

## 2022 Seniors and Families: A Guide for Applying to Colleges

- **Correspondence RE: Senior Dates, Deadlines, and Opportunities**
  - Please make sure that all demographics (emails and phone numbers) are up-to-date in the Parent Portal. Parents, please check to make sure SHS emails are coming to your inbox and not going to your spam folder.
  - **Students, READ YOUR SCHOOL EMAIL DAILY.**
  - Follow Salem High School on Facebook, Instagram, and/or Twitter.
  - Utilize *Naviance*: <https://student.naviance.com/salhs>
  
- **Naviance** is an important component to learn about college rep visits for SHS students and scholarship opportunities. It is also the means to make SHS transcript and teacher recommendation requests.
  - **Naviance Student:** Students can access through the SHS website, <http://shs.salem.k12.va.us/> (click on *School Counseling, Seniors, Naviance Student Login*) or <https://student.naviance.com/salhs>
    - Students' usernames and passwords are the same as their usernames and passwords for their other SHS student accounts.
    - **College Rep Visits:** College representatives will visit SHS students throughout the fall. To view schools who have scheduled visits, login into Naviance and look under, *What's New*. You may also access the College Visit Calendar on our webpage.
      - The college reps in these meetings might be reviewers of SHS applications as they often are assigned to specific regions. Be prepared to ask questions and to engage in conversations with the college reps.
  - **Requesting SHS Transcripts:** Students are to input all schools to which they are applying into Naviance. Most schools will require initial, midterm, and final transcripts. Students make the requests in Naviance and determine through which means they are applying and which decision types (Early Decision, Early Action, or Regular Decision).
    - A Link to a Naviance Helpsheet, *Naviance College Application Process*, is located on our website: <https://shs.salem.k12.va.us/registration#>. Click on the tab, *Seniors*, for helpful resources..
  - **Requesting Letters of Recommendation (LOR):**
    - View individual colleges' websites and application checklists to determine if LORs are required and if so, how many.

- Determine from which teachers they want to ask for recommendations.
  - Ask those teachers in person and **provide some sort of resumes.**
  - Students should always give teachers at least 1 week notice and never request just prior to Winter Break. (Plan ahead!)
  
- **Applying to 4-Year Colleges and Universities**
  - **There is No Perfect Recipe for Applying to College but here are some helpful tips and starting points:**
    - Number of Schools to Apply? Recommendation: Apply to your *Dream* (or Reach) School; Apply to a *Safety* School (one to which you know you meet their criteria for acceptance); Apply to 2 or 3 other schools in which you might be interested.
      - Always consider whether the schools offer your potential majors/areas of academic interests.
    - **Timeline:**
      - MOST IMPORTANT: Check the schools' websites for their due dates and application requirements. We can give you general deadlines, but schools set their own deadlines.
      - Always complete components of the application **BEFORE** due dates as you never know what life circumstances can pop up and cause you to miss deadlines if you wait until the last days. Example: The Internet goes out. (BEST PRACTICE: Reset all deadlines to one week prior to the real due dates.)
      - In general, students should apply to their first choice schools by Halloween, their 2nd choices by Thanksgiving, and have all applications completed before Winter Break.
        - *Keep in mind, Salem Schools are closed during Winter Break.* Please do not ask teachers to write and to send LORs over the break. Plan ahead and ask for LORs no later than 1 week prior to Break.
        - Also, some colleges have application deadlines of January 1. Salem Schools are closed during that time which also means that all transcript requests need to be made in Naviance at least two days before Winter Break.
    - **Different Application Deadlines & Decision Opportunities:**

- *Early Decision* (ED) is a binding contract. The student is saying that if accepted, he/she will attend. Students can only apply to one school as ED. Deadlines are usually around Nov. 1, but again, check specific schools' websites.
- *Early Action* (EA) is not binding & students may apply to multiple schools as EA. Deadlines usually are around Nov. 15 or Dec. 1, but again, check specific schools' websites.
- *Rolling Admission* is not binding. Students receive admission decisions quickly and may apply to multiple schools who offer Rolling Admissions. Rolling Admission schools often will accept applications later into the current school year but will give housing priorities and/or registration priorities to prospective students who apply and accept early. Even with Rolling Admissions, we recommend applying before Winter Break.
- *Regular Decision* (RD) is not binding, and students may apply to multiple schools. Deadlines are generally January 1 or January 15 but again, check specific schools' websites.
  - Again, a January 1 deadline can present issues if students do not plan ahead and do not complete applications prior to Winter Break because the School Counseling Office (including our Guidance Secretary) and teachers are off for the holidays.
- **Requesting transcripts:**
  - Requesting SHS Transcripts: Use *Naviance Student*, <https://student.naviance.com/salhs>
  - When we send transcripts, we also send a copy of the most recent SHS School Profile.
  - Students using the Common App to apply to schools, will need to match their *Naviance Student* accounts to their Common App accounts. A help video is available on our SHS School Counseling Website.
  - Requesting VWCC transcripts: For students who have dual-enrolled courses with VWCC, request VWCC transcripts through their website: <https://www.virginiawestern.edu>  
Helpful hint: When requesting a VWCC transcript, also request a copy for your home address.
- **Letters of Recommendation (LOR):**

- #1, Check to see which specific schools require letters of recommendation and how many. Do not put in requests in Naviance before checking to see if the schools want LORs and how many.
  - In the past, we've had students request too many LORs for specific schools. Most have caps on the number they'll accept. Therefore, the teachers who wrote & submitted their LORs first are the LORs that were received. Naviance would not send the additional letters. Sadly, in some cases, these were often not the students' first recommendation choices. Research ahead of time!
- Students should politely ask the potential recommenders in person.
- Students need to provide the recommenders with resumes. Simply, resumes help teachers create stronger LORs, and some will not write LORs without student-provided information.
- Students then input the requests into *Naviance Student*, <https://student.naviance.com/salhs>
- Usernames and Passwords for College Guest Accounts:
  - Most colleges will have you create a guest account. Please do not lose or forget your usernames and passwords.
  - Check these accounts regularly to make sure all of the components of your applications have been received by Admission Offices. Remember, it is the student's responsibility to make sure their college applications are considered "complete".
  - Often, acceptances first will post in students' guest accounts before a student receives any traditional mailings.
  - Often, the college guest accounts are where and how students will then accept or decline their offers.
- **SATs and ACTs:**
  - Sending SAT or ACT scores: To send official scores, students must request this directly from their College Board (SAT) accounts, <https://www.collegeboard.org/> and/or ACT <http://www.act.org>. Salem High School does not have access and cannot send students' "official" scores. Scores must be sent directly from the College Board or ACT to the colleges' Admission Offices, per the students' requests.
- **FAFSA: Free Application for Federal Student Aid**

- To be considered for financial aid, parents must complete the FAFSA at <https://fafsa.ed.gov/>.
  - Application opens Oct. 1, 2021.
  - Note individual colleges' deadlines. The FAFSA must be completed in order to be considered for financial aid.
  - In previous years, VWCC has offered free FAFSA help sessions on several Saturdays in the fall and into the winter. These help sessions were open to the community, regardless as to which schools high school seniors were applying. Please periodically check their website, <https://www.virginiawestern.edu/>.
- **CCAP (Community College Access Program)**
  - This is a scholarship opportunity to Virginia Western Community College.
  - Website: <http://www.virginiawestern.edu/ccap/>
  - Application opens on Oct. 1, and the deadline is Feb. 1. In order to be considered, all components must be completed and submitted to VWCC, including the FAFSA, by Feb. 1. **This deadline is firm.**
  - There are specific criteria that students must meet in order to be considered. The main criteria is they must have a cumulative grade point average of 2.5 by the end of semester 1 of their senior year.
  - An important piece for parents: Complete The FAFSA
    - To be considered for CCAP, parents must complete the FAFSA.
      - <https://fafsa.ed.gov/> Application opens Oct. 1, 2021.
      - Necessary Items for FAFSA: Social Security Number, 2020 Federal Income Tax returns, W-2s, and other records of money earned. (You may be able to transfer your federal tax return information into your FAFSA using the IRS Data Retrieval Tool), bank statements & records of investments (if applicable), records of untaxed income (if applicable).
      - Best practice: Parent and child complete this piece together.
- **Scholarships**
  - SHS will post scholarships throughout the school year on *Naviance*. Students should check the scholarship list on Naviance every week and apply to anything and everything that is applicable. <https://student.naviance.com/salhs>
  - There is also a list of scholarships available on the School Counseling Website, <https://shs.salem.k12.va.us/registration>, but all applications and websites should be accessed through *Naviance Student*.
  - Scholarship Search Engines:

- There are several. Common scholarship search engines that many students use are <https://www.fastweb.com> and <https://www.goingmerry.com/>.
    - Caution: Be wary of scholarship search engines that charge fees.
  - Other Scholarship Avenues:
    - Employers, organizations & churches of which you are members.
    - Check with grandparents; sometimes, if they are members of organizations, their grandchildren may be eligible for scholarships.
    - <https://www.nshss.org/> If you are a member of the National Society of High School Scholars, you may be eligible to apply to NSHSS's scholarships.
  - College/University Specific Scholarships
    - Apply to available scholarships that are offered directly through the colleges to which the student is applying.
      - Check the college's websites for these opportunities.
      - Sometimes, the general scholarship deadlines for colleges are before students even have received their acceptances...apply anyway!
      - If the college offers scholarship competitions, enter!
- **Notable & Common Information & Answers Needed for Applications:**
  - SHS does not "rank". We use "decile" to report students' class standings...top 10%, top 20%, and so on. Students may email their counselors for their standings.
  - Size of Senior Class: 300
  - GPAs (Grade Point Averages) are weighted, and our GPA scale is a 4.0.
  - Our passing mark is a "1".
  - Colleges are interested in students' cumulative GPAs which are reported on their transcripts. This is an overall GPA, not a semester-specific GPA. Contact your counselor through email for your cumulative GPA.
  - For applications that ask you to list your classes, utilize our transcript and input the courses exactly as listed on your transcript.
  - GPA's are recalculated after grades from 1st semester are finalized and will be listed on the midterm transcripts.
  - "Waive" right to view requested recommendations. If you answer, "Yes", you are giving more credibility to recommendations.
  - Applications often ask for our School Code which is **472035**. Please note that there is also a Salem High School in the VA Beach area. Please

carefully choose our Salem High School in Salem, VA when noting your high school.

- Students should request *Midterm Transcripts* through *Naviance Student* in February to all schools to which they are still applying.
- In May, students should request their *Final Transcripts* be sent to their final choices through *Naviance Student*. Do not forget! We often have panicked students in August whose colleges are *holding* their schedules because they did not complete this last step.
- Other reasons final choice colleges will put *holds* on students:
  - Colleges require proof of immunization. (Look for these now as we've known students who had to get multiple vaccines over summers.)
  - Male students: At 18, you must register for the Selective Service. If you do not, even if you are able to register for fall courses, generally colleges will put a hold on your spring courses.

**We ARE HERE FOR YOU! Contact Your School Counseling Department for Assistance:**

**Seniors..**

- Mrs. Smith– Last Name A – E: [ssmith@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:ssmith@salem.k12.va.us)
- Dr. Snow – Last Name F – J: [ksnow@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:ksnow@salem.k12.va.us)
- Ms. Arbogast – Last Name K – Q: [marbogast@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:marbogast@salem.k12.va.us)
- Mrs. Parrish – Last Name R – Z: [jparrish@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:jparrish@salem.k12.va.us)
- Guidance Secretary: Mrs. Chitwood: [tchitwood@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:tchitwood@salem.k12.va.us)
- Advanced Studies: Mrs. Mangum: [smangum@salem.k12.va.us](mailto:smangum@salem.k12.va.us)

**Advice To All Seniors: Take Charge! Research, Apply, Meet Deadlines, & Be Proactive!**