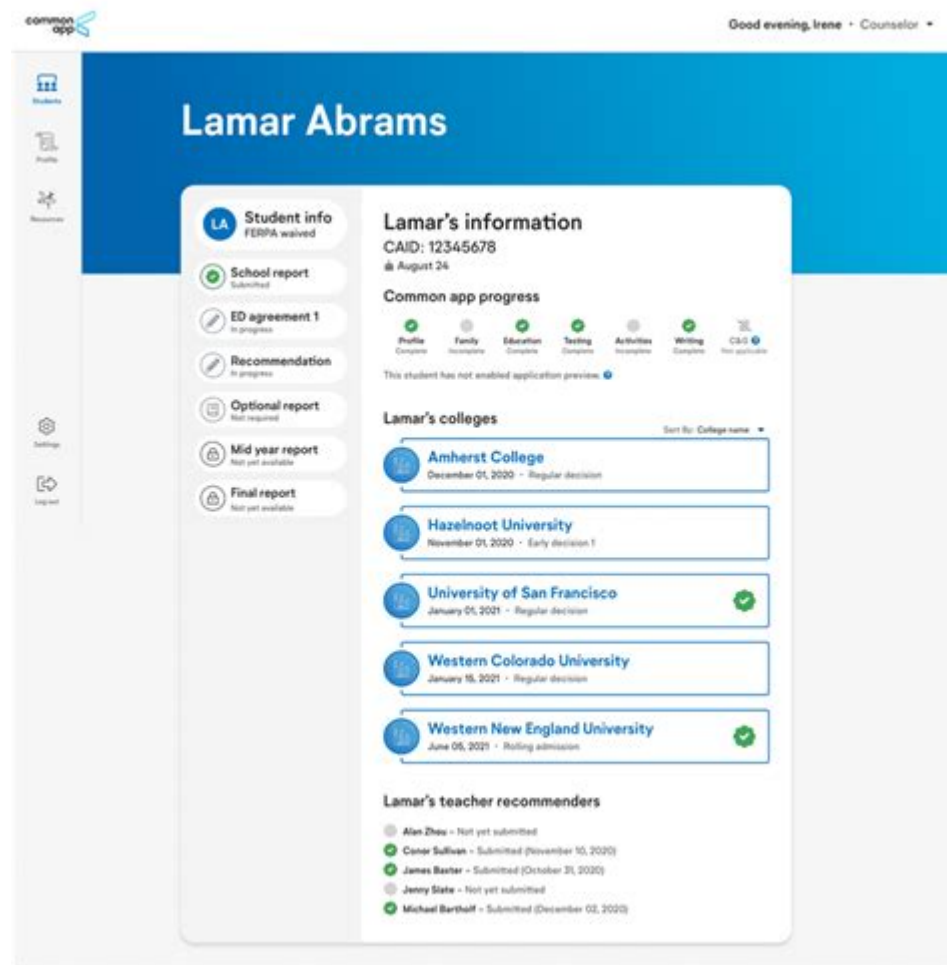# Common App Recommender Guide

Common App Recommender Guide

The college application process can be daunting, and one of the most critical components is the recommendation letters. The Common Application (commonly referred to as the Common App) is widely used by students applying to colleges and universities across the United States and around the world. In this guide, we will explore the role of recommenders in the Common App, the types of recommenders, how to choose the right ones, tips for writing effective letters, and the overall process for submitting recommendations.

Understanding the Common App Recommendation System

The Common App is a platform that allows students to apply to multiple colleges with a single application. One of the key features of this system is the ability for recommenders to submit letters of recommendation on behalf of students. This section will delve into the purpose of these letters and the different types of recommenders.

Purpose of Recommendation Letters

Recommendation letters serve several important purposes in the college application process:

1. Validation of Achievements: They provide a third-party perspective on a student's accomplishments, character, and potential.
2. Insight into Character: Colleges are not only interested in academic performance but also in the character and personality of applicants.
3. Contextual Background: Recommenders can offer context about a student's circumstances, challenges, and growth that may not be evident in other parts of the application.

Types of Recommenders

The Common App allows students to submit recommendations from various sources. The most common types of recommenders include:

– Teachers: Typically academic teachers who can speak to the student's performance and potential in their subject area.
– Counselors: School counselors who provide insight into a student's overall experience, involvement, and school environment.
– Others: This can include coaches, employers, or community service leaders who can speak about the student's skills, work ethic, and character.

Choosing the Right Recommenders

Selecting the right recommenders is crucial in creating a compelling application. Here are some guidelines to help students make informed choices.

Consider Academic Performance and Subject Relevance

1. Subject Relevance: Choose teachers from subjects that align with your intended major or field of study. For example, if you're interested in engineering, a recommendation from a math or science teacher would be beneficial.
2. Strong Academic Performance: Select teachers who can attest to your academic abilities and have witnessed your dedication in their classroom.

Assess Relationship Quality

1. Personal Connection: Choose recommenders who know you well and can provide detailed insights into your personality, character, and achievements.
2. Positive Experience: Consider those with whom you have had positive interactions, as they are more likely to write enthusiastic and supportive letters.

Diversity of Perspectives

- Variety of Roles: Aim for a mix of recommenders, such as a teacher and a counselor, or a teacher and a coach. This diversity can provide a well-rounded view of you as a candidate.
- Broad Experiences: Recommenders from different areas of your life (academic, extracurricular, work) can highlight various aspects of your skills and character.

Guidelines for Recommenders

Once the recommenders have been chosen, guiding them on how to write effective letters can be beneficial. Here are essential tips for recommenders:

Letter Structure and Content

1. Introduction: Begin with a brief introduction of how the recommender knows the student, including the context and duration of their relationship.
2. Specific Examples: Use specific anecdotes that illustrate the student's skills, character, and achievements. General praise without examples lacks impact.
3. Personal Attributes: Discuss personal attributes that make the student a good fit for college, such as resilience, leadership, and teamwork.

Be Honest and Authentic

- Genuine Assessment: Recommenders should provide a truthful and balanced account of the student's strengths and weaknesses.
- Avoid Clichés: Instead of generic phrases, recommenders should strive for originality and specificity in their writing.

Keep It Concise and Focused

- Length: Aim for a recommendation letter that is one to two pages long, maintaining a clear focus on the student's capabilities and potential.
- Clarity: Use clear language and avoid jargon to ensure the letter is easily understood.

The Recommendation Submission Process

Understanding the submission process is crucial for both students and recommenders. Here's a step-by-step guide.

For Students

1. Invite Recommenders: Use the Common App platform to invite recommenders to submit their letters. Provide them with ample time (ideally several weeks) before deadlines.
2. Provide Context: Share relevant information, such as your resume, personal statement, and thoughts on your college goals to help them write a more personalized letter.
3. Set Deadlines: Clearly communicate the deadlines for submission to ensure timely delivery.

For Recommenders

1. Accept the Invitation: Respond to the student's request through the Common App system.
2. Draft the Letter: Write and finalize the letter, making sure to adhere to the guidelines mentioned earlier.
3. Submit on Time: Recommenders should submit their letters before the student's application deadline to avoid any last-minute issues.

Conclusion

The role of recommenders in the Common App process is pivotal in helping colleges understand who a student is beyond their grades and test scores. By choosing the right recommenders, guiding them effectively, and ensuring a smooth submission process, students can significantly enhance their college applications. A thoughtfully written recommendation letter can provide valuable insights and make a lasting impression on admission committees, ultimately influencing a student's journey towards higher education. As students and recommenders navigate this process together, clear communication and collaboration can lead to the best outcomes.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of the Common App recommender guide?

The Common App recommender guide is designed to assist educators and recommenders in understanding the application process, providing insights on how to write effective letters of recommendation, and ensuring that they meet the requirements set by the Common Application.

Who can serve as a recommender in the Common App process?

Recommenders can include teachers, school counselors, and other individuals who can provide insight into the applicant's character, academic performance, and extracurricular involvement. It's important that recommenders are familiar with the student's achievements and abilities.

What are some key tips for writing a strong recommendation letter according to the Common App guide?

Key tips include personalizing the letter by sharing specific anecdotes about the student, highlighting their strengths and contributions, and being honest and specific about their capabilities and potential. Recommenders should also follow the word limit and deadlines specified by the Common App.

How does the Common App help recommenders submit their letters?

The Common App provides a streamlined platform for recommenders to submit their letters electronically. They receive a link via email, which directs them to the application system where they can upload their letter and provide any additional information required.

What resources are available for recommenders who have questions about the Common App?

Recommenders can access various resources including the Common App website, which offers a dedicated section for recommenders, FAQs, and instructional materials. Additionally, webinars and training sessions are often available to help guide recommenders through the process.

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