

How to get into Stanford: Admission Requirements 2023



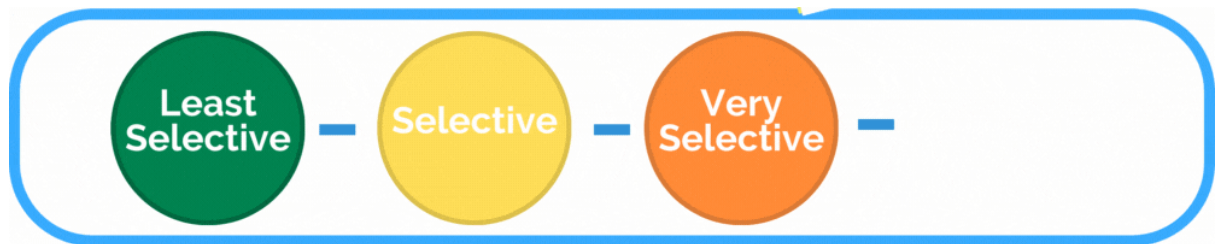
Stanford University has **played a role** in establishing Silicon Valley as a global hub for technological innovation, and its name alone conjures up images of sun-drenched quads, top-tier academics, and some of the brightest minds in the world. All in all, there's a lot that would make the prospective student wonder how to get into Stanford.

For example, the stunning 8,180-acre campus boasts everything from outdoor art installations to a golf course. And if you're a fan of sports (or just want to pretend you are), Stanford's got you covered with 36 varsity teams competing in the Pac-12 Conference. For these (and other) reasons, the university fielded over **56,000 applications** in 2022.

A quick note on college rankings: we think they're generally a bad way to think about where you should go to college. We talk about **why rankings are bad in greater detail here**, but essentially, a lot of college rankings don't actually tell you whether you and the school would fit well together, or that the school is someplace you'll thrive. That said, we also understand that many students/families are confused regarding and have questions about aspects of the application process, so we've built the post below to hopefully clarify things, so students/families can make informed decisions.

HOW HARD IS IT TO GET INTO STANFORD?

It is extremely difficult to get accepted to Stanford. The grade point average of people who get accepted to Stanford are in the **top tenth of their class**. People who successfully get into Stanford also tend to have impressive extracurricular activities and college applications essays.



STANFORD ACCEPTANCE RATE

The Stanford **acceptance rate is 3.7%**, making it one of the most competitive universities in the world. Acceptance rate is an indication of how competitive a school is, but it is also an indication of how popular a school is. **To get into a school like Stanford, you will need to perform exceptionally well in every college application area, including essays.**

Acceptance Rate

STANFORD EARLY DECISION, EARLY ACTION, REGULAR DECISION, AND TRANSFER ACCEPTANCE RATE

Stanford's regular decision **acceptance rate is 3.7%** because it received **56,378 applications and accepted 2,075 students**. Stanford's regular decision process is one of the most selective in the country. Stanford has had far more applicants each year since at least the 2020-2021 application season. Stanford University's admission rate continues to decrease each year partly because its number of applicants increases each year.

Stanford University doesn't publicly release data about its early action program. If you are curious about this data, **reach out to the University's admissions department to learn more**. Know that, in general, early action and early decision acceptance rates **tend to be a bit higher** than regular decisions acceptance rates.

Stanford’s transfer acceptance rate is 1.8% because it received 3,141 applications and accepted 57 students. Stanford is one of the most highly sought after research universities in the world, making its transfer admissions process one of the most selective in the country.

GPA REQUIREMENTS TO GET INTO STANFORD UNIVERSITY

The recommended GPA requirements to get into Stanford are between 3.9 and 4.0. You will need an **incredibly high GPA** and will likely be graduating in the top tenth of your class in order to get into Stanford. If your GPA is lower than suggested at the time you apply, you may have to perform above average on your standardized tests. If your grades aren’t as high as they could have been due to life experiences or hardship, you should consider writing about it in your **additional information section**.

STANFORD UNWEIGHTED GPA REQUIREMENTS

Stanford Unweighted Average GPA: 3.95



GPA Distribution	Percent Admitted
4.0	70.7%
3.75-3.99	22.9%
3.50-3.74	4.0%
3.25-3.49	1.9%
3.00-3.24	0.4%
2.5-2.99	0.1%
2.0-2.49	0%
1.0-1.99	0%

Below 1.0

0%

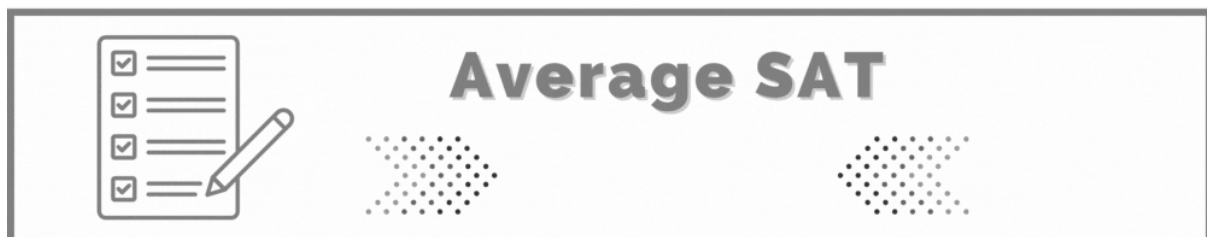
WHAT GPA IS REQUIRED FOR STANFORD?

Applicants' GPA when applying to Stanford should ideally be between 3.9 and 4.0 to be strong candidates. To be frank, you'll be hard-pressed to make a strong application with a GPA falling below this range, but it certainly won't hurt to compensate by increasing your SAT or ACT scores.

SAT REQUIREMENTS TO GET INTO STANFORD

The recommended SAT requirements to get into Stanford are a 1,500 to 1,570 composite score, combining the reading and writing, and math sections together. You will need an incredibly high SAT score in order to get into Stanford. If your SAT is lower than suggested at the time you apply, you may have to perform above average on your other standardized tests or have spectacular extracurricular activities to compensate. If your grades aren't as high as they could have been due to life experiences or hardship, you should consider writing about it in your [additional information section](#).

Stanford is a "Test Optional" school, meaning it does not require standardized test scores, but will consider them if submitted. For the 2022–23 and 2023–24 admission cycles, Stanford will [not require ACT or SAT](#) scores for first-year or transfer applicants. It's up to you whether to submit your scores or not. There are a number of factors to consider as you make this decision, and you can read more about them [here](#).



STANFORD AVERAGE SAT COMPOSITE SCORE: 1540

SAT Score Distribution	Reading %	Math %
700-800	88.18%	93.41%
600-699	11.19%	5.96%
500-599	0.63%	0.63%

400-499	0.00%	0.00%
300-399	0.00%	0.00%
200-299	0.00%	0.00%

WHAT SAT SCORE IS REQUIRED FOR STANFORD?

Applicants should score between 1530 - 1590 on their SAT to be strong candidates for admission to this school. Having less than this will require compensating by using a substitute ACT score or having an above-average GPA. You do not need to submit an SAT or ACT score for application to Stanford, but it will be considered if submitted.

Stanford SAT Distribution	Composite Score %
1400 - 1600	92.26%
1200 - 1399	7.53%
1000 - 1199	0.21%
800 - 999	0.00%
600 - 799	0.00%
400 - 599	0.00%

ACT REQUIREMENTS TO GET INTO STANFORD

The recommended ACT requirements for Stanford are a 34 to 35 composite score combining all English, mathematics, reading, and science sections. You will need an incredibly high score in order to get into Stanford University. If your ACT is not what you'd hoped by the time you apply, you may have to make it up by getting above-average scores on the SAT and having an above-average grade point average. If your ACT wasn't as high as you'd like because of difficulties or hardship, you should consider writing about it in your additional information section.

STANFORD AVERAGE ACT: 34



Average ACT

..... **34** 

ACT Score Range	Composite Score %
30-36	96.1%
24-29	3.7%
18-23	0.2%
12-17	0.00%
6-11	0.00%
Below 6	0.00%

WHAT ACT SCORE IS REQUIRED FOR STANFORD?

Applicants should score between **34 and 35 on their ACT** to be strong candidates for admission to this school. Having less than this will require compensating by using a substitute SAT score or having an above-average GPA. Either an SAT or ACT score is required for application to this school.

WHAT DOES STANFORD LOOK FOR IN STUDENTS?

When it comes to selecting students, Stanford looks beyond just test scores and academic achievements. **The university seeks students who embody its values and mission.** Yes, having competitive grades and test scores is important. But most students who get rejected from Stanford have those kinds of scores—you need to show how you are committed to creating positive change in the world and contributing to the betterment of society.

How do you know if Stanford is the right place for you? And how do you demonstrate to the school that you are the right person for Stanford?

Start by exploring Stanford's mission and values, both through its **mission statement** and through what it outlines in its **discussion of its values**. Notice, for example, how often the focus is on *innovation, leadership, and social responsibility*. Stanford is interested in students who are not just academically driven but also committed to making a difference in the world.

Stanford is looking for students who are passionate about learning and exploring new ideas. The university values intellectual curiosity and seeks students who are eager to engage with their community and make a positive impact. Stanford also values leadership, teamwork, and collaboration. They are interested in students who are not just high achievers but also have the ability to work well with others and lead by example.

How do you see yourself aligning with this mission and these values? What parts of your story demonstrate that you have already worked toward these things, and that Stanford is the place for you to take your next steps? How will you and the Stanford community make great partners in trying to solve the world's problems?

How else can you demonstrate that you and Stanford fit together? Think about your answers to these questions:

How have you demonstrated leadership skills in your community or extracurricular activities? How have you worked with others to achieve a common goal, and what did you learn from that experience? How will you continue to do so at Stanford?

In what ways have you taken the initiative to pursue your interests, and how have you overcome any obstacles in doing so?

How have you contributed to your community, and what impact have you had? How do you envision yourself contributing to the Stanford community?

Where have you taken risks and learned resilience, and how have these experiences shaped you?

In what ways have you explored your creativity and innovative thinking, and how do you plan to continue to do so at Stanford?

How have you demonstrated your commitment to social responsibility and contributing to positive change in the world?

What ideas or projects have you developed that showcase your innovative and creative thinking? How have you challenged the status quo in your academic or personal pursuits?

What social or environmental issues are you most passionate about? How have you contributed to your community or made an impact in these areas?

How do you envision balancing your academic, extracurricular, and personal commitments at Stanford, and what strategies do you have for maintaining your well-being and avoiding burnout?

STANFORD APPLICATION DEADLINES

The Stanford application deadline for regular decision is January 5. Stanford also provides an alternative form of application in addition to regular decision: restrictive early action. **The application deadline for Stanford's restrictive early action is November 1.** Below is a table showing the deadlines for each of the steps of the Stanford admissions process.

Notification Plan	Application Material	Application Deadline
Restrictive Early Action	Submit Application	November 1
	Submit Test Scores	Last Acceptable Test Date: SAT - October ACT - September
	Submit Financial Aid Application	November 15
	Admissions Decisions Released	Mid-December
Regular Decision	Submit Application	January 5
	Submit Test Scores	Last Acceptable Test Date: SAT - December ACT - December

Submit Financial Aid Application (if still pending) February 15

Admissions Decisions Released Mid-February

STANFORD RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION POLICY POLICY

*It is **Stanford policy** that, if you apply to Stanford with a decision plan of Restrictive Early Action, you may not apply to any other private college/university under their respective Early Action, Restrictive Early Action, Early Decision, or Early Notification plan (but you can apply early to public schools).*

In addition, it is Stanford policy that you may not apply to any public university under an early binding plan, such as Early Decision.

If you apply to Stanford under Restrictive Early Action, you may apply to other colleges and universities under their Regular Decision plan.

If you apply to Stanford under Restrictive Early Action and your application is deferred, you may apply to another college's Early Decision II plan.

STANFORD SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY PROMPTS

To complete Stanford's supplemental essay requirements, applicants must complete 8 essays. Their prompts are below and the Stanford supplemental essay guide that they were sourced from can be found [here](#).

PROMPT #1

What is the most significant challenge that society faces today? (50 words)

PROMPT #2

How did you spend your last two summers? (50 words)

PROMPT #3

What historical moment or event do you wish you could have witnessed? (50 words)

PROMPT #4

Briefly elaborate on one of your extracurricular activities, a job you hold, or responsibilities you have for your family. (50 words)

PROMPT #5

Name one thing you are looking forward to experiencing at Stanford. (50 words)

PROMPT #6

The Stanford community is deeply curious and driven to learn in and out of the classroom. Reflect on an idea or experience that makes you genuinely excited about learning. (250 words)

PROMPT #7

Virtually all of Stanford's undergraduates live on campus. Write a note to your future roommate that reveals something about you or that will help your roommate — and us — get to know you better. (250 words)

PROMPT #8

Tell us about something that is meaningful to you and why. (250 words)