

COLLEGE ADMISSION 101

WHAT GOES INTO ADMISSION?

1. The Application
2. Application Terms (types of deadlines)
3. Institutional Priorities
4. Academics
5. Activities
6. Letters of Recommendation
7. Standardized Testing
8. Essays
9. Building a College List

TYPES OF APPLICATIONS



1. The Common Application

- a. One standard application to over **900** college and universities.
- b. Student creates an account and adds schools to dashboard.

2. Institutional Applications (Direct Apply)

- a. Applications linked directly to a college site.
 - *For each option, students must create an account w/ an email address (student's) and password.*
 - *Students MUST remember their logins for each application.*
 - *Students request transcripts & letters of rec in Naviance.*



Georgetown
University



APPLICATION TERMS

1. Regular Admission
2. Rolling Admission
3. Early Action / Priority
4. Restricted Early Action
5. Early Decision
6. Open Admission



REGULAR ADMISSION

- Deadlines in **January** or **February**
- Students hear decisions in March / April
- The regular decision pool tends to be larger as this is the general applicant pool for the upcoming year
- Good option for students who want to test again during the fall of senior year or want to include senior grades in application.



ROLLING ADMISSIONS



- **ROLLING ADMISSION**

- a. Rolling admission means colleges review applications on an ongoing basis. Students usually hear back within 2-4 weeks after submitting all application materials.
- b. Common option for medium/large state universities due to the volume of applications
- c. Since applications are reviewed as they're received, students who wait until late in the application cycle may face stiffer competition for the remaining spots.

OPEN ADMISSION

1. Post-Secondary programs with no deadline to apply
 - a. CCAC
 - b. Online Programs
 - i. GED
 - ii. University of Phoenix



EARLY ADMISSION

- Many colleges offer **early admissions** programs where students can submit applications and receive decisions earlier than they would for regular decision.
 - a. Some schools are now filling as much as half of their incoming class with early applicants.*
- Early Admission typically require applications to be submitted by **November 1st** with decisions in mid-December.
- Three types of early admission plans:
 - a. Early Action**
 - b. Restrictive Early Action**
 - c. Early Decision**

EARLY ACTION/ PRIORITY

- **Early Action** is a **non-binding** early admission plan.
- A student applying EA is not bound to attend if offered acceptance and can apply to more than one university under the EA admission plan.
- Students can accept an offer upon receiving it or make their final selection in the Spring after finding out where else they have been accepted.
- We recommend students apply EA to their top-choice schools if they have their strongest data for their application early.

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION

- Also known as “Single Choice Early Action”
- A **non-binding** early action option with certain stipulations, typically that students may not apply to any other private schools’ early action programs.
- A student can typically apply to an **REA** school and still apply to:
 - A non-binding admission to a college outside of the US
 - A non-binding rolling admission program
 - A public university’s EA program
 - An ED II program if notification occurs after January 1st.
- Common schools that offer this plan include: Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, Yale, and Notre Dame.
- Students still have until May 1st to decide if they want to attend.

EARLY DECISION

- ED is a **binding** admission plan.
- A student applying ED is pledging their attendance to an institution if offered admission.
- Students can only apply to one school under the ED plan.
- Some schools offer an ED II plan which is generally the same as ED, with a later deadline (Jan/Feb).
- If offered acceptance, students are expected to withdraw all other applications.
- ED can provide an “edge,” but typically only if the student is already a competitive applicant
- We recommend students only apply ED if:
 - The school is their top choice or dream school
 - The student is a competitive applicant based on the school’s admission requirements
 - Your family can afford to write a check for the full amount of tuition

WHY APPLY EARLY?

- It's one of the best ways for students to show interest.
- Institutional needs change with time.
- Students will be done with the application and selection process early.
- Some colleges only give scholarship consideration for those students who apply by the early deadline.

Ultimately, it's a good idea to ask your school counselor his/her recommendation on which colleges you should apply early, and which you should choose regular admission plans.

INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES, I.E. "HOOKED STUDENTS"

"Hooked" students are applicants who tend to have a substantial edge if they apply early because they are one of these:

- A very desirable recruited athlete
- An applicant with a distinct, noteworthy talent the college desires
- High potential, under-represented and/or disadvantaged minority students
- Students who are children of major donors to the college
- Students who are legacies (children of a parent who is an alumnus)
- Faculty children
- First generation students

ACADEMICS

1. Cumulative, Weighted GPA (i.e. QPA)
2. Trends of Improvement
3. Rigor of schedule
 - a. Honors, AP, CHS
 - b. Challenge yourself in your area of interest!
4. We do not rank.
5. Students with 504/IEPs can choose to share their documents with the Office of Disabilities to determine with accommodations can be made at each school. NA does not share that information with colleges. It is family/student choice.

ACTIVITIES

- It's more important to have meaningful activities than many activities. DO WHAT MAKES YOU HAPPY!
 - If you love it, you naturally become more competitive.
 - If you are interested, college admission officers will be more interested.
 - Quality vs. Quantity
 - Activities do not have to be school-sponsored.
 - Sports, Clubs, Church, Music, Dance, Jobs, Volunteering, Family Responsibilities

WHAT ARE YOU PASSIONATE ABOUT? DO IT!

LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

- Not all colleges require letters.
- Most often, colleges will ask for letters from academic teachers (grades 9-12) and/or school counselors.
- Some schools allow students to send an “other” letter from an employer, coach, clergy, etc.
- Students do not need to ask for letters until the end of junior year, or summer before senior year. Students should wait until they know what colleges are requiring before asking.
- Teachers will be asked to rate students’ abilities, performance, and character in a number of areas. Students need to thoughtfully consider which teachers know them well enough to do this.

TESTING OPTIONS

SAT/ACT-both exams are given equal weight at colleges as options used in admissions. See differences [here](#).

Test Optional- Colleges that don't require SAT or ACT scores for admission. (Merit Scholarships, depend on major) [list on website](#)

*Pay attention to graduating class (some colleges still determining what plan is in following years)

Test Blind- scores are not considered regardless of whether they are sent. (UC Schools)

SAT / ACT: TEST OPTIONAL

For Fall of 2025, a majority of colleges are Test Optional. Some more competitive have reinstated requirement.

- Should I send my scores?
 - Are your scores in the middle 50% range of prior year admitted students? (context of scores)
 - Do your scores help your overall application?
 - Is the school truly test **OPTIONAL**?
- If sending scores, students may have to send them directly from the testing website (College Board or ACT) for a fee.
- Some colleges accept Self-reported test scores ([see website](#))
- AP Scores- Can self-report for admissions and share later for potential transfer credit.

ESSAYS

- The essay should be written in student's voice.
- The Common App has 7 prompts from which to choose.
- Make sure to share your essay with a teacher/counselor for feedback.
- This year, the Common App is continuing a optional question: *If you need it, this space is yours to describe those impacts. If COVID-19 did not have a remarkable impact in your life, it is ok and recommended not to write an essay about it.*
- Check out The College Essay Guy for tips:
<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/>

ESSAY TIPS- COMMON PITFALLS

- Do not repeat activities and involvements already listed in applications.
- Essay should tell something about **YOU**. Be careful not to tell a story about your grandmother, for example. (Conversation)
- It can be used to give insight into a past situation. (Be careful of tone)
- Be honest, and be yourself. If you're funny, use humor. If you're introspective, share that side.

BUILDING A COLLEGE LIST

To have a balanced college list means you have colleges and universities in your “Reach”, “Target” and “Likely/Safety” categories that you are excited about—**averaging five to eight total college applications**.

Reach: Your academic profile is slightly below the school’s mid 50th percentile and/or school’s acceptance rate is between 1 to 25%

Target: Your academic profile is in the range of the school’s mid 50th percentile and/or school’s acceptance rate is between 26-50%

Likely/Safety: Your academic profile is above the school’s mid 50th percentile and/or school’s acceptance rate is 50% or higher. These schools may likely offer you more merit-based scholarships than the other two categories.

*Acceptance rates heavily influence category type.

COLLEGE ISN'T THE DESTINATION,
IT IS A STEPPING STONE.

-DANIELLE GOLOD-