

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS-EARLY, REGULAR, ROLLING WHAT DOES THIS ALL MEAN?

There are three basic college application timelines*:

1. **Regular Admission**— Students apply by a specified deadline (usually midwinter) and hear from colleges by a clearly stated time, usually early April. The student needs to make a decision and let the school know by May 1 (universal reply date) whether or not they will attend.
2. **Rolling Admission**— Students apply and the institutions review the applications as they are submitted and render admissions decisions throughout the admissions cycle. This usually only takes a few weeks. Students may wait until May 1 to accept the offer of admission, but in rare cases could risk that all spaces in the freshmen class are filled. Students should stay in touch with the college.
3. **Early Application**— There are several early application types, some are binding and some non-binding. These early options are offered by many colleges that also use the regular application calendar.
 - **Early Action**— Students apply early and receive a decision in advance of the institution's regular date. These are nonbinding. The college will let you know if you are accepted by early January, yet the student can wait until May to make a decision. It also allows families to compare financial aid packages.
 - **Early Decision**— Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where if they are admitted they will definitely enroll. This is a binding commitment. The application deadline and decisions occur early. Usually between mid-December or by early January, the college notifies the student of admission, deferral to the pool of regular applicants, or denial. Colleges take this seriously, so early decision should only be used if students have undertaken a thorough college search. Most students need time to explore options and making a decision this early doesn't allow the student to change their mind several months later. Students should also fill out regular admission applications for other colleges in case the ED college denies them admittance. These applications can be submitted only have denial or deferral from the ED school. Families are unable to compare financial aid offers with early decision.
 - **Restrictive Early Action**— Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. But restrictive action does not allow a student to apply EA or ED to other institutions. If offered enrollment, the student can wait until May 1 and the commitment is non-binding. This option is offered by fewer schools.

*The information below is adapted from information from www.collegeboard.com & NACAC.