

# The Common Application 2023-24

## What is the Common App?

The Common App is a single application that is accepted by most colleges and universities to which Deerfield Academy students will apply. Students fill out the Common Application online and can submit it directly to their colleges. Look at your college list on Naviance to see which of your schools use the Common App. Many of you will apply to all of your colleges with the Common App.

## How do you access the Common App?

The Common App is at [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org). Logging in and beginning the registration process does not take any preparation, and everything you enter can be edited at a later date.

## How to register?

- Go to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)
- Under the heading “Your future starts here”, click the Start your application button. Next, click the link in: “**First year student?** Enter your information to create your account.
- Enter your email address and create a password – be certain this is an email address you check frequently as it will be shared with the colleges to which you apply so that they can provide updates regarding your application. Note: there are a many password requirements, so be sure to follow instructions and write down your password somewhere you can find it in case you forget.
- Answer the prompts to create your account. Be sure to use your official name as it appears on legal documents. Identify yourself as a “first-year student” and click that you plan to start college in 2025 (even if you are contemplating the possibility of a Gap Year). Check the boxes indicating that you agree to the terms.
- Click “Create Account”

Once you register, you will see 4 tabs at the top of your page:

- **Dashboard** – will display all of the colleges you’ve added to your list and the status of your work for each major application component including deadlines and a quick overview of your progress (this will be empty until you add your colleges; your list **does not** transfer directly from Naviance)
- **My Colleges** – provides a list of your colleges in the left-hand column and indicates college information such as phone numbers, deadlines, fees, and requirements. This is also where you will complete any college specific questions (“member questions”) including additional writing supplements.
- **Common App** – where you complete your general biographical and educational information that will be submitted to all of your colleges. This information should be completed first (ideally over the summer).
- **College Search** – allows you to search for and add different colleges to your Dashboard/My Colleges list.
- **Financial Aid Resources** – provides links and information to help you understand the financial aid process and apply for aid.

## Where to begin?

You should begin by completing the information in the “Common App” tab. Fields with a **red \*** are required. Fill out the application sections with total completeness and accuracy. When you complete a section, click the **Continue** button and your information will automatically be saved as it moves you to the next screen. You will know you are done with a section when it has a **Green v**. Note that you can always come back and revise; nothing is finalized until you submit an application.

- **Profile** – includes your personal information, address, contact details, demographics, geography, language, citizenship, and fee waiver information (talk to your College Advisor for specifics regarding your qualifications for a fee waiver). Be sure to enter your address as your permanent home address; you should enter Deerfield as your “current/mailling address” and note the dates you are here (Sept-May).
- **Family** – indicate the individuals that make up your household including your parent/guardian information and siblings. Here is where you will need to input your parents’ education; if you do not know this information, please ask your family.

- **Education** – focuses on your high school experience.
  - *School*: you will be prompted to “look up” your high school name. Once you indicate Deerfield Academy, the application will auto-populate the address and CEEB Code (which is 220685). If you attended any other high schools, you’ll be asked to enter that information later.
    - You will also be asked in this section to indicate whether you will graduate early or late, or whether you took time off during your high school years. If you repeated a year (for example: you had completed 9<sup>th</sup> grade before entering Deerfield as a new/repeat 9<sup>th</sup> grader, or 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> before entering DA as a 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> grader), or if you are a PG, you should select “will graduate late.” If you select one of these options, an explanation box will pop up asking you to “provide details about the change in progression.” Note: this is not considered an essay and can typically be answered in as few as one or two sentences, stating simply the benefits associated with repeating or enrolling as a PG. If this question does not apply to you, you can select “no change in progression.”
  - *Other Secondary Schools*: you will be asked if you’ve attended any other secondary schools, which includes any high school(s) you attended prior to enrolling at Deerfield. Follow the same process of finding your school, and then include the dates of attendance.
    - Note: If you attended more than one high school, the Common App will require that you answer a short prompt to “provide details about why you left” the previous school(s). Rest assured that this will not be reviewed as an essay and can (in most cases) be answered simply in a straight forward sentence or two about what prompted you to transfer.
  - *Colleges & Universities*: If you have taken coursework at a college, perhaps during the summer or online, you can share that information here.
  - *Grades*:
    - Graduating class size 209
    - Class rank reporting – indicate “none”
    - Cumulative GPA – leave blank- colleges will use your transcript to compute the GPA
    - GPA scale – leave blank
    - GPA weighting – unweighted
  - *Current Year Courses*: be sure to include all senior year courses.
    - Each course needs to be entered separately. Count how many distinct courses you are taking this year.
    - Deerfield uses a trimester system.
    - **Enter all course names**
    - It’s easiest to enter the year-long courses first. Then, when entering one- and two-term courses, we recommend entering those in sequence by discipline, indicating which trimester(s) you are taking the course (ie if you are taking a Fall/Winter History course followed by a Spring History course, enter those in that order, or if you are taking three one-term English courses, enter the Fall course, followed by the Winter course, followed by the Spring course)
    - Choose “N/A” for the Course Level unless specifically listed as AP, Honors, or Accelerated in the course name on your transcript. College admission officers will also review your official transcript alongside our school profile, which provides a numbering system to shed light on the rigor of our courses.
  - *Honors*
    - Do you wish to report any honors related to your academic achievements beginning with ninth grade or international equivalent? You may add up to 5.
  - *Community Based Organizations*
    - Indicated the number of community programs or organizations that have provided you with free assistance in your application.
  - *Future Plans*
    - Career Interest
    - Highest degree you intend to earn
- **Testing** – indicate whether or not you wish to self-report your standardized test scores. Note that some schools let students self-report test scores in lieu of an official score report (and will require an official

score report upon matriculation), while others require an official score report by the application deadline to complete the application. Check each school's admissions website for their requirements.

- If you are applying to any schools as a “test optional” candidate, you will NOT self-report your test scores to that college, but you can to all others
  - You can indicate your scores and plans for any upcoming test dates
  - This information can be updated as you do more testing in senior year
  - Be sure to include your AP exam scores here if you wish to report them (since you will not send an official report of these scores until you enroll)
  - The section “Senior Secondary Leaving Examinations” will be blank for most students who have attended college only in the United States. Students who took, for example, GCE A-levels can report those scores here.
  - **Remember, for some colleges, you must still request an official score report to be sent from the testing agency (ACT/College Board) directly to each of your colleges**
- **Activities** – complete the fields in this area in order of most important to least important (to you). You are limited to 10 activities and there is a limit of 150 characters for the description field. You may also utilize the additional information section to include anything that will not fit in the Activities section. You will only be allowed to attach a resume if your college asks for it (you would upload the resume within the member questions area).
    - Within each activity, include your position/title and the organization's name in the first blank
    - Give a description of what you actually did in this activity in the second field
    - Give your best estimate of hours per week and weeks per year in those fields; if the amount of time varies, give an average
  - **Writing** – this will be for your FINAL essay only; do not enter drafts here! Once you are confident in your essay (hopefully after review by your College Advisor), you will be able to enter it into the required field and indicate the prompt used. Please remember, your essay must be between 250 – 650 words. Any less or more will not be accepted. Also, be aware of any formatting issues when you copy and paste your essay into the essay field. You can check the formatting in the “print preview” when you get to the submission process.
    - Additional Info-
      - Due to the disruption of the Coronavirus, the Common App added an optional prompt which will allow you to share how the pandemic affected you personally or academically.
      - You are given an “additional information” space. This text box will take up to 650 words. Most students will leave this blank, but if you think you have something else to mention (extended illness, unusual circumstances that affected your academic or extracurricular performance, etc.), you can use this space in consultation with your college advisor.
  - **Courses & Grades** –this section of the Common App, which asks for self-reported grades, is only required by a small collection of colleges. To view the full list, click [this link](#). We recommend touching base with your College Advisor about this section prior to submitting it. If you are not applying to any of these colleges, you will not even have the ability to complete this section; and it only becomes workable once you have added any of the colleges that require “Courses & Grades.”
    - Related note: the Deerfield College Advising office will submit all of your high school transcripts (and any summer course transcripts you send to us) to all colleges that accept the Common App.

## Adding Colleges

As you finalize your college application list, you should enter specific colleges into the “My Colleges” area using the “College Search.” You are limited to 20 colleges in your “Dashboard” (but no one should be submitting that many applications!) so you should only enter colleges that you are confident you will be submitting an application to for next fall. Under each college name in the “My Colleges” tab, you will find details about the application fee, deadlines, and requirements.

## Member Questions and Supplements

Most colleges will ask additional questions, such as your application plan (Early Action, Regular Decision, etc.), your intended field of study, and whether you have any relatives who attended the college. Answer all required questions in these sections.

Some colleges will also ask for additional essays either in the Member Questions or in the Writing Supplement. These may be long essays or short-answer questions. Either way, you should take as much care with these essays as you do with your main essay! Please be aware that the dashboard may not show that a school has a writing supplement, but if you click on Member Questions, they may have a fairly extensive set of extra questions—what most of us would call a writing supplement! Other schools will have different essay questions for different majors, so those questions may not show up until you complete the section where you note your potential major. Don't be fooled into thinking there is no additional essay until you check carefully. As always, if you have any questions please feel free to reach out to your College Advisor.

## FERPA Release Authorization and Naviance

In order to match your Common App account to your Naviance account, you'll need to complete the FERPA Release Authorization in the Common Application. You must add at least one college to "My Colleges". Click on your added college. A College Information ribbon will appear, under applications click on Recommenders and FERPA. Click on the button, review the statement on the first screen (and check the box to acknowledge it) and then, on the second screen, indicate whether or not you waive your right to access your recommendation letters. DA policy states that all letters written by DA faculty and staff are confidential, so you should check the box that you waive your right to access these letters if you want us to write on your behalf. If you have questions about this policy, please see your College Advisor.

**Please pay special attention to the FERPA waiver! Check that you waive your right to access before "Matching" your FERPA to your Naviance account!**

- You will complete this agreement one time and your selection will be applied to all schools to which you apply using the Common App.
- Do not complete any other recommender assignments in the Common App and do not print out the forms on this screen.
- Once you have completed the FERPA Release Authorization, log in to your Naviance account, click on the Colleges tab, then click on "Colleges I'm Applying To." Click on the Match Account button. This will open a new window redirecting to the Common App login page. Sign into your Common App account. Check the box agreeing to connect the two accounts. Click connect. You will receive a Success message and be redirected back to Naviance. Click [here](#) for a helpful video.

## Submitting an Application

There is a preview option available in the Common Application when you proceed through the submission menu. A PDF preview will be available at this time and show exactly what the colleges will see upon submission. If you are not satisfied with your PDF, click the X in the top right corner to close the preview and abandon the submission. The application will not be submitted until you sign, date, and click "submit" in Step 3.

## What's next?

Once you have submitted the application to one college, it is possible to return to the application and edit it for future submissions to other colleges. (You cannot edit an application you have already sent.)

You can track the status of each application in the "Dashboard" section of the Common Application.

- **Green ✓ = Submitted**
- **Grey – = Not Applicable**
- **Red – = Not Required**
- **Yellow ● = Pending**

The dashboard allows you to view and sort by deadline (it will also indicate when a college application deadline has passed). You can remove any colleges from the list by clicking on the trash can in the right hand column.