



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS POLICIES

Regular Application Deadline and the Candidate's Reply Date

Many colleges establish an application deadline by which all applications must be received. All students are then notified of the college's decisions at a uniform response date, typically on or before April 1st. At most colleges, May 1st is the date by which accepted applicants must indicate their intention to enroll. By use of a common reply date, students may evaluate all notices of admission and financial aid awards before deciding on any one college. Explained below are the most common application options students may encounter during the college admissions process. Given the variety and subtle differences between them, students should read each college's literature carefully.

Early Decision: Many colleges offer this plan to applicants who are sure they want to attend the college. This college should clearly be the applicant's first choice. Traditionally, the deadline for early decision applications has been November 1st or 15th. Colleges then render a decision by mid-December. Some colleges also have a second round of early decision (usually in January or February). These later plans have the advantage of giving students more time to think through their decision.

If accepted under this plan, the student is under strong ethical obligation to attend the college and to withdraw or forego applications to all other colleges. Some colleges exchange lists of students accepted under this program.

Early Action/Early Admission: This program is similar to early decision, except that, if admitted, the applicant is not ethically obligated to withdraw other applications and has until May 1st to decide.

Rolling Admission: Under this program a college considers a student's application as soon as all the required credentials have been received. Notification of acceptance or rejection is mailed as soon as a decision is made. Colleges that follow this practice may make their admissions decisions continuously over several months, in contrast to the practice of other colleges who accumulate their applications until a deadline date and then announce all their decisions at the same time.

Regular Decision: The process whereby a college accepts applications from prospective students and delays the admission decision until all applications from the entire applicant pool have been received and reviewed. Decision letters are mailed to applicants, all at once, traditionally in March or April.

Deferred or Delayed Admission: Most colleges allow an accepted candidate to postpone enrollment in a college, generally for one semester or one year. Talk with your counselor about your plans and how to contact your college of choice.

Open Enrollment: An open admissions policy grants acceptance to all high school graduates without regard to additional qualifications.

Wait List: The process used by selective colleges who do not initially offer or deny admission, but extend the possibility of admission to a later date (usually late May through July). Students should accept another college's offer since waiting list acceptances are very inconsistent. (Discuss all wait list situations with your counselor. Second semester grades and your method of reply can be critical to your acceptance.)

Instate (Resident) Student: A student whose permanent residence is in the same state as the college or university he or she attends or hopes to attend. In-state students pay lower tuition than do out-of-state students.

Out-of-State (Non-Resident) Student: Student whose permanent residence is in a different state than that of the college or university which he or she attends or hopes to attend. Out-of-state students generally pay higher tuition than do instate students.

Gap-Year Programs: Year-long programs designed for high school graduates who wish to defer enrollment in college while engaging in meaningful activities, such as academic programs, structured travel, community service, etc.

Notification Date: The date by which applicants who are accepted for admission are expected to notify the institutions of their intent to enroll and make enrollment deposits. That date is often on or around May 1st.

Credit (or Semester) Hour: Credit given for attending one lecture hour of class each week for 15 weeks or equivalent. Most college classes are three credit hours, meaning their total meeting time for a week is three hours.

Developmental Education: Instructional and support activities designed to keep unprepared students in college and help them improve their basic skills so that they can successfully complete a program and achieve their educational goals.