

Your Essential HBCU Application Checklist

HBCU Harvest is here to ensure you successfully navigate the application process. This checklist is your step-by-step guide to preparing and submitting a polished, complete application package for your Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Phase 1: Preparation (Starting Early Fall)

This is the essential groundwork for a smooth application season. Get these done first!

Status	Task	Details
☐	Finalize Your College List	Confirm your list of 8-12 HBCUs (Reach, Target, Safety) and note all application deadlines (Early Action/Decision vs. Regular Decision).
☐	Create Application Accounts	Set up profiles on the Common App and/or the Common Black College Application .
☐	Verify Testing Requirements	Determine if your schools require or recommend SAT/ACT scores. Arrange for official scores to be sent directly to each institution.
☐	Request Transcripts	Submit the required forms to your high school counseling office to send official transcripts to each college.
☐	Prepare Financial Documents	Start gathering the necessary tax and financial information (from your parent/guardian) to file the FAFSA and institutional aid forms.
☐	Gather Recommendation Info	Ask teachers/mentors who know you best to write your letters. Provide them with your resume and a list of your accomplishments and deadlines.





Phase 2: Core Components (Completing the Application)

Focus on crafting and submitting the critical components that tell your story.

Status	Task	Details
☐	Complete Personal Essay	Write, review, and finalize your main personal essay, ensuring it authentically reflects your voice and connection to the HBCU mission.
☐	Complete Activities Section	Detail your extracurriculars, volunteer work, and employment, highlighting leadership roles and the impact you made.
☐	List Academic Honors	Input all awards, distinctions, and academic honors received throughout high school.
☐	Complete Supplemental Essays	Research and write all school-specific essays (the "Why Us?" questions) for each of your chosen HBCUs.
☐	Finalize School Forms	Ensure your school counselor has uploaded all required materials (transcript, School Profile, Counselor Recommendation).



Phase 3: Submission, Follow-Up, & Final Decision **(October - May)**

Timeliness is everything. Submit on time, confirm all materials are received, and make your final decision.

Status	Task	Details
☐	Submit FAFSA	File the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) immediately once it opens in October. Submit early!
☐	Review & Submit Applications	Before hitting 'Submit,' review every section one final time for errors. Pay the application fee or submit your fee waiver.
☐	Confirm Completion	After submission, check each college's application portal to ensure all materials have been received and marked as complete.
☐	Review Financial Aid Offers (Early Spring)	Carefully compare the financial aid packages from all your accepted HBCUs. Look at grants, scholarships, and loan amounts.
☐	Appeal Financial Aid (Early Spring)	If necessary, reach out to the Financial Aid office to appeal the offer, especially if you have competing offers or special financial circumstances.
☐	Make Final Decision (May 1st)	Submit your enrollment deposit to your chosen HBCU by the deadline (typically May 1st) and notify all other schools of your decision.

