

Types of College Applications

EARLY DECISION (ED): Students are permitted to apply early to only one college or university. If accepted, students are legally bound to attend that school (and are forbidden to apply to all other schools). Typically, ED applications are due November 1.

ADVANTAGES

- Students are more likely to be accepted because colleges have higher admission rates for ED applicants.
- Students find out early if they're accepted (usually between December 1 and 15)

DISADVANTAGES

- Students are under contract to attend the college that accepts them even if they receive no financial aid.
- Students who submit an ED application are forbidden to apply to all other schools using any type of Early Application or early notification process. If a student is rejected by the school they applied to under ED, they must then apply to other schools using the Regular Admission process.

The ED process should only be used by highly qualified students (students with superior grades, SAT®/ACT® scores, and extracurricular activities) who are committed to attending their first choice college or university, regardless of financial aid considerations.

EARLY APPLICATION / EARLY ACTION (EA): Applications typically are due November 1-15, but students are not required to commit to attending a particular college until May 1.

ADVANTAGES

- Students receive decisions from colleges about their admission status early (before the December holidays), but do not have to commit to attend college before May 1. This gives students plenty of time to compare college characteristics and financial aid offers before committing to attend a particular college. In effect, this allows students to “shop” for colleges.
- Students are more likely to be accepted because colleges have higher admission rates for EA applicants. If students are not accepted to the colleges they applied to under the EA process, they still have adequate time to apply to other colleges and universities under the Regular Application process.
- Even when students apply to or are accepted by a school under EA, they remain free to apply to any other college and university using the Early, Regular, Rolling, or Late admission process.

DISADVANTAGE

- Students will have a busy fall semester because all application documents normally are due in early- to mid-November.

SINGLE-CHOICE EARLY ACTION: Students are allowed to apply early to one college or university only (in other words, students are forbidden to apply to any other school using Early Applications or Early Decision applications. Typically, Single-Choice Early Action applications have due dates of between November 1 and 15.

ADVANTAGES

- Student are more likely to be accepted because colleges have higher admission rates for Single-Choice Early Action applicants and students are not required to commit to attending a particular college until May 1.
- If rejected under the Single-Choice Early Action process, students will have time to apply to other colleges and universities using the Regular Admission process.

DISADVANTAGE

- Students are forbidden to submit Early Applications to more than one school, thereby reducing their chances for acceptance to other schools.

REGULAR ADMISSION: Applications are due to most colleges and universities between January 15 and February 1 (the University of California schools have a regular application deadlines of November 30). Each school's Regular Application deadline should be noted and adhered to by student applicants.

ADVANTAGES

- Students have additional months of time to complete and submit their applications (as compared to Early Decision and Early Application deadlines)
- Students have no restrictions on the number schools they can apply to.

DISADVANTAGES

- Students are less likely to be accepted because colleges have lower admission rates for Regular Admission applicants than for Early Decision and Early Application applicants.
- Students will not find out if they have been accepted to their colleges until April under the Regular Admission process.

ROLLING ADMISSION: there are no application deadlines; colleges accept applications and applicants throughout the year. Decisions to admit students are made on a case-by-case basis and students usually receive decision letters within 4 to 8 weeks.

ADVANTAGE

- Students can apply anytime.

DISADVANTAGES

- Once colleges accept enough students, additional applications from Rolling Admission applicants won't be considered.
- Students should remember the later they apply, the less likely they will be accepted and the less likely they will qualify for financial aid.

It is recommended students apply as early as possible to schools with Rolling Admission. If students apply in late spring or summer, they should first contact the college's admissions office to make sure they are still accepting applications before completing and submitting forms and documents.

LATE ADMISSION: Hundreds of colleges and universities offer Late Admission. Deadlines for submitting applications vary from June through August; students must verify Late Admission deadlines at each school of interest.

ADVANTAGE

- Students can apply anytime, even in summer months after high school graduation.

DISADVANTAGES

- Once colleges accept enough students, additional applications from Late Admission applicants won't be considered.
- Students should remember the later they apply, the less likely they will be accepted and the less likely they will qualify for financial aid.

It is recommended students apply as early as possible to schools with Late Admission. If students apply in the summer, they should first contact the college's admissions office to make sure they are still accepting applications before completing and submitting forms and documents.

OPEN ENROLLMENT: students may apply up until the first day class starts.