

# THE APPLICATION PROCESS

After you've visited colleges, you will begin the process of actually applying to colleges. Here is some advice concerning your applications.

1. **Know and adhere to application deadlines.** They will vary from college to college, so create a timeline as part of your organized approach. **There are four primary application and deadline types:**

- **Early Decision:** The student applies for admission before the regular decision deadline to an institution, and if accepted he/she must make a commitment to attend that institution. Only a student who can make a deliberate and well-reasoned first choice decision should apply under an Early Decision plan because the institution will require a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1. When applying for Early Decision, academic achievement only through junior year is used as the main criteria for selection. The student may apply to other colleges, but is allowed only **one** Early Decision application pending at any time. Immediately upon acceptance of the offer, the student must withdraw all other applications and make no subsequent applications.

- **Early Action:** Permits a student to apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision during the senior year, well in advance of the normal response dates in the spring. The candidate is not committed to enroll at that particular institution. Technically, the student may apply to other colleges under this plan, but the student needs to clarify this with specific institutions. The student will not be required to make a commitment prior to May 1 but is encouraged to do so as soon as a final college choice is made.

- **Regular Decision:** Student applies for general admission to a college or university. An institution reviews most of its applications prior to notifying the majority of its candidates. The student may apply to other colleges under this decision plan. The student will not be required to make a commitment prior to May 1 but is encouraged to do so as soon as a final college choice is made.

- **Rolling Admission:** An institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decisions to students as they are reviewed. The student may apply to other colleges. The student will not be required to make a commitment prior to May 1 but is encouraged to do so as soon as a final college choice is made.

*Source: 1998 Membership Directory, National Association for College Admission Counseling, 289-290.*

- **Merit Scholarship:** Student has to meet this deadline in order to be considered for a merit-based scholarship; it is typically different than the other four. In addition, some institutions require an extra writing sample. Not all colleges have a separate deadline or extra writing sample; however, it is extremely important to find out which do.

2. Adhere to deadlines established by your guidance/college counseling office. Many counselors require you to complete your application up to a month prior to the college's deadline, while others ask for all applications to be completed by a set date (sometimes as early as mid-November).

3. Don't apply to every college with which you are familiar. If you've done your homework and prepared yourself, you should be able to limit the number of schools to which you apply. Plan to include the following:

- One or two “unlikely” schools (colleges at which your chances for admission are uncertain)
- One or two “comfort” schools (colleges where you’re fairly confident about your chances for admission)
- One or two “likely” schools (colleges where your admission is extremely likely)

4. Application Types:

- Institutional applications obtained via mail
- The Common Application (accepted at over 350 colleges around the country)
- Online applications which can be found on colleges’ websites or other locations

5. Arrange for testing agencies to send official standardized test scores (SAT I, SAT II, ACT) directly to each college you are applying to.

6. **Follow the directions!** Answer every applicable question and write (or type) legibly.

7. Understand the different types of admission decisions you might receive.

• **Accept**

• **Conditional Admission:** Some colleges will offer admission which is contingent upon your meeting certain requirements, which might include attending a summer session or enrolling in a specific course your final semester of high school.

• **Wait List:** The college has neither offered nor denied admission, and there is still a possibility that you will be offered admission in the as space becomes available in the summer months.

• **Defer:** In this case, your application will automatically be reconsidered at a later time. This often happens when the admission committee wants additional information such as academic progress reports or recommendations.

• **Deny**

8. Always proofread! Be sure to check your spelling and capitalization before submitting any application material (proofreading should not be limited to just your essay). This is not texting messaging; therefore, internet slang is unacceptable.

9. Keep an open mind about all colleges to which you are applying. Try not to eliminate or decide on a college until you have received all admissions decisions, financial aid offers, scholarships, etc.