



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 www.commonapp.org.

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.



Recommendation letters and forms play an important role in the application process. As a recommender, you have the opportunity to provide insight into an applicant's strengths and aspirations.

- Name of student:
 Email address:
 Student type: First Year
- Activate your account:
 - Your username is:
 Please visit our website to activate your account

After creating your account you'll be able to submit materials for all students who invite you as a recommender. The activation link will be active for 90 days.

If you do not plan on submitting materials on behalf of this student you can decline this request.

If you prefer not to submit recommendations online you can opt out of using the Common App system. Opting out means you will need to mail hard copies of all recommendations to each college on behalf of your students.

For more information about how to complete recommender forms in the Common App, check out the Recommender Guide.

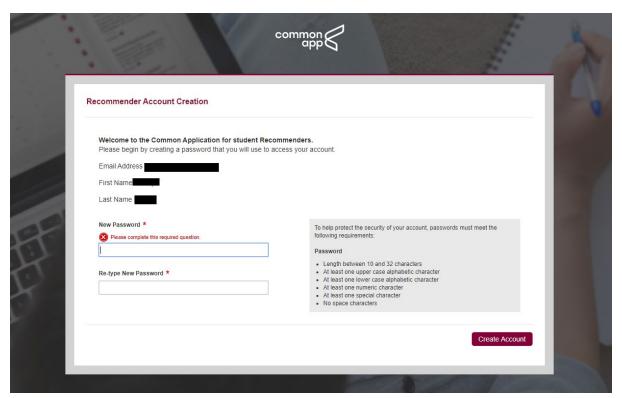
Have a question? We're here to help 24/7/365

Your friends at Common App

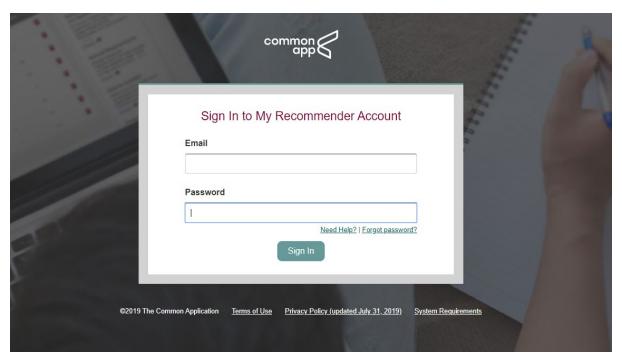




4. If you click on the "activate your account" option in the email, you will be prompted to create an account with the Common Application website.



5. After you have created a password, you will be taken to the Common Application homepage. Sign in using your email and new password.

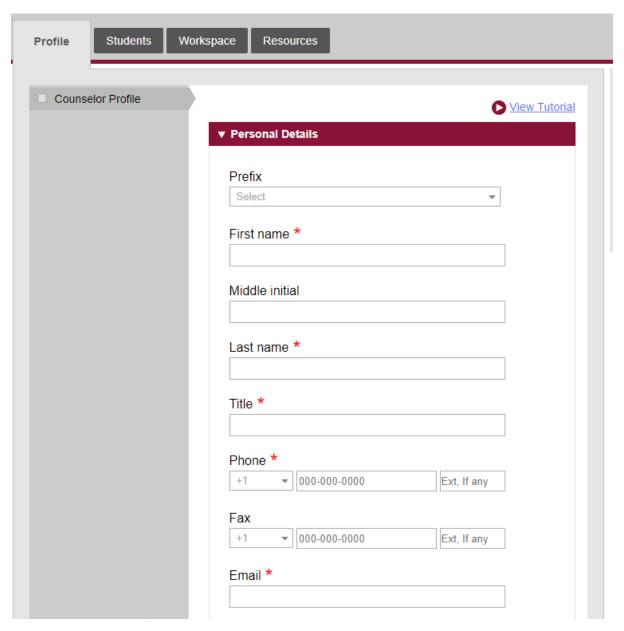






Counselor Profile (distinct from Teacher Profile)

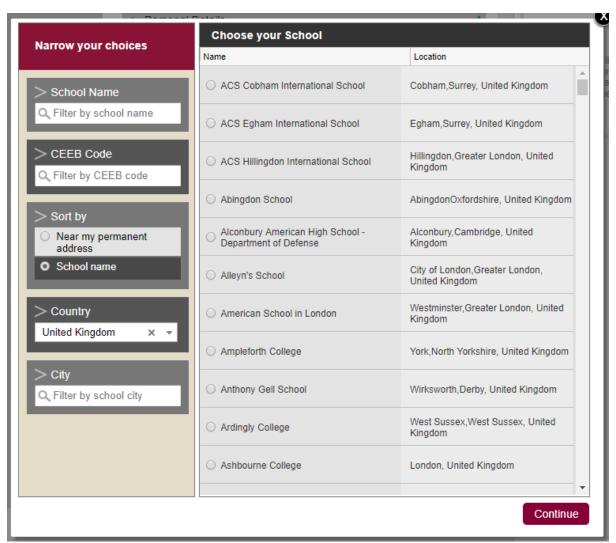
1. **Personal Details –** After logging in you will be taken to a "Counselor Profile" screen to first fill in your details, name, contact information, etc.







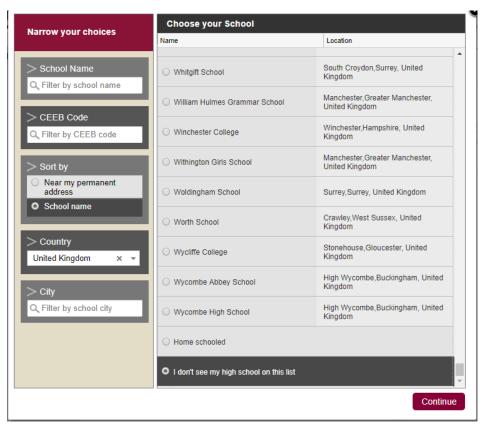
2. **School Details** – You will then be asked to fill in the school's details. This involves looking up the school on their online database. You can do so by clicking the "Find School" option and selecting your country as "United Kingdom".







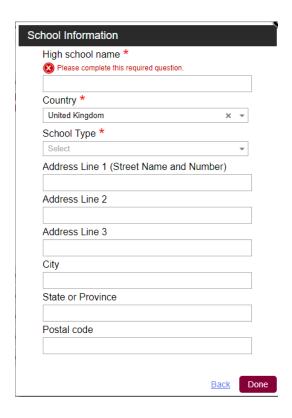
3. If your school is not on the list you can select "I don't see my high school on this list" at the bottom of the options.



4. 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.







- 5. **School Profile** First you will fill in questions about the school.
 - **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 complete (Bachelor's) degrees or two-year (Further Education, Access courses, etc.) degrees.
 - 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 Fulbright website) so that you can more easily complete this section.
 - 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.
 - 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".
 - 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 our <u>School Documents</u> page for more information.

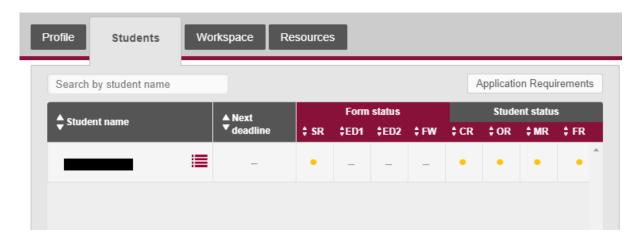
- 6. Class Rank and GPA Note whether you provide students with a Class Rank or GPA (Grade Point Average). It is okay to answer no. Most UK students do not report GPA.
- 7. **Transcripts -** Please use the guidance below to answer these questions.
 - Are current courses listed on the transcript? Yes
 - 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."
 - International School Because your school is located in the UK, you are considered an international school to a US university. 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.
- 8. **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.



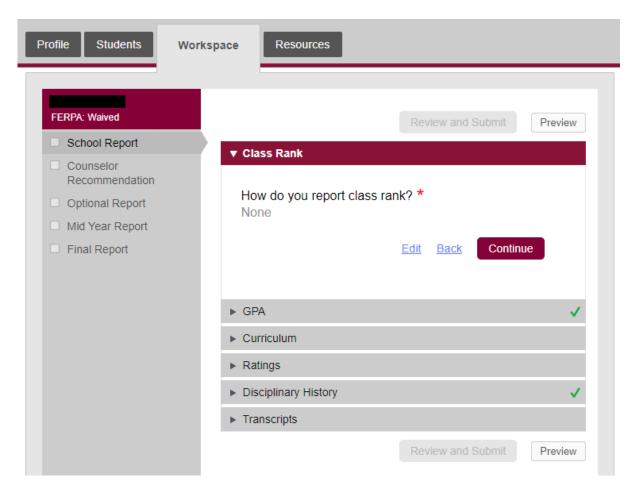


Common Application for counsellors

1. After you have finished the Profile section you can move on to the next tab in the Common Application for completing the required components for each student. You will start by clicking on the student's name.



2. This will take you to the Workspace tab where you will complete information about the student and further questions about the grading and ranking system of the school. Some of these questions will be the same as the ones you have just completed on your profile page.







3. School Report

- 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 questions.
 - o 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 our <u>School Documents</u> page for more information.
 - 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."
- 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) *

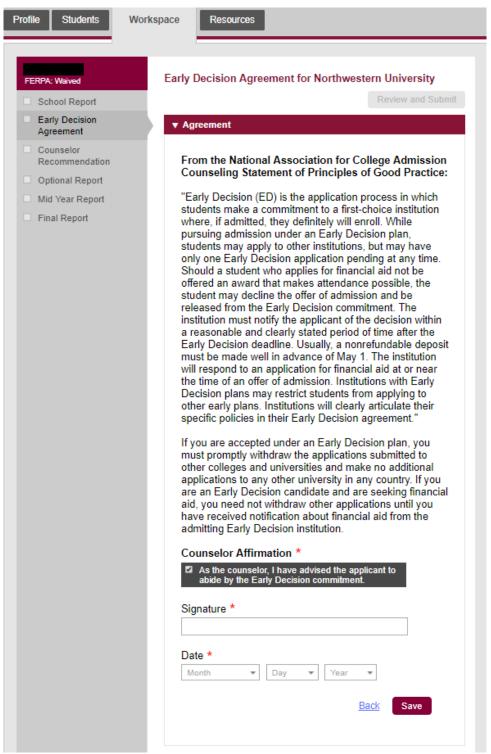




4. Early Decision Agreement – This tab will only appear if the student is applying to a university Early Decision. As a representative of the school, you will need to review and complete this portion fully as Early Decision requires confirmation from the school that should the student receive acceptance and sufficient financial aid they will definitely attend the university. 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.



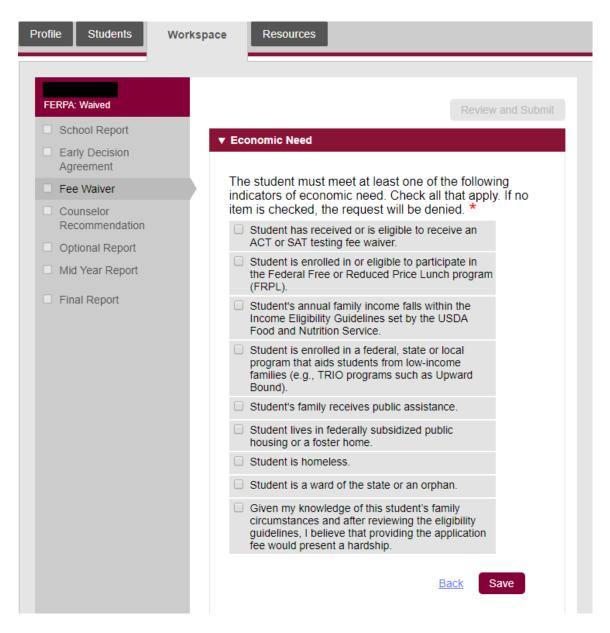




5. Fee Waiver – This tab will only appear if the student has requested an application fee waiver. You will select as many of these indicators of economic need as necessary.







6. **Counsellor Recommendation** - Once you are ready to submit the recommendation letter please attach it here. Visit our <u>School Documents</u> page for further information.





7. **Review and Submit** – Once you complete your Counselor 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 have a green tick next to the Optional, Mid Year and Final Report sections as 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.





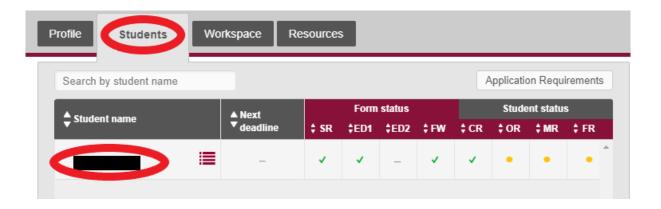
Optional, Mid Year and Final Reports

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, by 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. Please note you will have to submit a transcript. If there are no updates to what you submitted for the School Report, that is OK. If possible, in the evaluation, comment on the students' academic performance and extracurricular involvement during the autumn and any achievements or improvements the student has made.

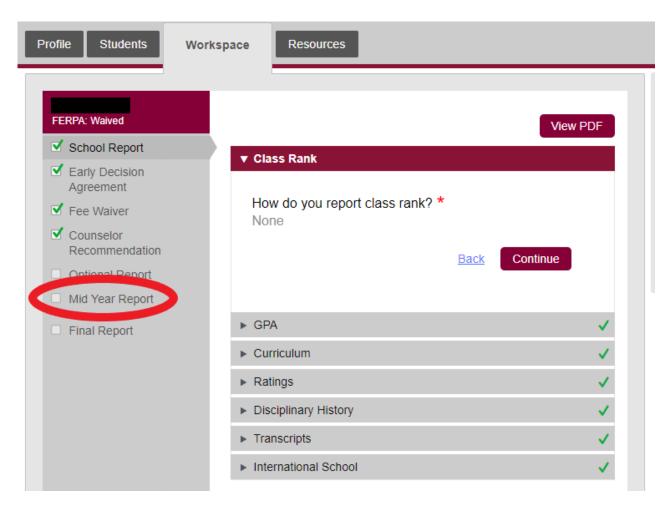
- 1. Log in to your Common Application account. Remember to ensure you're on the "Recommender" tab.
- 2. Click on "Students" and then clink the link to the specific student name.



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



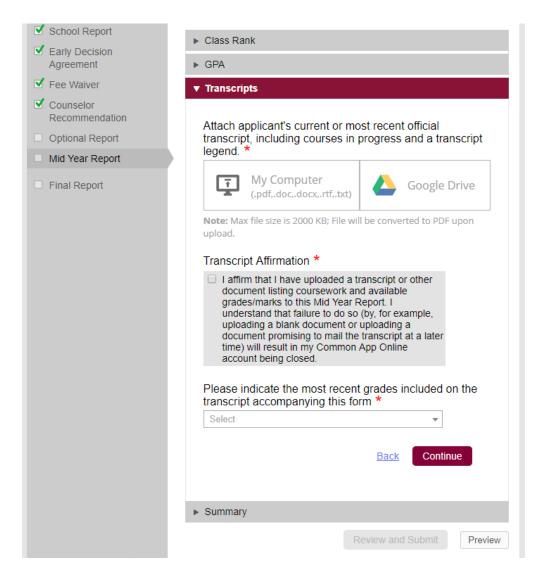




- 4. Then, you'll see a series of questions you will go through (which you've already answered) in your initial submission for the student. They will be: Class Rank, GPA, Transcripts, and Summary. You'll see that most things are automatically filled in. If they are not filled in then just answer the questions so that each of the four sections has a green check mark in the corner.
- 5. Remember, you must 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. If possible, in the evaluation, comment on the students' academic performance and extracurricular involvement during the academic year. You will have to submit a final transcript including the student's actual results.

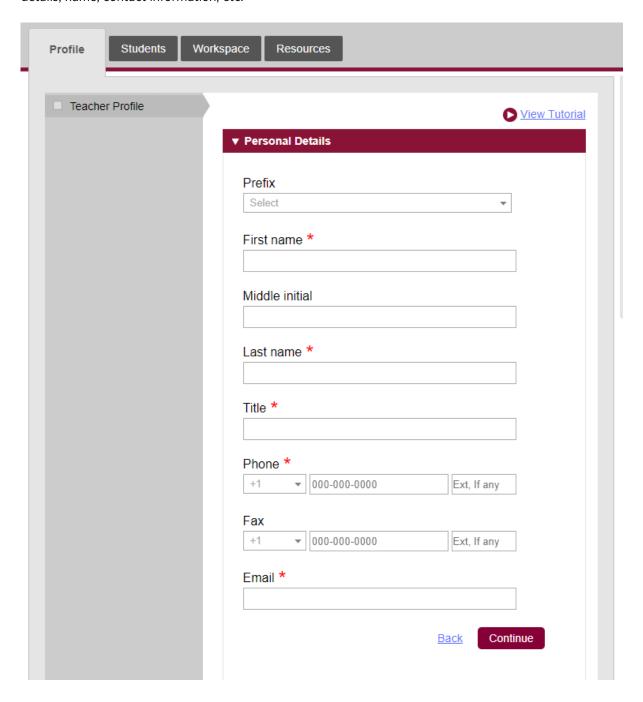
Please note that if the online system has closed before your transcripts were finalised and uploaded into your account, you will need to email the final transcript to the university.





Teacher Profile

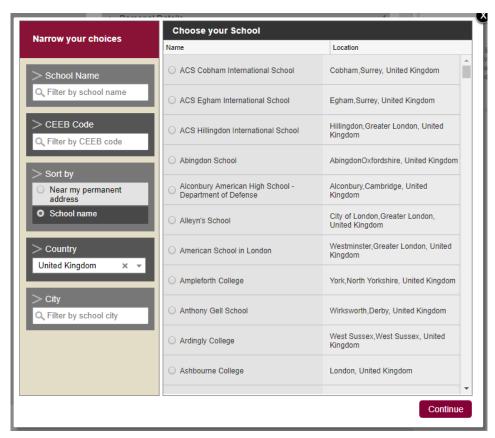
1. **Personal Details –** After logging in you will be taken to a "Teacher Profile" screen to first fill in your details, name, contact information, etc.







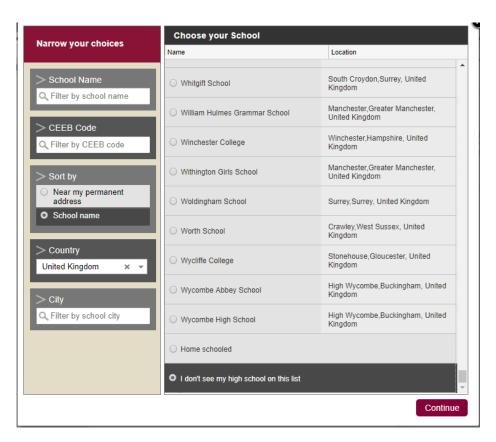
2. **School Details** – You will then be asked to fill in the school's details. This involves looking up the school on their online database. You can do so by clicking the "Find School" option and selecting your country as "United Kingdom".



3. If your school is not on the list you can select "I don't see my high school on this list" at the bottom of the options.







4. 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.

High school name *	
Please complete this required question.	
Country *	
United Kingdom ×	-
School Type *	
Select	~
Address Line 1 (Street Name and Number)	
Address Line 2	
Address Line 3	
City	
State or Province	
Postal code	





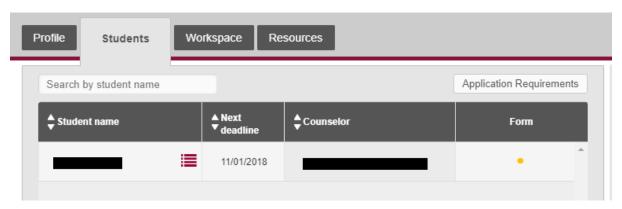
5. Applicant's academic ratings – "Do you complete applicants' academic ratings on the Common Application Teacher Evaluation?" If you answer yes to this question, then later in the application process you will answer sixteen questions where you will be asked to compare your student to other students 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".





Common Application for teachers

 After you finish the Profile section you can move on to the next tab in the Common Application for completing the required components for each student. You will start by clicking on the student's name.



- 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** This will be the letter of recommendation. For more information, visit our <u>School Documents</u> page. Once you are ready to submit the recommendation letter please attach it here.
 - English and Welsh teachers Please note that grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 correspond to Years 10. 11. 12 and 13.
 - Northern Irish teachers Please note that grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 correspond to Years 11, 12, 13, and 14.
 - Scottish teachers Please note that grade levels 9, 10, 11 and 12 correspond to S3, S4, S5 and S6.

Note: If the student would like to submit an extra reference letter (example: from a work experience or extracurricular activity) in addition to the guidance counsellor and two teacher letters, you may wish to first confirm with the university how they would like it submitted. Typically, the referee can mail the additional letter directly to the university undergraduate admissions office.

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.

Note: If after submitting the forms you realise you made a mistake, Common Application's Support Page has provided the following information:

The Common App Solutions Center is not permitted to make updates to any submitted forms.

The Common Application organization evaluated the issue of counselors and teachers who want to retrieve or edit previously submitted online forms because they addressed their recommendations to specific institutions without realizing it (despite the instructions), or wanting to change answers on the already submitted form. They also evaluated the issue of counselors submitting updated or incorrect documents. Unfortunately, in these cases, the Common Application organization must reiterate the policy that documents cannot be retrieved or edited once submitted. Schools are aware that mistakes happen and students are not penalized.

<u>Recommenders</u>: You can contact the student to have them remove your assignment to any school besides the school named in your letter. You may also contact the school to find out if they will accept another letter sent directly to them. There is no way to retract it once it is submitted.

<u>Counselors</u>: The Optional Report may be used at any point in the academic year to submit updated grades and/or transcripts, as well as to correct errors previously submitted on any recommendation form.

Keep in mind that the Optional Report form can only be submitted **once** during the application season.