



Applying to College: Tips & Tools for Seniors

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September 27, 2022

Applying to College: Where to Start

Ask Questions...

What majors interest me? What careers interest me? Where do I want to live? Do I prefer a campus in a busy, urban environment with lots of amenities? Do I do best in a quiet suburban neighborhood? A rural community with lots of nature? Do I want to keep on living near the coast? In California? Close to home?

Is cost a factor? What is my “Plan B”?

Deciding *Where* to Apply

College Major: What do you want to study?

If you know what you want to study, then use your intended major to help refine your search.

If undecided or unsure, then choose colleges with numerous majors from which you can choose.

Deciding *Where* to Apply

Where do you want to live?

You are planning to spend four years at the campus you choose. Preference for a certain type of environment is a valid consideration. Use personal preference to help guide your search.

- Do you prefer an urban campus surrounded by lots of activity or a more quiet, less busy suburban surrounding.
- Do you prefer a rural setting surrounded by lots of natural beauty?
- Do you want to stay in California, or are you open to college in other states?
- Does it matter how far you have to travel to go home, even within California?
- Do you want a large campus or small college environment?

Deciding *Where* to Apply

What schools are an academically good match for me, with a strong likelihood for admission?

Check admission rates for the colleges you are interested in attending. *Look at the GPA of that school's current year admitted freshman to see if yours is in line with the average admitted student.*

Applying to Schools with Varying Admission Rates

Acceptance or Admission rate is simply determined by the ratio of the number of students who are admitted to a university to the number of total applicants that applied. ***Admission rate is based on first-time, first-year students.***

A lower admission rate does not mean that a college is better than one with a higher rate of acceptance. It only means that it gets many more applications than other schools and can thus accommodate a lower percentage of admissions.

Where do I Find Information on Majors, Admission Rate, etc...

One way is to use one of these popular online search tools that provide numerous specific details about individual colleges:

Big Future

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

Major Clarity .

See Janet Light in the PGHS Library or email jlight@pgusd.org

for student login information.

The College Board's Big Future

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

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the BigFuture College Search page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: `C:/Users/KParis/Desktop/College%20Search%20-%20BigFuture%20-%20College%20Board.html`. The page title is "College Search" and it includes a search bar with the placeholder text "Search by college name".

The main heading reads "Find the right college for you." Below this, it says "Choose a category to start exploring." There are four category buttons: "Location", "Major", "Type", and "Campus Life".

The page features a colorful illustration of a college campus with a large building, trees, a fountain, and a gazebo. A "Top" button is visible in the bottom right corner of the illustration area.

The footer is divided into three sections: "Programs" (listing SAT, PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, and PSAT 8/9), "College Board" (listing About Us, Careers, Membership, and Newsroom), and "Help" (listing Contact Us and More).

The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar with "Type here to search", several application icons, and the system tray displaying "60°F Sunny" and the date "5:42 AM 10/20/2021".

UC Campuses

UC admission rates for each individual campus can be found by using this link:

<https://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/campuses-majors/freshman-admit-data.html>

Disclaimer from the UC website: These numbers are useful only as a general guide to selectivity and not as a predictor of your chances for admission to a particular campus.

Some schools are always considered a higher admission risk regardless of gpa

For very selective colleges in which the admission rate is below 20%, even students whose gpa meets or exceeds that of the average admitted freshman, the school is still considered a higher admission risk.

Admission to very selective schools is unpredictable and should always be treated as such.

When applying to all Ivy League schools, Stanford, UCLA, UC Berkeley, Cal Poly SLO and other schools with similarly low acceptance rates the student is advised to include other options on their college list as well.

Deciding *Where* to Apply

Plan A: 4-year College; Plan B: ?

Are you a “UC or Bust” student?

Some students only want to attend certain universities and if they do not get into those, then they would prefer to go to MPC or other community college and then transfer into their dream school later.

Is this you?

If so, then using admission rate to guide your search is not as critical.

Deciding Where to Apply

Plan B: Community College Not a Desired Option

If attending a community college is not an option you want to consider, then:

Apply broadly making sure to include a number of 4-Year Colleges that have generous admission rates.

If Your Plan B is MPC or other community college...

Nearly all transfer agreements are structured for you to transfer to a 4-year college **as a junior**.

MPC has defined transfer relationships with many UC and CSU campuses.
So do other California community colleges.

Make sure to let your community college counselor know which colleges you hope to transfer to so they can advise you accordingly.

How many schools should I apply to?

Applying to a larger number of schools is less critical than making sure the colleges applied to include those with generous acceptance rates.

Apply Broadly
across admission rates



What Does *Impaction* Mean in College Admissions?

Impaction occurs when there are more eligible applicants than openings - the university can not accommodate all eligible applicants.

The admission rate for impacted programs is significantly more narrow.
Impaction varies per program.

For a list of CSU Impacted Programs go to:

<https://www.calstate.edu/attend/impaction-at-the-csu/Documents/ImpactedProgramsMatrix.pdf>

Rolling Admissions

If a school says it has rolling admissions it means that they evaluate applications as they are submitted. They do not wait until the whole group of applicants have submitted on the final deadline date before reviewing them.

For schools with rolling admissions, it is better to apply earlier, at the beginning of the application period.

UC and CSU Admission Timeline

November 30, 2022: All applications due by this date.

March 31, 2023 : All applicants will be notified of admission decisions by this date. Notification can begin as early as mid-February, depending on campus. Decisions commonly are sent out beginning March 1st.

May 1, 2022 : Deadline for applicants to commit to attending the one university of their choice.

***Campuses that use rolling admission will notify regarding decisions as they occur.*



Filling Out College Applications

Where to Start. How to Get Help.

Starting the Application

Applying to a UC?

Go online to admission.universityofcalifornia.edu

Applying to a CSU?

Go online to <https://www2.calstate.edu/apply>

Applying to a Private College?

Go online to commonapp.org to see if your college is there.

Applying to an Out-of-State Public University?

Some non-California public universities use the Common Application. If the public university is **not listed** on the Common App, then you must go to the school's individual website and follow the posted instructions for submitting an application

Avoid Mistakes: Use
the CSU Freshman
Application Guide

<https://www.calstate.edu/apply/freshman/Documents/freshman-application-guide-22-23.pdf>

CAL STATE **APPLY**



Freshman Application Guide

Ask for Help with your Application: UC Campuses

UC application and Application Center

The UC provides help and support throughout each of its application sections. Applicants can view answers to their commonly asked questions on each page of the application by clicking 'Help' on the top navigation bar.

Students needing further assistance can contact the UC Application Center via phone or email. The center is available Monday–Friday, 10 a.m.–6 p.m. (Pacific Time).

(800) 207-1710 (within the U.S.)

ucinfo@applyucsupport.net (email)

Ask for Help with Application: Common App

The screenshot shows the Common App Student Solutions Center website. The browser address bar displays the URL `appsupport.commonapp.org/applicantsupport/`. The page header includes the Common App logo and the text "Student solutions center" with a "Create an account" button. A blue navigation bar contains the heading "How can we help?" and a search input field with the placeholder text "Search FAQs" and a "Search" button. Below the navigation bar are several menu items: Home, Help topics, Contact us, Live colleges, Writing requirements, School discipline questions, and Known issues. A welcome message reads: "Welcome to the solutions center! Search for answers to common questions or select from our list of trending help topics. If you cannot find what you need, please message us. We're available 24/7 to help." Below this message are four featured help topics, each with a thumbnail image and a title: "Account already exists message", "Recommender didn't receive invite", "Courses and Grades FAQs", and "Test scores not appearing". At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Transfer student help" and "Recommender help". The footer contains links for "System requirements", "License agreement", "Terms of use", and "Privacy policy (updated October 1, 2020)", along with social media icons for Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. The copyright notice reads "© 2021 Common App". A "Ask Joy a Question" chat button is visible in the bottom right corner. The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the search bar with the text "Type here to search", several application icons, and the system tray displaying "60°F Sunny", "19:30 AM", and "10/20/2021".



Considering College Costs

Private Colleges and Out-of-State Public Universities

- The tuition published by private universities is discounted for 90% of applicants. Use the school's "**net price calculator**" to get an estimate of what the cost could be for your student.
- **Private colleges do not have In-State or Out-of-State tuition – it is the same for everyone.**
- Out-of-State Public universities are more expensive for residents of states other than their own. However, CA students may get a discount at universities that offer a **Western Undergraduate Exchange (WUE) program.**

Private Colleges

Students in the top 25% - 33% of the applicant pool are more likely to get financial aid.

Students near the bottom of the college's admitted group may be offered financial aid, but it may not meet as much need.

What this means to you:

If money is a factor in your college search

and will impact your final choice,

ensure that you apply to some colleges

in which you are in the top of the applicant pool.

Compare your numbers to those of the typical freshman admitted.

Out-of-State Public Universities

Western Undergraduate Exchange

<https://www.wiche.edu/tuition-savings/wue/>

WUE gives a discount to California students so that the tuition is closer to in-state. WUE is available at select schools in:

*Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho,
Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon,
South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.*

Check the WUE website to see if one of the schools you are interested in offers a WUE discount.

Even schools that don't participate in WUE typically have some type of out-of-state aid program.

Out of State Universities:

Applying outside of California?

- The ***University of New Mexico*** in Albuquerque has 9 Engineering programs, none of which are impacted. With its generous *Amigo* scholarship program, it often comes in at a cost slightly less than a CSU.
- The **University of Hawaii** in Honolulu (Manoa campus) has renowned Business and Marine Science programs, and with the WUE discount, tuition comes in at around the cost of a CSU for California residents.

Frequently Asked Questions

*Can I go to a CSU
my first year and then
transfer to a UC?*



Can I go to a CSU my first year and then transfer to a UC?

This will not increase your chances for admission.

The UC's make admission decisions using the following priority:

1. Transfer students from CA community colleges with an Associate Degree for Transfer (ADT) or Transfer Application Guarantee (TAG) coming in as a junior.
2. Incoming Freshmen
3. **Transfer students from other 4 year colleges**

Frequently Asked Questions

*Can I apply to a less
competitive program and
then switch majors ?*



Can I apply to a less competitive program and then switch majors?

College admissions staff universally answer *No*.

Some campuses like Cal Poly SLO, do not allow major changes at all the first two years, regardless of program.

Other schools will not allow transfer to an impacted program in which there is little room.

The UC and CSU recommended pathway is for a student who wants a particular major but did not get in, to attend a California Community College and transfer as a junior.

Common Mistakes

*Don't take chances with
your admission by filling out
the application incorrectly*



Mistake: Not Using Transcript to Fill Out UC and CSU Applications

All information entered must match the transcript exactly.

*If you don't have a copy of your transcript already, sign up for your
Parchment account for online access to your transcript at any time.*

For more information about how to set up your Parchment account email the
PGHS Registrar, Johanna Biondi at

jbiondi@pgusd.org

Mistake: Leaving Senior Year Classes Blank on UC and CSU Applications

Students frequently forget to include their current senior year classes on the application.

Even though you don't yet have grades for your senior classes, they need to be included.

Semester 1 classes are "In Progress" and Semester 2 classes are "Planned".

Mistake: Using High School Email as Contact Information

Remember that once you graduate PGHS, your high school email will become invalid.

Use a non-PGHS email to apply to colleges and scholarships.

Mistake: Not Checking Student Portal Frequently After Submitting Application

UC's and CSU's will likely communicate with you via the student portal you set up with each campus.

If they need more information from you, or something was done incorrectly and needs changed, that is how they will contact you.

Don't miss out on an admission because of a fixable error.

Harvard Law Admitted Class of 2022

Where did they go to undergraduate school?

Harvard Law School, with a less than 10% admission rate, accepted students from a wide range of undergraduate schools, including **CSU's** and many schools popular with our PGHS students:

Arizona State

CSU Long Beach

CSU Los Angeles

CSU Northridge

Humboldt State

U of Colorado, Boulder

U of Hawaii, Manoa

U of Nevada, Reno

U of New Mexico

Westmont College

UC's: Berkeley, Davis, Irvine, LA, Riverside, SD, SB, SC

<https://hls.harvard.edu/jdadmissions/apply-to-harvard-law-school/jdapplicants/hls-profile-and-facts/undergraduate-institutions/>