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Definitions of Types of College Admissions

There are many different types of college admissions. Keep track of college acceptance types and make sure you don't apply too early if you need to wait for higher test scores and fall grades.

Some colleges have specific deadlines, while others accept students as they apply or who meet certain minimum criteria. Some have binding early decision options, while some let you get in early and then still apply to other colleges. Many state colleges have only one fixed deadline. Be smart in choosing how you will apply to a college.

Early Action (EA)- Many colleges enable you to apply Early Action in November-December, and you receive a decision by mid-December (or January). Early Action is NOT binding. You can apply to as many Early Action schools as you like. You have until May 1 to accept.

- Pros- 1. You can get an early acceptance to a great college before the winter holidays and eliminate some colleges from your list. 2. You don't have to accept the EA college.
- Cons- 1. Colleges don't see your fall senior grades or late November-December test scores. 2. Early Action doesn't really offer any increased chances of admissions.

Early Decision (ED)- Many private colleges offer Early Decision which is an early BINDING route to college admissions. You apply in early to mid November to ONE college, and you find out by mid-December. You must attend if you get accepted.

Some schools even offer **Early Decision II** which means you apply in January and find out in February. You should really investigate this college in person by visiting it or meeting with college representatives in your city. You should contact admissions officers, alumni, and classmates who attend this college. Take this decision very seriously.

- Pros- 1. If accepted, you know where you will go to college by mid-December. 2. Colleges deny it but there are distinct advantages to applying early especially if you have a connection to the college or a true passion.
- Cons- 1. You must go. You cannot accept another college if you are accepted Early Decision. 2. You cannot always get the best financial aid package as financial aid forms aren't due until January. So Early Decision is not for those students whose financial

resources are iffy. 3. Early Decision colleges don't see your first semester senior year grades or late November to December test scores.

Note Brown allows ED students to apply to Early Action schools. We think this is because they reject so many ED students that they want these students to have other options. Check to see whether an ED school will let you apply EA to other schools.

Early Response or Notification- Many public colleges are now offering Early Response or Notification which is very similar to Early Action. You submit your application in the fall and find out within a couple of months whether or not you are accepted.

- Pros- Same as Early Action.
- Cons- Same as Early Action.

Guaranteed Admissions- Many public universities offer automatic admissions to students who meet certain academic and/or test scores requirements. Students must still apply but get admissions offers earlier than other students. Some state colleges accept all students who meet certain guidelines. Some guarantee admissions to schools in local service areas or at certain sets of colleges. UC eligibility is now for students who are in the top 9% of their high school class and who meet UC admissions requirements. They are guaranteed admissions but not to any particular campus.

- Pros- You know early on where you can go to college.
- Cons- Really strong kids not in the top % set by a college have a harder time getting admitted.

Priority Applications- Some private universities send priority applications to highly qualified students reducing some application requirements and guaranteeing earlier admissions. They reduce or waive application fees.

- Pros- You can get a great scholarship to such a college.
- Cons- These schools may be too easy for you.

Priority Deadlines- If you apply before this deadline, you have a higher chance of getting admitted and/or receiving a scholarship to a public university. Many state and/or public universities use priority deadlines to encourage early applications. They do not guarantee admissions to those who apply afterward the priority deadlines but do accept some of those applications. The University of Maryland, for example, has a November 1 Priority Deadline.

- Pros- You get a greater chance of receiving a scholarship and getting admitted to competitive majors and programs.
- Cons- Earlier application preparation. Same as Early Action.

Regular Admissions- This is a set deadline for applying to a college. You apply by one date- usually January 1-February 1 for freshmen and February-April for transfers. You find out in March-April for freshmen and March-June for transfers whether you get admitted. Freshmen

must let the college you accept of your decision by May 1. Some major public universities have fall regular admissions deadlines. The University of California and the Cal States have a November 30 deadline for freshmen and transfers. The University of Texas has a December 1 deadline.

- Pros- 1. You get to submit your fall grades and all fall test scores. 2. You get to apply for Financial Aid and compare offers. 3. You get stronger consideration if too many kids from your high school are applying early. 4. You can ask a senior teacher to write a recommendation.
- Cons- You have to wait until springtime to find out.

Restrictive Early Action or Single Choice Early Action-These are the same as Early Action-early deadlines and not binding. ONLY, you CANNOT apply to another other school Early Decision or Early Action. Harvard and Princeton just re-introduced this option.

- Same pros and cons as Early Action.
- Two additional Cons. 1. Also a risk for kids in very competitive classes as you may get deferred, and regular admission may be the way to go for stronger consideration. 2. You can't apply to another other private college Early Action or Decision.

Rolling Admissions- Many public universities and some private colleges offer Rolling Admissions. You apply as soon as you can and within a few weeks you can find out whether or not you get in. This goes on throughout most of the admissions cycle for a college. Once your application is complete, you can get a decision. Some of these colleges do defer students to see fall grades.

- You can get an admissions decision really early.
- If you apply really early in the fall, schools won't see fall grades or test scores. Kids at really big public high schools sometimes have a challenge getting all the paperwork work in early.