

TERMS TO KNOW BEFORE YOU APPLY



Application Response Time Options

1. **REGULAR DECISION** – *Response is received by a specified date (usually April 1).*

Advantages:

- ☐ Applications are due later (usually January 15–February 1) allowing additional time to complete and submit applications.
- ☐ Students have no restrictions on the number of schools they can apply to.

Disadvantages:

- ☐ Lower chance of being accepted because colleges have lower admission rates for Regular Decision applicants than for Early Decision and Early Application applicants.
- ☐ Applicants will not find out if they have been accepted until later (usually April 1).

2. **ROLLING ADMISSION** – *Decisions are made as applications “roll in”.*

Advantages:

- ☐ No application deadlines; colleges accept applications and applicants throughout the year so students can apply at any time.
- ☐ Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.
- ☐ Students usually receive decision letters within 4 to 8 weeks.

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.

3. **EARLY ACTION** – *Response is received earlier than Regular Decision.*

Advantages:

- ☐ Students receive decisions from colleges about their admission status early (usually December – February), 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 will have adequate time to apply to other schools under the Regular or Rolling Decision process.
- ☐ Even when students apply to or are accepted by a school under EA, they remain free to apply to any other school using the Early, Regular, or Rolling Admission process.
- ☐ Non-binding commitment.

Disadvantage:

- ❑ Applications are typically due November 1–15, but sometimes as early as October 15. Students will have a busy fall semester because all application components are due.

4. **EARLY DECISION** – *Response received early*

Advantages:

- ❑ Students receive decisions from colleges about their admission status early (usually December–January).
- ❑ Students are more likely to be accepted because colleges have higher admission rates for ED applicants.

Disadvantages:

- ❑ Students are allowed to apply ED to only **one school**. If accepted, students are legally bound to attend that school even if they receive no financial aid.
- ❑ Some schools forbid students who submit an ED application from applying 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, regardless of financial aid considerations.

5. **RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (SINGLE-CHOICE)** – *Combo of EA and ED.*

Advantages:

- ❑ Students receive decisions from colleges about their admission status early (usually December – February), but do not have to commit to attend college before May 1.
- ❑ Students are more likely to be accepted because colleges have higher admission rates for REA applicants.
- ❑ If students are rejected under the REA process, they will have adequate time to apply to other schools under the Regular or Rolling Decision process.
- ❑ Non-binding commitment.

Disadvantage:

- ❑ **Students are forbidden to apply to any other school using EA or ED applications,** thereby reducing their chances for acceptance to other schools.

Admission Decisions

1. Accepted – you're in!
2. Denied – you're not in
3. Deferred – you're in limbo. Applied EA or ED and decision is being deferred.
4. Waitlist – you could be in