



# US-UK Fulbright Commission EducationUSA

# **Common Application guide for teachers and advisors**

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### **Introduction to the Common Application**

#### What is it?

The Common Application is used by over 900 American universities. It is somewhat akin to UCAS, in that you will save time by being able to complete information and recommendation letters that you can submit to multiple universities. You can access the Common Application and find out more information online at <a href="https://www.commonapp.org">www.commonapp.org</a>.

#### **How to access the Common App**

Students will register on the Common Application and will invite counsellors and teachers to complete the required documents through the online system. You will then receive an automated email from the Common Application asking you to activate your account.

If you have not received this email then please check with your student to ensure they have added you as a recommender in their Common Application. You should work with your student directly or contact the Common Application if any difficulties arise.

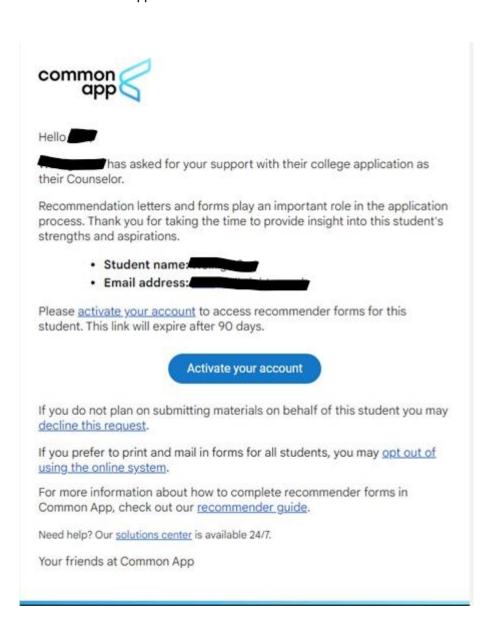
Please note that forms submitted online via the Common Application **cannot** be altered or changed after submission. The forms will be submitted once and then sent automatically to each university where the student applies. Please triple check that you've uploaded the correct and final documents before hitting submit.





#### **Creating your Common Application login**

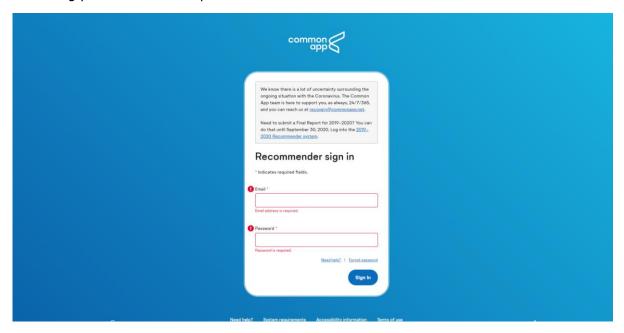
- 1. Your student will register you as a counsellor or teacher within the My Colleges section of their application. Be sure to give all students the same email address so that you can manage forms from one login.
- 2. The student can choose one counsellor and two teachers per university. Most students will use the same three individuals for each university. Note the counsellor and teacher cannot be the same person. They will have access to different forms. It is important that the student knows which school representative will serve in which capacity.
  - Ideally the student should waive the right to see the recommendation letters submitted by the school representatives to maintain credibility of the letters in the eyes of the university.
- 3. You will receive an email as soon as the student adds you to the Recommenders and FERPA section of their application.







- 4. If you click on the "activate your account" option in the email, you will be prompted to create an account with the Common Application website. Note that you can only create an account via the student's invitation link, not on the login page of the Common Application website.
- 5. After you have created a password, you will be taken to the Common Application homepage. Sign in using your email and new password.

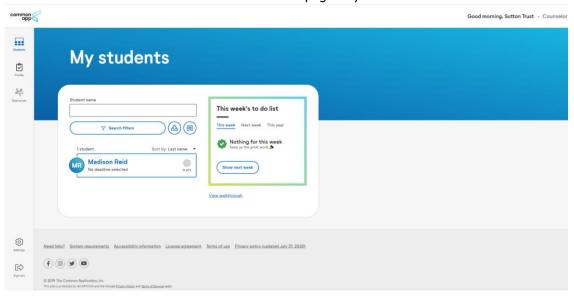






#### **Counsellor dashboard – setting up your profile**

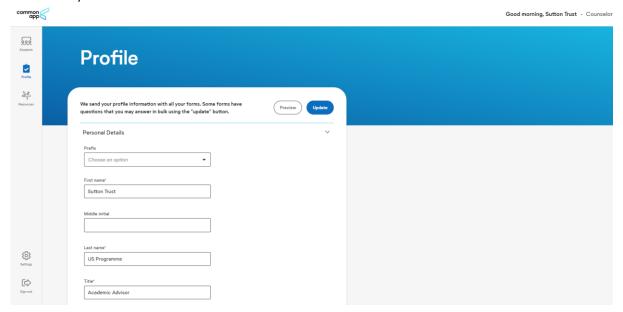
1. **Main dashboard and Students tab** – The main page of your dashboard looks like this:



Below the search bar you will see a full list of all students assigned to you. You can also search them individually.

The to do list will highlight upcoming deadlines.

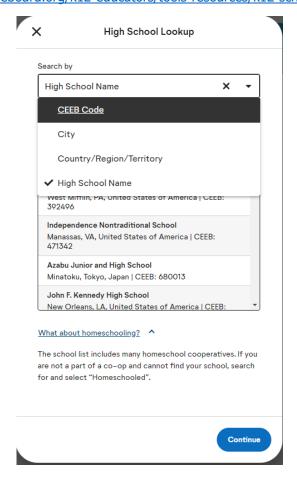
Profile tab and personal details – Before uploading any documents, you will need to complete
all sections in this tab. In the personal details section, you will fill in your name, contact
information, etc.







3. School Details – Scroll down after completing the personal details section and you will be asked to fill in the school's details. This involves looking up the school on their online database. You can search by your school's name, country/region/territory, city or CEEB code. To check if your school has a CEEB code, you can do a search on the College Board website (https://satsuite.collegeboard.org/k12-educators/tools-resources/k12-school-code-search).



If your school is not on the list you need to scroll to the bottom of the 'choose school' search results list, select 'I don't see my high school in this list' and click "Continue". A pop up page will appear where you will need to manually enter your school's information.

You will then fill in the school's name and contact information. Note, in the US public school is equivalent to state school or an academy and a charter school would be most similar to a free school in the UK.



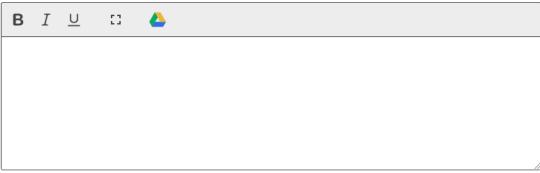


Once you fill in your school name you will have space to address any changes due to COVID-19, i.e. grading policies, course availability, testing requirements, etc. Please do not use this space to discuss your student's individual circumstances, as they will have a place to address this in their own application.

Your school may have made adjustments due to community disruptions such as COVID—19 or natural disasters. If you have not already addressed those changes in your uploaded school profile or elsewhere, you can elaborate here. Colleges are especially interested in understanding changes to:

- · Grading scales and policies
- · Graduation requirements
- · Instructional methods
- · Schedules and course offerings
- · Testing requirements
- · Your academic calendar
- · Other extenuating circumstances

Your students will have a similar space in their application to share how these events have affected them personally.



Min: 0 / Max: 500 0/500 words

- 4. **School Profile** First you will fill in questions about the school.
  - Attach your school profile here The school profile provides contextual information
    about the school the student attends. Once you are ready to submit your final school profile
    please attach it here. Remember that the school profile is school specific, not student
    specific. This means that if you are serving as the counsellor for more than one student at
    your school this school profile will be associated with all their applications. Visit the school
    documents section on our website for more information and for a template you can use to
    create the school profile.
  - **Graduating class size** is the number of students in your pupil's year group.
  - **Percentage of graduating class** Note the percentage of students from your graduating class who are attending a two-year college (equivalent to the UK's Further Education, Access courses, etc.) and four-year college (equivalent to a Bachelor's in the UK). If you do not have this information, you may leave this blank.
  - Percentage of students There are several questions that ask about different
    percentages regarding various demographics. If you do not have this information, it is not
    required and it is okay to leave these blank. However, much of this information is important
    when it comes to the school report and giving universities a full picture of the type of school
    the student is coming from. We recommend first compiling the school profile (see above) so
    that you can more easily complete this section.
  - **School setting** Please select whether your school is in a rural, suburban or urban setting.





- Courses offered at your school Please note that courses are equivalent to modules. Most UK schools will not have AP or Honors classes. These are terms used by American high schools and unless you work at an American or international school, this will not be applicable.
- **Block schedule** UK schools are not on block schedule. (Block scheduling in the US means pupils take 3-4 subjects in the autumn semester and sit exams and then take 3-4 new subjects in the spring, as opposed to 6-8 subjects throughout the year.)
- **Graduation date** Please enter results day as the graduation date.
- Is your school located outside of the United States? Please select 'yes'.
- AP curriculum As noted above, most UK schools will not have AP classes.
- Applicant's academic ratings "Do you complete applicants' academic ratings on the Common Application School Report?" If you answer yes to this question, then later on in the application process you will answer four questions where you will be asked to compare your student to other students in their class in the areas of "academic achievements", "extracurricular accomplishments" and "personal qualities and character". If you feel that your student rates highly in comparison to their peers in these areas, then you may wish to answer "yes" to this question. Otherwise you may wish to answer "no".
- **Does your school require students to perform volunteer service** Please select accordingly. If you select yes you will need to describe the requirements.
- 5. Class Rank Note how you report class rank, if applicable.
- 6. **GPA** Note whether you provide students with a GPA (Grade Point Average). It is okay to answer no. Most UK students do not report GPA.
- 7. **Transcripts** Please use the guidance below to answer these questions.
  - Are current courses listed on the transcript? Yes
  - Are college entrance examination scores included with or visible on the transcript? No
  - Please indicate the most recent grades included on the transcript accompanying this form —
     If your student is currently in their final year of school then you will answer "Final junior
     year grades". If your student has completed their final year of school then you will answer
     "Final senior year grades."
- 8. **International School** Because your school is located in the UK, you are considered an international school to a US university. For "International applicants: Is promotion within your educational system based upon standard leaving examinations given at the end of lower and/or senior secondary school by a state or national leaving examinations board?" Answer "Yes" as progression to universities in the UK is normally dependent on test results. Please answer these questions as they relate to your school. It is okay to leave the question about the marking or grading scale used in your school blank.
- 9. **Certifications** Please read these statements thoroughly and tick <u>both boxes</u>. It is very important that you complete this section because without completing it you could be causing delays to your student's application decision.

Your profile is now complete! You can now navigate to your students' applications by selecting 'go to my students' at the end of the profile tab, or by clicking the 'students' tab along the left-hand side of your browser.





#### Your students – submitting documents as a counsellor

1. **An overview** - After you have finished the profile section you can move on to submitting documents for your students. All your students are listed in the 'students' tab. Click on a student to see all their materials and deadlines. If you are supporting multiple students, you will see all the students listed here.

In the example below, you can see that Madison is applying to Grinnell College. Your students will likely have multiple colleges selected. She waived her FERPA rights, which we recommend all students do. This means students pledge not to read their recommendation letters. This upholds the integrity of the application process, and also means you will not share your recommendation letters with the student.

As your student makes changes to their account (adding and removing colleges, waiving their FERPA rights, etc.), you will receive notifications about those changes. You can choose to stop receiving notifications in the account settings tab on the left-hand column.

Notifications e	
Hide notifications ^	
Changed FERPA status to waived	×
Added Rice University	×
Removed New York University	×
Added Amherst College	×
Removed Amherst College	×

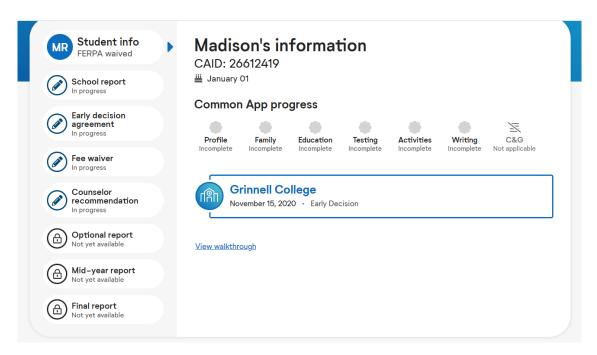
Dismiss all

In the left-hand column you will see the documents you need to upload as a counsellor. Right now the school report, early decision agreement, fee waiver and counsellor recommendation are available. The optional report, mid-year report and final report will unlock in the spring term after students submit applications. More information on these sections can be found further down in this guide.

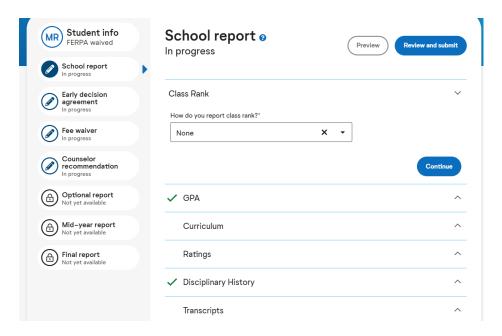
On the right-hand side you can see, in this example, Madison is applying to Grinnell College. If your student is applying to multiple colleges you will see all of them listed. She has yet to complete any of her sections – from her profile to the writing – but as she completes them, you will be able to see her progress. You can also preview their application content if they enable preview when they invited you as a recommender, but this is not required. You will also be able to see her deadline selection for Grinnell College – she is choosing to apply Early Decision.







2. **School Report** - To submit your school report click on the 'school report' icon. Here you will complete information related to your school – some of this information is the same as what is in your profile tab.







- Class Rank and GPA Note whether you provide students with a Class Rank or GPA (Grade Point Average). It is okay to answer no. Most UK students do not report GPA.
- Curriculum Please answer these questions honestly, keeping in mind that US universities
  want to see applicants working hard in their final year of school and the most competitive
  universities will want to see students have selected the most rigorous options available to
  them. An important factor for US universities is the difficulty of a pupil's course selection
  relative to other students at your school.
- **Ratings** This section will only appear in the application if you answered "Yes" to the question regarding applicant's academic ratings in the School Profile section of the application. If this section appears for you then please answer the questions honestly.
- **Disciplinary History** Note that disciplinary action can come into play in the admissions decision. However, it is important to be upfront about this information.
- **Transcripts** Please use the guidance below to answer these guestions.
  - Please indicate number of official transcripts you can provide for the applicant. 1
  - Current or most recent transcript —Once you are ready to submit the student transcript please attach it here. Visit the <u>school documents</u> section on our website for more information and for a template you can use to create the transcript.
  - Are current courses listed on the transcript? Yes
  - Are college entrance examination scores included with or visible on the transcript?
     No
  - o Transcript Affirmation Please read through the statement and check the box.
  - Please indicate the most recent grades included on the transcript accompanying this form – If your student is currently in their final year of school then you will answer "Final junior year grades". If your student has completed their final year of school then you will answer "Final senior year grades."
  - o I recommend this student Please answer honestly.
- International School Because your school is located in the UK, you are considered an
  international school to a US university. Please answer the questions in this section as they
  relate to your school. For the question regarding the marking or grading scale used in your
  school and its approximate equivalence in the US we have provided the below guide, but
  please feel free to adjust as you see fit.

Please indicate the marking or grading scale used in your school and its approximate equivalence to the A-F scale commonly used in the United States:
A (Excellent) \*
A\* and A

B (Very Good) \*
B

C (Average) \*
C

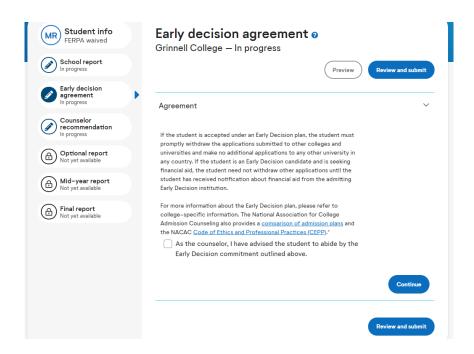
D (Poor) \*
D and E

F (Failing) \*
U





3. **Early Decision Agreement** – This tab will only appear if the student is applying to a university Early Decision. As a representative of the school, you will need to review and complete this portion fully as Early Decision requires confirmation from the school that should the student receive acceptance and sufficient financial aid they will definitely attend the university and will withdraw all other applications. **This should not be taken lightly** and we recommend that you have a conversation with the student before signing this to ensure they will be attending the university if they are accepted. Universities view this as a binding contact between the school, university and student. Should the student later decide not to attend, this could have a negative impact on future candidates from your school interested in the university for early decision.



- **4. Fee Waiver** This tab will only appear if the student has requested an application fee waiver. You will select as many of these indicators of economic need as necessary.
- 5. **Counsellor Recommendation** Visit the <u>school documents</u> section on our website for more information on writing your recommendation letter.

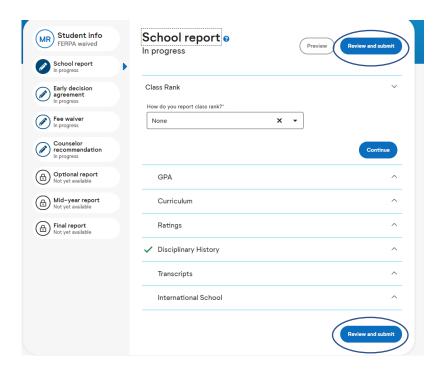
Once you are ready to submit the recommendation letter please attach it using the 'upload' button. You can only submit this form once and after submission will be unable to modify the form in any way. You will be given the opportunity to preview your document before finalising the upload.

Please note that you are only able to submit the Counsellor Recommendation letter. Your colleagues providing Teacher Recommendation letters must submit their letters on their own Common Application account, for which there is guidance further down in this document.





6. **Review and Submit** – Once you complete your Counsellor Profile, the School Report, the Early Decision Agreement (if applicable), the Fee Waiver (if applicable) and the Counsellor Recommendation then on the top of the Workspace tab you will now "Review and Submit" each of these sections. (Please note: If you cannot click on the Review and Submit link then this is because you have not yet completed all the required questions in these sections and you will need to go back to complete any unanswered required questions.)



When you click on the "Review and Submit" link you will review the information you have entered and will check the box that you have reviewed the PDF and wish to proceed. Review the information fully, check the box and click "Continue". At this point you will affirm a statement, sign your name and submit the section.

Remember, forms submitted online via the Common Application **cannot** be altered or changed after submission. Therefore, please be sure to carefully review before submitting each section. The forms will be submitted once and then sent automatically to each university where the student applies. Please triple check that you've uploaded the correct and final documents before hitting submit.

Please note that there is no overall application submission. After you submit each individual section you will receive a green tick next to the section name. Once you have a green tick next to each of the relevant sections your work is done!

Note that at this time you will not be able to access the Optional, Mid Year and Final Report sections and that these sections will be completed later in the year if needed. See below for more information.

If you would like reassurance that all the required sections have been completed, you can ask your student to log into their Common Application where they will be able to check whether you have submitted all the required documents.





#### **Optional, Mid Year and Final Reports**

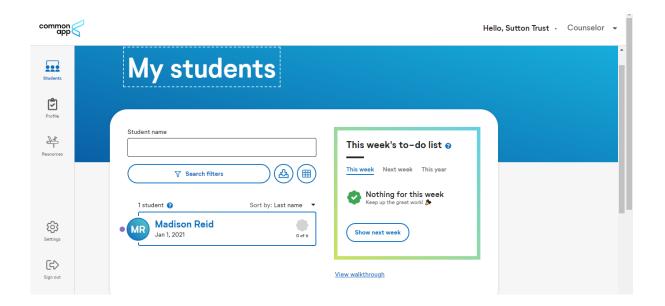
Please note that these reports are not submitted alongside the initial Common Application submission. According to the Common Application website, "The Optional, Mid Year, and Final Report forms are intended to be used as a way of updating colleges about a student's academic progress subsequent to submitting the initial School Report form."

**The Optional Report:** There is an option to submit an additional grade report, but it is not required. This is for schools that wish to send updated grades at a point in the year other than Mid and Final Reports (ie for Early Decision and Early Action students). You may also report any changes to the original school report and have the option to update your evaluation. It is unlikely you will need to complete this unless there has been a significant change in the student's performance or circumstances. Please note that this form can only be submitted once throughout the school year.

**The Mid Year Report:** This form is based on the US semester system, in which American students would likely have grades and an updated GPA/class rank to report in January. Additionally, those on block scheduling would have 3-4 classes in the first semester and a new set of classes to report for the second semester. Many universities however still require a Mid Year Report for international students taking different curricula.

For the Mid Year Report you will have to answer a few questions on the Common Application and submit an updated transcript. If the predicted grades are the same as what you originally submitted, you may upload the same transcript again. Of course, if the predictions have changed, this should be noted.

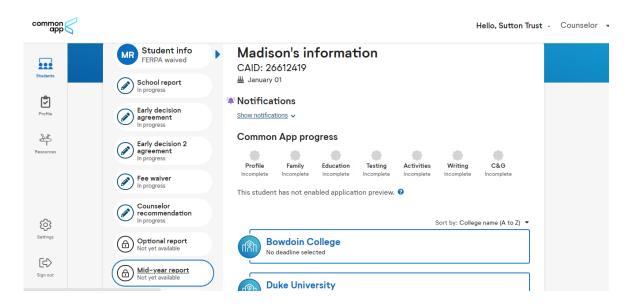
- 1. Log in to your Common Application account here: <a href="https://recommend.commonapp.org/login">https://recommend.commonapp.org/login</a>
- 2. Click on "Students" and then clink the link to the specific student name.



3. You'll then see a toolbar on the left side. You'll see the "Mid Year Report" as an option. Click on that.







- 4. Then, you'll see a series of questions you will go through (which you've already answered) in your initial submission for the student. They will be: Class Rank, GPA, Transcripts, and Summary. You'll see that most things are automatically filled in. If they are not filled in then just answer the questions so that each of the four sections has a green check mark in the corner.
- 5. You will then submit a transcript even if it's unchanged. Please indicate the most recent grades included on the transcript accompanying this form If your student is currently in their final year of school then you will answer "Final junior year grades". If your student has completed their final year of school then you will answer "Final senior year grades."
- 6. You will then have a 'Summary' tab which has some questions asking about if there have been changes to the student's courses, disciplinary status, criminal history, and if you want to update your original evaluation of the student. Just answer these questions truthfully.
- 7. You'll then have the opportunity to submit this and it will generate a PDF. Please check over this carefully before the final submission. Then, finally click on review and submit the document. A green check will appear next to the words Mid Year Report which will indicate that your submission is complete.

**Note**: US universities have asked us to suggest not to submit all of the school forms at once. They may delete your forms, assuming you submitted them early in error. The exception is gap year/mature students – if you are not regularly in touch and will not have updates, note this in the School Report. In this instance, you may want to ask the university if you can skip sending the Mid-Year and Final Reports.





**Final Report:** Please note that in order to submit a Final Report in the Common Application system, you need to submit a Mid-Year Report.

This form is based on the US semester system, by which American students would likely have grades and an updated GPA/class rank to report in early summer. The questions are very similar to the School and Mid-Year Reports. You should submit the Final Report when students get their A-level, IB (or equivalent) results. You will have to submit a final transcript including the student's actual results.

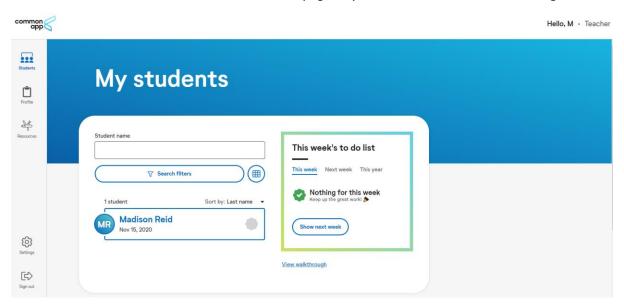
Please note that if the online system has closed before your transcripts were finalised and uploaded into your account, you will likely need to email the final transcript to the university.





#### Teacher dashboard – setting up your profile

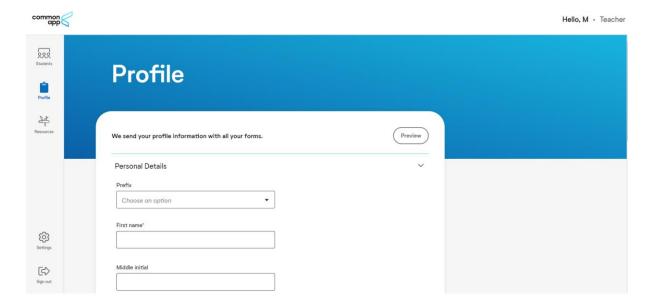
1. Main dashboard and Students tab – The main page of your dashboard looks like the image below.



Below the search bar you will see a full list of all students assigned to you. You can also search them individually.

The to do list will highlight upcoming deadlines.

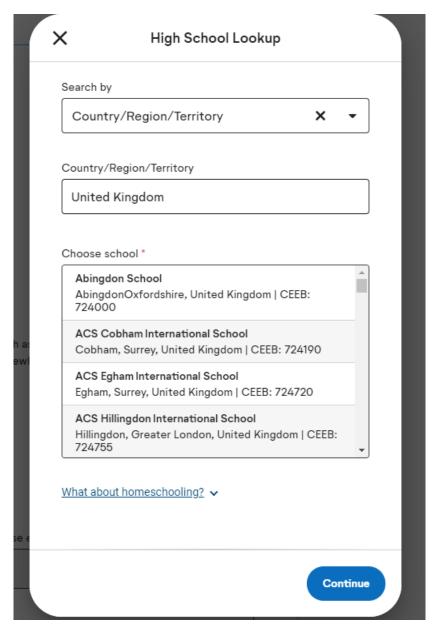
2. **Profile tab and personal details** — Before uploading any documents, you will need to complete all sections in this tab. In the personal details section you will fill in your name, contact information, etc.







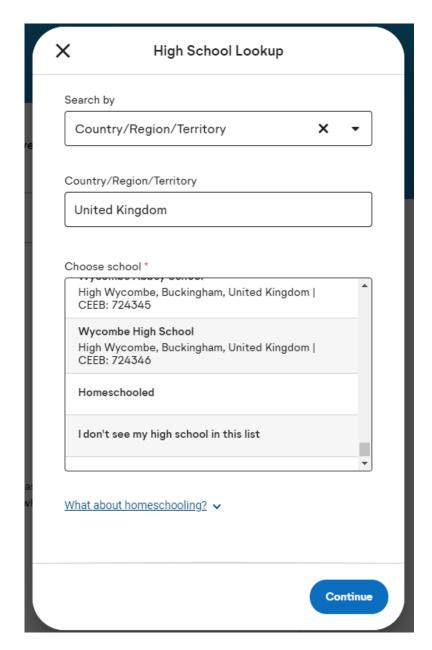
School Details – Scroll down after completing the personal details section and you will be asked
to fill in the school's details. This involves looking up the school on their online database. You can
do so by selecting 'Country/Region/Territory' in the 'Search by' box, and typing in 'United
Kingdom'.



If your school is not on the list you need to scroll to the bottom of the 'choose school' list and select 'I don't see my high school in this list'.







You will then fill in the school's name and contact information. Note, in the US public school is equivalent to state school or an academy and a charter school would be most similar to a free school in the UK.





;	X School Information
	High School Name*
V€	Country/Region/Territory*  United Kingdom
ı	School Type*  Choose an option   ▼
ı	Address Line 1
ı	Address Line 2
ı	Address Line 3
a as	City
L	State or Province
e e	Back Continue

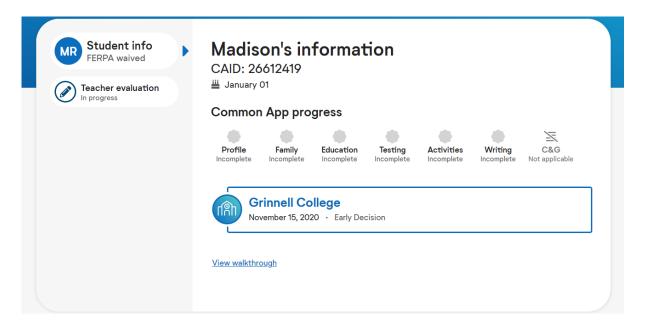
4. **Applicant's academic ratings** – "Do you complete applicants' academic ratings on the Common Application Teacher Evaluation?" If you answer yes to this question, then later in the application process you will answer sixteen questions where you will be asked to compare your student to other students in their class in areas such as academic achievement, creative thought, productive discussion and motivation. If you feel that your student rates highly in comparison to their peers, then you may wish to answer "yes" to this question. Otherwise you may wish to answer "no".





#### Your students – submitting documents as a teacher

1. After you finish the Profile section you can move on to uploading documents in the Common Application by clicking on the 'Students' tab, and then the student's name. We recommend that students waive their FERPA rights, which means that they will not be reading their recommendation letters, and that you are not sharing their recommendation letters with them. This maintains the credibility of the letters in the eyes of the university.



- 2. **Teacher Evaluation** Select the subject area for your student.
- 3. **Ratings** This section will only appear in the application if you answered "Yes" to the question regarding applicant's academic ratings in the Teacher Profile section of the application. If this section appears for you then please answer the questions honestly.
- 4. Written Evaluation You will be invited to answer four short questions about your student.

"How long have you know this student and in what context?"

Use this space to state in what capacity you know the student, similarly to how you may have done in the opening to your letter.

"What are the first words that come to your mind to describe this student?"

Use this space to confirm your student's qualities as set out in your letter. This is also an opportunity to add any more detail or descriptors for your student not included in your letter.

"In which grade level(s) was the student enrolled when you taught them?" is where you indicate at which point you began to teach the student:





Teachers in England and Wales - Please note that grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 correspond to Years 10, 11, 12 and 13.

Teachers in Northern Ireland – Please note that grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 correspond to Years 11, 12, 13, and 14.

Teachers in Scotland – Please note that grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 correspond to S3, S4, S5 and S6.

"List the courses in which you have taught this student, including the level of course difficulty (AP, IB, accelerated, Cambridge, honors, elective; 100-level, 200-level; etc.)."

Use this space to confirm the subject and qualification that you teach the student. Please indicate that they follow a standardised national curriculum and whether the student is taking a rigorous courseload (the IB, Welsh Baccalaureate, A Levels, BTEC and Highers Qualifications would all be considered rigorous).

5. **Uploading your letter** - Visit the <u>school documents</u> section on our website for more information on writing your recommendation letter.

Once you are ready to submit the recommendation letter please attach it using the 'upload' button at the bottom of this Evaluation section. You can only submit this form once and after submission will be unable to modify the form in any way. You will be given the opportunity to preview your document before finalising the upload.

5. **Review and Submit** – Once you complete all the required components of the Teacher Profile and Teacher Evaluation, on the top of the Workspace tab you will now "Review and Submit" your documents. When you click on the "Review and Submit" link, you will review the information you entered and will check the box that you have reviewed the PDF and wish to proceed. Once you have reviewed the information fully and checked the box click "Continue". At this point you will affirm a statement, sign your name and submit the application. Please note that after completing this step you will no longer be able to make any changes to the Common Application or the recommendation you submitted.

Please note that there is no overall application submission. After you submit this page you will receive a green tick next to the section name. Once you have a green tick your work is done!

If you would like reassurance that your recommendation has been submitted, you can ask your student to log into their Common Application where they will be able to check whether you have submitted.