

College Applications *for Students*

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Abstract

The counselors at the John F. Kennedy School (JFKS) do their best to stay updated on the following information; however, it is each student's responsibility to follow-up and do their own research as it relates to individual circumstances. Each student profile is unique, and as such, should be evaluated individually based on university admission criteria. Do your due diligence when it comes to researching university requirements and deadlines.

Graduation Requirements & Transcript Requests

The following chart shows the credit requirements to graduate from JFKS with the US High School Diploma. If you have any questions about your credit count, see the Registrar (Ms. Mack) in Haus Reil for a transcript.

<p>High School Diploma Requirements</p> <p>Total credits required: 26</p> <p>English: 4 credits</p> <p>Mathematics: 3 credits (U.S. Colleges prefer 4 credits in Algebra I and higher)</p> <p>Social Studies: 4 credits (3 if you were not enrolled at JFKS for 4 years) which must include U.S. History</p> <p>Science: 4 credits</p> <p>PE/Sport: 2 credits</p> <p>German: 1 credit for each year enrolled at JFKS</p> <p>+Electives to total 26</p>
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To request a transcript, **email** Ms. Mack and **stop by** to see her personally in Haus Reil. Transcripts are sent to colleges & universities from JFKS and reflect your grades from 9-12, as required by US colleges. US colleges can rescind offers if grades drop senior year. You must review your transcript with Ms. Mack **BEFORE** you submit your applications to ensure correctness.

Choosing the Best Post-Secondary Option

Things to Consider:

- ❖ Majors/Courses
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Size
- ❖ Selectivity/Requirements-How you compare
- ❖ Flexibility
- ❖ Citizenship
- ❖ Cost
- ❖ Culture
- ❖ Special programs (Ex. athletics, band etc.)
- ❖ Data (grad school placement, graduation & retention rates, etc.)
- ❖ Fit over prestige

Steps to Apply:

- ❖ Narrow down list of schools
- ❖ Make list or chart of deadlines and requirements for each school
- ❖ Request Recommendations, if applicable
- ❖ Send test scores, retake or take tests if needed
- ❖ Finish essay(s) or personal statement
- ❖ Check your transcript
- ❖ Apply & save work (Common App, College's site, UCAS)
- ❖ Contact your university or HS counselor to ask questions
- ❖ Submit application and pay, if applicable
- ❖ Request official transcript from Haus Reil, if applicable
- ❖ Be patient and keep your grades up

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What do colleges consider?

A: GPA and rigor of your courses in the context of the JFKS curriculum is number 1 for Diploma students. The rest depends on the school but may include:

- SAT/ACT scores (important for most colleges)
- Essay
- Recommendation Letters
- Subject Tests
- Talent/Excellence in some area
- Demonstrated Interest
- Ability to pay (international)

NOTE: Your GPA can be found on your transcript.

Q: What if I'm an Abi student applying to the US?

A: Check college websites for admission requirements for international students—ALL ARE DIFFERENT! Some colleges might give credit for Abi coursework. Please check.

- Is an English proficiency test required? TOEFL (American English) or IELTS (British English). You may request an exemption letter from Ms. Mack if requirements are met.
- Finances—Are international students offered scholarships, financial aid, etc.? Each school has their own process.

Applying to the US via Common Application

Colleges that use the “Common Application” must be completed at www.commonapp.org. For colleges that don’t offer the “Common App” you should visit each college’s website to access the online application. Keep track of usernames and passwords used at each school. You will be able to log on to most colleges’ websites to view your application status.

Common App Tips:

- Fee Waiver: “Our member colleges want to make sure that application fees do not pose a barrier for any student who wishes to apply for admission. Do you feel that your financial circumstances might qualify you for an application fee waiver? (Your counselor will be asked to verify your response.)”
- Grades Section
 - Class Rank Reporting – Decile
 - Rank Weighing – Weighted
 - Graduating Class Size – get from HS counselor (SY 2020/21: 121)
 - GPA Scale – 4
 - GPA weighting – weighted
- Current Year Courses – LIST ALL
- Counselor Contact Information:
 - Teresa Gebhardt
 - High School & College Counselor
 - teresa.gebhardt@jfsberlin.org
- “If you have received any honors related to your academic achievements beginning with the ninth grade or international equivalent, please indicate number of honors.”
 - National Honor Society – School honor

- National Merit Commended Scholar & Semifinalist – State/Regional honors
- National Merit Finalist & National Merit Scholar – national honors
- International applicants: Is promotion within your educational system based upon standard leaving examinations given at the end of lower and/or senior secondary school by a state or national leaving examinations board?
 - Abi answer is YES. Abi would appear from dropdown, but you enter 0 since you didn't take your exams yet.
 - Diploma answer is NO.
- If you have any questions about the Activities or Honors section, ask your HS counselor.
- "In addition to sending official score reports as required by colleges, do you wish to self-report scores or future test dates for any of the following standardized tests: ACT, SAT/SAT Subject, AP, IB, TOEFL, PTE Academic, and IELTS?"
 - Useful to highlight strong scores and to alert of upcoming test date.
 - Abitur students select YES to question about "Leaving exams."
Diploma students select NO.
- Additional Information: "Please provide an answer below if you wish to provide details of circumstances or qualification not reflected in the application." Utilize this! (with discretion and without repetition)
650 word limit
- Can indicate Gap Year under Educational Interruption section, but check with individual colleges for deferral policies.
- Be prepared for glitches. Common App has good and bad years.
- Mid-year report is sent to Common App schools.

Essay

Common Application colleges have the choice of whether or not to require the Common App Essay. Most will. Some colleges require additional shorter essays called supplements. Those essay or short answer questions are of equal importance to the main essay.

What to write about? Be creative in telling a story about you that demonstrates how you would add to the community to which you are applying. Here are some examples:

HELPFUL LINKS:

- List of Essay Questions: <https://www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts>
- Tips for Writing Your Common App essay: <https://blog.prepscholar.com/common-app-essay-prompts>
- Examples: <https://blog.prepscholar.com/college-essay-examples-that-worked-expert-analysis>

FERPA

This is a US law that gives permission to release student records. Common App and other applications will ask you whether or not you “Waive your Right” to read your letters (once you matriculate to college). Most recommend that you select the option to waive your right. This gives more credibility to the letter’s author. Please keep in mind if someone feels they cannot write a good recommendation for you, they should decline to write you a recommendation. If you are questioning whether or not someone will write you a good letter of recommendation, you should probably ask a different person.

You must complete the FERPA section before you can request recommendations from your teachers and counselor. To complete FERPA, go to one of the colleges on your Common App “My Colleges” list and click “Recommenders and FERPA.” You only have to do it once.

[Common App Submission](#)

Make sure you print preview your entire application prior to submission. The application must be complete before you can print preview. Give yourself enough time to check for any mistakes and be able to make corrections before you hit submit.

How Do I Apply to the UK? Via UCAS!

UCAS requires proof of completing Abi or Diploma. Offers usually contingent on your achieving a certain Abi score, GPA for diploma students, certain English language proficiency scores, and/or AP exam scores. Fee Status EU citizens don't get instate tuition.

Here is some helpful information:

- ucas.com
- buzzword – **please make an appointment and talk with your counselor about this.**
- Application has six sections:
 - Personal details
 - Student finance (UK and EU only)
 - Choices
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Personal statement
- Obtain a copy of your transcript from Registrar Ms. Mack to help you complete Education (Qualifications) section.
- Personal statement should be done early if you are applying to Oxford, Cambridge or Medical/Dental programs as your deadline is **OCTOBER 15**.
- Check if you must register for external exams required for certain programs in the UK. For example, LNAT (for law), UKCAT (for medicine), TSA, etc. It is your responsibility to check what you need.
- **Can select up to 5 Choices / courses**

- UCAS “Track”: online system that allows students to follow the progress of their application. Students can see their choices and personal information, display their offers and reply to offers online.
- Personal Statement: What is your motivation for choosing this course?
- Mostly focused on course, no more than 20% everything else.
- EXTREMELY important to know your intended major/course.
- They look at Diploma students’ AP Scores first, then GPA and SAT/ACT.
- GPA requirement depends on your course and university.
- UCAS requires that we predict your final GPA, AP scores and Abitur Zeugnis.

UCAS Qualifications for Diploma students

- Enter in your courses from 11th grade with your averaged grades for the year.
- Put in your MSA & US High School Diploma as a qualification.
- You will need to enter in your AP Exams and scores.
- You will also list your MSA qualifications with your scores.

UCAS Qualifications Abi Students

- List TWO qualifications: the Abi & the US High School Diploma.
- Average your grades for the Abi using the 15 point scale.
- Average your grades for the diploma using the letter grades based on the American system.
- List your MSA qualifications with your scores.

Pending Qualifications

Pending Qualifications & Deadlines for Submitting UCAS Materials: HS Counselor will input your pending qualifications (Ex. Final Abi average, upcoming AP Exam scores) but needs your input. Email the HS Counselor or deliver a printed copy of your predicted/ pending qualifications. Depending on your program and qualifications this may include:

Predicted AP exam scores (ask your teacher and evaluate your historical testing performance and skills related to the subject area; it's hard to predict this early so just do your best). Predicted overall Abi grade (Example- 1.5, 1.0, etc.) Frau Krüger (or Frau Aust) has a formula that can help you.

You must submit your UCAS application and send the HS Counselor predicted grades by **October 1** for the October 15 deadline and **December 1** for the January 15 deadline. Additionally, the Counselor Recommendation Letter Request should have been completed by now. Teacher letters or comments must arrive to your counselor by **October 1** for the October 15 deadline and **December 1** for the January 15 deadline.

UCAS Offers

- Conditional or Unconditional
- When you receive decisions from all of your choices you will need to reply by a set date.
- Can hold a maximum of two offers:
 - **Firm** – first choice. If you meet the conditions of the offer you will be placed.
 - **Insurance** – back-up choice; only comes into play if you are not placed with your firm choice

- If a student does not meet the conditions of their firm or insurance choice (or they didn't select an insurance choice), they will be entered into a process known as **Clearing**.
- If you fail to reply to offers by the deadline, all offers will be automatically declined.
- If you don't get an offer from any of your choices, you can use "Extra." www.ucas.com/extra

HELPFUL LINKS:

- How To Write A Personal Statement:
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/applying-university/how-write-ucas-undergraduate-personal-statement>
- <https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/ucas-personal-statement-worksheet.pdf>
- <https://bridge-u.com/blog/how-to-write-a-personal-statement/>

Applying in Germany

Please see the document entitled “College Planning for Abitur & Diploma students” on the JFKS website (under students tab: <https://jfks.de/pdf/College%20Planning%20for%20Abitur%20and%20Diploma%20Students.pdf>) for detailed information on how to study in Germany with the American High School Diploma. Most programs require the application be submitted through uniassist <https://www.uni-assist.de/>. Refer to your university as there are exceptions (Ex. Medicine). Diploma students must prove German proficiency.

Applying to the Netherlands

Contact the university directly. They will then advise you of the best way to apply. There is a centralized Studielink, but it is not always necessary to apply through it immediately. You will need to set up an account on Studielink at some point to be registered as a student in the Netherlands

Limited English language majors; some highly selective, others more or less open. Processes vary with deadlines typically in winter or spring. Schools typically require full recommendations from two teachers and a counselor (like the US), except you typically must indicate recommender email addresses and recommenders must fill out a form with recommendation-type information after receiving an email from the uni. Give your recommenders a heads up.

Letters of Recommendation

Required or recommended at most US schools, required for UK, required for many schools in the Netherlands, & required for some English language German universities.

- Counselor: Students should have completed Recommendation Letter
- Teacher:
 - Ask teacher in person with the “Teacher Request Form” (unless teacher says they don’t need the form). This form lets the teacher know important facts about where you’re applying etc.
 - You must speak to the teacher in person before adding them to your Common Application.
 - Teacher will forward letter to HS Counselor & Registrar and we will send once you make a transcript request.
 - For US schools, we will send the full letter.
 - For UCAS, we can create one “mash-up” or send one teacher’s full letter if you choose this option.
 - REMINDER: To request a transcript, **email** Ms. Mack AND **stop by** to see her personally in Haus Reil.
 - If you obtain a letter in German, make sure you give Haus Reil extra time to translate or pursue your own professional translation.
 - COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR RECOMMENDERS to develop a plan. Make sure you check in about your deadlines, etc.
 - Give them ample time & thank your teachers afterwards!

Test Scores

- SAT/ACT
 - SAT: Request Score Recipients at: www.collegeboard.org
 - ACT: Request Score Recipients at: www.actstudent.org
- AP Scores
 - US
 - Generally not used in US admissions decisions
 - Used primarily for college placement
 - Indicate score recipient during senior year pre-administration session
 - UK & Many European Countries
 - Often critical in the admissions process
 - Follow each university's procedure
 - Send directly to universities from College Board at appropriate time

NOTE: JFKS does not send test scores because most colleges require that they come directly from testing agency*. If you know for a fact that your school accepts scores informally from the high school, please come to see Registrar (Ms. Mack) to make this request.

*Request to send official AP scores: <https://apstudents.collegeboard.org/sending-scores>

Financial Aid

US Citizens can complete the FAFSA to apply for aid for US colleges starting January 1, 2016. Pay attention to FAFSA deadlines: www.fafsa.gov

Many US colleges require or accept an additional & more detailed form (CSS profile, specific institutional form).

Here is another link to: UK Financial Assistance

www.ucas.com/students/studentfinance

Finalizing the Deal

- Confirm with US colleges by May 1.
- Follow UCAS guidelines for accepting offers.
- Keep track of deadlines for deposits and tuition payments.
- Final Transcript sent to US colleges in the summer. REMINDER: Be sure to fill out your senior survey and personally let your Counselor know where you are going to school so the final transcript is sent.
- To make things easier, here are the most popular US & UK application deadlines and your corresponding deadline for requesting materials or assistance from JFKS. Some colleges have alternative deadlines and some have priority deadlines that are different than their official deadlines, so always check with your college.

- ❖ **October 15:** UK Oxbridge, Med, Vet & Dental

October 1: JFKS Deadline

- ❖ **Nov 1:** Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, Early Decision & Priority Rolling Admission Deadline for some US schools

October 9: JFKS Deadline

- ❖ **Nov 10-15:** Early Action, Early Decision & Priority Rolling Admission Deadline for some US schools

October 27: JFKS Deadline

- ❖ **Dec 1:** Early Action, Early Decision & Priority Rolling Admission Deadline for some US schools

November 13: JFKS Deadline

- ❖ **January 1:** Regular Decision for some US schools

December 1: JFKS Deadline

- ❖ **January 15:** Regular Decision for some US schools & **UCAS Deadline**

December 1: JFKS Deadline