

Common App Student FAQs

1. How do I set up a Common App Account?

To create a "First Year Student" account, go here: <https://apply.commonapp.org/createaccount>



2. How do I know if the college(s) I am applying to are on Common App?

For the most up-to-date list, refer to the college search tab in the Common App portal.

3. Should I waive FERPA?

Family Educational Rights and Privacy ACT (FERPA) is a law that gives you rights to your educational records. Your applications, including your letter of recommendations, become part of your records. Waiving FERPA means you are giving up your right to view your letters of recommendations. If colleges see that you can view your letters of recommendation, they will question if the contents of the letter are truthful and reliable. Waiving FERPA helps uphold the integrity of the letters.

4. How do I add a teacher recommender?

After you ask your teacher and they agree to write you a LOR, follow these steps:

1. Go to the Recommenders and FERPA section of a school in the My Colleges Tab.
2. Scroll down until you see the "Teacher" or "Other Recommender" section.
3. Click on the box to select the Teacher or Other Recommender you want to assign. Note that you may need to click on "Add Another" for optional recommenders.

5. How do I know if my counselor or teacher have submitted my application materials?

Here's how a student can check if a document, like a Letter of Recommendation (LOR) or transcript, has been submitted by a teacher or counselor:

1. Log into your Common App account.
2. Click on the "My Colleges" tab.
3. Select a college from your list.
4. Click on the "Recommenders and FERPA" section.
 - a. Here, you'll see a list of all the recommenders you've invited, including teachers and your counselor. Next to each name, you'll see a status. If it says "Submitted," that means the recommender has completed and submitted their part. If it says "Invited," that means the recommender has been asked, but hasn't submitted their part yet.
Remember, you won't be able to see the actual content of the documents, like the LOR or transcript. This is to respect the privacy of the recommenders and the rules FERPA. But you can see if they've been submitted or not.

Remember, Counselors and Teachers have additional days beyond the student deadline to submit materials.

6. I am reporting my grades, and my weighted grade is over 105. Common App won't let me add a grade over 105. What do I do?

If a student's weighted grade exceeds 105, they should report the grade as it appears on their transcript. If the Common App system does not allow for grades above 105, the student can use the "Additional Information" section in the Writing portion of the application to explain this. They can mention that their school's grading scale allows for grades above 105 and provide their actual grade there. This will help colleges understand the discrepancy and evaluate the application accurately.

7. Other questions/guides:

<https://www.commonapp.org/apply/first-year-students>

