

First-Year Application Tips: 2010

Our *First-Year Application Tips* are designed to help you thoughtfully approach the application process. We hope the information will answer some of the questions you might have and make what can be a challenging process a bit more comfortable.

We strongly encourage you to review the College of Human Ecology's publications, including the viewbook, program fact sheets and our website, as you consider our College.

Attending a College of Human Ecology information session (http://admissions.cornell.edu/visit/info_schedule.cfm) is also strongly recommended. A visit to the College offers a more complete understanding of our mission, academic programs and how they fit into the context of the world, which is helpful as applicants craft their essays.

We find that students who limit their search to online resources make less compelling presentations.

Choosing a college and a major

Selecting a college and a major are important decisions that might seem daunting. There are, however, a few tips to keep in mind as you consider your options.

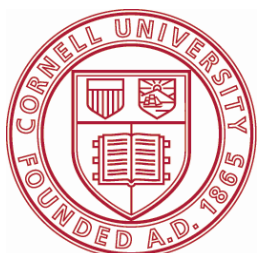
- ✦ Consider the mission of each college - its academic objectives, research focus, family of majors and graduation requirements.
- ✦ Obtain a copy of the Cornell University Courses of Study (www.admissions.cornell.edu) and read the course descriptions listed under the major(s) that interests you. The course descriptions will help you better understand the program components and the curriculum requirements.

Keep in mind that Human Ecology is organized around the exploration of contemporary social issues, not simply academic disciplines.

In general, Human Ecology programs:

- focus on contemporary issues that influence all aspects of the human condition;
- blend the liberal arts with practical, real-world experiences; and
- are adaptable and allow for meaningful concentrations across all of Cornell's colleges.

When considering Human Ecology's programs know that your choice is not set in stone. We understand that interests evolve, and in fact, that is encouraged. We also know that you probably have had a combination of experiences – academic, research, extracurricular, work, and volunteer – that makes Human Ecology a compelling and thoughtful choice among Cornell's colleges and programs.



While we do not admit students to specific majors in Human Ecology, we expect all applicants to be certain that they are interested in the education, experience and goals of the College. Applicants who are not yet sure about the major they would like to pursue are welcome to indicate that they are "undecided", but still need to demonstrate a deep connection to the Human Ecology mission and identify with one or more of our programs.

The Primary/Alternate college option

Use care when considering this option. While your interests might be satisfied through two colleges, it is important that your academic interest essays are clear and distinct, and do not leave the Admissions Committee questioning the authenticity of your interests.

The application – an uncommon approach

We strongly encourage applicants to take an *uncommon* approach to the Common Application, particularly the essays. Students should use the essay as an opportunity to reveal something unique about themselves and relevant to our programs.

The Human Ecology Admissions Committee is very interested in how you establish a match between your academic goals and our College offerings. It is critical that applicants thoughtfully consider how they write about their academic interests within the context of Human Ecology, and that these interests are clearly stated and genuinely connected to our mission.

The Human Ecology Admissions Committee wants to know which major(s) you are considering and why. What kindled your interest and how has that interest grown? What kinds of academic, extracurricular and/or work experiences have been important in developing this interest? Do you have a career goal in mind (it is okay if you do not!)? How will a Human Ecology education help you achieve your goals?

General or vague statements of interest impact our review and are detrimental to an application.

Personal essay

The personal essay allows the Admissions Committee to get to know you better – about what are you curious, what drives and inspires you, and/or what you find worthy of respect. This essay is an opportunity for you to express yourself and should not be a source of anxiety. Your essays should be thoughtful and genuine; they should reveal, rather than report. Of course, good grammar and spelling are important!

DEA and FSAD applicants

All students applying to the Interior Design, the Apparel Design and the Apparel and Textile Management options are required to submit a Design Index with their application.

Interior Design and Apparel Design applicants are **required** to submit a portfolio with their application for admission.

It is **very strongly recommended** that Apparel and Textile Management applicants also include a portfolio.

Portfolio guidelines and Design Indices are available at www.human.cornell.edu/admissions.

The four year transcript

The high school transcript is a critical piece of the application that reflects academic growth, rigor, and persistence.

The Admissions Committee is interested in students who have challenged themselves by taking the highest level of coursework for which they are prepared, and who are doing well in those classes. Students are expected to pursue challenging math and science courses, again, at the highest level for which they are prepared, throughout their high school career, regardless of the major to which a student applies.

Please pursue the established progression of course sequencing that makes the most sense for your level of preparation. We find that students who skip levels of coursework without a proper foundation are not always successful.

The Admissions Committee prefers that applicants complete calculus before statistics; biology *and* chemistry or physics before environmental science, in the areas of upper level math and science.

We realize that high schools are as varied as the communities that support them, and while some schools might offer many honors, Advanced Placement and/or International Baccalaureate courses, others might offer few, if any. The Admissions Committee is sensitive to these curricular differences, which are often reported by the secondary school profile high school guidance offices provide. Ask your guidance office to provide you with a copy of the high school profile for your own reference.

We hope students will find ways to reach beyond school offering limitations to comfortably incorporate more challenge into their curriculum. While we encourage students to stretch themselves, the Admissions Committee does not want students to overextend.

Students are required to provide mid-year and final grades from their senior year. Do not underestimate the importance of these grades. Be sure to apply yourself to your schoolwork throughout your senior year.

Accepted students should not drop any senior coursework without first consulting the Human Ecology Admissions Committee. Accepted students who do not maintain the academic momentum presented at the time of application will be contacted by the Admissions Committee.

Extracurriculars

The Human Ecology Admissions Committee is interested in how you use your time outside of the classroom, what engages you and what informs your academic interests. Along with teams, clubs and organizations, other important extracurricular activities include work, internship, volunteer, and research experiences.

We are interested in quality, not quantity. The Committee would rather have insight into something you really care about than see a long list of activities that might have competed for your attention.

Leadership is another factor considered when reviewing an application. Our Admissions Committee believes that leadership is demonstrated in many ways. Being an officer of an organization or a team captain is a great way to exhibit leadership, but it is also about meaningful and committed participation in an organization, group, team, etc.

Letters of recommendation

Letters from teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, members of the community, etc. are thoroughly reviewed to get a better idea of the role that students play in the classroom and in their community. The Committee looks to these letters to address candidates' maturity, self motivation, initiative and character. The letters are also used to get to know the applicant better since we do not conduct interviews.

Be sure to give recommenders plenty of time to craft a strong letter on your behalf. Again, the committee is interested in the quality of the letters, not in quantity. *Deferred Early Decision applicants should refrain from sending additional letters of reference.*

Standardized exams

While standardized exams are required in the application review process, students should realize that the exams are one of the many components of an applicant's story.

First-year applicants must take the SAT I or the ACT exam with the writing component. The Admissions Committee does not have a preference as to which exam is taken.

In addition, the College of Human Ecology requires two SAT Subject exams, one of which must be taken in math. The second choice is flexible.

TOEFL/IELTS scores are required for international applicants for whom English is not their first language. More information is available at admissions.cornell.edu/apply/international.

Selection considerations

The College of Human Ecology Admissions Committee is interested in academically gifted students who are engaged in their school and greater communities, and who have a deep connection to the mission of the college as demonstrated in their essays, coursework, and lives.

Miscellaneous tips

- ^ The College of Human Ecology Admissions Committee carefully reviews each application, including the essays, in an effort to thoughtfully craft an incoming class.
- ^ Carefully conduct your college search to be sure that you can articulate a fit with that institution. The Admissions Committee is adept at determining which applicants have not done their research or are not presenting genuine interests.
- ^ Feel free to contact us with any questions about the College of Human Ecology or the admissions process.

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