

How to Create a School Profile for Your Students' Applications to U.S. Colleges/Universities

What is the School Profile, and why do I need to create it?

The school profile is a document that accredited U.S. universities/colleges will read to get a better understanding of 1) the educational system in your country and 2) the educational system / grading / classes offered in your institution specifically. It is important to have this document ready in case any of your students want to apply to U.S. universities/colleges so that the universities they apply to will be able to fairly evaluate their application, taking into consideration the level of rigor of the courses at your school, how they were graded, and more. Keep in mind that students from *all over the world* apply to U.S. universities/colleges, so you **cannot** assume that they know how high schools function in your specific country.

Important things to keep in mind:

- The School Profile is a document about the **institution**, *not* the student who is applying to U.S. universities / colleges. In theory, you can use the same School Profile each year, as long as you update specific sections with more current information. For example, if you have 5 students applying to U.S. universities / colleges one year, the School Profile you submit for your institution is the same for all of them.
- There is not one single formula for the perfect School Profile; the layout in this document is merely a suggestion of important aspects to include in your School Profile, but ultimately you may edit it / change it as you wish.
- It is essential that the School Profile be on your school's letterhead / include your school logo, as well as your (guidance counselor or similar) contact information, in case the institution wants to follow up with questions
- Please upload the document in PDF form, not Microsoft Word. CommonApp is a common platform that asks for a School Profile, but other application platforms will ask for the same type of document, as they need to better understand the education system in your country, and in your specific institution.
- Do not assume that universities and colleges know how the educational system works in your country; it is better to be on the safe side and explain every component of your educational system.

Categories to include in your School Profile

(Information adapted from www.professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/counseling/profile)

- General High School Contact Information
- Community
- School
- Admission Process (if applicable)
- Curriculum
 - Leaving exams / how one obtains a high school degree (if applicable)
 - Other programs (AP/ IB)



- Graduation Requirements
- Rank
- Grading
- GPA
- COVID19-Related Changes
- Class of _____ Achievements
- Standardized Test Results
- Post High School Placements
- Awards and Distinctions for the Class of _____
- Colleges/universities attend by (institution's) graduates in the last 4 years
- Guidance Counselor Contact Info

For the specific things you should include in each section, please see each sub-section on the following pages.

General High School Information

This portion does not necessarily need a title. If you include the institution's logo / letterhead at the top of your page, then you can write the following information at the top of page 1, in bullets or on separate lines:

- Name of the institution
 - **Recommendation:** Put the Spanish name in italics, followed by the English translation in normal text, and then use the same name for the rest of the document—either the name in Spanish, or the name in English. Do not switch back and forth.
- Address of the institution
- Phone number(s)
 - **Recommendation:** Include the area code
- Email addresses (General institution email address, email address of the principal)
- Website
- Social Media Accounts

Community

In a brief paragraph, answer the following questions:

- Where is it located? (City, country)
- What type of economic classes are seen in the student population? (*Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds? Middle class? A mix of different groups? Mostly upper class, with a few students from low socioeconomic backgrounds studying with scholarships?*)

Example: ABC High School serves the needs of students on the Caribbean coast of Costa Rica, located in the center of Limón, Costa Rica. The student population is comprised of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds; as a result, students' access to Internet and equipment at home is limited.

- What are the demographics? (*Mostly Costa Rican students? 80% Costa Rican with 20% other nationalities?*)

Example: The majority of the student population is composed of Costa Rican students, but we also have students originally from Nicaragua and Venezuela.



- Does your institution have a reputation? Has it received any awards or recognition in recent years?

Example: This institution was named the third best STEM school in Costa Rica by the Ministry of Public Education in 2019.

School

In a brief paragraph, answer the following questions:

- Is it public, semi-private, or private? What educational standards does it follow? Is it accredited?
- How many students are enrolled in the school? In what grades?

Example: Lesly High School serves the needs of 250 students from 7th to 11th grade; the class of 2020 has 53 students total, the class of 2019 had 50 students.

- When was it founded? By whom? What are the school's values?
- What kind of curriculum does it follow? (*Basic terms...for example, is it an academic high school, or professional technical high school?*)

Example: Smith High School is an academic high school, following the Costa Rican Ministry of Public Education's academic standards, with most students graduating after 11th grade. Students enrolled in the IB program take an additional year of school, graduating after 12th grade.

Example: Brooks High School is a public professional technical high school, offering 10th – 12th grade. Students completed the first portion of their high school studies (7th – 9th grade) in other institutions and then transfer to Brooks to complete their technical and high school degree, graduating one year after other Costa Rican students enrolled in academic high schools.

Curriculum

- Does the school use semesters? Quarters? Trimesters? What school year does your institution follow?

Example: ABC High School follows the typical Costa Rican school year, starting classes in February and ending classes at the end of December. The school year is divided into three trimesters, that are 3 months each, with a one-week vacation before Easter and a two-week vacation in July.

- How many lessons or blocks are there each day? How many minutes long are they?

Example: Students have 6 classes per day, which are 45 minutes long. They also have one lunch period which is 45 minutes long.

- What is the school day schedule? (Start time, finish time)



- What courses are offered? (*Sometimes a table / chart is easier, with the number of classes or lessons per material / which years they are taken*)
 - Do the courses have labs? Are they college-credit classes to universities in your country?
- Does the school offer IB or AP classes? Which ones?

Example of a table to explain courses:

The courses offered and taken by all students in order to graduate are as follows:

Subjects	Classes per week	Semesters taken
Precalculus*	10	2
Calculus*	6	2
Linear Algebra	3	2
Statistics	4	1
Physics*	4	4
Physics Lab*	2	4
Chemistry*	4	4
Chemistry Lab*	2	4
Biology*	4	4
Biology Lab*	2	4
Coding*	3	3
Robotics	3	1
Spanish	5	4
English	4	4
Conversational English	2	4
History	2	4
Geography	2	4
Civic Education	2	4
Physical Education	2	4
Research	2	4
Logical Reasoning	2	2
Verbal Reasoning	2	2
Counseling	1	4
Religion	1	4

*: Students earn credit from all public universities in Costa Rica.

*: Students earn credit for these courses only from one public university, the Costa Rican Institute of Technology (ITCR).

Example of IB course listing:

The following subjects are available at the IB Diploma programme

at (Institution Name)

SPANISH A: Literature HL

ENGLISH B SL

HISTORY AMERICAS HL in SPANISH

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY in a GLOBAL SOCIETY, OR ITGS HL in SPANISH

BIOLOGY SL in SPANISH

MATHSTUDIES SL in SPANISH



Graduation Requirements

- How does one obtain a high school degree in your institution? Are there leaving exams?

Example: In Costa Rica: FARO exams, “Bachillerato” exams, IB exams + 2 “Bachillerato” exams, etc.

- ➔ How do the “Bachillerato” / FARO exams work? What happens if a student doesn’t pass all of them? What happens if a student doesn’t pass one?
- ➔ What is the presentation grade, in the Costa Rican high school system? How is it calculated?

- If the institution is a professional technical high school, how does a student obtain the technical degree?

- Do students have to obtain a specific number of credits to graduate?

Example: Over the course of their four years at Brooks High School, students must earn 4 credits of English, 4 credits of science, 4 credits of math, 2 credits of social science, and 2 credits of electives, in order to graduate.

Rank

What is “rank”? Rank refers to a way of classifying students in numeric order based on their academic achievements. For example, if the graduating class at your high school has 124 students, and your student has the 11th best grades (GPA) out of everyone, her rank is 11 out of 124, which also means that she is in the top 10% of her class.

If your institution does not use rank, simply write “Our institution does not use rank.” The U.S. universities and colleges do not want you to “translate” your institution to U.S. standards, so it is okay to say that you do not use rank.

Grading

In this portion, you should explain the varying levels of grades for students. If your institution does not use letter grades (A, B, C, D) like the United States, **that is okay**. Do not change your information to adapt to a U.S. system, explain how it is in your country. It is easiest to do so with a chart.

Examples of grading chart

Grading

Excellent	85-100
Average	70-84
Failure, meaning the student must go back to his/her previous high school	70 or below

Grading

Excellent	91 to 100
Very Good	85 to 90
Average	80 to 84
Poor	70 to 79
Failing	0 to 69



COVID-19 Related Changes

In a brief paragraph, answer the following questions (if you have not already mentioned them in previous sections):

- How did instruction change with COVID-19? (Synchronized classes via Zoom, or distance learning with specific tasks to complete)
- Did your grading system change with COVID-19 related changes?
- Any other relative changes

Class of _____ Achievements

This is where you explicitly state the number of students from the Class of ____ (most recent graduated class) that have graduated. You may also mention how many students are on track to graduate in the current senior class.

Example: In the class of 2019, there were 103 students in the senior class, and 99 graduated, meaning that the class of 2019 had a 96% graduation rate. Of the four students who did not graduate, 2 dropped out during their four years of study, and 2 did not meet graduation requirements.

For the class of 2020, there were 107 students in their generation when they started high school, and as of now, 101 are on track to graduate.

Standardized Test Results

In this section, U.S. colleges / schools typically give statistics about how their students perform on the SAT and ACT. However, if your student population does not regularly take these exams, you have a few options:

- 1) You can omit this portion on your School Profile.
- 2) You can have this portion on your School Profile, but write “Not many students in our institution take these exams, so we do not have the statistics.”
- 3) You can put standardized test results for tests taken in your country, with an explanation. For example, in Costa Rica, students have to take entrance exams to get into the public universities, so this could be an option.

Example:

Standardized Admission Test Results

In Costa Rica, students must take an admission exam for each public university. Each admission exam is different, but in general each test evaluates the students' abilities in verbal reasoning and quantitative and logical reasoning. Then they are admitted into their respective majors accordingly their scores and the required minimum score according to that specific major.

University	Max Score	Middle 50%
University of Costa Rica (UCR)	800	693,27
Costa Rican Institute of Technology (ITCR)	800	715,07
National Costa Rican University (UNA)	900	742,78



Post-High School Placements

In this section, give a few statistics about students in the most recent generation and what they are currently doing. (Are they working? Are they enrolled in college/university?)

Example:

Post High School Placement

- 95% hired and working in a company
 - 70% enrolled in 4-year colleges/universities
-

Awards and Distinctions for the Class of _____

In this section, you can list the achievements by the **most recent** graduating class. For example, if you are turning in this School Profile in November 2019, you would list the achievements for Class of 2018. These achievements are not student-specific.

Examples

- 3rd place, Biology Olympiads (Regional level)
 - 2nd place, Science Fair (National level)
 - Participating in the Central American Chemistry Olympiads
 - 2nd place, Model UN
 - Honorable mention in the 2018 Costa Rican Robotifest
-

Colleges attended by (institution) graduates in the last 4 years

In this section, list the universities / colleges attended by the students who have graduated from your institution in the last 4 years. If the name of the institution is in another language, it is recommended to put the name in English first, with the name in its original language second, italicized.

Example:

- New York University, New York, U.S.A.
 - The Health Sciences University (*Universidad de las Ciencias Médicas*), Costa Rica
 - University of the Ozarks, Arkansas, U.S.A
 - Costa Rican Institute of Technology (*Instituto Tecnológico de Costa Rica*), Costa Rica
-

Guidance Counselor Contact Information

In this section, the guidance counselor (or similar) should list their contact information (full name, email address, phone number).

After completing your School Profile, feel free to reach out to the nearest EducationUSA Adviser to take a look at it and give you feedback!