NHSI Film & Video Applicant Guide

The supporting materials needed to complete your application are outlined here, along with resources to help guide your formatting.

The NHSI's goal is to provide high school students with a collegiate experience, and this includes the admission process. While we understand the temptation for families to assist, **we encourage students to complete all elements of their application** so that you may know what to expect from a college admission process.

Application Components

- Resume
- Transcript
- Essays
- Letter of Recommendation
- Standardized Test Scores (*optional*)
- English Language Proficiency Test Scores (*international students*)

Resume

In **one page**, describe your activities and coursework related to film and/or your chosen concentration. There are examples provided at the end of this guide to inform your formatting. Feel free to adapt these examples to best highlight your experience and skills.

Acting Applicants should submit a standard acting resume:

- Name of each production, role (or crew assignment), and producing organization (high school, community, college, professional, etc.)
- Any classes, camps, programs, workshops and/or skills related to performing (singing, dancing, competitive speech, etc.)

Production and Screenwriting Applicants should submit a more traditional resume detailing:

- Experience in film, media, photography, creative writing, theatre crew, etc.
- Any relevant classes, workshops, or clubs you have been involved in
- Any informal experience with film, media, photography, etc. (such as film projects shot/edited on a phone)
- Please add a short synopsis of films worked on
- **Production students - be sure to include equipment details such as:**

- Editing software (i.e. Adobe Premiere)
- Type of cameras or grips you have used
- Type of microphone or other sound equipment you have used

Transcript

Transcripts may be unofficial but must be current and include your name

- **Juniors**: Submit a transcript that includes final grades from the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years, along with a current progress report
- **Sophomores**: Submit your 2025-2026 transcript and a current progress report

How to obtain your transcript:

- If you can access your transcript through an online portal, download a PDF or take a screenshot. Be sure your name is visible in the screenshot!
- If you do not have access to an online portal, ask your school counselor to give you a current copy, or have them email your transcript to nhsi@northwestern.edu

Essays

AI Policy: The committee wants to hear **your voice** through your essays, which cannot be accomplished if your essays are written by AI. Please spend time thinking about the prompts and do not rush writing the essays - **this should be the part of the application that takes the most time.** If an essay is obviously written by AI, the committee may ask you to rewrite it, or your application may be rejected outright.

Students applying for all concentrations must write two essays responding to the prompts below. **Please keep your essays to one page, single spaced, 12pt font in either Times New Roman or Aptos.**

Head your essays with this information:

- Name
- Track(s) Applying for
- Essay #

Essay Prompts:

- **Essay #1:** *Write a detailed letter to your future NHSI roommate that **tells a story about yourself which illuminates something about who you are.** Maybe it's a story about something that happened to you that formed your personality. Maybe it's*

a story that perfectly encapsulates one aspect of your personality. Be creative! Take some time to think about what you write. You want your roommate to have a sense of what makes you, YOU! We realize that one story cannot summarize your whole personality - we are looking for a detailed story that tells us something about who you are - please do not give us a list of your likes and dislikes although you can certainly include items in your story.

- **Essay #2:** *Tell us a story about a time you were challenged by a friend or peer with ideas or opinions that were different from your own. What happened? Were you able to come to a resolution? If so, how? If not, what happened? Choose a conflict that is personal and meaningful to you, with clear details about the situation, your actions, the outcome, and what you learned.*

Letter of Recommendation

Ask your drama teacher, recent director, or other relevant educator if they are willing to write you a letter of recommendation by the deadline. **Make sure your recommender knows you well and can advocate for you.** Letters are not shared with students.

- Obtain your recommender's email address
- Submit their contact information to us via this Recommender Form
- We will send your recommender instructions for writing & sending their letter
    - *Please check in with your recommender about a week after submitting the Recommender Form to make sure they received our instructions in their inbox/spam/junk.*
- **At least one letter of recommendation is required**, but we will accept up to two from different recommenders.

Optional: Standardized Test Scores

If you have taken any standardized tests (PSAT, SAT, PLAN, or ACT) you can submit a copy of your scores. **Do not submit SAT/PSAT scores under 1200; do not submit ACT scores under 29.**

- We CAN accept screenshots.
- Test score reports must include the student's name and results in the same document or image.
- Note: CollegeBoard does NOT have an NHSI option for sending results. Sending results via CollegeBoard to Northwestern University will deliver your scores to Undergraduate Admissions, NOT the National High School Institute.

International Students Only: English Language Proficiency Test

If English is not your first language, we must receive evidence of your speaking proficiency in English. You must submit an English Language test score, such as a TOEFL, IELTS, or the Duolingo English Test. The minimum TOEFL score required is 105.

- Emphasis is placed on the speaking score
- The SAT/ACT do not test speaking ability and thus will not be accepted to fulfill this requirement
- If you have not yet taken an English Language test, please arrange to take one in time for the admission deadline
    - *Duolingo offers a test without appointments, with results available in 1-2 days for an added fee*
- Exceptions can be *considered* for international students who attend high school in the United States, Canada, or the United Kingdom. Please email our office to inquire: nhsi@northwestern.edu

SAMPLE RESUME - PRODUCTION/WRITING

Student Name

617 Noyes Street
Evanston, IL 60208

(847) 491-3026
nhsi@northwestern.edu
nhsi.northwestern.edu

BS, Communication (20XX)
Northwestern University, Evanston, IL

QUALIFICATIONS SUMMARY

Film and Television Production/Screenwriting: Experienced in a wide range of film and video projects from their inception to completion. Ability to efficiently organize and coordinate shoots. Knowledge and experience using a variety of production equipment. Experience with script analysis and skilled at writing and editing scenes, treatments, and scripts. Proficient in film and sound editing.

Technical Proficiencies: Adobe Premiere Pro, celtx Scriptwriting software, MS Office, Canon C100 Mark cameras, GoPro Hero 4 camera

Additional Strengths: Enthusiastic and creative. Values collaboration. Demonstrated ability to meet deadlines and objectives. Possess necessary organizational and communication talents to successfully complete projects. Support fellow production crew members to encourage cohesiveness. Establish and maintain strong working relationships with production crew and all actors.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Director/ Producer
"Film A"– 16mm Short Film
"Film B"–Short Claymation

Director of Photography / Editor
"Film C" – 16mm Short Film
"Film D"- HD Short Documentary

Writer/ Director
"Film E"- Short P.S.A

Producer
"Film F" – HD short documentary
"Film G" – HD Short Film

Technical Director
"Film H" – Short Video

EXPERIENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Film and Production
Northwestern, Department of Radio/Television/Film, Evanston, IL (20XX-20XX)

- Casted, directed, and co-produced film and video projects. Planned, organized, and budgeted film shoots. Provided input for final picture and sound edit.
- Assisted in the writing/rewriting of scenes, treatments, and portions of scripts. Located and secured approval for scene locations and coordinated communication with cast/technical crew.

Theatre
Northwestern University, Department of Theatre, Evanston, IL (20XX-20XX)

- Acted in multiple mainstage productions
- Served as Assistant Director on two productions and Assistant Technical Director for a musical.

Other Work Experience

- Waiter, Restaurant X (20XX – present)
- Freelance photographer, family portraits, weddings (20XX – present)

ACTIVITIES

Founding member of school's Film Club, University Theater, volunteer work X organization

SAMPLE RESUME - ACTING

BILLY SMITH
SAG, AEA/AFTRA Eligible
bsmith@hotmail.com
www.billysmith.com

Hgt: 5'11 | Pronouns: He/Him
Eyes: Blue | Hair: Brown
Coat: 42R | Shoe: 10

Film and Television

Film	Role	Production Company
Film	Role	Production Company

Commercial Spots

Commercial (national, principal), Commercial (national, principal), Commercial (regional, principal), Commercial (regional, principal), Commercial (regional, principal), Commercial (regional, principal), Commercial (national, featured), Commercial (regional, featured), Commercial (national, background)

Industrial

Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role), Company (role)

New York Theatre

Play	Role	Theatre
Play	Role	Theatre
Play	Role	Theatre
Play	Role	Theatre

Regional Theatre

Play	Role	Theatre
Play	Role	Theatre
Play	Role	Theatre
Play	Role	Theatre

Special Skills

Combat/Stunts	Certified: SAFD, USA (resume available upon request)
Dialects	Standard British, Irish, Southern, Rural Southern
Additional	Juggling, Class A Drivers License, Athletics, Horses

Training

M.F.A.	Acting, Boston Conservatory
B.F.A.	University of South Carolina
Workshops	Auditioning (Edward Albee), Shakespeare (Tina Packer)