

Some Typical Admissions Policies

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Early Action

Students who apply under a college's Early Action plan receive a decision before the standard response date but are not required to accept an offer of admission or to make a deposit prior to May 1. Most Early Action deadlines are in November, December, or January, with notification some weeks later. Approximately 200 colleges have Early Action plans. Students should be sure to read the college policy carefully. Some colleges have "single choice Early Action" plans. In these plans, colleges place some restrictions on the applicant's right to make applications to other Early Decision or Early Action plans.

Early Decision

Students who apply under Early Decision commit to enroll at the college if they are admitted and offered a satisfactory financial aid package. Application deadlines are usually in mid-November, with a mid- to late-December notification date. Approximately 230 colleges have an Early Decision plan. Some colleges have both an Early Decision and an Early Action plan.

Open Admissions

Under this policy, a college admits students without regard to conventional academic qualifications, such as taking appropriate high school subjects and receiving suitable high school grades and admission-test scores. Virtually all applicants with high school diplomas or the equivalent are accepted. Most community colleges practice open admissions, although many have requirements for certain programs—for example, nursing.

Rolling Admissions

In this frequently used procedure, a college considers each student's application as soon as all the required credentials, such as school record and test scores, have been received. The college usually notifies an applicant of its decision without delay. At many colleges, rolling admissions allow for early notification and work much like nonbinding Early Action programs.

Candidates Reply Date Agreement

A college subscribing to this agreement does not require applicants offered admission as first-year students to notify the college of their decision to attend (or to accept an offer of financial aid) before May of the year the applicants apply. The purpose of the agreement is to give students time to hear from all the colleges to which they have applied before having to make a commitment to any of them.

Source: College Counseling Sourcebook, 4th Edition