



**ARE YOU READY
FOR APPLICATION
SUBMISSION?**

10 Ways to Know

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You've worked for months on planning your school list, writing all the essays, and getting everything in near-perfect shape to send to your top-choice colleges. If you've proofread multiple times and you've tried your best to frame everything as impressively as you can, you should feel confident in everything you've written so far. But the question might still remain on your mind—how do you know you're ready to submit?

You might be waiting for some positive sign from the universe to let you know it's time, but it's more logical to go through a checklist and decide whether you've done everything you can before you hit that fateful button. We've provided you with 10 ways to determine whether you are all set.

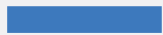
1. You've carefully typed in all your information

When you're filling out an application system such as the [Common App](#) or [Coalition App](#), you're adding a lot of information. You're human—mistakes can happen. So, when reading back, make sure that you've included all your data, especially entries with numbers in it, correctly. Check whether you've accidentally added your school address where your home address should be, or if you've inserted "513" in your phone number instead of "315." Verify that all your grades and scores have been correctly added. Confirm whether you've listed all of the applicable standardized test scores and whether the scores you've entered are accurate! The last thing you want is admissions officers seeing SAT scores that don't match up with the official score report. So be very careful of misplaced numbers and facts when checking that you're ready.

2. You've answered all school-specific questions (even the hidden ones)

Check whether you've answered all the supplemental essays for each of your schools, including the hidden ones. You might have just completed your responses for the prompts under the "writing supplement" tab without even being aware that there are essays included within the "activities" or "academics" tabs. Stanford, for example, includes the question "Briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work or family responsibilities. (50-150 words)" under the activities questions on top of asking other longer and shorter prompts under the writing questions. Don't leave this for the last second! In fact, for many schools, such as Vanderbilt, the only supplemental essay is the one hidden under the activities tab. Carefully go through all of the tabs within the Common App before sitting down to write your essays.

Stanford



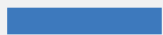
Activities ▲

Briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work or family responsibilities. (50-150 words)* *

B *I* U []

Min: 50 / Max: 1500/150 words

Vanderbilt



Please briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities or work experiences. (200-400 words)*

B *I* U []

Min: 150 / Max: 4000/400 words

3. You've mentioned the right college

On the topic of supplemental questions, when you're juggling a ton of essays for multiple schools, obviously there will be some overlap. And it's more than okay for you to reword some of them a little and use them for similar prompts asked by a different college. However, when doing so, you need to be very careful. Before you're ready to submit, check whether your essays correspond with the correct university on the Common App. It's not going to look very good if your "Why Duke" essay mentions the word "Harvard"!

4. You've got consistent formatting for your activities list

One of the most common mistakes that students make is inconsistently formatting their activities list. If you're having doubts about whether you're ready, check your activities list first. Watch out for places where you've ended some of your extracurricular descriptions with periods, but not others. Admissions officers will not appreciate that. Other errors to watch out for are inconsistent capitalization and not maintaining a clear order when talking about your various roles. Make sure you haven't written "President & Founder" for one activity but "Founder & President" for the next. Decide on one format and stick with it.

5. You've gone through plenty of drafts for your essays

This one should go without saying, but your writing makes up some of the most important parts of your application. Whether it's your personal statement or your supplemental components, these are effective ways to convey more information about yourself and convince admissions officers that you would meaningfully contribute to campus. How you present yourself is important—and you definitely do not want any typos in your writing. Editing once or twice is not enough, you'll want to submit highly polished work.

6. You've had one (or two) other pairs of eyes take a look

Continuing from the last point, don't just rely on yourself to catch all of the errors in your essays and the other parts of your application. It can undoubtedly help to have other people take a look, particularly people such as your teachers and guidance counselors, who all have experience with college applications and know the process well. Having a second or third opinion can help guide you towards areas that need improvement and also help affirm that you are indeed all set to submit.

7. Providing your recommenders with everything they need

Before you submit, check in with your recommenders to verify that they have everything they need for submitting their letters, if they haven't done so already. Remind them of the deadline dates, and ask them if there is anything else that would be helpful for them to write a strong letter. Ensure that you've included the correct email addresses and names of your teachers and counselors. Finally, verify that you've waived the FERPA rights for viewing your recommendation letters.

8. You've given some thought to "optional" components

Sometimes colleges have essays or questions that are optional and there are two ways to approach these:

- Ask yourself if it is *really* optional - i.e., Harvard's supplemental essays are technically optional, but you don't actually have a real chance of standing out among the thousands of applicants if you don't answer them. Even if a component says it's not required, carefully consider whether your application would benefit from answering it.
- Think carefully about whether it's right for you - Some prompts are targeted towards certain demographics, such as Duke's question for LGBTQ+ students to elaborate on their identity. Think about whether the prompt applies to you and if it would make sense for you to answer it, especially when compared to other students who have gone through experiences and circumstances that differ from yours.

Before you've decided completely, go over your optional questions and determine how much it would benefit you to write responses to them.

9. You've taken advantage of the Additional Information section

Before you're ready to be done, think carefully about whether you want to use the [Additional Information](#) section that exists in the application system. You could use this component to explain a health situation that might have affected your application, provide further context on a grade that is an outlier in one of your classes, or if you had any emergencies that might have impacted you deeply. If your school system follows a non-traditional route, you can go into more depth to explain how the system works. You have to use your judgment correctly, however, because this is not the place to continue your activities list or personal statement! A lot of times, admissions officers find out about extenuating circumstances after the admissions decision has already been made and they wish they had understood these things earlier. Don't mix this up with the COVID-19 question either!

10. You've taken a look with fresh eyes

Finally, don't write, edit, and proofread your application materials and essays in one sitting. You should start with plenty of time in hand so that you can take space from the components. This way, you can step away, get some rest, and come back to read your essays and activities list with fresh eyes. You'll probably catch some errors you otherwise wouldn't have.

Determining when you're 100% ready to send in your application can be an overwhelming decision and not something you should leave for one hour before the deadline. Give yourself plenty of time and take a look at each of the points above. Once you've gone through all of them and made sure you've checked and double-checked every single component, you should be all set to submit. You got this!