

College Admission Terms

Admission Timeframe:

ROLLING ADMISSIONS

An admission policy of considering each application as soon as all required information has been received, rather than setting an application deadline and reviewing applications in a batch. Colleges that use this admission policy usually notify applicants of admission decisions quickly.

EARLY DECISION

An option to submit an application to your first-choice college before the regular deadline. When you apply through this format, you get an admission decision earlier than usual. These decisions are binding. You agree to enroll in the college immediately if admitted.

EARLY ACTION

A round of admission where students apply to—and hear from—Universities in the fall of their senior year. This option is non-binding, and allows students fullest scholarship consideration.

REGULAR DECISION

This is non-binding, and offers a later application round for students who choose to apply the spring of their senior year.

Financial Terms:

FASFA

Also known as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. Everyone planning to attend college should fill in and submit this form prior to their first year. It determines if you qualify for financial assistance with tuition so you can attend the school of your choice. Your college offer may be based on these results.

Student Aid index

This number is based on information provided in the FASFA and is the amount your family is considered able to contribute towards college.

Demonstrated Need

This is essentially how much financial assistance a family will need to cover the cost of attending college. This figure relies on two separate data points—a family's expected family contribution and the cost of attending that specific college.

FINANCIAL AID

Money given or loaned to you to help pay for college. This aid can come from federal and state governments, colleges, and private organizations. It might include work-study assistance, loans, grants, or scholarships.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIP

Scholarship money that is given to you based on academic achievements.

NET PRICE

Calculated by taking the “sticker price” for tuition, room and board and other fees, and subtracting any scholarships and grants the student is receiving.

NET PRICE CALCULATOR

By law, every school has this on their website. It may be hard to find. Search on the school’s search bar. It allows you to calculate the approximate price for attending that school based on your individual circumstances. It may or may not include merit scholarships. This at least allows for a ballpark figure when determining a financial fit.

TUITION

The core price for college classes. This may be listed as a flat rate for a range of credits, usually 12-18, or priced per credit. This is only a portion of the cost of attending a school.

COST OF ATTENDANCE

The estimated cost of attending this institution for one academic year. The COA is a combination of both direct and indirect costs.

Need Blind

A policy of making admission decisions without considering the financial circumstances of applicants. Colleges that use this policy may or may not offer enough financial aid to meet a student's full need.

WORK STUDY

These programs help college students with financial need get part-time jobs to help pay for day-to-day expenses and tuition payments.

Testing:

TEST OPTIONAL

Some schools offer the option for students to submit test scores. Look at their average range for admitted students from the previous year. If your score is within or above the range, send your scores. Be sure to read the fine print. Some GPA, majors, or scholarships may require scores even at test-optional schools.

SUPERSCORE

When colleges take your highest score from each standardized test subtest to create a new score. The scores do not have to be from the same test date.

ACT/SAT

Both tests are given equal weight among schools. Choose the one that you perform best.

Other:

COMMON APP

A standard application form accepted by many colleges. You can fill out this application once and submit it to any one or several of the nearly 1000 colleges that accept it.

DIRECT ADMIT

When you are admitted to a specific college or degree, not the university. (For example: Clemson Nursing or Tennessee College of Health Sciences)

LIBERAL ARTS

Interdisciplinary study of humanities, social and natural sciences meant to give students a broad spectrum of knowledge.

ACCELERATED PROGRAMS

Schools may offer an opportunity to complete a Bachelor's Degree AND a master's degree at the same time. This allows you to finish in less time than if you were to do them separately.

3+2 Programs

This is a dual-degree program that's completed in five years. The first three years are spent at a liberal arts college. The last two are spent at a university with an engineering school. In the end, students graduate with two bachelor's degrees. Depending on the school or program, it can also be an accelerated path for an undergraduate degree combined with a master's degree.

Living Learning Environment

This is a campus housing option that groups students by shared interest. These specialized communities can benefit students academically and socially. Students in this housing often report a high sense of belonging and increased faculty support.

Demonstrated Interest

An action that demonstrates you have a sincere interest in attending a particular college. Many admissions committees consider this factor in making their decisions. Some of the ways you can demonstrate an interest in attending include a campus visit or virtual tour participation, having an initial interview, conversations with admission representatives, and applying for early admission.

CLASS RANK

Refers to a student's standing in comparison with their classmates. It's often determined by grade point averages and is expressed as a percentile.

Bachelor's Degree

When you complete the required courses and earn enough credits, typically after four years in college, you will earn a BA or bachelor's degree. Depending upon your major, you may earn a bachelor of arts (BA), bachelor of science (BS), or a bachelor of fine arts (BFA).

First Generation Student

A college student who is the first in their family to go to college.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Refers to any formal schooling after high school.
