

# Application Don'ts

By Lee Shulman Bierer [College Admissions Strategies](#) Oct. 6, 2020

November 1, an important college application deadline, is almost upon us and the stress in many homes with high school seniors is almost palpable. Here are some tips to make the last part of the application process run a little more smoothly:

**Don't procrastinate.** November 1 is the most common deadline for colleges and universities that offer Early Decision (binding) and Early Action (non-binding) admissions programs. Procrastinators need to be aware that in the last few days before the deadline many college computer servers will be on overload and have been known to shut down entirely. This could mean that if you wait until the last minute to submit your application that it won't get in on time. I have heard ridiculous statistics that range from 60-80 percent of students wait until the last two days to file their applications. Think about what that means when you're a college or university with a large applicant pool, such as UCLA which received over 100,000 applications last year. That is not a typo. According to the "2022 Princeton Review, The Best 387 Colleges," UCLA was the recipient of 108,847 applications. If that server doesn't go down, you know it's going to be running slowly.

You should also note that colleges are aware of the date and time you file your application, so some may construe your procrastination as being either lazy or disinterested.

**Don't be generic. Use your essays to set yourself apart from the masses.** Don't tell the college admissions office what you think they want to hear (how prestigious their school is, how beautiful the campus is, etc.) demonstrate that you've done your homework, and share why each college is a good fit for you academically and socially. You should specifically address the courses are you looking forward to taking and how you see yourself getting involved in campus life (clubs, activities, etc.).

**Don't rush at the end.** Oftentimes students are so eager to hit "submit" that they fail to proof their essays and the activities sufficiently. Submitting an activity list that says you are a "Candy Stripper" instead of a "Candy Striper" may cause some good-natured teasing at one college, but **the failure to proofread may doom your application** at another school. Since you don't know exactly who is reading your application, you just don't know how they'll react.

**Don't be a stealth applicant.** Colleges are engaged in social media. **If you are interested in a college or university, you should let them know; "like" their Facebook page and follow them on Twitter and Instagram. Make sure you let them know if you visit their campus, if an admissions representative comes to your school or if you meet them at a college fair. It's also important to note that some colleges are looking at students' social media pages as well, so clean them up.**