

Early College Application Plans



Early Decision (ED)

- You may only apply to one college under an Early Decision plan and you are committing to attend that college if accepted.
- If you are accepted, you must withdraw all applications to other colleges.
- Your application will be evaluated on the basis of your record through your junior year.
- In order to be ready to apply Early Decision, you must do extensive research and visit college campuses and be absolutely sure of your ED choice.
- Early Decision applications generally fall around November 1.
- At some colleges, an Early Decision application increases your chance of being accepted. This is a question you should ask a representative of each college.
- You must be absolutely certain that the ED school is your first choice and you will not regret losing other possible college options.
- If you are NOT sure, do NOT apply ED!
- Also, if you think you will need financial aid, you should probably not apply ED—talk to the college rep.

Restricted Early Action (REA)

- Restricted early action is a nonbinding plan where students apply to a first-choice college early and receive an early decision (admit, defer, deny), usually in December. Students have until May 1 to respond to this offer of admission. You may apply to other schools under regular or nonbinding rolling admission plans, but you may not apply to any other school under an early action, early decision, or restricted early action plan. Check on individual college websites to find the verbiage that each college uses in the restrictions of their early plan.

Early Action (EA)

- Many colleges and universities have Early Action or Early Notification plans.
- EA works the same way as ED, but is not binding—you do not have to commit to attending the EA college if you are accepted—you have until May 1 to decide.
- EA deadlines are also around November 1.
- Pay careful attention to the college’s Early Action policies—many schools have “Restricted Early Action” programs that do not allow students to apply to any other schools early.

Rolling Admissions

- Many state universities as well as some smaller colleges have *rolling admissions* plans.
- These schools review applications as they come in, and the earlier in the process, the better—usually in September and October.
- Generally, four to six weeks after your application has been received, you will receive a decision.