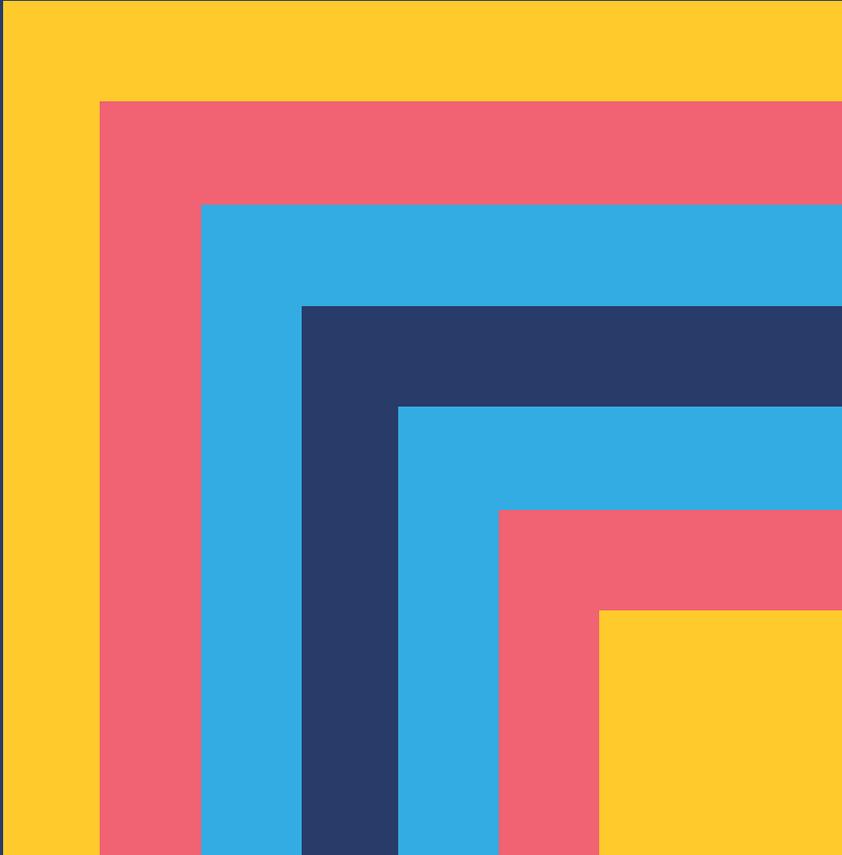


# Inside ApplyTexas:

## Tips to Easily Navigate and Produce a Stellar ApplyTexas Application

By Collegewise Counselors: Liz Pack, Rebecca Putter, and Tim Magee

**COLLEGE  
WISE**



## For Students and Parents:

Here at Collegewise, we love guides. While we've got a guide for just about everything—including how to make a perfect pot of coffee (yup, it's amazing)—shockingly, until now we've never produced an ApplyTexas Application Guide. And yes, we know what you're thinking. It's ApplyTexas without a space, not Apply Texas. We're not sure who made that decision, but since it's technically correct we're going with that in our guide.

We've arranged the guide so that you can either read the entire thing or go directly to those sections where you have questions or need a little help. Just like with the Common App (if you haven't already downloaded the [Collegewise Guide to the Common App](#), you are missing out on a truly magnificent read), we think you'll be delighted by how just a few small—but smart—tweaks can make a world of difference in your application.

If, at the end of reading the guide, you feel like you want some more assistance, our Collegewise counselors can help you:

- Tackle your ApplyTexas essay questions—both the long and short answers
- Review every piece of your application before you officially hit "Submit" and send it spiraling off into cyberspace
- Answer any last-minute questions about either Texas admissions in particular, or your college journey in general

To find out more about these services, just email our Director of Counseling Outreach, Patti Winkel, at [pattiw@collegewise.com](mailto:pattiw@collegewise.com) and she'll help you get connected with a counselor.

## For Counselors and Teachers:

While this guide is protected by copyright, we encourage you to share it with anyone who is well-served by its existence, including your colleagues and students. Some counselors print a copy for their office, others forward the download link directly to their students, and some add the link to their school's newsletters or websites. All that we ask is that the Collegewise name remains on the document, and that you neither change the guide nor charge for its use.

We also have other useful resources for you:

[Sign up for Collegewise's free email newsletter](#) for counselors, students, and parents. We don't send out sales pitches—just great college planning advice. And if you change your mind about subscribing, one click is all it takes to opt out.

Check out [our founder's blog](#). Hundreds of counselors around the world read (and share) it, and Kevin's blogged his wisdom daily for nine straight years, creating a streak even Cal Ripken would admire.

You can even invite us to help you if you need a speaker. We're really good presenters (both live and online) and there are very few college-related topics we cannot handle. And yes, we also conduct remarkably good professional development sessions.

If you'd like to set up something where Collegewise could help you, please email us at [info@collegewise.com](mailto:info@collegewise.com).

Thanks for reading this,

Collegewise

## Table of Contents

<a href="#">How to Use This Guide</a>	5
<a href="#">Before You Start Your Application</a>	5
<a href="#">Creating an ApplyTexas Account</a>	6

## Sections of the ApplyTexas App

<a href="#">How to Start Your ApplyTexas Application</a>	7
<a href="#">Biographical Information</a>	8
<a href="#">Biographical Information (continued)</a>	10
<a href="#">Educational Background</a>	11
<a href="#">Educational Information</a>	12
<a href="#">Test Scores</a>	13
<a href="#">Residency Information</a>	14
<a href="#">Extracurricular and Volunteer Activities</a>	14
<a href="#">Employment Information</a>	16
<a href="#">Custom Questions for this Institution</a>	17
<a href="#">Essays</a>	18
<a href="#">Certification and Payment Information</a>	20
<a href="#">Submit</a>	20
<a href="#">Scholarships</a>	22
<a href="#">About the Authors</a>	22
<a href="#">Want More?</a>	23

## How to Use This Guide

We wrote this guide to pick up where the ApplyTexas Application's instructions leave off. For example, the ApplyTexas Application outlines how to add your activities to the appropriate section, but we explain how to present them in a clear and compelling way.

We *didn't* write this guide to tell you how to select which Texas schools you're applying to, how to correctly report your grades in the Academics section, or which residence hall to choose. We think the ApplyTexas Application instructions and resources are very thorough, and we didn't want you to spend time reading about anything that's already available online. This is our subtle way of saying, "Please don't ignore the ApplyTexas Application directions".

## Before You Start Your Application (a.k.a. Boring but necessary information)

Here are a few steps we suggest you follow before you begin your ApplyTexas application:

1. Bookmark the [ApplyTexas website](#). You'll be using this link a lot as you complete your ApplyTexas applications.)
2. Bookmark the ApplyTexas [application instructions for freshman](#) or their [guide for transfers](#). Each of these documents offers a wealth of basic information on how to fill out the ApplyTexas application.
3. Confirm that the universities you plan on applying to actually use the [ApplyTexas platform](#).
4. Make sure spell-check is enabled in your browser. (If you're not sure how to do this, you can search your browser's "help" section, or Google it.)
5. Add yourself to the [ApplyTexas Twitter feed](#). They offer timely and useful advice throughout the process.
6. Increasingly, many schools are providing advice on how to approach their applications through social media. (And they'll likely announce on their pages when they'll be releasing admissions decisions!) Here are the specific links for a few ApplyTexas campuses:

University of Texas at Austin – [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)  
Texas A&M at College Station – [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)  
Texas Tech University – [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)  
Baylor University – [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)  
Texas Christian University – [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)  
Trinity University – [Facebook](#) & [Twitter](#)

If you're looking for a school we didn't list, don't worry. You don't need to do anything fancy. Simply type "X University Admissions Twitter Page" into your search engine of choice and it should be the top hit for your search.

### 3 Easy Steps to Create an Account

1. When you are ready to begin, go to [ApplyTexas.org](https://ApplyTexas.org)
2. After clicking on "Create New Account", you will be taken to a page that asks you for various identifying information to establish an ApplyTexas profile. This includes:
  - Full Legal Name – Confirm your full legal name as it appears on official documents (i.e.: birth certificate, passport, etc.)
  - Date of Birth
  - Place of Birth (city, state, and country) – also confirm with official documents like your birth certificate
  - Current Grade Level (if you are starting your application before the beginning of senior year, you should still indicate 12<sup>th</sup> grade)
  - Email Address
  - Permanent Address
  - Physical Address – also known as your mailing address; if it is the same as your permanent address, you should leave this blank
  - Phone Number(s)
  - Emergency Contact Information
  - Ethnicity and Race
  - Gender
  - Create a password following the guidelines they provide and enter the reCAPTCHA information to prove you are a real person
3. Click "Create my Profile" and you are done creating your account.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** When you choose your email address, avoid three common mistakes:

**Use YOUR primary email address, not a parent's.** While it's tempting to have mom or dad check in on your apps, it's up to you to make sure you're keeping up with your college emails.

**Use an appropriate email address.** Make sure that your primary email address is neither silly (e.g. beachgirl24@aol.com) nor offensive (we'll pass on giving examples here). Our best advice? Use an email account that's a version of your name: `firstname_lastname@gmail.com`, `lastname_firstname@gmail.com`, or even `firstname_middleinitial_lastname@gmail.com`.

**Use an email address that you check frequently.** All ApplyTexas correspondence will go to the account that you list, so make sure it's one that you check often. Make it easier on yourself to check for college emails by adding this email account to the mail app on your phone or by creating an email account that's **ONLY** for college applications.

## How to Start Your Application

**Step 1:** Once you create your initial profile, you will be directed to a similar-looking page confirming your username, which is the email address you entered. From this page, you will see a hyperlink that reads "You may now go to My Applications to complete an application." Click that to begin your first application.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** Only create an application for ONE college to start. ApplyTexas allows you to copy completed applications for another college that uses the ApplyTexas platform. If you plan on applying to The University of Texas at Austin, or Texas A&M University – College Station, we recommend you complete their application first because they require more information than some other schools using the platform. This will make it easier for you to reduce your workload on future applications. #Winning!

**Step 2:** After clicking "Go to My Applications" you should now be on your "My Account Dashboard" where you can now click on "Create a new application now".

**Step 3:** If you are applying as an undergraduate to a 4-year institution, click "Create a new 4-year university undergraduate admissions application."

**Step 4:** You will now be asked to select your "Target University." Select the name of the college you wish to apply to from the drop-down box provided.

**Step 5:** Click “Application Type.” Select the type that describes you best and then hit “Continue.”

*You’re a freshman if:*

- You plan to enter college straight out of high school OR
- You have chosen to take college courses while you are still in high school, but you haven’t taken any time off between high school and college

*You’re a transfer student if:*

- You have completed high school AND
- You have already begun taking college courses at an institution of higher education (i.e. community college or another four-year university after you graduate high school) and wish to complete your undergraduate education at a Texas school

**Step 6:** Select your “Semester of Entry”. For most high school seniors, you will be selecting the fall semester of the year you graduate from high school. Transfer students will also typically select fall, but some colleges in Texas offer transfer students the option to start in the spring semester.

**Step 7:** Select your school choice. This is asking which particular academic program within the university do you plan to be a part of (e.g: McCombs School of Business at UT Austin, Whitacre College of Engineering at Texas Tech). If you need help figuring out which school your major is housed in, you can typically Google “X University Undergraduate Majors” to find out.

**Step 8:** Select your first and second choice majors.

**Step 9:** You are now ready to continue on to the rest of the application. You may do so by clicking “Continue to Application.”

## Biographical Information

A lot of the information in this section will already be filled out from when you created your account. Use this time to double check for errors and fill out remaining questions not asked when you created your account.

**Step 1:** Enter your U.S. Social Security Number. You are allowed to leave the Social Security Number field blank if you do not have one. Note: if you select a country of citizenship other than the United States of America, you will have to select the appropriate citizenship/visa status.

**Step 2:** *When were you born?* This should already be here from when you created your account. If it is incorrect, you should change that now.

**Step 3:** *Full legal name.* ApplyTexas recommends that you do not use nicknames or abbreviations because this will be on your official records if you enroll. Please do not include diacritical marks such as accents (') or tildes (~).

**Step 4:** *Other names or aliases.* Only fill out this portion if you previously attended school under a different name or registered for a standardized exam like the SAT or ACT with a different name.

**Step 5:** *Place of Birth.*

**Step 6:** *Are you a U.S. Citizen?*

**Step 7:** *Status as a current U.S. military service member, veteran, or dependent.* You may leave this section blank if none of the options apply to you or your family.

**Step 8:** *Permanent address.*

**Step 9:** *Physical address.* Make sure the address you provide here is the place where you want any correspondence from the colleges to be sent.

**Step 10:** *Phone Numbers.* Your listed phone number should be for a phone that is easily accessible, like your personal cell phone (or a parent's cell if you don't have your own). Do not use any dashes or spaces when entering your phone number.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *Make sure your voicemail message is clear and professional. We recommend selecting the automatic greeting option if you don't feel comfortable leaving your own personal message. Be sure that your voicemail box has space available for new messages. Just so you know, admission officers might leave voicemails for you asking you to clarify information or even to share positive news about your application. (Yes, it's all so very last century.) So, don't forget to check your messages!*

**Step 11:** *Emergency Contact.* This is typically your legal guardian(s).

**Step 12:** *Student e-mail address.* Use the email you check most frequently.

**Step 13: Family Educational Background.** Collegewise recommends you don't just guess in this situation. Always confirm with your parents or guardians about what educational level you should enter.

**Step 14: Ethnicity and Race.** Here you will be asked if you are of Hispanic or Latino descent as well as the option to select your racial category. You may select more than one racial category if needed.

**Step 15: Your gender.** Here you will select your gender as identified on official legal documents (birth certificate or passport as examples).

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *In general, always hit "Save changes" when you have completed a page of the application. For this particular page, once you hit "Save changes" you will be asked to check a box that verifies your name and birthdate. Check the box if everything is correct and then hit "Save page" one more time to continue.*

## Biographical Information (cont'd)

**Step 1:** *In addition to English, what languages do you speak fluently?* Select language and number of years spoken.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *We usually recommend adding a language only if you feel you can speak comfortably in a conversation with another person who speaks the same language. Imagine an admission officer called you to ask you about your application in that language. Would you feel comfortable responding?*

**Step 2: Family Income.** Some students are afraid to answer this question honestly because they fear that it may impact their application in some way. But your financial aid eligibility is based on a number of factors, and while income is taken into account, all decisions about financial aid are based on the information provided in your FAFSA.

**Step 3: Household Size.** Only whole numbers are allowed in this box. If you're not sure, ask your legal guardian how many people they claim as a dependent on their taxes.

**Step 4:** *Do you have family obligations that keep you from participating in extracurricular activities?* Check the box for "Yes" or "No". Again, don't be embarrassed or ashamed if you answer "Yes" here. Universities are looking for students with all types of

backgrounds and experiences and they are using this to understand your circumstance better.

## Educational Background

**Step 1:** *Are you a freshman with:* Here you will select either “no previous college credit hours” or “college credit hours.” If you have college credit hours, you will enter the total number of credits you will earn by the time of your high school graduation.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *This question is asking for college credit hours earned BEFORE graduating high school. This would include dual enrollment courses during the school year, or summer camps you may have attended at a university where you earned official college credit. This does NOT include AP/IB classes or AP/IB credit.*

**Step 2:** *High school you graduated from or expect to graduate from:* Instead of manually typing in your high school information, you should be able to use the “Find your high school” button to look up your school and auto-populate your school’s information.

- You may also select “home-schooled” if that is applicable to you.
- You will also indicate here whether or not you plan to graduate with an IB Diploma.

**Step 3:** *Do you have a GED or have you completed another high school equivalency program?* If you plan to graduate from a traditional high school or home school, you will select “Not Applicable.”

**Step 4:** *Please list all post-secondary colleges and universities which you have attended or are currently attending, their school codes, their locations, the dates you were enrolled, the number of hours earned, any type of degrees you have received, and the date the degree was conferred. Include colleges and universities you attended while you were in high school. This is where you would include the name of the institution where you received any dual credit while in high school and the dates of attendance.*

- You MUST list an institution if you have dual credit to report. Your application will be withdrawn if you fail to include this information.
- If you are listing an institution because of dual credit, you will need to request an official transcript be sent from that institution to the college(s) to which you are applying.

**Step 5:** *Are you currently on academic suspension from the last college or university attended?* We hope this is self-explanatory, but if not, you can find this information by calling the school’s registrar’s office.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *Texas resident High School Diploma question – some universities using ApplyTexas will ask students to list their High School Diploma classification. If you don’t know the answer, your school counselor will be the best person to ask to ensure you’re entering the correct answer.*

## Educational Information

**Step 1:** *If you plan to pursue a professional program, please specify which one:* You must select an answer to this question, even if your answer is “None” or “Other.” All options are listed in the drop down box.

**Step 2:** *Will you seek teacher certification?* This is required of all applicants, but for students choosing “yes” you will then select the school level you plan to teach. Don’t worry, you’re not locking yourself in. The school just wants a better idea of your career aspirations.

**Step 3:** *Senior Course Information:* Your transcript is your chance to highlight your strengths. DO NOT list your classes in the order you take them during your school day. Instead, list your senior year courses in order from most to least rigorous (AP, IB, Dual Credit, and Honors classes) to make your senior year stand out to admission readers.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *Before you start this section, print out an official copy of your transcript! Students can usually find their high school transcripts in their online school portals, but if you don’t have one of those (or don’t know what the heck we’re talking about), ask your high school counselor for a copy of your unofficial transcript.*

For example, the abbreviations APUSH, AP US, and AP US Hist are all examples of how to abbreviate the same course—Advanced Placement (AP) US History. Every high school will use their own abbreviations and you should follow what your official high school transcript states. You see why having your transcript will be helpful as you’re reporting grades? The details matter, and you wouldn’t want ApplyTexas schools to see your self-reported transcript and think you were misrepresenting the classes you’d taken.

## Test Scores – Admissions Tests

Filling out the testing section of the ApplyTexas application is actually quite intuitive. You simply check the box for the score you intend to send and the date you took that exam. The bigger questions most students have are about how ApplyTexas schools evaluate tests for admission purposes.

Before we dive into your testing FAQ's, a quick note: any testing calendar involves a deeply complex set of decisions that depends on a bunch of factors, including your choice of major, the competitiveness of the school to which you are applying, where you sit in your academic schedule, and what part of the year are you busiest with extra-curricular activities. The information below does not take all of your personal factors into account.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *On the actual ApplyTexas application, there is typically only one spot to list the date of an exam taken. If you were planning on listing more, don't worry. We recommend listing your highest score from a single date on the actual application, then send additional official score reports from the testing agency (either Collegeboard or ACT.org) directly to the schools to which you are applying.*

### ApplyTexas Testing FAQ

#### ***When should I test?***

Students can plan to take the SAT or ACT once they complete Algebra 2, but should plan to take their *last test no later than November of senior year*. But, in reality, this is the very latest anyone should test. Students who test earlier will be able to consider which ApplyTexas schools might be the best fits for their profile and interests.

#### ***How should I report my scores?***

There are two steps to make sure that the ApplyTexas schools receive your test scores:

1. In the ApplyTexas application, you check which score report you plan to send.
2. Send an official copy of your scores from ACT or College Board.

#### ***How do I know that the schools received my test scores?***

For most universities (across the U.S.), once you have submitted all your materials you will receive instructions from the university allowing you to access an online portal to track when your documents are received by the admissions office. If you are unsure whether any campus has received your official scores, it is imperative that you call or email to confirm directly with that admissions office that your scores are on file.

### **What about SAT Subject Tests—should I take those?**

Great question! Each school, and sometimes major, has their own testing requirements. You should look up that information for each college you're applying to before you register for three Subject Tests and end up not needing them.

## **Residency Information**

Many public institutions need to verify whether or not each student is considered to be an in-state student for tuition purposes. This section addresses just that. For many of you, this section should be fairly straightforward. However, we always recommend you sit down with a parent or legal guardian to ensure you are answering the questions accurately and to the best of your ability.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *One residency question in particular can be a bit tricky. The question asks, "During the 12 months prior to the term for which you are applying, did you attend a public college or university in Texas in a fall or spring term (excluding summer)?" If you are a current high school senior (resident of any state) who has taken dual credit classes at a public community or four-year college in Texas while in high school, you will select "No" to this question. If you have already graduated from a high school and have since taken classes at a public college or university in Texas, you will select "Yes" to this question.*

## **Extracurricular and Volunteer Activities**

Most schools that use ApplyTexas will have an extracurricular, volunteer, honors & awards, and work/summer opportunities section. ApplyTexas is pretty clear about how to fill this out, so as always, read the directions preceding each category. In the meantime, we've answered a few of your frequently asked questions.

### **What should I list as Extracurricular Activities?**

This is the catch-all section for anything you do outside the classroom that didn't isn't specifically a job, summer opportunity, or community service opportunity. This includes sport teams, music, theatre, student council, clubs/organizations, etc. Don't forget that hobbies count! Did you teach yourself how to play guitar by watching YouTube videos and spend a couple of hours every week playing? Well, that's awesome—put it down!

### **Should I fill out this section or just submit a resume?**

At Collegewise, we actually recommend you do both. Filling out your activities within the application is kind of like a teaser trailer for your resume.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** For the 2019 application cycle, Texas A&M is encouraging students to NOT submit an expanded resume. They recommend only submitting one if there are activities that absolutely require additional information in order to fully understand them.

### ***So why am I filling out both?***

By filling out some of your activities in the application itself, the admissions officers can see quickly what is most important to you. However, the character limit on the application is incredibly limited. It's 80 characters. That's usually not enough space to adequately describe your involvement and impact in an activity. So we suggest keeping the activity section short and sweet, and then including the "bread and butter" on your resume (what some universities within Texas refer to as the expanded resume).

On the expanded resume, you have a little more space to add detail. You can include things like why you enjoyed that particular activity, what you learned from it, a memorable experience that highlights something you accomplished, or even numbers for context (i.e. you raised \$15,000 for charity). If you participated in a state competition, tell them how many people you competed against, or how many interviews you had to go through to get to that position. Quantifying helps admissions counselors better understand how hard you worked and how much you contributed to your life outside of class.

Additionally, it's fine to abbreviate on both your application and expanded resume, as long as the abbreviation is universally understood. It would be hard to find an admissions officer who doesn't know the meaning of "MVP," but if you're not sure, then spell out the acronym. In addition, you'll find you can save space by using numbers and abbreviations in the right place. "Senior Class Vice President" can also be "Class VP: 12," and "First Place in Conference Championship as a Sophomore and Junior" can be "1st in Conf. Championship: 10, 11." But be cautious. If you find yourself so desperate to squeeze in more information that your section is looking more like someone with a concussion trying to do Morse code, you may want to consider using the full word or different abbreviation.

Beyond importance, consider listing activities towards the top that you have been involved in the longest/most consistently or where you held a leadership position (usually this matches up with importance for a student). It is far more important that you be authentic here rather than worry about being impressive.

### ***I don't have enough activities to fill every space! What do I do?***

You don't need to have an activity in every single category in order to be admitted. We promise. You will have some categories that are blank, and that's okay! Also, don't feel

like you need to fill in 10 spaces in each category. Only have one entry? Great! Put that one down proudly and don't try and make other things fit in each category that just don't. And, whatever you do, don't try to make things sound more important than just weren't. (More on that below.)

### ***What should (and shouldn't) I list in the Volunteer and Community Service section?***

Did you donate at a blood drive once in ninth grade for an hour? While Red Cross math says that you saved up to three lives with that donation, it is probably not worth noting here. Try to focus on the volunteer experiences that meant the most to you and where you had an-ongoing, tangible impact. If community service wasn't your thing, that's okay. Leave this section blank. It's best not to exaggerate (or invent) community service hours that just didn't happen.

### ***What should I list as Activities and Awards?***

National Honors Society (NHS) is an activity that fits a lot better here than it does in the Extracurricular Activities section, especially if you are not particularly involved in NHS (i.e.: holding a board position, or taking it upon yourself to organize volunteering opportunities for students other than yourself). Other good things to note here include MVP, Student of the Month, Honor Roll, Scholar Athlete, and other recognitions of this kind that acknowledge your accomplishments but aren't necessarily a stand-alone activity.

## **Employment, Internships, and Summer Activities**

### ***What should I list as Work Experience?***

List here any jobs you were paid to do. This can be a paid internship, babysitting gig, or the neighborhood landscaping business you started. It doesn't have to be a formal job at a restaurant or store.

### ***What counts as a Summer Activity?***

Did you go on a mission trip for two weeks? Were you a counselor in training at the camp you grew up attending? Did you attend marching band camp to prepare for the upcoming season? All of those things count, so you should add them! Admission counselors are trying to understand how you spent your time in the summer. Don't make them assume you were just sitting around eating ice cream and watching Netflix 24/7. But do be mindful that the same activity should only be listed once, even though it could fall in multiple different categories (work, summer, extracurricular, etc.) We suggest picking the category that best fits the activity and only list it once.

## Custom Questions for this Institution

Most universities that use ApplyTexas will have custom questions for their particular school. Usually these are “yes” or “no” questions that shouldn’t be too time-consuming. Typically, they’re trying to determine things like your interest in specific clubs or activities they have on campus, see if you’ve visited campus before, or if you’re related to anyone on the Board of Trustees, for example.

However, there are a few other important custom questions that you should be sure not to miss.

**Texas A&M** has an extra essay for engineering and computer science majors. Currently, the question is: *Describe your academic and career goals in the broad field of engineering (including computer science, industrial distribution, and engineering technology). What and/or who has influenced you either inside or outside the classroom that contributed to these goals?*

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *For students who need to answer this question, we recommend taking a look at our advice for the first UT Austin short answer listed below.*

**The University of Texas at Austin** also has a few short answer questions. These extra essays, are are also in the “Custom Questions” section. Here’s what we recommend you think about when answering them.

1. *If you could have any career, what would it be? Why? Describe any activities you are involved in, life experiences you’ve had, or even classes you’ve taken that have helped you identify this professional path.*

This question is pretty straightforward. They’re not trying to trick you. We recommend you be honest and tell your story here. Was there a particular class that sparked your interest and you couldn’t stop asking questions? Did you hear a new podcast that took you down a wormhole of research? Did you spend time with a local organization that inspired you to do something similar? Tell those stories! Stories about how you discovered your interest and future career path are interesting (and often memorable) for admission counselors to read. Generally, your answer should relate to your first and second choice major choices and how you hope to explore them at UT specifically.

2. *Do you believe your academic record (transcript information and test scores) provide an accurate representation of you as a student? Why or why not?*

Again, this is not a trick question, we promise! Many students think if they say “yes” it sounds like they’re too proud or being boastful. We think you should be proud of your hard work in high school! If you want to answer “yes” to this question, you should. But you should also include the hard work that went into those accomplishments. What type of student were you? Did you struggle in AP Physics and had to figure out a different way to study in order to earn an A? Let them know!

If you answer “no” to this question, that’s also fine. Just be careful that you don’t use this space to complain about a horrible teacher or say anything that might come across as laying blame on someone else. Admissions officers don’t expect you to be perfect. But if something didn’t go as planned in high school they need to know why. Maybe you were ill for a month and couldn’t catch up on as much work as you wanted to, but you studied like crazy to ace the AP exam. Maybe you couldn’t take as many honors or AP classes as you wanted because you were a dedicated athlete or debater and had to make room for that in your schedule. Maybe standardized testing just isn’t your thing and you believe that your transcript is more reflective of your academic potential. Whatever it is, give colleges the context as to why you might not feel that your transcript or test scores represent you, and take full ownership over your situation.

*3. How do you show leadership in your life? How do you see yourself being a leader at UT Austin?*

UT Austin does a great job explaining that leadership can be seen in [many shapes and forms](#). Maybe you were the captain of the soccer team and you were proud of that. Tell them about it! Maybe you had to be the chauffeur and babysitter for your younger siblings to help your parents out. That counts, too! When answering this question, we encourage you to think of any time you stepped up to the plate that meant a lot to you and the people around you. Holding an official leadership position in your school isn’t the only way to be a leader in your community.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *For almost any application a student is submitting, we always recommend you draft your essay in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Pages, or other platform of your choice to ensure your work is saved and safe. Once you are completely happy with your essay, then you can copy and paste your essay into the text boxes on ApplyTexas. Be sure to review each essay carefully for any formatting issues that may arise from copying and pasting.*

## Essays

Each university that uses ApplyTexas does a pretty great job of letting you know which essays are required for their school. If all the essays are marked as optional, Collegewise

usually recommends you submit one anyway because it helps provide additional context for your application, which is always a plus. Remember, admissions counselors are using these essays to get to know you and see if you'd be a good fit for their campus, both socially and academically. This isn't the place to reiterate your entire resume with highlights of your accomplishments. They really want to get to know YOU!

### **Here are also some FAQs about essays on ApplyTexas:**

*Do all institutions on ApplyTexas have the same essay topics?*

Yes, for the most part, they do. This is great news for you because you don't have to reinvent the wheel every time you apply to a different university. For the 2019 application cycle, UT Austin and Texas A&M only require essay topic A as the long essay requirement. Other schools like Texas State and Texas Tech allow you to choose between three different essay topics (A, B, and C - see below).

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *We typically recommend students choose the essay topic that can be used most frequently. For most students that's topic A, especially if they plan to apply to UT and Texas A&M. Ultimately, though, it's your choice!*

Topic A - *What was the environment in which you were raised? Describe your family, home, neighborhood, or community, and explain how it has shaped you as a person.*

Topic B - *Some students have an identity, an interest, or a talent that defines them in an essential way. If you are one of these students, then tell us about yourself.*

Topic C - *You've got a ticket in your hand. Where will you go? What will you do? What will happen when you get there?*

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *Yes, we're listing this one twice because it's THAT important. For almost any application a student is submitting, we always recommend you draft your essay in Microsoft Word, Google Docs, Pages, or other platform of your choice to ensure your work is saved and safe. Once you are completely happy with your essay, then you can copy and paste your essay into the text boxes on ApplyTexas. Be sure to review each essay carefully for any formatting issues that may arise from copying and pasting.*

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** Some institutions will give you the choice to submit your essay(s) at the same time as your application or after you submit your application. We say do yourself a favor and submit the essay(s) with your application to remove one more item from your to-do list. And it ensures you don't forget to submit them later!

## Certification and Payment Information

Here you will need to agree to each school's terms and conditions. If you have particular questions about their terms, we encourage you to contact the admissions office directly.

After you agree to the terms and conditions, you will be asked: "Your transcript will be shared with the community college(s) you previously attended for considering your eligibility for and awarding of an Associate degree (if you qualify). Do you consent?" You should answer "Yes" to this question if you have earned at least 60 college credits from a community college. If you have taken community college courses while in high school, but less than 60 credits, you may select "No" or "Not applicable – this question does not apply to me."

Once you agree to the terms and conditions, you will select your payment method and proceed to entering your credit card information on the next page.

## Submit

The submission page provides you with an application summary and shows the completion status of all of the sections of your application. Once you start the submission process, you will be asked for demographic information and your state of legal residence. You will then be able to review your entire application to ensure everything is correct.

## Fee Waivers

If paying for application fees might be a hardship for your family, some schools will waive those fees for students who are U.S. citizens, permanent residents, or eligible for AB 540 benefits. Your high school counselor should be able to help you navigate this process, or you can contact the university specifically and discuss with them.

## After You Submit

After you submit your application, we recommend printing out a copy so that you have a record of the application along with your application ID. If you don't have a printer (or

are ecologically inclined), save the document electronically so that you have access to this information. (Google "Print to PDF" to find out how to do this on your computer.)

Remember, you still need to request that your transcripts and test scores are sent to each individual institution to which you are applying. For each school you are applying, you will also need to research how they suggest you send letters of recommendation.

### ***What else do I need to do after I hit submit?***

Usually within 72 hours, you will receive an email from the school you applied to with instructions for setting up your institution-specific status page or portal. This is where you can log in to see if the college received all of your required application materials. This is also the place where you can upload additional documents, like resumes, if that school allows them. You will typically also receive your admission decision on these portal pages, so be sure to write your login information down in a safe place, and check the pages at least once a week for any updates to your application.

Finally, some institutions in Texas allow you to submit an application for on-campus housing even before you've received your admission decision. You can usually find this information by Googling the name of your institution plus "residential life" or "on-campus housing application."

### ***What if I have changes to my academic record?***

This one is a big deal. A change to your academic record usually means that, after submitting your application, you:

- Change schools
- Add or drop a course

When this happens, you must notify each school to which you are applying, either by email or postal mail. Your correspondence must include your name, ApplyTexas Application ID number, and your signature (if you mail a letter). Make sure you keep a copy of this correspondence for your records.

**Collegewise Pro Tip:** *If your test scores go up (SAT, ACT, TOEFL, etc.), you should update those if the school allows it. You can check this on the school's website.*

## Scholarships

So what about scholarships? Some institutions that use ApplyTexas include their scholarship applications on ApplyTexas as well. Texas A&M and The University of Texas at Austin are the two most notable colleges that do this. You may either submit the additional scholarship application with your application for admission OR you can submit the scholarship application after you apply for admission, as long as your scholarship application is submitted by the indicated deadline (usually December 1<sup>st</sup>). We always encourage families to fill out the ApplyTexas Scholarship pages.

If the school you are applying to does not have an additional scholarship application on ApplyTexas, we recommend you go to the scholarship page at that individual university to read their scholarship application procedures. Some schools will tell you to apply to individual scholarships, while some schools will tell you that just by submitting an application for admission, you will be considered for all scholarships. It varies by school, so be sure to read instructions carefully!

## About the Authors

**Liz Pack** – After graduating from The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Liz worked in the UNC Office of Undergraduate Admissions as an admissions counselor and fell in love with information sessions and providing advice about the college process. Looking for more experience in higher education, she traveled to The University of Texas at Austin to complete her master's degree in higher education and spent time as an admissions counselor at UT's Office of Admissions.

**Rebecca Putter** – After getting her start in education by launching a satellite branch of a tutoring company in Austin, Rebecca spent a year as a pre-law advisor and career coach with UT Austin's Liberal Arts Career Services Office. Prior to joining Collegewise, Rebecca interned for a local private counselor and took on her own caseload of students. It was then that Rebecca realized she wanted to help high school students of all GPAs and test scores find—and get into—the college of their dreams. Rebecca was valedictorian of her high school class and earned a near perfect GPA both while studying politics at NYU and later when earning a master's degree in higher education from UT Austin.

**Tim Magee** – Tim has spent most of his extensive career in education as an Associate Professor of English at Westchester Community College, where his position as co-chair of the First Year Experience committee allowed him to develop an expertise in helping

students adjust to the transition to college. Before joining Collegewise, Tim also spent time consulting for an EdTech startup whose mission is to provide free, online college prep advice and resources to low-income students in order to improve access to higher education.

## Want More?

Collegewise is a private college counseling firm that holds two beliefs: (1) The college admissions process should be an exciting, adventurous time for every family, and (2) accurate, helpful college information should be made available to everyone. So, even though we are private counselors who work with families who can afford to hire us, we also enjoy working with anyone who is interested and willing to listen, whether we're writing, speaking, or teaching as much as we can.

If you'd like to learn more about how we can help your family or your students enjoy a successful, more joyful college admissions process, [just reach out and ask](#).