JHHS Student Information Form for Teachers to get an in-depth description of your academic strengths, interests, goals and future plans. This form is available in the College Career Center and in the Naviance Document Library.**

**Colleges look most favorably on recommendations where you waived the right to review (i.e., the letter is sent to the college directly from the person writing). Be sure to waive your right to review recommendation letters.**

**Allow at least 15 school days for a teacher/counselor to write your letter.**

**Send a thank you note to the teacher when the application process is over.**

## Personal Statement or Essays

Not all colleges require essays, but when a college does, it is an important part of the admissions application. The essay or personal statement allows colleges to see how well you communicate and, more importantly, allows them to see you as an individual. For this reason, there is no one formula for writing a good essay. Instead view this as your chance to communicate your personality, character, feelings, motivations, strengths, and passions. Honesty, self-awareness, and creativity are all elements of a strong essay.

Questions will vary widely from college to college, so plan to spend some time considering essay topics, drafting and editing your essay. The summer before senior year is a great time to work on your college essay. It is best to have a draft of your essay completed by the time you return to school. *Some key things to keep in mind:*



- Use the essay to express your uniqueness. Do not include information already listed on the application or transcript.
- Follow the directions! Answer the question asked. If there is a limit on the number of words, adhere to the limit.
- Use a style that is comfortable to you, using your own words and style.
- Use correct grammar, punctuation and spelling. Have your essays proofread by your family, teachers or tutors in the Writing Well.

## Activities Resume

An activities resume is a brief, easy-to-read, summary of your after school activities, honors, community service and work experience. In some cases, the resume can be used in lieu of completing the activity section on a college application. Other schools only recommend attaching your resume when the application does not provide enough space for you to list, in greater detail, a description of your activities and experiences. Some colleges/universities **require** that you complete the activities section of the application, so please read the instructions carefully!

### Resume Writing Tips:

**List your information in reverse chronological order with the most recent listed first.**

**Organize your activities into categories (e.g. Athletics, Clubs, Awards, Work Experience, etc.)**

**Try to keep the resume to one page.**

**Appearance is very important. Use blank space, font size, bold, italic and underline features, and indent or tab features to create an outline effect. You can use the resume-writing feature in Naviance to help you with formatting your resume.**

**Be sure to proofread for errors.**

## *Sample Activities Resume*

**John P. Senior**  
12345 Main Street  
Arlington Heights, IL 60004  
(847) 555-1212  
[JSenior7890@stu.d214.org](mailto:JSenior7890@stu.d214.org)

### **Education:**

John Hersey High School Class of 2018  
1900 East Thomas Street  
Arlington Heights, IL 60004

G.P.A.: 4.8/5.0  
ACT: English 26, Math 22, Reading 24, Science 23, Composite 24

### **School Activities:**

Soccer:  
    Team Captain Grades 12  
    Most Valuable Player Grades 11,12  
    Varsity Grades 10,11,12  
    Junior Varsity Grade 9  
Service Over Self:  
    Thanksgiving food drive, Chair Grade 10  
Club Member: Chess Team Grade 9 - 11

### **Volunteer Service:**

Northwest Community Hospital Volunteer Grades 11, 12  
(4 hrs/week)  
Church - Youth Group Grades 9 -12  
(2 hrs/week)

### **Work History:**

Target, Cashier 06/2016 - present  
(8 hours/week)  
Arlington Hts Park District, Lifeguard 06/2015-08/2015  
(40 hours/week in summers)

### **Summer Programs:**

Stanford University Summer Enrichment Summer 2014

### **Awards:**

Academic Honor Roll Grades 9 - 11  
National Honor Society 2014- 16  
Illinois State Scholar 2016

## ***Interviews***

The interview is used in the admission process at some colleges. If an interview is *required* or *recommended*, it can be a significant factor in the admissions decision. Interviews may be conducted by a representative of the admission staff or by an alumni living in your community. The interview is an opportunity for you to highlight your uniqueness, personality, and what you can bring to the college. A few interview tips are listed below, but you can also ask Mrs. Davis to conduct a mock interview to prepare you for this process.

Make a good first impression. Dress neatly, be punctual, and shake hands initially and at the end of the interview. Make eye contact and listen attentively.

Be prepared. Consult the college's materials or website so that you can ask appropriate questions and express your interest in the school.

Show genuine interest and enthusiasm for the college.

Thank the interviewer for his/her time and ask for business card or contact information. Follow up with a thank you note.

# *NCAA and College Athletics*

## NCAA

The NCAA, or National Collegiate Athletic Association, was established in 1906 and is the athletics governing body for more than 1280 colleges, universities, conferences and organizations. NCAA schools are divided into three divisions. Division I and II members may offer athletics scholarships, while Division III schools may not. For more information, visit [www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.org](http://www.ncaaeligibilitycenter.org).



## NAIA

The NAIA, or National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics, founded in 1937, includes nearly 300 smaller colleges. A list of these colleges may be found at [www.naia.org](http://www.naia.org). Over 90% of NAIA colleges offer athletic scholarships.

All students who want to become either NCAA or NAIA athletes should attend the D214 Student Athlete Night in November and read the D214 Student-Athlete Handbook. These resources have valuable information about the recruitment and application process.

## *Special Education College Programs*

There are many colleges that are able to serve students with special needs. The range of services and associated costs vary widely. Students should work closely with their case manager and college counselor as they begin planning for college to determine the specific needs of the student and each college or university's ability to provide these services. Students may want their IEP, 504, or other documentation made available to their chosen college. The College Career Center staff can guide them on how and when to advise each school. Special accommodations for ACT and SAT testing need to be arranged well in advance of the test date. Students looking for Special Education College Programs are encouraged to pick up a copy of *Directions: A College Guide for Students with Special Needs* from the CCC and attend the District 214 Directions College Fair.