

What Are Your College Admissions Options: Early Decision, Early Action, Rolling or Regular?

Main Types of College Admissions Options

Different types of schools generally offer various types of college admissions options. Here are the primary admission options you will encounter:

Regular Admission

This is the most common option for 4-year colleges and universities. All students must submit their applications by a specific date, usually between November and February. The admissions board then reviews all the applications and sends out acceptances and rejection letters on the same date.

Rolling Admission

Common at large state universities, schools that provide this preference are allowing students to apply at any time during their admission period; typically, September through July. The school then evaluates each college application as it's received and sends acceptance letters to students who meet their requirements. Because admission is granted on a first-come, first-serve basis, you'll want to submit your application as early as possible.

Open Admission

Typically, community colleges, offer this type of enrollment. Open admission means that nearly all high school graduates are admitted, provided they have a diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate.

Early Admissions Options

If you're sure you want to attend a specific university, consider applying early using one of the following options. Applying early lets universities know they're your number one choice, which could improve your chance of acceptance.

Early Decision

Under this admissions program, you agree to attend this school if accepted. If you receive an acceptance letter, you must withdraw any other applications to other schools. Because this option is binding, you need to be both sure about your choice and realistic about your application.

Early Action

Like early decision, you are applying only to your top-choice school. However, unlike early decision, you are not bound to attend if accepted and you can apply early action to more than one university. You can accept an offer as soon as you receive it or wait to make your final selection in the spring after you've found out where else you've been accepted.