

The College Process

Senior Parent Edition

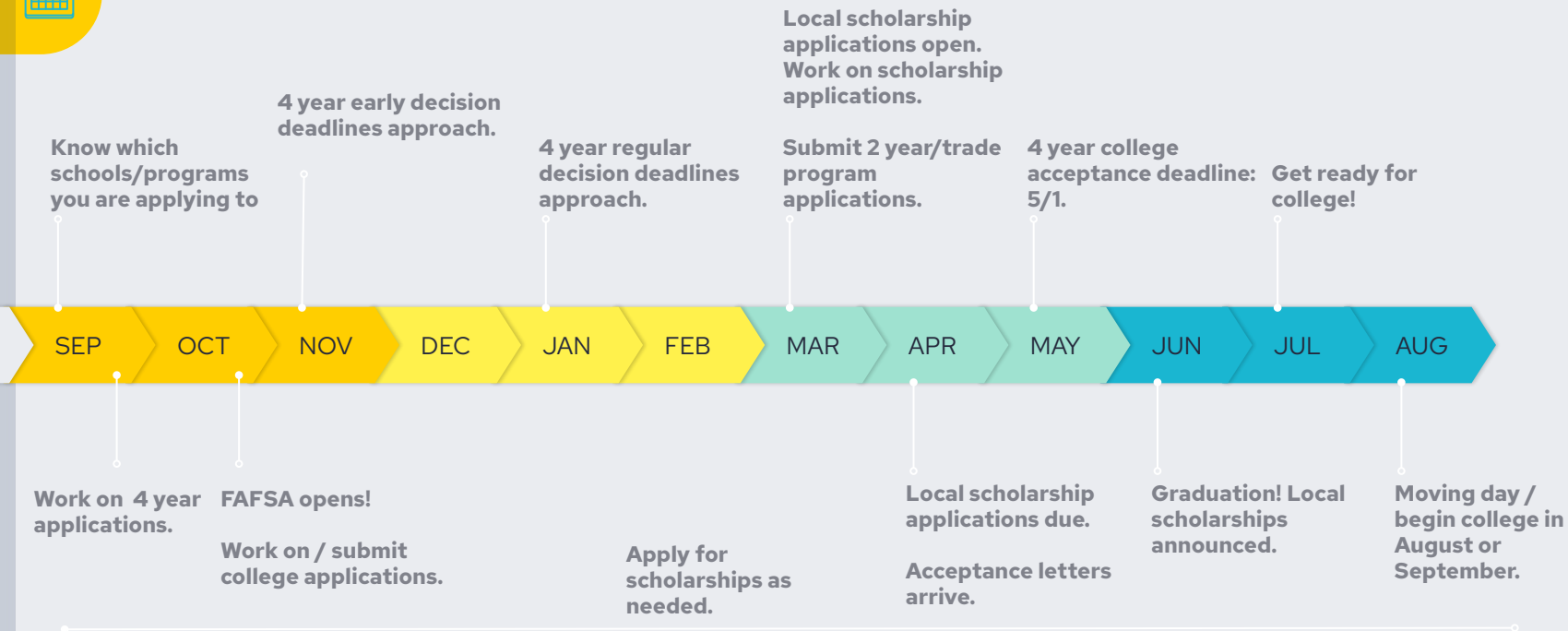
Welcome!



Thanks for being here. We'll go over how to get started, what to expect, and resources for help.



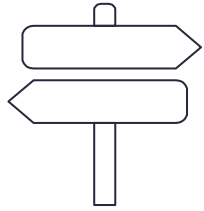
Senior Year Timeline





What Holds Seniors Back

- **Nervous** - I don't know what to do.
- **Expectations** - My mom wants me to go to Whitman and my dad wants me to go to UW.
- **Big Decision** - What if I make the wrong decision and I don't like my college choice?
- **The Future is Scary** - I have no idea what I want to do and everyone else does.



2 vs. 4 Year Degree

Student perception & benefits of both.



To Do

1. College search
 - Pick 3-6 schools
2. SAT/ACT
3. Apply to colleges (get organized!)
 - Applications requirements
 - Deadlines
 - Essay
 - Resume
 - Transcript
 - Recommendations
4. Financial Planning


1. College Search

[College Search Options \(FHHS CCC Website\)](#)



College Search

- Meet with Hailey
- Campus visits
- Narrow it down (apply to 3-6)
 - 2 or 4 year
 - Public or private
 - Location (close to home or far away)
 - Setting (rural, suburban, urban)
 - Size
 - Majors
 - Co-curricular activities
 - GPA / Test Scores (SAT/ACT)

 **College Comparison**
Use this tool to compare different colleges and determine which school is the best fit for you. Fill in as many areas as you can.

College Name			
Location			
Desired Program of Study			
Variety of Majors			
Availability of Professors			
Travel Abroad Opportunities			
Jon/Internship Opportunities			
Public or Private			
Number of Undergraduates			
% of Students Admitted			
Average ACT/SAT Scores			
Cost			
Travel Expense			
% of First Year Students Who Live on Campus			
Dorms (Great, OK, Poor)			
Help Resources (Math, Writing, Science, etc.)			
Co-Curricular Activities			
Financial Aid			
Campus Culture (Do you feel you fit?)			
Other:			
Other:			
Other:			



Selecting a Major

- Is selecting a major important?
- Explore strength/weakness/interests
 - School
 - Outside
- School size and college majors
- Visits to college departments





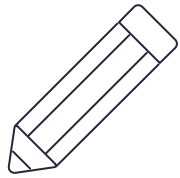
Campus Visits

- Sign up for scheduled tours
- Attend information sessions
- Have prepared questions
- Meet w/ an admissions counselor
- Visit with department head
- Sit on in a class
- Visit with a coach
- What do you like/dislike about the campus?
- What are the students like?
- Ask students questions
- Do you see yourself fitting in?
- Keep notes/brochure
- Have lunch on campus



2. SAT/ACT

[College Board Website](#)

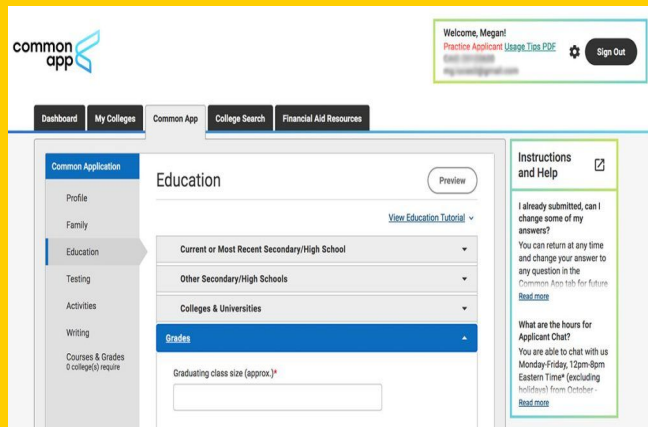


To test or not to test?

Test optional vs. test blind

3. Apply to Colleges / Programs

Common App, Institution-Specific, WA Community Colleges



The screenshot shows the Common App interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'common app' logo and links for 'Dashboard', 'My Colleges', 'Common App', 'College Search', and 'Financial Aid Resources'. A welcome message for 'Megan!' is visible in the top right corner. The main content area is titled 'Education' and includes a 'Preview' button. A sidebar on the left lists various sections: Profile, Family, Education (selected), Testing, Activities, Writing, and Courses & Grades. The 'Education' section is expanded, showing options for 'Current or Most Recent Secondary/High School', 'Other Secondary/High Schools', and 'Colleges & Universities'. Under 'Colleges & Universities', the 'Grades' sub-section is selected, displaying a form for 'Graduating class size (approx.)' with a text input field. A 'View Education Tutorial' link is also present.

WWU Undergraduate Application for Admission and Scholarships

Welcome! To begin the application process, please create an account under the first-time users section. If you have already started a WWU application on this site, you can login in the returning users section.

Returning users:

[Log In](#)

First-time users:

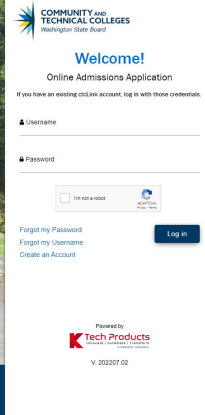
[Create an account](#)

OFFICE OF ADMISSIONS

[CONTACT](#)
[REQUEST INFO](#)
[Accessibility](#)
[Website Privacy Statement](#)

TRIBAL LANDS STATEMENT

Western Washington University's main campus is situated on the ancestral homelands of the Coast Salish Peoples, who have lived in the Salish Sea basin, all throughout the San Juan Islands and the North Cascades watershed from time immemorial. We express our deepest respect and gratitude to our Indigenous neighbors, for their enduring care and protection of our shared lands and waterways. [Access our Inclusive Tribal Lands Statement.](#)



The screenshot shows the 'Welcome!' page for the WWU Online Admissions Application. It includes the 'COMMUNITY and TECHNICAL COLLEGES' logo and the 'Western Washington State Board' text. The page prompts users to log in if they have an existing account or to create a new account. It features input fields for 'Username' and 'Password', a 'Log In' button, and a 'Create an Account' button. There are also links for 'Forgot my Password', 'Forgot my Username', and 'Create an Account'. A 'Powered by Tech Products' logo is visible at the bottom right.



Organization

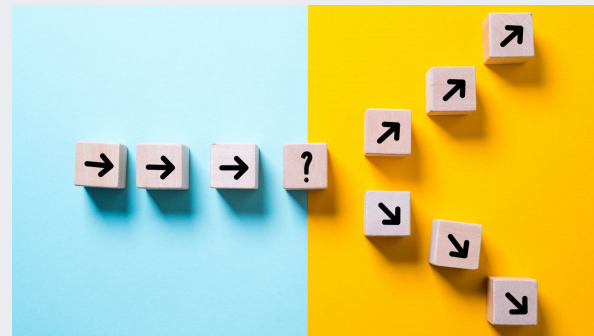
- College Process (FHHS CCC Website)

[illegible]



Deadlines: Early Action vs. Early Decision vs. Regular Decision

- Regular Decision (RD)
 - Most common form of applying
 - Can apply to multiple schools
- Early Action (EA)
 - Non-Binding
 - OK to apply to many EA schools
 - Strong competition to select schools
- Early Decision (ED)
 - Binding (you have to go if accepted)
 - Can only apply to one school ED
 - Possibility of poor financial aid
 - Might get a closer look
 - Contract must be signed by parent and guidance counselor
 - Discussion with university advised





What Colleges Look At

- Academic Profile
 - Transcripts
 - SAT/ACT
 - Class rank
 - Courses / rigor
 - Grades (GPA)
- Personal Profile
 - Essay
 - Resume
 - Extracurricular activities
 - Honors and awards
 - Travel
 - Work experience
 - Community service
 - Hobbies
 - Site visit
 - Interview



Essay

DO

- Focus on a moment in time, not your whole life story
- Ask friends/family what makes you stand out
- Be concise - keep it moving
- Write a compelling intro
- Ask someone to read it for you & give feedback

AVOID

- Listing achievements and involvement (this is on your resume or other areas of the application)
- Listing character traits
- Waiting until the last minute to write it
- Submitting without proofreading / editing



Personal Essay Prompts

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please **share your story**.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. **Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure.** How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. **What prompted your thinking?** What was the outcome?
4. Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. **How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?**
5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a **period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself** or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? **What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?**
7. Share an essay on any topic of your choice. It can be one you've already written, one that responds to a different prompt, or one of your own design.



Supporting Documents

- Teacher Recommendations
- Transcript
- Counselor Recommendation and School Report
- Supplementary Materials (Department Specific)
 - Athletics
 - Music
 - Writing
 - Art
 - Drama

4. Financial Planning



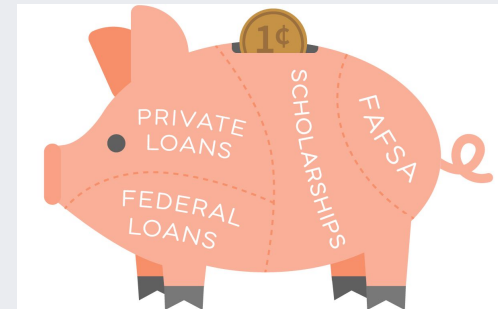
Fill out the FAFSA!!

FAFSA / WASFA



Financial Aid Resources

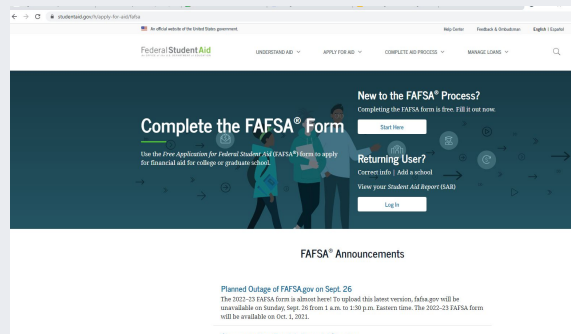
- [FAFSA / WASFA Help \(FHHS CCC Website\)](#)
- [CSS Profile \(College Board\)](#) (private colleges)
- [Scholarship Search Options \(FHHS CCC Website\)](#)
- [College Bound Scholarship](#)
- [Western Undergraduate Exchange \(WUE\)](#) Program
- Local scholarships (March/April)
- [SJI Service Scholarship](#)
- Student email notifications
- College financial aid / scholarship applications





FAFSA

- Opens in October (hopefully)
 - First come, first served
- Student and Parent have separate accounts
- Links to IRS data
 - Based on prior year's tax info
- Determines your *Student Aid Index (SAI)*
 - Lower SAI more likely to receive gift aid
 - Money in student's name
- Anyone can qualify for certain types of aid





Types of Aid

- Gift Aid (federal, state, school)
 - Doesn't have to be paid back
- Work Study (federal)
 - Earn while you learn
- Loans (federal, private)
 - Must be repaid, including interest
 - OK to accept with financial aid package
 - Track loan amount
 - Know payback terms

Deadlines to complete financial aid applications are different than admission application deadlines!



A Few Last Things

- Call the colleges with questions or to make sure admissions and financial aid applications are complete
- Scholarship displacement- ask financial aid office about the impact on your aid if you are awarded local scholarships (what will be taken away?)
- Start now and do a little at a time

Action Items In a Nutshell



Make Your List

Decide which colleges to apply to



Apply

Make sure you know the deadlines



Apply for Financial Aid

FAFSA/CSSP December of senior year and community scholarships in the spring



Make a Decision!

Commit by May 1. Secure financial aid/plans.

Thanks!



Any questions?

You can find me at:

- FHHS Counseling Center
- haileyhendersonpaul@sjisd.org
- 360-370-7132

