

# CTP

## Thinking about applying to colleges in the United States?

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This workbook helps ease the process with detailed walk through guide to:

**SAT**  
**Financial Aid**  
**Recommendation Letters**  
**Common App**  
**Essays, and many more**

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Organized by Columbia University Students, 2018



**Counseling and Test Preparation (CTP)** is an educational program in Addis Ababa founded by Columbia University students. CTP provides process-oriented guidance to inspire Ethiopian students' post-secondary aspirations. The goal of CTP is to provide a comprehensive, developmental counseling program based upon the identified needs of Ethiopian high school students in order to inspire students to work towards their goals of getting acceptance to top university programs in the United States.

### **The Importance of College Counseling**

*Of the hundreds of high schools in Addis Ababa, only three have college counselors.*

Counselors have a critical role in the college search and admissions process for high school students. Ethiopian students who do not have access to college counseling are unaware of scholarship opportunities and simply over rely on friends and relatives for advice about colleges. The complexity of information, the vast differences among colleges in the application requirements and the non-negotiable deadlines set by universities make the application process demanding and stressful.

### **The Goal of CTP**

High school students not only require better information, resources, and advocacy through the application process, but also need mentors who can take the time to help them work through the complex personal struggles they face both before and after the acceptance letters arrive. The goal of CTP is to demystify the application process to US universities and to give all Ethiopian high school students the necessary training they will need to excel in the SAT exam. The CTP program offers classes whereby students receive rigorous training on SAT test-taking skills.

In addition to the SAT preparation aspect of the program, students are paired with Columbia university mentors who will guide them through the college application process. The CTP instructors also work to help students identify US colleges that offer robust support structures and adequate funding.

### **CTP- A Student-for-Student Program**

The CTP instructors are students themselves who have recently completed the application process and have been accepted to US universities such as Columbia University and Stanford University. These instructors are the very best sources of advice for students since they themselves have recently gone through the same process, and hence can relate to students on a personal level.

The college-bound CTP instructors tutor students based on tried-and-validated methods that have worked for them and allowed them to get accepted to the most selective colleges in the United States.



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## General Course Description

The Fourth CTP program will be held from June 27 until August 13, 2018. Throughout these seven weeks, participating students will convene at Lideta Catholic Cathedral School for 3 hours every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday afternoon. This summer, we will have three different sections: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced. The material delivered in class varies between the three sections but it typically includes SAT (Reading, Writing, and Math), demystification lectures, and other aspects of the application process. Most classes start with Reading exercises followed by either Writing or Math lectures. There will also be discussions that will include tips from the instructors on how to approach questions and specific advice for crucial parts of the SAT exam.

Friday classes for Beginner and Intermediate sections will be used to talk about the college application process. This workbook begins with college search process, guides the student through the necessary application and financial forms and ends with a description of the American student visa application process. When the CTP program concludes, students will have all the necessary information to apply to US universities.

Alongside the study sessions, there will be speaking events from several individuals regarding SAT and college applications. Moreover, there will be mentoring sessions every week in closed group settings led by one of our ten instructors.



## TASK 1:

After you have read this section thoroughly, do the following.

- 1) Create a new email account on gmail, if you fall in the category described below. This way, we will have your new email address. The document below explains how you should name your account and use it from this day forward.
- 2) If you have a smart phone, make sure to join the “CTP Class of 2018” Group. If you do not have a smart phone, we will also communicate any important information via email so make sure to check your email regularly.

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### COMMUNICATION: EMAIL

Please take this seriously as we begin to express the importance of sending coherent Professional emails.

These four rules will make you experts at communicating your thoughts via email.

- Rule 1: Do not email the way you text.
- Rule 2: Your email address should be professional
- Rule 3: Always read the email from start to finish
- Rule 4: Check your email if not every other day then once in two days.

Following these 4 Rules will make you an effective communicator.

#### ***RULE 1: Do not email the way you text.***

Please finish your sentence. Don't type lol or JK or “ze” when you can write the full “The”. Why would you do that? Even if you are emailing your CTP mentors, you should always write in full sentences. We've received emails that say “hi whn do u think applications for CTP will start? Tnx ” or “ u knw who I can ask about z mentorship program?”

Someone once said “Your email messages are as much a part of your professional image as the clothes you wear, so it looks bad to send out a message that contains typos.”

This is not an exaggeration.

Even if you are communicating with mentors or CTP members, you have to begin practicing to write fully coherent professional emails.

Here is why- Emails are the most important form of communication you have got as you begin the college application process. When you have questions about the college and you email the admissions officers, if your email has spelling errors or they see a text message style writing instead of coherent sentences, they WILL NOT take you seriously. They receive THOUSANDS of emails from students, and the first thing they see is your email. They will have no way of knowing that you are an A+ student. Who cares! If you can't write properly, then it shows that you don't have respect for their time. Please don't do it. Take time to reread your emails and type full sentences.

#### ***RULE 2: Your email address should be professional***

Your email address should be professional

A high school student counselor used to say this line at every student body meetings “If you have Hotmail accounts or yahoo accounts that look like this:

[xoxolovebabe@hotmail.com](mailto:xoxolovebabe@hotmail.com) or [sexyBabe100@yahoo.com](mailto:sexyBabe100@yahoo.com), don't ever use it to send to any one you would like to start a professional relationship with. Never.”

If you were 10 years older and you received an email from this person, would you take them seriously? Would you even open it? I certainly would think that it was a spam mail.

Here is your task for this week: Open a new email account on gmail with your first and last name (plus some number if you need it). Ex: [gelila.zenebe2018@gmail.com](mailto:gelila.zenebe2018@gmail.com)

Why?

Here's why: you probably have one or two email accounts already or you might just be using your parents'. But here is the problem, when you begin applying to colleges, you will receive emails on a weekly basis. You DON'T want to miss the important college emails in a sea of spam emails. You should have one email account solely dedicated to your applications and professional contact and educational purposes (such as CTP).

You see how important it is?

This will make your life so much easier. You will thank the day that you opened this professional email account.

***RULE 3: Always read the email from start to finish***

Always read the email from start to finish (especially if it is an email from CTP or colleges). We want to see you succeed and we will send materials online if we believe they will help you get prepared. Please take time to read them and to understand. They are all for YOU.

***RULE 4: Check your email if not every other day then once in two days.***

Check your email if not every other day then once in two days. You probably have two things in mind right now:

Here's why: For CTP, the team in New York and the CTP team currently in Addis will be sending you papers and practices and these materials are so instrumental to help you build the skills you will need for the SAT and applying for college.

In addition, you will need to build this habit of constantly being connected to the professional world as you begin

applying, because you will need to send your documents on time and register for exams and make sure that all the requests are in on time. When you enter college, you will begin checking your email at a minimum twice every day (during the summer. Probably once in 2 hours during the school year).

You're also probably thinking: "but internet in Ethiopia is not reliable. How are we going to check every other day when access is so strained?" Sadly, such is the current condition of our country. When we applied to college, the internet situation was just the same. When you will be applying a few months (or perhaps a year) from now, the internet condition will not change. That is not something we can change, but it is something we can work around. Given that this is the situation of our country, how can we move forward? How have others done it in the past? Where do people go to get good internet? These are the questions you should be asking. Please, from now on when you are given an online task- you should never use the "bad internet" excuse to justify your inability to complete the task or read an email.

You need to begin building the habit of using the internet (even in its current slow state) right NOW. It can be frustrating but you need to begin finding the places with good internet access. They exist in Addis. You don't want to struggle with that while you're applying. Your mentors will tell you about them. So again, we are trying to expose you to the websites you will be using at an early stage so that when you begin applying, they will be second nature to you. You have enough to worry about – the essays and deadlines to have to think about internet and discomfort with using the websites.

If you follow these 4 rules about email writing and habit building, then you will be one step closer to becoming an effective professional communicator.

**Let's talk specifics- Email WRITING**

Would you rather read short, concise emails or long, rambling one? Here's something to always ask yourself as you are writing your email "Have I said all I wanted to say without putting too much words in there?" .... "am I repeating myself anywhere?"

So make sure that your emails are as short as possible, without excluding necessary information. Make clear requests, get to your point rapidly. In addition, always remember to "check your tone". This means that your email should not sound "harsh" or "angry". What do we mean by this? When you write, always be polite. Start with "Dear Mr. ---" or "Hello Mrs. So and So". Then followed by "I hope you are doing well." You will then begin introducing yourself and why you are sending this email. Always explain the intent of your message. For example:

"Dear Mr. Granger,

I hope you are doing well. My name is Harry Potter and I am a student at Hogwarts School of Wizardry in Addis Ababa. I was able to get this email address from the school website and I was hoping to address some questions I had about admission requirements. First, is it always the case that international students should submit their TOEFL scores via email? In addition, I was also wondering whether the school requires students to send results of two SAT II Subject tests.

Thank you very much for you time. I hope to hear from you soon. Best,

Harry Potter"

The above is an example of a good email that effectively communicates the reader's intent. When you close your emails, don't say "bye" or "ciao" or "tnx". Be as polite as you can be.

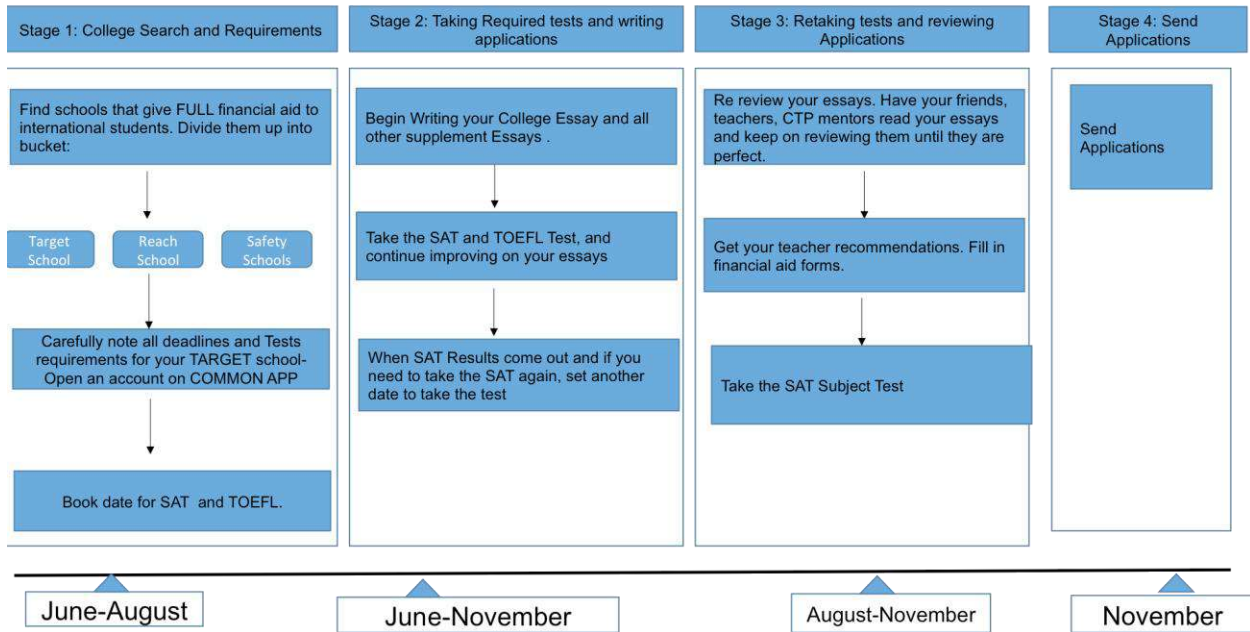
## **Make Good Use of Subject Lines**

Always put a descriptive subject line in your emails. The above email for example could have the following subject line:

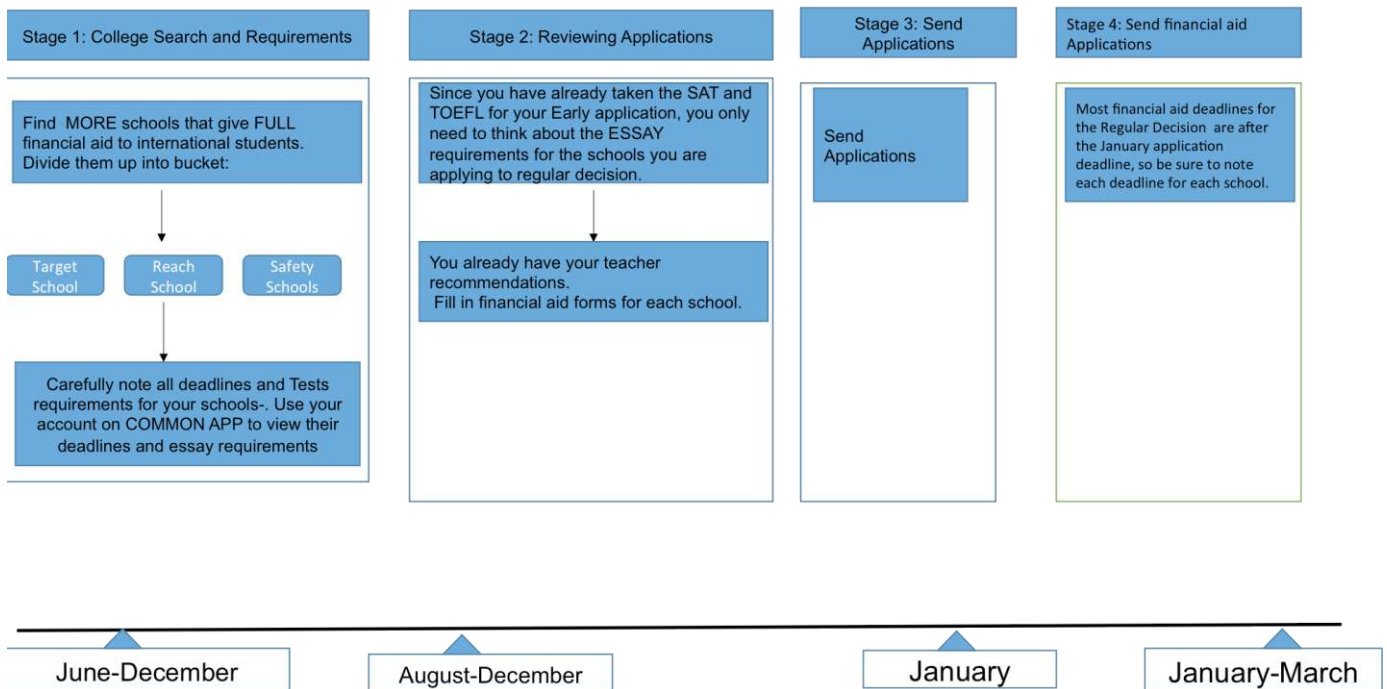
"Questions on Application Requirements for International Students:

A blank subject line is more likely to be overlooked or rejected as "spam". Remember that. You know that some people actually buy software that will automatically stow away "potential" spam emails, and one such requirements for some might just be that your subject line is empty. How sad would it be that the person was unable to read your email because you forgot to put a title to your email?

## The Early Application Time Line



## The Regular Application Time Line



# The Application Process

## **Introduction**

The college application process may be confusing especially for those applying for the first time. Fortunately, it's not as daunting as it seems. Different criteria have to be fulfilled for a complete and successful application. However, if you are familiar with the steps you need to take ahead of time, then it may turn out to be much simpler than you had first anticipated.

## **The College Selection Process**

One of the most exciting parts of the application process is finding and picking a college that is the right fit for you. The process of selecting the colleges you will apply to has several stages.

### *1. What do I want?*

In order to find a college that is the perfect fit for you, you have to first be able to define what you want from a college. You can ask yourself these questions.

- What do I want in the long term?
- Do I want a Liberal Arts education or a Career-Oriented education?
- How close do I want to be to home? Is there a specific place I want to go to?
- Do I want a small intimate college or a huge university? What kind of student body do I want to be a part of?
- What kind of school am I qualified enough to go to? How rigorous a curriculum do I want in the school I attend?
- What type of housing and student activities do I prefer?
- How much financial assistance do I need?
- Do I know what I want to study in college?

All these and more personalized questions are important points to consider when trying to build a mental image of the type of college you want to attend.

### *2. How do I find what I want?*

Although there are some comprehensive books and booklets with plenty of information on a wide variety of colleges in the US, the most convenient way to find a college/colleges fit for you is online. One very effective college search tool online is College Search by College Board:

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/college-search>

Visit the website to start your college searching process. It has a lot of helpful filters that allow you to search for your ideal college by checking things like enrollment size, campus setting, financial aid information, average SAT scores ...

### 3. *What is required of me?*

Although your qualification is one of the deciding factors for the colleges you chose, you still need to more specifically evaluate yourself based on each college. Once you've came up with the selected list of colleges, look into each one of them and see what is required of you (in terms of testing, high school curriculum, finance, application process, deadlines, etc...). You can filter out colleges based on what you can and cannot offer.

### 4. *Build a Final Colleges List*

After you've done your basic research, you need to compose a final list of the colleges you'll apply to. The average number of college most applicants apply to is approximately equal to 10. About a third of these will be your Reach Schools (The most selective colleges in your list, schools you aspire to). Another third will be your Match Schools (Schools that match your credentials, schools you'll probably get into). The last third will be your Safety Schools (schools you're more or less sure you'll get into, school's you're more than qualified for).

## **Standardized Tests**

### ***SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests***

#### **SAT Subject Tests**

Subject Tests are one hour-long, content-based tests that allow you to showcase achievement in specific subject areas where you excel. These are admission tests where you choose the tests that best showcase your achievements and interests. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, mathematics and science.

#### **ACT and ACT Plus Writing**

The ACT (No Writing) consists of four multiple-choice tests: English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science. The ACT Plus Writing includes the four multiple-choice tests and a Writing Test, a 30-minute essay test that measures your writing skills. Some colleges require the Writing Test; others do not. You should decide whether or not to take the Writing Test based on the requirements of the colleges you are applying to or considering.

### **English Proficiency Test**

#### **TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)**

TOEFL is an English Proficiency Standardized Test administered in 165 countries and used by over 9000 universities, agencies and other institutions. Your TOEFL scores are valid for 2 years. There are two options for TOEFL test takers:

- **iBT – Internet Based Test:** Lasts about 4 hours on average. It contains a Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking section. Each section is scored on a scale of 0 to 30. The TOEFL iBT total score ranges from 0 to 120. Test is administered electronically (on computer).
- **PBT – Paper Based Test:** Lasts about 2 and a half hours. It contains Reading, Listening and Structure sections, as well as a Writing section that is scored separately. PBT total score ranges from 310 to 677 (Listening 31–68, Structure 31–69, Reading 31–67). The Writing section is scored on a scale of 0–6.

## **IELTS (International English Language Testing System)**

IELTS is an international standardized test of English language proficiency for non-native English language speakers. There are two versions of the IELTS:

- The Academic Version – intended for those who want to enroll in universities and other institutions of higher education. (This is the one you should take.)
- The General Training Version – intended for those planning to take non-academic/vocational training.

The test includes 40 minutes of Listening, 60 minutes of Reading, 60 minutes of Writing and 11–15 minutes of Speaking sections. The test takes about 3 hours in total and is scored on a range of 0 to 9. IELTS scores are valid for 2 years.

## **The New SAT (2016)**

### **Format**

The new SAT evidence-based reading and writing section consists of two sections collectively scored on a 200–800 scale. These sections will include:

- A 65-minute reading section consisting of 52 questions
- A 35-minute writing and language section consisting of 44 questions

### **How is it different from the old critical reading and writing sections?**

The motive behind the redesign to the SAT's format is to give priority to the questions that will present students with the kind of reading and writing challenges they will encounter in college and in their careers.

The new evidence-based reading and writing section is different because:

- There are only 4 alternatives on the multiple choice questions.
- The correction system has been changed to a “rights-only” one, meaning students will not be penalized for a wrong answer, unlike on the old SAT.
- There will be emphasis on reasoning, similar to the old one.



- When it comes to vocabulary, the emphasis will be on meaning of words in extended contexts. This tests knowledge of how word choice shapes meaning, tone and impact.
- All passages are taken from high-quality, previously published sources.

## What is required?

College Board states that the aim of the new evidence-based reading and writing section is:

“to determine whether students can demonstrate college and career readiness, proficiency in comprehending a broad range of high-quality, appropriately challenging literary and informational texts in the content areas of US and World literature, history/social studies and sciences.”

Therefore, a student’s ability to analyze texts rhetorically and ability to interpret meaning of relevant words and phrases in context will be tested thoroughly.

There means there is an emphasis on:

- Words in Context
- Command of evidence
- Inclusion of informational graphics
- Specified range of text complexity

## The New SAT Essay

The format:

- **50-minute section (optional):** passage and essay prompt will be provided.

## What has changed in the new SAT Essay exam?

- This portion of the exam is now optional.
- Double the time will be allotted. You will be given 50 minutes to complete the essay, instead of the previous 25 minutes.
- In the New SAT, passages will be slightly longer. A 600-700 word passage will be provided.
- Unlike the Old SAT, you will not be asked to agree or disagree with the topic presented in the passage. Instead, you will be asked to explain how the author built his or her argument
- For the New SAT, you will ALWAYS be given the same essay prompt. Even if the wording is not exactly the same, you are always asked: explain how the author built an argument to persuade the audience of his or her claim. (Disclaimer: The passages presented to you will NOT be the same)

## **The Essay Prompt**

Write an essay in which you explain how [the author] builds an argument to persuade [his/her] audience that [author's claim]. In your essay, analyze how [the author] uses one or more of the features listed above (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of [his/her] argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage. Your essay should not explain whether you agree with [the author's] claims, but rather explain how the author builds an argument to persuade [his/her] audience.

## **What is the Focus of the New SAT Essay?**

The Essay Portion of the Test will focus on three main areas:

- Reading
- Analysis
- Writing

### **Reading**

Read the passage, do not skim or quickly glance over the material. Reading is evaluated by, comprehension or a complete understanding of the text as well as the central idea of the passage. Therefore, it is very important to show that you understand the passage and the main idea being presented by the author.

### **Analysis**

Once you have read the passage and have a clear understanding of the central theme. Examine the author's writing technique. The main question to ask yourself is: how is the author attempting to persuade or add power to his or her argument? What evidence, language/word choice, reasoning is being provided? Examine the stylistic and persuasive techniques being used by the author to encourage his or her claim (main idea) onto the audience. The techniques you identify and take note of through analysis will be the evidence you use to support your claim.

### **Writing**

Formulate an argument. Make sure you have a clear cohesive thesis (claim/main argument). Support your claim with evidence from the passage (do not use every detail you notice or identify from the passage in your essay). When using supporting evidence (from your analysis) only make use of relevant and strategic support for claim. Show a development of ideas through your paragraphs and your essay (your essay should be building from the paragraph before). Your essay should have all of the basic components of an essay; in its simplest form this is an introduction, body and conclusion. Try to have a skillful introduction and a summarizing conclusion.

## Example of New SAT Essay Prompt

As you read the passage below, consider how Paul Bogard uses

- Evidence, such as facts or examples, to support claims.
- Reasoning to develop ideas and to connect claims and evidence.
- Stylistic or persuasive elements, such as word choice or appeals to emotion, to add power to the ideas expressed.

***Adapted from Paul Bogard, “Let There Be Dark.”***

**©2012 by Los Angeles Times. Originally published December 21, 2012.**

At my family’s cabin on a Minnesota lake, I knew woods so dark that my hands disappeared before my eyes. I knew night skies in which meteors left smoky trails across sugary spreads of stars. But now, when 8 of 10 children born in the United States will never know a sky dark enough for the Milky Way, I worry we are rapidly losing night’s natural darkness before realizing its worth. This winter solstice, as we cheer the days’ gradual movement back toward light, let us also remember the irreplaceable value of darkness.

All life evolved to the steady rhythm of bright days and dark nights. Today, though, when we feel the closeness of nightfall, we reach quickly for a light switch. And too little darkness, meaning too much artificial light at night, spells trouble for all.

Already the World Health Organization classifies working the night shift as a probable human carcinogen, and the American Medical Association has voiced its unanimous support for “light pollution reduction efforts and glare reduction efforts at both the national and state levels.” Our bodies need darkness to produce the hormone melatonin, which keeps certain cancers from developing, and our bodies need darkness for sleep. Sleep disorders have been linked to diabetes, obesity, cardiovascular disease and depression, and recent research suggests one main cause of “short sleep” is “long light.” Whether we work at night or simply take our tablets, notebooks and smartphones to bed, there isn’t a place for this much artificial light in our lives.

The rest of the world depends on darkness as well, including nocturnal and crepuscular species of birds, insects, mammals, fish and reptiles. Some examples are well known—the 400 species of birds that migrate at night in North America, the sea turtles that come ashore to lay their eggs—and some are not, such as the bats that save American farmers billions in pest control and the moths that pollinate 80% of the world’s flora. Ecological light pollution is like the bulldozer of the night, wrecking habitat and disrupting ecosystems several billion years in the making.

Simply put, without darkness, Earth’s ecology would collapse....

In today’s crowded, louder, more fast-paced world, night’s darkness can provide solitude, quiet and stillness, qualities increasingly in short supply. Every religious tradition has considered darkness invaluable for a soulful life, and the chance to witness the universe has inspired artists, philosophers and everyday stargazers since time began. In a world awash with electric light...how would Van Gogh have given the world his “Starry Night”? Who knows what this vision of the

night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?

Yet all over the world, our nights are growing brighter. In the United States and Western Europe, the amount of light in the sky increases an average of about 6% every year. Computer images of the United States at night, based on NASA photographs, show that what was a very dark country as recently as the 1950s is now nearly covered with a blanket of light. Much of this light is wasted energy, which means wasted dollars. Those of us over 35 are perhaps among the last generation to have known truly dark nights. Even the northern lake where I was lucky to spend my summers has seen its darkness diminish.

It doesn't have to be this way. Light pollution is readily within our ability to solve, using new lighting technologies and shielding existing lights. Already, many cities and towns across North America and Europe are changing to LED streetlights, which offer dramatic possibilities for controlling wasted light. Other communities are finding success with simply turning off portions of their public lighting after midnight. Even Paris, the famed "city of light," which already turns off its monument lighting after 1 a.m., will this summer start to require its shops, offices and public buildings to turn off lights after 2 a.m. Though primarily designed to save energy, such reductions in light will also go far in addressing light pollution. But we will never truly address the problem of light pollution until we become aware of the irreplaceable value and beauty of the darkness we are losing.

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Write an essay in which you explain how Paul Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience that natural darkness should be preserved. In your essay, analyze how Bogard uses one or more of the features in the directions that precede the passage (or features of your own choice) to strengthen the logic and persuasiveness of his argument. Be sure that your analysis focuses on the most relevant features of the passage.

Your essay should not explain whether you agree with Bogard's claims, but rather explain how Bogard builds an argument to persuade his audience.

### **Example of Student Essay**

In response to our world's growing reliance on artificial light, writer Paul Bogard argues that natural darkness should be preserved in his article "Let There be dark". He effectively builds his argument by using a personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions.

Bogard starts his article off by recounting a personal story – a summer spent on a Minnesota lake where there was "woods so dark that [his] hands disappeared before [his] eyes." In telling this brief anecdote, Bogard challenges the audience to remember a time where they could fully amass themselves in natural darkness void of artificial light. By drawing in his readers with a personal encounter about night darkness, the author means to establish the potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery that genuine darkness can possess. He builds his argument for the

preservation of natural darkness by reminiscing for his readers a first-hand encounter that proves the “irreplaceable value of darkness.” This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author’s claims.

Bogard’s argument is also furthered by his use of allusion to art – Van Gogh’s “Starry Night” – and modern history – Paris’ reputation as “The City of Light”. By first referencing “Starry Night”, a painting generally considered to be undoubtedly beautiful, Bogard establishes that the natural magnificence of stars in a dark sky is definite. A world absent of excess artificial light could potentially hold the key to a grand, glorious night sky like Van Gogh’s according to the writer. This urges the readers to weigh the disadvantages of our world consumed by unnatural, vapid lighting. Furthermore, Bogard’s alludes to Paris as “the famed ‘city of light’”. He then goes on to state how Paris has taken steps to exercise more sustainable lighting practices. By doing this, Bogard creates a dichotomy between Paris’ traditionally alluded-to name and the reality of what Paris is becoming – no longer “the city of light”, but moreso “the city of light...before 2 AM”. This furthers his line of argumentation because it shows how steps can be and are being taken to preserve natural darkness. It shows that even a city that is literally famous for being constantly lit can practically address light pollution in a manner that preserves the beauty of both the city itself and the universe as a whole.

Finally, Bogard makes subtle yet efficient use of rhetorical questioning to persuade his audience that natural darkness preservation is essential. He asks the readers to consider “what the vision of the night sky might inspire in each of us, in our children or grandchildren?” in a way that brutally plays to each of our emotions. By asking this question, Bogard draws out heartfelt ponderance from his readers about the affecting power of an untainted night sky. This rhetorical question tugs at the readers’ heartstrings; while the reader may have seen an unobscured night skyline before, the possibility that their child or grandchild will never get the chance sways them to see as Bogard sees. This strategy is definitively an appeal to pathos, forcing the audience to directly face an emotionally-charged inquiry that will surely spur some kind of response. By doing this, Bogard develops his argument, adding gutthral power to the idea that the issue of maintaining natural darkness is relevant and multifaceted.

Writing as a reaction to his disappointment that artificial light has largely permeated the prescence of natural darkness, Paul Bogard argues that we must preserve true, unaffected darkness. He builds this claim by making use of a personal anecdote, allusions, and rhetorical questioning.

**This Response scored a 4/4/4 (highest possible score).**

**Reading—4:** This response demonstrates thorough comprehension of the source text through skillful use of paraphrases and direct quotations. The writer briefly summarizes the central idea of Bogard’s piece (natural darkness should be preserved; we must preserve true, unaffected darkness), and presents many details from the text, such as referring to the personal anecdote that opens the passage and citing Bogard’s use of Paris’ reputation as “The City of Light.” There are few long direct quotations from the source text; instead, the response succinctly and accurately captures the entirety of Bogard’s argument in the writer’s own words, and the writer is able to articulate how details in the source text interrelate with Bogard’s central claim. The response is also free of errors of fact or interpretation. Overall, the response demonstrates advanced reading comprehension.

**Analysis—4:** This response offers an insightful analysis of the source text and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task. In analyzing Bogard's use of personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions, the writer is able to explain carefully and thoroughly how Bogard builds his argument over the course of the passage. For example, the writer offers a possible reason for why Bogard chose to open his argument with a personal anecdote, and is also able to describe the overall effect of that choice on his audience (In telling this brief anecdote, Bogard challenges the audience to remember a time where they could fully amass themselves in natural darkness void of artificial light. By drawing in his readers with a personal encounter...the author means to establish the potential for beauty, glamour, and awe-inspiring mystery that genuine darkness can possess.... This anecdote provides a baseline of sorts for readers to find credence with the author's claims). The cogent chain of reasoning indicates an understanding of the overall effect of Bogard's personal narrative both in terms of its function in the passage and how it affects his audience. This type of insightful analysis is evident throughout the response and indicates advanced analytical skill.

**Writing—4:** The response is cohesive and demonstrates highly effective use and command of language. The response contains a precise central claim (He effectively builds his argument by using personal anecdote, allusions to art and history, and rhetorical questions), and the body paragraphs are tightly focused on those three elements of Bogard's text. There is a clear, deliberate progression of ideas within paragraphs and throughout the response. The writer's brief introduction and conclusion are skillfully written and encapsulate the main ideas of Bogard's piece as well as the overall structure of the writer's analysis. There is a consistent use of both precise word choice and well-chosen turns of phrase (the natural magnificence of stars in a dark sky is definite, our world consumed by unnatural, vapid lighting, the affecting power of an untainted night sky). Moreover, the response features a wide variety in sentence structure and many examples of sophisticated sentences (By doing this, Bogard creates a dichotomy between Paris' traditionally alluded-to name and the reality of what Paris is becoming – no longer "the city of light", but moreso "the city of light...before 2AM"). The response demonstrates a strong command of the conventions of written English. Overall, the response exemplifies advanced writing proficiency.

## The New SAT Math

### The Format:

- 25-minute section with 20 questions: all questions are Multiple-Choice.
- 25-minute section with 18 questions: 8 Multiple-Choice and 10 Grid-Ins.
- 20-minute section with 16 questions: all questions are Multiple-Choice.

### What has changed in the new SAT Math exam?

- The test will have 45 multiple choice questions in total, which will each have 4 answer choices. The Old SAT exam had 5 multiple choices. This is also the current format of the ACT.
- It is shorter (ok well...5 minutes shorter...but still)
- The New SAT will now cover some topics in Algebra II which have not been covered in the past. It means, the SAT will be more conceptual.
- Similar to the Old SAT, there will also be Grid-In Questions in the New SAT. 22% of the questions will be student-produced response questions. Instead of choosing a correct answer from a list of options, you'll need to solve problems and enter your answers in the grids provided on the answer sheet.
- The Math test will have a Calculator and a No-Calculator Section, which is NEW to this SAT. The old SAT allowed Calculators for all sections.
- Some parts of the Test will include several questions for a single scenario. We will go in detail on the types of questions in the following sections of the CTP Workbook.

### What is the Focus of the New SAT?

The Math Test will focus in depth on the three areas of math that play the biggest role in a wide range of college majors and careers:

1. Heart of Algebra, which focuses on the mastery of linear equations and systems
2. Problem Solving and Data Analysis
3. Passport to Advanced Math, which features questions that require the manipulation of complex equations.
4. Geometric and Trigonometric Concepts

#### Heart of Algebra

Heart of Algebra will assess students' ability to analyze, fluently solve, and create linear equations and inequalities. You will be asked to:

1. Create, solve, or interpret a linear expression or equation in one variable
2. Create, solve, or interpret linear inequalities in one variable
3. Build a linear function that models a linear relationship between two quantities.
4. Create, solve, and interpret systems of linear inequalities in two variables.
5. Create, solve, and interpret systems of two linear equations in two variables. Algebraically solve linear equations (or inequalities) in one variable.
6. Algebraically solve systems of two linear equations in two variables. The equations will have rational coefficients.

7. Interpret the variables and constants in expressions for linear functions within the context presented.
8. Understand connections between algebraic and graphical representations.

### **Passport to Advanced Math**

Passport to Advanced Math questions include topics that are especially important for students to master before studying advanced math. Chief among these topics is the understanding of the structure of expressions and the ability to analyze, manipulate, and rewrite these expressions. This domain also includes reasoning with more complex equations, and interpreting and building functions.

Passport to Advanced Math questions ask students to:

1. Create a quadratic or exponential function
2. Determine the most suitable form of an expression
3. Create equivalent expressions involving rational exponents
4. Create an equivalent form of an algebraic expression by using structure and fluency with operations.
5. Solve a quadratic equation having rational coefficients. The equation can be presented in a wide range of forms.
6. Add, subtract, and multiply polynomial expressions and simplify the result.
7. Solve an equation in one variable that contains radicals or contains the variable in the denominator of a fraction.
8. Solve a system of one linear equation and one quadratic equation.
9. Rewrite simple rational expressions.
10. Interpret parts of nonlinear expressions in terms of their context.
11. Understand the relationship between zeros and factors of polynomials, and use that knowledge to sketch graphs.
12. Understand a nonlinear relationship between two variables by making connections between their algebraic and graphical representations.

### **Problem Solving and Data Analysis**

The tests require problem solving and data analysis. Problems in this category will require significant quantitative reasoning about ratios, rates, and proportional relationships and will place a premium on understanding and applying unit rate. Students will be expected to identify quantitative measures of center, overall patterns, and any striking deviations from the overall pattern and spread in one or two different data sets. This includes recognizing the effects of outliers on the measures of center of a data set. Many of these problems are set in academic and career contexts and are likely to draw from science and social science.

Problem Solving and Data Analysis questions ask students to:

1. Use ratios, rates, proportional relationships, and scale drawings to solve single- and multistep problems.
2. Problems involving percentages.
3. Problems involving measurement quantities, units, and unit conversion.
4. Given a scatterplot, use linear, quadratic, or exponential models to describe how the variables are related. The student will, given a scatterplot, select the equation of a line or curve of best fit;



5. Use the relationship between two variables to investigate key features of the graph.
6. Compare linear growth with exponential growth.
7. Use two-way tables to summarize categorical data and relative frequencies, and calculate conditional probability.
8. Make inferences about population parameters based on sample data.
9. Use statistics to investigate measures of center of data and analyze shape, center, and
10. Evaluate reports to make inferences, justify conclusions, and determine appropriateness of data collection methods. The reports may consist of tables, graphs, or text summaries.

### **Geometric and Trigonometric Concepts**

1. Solve problems using volume formulas. Any required volume formulas will be provided to students either on the formula sheet or within the question.
2. Use trigonometric ratios and the Pythagorean
3. Add, subtract, multiply, divide, and simplify complex numbers.
4. Convert between degrees and radians and use radians to determine arc lengths; use trigonometric functions of radian measure.
5. Apply theorems about circles to find arc lengths, angle measures, chord lengths, and areas of sectors.
6. Use concepts and theorems about congruence and similarity to solve problems about lines, angles, and triangles.
7. Use the relationship between similarity, right triangles, and trigonometric ratios; use the relationship between sine and cosine of complementary angles.
8. Create or use an equation in two variables to solve a problem about a circle in the coordinate plane.

# Application Forms and Fees

Once you have decided on which schools to apply to and researched on their requirement, the next step is to fill out application forms. An application form is like a formal written request for admittance to a college and is a way a college collects information about you, their applicant, to make an admission decision. Application forms vary from one institution to another. Colleges accept one of two types of forms:

## Shared Forms

These are on line websites with forms that support a wide range of schools. There are two prevalent shared forms that most colleges use:

- The Common Application
- Universal Application

These platforms are designed in a way that collects applicant information that is common to the schools.

## Individual Forms

These are individual, tailored forms that are applicable to only one college.

## The Common Application

The Common Application (common app) is an undergraduate college admissions application that an applicant may use to apply to any of 750-plus member colleges and universities all around the world.

### Navigating through the Common Application

- 1) Go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and create an account using a working email address. Write down your user name and password somewhere safe.
- 2) Familiarize yourself with the common application. The common application has four components namely,
  - Dashboard
  - My colleges
  - Common App
  - College search
- 3) Click on *College search*, and one by one enter the names of the colleges that you plan to apply to, then select the college from result list and then click add, then you could go back to result list and click on criteria to add another school.

**THE COMMON APPLICATION**

Welcome, Lydia!  
First Year | CAID 18707302  
ldyayalew1@gmail.com

Dashboard My Colleges Common App **College Search** Financial Aid Resources

**Criteria**

Criteria Application Requirements

**College or City Name**   
Separate multiple search terms with a comma, e.g.: Washington, Boston

**Country**

**US State**

**Distance from ZIP**   Miles from

**Term** ☐ Fall 2018 ☐ Spring 2018 ☐ Other 2018

**Deadline on or after**

**Application Fee** ☐ No fee for domestic applicants (U.S. Citizens)  
☐ No fee for international applicants (Non-U.S. Citizens)

**Writing Requirements** ☐ Do not require the Common App personal essay  
☐ Do not require additional college-specific essays

**Standardized Test Policy** ☐ Always Required ☐ Sometimes Required  
☐ Never Required ☐ Flexible ☐ Ignored

**Letter of Recommendation** ☐ Required ☐ Not Required

Clear Search

- 4) Once you have added all the colleges on your list, click Dashboard and you will find your colleges with all their deadlines and submission status.

**THE COMMON APPLICATION**

First Year | CAID 18707302  
ldyayalew1@gmail.com

Dashboard **My Colleges** Common App College Search Financial Aid Resources

My Colleges Requirements

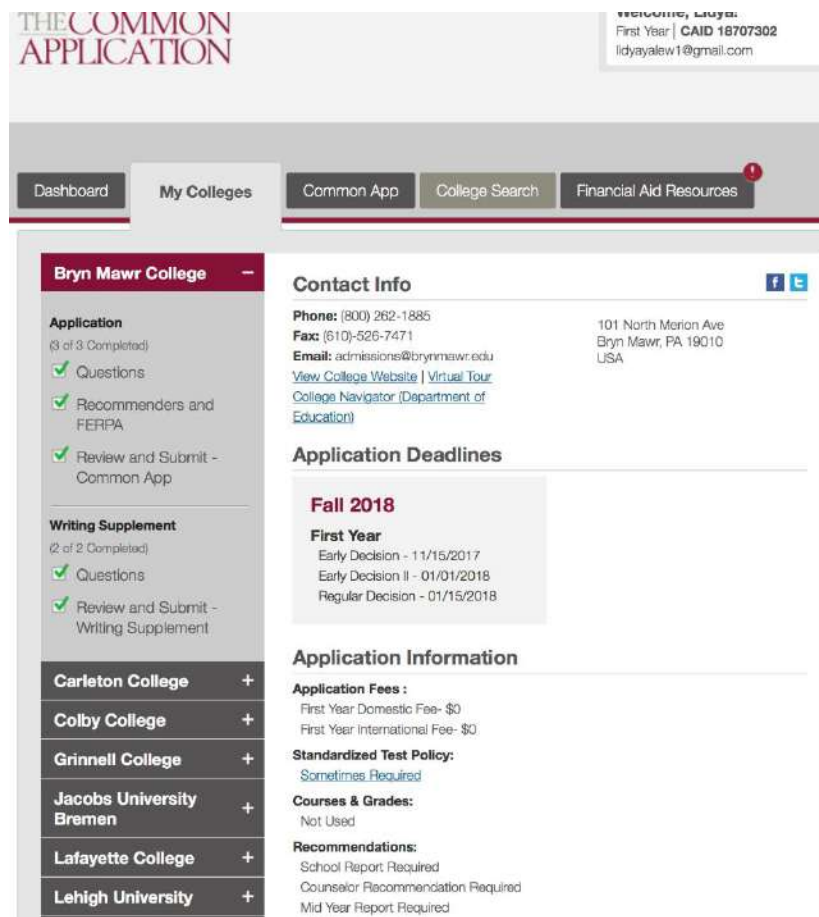
My Colleges (19)	Writing Requirements	Deadline	Application	Writing Supplement	Remove
Bryn Mawr College		01/15/2018			
Carleton College		01/15/2018			
Colby College		01/01/2018			
Grinnell College		01/15/2018			
Jacobs University Bremen		02/01/2018			
Lafayette College		01/15/2018			
Lehigh University		01/01/2018			
Macalester College		01/15/2018			
Middlebury College		01/01/2018			
Mount Holyoke College		01/15/2018			
Skidmore College		01/15/2018			

- 5) The Common App section is pretty straightforward. It has several components such as personal information and writing. Items with red asterisk are required. Fill it up section by section and click continue to proceed. A green check mark means that you are technically done with a sub-section, also this is the section where you enter your common application essay (more on this later).



- 6) Under My colleges you will find the colleges you added via college search, you will see four things under each school:

- *Questions*: college specific information
- *Assign recommenders*: assign teachers you want to recommend you to that specific school
- *Submission*: review and submit the application
- *Writing supplements*: school specific supplemental essays



7) After a careful review, submit the common application for each school.

**Application Review and Submission**

You are ready to Review your application to Northeastern University! Clicking Review and Submit will walk you through the three steps outlined below. If you want to Review your application without submitting, you can do so. Simply click Review and Submit to generate the PDF, and then close the box or click "Back." Either action will return you to this page.

- ➔ Final review of your application\*
- ➔ Application fee payment (if not waived)
- ➔ Signature

***The submission process will not be complete until your signature has been submitted.***

Please be sure to complete all steps of the submission process.

\* Note this college has chosen to not include certain Common Application answers in the PDF they receive for your application. As a result, the following answers will not be displayed in your PDF: SSN.

**Review and Submit**

## Common Application Instructions

The application is divided into different sections which contain several prompts. These sections include Applicant, Future Plans, Demographics and etc. The instructions in this document are divided in accordance with the sections in the common app. There's, in most cases, a description for each question of each section, except in the case it is left out due to its obviousness.

## Applicant

**Legal Name:** Your official legal name is the name that you have on your passport. It should be in the following format. The format is also applicable if you don't have a passport yet.

- First Name – this is the name you are addressed by, not including your Father's name.
- Middle Name – this should be your Father's name.
- Last Name – this should be your Grandfather's name.

***Cultural Note:*** The Ethiopian naming system follows the “Name – Father’s Name – Grandfather’s Name” format. On the other hand, the American naming system follows the “First Name – Middle Name – Last Name”. The First Names in both systems are similar. However, a person’s middle name is not their Father’s name. A person’s Last Name is usually a family name. This means in the American system you, your father and your grandfather all have the same Last Name. The format listed above shows how to translate the American System to the Ethiopian System.

**Preferred Name:** Put in a preferred name if it differs from your legal name. This is optional and usually advisable to leave it blank.

**Former Last name(s):** Fill this in as per your circumstances. This is also optional.

**Birth Date:** This should be the same date on your birth certificate. If you don’t have a birth certificate make sure you fill in a date used in other official documents (like passports, IDs etc.). It should follow the mm/dd/yyyy format. Don’t use dd/mm/yyyy.

Example: Write February 27, 1995 as 02/27/1995

**Gender:** Check either Female or Male.

**US Social Security Number:** Required if you are a US citizen or Permanent Resident but optional for others. Leave this if Ethiopia is the sole country of your citizenship.

**Preferred Telephone:** This should be Home number or a Cell number. Make sure you can be reached by the chosen number. Write the number including the country code. The country code for Ethiopia is +251. Example: +251911000000.

**Email Address:** Your email is the primary source of communication during your college application process. Since it will be seen by your admissions officer it is important that your email be formal and “respectable”.

Examples of proper email addresses: [abebe1997@gmail.com](mailto:abebe1997@gmail.com), [abebech.habtam@gmail.com](mailto:abebech.habtam@gmail.com)

Example of addresses to avoid: [abeberapgod@gmail.com](mailto:abeberapgod@gmail.com), [abebechswaggerrific@yahoo.com](mailto:abebechswaggerrific@yahoo.com)

**IM Address:** This is optional. If you don’t know about it, then you don’t need it.

**Permanent Home Address:** The addressing system in the United States is standardized. US Addresses have a number and a street, a city, a state, and a zip code which uniquely identifies every residential /business location. This address often refers to both the geographic location of a residence as well as the mailbox to deliver messages and packages. Currently such a standardized addressing scheme is not implemented in Ethiopia. However, most urban residences can be generally addressed using their street location. You can use the following format for the address:

Number and Street – P.O. Box, Street Name [and if you are in Addis include a sub city].

Example: P.O. Box 20101, Debrezeit Road, Nefas-Silk Lafto Sub-City

Note that if the P.O. Box is not in your name it's advisable (but not necessary) to prepend a care of to the P.O. Box.

Example: c/o Adaneh Mebratu P.O. Box 20101

Apartment # - Ignore this

City/Town – the City or Town of residence

County or Parish - Ignore this

State/Province – Ignore this if you are in Addis or Dire Dewa. They are independent of any region. Otherwise fill in your region of residence.

Country – Ethiopia

Zip/Postal Code – leave this blank as Zip code doesn't apply to Ethiopian residences

Alternate Mailing Address: As stated above, the permanent address is often the same as the mailing address (the address which receives mail). Sometimes, however, mail is received at an address different from the residential (home) address. You can put in a mailing address if it's different from what you put in for the Permanent Address. If you put in a mailing address, colleges will be sending you mail through that address, otherwise they'll send it through the Permanent Address.

### **Future Plans**

The answers to these questions varies for different colleges. If you are filling the common app online, which is more recommended, you fill the other sections once and the Future Plans section for each college that you apply to.

College Name: the specific college you are filling this section for.

Entry Term: usually people enroll during the Fall term.

Decision Plan: one of the following: Early Decision, Early Action or Regular Decision.

Academic Interests: list subjects, majors, disciplines or any other form of academic interests

Career Interest: a career you find appealing.

*Note:* Academic interests and Career interest listed here are not binding. Meaning colleges will not force you to stay with the choices you indicated above. These questions are here merely to assess your interests.

**Deadline:** the best sources for the deadline is the edu website of the college in question.

**Need-based aid:** You have to tick yes if you want to apply for financial aid.

**Merit-based scholarship:** Tick yes if you intend to apply for merit-based scholarship. This is in addition to your financial aid and provides enhanced financial opportunities.

**Important Note:** *What is referred to as a college scholarship by many people in Ethiopia is actually financial aid. If you hope to attend a college without paying the full price, you must apply for financial aid. The application for financial aid, known as CSS Profile, is separate from the common app (it will be discussed in later sections).*

**Full-time Student:** Must select yes since you are an international student. US Law requires international students to attend college full-time.

**Enroll in a degree program during first year, live in College Housing:** suggested that you choose yes.

**Highest Degree Intended:** this is non-binding as well.

## Demographics

**Citizenship Status:** choose Non-US if you're Ethiopian. Ethiopia must then be listed in the Non-US citizenship(s) list.

**Birthplace:** ignore state for Addis or Dire Dawa. Include it for others.

**Language Proficiency:** List all the languages you speak. Example – Amharic S (**S**peak), R (**R**ead), W (**W**rite), F (**F**irst Language), H (Spoken at **H**ome), English S, R, W...

**Optional:** This part includes questions whose answers are used only for admissions statistics and does not affect their admissions decisions. They are about religious and ethnic background. They are optional.



## Family

The answers to most of the questions in these sections depends on your circumstances. Nonetheless, you must indicate at least one guardian, whether they are a parent or non-parent. The following is a list of explanations on some of the less apparent questions.

Name: same format as your name.

Occupation: the type of work the parent /guardian is generally involved in. Example: Like Engineer, Accountant etc. On the online form this is selected from a list.

CEEB: college Board registration number for the school / University. Only a few schools and universities in Ethiopia are registered for the College Board and thus for most schools their CEEB defaults to 0000.

Siblings: Enter information about all your siblings.

## Education

Most Recent School: This should be the high school that you are currently attending, if you are still in high school, or graduated from, if you are already in college.

School type: choose the organizational structure that best defines your school. Note that currently there are no chartered schools in Ethiopia.

Address: put in your school's mailing address in the format described above.

CEEB Code: put 0000 if your high school is not registered with College Board. Use your high school's CEEB if it has one. The online form has a search school feature that enables you to find your school if it's registered or enter it directly if it's not.

Counselor's Name: This is the name of a school official who will act as your advisor. This person must fill and sign forms like the school report and send out recommendation letters.

Counselor's Title: The name title that your counselor is addressed by. Unless your counselor has an officially recognized title like Dr. use Mr. for male and Ms. for female.

Counselor's Fax: can be ignored if your counselor doesn't have a fax.

List of other Secondary Schools: use this to list high schools (Grades 9 – 12) other than the most recent school that you have attended.

College and Universities: List all the college courses you have taken here. Generally, in

Ethiopia you have to be enrolled in colleges (university) to take college level courses.

## Academics

The information you type here must closely match the official records your school keeps. That is, it should match your transcript. Inflating your grades or rank contrary to what is on your transcript could be regarded as fraud and may result in your application being terminated.

**Grades:** These include class rank and GPA (grade point average). While most Ethiopian schools use average points instead of GPAs, the transcript often provides a way to convert the average to a GPA. GPA scale is the maximum GPA possible. Usually this is a 4.0. Consult your school's office for the precise details.

**Weighted vs. non-weighted:** In most Ethiopian schools, each class contributes equally to your final average and in consequence to your class rank and GPA. If you attend such a school your GPA and Class Rank are not weighted. However, in some schools more difficult classes contribute in greater proportion to the final average. This is similar to university credit hours, where the courses with the higher credit has a significant effect on your average. If you attend such a school system your GPA and class rank are weighted.

**Exams:** Use this space to list all the ACT, SAT, TOEFL, AP, IB, and SAT Subject tests that you have taken with their respective dates and the best scores. From the exams listed above, Ethiopian applicants more commonly take SAT, TOEFL, and SAT Subject Tests.

**Note:** *Colleges will still require that you send an official score report from the testing agency (College Board, ETS and others). Make sure the grades you list here match your official score report.*

**Current Courses:** This is where you enter the classes that you are taking during the year of application. For all schools in Ethiopia, excepting international schools, students take the same classes throughout the year regardless of whether the school year is divided into a quarter, trimester, or semester. There are other school system in which if you take a subject (course) during your first semester (trimester) you may not necessarily take it the next one. This is similar to how universities students take different courses every semester.

**Full Year/ First Semester/ First Trimester:** List the subjects you take the whole year or during the first semester /trimester. If you have a quarter system, two quarters are considered a semester. If you're taking the Ministry of Education's curriculum, as most

schools are required, you only need to list your classes in this column and leave the next two sections empty.

*Second Semester / Second Trimester:* List classes you took during second semester / trimester. If you follow the Ethiopian curriculum leaves this part blank.

*Third Trimester:* If your school follows a trimester system, list courses you took during the third trimester here. Leave this blank if you follow the Ethiopian curriculum.

*Honors:* List any awards or certificates you have received at your school level, regional level, national level or international level. If you have received a prestigious award at a national or international level your college may request you to send a copy of your certificate. Otherwise don't send colleges any certificates of honor if they don't explicitly request it.

## Extracurricular Activities and Work Experience

This is where you describe your non-academic achievements both in your school and outside your school. These include any non-academic activities like music, dance, arts and sports, school club activities, activities in organizations outside your school and work experience. Organizations outside your school can be any of the following: non-profit, governmental, religious or political. You can include any non-academic activity or personal pursuit you think represents your values and can strengthen your application. You can't include, however, language classes and school classes. Additionally, things like having lunch with your friends don't count as extra-curricular activities.

### **Note:**

- ❖ If you haven't actively participated in extra-curricular activities, it is never late to start now.
- ❖ It is often advisable to invest a large amount of your time on a few activities you are passionate about than to have superficial participation in a large number of activities.

Each extra-curricular activity has the following format on the common app:

- ✓ *Grade Level:* Check all the grades when you were part of the activity or work experience.
- ✓ *Approximate Time Spent:* List approximate hours/per week and weeks/per year you participated in the activity. Also indicate if the activity is done during the school year or during summer break. Some activities may take place during both

times of the year.

- ✓ *Positions Held, honors won, letters earned or employer:* List any offices or positions held for this activity if you are participating in a school club or other organization. Also list any of your accomplishments including honors won, letters earned and certificates received. If this activity is a work experience include your employer's name and organization.
- ✓ *Participate in College:* You can indicate here whether you want to pursue this activity if it's available to you in college. This again is also non-binding and you are not required to pursue the activities indicated here while you are in college.

## Ask Yourself



With the advent of “holistic admissions” - an admissions technique that assesses each applicant based on their qualities that are more than just their grades - there is a significant attention given to extracurricular activities in evaluating college applicants. The “Activities” section in The Common Application is where applicants get a chance to present their extracurricular experiences. It is generally good to give this section a lot of thought before reporting your activities.

And on that note, this week's questions are:

- Did you decide on which ten (or less) activities to report on the Common Application?

- When you decided on which activities to report, did you make sure you had a good balance between activities in the school and outside of school?

### *Painting your picture*

- Have you written down your activities on a piece of paper separate from the form, with all the information you have on them, and read it and liked what it told about you?
- Do the activities you picked portray you as an ideal student for the college?
- Have you decided whether you want to appear well-rounded or focused and picked your activities accordingly?

### *Activity organization on the Common Application*

- Did you put the activity you've dedicated the most time and energy to, or are most passionate about, at the top? Did you organize the rest of your list the same way? (most important to least)
- Did you know that it is better to focus on depth (commitment and contribution) than it is to focus on breadth (variety)?
- Did you know that more than one activity can be listed down under the same "Activity Type"?
- Have you looked at the whole "Activity Type" list and decided where each of your activities fit?
- Do you know exactly what your role was in each of your activities? Have you given names to your roles?
- Did you know that most colleges would rather not have you send them additional materials on your activities? (i.e. certificates, etc...)

### *Through the eyes of others*

- Have you made someone else, a friend or teacher or parent, look at it and asked them what they think?
- Does your activities list make sense in relation to the rest of your application? (what your essay, teacher recommendation, grades say about you)

### *Looking at example applications*

- Did you look at Common Application activities report samples online?

### *Particulars on your activities*

- Do you know what establishment (school club, company, project, etc...) your activity was under?
- Have you exhausted the list of things you did and distinctions you got as part of that activity?
- Can you eloquently describe the activity?
- Have you calculated how many hours per week, and how many weeks per hour

- you devoted to the activity?
- Did you know that you can use abbreviations when filling out the form? (Like stdt. for student, govt. for government, etc...)
- Did you know that if there is information about your activities that you can't fit in the activities section, you can write it down as "Additional Information" in the "Writing" section of the common app?
- Did you know that you don't have to choose "yes" when asked if you want to participate in similar activity in college?

*Did you know that your activities report is very, very important?*

**Mentors' Wise Words:** *"Don't try to exaggerate, or use fancy words to make simple activities look better. That will work against you. Instead, try to find the activities you did the most on and fit in better with the personality you're trying to portray in your application. Try to explain them concisely, leaving no information out. It's fine if you haven't won awards for all of your activities, or had leadership positions in them, as long as you've made meaningful contributions. However, if you have activities you've made impressive leaps in, be sure to include them (standing out never hurt)."*

## Writing

The writing section of the common app, which has become synonymous with the college essay, is one of the most important components of the college application process. This section provides you an avenue to express yourself in your own words based on the Essay prompts that are provided. College admission officers use this section to gauge your personality and how well you'll fit into their respective colleges. Therefore, it cannot be stressed enough that you start writing your college essay months ahead of your deadline.

*Some technical things to Note:*

- Your essay must be between 250 – 650 words long. The online system will not allow you to submit essays less than 250 words long. And for essays greater than 650 words, the extra words are clipped.
- You are not required to have exactly 650 words. Do not drag your essay unnecessarily. It should have as many words as is natural to express your story; not much or less.
- Your essay is sent to all the colleges you apply to. In General, you are not allowed to customize your essay for each college.
- Your essay should be your own work. Plagiarizing other people's work in full or in part will result in your rejection from the colleges you are applying to.
- If you use someone else's speech or expressions, be sure to quote them appropriately. For instance, if you use Einstein's speech, you must indicate that

you are using Einstein's speech. Presenting other people's speech or expressions as your own is regarded as Plagiarism

*Things to be aware of while writing the Essay:*

- Be sure to stay within the bound of your chosen topic.
- "Show, don't tell". Your essay is not a platform for listing your curricular and extracurricular achievements.

However, you can express some of your extracurricular and academic passions in a way that naturally fits into the essay. You should enable the reader to grasp your passion for the activity using stories, senses, feelings, and imagery as opposed to summarizing and saying "I am interested in X."

- Keep in mind the cultural differences. Some things we consider to be rude behavior or inappropriate in our culture maybe irrelevant or even promoted in other cultures and vice versa. For instance, American culture values individualism and challenging authority, the latter of which is sometimes frowned upon in Ethiopian cultures. Having instances of challenging authority in your essay will not only be acceptable but also positively viewed (in fact this is one the essay prompts). However, blatant disrespect of authority figures like your parents, teachers and community leaders is universally considered to be ill-mannered.

*While you are allowed to freely express yourself on your essay, you must avoid any views that devalue other people based on their gender, religion, ethnic identity, national identity, socio-economic status, political identity, sexual orientation and etc. In lieu of the above, avoid essays with religious and/or political themes.*

- While you are allowed to express your beliefs, be it religious or political, notwithstanding the above point, an essay that chooses to focus on such issues cannot adequately represent you as a complex and multifaceted person. Additionally, such essays often lead to endless rhetoric than only serves to damage your chances of getting accepted into a college.

## Signature

This is the last section of the common app. Check everything thoroughly before signing and submitting your application.

**Application Fee Payment:** Most colleges charge application fees of \$75 or more. There is the possibility of avoiding this fee if your counselor or school writes a few waivers, a letter stating that you cannot afford to pay the application fees. If you do select the fee waiver option, you must send your fee waiver with the other documents (see the part on

recommendations and transcripts).

**Required Signature:** Check all the boxes and write your full name (including Grandfather's name) on the space provided. After signing, you can send this part of the application to the respective colleges. Then you still need to send the Writing Supplement, transcripts, recommendation letters, school reports, mid-year reports, Final-report and fee- waiver (if you didn't pay the application fees).

## Writing Supplement

The common application that you filled above is identical to all the colleges you apply to. They will all receive the same application, and hence the name common app. Most schools however choose to ask you some school specific questions. The type and number of these questions differs from school to school, but generally you are asked to fill more forms, and write additional short essays. The deadline to submit the writing supplement is the same as that of the common app. If you face problems filling the supplement you can often find the solutions on the college's edu website. You can also directly email admissions officers.

## Supporting Documents

Supporting documents can be sent by either mail or uploaded online. Uploading is much cheaper and faster. If you are sending your documents by mail, you can send your recommendation letters, transcripts, and fee-waiver in the same envelope.

## Recommendation Letters

Your counselor must write you a general recommendation letter. Additionally, you should ask two teachers, preferably Math and English Teachers, to also write you a recommendation. These recommendation letters should be signed. The deadline for sending the letters is on the same day as when the common app is due. Therefore, you should ask your teachers and counselor as early as possible.



## School Report, Mid-Year Report and Final Report

The School Report should be filled in consultation with your counselor. It is due during the same time as your common app, so you should ask your counselor to fill it for you as early as possible. The following shows how to complete each part of the report:

### **Student part:**

Name, Gender, Birthdate: must be the same as in the common app

Common App Id: This is assigned to you when you sign up at commonapp.org

Address, School, CEEB Code, and Current Courses: must be the same as in the common app.

### **Counselor Part:**

Name and Information: Make sure it is similar to the counselor's name and info you filled in the common app.

Background Information: See the details of weighted and non-weighted in the instructions for the Academics section of the common app.

Once you have sent the common app, writing supplement, supporting documentation and School report, you have officially applied to the college. You can then proceed to filling financial aid forms. The most common form is the CSS Profile.

Mid-Year Report: This has the same format as the School report and is used by the admissions officers to follow up on you after your application has been submitted. You are required to send a mid-year report to all the schools which you have applied whether you are regular or early decision. This report is due after your first semester grades are available.

Final Report: This also has the same format as the School report and is sent to the college in which you have been accepted and enrolled. It is used by admissions officers to check that you have been attending your regular classes after receiving your acceptance. The Final Report has to be submitted as soon as your last grades are released by your school.

## Waiving the Common Application Fee

Each college will have its own application fee, mostly around \$75. You can get this fee waived by indicating so in your application. In turn, you will be required to have your counselor confirm that you are unable to pay this amount. Your counselor can do this on his/her recommender account or by mailing the college a letter verifying your statement.

## More on Essays

When you apply to college, you'll need to complete an essay as part of your application. This is your opportunity to show admission officers who you are and to provide information about yourself that didn't fit in other areas of your application. The essay also reveals what you can do when you have time to think and work on a writing project.

The number one piece of advice from admission officers about your essay is "Be yourself." The number two suggestion is "Start early." Check out these other tips before you begin.

### Choose a Topic That Will Highlight You

- ✓ Don't focus on the great aspects of a particular college, the amount of dedication it takes to be a doctor or the number of extracurricular activities you took part in during high school.
- ✓ Do share your personal story and thoughts, take a creative approach and highlight areas that aren't covered in other parts of the application, like your high school records.
- ✓ Keep Your Focus Narrow and Personal
- ✓ Don't try to cover too many topics. This will make the essay sound like a résumé that doesn't provide any details about you.
- ✓ Do focus on one aspect of yourself so the readers can learn more about who you are. Remember that the readers must be able to find your main idea and follow it from beginning to end. Ask a parent or teacher to read just your introduction and tell you what he or she thinks your essay is about.
- ✓ Show, Don't Tell: Don't simply state a fact to get an idea across, such as "I like to surround myself with people with a variety of backgrounds and interests."

Do include specific detail, examples, reasons and so on to develop your ideas. For the example above, describe a situation when you were surrounded by various types of people. What were you doing? Whom did you talk with?

- ✓ Use your own voice: Don't rely on phrases or ideas that people have used many times before. These could include statements like, "There's so much suffering in the world that I feel I have to help people." Avoid overly formal or business-like language, and don't use unnecessary words.

To reiterate, it is important that you write in your own voice. For the above example, you could write about a real experience that you had and how it made you feel you had to take action. And note that admission officers will be able to tell if your essay was edited by an adult.

### Make it a Habit to Proofread Your Essays

- ✓ *Ask a teacher, a friend, or a parent to proofread*: Don't turn your essay in without proofreading it and don't rely only on your computer's spell check to catch mistakes. A spell-check program will miss typos as these:

"After I graduate from high school, I plan to get a summer job."

Do not just ask the person proofreading your essay to catch mistakes. You should also ask if the writing sounds like you.

### Ask Yourself



One of the most important parts of the college application process is your college application essay. The college application essay is where applicants get to speak “in their own voices”. Your essay is your chance to stand out as a thinking, breathing human individual with thoughts, feelings, and relatable ambition and qualities. Here is where you get to have your say and indirectly argue for a spot at the college you’re applying to. You should place the utmost importance on it and be well on your way to be done with your essay by this time. Here are some questions to make sure you haven’t made any faux pas in writing your essay:

### Prepping for the essay:

- ☐ Have you read as many actual and sample college essay as you can, just to make sure you know what is generally expected of any essay?
- ☐ Have you tried to read college essays of students accepted to colleges you’re applying to?
- ☐ Have you sought out resources (online or otherwise) on how to write college essays as much as you can?
- ☐ Did you write a list of qualities you want your essay to reflect before you started your essay?
- ☐ Did you outline your essay, clearly determining what new thing your essay will add to your application?
- ☐ Did you research the colleges you’re applying to well and know that your essay content is relevant and valuable to the schools?
- ☐ Are you sure about your essay topic, do you really mean what you wrote?
- ☐ Have you made sure your essay does not go over the 650 word-limit?
- ☐ Do you know that you don’t have to write exactly 650 words, if you’ve made your point well?
- ☐ Is your essay proofread for grammatical and spelling errors many, many times?

### Writing style:

- Does your essay have coherence, and does it go from one part to another with logical flow?
- Have you made sure your essay is not superficial, but has a point, or points, it carries throughout?
- Have you made sure your essay is not confusing to read?
- Have you made sure your essay doesn’t contain unnecessary complicated

sentence structures, or complex vocabulary?

- Did you read your essay and make sure that it is representative of the qualities that you intended? (You might want your essay to show your open-mindedness, or playfulness, for example)

### Honesty:

- Have you made sure your essay is not boastful, or clearly exalting yourself?
- Have you made sure your essay goes for clarity and isn't an obscure attempt to sound smart?
- Have you made sure your essay in no way portrays you as vain, conceited or ignorant?
- In writing your essay, have you made sure you were honest about weaknesses you have, if you mention weaknesses, and have you shown that you are working on them?
- Have you made sure your essay doesn't violate important college ideals like intellectuality, open-mindedness, tolerance, collaboratively, etc...?

### What a Common App essay should reflect:

- Have you made sure that your essay contains elements from your life that didn't have a place elsewhere in your application but are an integral part of your character?
- Have you made sure you don't list your merits and accomplishments in your essay, but rather try to show your commendable character through your experiences and your impressions of them?

### Seeking opinions:

- Have you asked other people to read your essay and asked them what they think the essay communicated about you?
- Have you asked other people what they think the essay fails to mention about you?
- Do you know that your essay can't satisfy everyone and the only person you should go for fully satisfying with is yourself?

### Every word counts:

- ❖ Have you made sure your essay doesn't contain irrelevant details or place fillers?
- ❖ Have you made sure your essay doesn't contain details that can be determined from other parts of your application?
- ❖ Have you made sure your essay doesn't sound like a general description of your

life, but tackles specifically an important aspect of it?

### The real you:

- ☐ Have you made sure you are the main topic of your essay, and not another character you are talking about, like a parent or friend or teacher, etc...?
- ☐ Is your essay something you truly want to present to someone who decides whether or not to give you admission? Are you confident with your essay?
- ☐ If your essay contains an idea or concept or predisposition you have, is it clearly explained and reasoned out?

### Creativity matters:

- Do you know that it is okay to take risks with your essay and explore novel writing styles, as long as your essay delivers valuable information and offends no one or misrepresents you?
- If you're telling a story in your essay, which is recommended, is it vivid and does it allow the reader to completely picture and understand the situation as well as what it meant for you?
- Have you made sure that whatever you mention in your essay as something that has shaped you has been explained well and leaves no doubt for the reader as to how it shaped you?
- Does your essay begin in an attention captivating way?
- Have you made sure that your essay is not boring, but written in an interesting way and contains valuable information about yourself as an applicant?
- Have you made sure your essay is representative of your individual voice, in terms of style, tone, diction and content?
- Have you made sure that your essay is not attempting to be emotionally moving, or funny or shocking, but a forthright account of how you view yourself, and who you are as a person?
- Does your essay clearly distinguish you as an individual, and portray character traits that are unique to yourself?

**Mentors' Wise Words:** "Your college essay is about you. While trying not to sound egocentric, make sure your essay's primary objective is to talk about you. You can write about the simplest things for a topic, as long as you extrapolate and use it as a tool to describe yourself well and make sure the reader gets to know you through your essay. Stay away from big words as much as possible, and don't give the reader a hard time understanding your essay. Go for simplicity. When you choose a topic, make sure it is something you can use to say as much as possible about you. Sometimes, your essay can be beautiful but not say much about you. Make sure you actually say something in your essay. Always ask for feedback, a lot more from peers and people who've already gone through college essay writing. Help is important."

## More on Recommendations

### Teacher Recommendations

#### *Selecting Teachers*

Here are the things you need to consider when deciding which teachers you want to write you a recommendation.

- *Student-Teacher Relationship*

The relationship you have with your teacher is an important thing to consider when selecting recommenders. It's important to not pick a teacher just because you do well in his/her class. Instead, try to find teachers with whom you have a good personal relationship. Does he/she know my qualities and shortcomings? Can he/she say something about me that no other teacher can?

- *Context*

Another thing to consider is the context your teacher knows you in. It is usually advised to have teachers that have worked with you outside of class write you recommendations. This could be in school projects, school clubs, etc... Your recommendation will have more depth if your teacher can testify to your credentials beyond what you offer in class.

- *Subject*

What subject do you want to demonstrate your affinity and enthusiasm for? This is a college specific question to consider. You'll want to shed light on your relationship with certain subjects through your teachers. For example, if you have your eye set on a liberal arts program, you need to assert your academic versatility by providing recommendations from teachers of both the humanities and the sciences. On the other hand, if you want to join, say, an institute of technology, you'd want to provide in-depth information on your analytical and computing abilities – recommendations from a math teacher and a science teacher would be wise.

### Asking for and Getting a Recommendation

Teacher recommendations are submitted either by mail or online. If you apply using The Common Application, then your teachers will also use that website to recommend you.

#### ***Recommendation by Mail***

- This is usually for colleges that prefer to use their own application forms, i.e. one that is different from The Common Application. Teachers fill out a paper form (if

the college requires one), attach a recommendation letter, and mail it to the admissions office.

### ***Online Recommendation***

- If the school provides its own online application, then there might be a platform for teachers to also submit their forms online. For the Common Application, there is a space for Teachers to submit their recommendations.

For a teacher to submit a recommendation using the common application, he/she has to do the following

#### ***I. Create A Recommenders' Account***

For a teacher to recommend you using The Common Application, he/she needs a working email address. You will invite your teacher to recommend using this email address. Your teacher then gets an email with instructions on how to create a Common Application Recommenders Account.

#### ***II. Fill out the Teacher Profile***

This collects information of the teacher's personal details as well as the school details.

#### ***III. Recommend the Student***

The Teacher evaluation includes two parts: Rating and Written Evaluation. In Ratings, the teacher rates the student on different qualities. The Written Evaluation Section is where the teacher submits his/her written recommendation letter as well as information on some specific questions.

### ***Counselor Recommendation***

Your counselor should by definition be an official that is specially assigned to help students with college applications. If you do not have one of these, you can assign your guidance counselor, school principal/director or a school official as a counselor. In some rare cases, a teacher can be a counselor as well.

Your counselor provides an evaluation of your academic proficiency, personal character and over-all potential activity. A counselor recommendation typically contains information on your academic rating in school, your extracurricular achievements, and your personal and social qualities.

The counselor recommendation submission process is quite similar to the teacher recommendation submission process. The counselor will create a Common Application Recommender's Account after you assign him/her. Through his/her account, your counselor will:

- Fill out a Profile
- Provide a School Report (Class Rank, GPA, Transcripts, Evaluation, etc...)



- Confirm Decision Plan Agreements and Fee Waiver Eligibility
- Provide Mid-Year and Final Reports.

### ***Other Recommendation***

This recommendation is completely optional. It is usually submitted if you think there is an individual who can make a valuable addition to your application. It could be an additional teacher, an employer, a project leader, a coach, etc... Supplemental recommenders can be assigned and submit their recommendations in the same way as teachers and counselors.

## **Ask Yourself**



The recommendations are a part of the application process where admission officers hear from the people who academically and professionally interact with you. Coupled with your essay, it adds to the human voices that are communicating your character and drive to the college. Usually colleges ask for two teacher recommendations (with the option of one more) and one recommendation from your counselor. You also have the option of submitting a supplemental recommendation. Recommendations are a great way for the people you've made an impression on in school and out of to vouch for you, so pay good attention to it.

*Here are this week's questions:*

- Did you know that recommendations could be a great way to supplement relatively weaker grades or test scores?
- Did you know that in a highly competitive pool, a well-written recommendation could highlight an outstanding applicant's impressive character beyond his/her self-advocacy?
- Did you know that your recommendations really matter because they're firsthand accounts from your school on how well you function in a learning environment?
- Did you know that the Common Application lets your teachers and counselor create a separate account to submit their recommendations?
- Did you know that your teachers and counselor need email addresses, and that you need to invite them to the Common Application using their email addresses?
- Did you know that, typically, recommendations come in both written evaluation and rating form?
- Did you know that waiving your right to see your teachers' and/or counselor's recommendations gives your application more credibility?
- Did you know that your recommenders should be well familiar with your college application status, interests and the process?
- Did you know that it's important to pick your teachers and counselors in a way that ensures maximum consistency with your application?

*Teacher Recommendations*

- Did you know that it's most ideal for you to ask for recommendation letters at the end of junior year and then follow up at the beginning of senior year?
- Have you made sure to choose a teacher that have likely seen you perform in a higher-level course and preferably have taught you over several years?
- Have you chosen a teacher that knows you in multiple settings? (for example, an English teacher who also runs the school newspaper you write for, or that is also a moderator for a school club you devote your time to)
- Have you chosen a teacher who is relevant to your academic goals and the school you are applying to? (Science and Math teachers for engineering school, Humanities and Social science teachers for Liberal Arts schools?)
- Have you made sure that, in picking your teachers, you've made sure your recommendations provide as much non-redundant information as possible?
- Have you read the requirements for recommendations for each college (some colleges require recommendations from teachers who teach specific subjects, like Math, etc...)?
- Have you provided your teachers with information about yourself to allow them to write effective recommendations that say as much as possible about you? (Information might include a resume/a completed student information form, an

interaction sheet which describes past interactions with the teacher's class, assignment samples, a brief synopsis of your goals and interests, list of colleges you will be applying to, samples of recommendations etc....)

- Have you provided your teacher with instructions on submission of the recommendation?

### *Counselor Recommendation*

- Did you know that compared to teacher recommendations, counselor recommendations should give a broader picture of you as a student?
- Did you know that your counselor recommendation should primarily shed light in your status as a student relative to your class, grade, school and general context's standards?
- Did you know that if you have any special circumstances, whether they're notable experiences or talents, your counselor is the best person to report on them?
- Did you know that the counselor you request a recommendation from is the same counselor you reported earlier in your Common Application form?
- Did you know that counselor recommendations should be longer than your teacher recommendation?
- Did you know that if you have aspects of your application that reflect badly on you and could be made better through your explanation, your counselor is the best person to do this?

***Mentors' Wise Words:*** “Talk to your teachers and counselor, make them intimate with your college application process, it's important that they understand what you envision, and what is going on in the other parts of your application. It is a good idea to go with a few sample recommendations to your teachers and counselor, just so they know the expected format. Recommendations should be detailed and informative, not general praises of your character. How do you learn? What environments do you thrive in? How well do you collaborate? How well do you improvise, lead, etc...? Always keep in mind that information from this part of your application is very credible to colleges.”

# College Admission Interviews

## *Why interview?*

- ✓ To put a face to your application
- ✓ Can be a deciding factor if you are on the border of being admitted
- ✓ Gives you a better sense of a college

## Before your interview:

- ✓ Make an appointment
- ✓ Learn what type of interview to expect – admission interview vs alumni
- ✓ Research the college by going through their website and brochures: what do you like about the school? – What about this particular school matches with you?
- ✓ Make a few notes about your self
  - What are your extracurricular activities?
  - Significant Experiences?
  - Test scores?
- ✓ Prepare questions you can ask the interviewer about the college if given a chance?
- ✓ Wear appropriate outfit!!!

## During the interview:

- BE ON TIME!
- Be outgoing, confident and honest
- Maintain good posture and body language
- Discuss academic background as well as life outside of the classroom.
- ASK QUESTIONS, this shows that you are interested in their college.
- Be sure to thank them in the end.

## What types of questions to expect?

It really depends on the interviewer; some are straightforward while others are not. Whoever the interviewer, you should make sure you can answer some of these basic questions that are bound to come up.

- Why do you want to attend our college?
- What can you contribute to the campus community?
- Tell me about yourself – strengths and weakness?

- Other possible questions
- Describe yourself in three words and explain why you chose those words.
- What courses have you enjoyed most?
- Which of your activities is the most rewarding and why?
- Are your grades an accurate reflection of your potential?
- What has been your biggest achievement?
- How did you spend last summer?
- What do you want to do after you graduate from college?
- May be asked your opinion on a current event.

## Supplemental Essays

We covered the Common Application Essay, a personal statement that most schools on the Common App require. In addition to this essay though, many colleges include their own school-specific essays, known as **writing supplements**. These are shorter essays or responses applicants provide based on prompts provided by the respective schools. Some common prompts are “Why our school?”, and “Explain a hobby”. Supplemental essays give admissions officers the chance to get additional information about students, and gauge their interest and fit for the school on a deeper level.

### Ask Yourself



- Did you know that some supplemental essay questions are optional?
- Did you know that writing supplemental essays, optional or otherwise, helps you express yourself better as an applicant?
- Have you done your research very well in preparation for the supplemental essays? Do you know the colleges inside out?
- Have you tried to find out things about the colleges more than what the websites have to offer? (Like student blogs, YouTube videos, testimonies from students you're in contact with, etc...)
- Did you know that since colleges have their own supplemental prompts, you should tailor your essays to the specific schools?
- Did you know that the common "Why this college?" essay prompt is testing your knowledge of the school and how you and the school would fit together?
- Did you know that talking about how much you love the school and are dedicated to it is not enough, but that you must show reasoning and support your regard for the school? That you must explain which aspects of the school speak to you and why?
- Did you know that for these types of essays, mentioning specific information, like course names, professors, or particular traditions, works greatly in your favor?
- Have you made sure that your "why this college" essay is not just a demonstration of how much you know about the school, but an honest argument for why you think you're a fit for the school?
- Did you know that one good way to do this is to highlight your goals/aspirations in life and explain, in detail, how that college would help you realize those goals?
- Did you know that mentioning how you come to know about/consider the school works in your favor?
- Did you know that supplemental essays are your chance to demonstrate your in-depth knowledge of the colleges? (The academics, the traditions, the locations, etc...)
- Did you know that some supplemental questions do not ask for essays? (Might be lists, paragraphs, etc...)
- Did you know that supplemental essays are a good chance to provide information your Common Application essay couldn't deliver?
- Did you know that some colleges have 'quirky' supplemental prompts and require you to show creativity and a different way of thinking?
- Did you know that supplemental prompts that ask you to talk about books or hobbies seek more than just what you read/do, but also why and what it means to you?
- Did you know that making your supplemental responses as meaningful as possible is to your advantage, because those responses are unique to that one college?
- Have you made sure that you avoided vagueness as much as possible and instead strived for clarity and detail?

- ✓ Have you made sure your essays/responses don't go over the limit?
- ✓ Have you made sure that your tone doesn't come off as arrogant but humble and honest?
- ✓ Did you make sure your essays are personal, unique to you and your experiences/opinions, and could only have been written by you? (Avoid writing responses anyone can write)
- ✓ Have you made sure you read sample responses by people who've been accepted to the same school?
- ✓ Have you exhausted the internet resources available telling you how to approach the supplemental questions for each school?
- ✓ Have you made sure your understanding of the vibe, values and strengths of the school is demonstrated in all your responses?

**Mentors' Wise Words:** *"The wisest things you can do for supplemental questions is to read other people's answers as much as you can and research the school as much you can. Be careful not to make it sound like you're trying too hard to build a connection between the school and yourself. Express your thoughts in simple, direct language to submit something that is smart and sincere. Don't try just to impress, but try to express yourself as best as possible, and show yourself as an individual that will both benefit from the college and be a valuable part of it."*

# Finances



## What is Financial Aid?

The average annual cost of tuition and fees at a US college education is above \$32,000. This price tag is impossible or at least strenuous to cover for many families. Through financial aid, however, many students who, without financial aid, could not pursue a US degree end up in institutions of their choice.

Financial aid is a term that encompasses all types of aid- directly received from a university-that goes towards financing your education. This includes grants, scholarships and loans. Some universities might cover your entire costs of attendance, some only partially, and others, not at all. Financial aid is comparatively hard to come by for non- US citizens. In fact, most schools in the US don't offer any financial aid to international students. It is therefore essential to keep the financial facts of your preferred universities during the application process. This chapter will introduce you to understanding financial aid, finding schools that have financial aid, and applying for financial aid.

### *Types of financial aid*

Financial aid often comes in three flavors: need based financial aid, merit based financial aid, and loans. Top ranked schools in the US often have need based financial aid only, while other schools tend to offer merit based or a combination of the two.

#### *Merit Based Financial Aid*

This kind of financial aid is offered to you based on your GPA or other merits that you have. Different schools have their own type of merit based awards. However, most times, merit based financial awards only partly cover your cost of attendance. At most universities that offer merit based financial assistance, you are automatically considered for a merit based award when you

apply. However, some schools have scholarships that you have to find out about yourself. Again, it's important to thoroughly schools' financial aid pages while applying.

#### *Need based financial aid*

This kind of financial aid is offered based on the universities estimates of your need. That is, the university, with the help of documents you provide such as employer letters, bank statements, determines how much you can afford to pay and offers a certain amount of money to augment your efforts to pay.

**Full demonstrated need:** Some schools promise that once you are accepted, they will meet your full demonstrated need. This means that they will determine how much you can afford to pay, and cover the rest of the cost of attendance.

**Need blind vs need aware:** Most schools are need aware; that is, they consider your financial eligibility while determining whether you are accepted or not. Ultimately, universities are for-profit institutions, and their primary purpose is to make money, not accept the best students. However, a smaller section of universities that offer need based financial aid claim to be need blind, which means your finances do not at all factor into your acceptance.

**Full need and need blind universities:** These universities promise to meet your full demonstrated need, as well as not consider your finances during their decision to accept you. Out of the thousands of US universities, only five offer such a combination: Massachusetts Institute of Technology(MIT), Harvard University, Yale University, Princeton University, and Amherst college.

## Schools that offer financial aid

As stated above, financial aid for international students is scarce, and it is important not to waste time or energy looking into universities that will not meet your financial requirements. Below is a list of schools that offer financial aid to international students. Note that the following list is NOT comprehensive, and you should research about your preferred schools in detail.

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| 1. Amherst College (MA)                | 21. Grinnell College (IA)                      | 42. Tufts University (MA)              |
| 2. Barnard College (NY)                | 22. Hamilton College (NY)                      | 43. University of Chicago (IL)         |
| 3. Bates College (ME)                  | 23. Harvey Mudd College (CA)                   | 44. University of Notre Dame (IN)      |
| 4. Boston College (MA)                 | 24. Harvard University (MA)                    | 45. University of Pennsylvania (PA)    |
| 5. Brown University (RI)               | 25. Johns Hopkins University (MD)              | 46. University of Richmond (VA)        |
| 6. Bryn Mawr College (PA)              | 26. Lafayette College                          | 47. University of Rochester (NY)       |
| 7. Bowdoin College (ME)                | 27. Lehigh University                          | 48. University of Southern California  |
| 8. Bucknell University                 | 28. Macalester College (MN)                    | 49. University of Virginia             |
| 9. California Institute of Technology  | 29. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MA) | 50. University of Washington           |
| 10. Claremont McKenna College (CA)     | 30. Middlebury College (VT)                    | 51. Vanderbilt University (TN)         |
| 11. Colby College (ME)                 | 31. Northwestern University (IL)               | 52. Vassar College (NY)                |
| 12. Colgate University (NY)            | 32. Oberlin College (OH)                       | 53. Wake Forest University (NC)        |
| 13. Columbia University (NY)           | 33. Occidental College (CA)                    | 54. Washington and Lee University (VA) |
| 14. Cornell University (NY)            | 34. Pomona College (CA)                        | 55. Washington University, St. Louis   |
| 15. Davidson College (NC)              | 35. Princeton University (NJ)                  | 56. Wellesley College (MA)             |
| 16. Duke University (NC)               | 36. Rice University (TX)                       | 57. Wesleyan University (MA)           |
| 17. Dartmouth College (NH)             | 37. Smith College (MA)                         | 58. Williams College (MA)              |
| 18. Emory University(GA)               | 38. Stanford University (CA)                   | 59. Yale University (CT)               |
| 19. Franklin and Marshall college (PA) | 39. Swarthmore College (NY)                    |  |
| 20. Georgetown University (DC)         | 40. Syracuse University (NY)                   |  |
|  | 41. Trinity College (CT)                       |  |

## Applying for financial aid

Financial aid, like the college application process, has many processes. Part of these includes filling out and submitting important financial forms. These forms usually consist of questions about your parents' (and yours as well) employment status, their assets and liabilities, their expenses, as well as your personal financial circumstances. Some of these questions might be completely irrelevant to your personal case. For example, most Ethiopian families don't fill out tax return forms. Yet, due to their ubiquity everywhere else, they are asked for often in financial aid applications. You will have to explain that no such form is available, and that you will provide instead signed letters from your

parents' employers about their incomes.

As always, different colleges do things differently, and you should be sure to check on your school's website about how exactly to apply for financial aid for that school. The two most common financial aid applications are Collegeboard's CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE® and Collegeboard's International Student Financial Aid Application (ISFAA) specifically for international students (non-US citizens) applying to US universities. We will have a quick look at how to find and fill in these forms for your respective colleges.

## **The CSS Profile**

The CSS Profile is mostly used by US universities that offer aid to international students. It is a completely online form, which means it does not need to be printed and filled out. Keep in mind that, often, supporting documents will need to be sent in addition to the CSS Profile through email or sometimes fax to each of the school you are applying to. The Profile consists of questions designed to clarify your/your parents' financial circumstances wholly to the university.

The CSS Profile has a fee of about \$25 dollars for submitting it to colleges. If you are sending the profile to multiple colleges, you will pay an initial fee of \$16 and an additional \$9 for every school you send your application to. If you cannot pay this fee, Collegeboard offers fee waiver for up to eight schools that you can use to apply for. If you need to apply to more schools, you can email the universities explaining that it causes a financial burden on your family. The universities might give you a fee waiver, a code or number that you can put in in the payment section which tells the CSS Profile that your university has already paid for you. Some universities may give you an option of applying through another form. Just be sure to email the university as early as you can because it may take them several days to reply to your request.

***Here are the steps you need to follow to find and use the CSS profile.***

### ***Registration***

The CSS Profile is handled by Collegeboard, the same institution that handles the SAT examinations. If you signed up for an SAT exam, you already have a Collegeboard account you can use for the CSS profile. Otherwise, head to <http://css.collegeboard.org/> for an excellent audio visual guide into how to register for and fill out the CSS profile.

### ***Filling out the form***

The CSS Profile is divided into multiple sections that are detailed out below.

#### ***Parents' Household Information***

This section inquires about the number of financially dependent people who live with your parents.

#### ***Parents' Prior Year Income and Benefits and Parents' Expected Income and Benefits***

In these two sections, you will fill in your parents' total household income from the previous year and amount of taxes they paid. In the following section, you will fill in expected amount of income of your parents in the coming tax year.

### ***Parents' Assets***

This section asks you to fill in details about your parents' assets which include: bank savings, land, home, investments, businesses, and retirement plans. There is an Explanations option which allows you to explain the worth of your parents' assets.

### ***Parents' Expenses***

This part of the Profile is very detailed, so be sure to fill it out meticulously. You will need to fill in details about your household expenses including: medical, educational, rental, clothing, entertainment, household, and other expenses. The amounts you put in as expenses should add up to the total income of your family.

### ***Student focused sections***

You will then fill out three sections that inquire about you. These sections include: Student Data (your school, your grade level, school fees, visa type, and country of citizenship); Student's Income and Benefits (your earnings, if any, in the past tax year), and Student's Assets.

### ***Explanations/Special Circumstances***

This is the last section. In here, you are allowed to write detailed explanations on circumstances that you feel need to be explained. It is a good idea to explain here that tax returns are not required in Ethiopia and taxes are directly deducted from salaries by employers.

After you have filled out all the sections, you can review and print your responses before submitting them. You can choose as many universities as you want to submit this form to. On the payment page, you can put in your fee waiver codes along with school codes (provided by the universities) if you have fee waivers or you can pay by using a credit card.

## **The ISFAA**

The International Student Financial Aid Application is another form that is shorter and easier to fill in compared to the CSS Profile. Unlike the CSS Profile, however, the IFSAA is not completely standardized, and it is not a single website that you enter your information to and then send to every school of your choice. Rather, each school has to make the IFSAA form available on its website, and not all schools decide to do so.

Another major difference between IFSAA and the CSS Profile is that the earlier asks for amount in US Dollars instead of Ethiopian Birr. Make sure that you are aware of this distinction, especially when you are working on both forms at the same time.

### ***Obtaining the ISFAA***

As stated above, the ISFAA is not completely standardized, and you have to make sure to obtain both the right form from your school from your school's website, and the current IFSAA form with the current application season on its cover page.

### ***Filling out the form***

The IFSAA is divided into six short sections as described below.

#### ***Section A/Cover page - Student's information***

This section is about your contact information including your name, your address, your citizenship and so on.

The expected visa type for most Ethiopian students is F-1. Unless you're a resident or a citizen, this is unlikely to change.

#### ***Section B - Parents' Information***

This section inquires about your parents' address, occupation, employer, and the people financially dependent on your parents (such as your siblings). Make sure to enter accurate information especially about the tuition costs of your siblings.

#### ***Section C - Financial Information***

This section asks about your parent's earnings.

If your parents don't fill in tax forms, which is most likely the case, make sure to accurately state what kind of verification you will be providing, such as 'Statement from employer.'

#### ***Section D - Asset Information***

This section inquires about your parents and your student's assets including homes, businesses, investments, and so on.

#### ***Section E - Expenses***

This section details out the expenses that your parents and you had this past tax year and in the anticipated tax year.

## **International Student Financial Aid Application (ISFAA)**

The International Student Financial Aid Application or the ISFAA in short is a form prepared specifically for international students (non- US citizens) applying to US universities.

Some universities might require to fill in the ISFAA instead of the CSS Profile or you may be allowed to use it as a substitute if you cannot afford to pay for the CSS Profile. In the latter case, it is important to get permission from the university first.

The ISFAA, unlike the CSS Profile, does not have any fees associated with submitting it. You can print it, fill it out, and submit it to the university by fax or email depending on the school's requirement. Some schools may require you to fill out the ISFAA online.

It is very important to fill out the form issued for your year of application because college board has new forms every year.

### ***How to fill out the ISFAA***

While filling out the ISFAA, it is important to note that amounts are to be entered in Dollars and not in Birr. For conversion into dollar, use current official exchange rate, which you can ask at a nearby bank or find out from the Internet.

We will use a sample filled-out form to explain the steps. This form was filled out by a high school senior, Abel, who is applying to Columbia University. Some of the filled out questions here are personal information of Abel and thus may not be exactly relevant to the respective applicant. It is just a sample ISFAA form.

#### ***Section A: Personal Information***

- Your name
- Permanent address
- Email address (It is generally recommended to have an email address with your name. Eg: abel.chala@hotmail.com)
- Date of Birth (Note the date format is mm/dd/yyyy)
- Place of birth
- Country of Citizenship
- Expected visa type (Check F-1 from the options)
- When you expect to start classes at the university (Find this out from the university's website. For Fall term, this is usually August or September.)
- If you will be attending college for the first time
- List of colleges which you are applying
- Marital status

#### ***Section B: Parents' Information***

- Your parents' marital status
- Information on your parents including their full name, age, address, occupation, and employment information
- Information on your siblings (if you have any) and other people who live in your house aside from yourself and your parents
- If any one of your parents are unemployed, then just fill in 'unemployed' for their job status.

#### ***Section C: Financial Information***

- You will be asked what kind of documentation you will provide as a supporting documentation

- Official exchange rate of your country's currency. Make sure it's the most recent exchange rate on the Internet.
- If the government imposes any restrictions (Answer no)
- If you have a source of emergency funds when you arrive in the US (If your parents don't have a US bank account, answer no.)
- How you will pay your transport to the US (You can say parents, relatives, organizations)
- Household income before taxes (calculate the yearly income of your parents and convert it into dollars before you put the amounts in.)
- If there will be a significant increase/decrease in your family's next year income (Answer yes if your parents expect to get a raise, change jobs, etc.)

### *Section D: Asset information*

- If your family owns its home, own a business
- Your family assets (this includes land, investments, and bank savings.
- If your family owns assets in another country
- If your family owns an automobile

### *Section E: Expenses*

- In this section you will be required to fill in detailed household expenses of your family annually. It is important that your expenses add up to give your family's income.
- If your family owes money to others
- If you employ other people (this includes house-maids)

### *Section F: Expected support for Educational Expenses*

- If your parents are planning to contribute a certain amount of money for your college education, it is important to fill the amount in this section.
- If the expected support is from income, pick 'Family's Income' and if it is from bank savings check on 'Family assets.'

### *Section G: Explanations/Special Circumstances*

- Use this section if you need to explain different circumstances to the financial aid officers.

On the following pages, you will find an example of a filled ISFAA form



# INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION

2015-16

Return this form to the college that provided it.

## Instructions for Completing the 2015-16 International Student Financial Aid Application

The International Student Financial Aid Application is designed to gather information from international students who are applying for financial aid at colleges and universities in the United States. When completing the application, it is important to:

- answer all questions that apply to you and your family;
- convert all currency figures to U.S. dollars (\$) before entering them on the form; and
- return the form directly to the college that provided or requested it. Do not send it to the College Board.

Some of the questions on the International Student Financial Aid Application are self-explanatory; the instructions that follow are only provided for questions that may need further explanation.

### Section A—Student's Information

This section pertains to the student who is applying for aid.

### Section B—Parents' Information

On this application "parents" means the custodial parent(s) — the parent or parents (or legal guardian) the student lives with. If the student's biological or adoptive parents are divorced or separated, the custodial parent(s) are the parent or parents with whom the student has lived the most during the 12 months prior to filling the application. If the custodial parent has remained, "parents" includes the student's biological/adoptive parent and stepparent.

15. Write in the number of people who live in your parents' household and are supported by their income.

16. Complete all parts of this question. Include family members counted as your dependents in question 11 and/or counted as your parents' dependents in question 15.

### Section C—Financial Information

17. Most colleges require you to submit documentation to verify information on this form. Check with the college to determine its requirements.

### Section D—Asset Information

Asset information pertains to the parents or to the student and the student's family if the student is married and lives independently of the parents.

Write in the value of assets and, where asked, any debt against the asset as of the time you complete this application.

### Section E—Expenses

29. Write in the annual amount your family spent on the items listed. If you do not know the actual amount, please estimate.

### 7. Country(ies) of citizenship

ETHIOPIA

### 8. Expected visa type

- ☒ F-1 ☐ F-2 ☐ J-1 ☐ J-2 ☐ H  
☐ G-1 ☐ G-2 ☐ G-3 ☐ G-4  
☐ Other

### 9. When do you expect to begin your studies at this college/university?

09 2015  
Month Year

### Will you be:

- ☒ attending a college/university for the first time? ☐ transferring from another college/university  
☐ a returning student?

### 10. List below the names of the colleges and universities to which you are applying

a. Columbia University

b.

c.

d.

e.

f.

### 11. Your marital status

- ☒ Not married ☐ Married/in a domestic partnership

If married, how many people are financially dependent on you?

## CONFIDENTIAL

### A. Student's Information

1. Your name ☒ Mr. ☐ Miss, Ms., or Mrs.

CHALA

Family (surname)

ABEL

Given (first)

ABEBE

Middle

2. Your permanent address

Mauritania Road P.O. Box 0000

ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA

3. Your email address

abel.chala@hotmail.com

4. Your mailing address (if different from above)

5. Your Date of Birth

10 20 1995

Month Day Year

6. Place of birth (Country)

ETHIOPIA



## Section B—Parents' Information

12. What is your parents' current marital status?  
(Mark only one box.)

- ☒ Married or in a domestic relationship
 ☐ Separated/Divorced
 ☐ Widowed  
☐ Remarried
 ☐ Never married

13. Father's name

BELETE

Family (surname)

ABEBE

Given (first)

14. Mother's name

ASSEFA

Family (surname)

ALMAZ

Given (first)

a. Age 59

a. Age 48

b. Address

Mauritania Road P.O. Box 0000  
ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA

b. Address

Mauritania Road P.O. Box 0000  
ADDIS ABABA ETHIOPIA

c. Occupation/Title

Deputy Manager

c. Occupation/Title

Housewife

d. Employer

DAAS Private Employment Agency PLC

d. Employer

-

e. Number of years with employer

5

e. Number of years with employer

-

15. How many people, including yourself, depend on the income of your parents for daily living expenses? 2

16. Family Member Listing. Provide information for all family members you included in question 11 or 15. Do not give information about yourself.

Full name of family member	Age	Educational information 2014-15							Educational information 2015-16		
		Relationship to you	Name of school or college	Year in school or college	Tuition and fees	Room and board	Scholarships and gift aid	Amounts of parents' contribution	Name of school or college	Total cost	Amount of parents' contribution
HANA ABEBE CHALA	10	SISTER	Nazareth School	5	250	-	-	250	Nazareth School	250	250

## Section C—Financial Information

17. What documentation will you be providing to verify income and asset information requested on this form?

☐ Tax forms ☒ Statement from employer ☒ Other (specify — for example, bank statement) bank statement

18. What is the official exchange rate of your country's currency to the U.S. dollar today? (for example, 3,100 pesos = \$1) 20.6008 = \$1

19. Does your government currently impose restrictions on the exchange and release of funds for study in the United States? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, describe restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

20. Do you have a source of emergency funds once you arrive in the United States? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, name source: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount available in U.S.\$ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

21. How will you pay for your transportation to the United States? (e.g., parents' income, sponsor, etc.) bank savings

22. During 2014, how much of your household income (before taxes or expenses) came from the following sources (in U.S. dollars)?

a. Father's work	\$ 5818.8	.00	e. Family business	\$	.00	i. Interest or dividends	\$	.00
b. Mother's work	\$	.00	f. Family real estate holdings	\$	.00	j. Housing, food and other living allowances	\$	.00
c. Your work	\$	.00	g. Pension/annuity/retirement	\$	.00	k. Other (explain)	\$	.00
e. Your spouse's work	\$	.00	h. Other members of the household	\$	.00			

23. Will there be a significant increase or decrease in your family's income next year? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section D—Asset Information

24. Does your family own its home? ☐ Yes ☒ No (If yes, complete 24a-24d below.)

a. What year was it purchased?		c. How much does your family still owe on the purchase price?	U.S.\$	.00
b. What was the original purchase price? U.S.\$	.00	d. What is the present market value?	U.S.\$	.00

25. Does your family own a business? ☐ Yes ☒ No (If yes, complete 25a-25d below.)

a. Date business commenced?		c. Your parents' share of business value?	U.S.\$	.00
Month Day Year		d. Your parents' share of business indebtedness?	U.S.\$	.00
b. Type of business? U.S.\$	.00			

26. Please list the value of the following family assets (if applicable)

a. Land and buildings (other than home or business)	U.S.\$	.00	d. Assets owned by student	U.S.\$	.00
Indebtedness on land and buildings	U.S.\$	.00	e. Money owed to family by others	U.S.\$	.00
b. Savings	U.S.\$ 3636.75	.00	f. Repayment (of 26e) expected this year	U.S.\$	.00
c. Investments (such as stocks and bonds)	U.S.\$	.00	g. Other (jewelry, artwork, antiques, etc.)	U.S.\$	.00



## Section D—Asset Information (continued)

27. Do you or your family have money, property or assets in another country? ☐ Yes ☒ No (If yes, complete the grid below. Include amounts in 26 above.)

	U.S. \$ Value	In which country(ies)?	Asset owner
Money	U.S. \$		
Property	U.S. \$		
Assets	U.S. \$		

28. Do you or your family own an automobile(s)? ☐ Yes ☒ No (If yes, complete 28a and 28b below for each automobile.)

a. Make (VW, Fiat, Ford, Toyota, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_ b. Year of manufacture: \_\_\_\_\_

## Section E—Expenses

29. How much did your family spend on the following expenses during 2014? SPECIFIC AMOUNTS ARE NEEDED.

Rent or mortgage	U.S. \$ 872.82	.00	Amount allocated to savings/retirement	U.S. \$ 349.128	.00
Utilities	U.S. \$	.00	Automobile maintenance	U.S. \$	.00
Food	U.S. \$ 1493.49	.00	Insurance (health and property)	U.S. \$	.00
Clothing	U.S. \$ 290.94	.00	Entertainment	U.S. \$ 48.49	.00
Household necessities	U.S. \$ 290.94	.00	Vacations	U.S. \$	.00
Medical expenses	U.S. \$ 48.49	.00	Servants	U.S. \$	.00
Educational expenses	U.S. \$ 387.92	.00	Other	U.S. \$	.00
Loan payments	U.S. \$	.00	Please explain: _____		
Taxes	U.S. \$ 2036.58	.00			

30. How much money does your family owe to other people or to financial institutions? U.S. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

Reason for debt: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount paid on debt in 2014 U.S. \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

31. Does your family employ other people? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If yes, how many in the home? \_\_\_\_\_ In the family business? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section F—Expected Support for Educational Expenses

32. Enter the expected amount of annual support toward your educational costs from the sources listed below:

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Student's vacation earnings U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00
Student's assets U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00
Family's income U.S.\$	500 .00 \$	500 .00 \$	500 .00 \$	500 .00
Family's assets U.S.\$	500 .00 \$	500 .00 \$	500 .00 \$	500 .00
Relatives and friends U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00
Your government * U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00
Agencies and foundations U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00
Private sponsor (explain in Section G) U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00
Other (explain in Section G) U.S.\$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00 \$	.00

33. List agencies/foundations/government to which you are applying for financial aid. (If more than two, attach a list.)

Agency/Foundation/Government	Application Date	Award Notification Date	Expected Amount in U.S.\$

## Section G—Explanation/Special Circumstances

Use this space to explain any unusual expenses, other debts, or special circumstances that the institution should consider when it is deciding how much financial aid, if any, you will receive. Use additional sheets of paper if necessary.

## Section H—Certification and Authorization

We declare that the information on this form is true, correct, and complete. The college has our permission to verify the information reported by obtaining documentation as needed.

**WARNING:** Providing false information may jeopardize a student's visa status and furthermore may result in a college revoking its initial decision to enroll the student.

Student's signature  
Father's signature

Spouse's signature  
Mother's signature

Date completed:

10 11 14  
Day Month Year

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14b-9323

Your ISFAA application will be complete once you and your parents have signed the last page of the form.

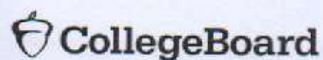
### *Certification of Finances form*

As stated on the form, the purpose of this form is to help colleges obtain a complete information about how much a student can contribute towards his/her education. So along with the CSS Profile or the ISFAA, you should submit this form because it is necessary for your I-20 to be issued. Just like the ISFAA, it can be printed out and filled out by hand.

### *How to fill out the Certification of Finances*

This form contains fewer questions than the ISFAA or the CSS Profile. You will only be required to fill personal information (like full name, permanent address, date of birth, country of birth, and expected visa type). In addition to these, an entire page on the Certification of Finances form is dedicated to sources and amount of annual support toward your education. If your family will support your education from bank savings, then you need a bank official to sign your form. However, there are banks whose policies do not allow them to do this. If this is your case, then use the extra writing space on the third page of your form to explain the case. If your parents are contributing from their income, then you will need their signature on the form. The same rule applies for any other sponsors.

Below is a filled-out Certification of Finances form by Abel:



## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CERTIFICATION OF FINANCES

2015-16

The purpose of the *Certification of Finances* is to help colleges and universities obtain complete and accurate information about the funds available to international applicants who want to study in the United States. Strict government regulations, rising education costs and economic conditions have made verifying the financial resources of international applicants essential. Institutions do not have the option of deciding whether to verify the financial resources of their international applicants; financial verification must be made prior to institutional issuance of a Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019).

This form is designed to standardize financial information provided by applicants to colleges, universities and U.S. consuls. By completing this form and returning it to the college or university requiring it, an applicant, if admitted, may obtain that college's authorization and issuance of a Certificate of Eligibility (Form I-20 or DS-2019). If parents and/or sponsors are unable to obtain a bank official's verification, it is recommended that institutions forward a copy of the International Student Financial Aid Application to the family for completion. The institution should attach a copy of this certification to the Certificate of Eligibility. U.S. consuls scrutinize the statements of financial resources given by nonimmigrant visa applicants. This certification will help such officials make their decisions and expedite visa issuance.

**Return directly to the college providing or requesting this statement.**

The space below is for optional use by issuing institutions for listing student's expected annual budget.

**1. Your Name**

☒ Mr. ☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss

CHALA

Family (surname)

ABEL

Given (first)

ABEBE

Middle

**4. Date of Birth**

10 20 1995

Month Day Year

**2. Permanent Address**

Mauritania Road P.O. Box 0000

ADDIS ABABA

ETHIOPIA

**5. Place of Birth (country)**

ETHIOPIA

**6. Country of Citizenship**

ETHIOPIA

**3. Mailing Address (if different from above)**

**7. Expected Visa Type**

- ☒ F-1 ☐ G-2  
☐ F-2 ☐ G-3  
☐ J-1 ☐ G-4  
☐ J-2 ☐ H  
☐ G-1 ☐ Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_



8. Enter the expected amount of annual support from the sources listed below. Enter amounts in U.S. dollars. Please PRINT all entries. Use an additional sheet of paper for explanations, if necessary.

**Student's Sources of Funds**

**8a. Personal or Family Savings**

United Bank S.C

Name of Bank

A bank official's signature is required on the certification if the student is partially or totally supported by personal savings

Signature of Bank Official

Title

Name of Bank

Address of Bank

**Official Certification of Sources of Funds and Amounts**

This is to certify that I have read the information furnished by the applicant on this form, that it is a true and accurate statement, and that the funds are available and will be provided as indicated

**8b. Parents (Money available from sources other than savings.)**

ABEBE CHALA BELETE

Father's Name

Mother's Name

Please describe the source:

FROM SALARY

Signature of Parent

Mauritania Road P.O. Box 0000 Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Address

**Official Certification of Sources of Funds and Amounts**

This is to certify that I have read the information furnished by the applicant on this form, that it is a true and accurate statement, and that the funds are available and will be provided as indicated

**8c. Sponsors (Money available from sources other than parents.)**

Sponsor's Name

Sponsor's Name

Please describe the source

Signature of Sponsor

Address

Relationship of Sponsor to Student

**Official Certification of Sources of Funds and Amounts**

This is to certify that I have read the information furnished by the applicant on this form, that it is a true and accurate statement, and that the funds are available and will be provided as indicated

**8d. Your Government**

Name of Agency

Enclose a signed copy of your letter of award with this form

TOTAL \$ .00 \$ .00 \$ .00 \$ .00

9. What is the present exchange rate of your country's currency to the U.S. dollar  
(for example, 3,100 pesos = \$1)?

\_\_\_\_\_ = \$1

10. Does your government currently impose restrictions on exchange and release of funds for study in the U.S.?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, describe restrictions.

11. Do you have a source for emergency funds once you arrive in the U.S.?

☐ Yes ☒ No

If YES, name source.

Amount available in U.S. dollars \$ \_\_\_\_\_ .00

12. How will you pay for your transportation to the U.S.?

bank savings

13. What is the total amount of money you expect to have when you arrive at this institution?

\$500 .00

14. Do you plan to remain in the U.S. during the summer?

☐ Yes ☒ No

15. If remaining in the U.S., do you plan to attend summer school?

☐ Yes ☒ No

16. What are the sources and amounts of support available to you during the summer?

Sources	Amount
U.S. \$	.00
U.S. \$	.00
U.S. \$	.00
U.S. \$	.00

Bank won't sign. Please see official letter from bank. It is not in the bank's policy to sign documents.

17 A CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY (Form I-20 or DS-2019) will not be authorized until this form is completed and returned to the institution to which you are applying. The institution will attach a copy of this form to your CERTIFICATE OF ELIGIBILITY. Both the form and certificate must be shown to the U.S. consul to obtain a visa.

Signature of Student

[Signature]

I certify that the information on this form is true, correct and complete. I understand that any misrepresentation may be cause for refusing or revoking admission.

Date

10 Day 11 Month 14 Year

This is to certify that I have reviewed the declaration and attached documents, if appropriate, and approve issuance of a Certificate of Eligibility.

SIGNATURE OF

COLLEGE OFFICIAL

NAME OF INSTITUTION

ADDRESS

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

TITLE

DATE



## *Supporting Documentations*

After you have filled-out one or more of the above forms, you will need to send supporting documentation of your family's financial circumstances to universities either by fax or by mail. Only then will the financial aid office be able to verify what you have stated in the forms. It is necessary to find out, from your university, what documents they want and to send them as soon as possible.

Some of the required supporting documents are stated below.

### *Letter from your parents' employers*

If your parents work for an employer, then it is necessary to get a letter from this employer that:

- certifies that parent is a permanent employee
- states parent's salary and amount of tax deducted both in Birr and Dollars
- explains that tax is directly deducted from salary by employer to send for government and that parent is not required to fill out tax forms
- verifies parent's relation to student
- explains reason for issue of letter

The letter must have:

- official header
- stamp
- signature of an official
- reference number
- date

A sample letter is given below:



DAAS

## DAAS PRIVATE EMPLOYMENT AGENCY P.L.C

---

Ref No. --  
DAAS/112/07-----

Date ----  
09/11/2014-----

To whom it may concern,

This is to certify that Mr. Abebe Chala Belete is a permanent employee of the DAAS Private Employment Agency P.L.C in a position of Deputy Manager.

He has served the corporation for over five years. His monthly gross salary is 10000 Birr and pays monthly income tax of 3500 Birr which are equivalent to USD 484.90 and USD 169.72 respectively as of November 1, 2014. The tax is withheld every month and directly sent to the government by this company. Therefore, Mr. Abebe is not required to fill out tax forms.

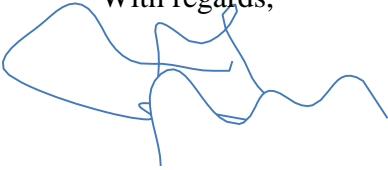
Mr. Abbebe has a son who is a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student at the International Community School of Addis Ababa (ICS). His son Abel Abebe Chala will graduate in May of 2015 and is presently applying for admission to universities in the United States of America.

This certificate, therefore, has been issued upon the request of Mr. Abebe.



DAAS

With regards,



Ayele Dawit

General Manager

## Bank Statements

A bank statement is one of the supporting documents you will need to present when applying for financial aid. This allows financial aid officers to see how much your family may be able to contribute towards your college education. Most banks have their own format so you shouldn't worry about it.

Below is a sample template:

To whom it may concern.

This is to certify that Mr. Abebe Chala Belete has been a customer of our bank since 21/08/2012. He has a balance of Birr 75000(seventy five thousand birr), in his savings account which is equivalent to USD 3636.75 as of November 9, 2014.

This Certificate has been issued upon his request.

With regards,

[Name and Signature] Branch Manager

### *Other supporting documentation*

It is possible to get other supporting documents that you think apply to your financial aid application. For example, you can have your high school write you explaining that, in Ethiopia, taxes are directly deducted from salary and that your parents don't have to fill out tax forms.

# Obtaining Your Visa

## The VISA Application

At this point, you will have completed all the requirements for your college applications. However, an equally important part studying abroad is accurately finalizing your VISA requirements.

Your American VISA is an essential travel documents that dictates whether or not you can enter the United States. The application process for your VISA is coordinated between you, your university and the American Embassy in Addis Ababa.


## SEVIS I-901 FEE

The SEVIS fee (or I-901) is a requirement of the Student and Exchange Visitor Program. All students travelling under F-1 VISA status (which you will be) are required to pay this fee. As a new applicant, you will go to the SEVIS homepage (<https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/index.html>) and submit a new I-901 form and payment.

(US) 1-703-603-3400

fmjfee.sevis@ice.dhs.gov

OMB 1653-0034 (Expires 09/30/2018)

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

I-901 Fee

PAY I-901 FEE

CHECK I-901 STATUS

HOME

NEWS

HELP

Click Here to Request an I-901 Fee Transfer

### APPLICANT VALIDATION

Enter the following information exactly as it appears on your Form I-20 or DS-2019.  
\*\* indicates that the information is required

SEVIS ID \*

N00000000000

Last Name \*

Surname or Primary Name

Given Name

First Name and Middle Name

Date of Birth \*

MM / DD / YYYY

SUBMIT

### Payment Instructions

**Before Proceeding:**




**You must have a complete and accurate Form I-20 or DS-2019** If you do not have an I-20 or DS-2019 or if the information on the form is incorrect, contact your school official or program sponsor.

**Do not** pay for a dependent child or spouse who is on an F-2, M-2, or J-2 visa. There is no I-901 SEVIS fee due for a dependent child or spouse for these visa types.

**Do not** pay again if you know that you have made a mistake after you submitted your information. Instead, send an email to [fmjfee.sevis@ice.dhs.gov](mailto:fmjfee.sevis@ice.dhs.gov) and explain what

# Navigating Acceptance

The first step in your VISA application is to contact the university where you have been accepted and request your I-20. The I-20 is a document issued by the International Students Office at your university. The front page is as follows:

U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service		Page 1 Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1) Student Status - For Academic and Language Students (OMB NO. 1653-0038)																		
<b>Please read Instructions on Page 2</b> <b>This page must be completed and signed in the U.S. by a designated school official.</b>																				
<b>1. Family Name (surname):</b> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"><tr><td colspan="2">First (given) Name: _____ Middle Name: _____</td></tr><tr><td>Country of birth: INDIA</td><td>Date of birth (mo/day/year): 02/07/19</td></tr><tr><td>Country of citizenship: INDIA</td><td>Admission number:</td></tr></table>		First (given) Name: _____ Middle Name: _____		Country of birth: INDIA	Date of birth (mo/day/year): 02/07/19	Country of citizenship: INDIA	Admission number:	<div style="text-align: right;"><b>SEVIS</b></div> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"><tr><td colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">For Immigration Official User</td><td style="text-align: center;">Student's Copy</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2" style="height: 100px;"></td><td rowspan="2" style="text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"></td></tr><tr><td>Visa issuing post</td><td>Date Visa Issued</td></tr><tr><td colspan="3">Reinstated, extension granted to:</td></tr></table>		For Immigration Official User		Student's Copy				Visa issuing post	Date Visa Issued	Reinstated, extension granted to:		
First (given) Name: _____ Middle Name: _____																				
Country of birth: INDIA	Date of birth (mo/day/year): 02/07/19																			
Country of citizenship: INDIA	Admission number:																			
For Immigration Official User		Student's Copy																		
																				
Visa issuing post	Date Visa Issued																			
Reinstated, extension granted to:																				
<b>2. School (School district) name:</b> University of Minnesota University of Minnesota, Twin Cities  School Official to be notified of student's arrival in U.S. (Name and Title): A B Assistant Director  School address (include zip code): Intl Student & Scholar Services 301 19th Ave S., 190 Humphrey Ctr Minneapolis, MN 55455  School code (including 3-digit suffix, if any) and approval date: SPM214F00039000 approved on 01/27/2003		<b>3.</b> This certificate is issued to the student named above for: Initial attendance at this school.																		
<b>4.</b> Level of education the student is pursuing or will pursue in the United States: MASTER'S		<b>8.</b> This school has information showing the following as the student's means of support, estimated for an academic term of 12 months (Use the same number of months given in item 7). a. Student's personal funds \$ 0.00 b. Funds from this school \$ 16,347.00 Specify type: Assistantship c. Funds from another source \$ 0.00 Specify type: d. On-campus employment \$ 0.00 Total \$ 16,347.00																		
<b>5.</b> The student named above has been accepted for a full course of study at this school, majoring in Electrical, Electronics and Communicati... The student is expected to report to the school no later than 08/23/2010 and complete studies not later than 08/23/2013. The normal length of study is 36 months.		<b>9.</b> Remarks: _____ _____ _____																		
<b>6.</b> English proficiency: This school requires English proficiency. The student has the required English proficiency.		<b>10.</b> School Certification: I certify under penalty of perjury that all information provided above in items 1 through 9 was completed before I signed this form and is true and correct; I executed this form in the United States after review and evaluation in the United States by me or other officials of the school of the student's application, transcripts, or other records of courses taken and proof of financial responsibility, which were received at the school prior to the execution of this form; the school has determined that the above named student's qualifications meet all standards for admission to the school; the student will be required to pursue a full course of study as defined by 8 CFR 214.2(f)(6); I am a designated official of the above named school and am authorized to issue this form.  Name of School Official: Assistant Director Signature of Designated School Official: _____ Title: _____ Date Issued: 03/30/2010 Place Issued (city and state): Minneapolis, MN																		
<b>7.</b> This school estimates the student's average costs for an academic term of 12 (up to 12) months to be: a. Tuition and fees \$ 2,567.00 b. Living expenses \$ 13,780.00 c. Expenses of dependents (0) \$ 0.00 d. Other (specify): \$ 0.00 Total \$ 16,347.00		<b>11.</b> Student Certification: I have read and agreed to comply with the terms and conditions of my admission and those of any extension of stay as specified on page 2. I certify that all information provided on this form refers specifically to me and is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I certify that I seek to enter or remain in the United States temporarily, and solely for the purpose of pursuing a full course of study at the school named on page 1 of this form. I also authorize the named school to release any information from my records which is needed by the INS pursuant to 8 CFR 214.3(g) to determine my nonimmigrant status.  Name of Student: _____ Signature of Student: _____ Date: _____  Name of parent or guardian: _____ Signature of parent or guardian: _____ Address (city): _____ (State or Province) (Country): _____ (Date): _____ If student under 18																		
Form I-20 A-B (Rev. 04-27-88)N		For Official Use Only Microfilm Index Number																		

Each university has its own unique requirements for an I-20. One of the main requirements is the completion of your SEVIS payment so track your progress and note down your SEVIS number.

Because your I-20 will be sent to you by mail, make sure you specify an accurate mailing address to your university. Stay in contact with the International Office at your university to make sure your I-20 gets issued to you in a timely manner.

## TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language)

The TOEFL is a test of your English proficiency and is required for your VISA application. Although this exam can be a strengthening part of the application that you send to colleges, it is included in this chapter because it is also essential for your VISA application. Your I-20 will generally indicate that English proficiency is required for the program that you are attending. Decided proof of your English proficiency will be your TOEFL scores.

To begin your registration for the TOEFL, visit their website (<https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/register>). In the middle of the page, there is an important link that says Use our step-by-step guide (PDF) which provides a detailed explanation of the entire process. After reading through this PDF, click on the register online button to register for the TOEFL.

The screenshot shows the ETS TOEFL website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Store', 'Contact Us', and a search bar. Below this, there are links for 'For Test Takers', 'For Institutions', and 'For Teachers and Advisors'. The main header area includes 'ETS Home > TOEFL > TOEFL iBT > Register for the Test', 'My TOEFL iBT Account', and 'Language'. The main content area is titled 'Register for the TOEFL iBT® Test'. It includes a sidebar on the left with links like 'TOEFL iBT', 'About the Test', 'Register for the Test', 'Test Centers and Dates', 'Identification Requirements', 'TOEFL Search Service', 'Cancel/Change Registration', 'Codes', 'Disability Accommodations', 'Prepare for the Test', and 'On Test Day'. The main text area provides instructions on how to register, including a note about walk-in registration and a link to request accommodations. There is also a section for 'Register Online' with a list of instructions. On the right, there is a photo of a smiling woman and links to 'TOEFL Go!® Official App' and 'TOEFL® Practice Online'.

ETS TOEFL

Store Contact Us Search for...

For Test Takers For Institutions For Teachers and Advisors

ETS Home > TOEFL > TOEFL iBT > Register for the Test My TOEFL iBT Account Language

### Register for the TOEFL iBT® Test

To make sure the TOEFL® test is offered in your area, [check your location](#).

**Testing in China** (except Hong Kong and Macau): Register at <http://toefl.etest.net.cn/> or see <http://www.neea.edu.cn/>. Some policies and procedures for China may differ from those on this website.

**Note:** Walk-in registration at the test center is not allowed.

If you are requesting testing accommodations due to a disability or health-related need, you cannot register using the online registration system or by phone. Find the information you need to [request accommodations and register for the test](#).

#### Register Online

- Register 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Be sure the name you use when you register exactly matches the identification you will bring on test day. See [Identification Requirements](#). You are required to enter at least 1 form of identification before you can register for a test date.

**TOEFL Go!® Official App**  
Prepare for your TOEFL test with official TOEFL iBT prep wherever you go. [Download now >](#)

**TOEFL® Practice Online**  
Get the only official practice test that gives you the experience of taking the real TOEFL iBT test. [Order now >](#)

[Official Guide to the TOEFL iBT® Test](#)

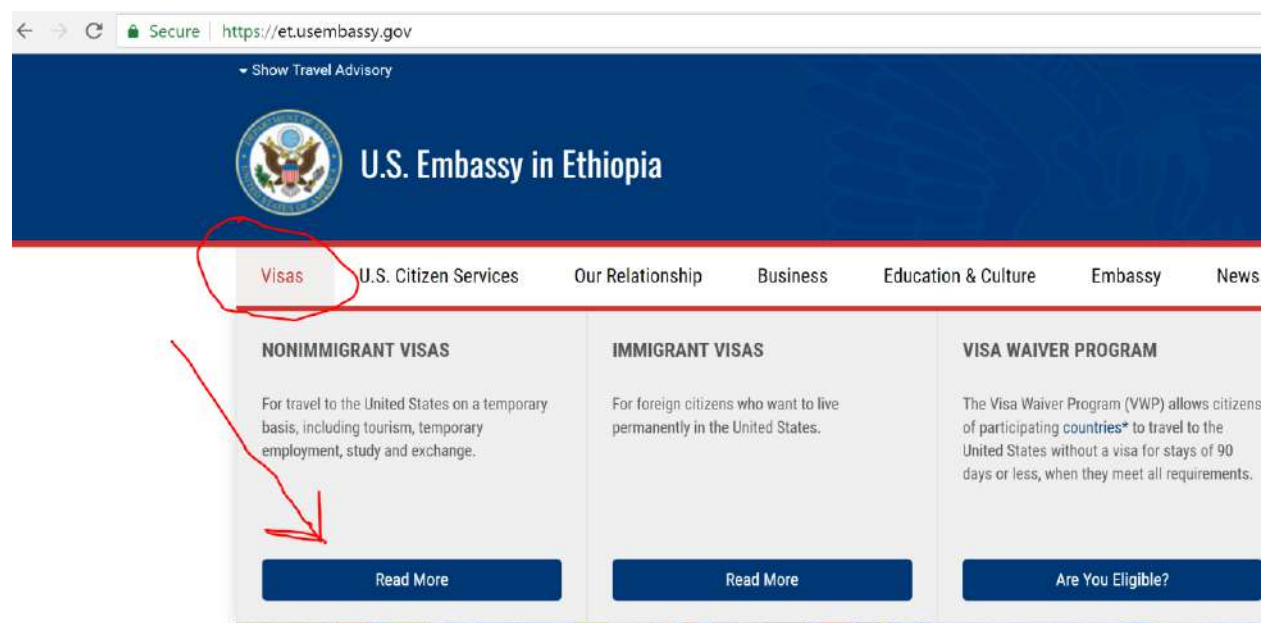


Relative to the SAT Reading and Writing sections, the TOEFL is a much simpler exam but should not be taken lightly. It is a comprehensive test of your English proficiency and contains reading sections as well as speaking and listening comprehension. With proper practice, it should be a test that strengthens your application.

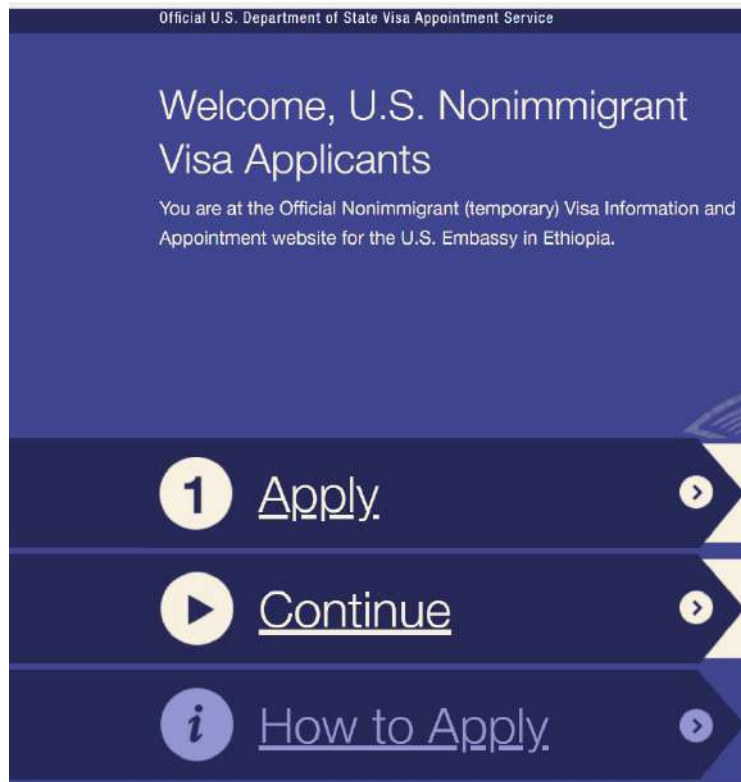
There are online practice tools on the website that can be a valuable asset to students who plan on taking the exam. The Frequently Asked Questions page can be quite helpful and may be accessed on the website (<https://www.ets.org/toefl/ibt/faq>).

## First Time VISA Applicants

Applying for an American VISA from Ethiopia may seem like a confusing and daunting task but once you have all the necessary documents, it's fairly straightforward. There is detailed VISA application information on the American Embassy website (<https://et.usembassy.gov/>). As a prospective student leaving for the United States, you will be applying for a non-immigrant visa (more specifically an F-1 student VISA). To begin the application process, go to the website listed above and find the link for Nonimmigrant VISA:



Once you click on the “Visas” menu option, a drop down item will appear. Select “Read More” under NONIMMIGRANT VISAS. You will then be redirected to the “Official U.S. Department of State Visa Appointment Service” at <https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-et/niv>.



Here, you can review the VISA application requirements and start your application once you have all the documents required. To see the steps required to complete your VISA application, visit the “How to Apply” page.

The first step is to decide your VISA type which, as previously discussed, will be an F-1 Student VISA. Follow the link under Step 1 if you want a detailed information of what each Visa type entails. On the website, you can follow the link for Studying in the U.S. (F, M). The page gives a brief overview of student VISA applications. The three main requirements it lists include the I-20 form from your university, proof of SEVIS fee payment and evidence that you can afford the tuition and payments required from your university.

## Steps required to apply for a US Visa

If required to apply for a Visa to travel to the United States the process includes the following steps:

1. Determine the type of Visa required to travel to the United States. Information about Visa types can be found at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/visa-information-resources/all-visa-categories.html>.
2. Complete the online visa application form, DS-160. The DS-160 is a U.S. Government on-line form and can only be completed at <https://ceac.state.gov/CEAC>. Each applicant must complete this form before using any services on this website.
3. Return to this website and complete the following application steps to schedule a Consular Section appointment:
  - a. Create a user account
  - b. Enter the DS-160 confirmation number for each applicant applying for a Visa
  - c. Complete the courier document return process
  - d. Pay the Nonimmigrant Visa (MRV) application fee(s)
  - e. Schedule a Consular Section appointment
4. Attend the Consular Section appointment.
5. After your interview, please follow specific instructions provided by the consular section or check this website for visa status and delivery information.

Proving you are capable of paying for your education in the United States is an essential part of your VISA application, which can be simplified if you are awarded sufficient financial aid. If the amount that your university requires you to pay is higher than your financial aid, you must provide documents that show you are capable of paying the difference. These documents can be your family's bank account statements, employer letter from your parents showing their wages and any other proofs of income.

## DS-160 (Nonimmigrant VISA Application Form)

The second step of your application is filling out the DS-160 Nonimmigrant VISA Application Form. Here are the basic steps to complete the DS-160 application.

- 1) Go to the web address under step 2 of the visa application requirement list, <https://ceac.state.gov/CEAC>
- 2) After you get to this page, click “DS-160, Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application.”
- 3) You should then be redirected to <https://ceac.state.gov/genniv/>

If you follow that link, you'll reach a page that gives you a brief explanation of the application and lets you create an account. Make sure you select Ethiopia, Addis Ababa as your location and follow the link to Start an Application.

The screenshot shows the CEAC website interface. At the top, there's a header with the U.S. Department of State logo and the text 'U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE CONSULAR ELECTRONIC APPLICATION CENTER'. Below this, the page title is 'Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (DS-160)'. The main heading is 'Apply For a Nonimmigrant Visa'. There's a 'FAQs' button on the right. A 'Tooltip Language: English' dropdown is visible. A 'Welcome!' section on the left explains the process. The 'Get Started' section on the right has a 'Select a location where you will be applying for this visa' dropdown menu, a CAPTCHA, and three buttons: 'START AN APPLICATION', 'UPLOAD AN APPLICATION', and 'RETRIEVE AN APPLICATION'. A blue circle highlights the 'START AN APPLICATION' button, and a blue arrow points to it from the right. Below the buttons, there's an 'Additional Information' section with links to 'Read more about U.S. visas at travel.state.gov' and 'Visit the website of the U.S. Embassy or Consulate'.

Once you start your application, you will receive a 10-digit Application ID that begins with AA... Make careful note of this code because you will need it to save and continue your application. You will be asked to choose and answer a security question in case you want to continue your application at another time.

After submitting your security question, you will be directed to the first page of the DS-160, which is the personal information section. Each section is shown on the left hand side of the page. The section you have completed are highlighted in dark blue while the sections you haven't filled out will be in grey. Make sure all the information you enter in these sections are accurate. You

should enter your full name and birthday as it appears on your passport and check multiple times before you submit each section.

The screenshot shows the 'Online Nonimmigrant Visa Application (DS-160)' form. At the top right, it displays 'Application ID AA004UPVZM', 'OMB CONTROL NUMBER: 1405-0182', 'FORM NUMBER: DS-160', 'EXPIRATION DATE: 8/31/2017', and 'ESTIMATED BURDEN: 75 MIN'. The left sidebar contains a navigation menu with 'Getting Started' (checked), 'Personal' (selected), 'Personal 1' (sub-selected), 'Personal 2', 'Address and Phone', 'Passport', 'Travel', 'Travel Companions', 'Previous U.S. Travel', 'U.S. Contact', 'Family', 'Work / Education / Training', and 'Security and Background'. The main section is titled 'Personal Information 1' and includes a note: 'NOTE: Data on this page must match the information as it is written in your passport.' Below this, there are three input fields: 'Surnames' (with a yellow highlight and example '(e.g., FERNANDEZ GARCIA)'), 'Given Names' (with example '(e.g., JUAN MIGUEL)'), and 'Full Name in Native Alphabet'. To the right of these fields are two help boxes. The first, 'Help: Surnames', states: 'Enter all surnames as listed in your passport. If only one name is listed in your passport, enter that Surname.' The second, 'Help: Given Names', states: 'If your passport does not include a given name, please enter 'FNU' in Given Names.' At the bottom of the 'Full Name in Native Alphabet' field, there is a checkbox labeled 'Does Not Apply/Technology Not Available'.

Upon completion of the DS-160, you will be prompted to print the DS-160 confirmation page. This page is essential for the remainder of your application.

## VISA Appointments and Application Fee

Now that you've completed the DS-160, you can go back to the Visa appointment website mentioned before (<https://ais.usvisa-info.com/en-et/niv>) and book your interview.

As a first time applicant, you will need to select the first option that says "Apply." The next page lists out conditions so you can choose the one that best applies to you. At this point, you will have completed your DS-160 so select the option displayed below:

Please select the condition that best applies to you:

---

☐ I am a diplomat, other government official, Fulbright Scholar, or participant in another U.S. Government sponsored program.

---

☒ I have completed the U.S. Nonimmigrant Visa application (DS-160) form and I need to apply for a visa.

---

☐ I am a Company, Travel Agency or Other Organization that needs to schedule appointments for a group of people.

---

☐ I need to apply for a K (Fiancé(e)/Spouse/Child) visa

---

☐ None of the above applies to me.

---

[Continue](#)

The next page will ask you to enter some information required to create an account. After entering the preliminary information (email & password), you will be asked to accurately enter more details. As always, enter your name, passport number, and birthday exactly as it appears on your passport. The DS-160 number should be on the DS-160 confirmation that you previously obtained. Make sure to read every question carefully and respond appropriately.

After entering the proper information into the form, you will be directed to set an appointment on the website. Print a confirmation of your appointment time so you can use it for the remainder of your application. You will need to take this appointment confirmation to Abyssinia Bank to pay the application fee for your VISA.

The application fee for your VISA is 160 US Dollars. This fee is an essential requirement for your VISA application and can be paid at any branch of Abyssinia Bank. You will be required to take your DS-160 confirmation page, your embassy appointment verification and proof of SEVIS payment.

Once you pay the fee at the designated bank in cash (about 4400 birr), you will receive a signed receipt which is essential for the remainder of your application. Within 48 hours of your payment at the bank, you will receive an email notification to log in to the VISA Appointment Service Website and confirm your appointment at the Embassy.



## Interview at the Embassy

The key towards a successful interview at the Embassy is preparation. Make sure you have all the necessary documents prior to your appointment. The Embassy website lists the following documents for reference:

### (F) ACADEMIC OR LANGUAGE STUDENT

- Form I-20, Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant (F-1 or M-1) Student Status for Non-Academic, Language Students, and Vocational Studies. The applicant will need to submit a SEVIS generated Form, I-20, which was provided to the applicant by the applicant's school. The applicant and the school official must sign the I-20 form.
- The Student and Exchange Visa Information System (SEVIS) I-901 fee receipt. For additional information about who is required pay this fee, please see SEVP on the Web at <http://www.fmiffee.com/>.

The following documents may be useful in support of your visa application:

- Intention to depart the United States upon completion of your travel.
- Sufficient funds to cover all expenses while in the United States.
- Evidence that you have significant ties to the country to which you intend to return at the end of your stay in the United States (This is generally established by evidence of family, professional, property, employment or other ties and commitments to a country other than the United States.)

To be safe, bring all the documents that you have used in your VISA application so far with you to the Embassy. To strengthen your application, try to bring your official transcript along with your acceptance letter from your university and your financial aid letter. If your financial aid letter indicates that you have to pay a certain portion of your tuition, bring documentation that proves you can afford the financial requirements.

The embassy generally holds VISA interviews on Monday and Wednesday mornings. Go to the Embassy at the appointment time and date listed on your appointment confirmation page. Security at the Embassy is quite strict so bring your passport and another form of identification. Also keep your appointment confirmation at hand because you will be requested to show it at the front gate.

If you have all the necessary documentation for your VISA interview, you should be confident that the VISA will be approved. The interviewer at the Embassy will ask you simple questions so answer confidently. If your VISA is approved, it will take approximately a week to process at which point you will receive an email notifying you to pick it up at a DHL branch. This branch will be the one that you requested while filling out your Appointment application.

### **Things to remember for your visa interview:**

- Under US law all nonimmigrant applicants are viewed as immigrants until they can convince the consular officer that they are not. So it is necessary to be able to show that you plan on coming back after studying there.
- Practice your English before your interview.
- Thoroughly know the program you have been accepted to and how it fits your future career plans. If you cannot articulate your reasons for study, then it is likely you will be viewed as planning to immigrate.
- Be brief.
- Don't forget to bring all necessary additional documentation.
- Maintain a positive attitude!

# Glossary of Terms



## *Applying*

**Applicant:** Any student who has completed the college application process at a particular institution.

**Application:** A college application is part of the competitive college admissions system. A complete application usually consists of academic records, personal essays, letter of recommendations, and a list of extracurricular. Most schools require the SAT or ACT.

**Application Deadline:** The date set by college admissions offices after which applications for admission will not be accepted.

**Advanced Placement (AP):** AP courses are college-level courses taught in high school.

**“Best Fit”:** There is no school that is best for all students. The “best fit” college is the school that is the best fit for you.

**Campus Interview:** This is a personal, face-to-face interaction between an admissions applicant and an institutional representative. Interviews are rarely required.

**Campus Visit/Tour:** A service by college admissions office for prospective students, allowing them to visit various campus buildings, meet key institutional personnel, and get a first-hand look at campus life.

**Catalogue:** A catalogue is a comprehensive publication that provides a detailed overview of an institution, including its mission, programs, costs, admissions requirements, faculty and administration, etc.

**College Essay:** A brief composition on a single subject, required by many colleges as part of the application process for admission.

**College Fair:** An event at which colleges, universities, and other organizations related to higher education present themselves in an exposition atmosphere for the purpose of attracting and identifying potential applicants.

**College Rep Visit:** This is when a college or university admissions representative visits a high school or community site for the purpose of recruiting students for admission to the institution.

**College search:** These are the steps you take in the early phases of college planning in order to identify college-level programs that meet your individual interests and abilities.

**Common Application:** The Common Application (informally known as the Common App) makes it possible for students to use one admissions application to apply to any of 456 member colleges and universities. This is a Common Application for First-Year Admission and a Common Application for Transfer Admission. Both versions allow the application to be filled out once online and submitted to all schools with the same information going to each.

**Extracurriculars:** Extracurricular activities are simply anything you do that is not a high school course or paid employment (but note that paid work experience is of interest to colleges and can substitute for some extracurricular activities).

**GPA (Grade Point Average):** Quantitative measure of a student’s grades. The GPA is figured by averaging the numerical value of a student’s grades. It is cumulative, starting from freshman year: grades count every year. A poor GPA in ninth grade can drag down the overall average, despite, for example, good grades junior year.

**Honor classes:** Honor courses are enriched courses that offer the same material in greater depth

and with a faster pace.

**Instate (Resident) Student:** A student whose permanent residence is in the same state as the university.

**Prospective Student:** Any student who is a potential applicant for admission.

**Out-of-State (Non-Resident):** Student whose permanent residence is in a different state than that of the university.

**“Reach School”:** A college or university that you have a chance of getting into, but your test scores, GPA, and/or class rank are a bit on the low side when you look at the school’s profile.

**Recommendations:** Statements or letters of endorsement written on a student’s behalf during the college application.

**“Safety School”:** A college or university where you clearly meet the admission requirements.

**School Profile:** This is an overview of your high school’s program, grading system, course offerings, and other features that your school submits to admissions offices along with your transcript.

**Selectivity:** Selectivity is the degree to which a college or university admits or denies admission based on the individual student’s record of academic achievement.

**Transcript:** This is the official document containing the record of a student’s academic performance and testing history.

### *College Entrance Exams*

**ACT:** A two-hour-and-55-minutes examination that measures a student’s knowledge and achievement in four subject areas- English, mathematics, reasoning, and science reasoning. There is also an optional writing test that assesses students’ skill s in writing an essay. It is score on a scale of 1 to 36 for each of the four areas. The four subject area scores are averaged to create a Composite Score.

**PLAN Test:** A test taken to prepare for the ACT.

**PSAT Test:** A test taken to prepare for the SAT.

**SAT:** This is a widely used college entrance examination. This includes the SAT Reasoning Test which assesses students’ critical thinking skills. It is a 3-hour exam measuring verbal and mathematical skills as well as grammar/conventions and the ability to write a brief essay. Students may earn a total of up to 2400 points (up to 800 points in each section: writing, math, and verbal).

**SAT Subject Test:** Also known as SAT II tests, they are offered in many areas of study including English, Math, many sciences, history, and foreign languages. Some colleges may require on or more Subject Tests as part of the application.

### *Types of Post-Secondary Institutions*

**Art School (Arts College, Art Institute, Conservatory):** An institution specializing in visual, performing, and/or creative arts.

**College:** An institution of higher learning, often referred to as a “four-year” institution which grants a bachelor’s degree in liberal art or sciences or both.

**Community College:** These are primarily two-year public institutions providing higher education and lower-level courses, granting certificates, diplomas, and associate's degrees.

**Graduate School:** Schools which offer degree programs beyond the bachelor's degree.

**Liberal Arts College:** A degree-granting institution with an academic focus in the humanities and sciences, rather than on training for a particular vocational, technical, or professional pursuit.

**Private Institution:** A college or university funded by private sources without any control by a government agency.

**Public Institution:** A college or university that receives public funding.

**Single-sex (or Single-Gender) College:** This is a college that accepts either women only or men only.

### *College Acceptance Terms*

**Acceptance:** The decision by an admissions officer or committee to offer the opportunity for enrollment as a student at a particular institution.

**College Selection:** The act of choosing and making the decision to enroll in and attend a particular higher-education program.

**Deferred Admission:** A category of admission used in conjunction with early (action, decision, notification, or acceptance) plans to indicate that a student has not been admitted but will remain in the applicant pool for reconsideration during the review of applications for regular admissions.

**Deferred Enrollment:** This is a category of admission available at some institutions for fully accepted students who wish- for a justifiable reason- to take a semester or year off before enrolling in college.

**Denial:** The decision by an admissions officer or committee to not offer a student admission to a particular institution.

**Early Action:** Early Action is when a prospective student applies for admission by early deadline and receives notice of acceptance, denial, or deferment with no obligation to the university to enroll, if accepted for admission.

**Early Admission:** Through this program, qualifying high school juniors with outstanding academic records may forego their senior year in high school and enroll in a college or university.

**Early Decision:** Students willing to commit to a school if accepted submit their application through this program by a date well before the general admission deadline. If accepted, the student must enroll in that school, so students should only apply early decision to their first choice school.

**Gap-Year Programs:** Year-long programs designed for high school graduates who wish to defer enrollment in college while engaging in meaningful activities.

**Notification Date:** The date by which applicants who are accepted for admission are expected to notify the institutions of their intent to enroll and make enrollment deposits.

**Rolling Admissions:** This is a practice used by some institutions to review and complete applications as they arrive, rather than according to a set deadline.

**Waitlist:** An applicant is put on the waitlist when an admissions officer or committee decides to offer the applicant the opportunity to enroll in the institution only if there is space available in the incoming class after fully admitted students have responded to their offers to enroll. This category of admissions is reserved for those students whose profiles are strong, but who are

marginally qualified in comparison to the overall strength of others in the pool of applicants.

### *Some College Lingo*

**Alumni:** This is a group of people who have graduated from a college or university.

**Audit:** To attend a class without receiving a credit for the class.

**Course Numbers:** Numbers assigned to specific classes.

**Credit (or Semester) Hour:** Credit given for attending one lecture hour of class each week for 15 weeks or equivalent. Most college classes are three credit hours, meaning their total meaning time for a week is three hours.

**Developmental Education:** Instructional and support activities designed to keep unprepared students in college and help them improve their basic skills so that they can successfully complete a program and achieve their educational goals.

**Enrollment:** The act of enrolling or being enrolled.

**First-Generation Student:** A student whose parents have no college experience.

**First-Year Student:** A college freshman.

**Matriculation:** The payment of deposits, tuition, fees, and other charges to enroll in a program of studies at an educational institution.

**Major:** A student's concentrated field of study.

**Minor:** A student's secondary field of study.

**Placement Tests:** Colleges and universities use these examinations to place students in courses that match their proficiency.

**Prerequisite:** A course that must be taken prior to enrollment in another course.

**Registration:** Enrollment in classes.

**Residence Halls:** Dormitories, apartments, houses, and other living quarters provided for students by the college or university in which they are enrolled.

**Student Persistence:** This is the act of working, progressing, and earning credits toward graduation in an academic environment.

**Student Retention:** This is the degree to which students remain enrolled as members of the university and persist toward graduation.

**Undergraduate Student:** A student enrolled in a 4 or 5 year bachelor's degree program, an associate's degree program, or a vocation or technical program below the baccalaureate.

### *Types of Post-Secondary Degrees*

**A.A:** "Associate of arts" degree that can be earned at most two-year colleges.

**A.A.S:** "Associate of applied science" degree that can be earned at some two-year colleges.

**B.A. or B.S.:** B.A. stands for "bachelor of arts" while B.S. stands for "bachelor of science." Both can be earned at four- year colleges.

**Graduate Degrees:** These degrees are earned beyond the bachelor's degree when the student

completes graduate school curriculum requirements. Common examples include the MA (master's degree), PhD (doctoral degree), MBA (master's degree in business administration), and MD (medical doctor).

Certificates: Certification programs, typically a package of five or six courses, are offered for credit or not taken over 3 to 18 months.

### *Financial Aid Terms*

Award Letter: A letter from a school that states the type and amount of financial aid the school is willing to provide the student, if s/he accepts admission and registers as a full-time student.

Cost of Attending College: This is the total cost of going to college, including tuition, room and board, books, transportation, fees, and personal expenses.

Demonstrated Need: This is the difference between the cost of attending college and your expected family contribution.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): This is the amount of money you and your family could be expected to pay for one year of college costs based on the data gathered from your financial application.

Fees: These are charges that cover costs not associated with the student's course load, such as costs of some athletic activities, clubs, and special events.

Financial Aid Package: The total amount of financial aid a student receives.

Need-Blind Admission: Full consideration of an applicant and his or her application without regard to the individual's need for financial aid.

Tuition: Amount of money that colleges charge for classroom and other applications and use of facilities like library.

### *Scholarships*

Academic scholarships: Academic scholarships are based upon academic achievement as reflected in your college application.

Athletic scholarships: These are based on athletic ability and your prospective college's departmental needs.

Corporate Scholarships: These are awarded to help employees and their families.

Private Organization Scholarships: These scholarship opportunities number in the millions. Many organizations are excellent sources for college scholarships.

### *Loans*

Institutional Loan: Any loan administered by the college or university using the institution's funds as the source of funding.

### *Grants*

Institutional Grant: This is a need-based grant provided by an institution and offered to students

whose families are unable to pay the full cost of college. Institutional grants do not have to be repaid.

Merit-based Grants: A form of gift aid (does not require repayment) based upon your GPA, academic excellence and extracurricular involvement with some attention to your financial need.

Need-Based Grant: This grant is offered, as part of the financial aid package, when a student and his or her family are unable to pay the full cost of attending an institution. The grant does not need to be repaid.)

### *Work-Study Programs*

Most colleges offer work-study programs. They allow students to work part time during the school year as part of their financial aid package. The jobs are usually on campus and the earned to pay for tuition or other college charges.

