



## How to Complete the CA4 Common Application Online

*You don't need to be an Internet expert to be able to fill out forms online, especially the common application. Here are step-by step-guidelines to help you do your application faster, and without any hitches. Use this guide for initial registration, reference and troubleshooting, but know that you can always refer to the online instructions and Help Center for questions you might have not included here.*

### Step 1: Initial Registration

Log onto to [www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org) and click on the "Create an Account" link.

For first time registration, follow the instructions below:

- Enter your email address and create a password that meets the requirements outlined on your right; your email address should be in the form: [steve@email.com](mailto:steve@email.com) *Save your user name and password in a safe place for future reference. You are not allowed to have multiple accounts with similar biodata for the Common App.*
- Fill in your first name and last name, by typing in the blank spaces
- Click on the 'Enter Address' link and fill in your details. For the zip code, type in five zeros (00000) as Zimbabwe does not have zip codes.
- For the phone number, enter the country code **263** in the first box, then enter your phone number starting with the city or service provider code in the second box, e.g. 4321456, 772547898 (**this is the format which you should use**) Do not include the 0. A phone number is required, but the format is for US phones, so you have to make your Zimbabwean one fit their format.
- To the 'I am applying as a \_\_\_\_\_' question, select the "First-Year-Student" option.
- To the 'I am a (n) \_\_\_\_\_' question, select the 'Applicant planning to enroll within the next twelve months' option.
- Read the Common application License agreement then check the box.
- Click on 'Create!' Now you are all set to access the common application form!

*Once you've registered you can review, edit, and save your application. If you choose not to register- **which might not be such a brilliant idea**-you still can do your form on the computer, but you cannot save it, and once you print it out it is gone! Save your self the hassle of re-typing by registering the first time you onto Common Application.*

### PLEASE NOTE:

If you are unsuccessful in registering, take note of the following possible errors:

- You did not click on the "I agree to terms of use", box,
- You entered a wrong birth date, which made you younger than 12! Or you might have used the wrong format for your birth date.
- You used a not so secure browser- the website is a highly secure one and some computers might not allow you to create an account on it. Try using Google Chrome or Internet Explorer. The EducationUSA computers are all equipped with secure browsers for the Common App if you do not have luck elsewhere.

## **Step 2: Complete the Application Form**

Once you have logged in with your credentials to access your account, click on the ‘**Common Application**’ box (grey box in the middle) to build your profile.

### **Profile:**

- Click on the edit link if you wish to provide an alternate address to use for your mailing correspondence if it is different from the one that you entered at registration
- If your citizenship is not listed on the scroll-down menu, enter Other (Non-US)
- Fill in other information as it applies to you.
- For the Common App Fee Waiver, you will also need to provide supporting evidence to show that the application fee might pose a financial barrier for you and your family. This verification can be in the form of a letter from a school official, college access counselor, financial aid officer, or community leader. Keep this in mind before requesting for a fee waiver.

### **Family:**

Fill out this section truthfully; do not omit or lie about family status. The computer aided technology of CA4 will adapt to your answers. For example, when you list the number of siblings you have, the corresponding number of answer spaces will appear.

### **Education:**

*Secondary School information* - Fill out as required, listing all schools you have attended for secondary and high school. Look up your school and if you cannot find it (There are only about 12 Zimbabwean schools listed!) leave as School Unknown and write in your school.

Decide who will be completing your School Report Form and uploading/printing your transcript and exam results and print that counselor/school administrator’s details including email address. Do the same for the teachers who will write your two letters of recommendation.

Your graduation date is your last day of A level exams.

*Community Based Organizations (CBO)* - Education USA does not count here as it a service open to the public and not restricted by financial considerations. IF you are in USAP, this section applies to you.

*Grades* - Class ranking: If you have an exact class rank, you should put it. If not, you should be able to estimate what percentile you fall in. (top quintile, decile, etc... %)

Rank weighting – Unweighted

Graduating class size- Total number of U6 A-level students at your school, not just in your section (ie sciences, arts, commercials)

Cumulative GPA –Leave blank

*Current year courses* – Enter the number of A level courses you are currently taking. If you have completed school last year, enter 0. For each course, write the name of the course (ie A Level Chemistry) and then click “Honors” for level and “1” for course credit. Make sure to include all of your courses including General Paper, English for Communication, etc.

*Academic Honors-* Please list any academic prizes and honors. Do not include any co-curricular awards such as sports awards, best debater, Allied Arts prizes, but do include school academic prizes, and national or international math or science Olympiads.

### *Future Plans*

From the scroll-down menu, choose your possible academic major. If you are not firm in your field of study, check undecided. Similarly, fill in your possible career plans. Note that your academic concentration does not have to be directly linked to your future career plans e.g. If you wish to become a doctor, you do not necessarily have to put pre-med or biology as your academic concentration.

### **Testing**

Fill out as required\*\*\*\* noting your Super-scored SAT and/or Subject Test and ACT exam results. If you don't have your scores before you submit the application, you will enter the dates when you will take the exams. It is essential that your official test results are sent directly from College Board or ACT to the colleges where you are applying in addition to simply listing your scores on the application form.

### *Senior Leaving Examinations*

If you are applying Early Decision before you complete your exams, you will not be able to complete this section. If you are applying Regular Decision, you will have completed your exams before you submit your applications. Thus, specify the number of exams you will have taken at A level, the examination board (GCE Cambridge or Other – write in ZIMSEC), your grade and whether it is predicted or actual. It will only be actual if you wrote earlier and are reporting actual marks.

### **Activities** (Extracurricular, Personal, and Volunteer Activities, Including Summer/Holidays)

In this section you're required to list **all** activities starting with the one that has the most meaning to you and going down in order of importance. There is space for up to 10 activities, but do not fill this space with meaningless, short term activities where you have spent less than an hour per week or that you did only in Form 1, etc. You want to show both depth and breadth in your activities. This section can include out-of-school activities such as serious hobbies, private music/art lessons, paid or voluntary work, serious family commitments and church activities.

### **Writing**

#### *Personal Essay*

Choose only one topic, which you are comfortable with and which tells your story best. The essay needs to be original, truthful and show sides of you not already in the application.

Type your essay, being sure to stay within the word limit or your essay will be cut off.

Edit your essay for grammar and spellings before you give it to anyone for further editing (*The essay is very, very important, and remember to edit, edit, edit and then give it to other people to edit and edit and edit again! Please attend the essay workshop for more details.*).

### **Supplements**

Some schools may have supplements that you have to fill. After you have added your colleges using the College Search option, check out if they have any additional requirements on the "Dashboard." Their specific questions or extra essays will show up when you are completing their applications.

### *The Arts Supplement*

All members may “host” their own arts forms if they choose to do so. If so, they will have a space for you to upload your work or links to it online. It is only possible to complete an arts supplement after you have added the school to your schools list – the supplement will fall under the “Member questions”.

### *The Athletic Supplement*

CA4 no longer has an Athletic Supplement. IF you are applying for a sports scholarship to a school using the common application, you need to contact the coach directly and send them relevant information including a sports cv, coach letter, national team verification letter and if relevant link to video. Information about athletic participation will also be collected from the activities section on the application and available to coaches if admissions offices choose to forward it.

### **Other required Information**

By signing this form you are agreeing to terms of use. Do not compromise your admission chances by lying, plagiarizing or omitting important information.

### **Step 3: Ensure Your School Documents Are Sent:**

Your school will need to complete and submit the following:

- Transcript
- Stamped O, AS (if applicable) and eventually A Level Results
- 2 Teachers Recommendations
- School Report Form, International Supplement to the School Report Form
- MidYear and Final Report Forms

Your teachers/school have to either submit all online (preferable as there is no cost to you) or all on paper. They cannot do a mixture. Complete the counselor and teacher information on the application form. If you are sending paper materials, print and photocopy the forms, but ensure each has a fresh school stamp. Assemble all school materials in sealed envelopes, with the school stamp across the seal to ensure they are official and have not been tampered with or seen by you. Each school will need its own set of materials.

### **Step 4: Submit Your Application**

Unlike the previous versions of the Common Application, you cannot submit parts of CA4, but must submit it all at one time. Once you have completed and submitted your Common Application in its entirety – application form, supplement questions, teacher and counselor recommendation requests and payment or waiver justification, it will show as submitted on your Dashboard. When you try to submit your next form, all that is repeated will be greyed out so that you only need to complete questions which are particular to that school. That is, once you put in the work to submit the CA4 once, it will be much easier for all other schools. Each time you submit your application, your school forms, if done online, will automatically be submitted as well, so you do not need to alert your high school if you decide to add schools on the Common Application once they have completed your forms. You will pay application fees online with a credit card.

Only submit your application after you have checked it, rechecked and triple checked it for any errors! You cannot undo a common application submission. Knowing the vagaries of Zimbabwean bandwidth, do not wait until the night before an application deadline to submit your form.