

When can I start filling out college applications?

The Common Application officially opens and begins accepting college applications on August 1st. The majority of colleges that have their own applications (not part of the Common Application) also open their application on August 1st as well.

Do I need to apply to college in August?

No. Many students will begin working on their college applications in the summer when students typically have a little extra free time. It is important that you begin brainstorming essay topics and begin writing rough drafts of your college essays as soon as possible as this is often the most difficult and time consuming part of applying to college.

Do I have an advantage of getting into college if I apply on August 1st.

No. August 1st is when colleges begin collecting applications. It is not when colleges begin reviewing applications. Students who apply to colleges between August 1st and October 30th are typically all considered in the priority group. Colleges that are on rolling admissions usually begin reviewing applications in late August/early September. It is important that you submit a perfect application rather than a rushed application. If you are taking SATs in August or September, it might be a good idea to receive your scores before submitting college applications. Scores typically come back 2 weeks after the test date.

Where/When can I access my GPA/transcript?

Updated GPAs are listed in your Alma account by clicking on the Graduation tab. Remember, Garnet Valley no longer provides class rank to colleges. Additional GPA information you might need to list on college applications: The GPA is weighted and based on a 4.0 scale. The highest GPA for the senior class is 4.35. There are 421 students in the senior class. The scheduling system format used at Garnet Valley is semester (this question is asked on the Common App).

Why are the letter grades on the graduation tab not converted to the 10 point scale?

Alma has completed the conversion of your letter grades to the new 10 point scale and your GPA listed is accurate. On your transcript, you will only see numeric grades. However, Alma is still working on changing the letter grades to match the numeric grades in the student's transcript tab. Apparently, this particular part of updating the previous letters grades in Alma is a little more complicated and requires extra time for Alma to complete. Again, the converted GPA is accurate and reflects the new grading and GPA scale.

Do I need to use SCOIR when applying to college?

Yes. SCOIR is an important part of the college application process. SCOIR is used by both the student and counselor to ensure colleges receive the transcripts and letters of recommendation. In SCOIR, list all of the schools you are applying to and list the names of the teachers who are writing your letters of recommendation. In SCOIR, you need to add colleges

to APPLYING column as you are working on the application. After you submit your application for each college you need to move the college to the APPLIED column. Your counselor will send supporting college documents after you move colleges to the APPLIED column.

Can I still request letters of recommendation in SCOIR?

Yes. The letter of recommendation is back open. Simply click on the MY COLLEGES tab, RECOMMENDATIONS AND FEE WAIVER tab, REQUEST A RECOMMENDATION tab. Use the drop down menu to request letters of recommendations from your teachers and counselor. Most students will ask two teachers and a their counselor for a letter of recommendation.

How do I send my transcript and letters of recommendation to colleges?

Your counselor will send your supporting college application documents after you move your college to the APPLIED column in SCOIR. Because the GVHS senior class is large and there are only 6 counselors trying to process thousands of applications for everyone, please make sure you move your college to the APPLIED column in SCOIR at least 9 days before a college deadline or immediately upon submitting your application. Sending documents is not as simply as sending a text message. It takes time to ensure documents are checked, prepared, and sent correctly.

I decided to apply to a college on the day before the college application was due. Is that a problem?

No. BUT.. don't wait until the last minute to apply to college. You need to start planning now and give yourself plenty of time to complete the application, write the essays, send SAT scores, and submit your transcript and letters of recommendation. Remember, you need to give your counselor plenty of notice in order to submit your transcript and letters of recommendations. Submitting documents is not like sending a text message or email. It takes time for colleges to receive documents, upload them to your student portal, and mark your application complete and ready for review. Some colleges expect ALL documents in their system by the deadline in order to be considered. Don't delay and plan ahead to avoid applying to college right before a deadline.

What is the Self Reported Academic Record (SRAR) that I see on the Penn State and Pittsburgh application?

Not every college requires the high school to send a transcript. Some colleges like Penn State Pittsburgh, Delaware, etc. allow students to report their courses, grades, credits, and GPA directly on the college application. When applying to college it is important that you have a copy of your transcript in front of you so that you can enter your courses and grades exactly as it appears on your transcript. If you eventually decide to attend a college that you self-reported your transcript, an official transcript will be sent by the Counseling Office that verifies the information you listed on your application. You do not need to enter 8th grade courses.

Do I use the Common Application to apply to all of my colleges?

Maybe. There are three popular application platforms that students can use to apply to colleges. The Common Application is the one that most of you are familiar with. The Coalition for College Application is another application used by some colleges. Before working on an application, students should double check to see which application their colleges are a member of. The third application option that some schools use is their own in-house college application. Depending on your college list, unfortunately, you may need to use more than one of these platforms. If a college allows you to use more than one of these application platforms, there is no preference as to which one you should use.

Does every college want an essay, transcript, letters or recommendation, etc?

No. Every college is different and unique in what they decide to collect and use to review applications. Before applying to specific colleges, it is important that you visit the college website and see exactly what that specific institution requires. That information is usually easily viewable in their Admissions tab and Application tab. It is your responsibility to know what documents are required for each application.

How do I send my SAT/ACT scores to colleges?

Students are responsible for sending their standardized scores to colleges. For colleges that want official scores to be sent, students can do this easily (but for a fee of course) through their College Board and/or ACT accounts. Just like self-reporting of grades, some colleges will allow students to simply list their SAT/ACT scores directly on the college application. Before spending extra money to send scores to colleges, check to make sure your colleges allow you to self report your scores.

How do I know that my counselor sent my transcript and letter of recommendations?

First, make sure you have moved your college to the APPLIED tab in SCOIR. Nothing will be sent to colleges until this step is completed. Each college will create a student portal for you and send you a login information for the student portal. This is where you can see the status of your application and what documents have been received or are missing. Remember, it takes time for colleges to process documents and upload them into their system. Documents sent by your counselor might not show up in the college student portal until two weeks after the documents were sent by your counselor. Be patient! You will also be able to see the status of documents sent in SCOIR.

Can I apply to college without an SAT/ACT score.

Yes. Because of the pandemic and the cancellation of standardized tests in the spring, many colleges have announced that they will be “test optional” for this year. This policy allows students to apply to college and be reviewed equally without submitting a standardized test score. If you didn’t get a chance to take a standardized test or you are not happy with your score, then applying under the college’s test optional policy is probably a good idea. Be aware,

if you apply test optional or decide to submit SAT/ACT scores, colleges will not let you change that decision after an application is submitted. Many of you might want to get you October or September standardized test scores back before making a decision and submitting a college application.

Is it too late to visit the colleges I'm considering applying to?

No. Visiting colleges in the summer is a common task for rising seniors, much like going to the beach. This summer college visits are a little trickier and most will be completed virtually. Some colleges have announced that they will begin tours in late August again. Before making any sort of travel plans, wait and verify that the college will open and is hosting in person tours again. In person college visits might need to happen in the winter or spring of senior year.

Is there anything additional I need to do as a student-athlete?

Yes. You need to make sure you have created an NCAA Eligibility Center account. This is required for all student athletes participating in a Division I or II sport in college. Students must create an account with the NCAA and send them your official SAT/ACT scores. The GVHS Counseling Office will send the NCAA a copy of your official transcript.

When should I begin applying for financial aid?

October. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) will open on October 1st, 2020. In order to qualify for federal and state need based aid, you must fill out and submit the FAFSA. Most families will submit the FAFSA in October or November.

Can I start looking for outside scholarships now?

Yes. It is never too early to start looking for private scholarships. The scholarship season typically runs from November through April of senior year so if you are searching for scholarships now, you might not find a lot of opportunities just yet. Students typically use popular search engines like Fastweb, Scholly, Scholarships.com.

Will my counselor be available to meet/help with the college application process?

Absolutely! We are here to support students through the college application process. Please feel free to make appointments when needed, virtually for now, so that we can make sure you are on the right track. We look forward to helping you prepare for the next steps in life and one of the best parts of our job is celebrating with you after hearing that you have been accepted to college, so share the good news when it comes!

Any advice for students/families going through the college application process for the first time?

Relax. Stay calm. Be patient. Be very organized. Check spam folders in email. Be aware of deadlines. Don't assume each college requires the same documents. Keep track of usernames and passwords. Ask questions before submitting the application.