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Decoding College Deadlines

You've probably heard several application deadline terms, so allow us to decode them.

Rolling Admissions: The school assess applications as they receive them and starts notifying students 8-12 weeks after receipt of a complete application. These schools operate on a "first-come, first-served" basis. With rolling admissions, the sooner you apply, the better, as admission gets more competitive with each passing day. Several major schools have rolling admissions schedules, including Michigan State University, Penn State, and IU-Bloomington.

Early Action: Students apply early (usually by November 1) and receive early notification (usually by the end of December) with no restrictions. Students can apply to several schools through Early Action and will not be bound to any one school. This is the most flexible option. Applying via Early Action is a good way to show demonstrated interest to a school. The other benefit is that with your application submitted, you can fully focus on your 7th semester grades (extremely important, especially if you are deferred). Most public universities, such as The University of Michigan, offer an Early Action deadline.

Restrictive Early Action (also referred to as "single-choice early action"): REA is a non-binding early action option in which a student may only apply to one private school's early program. Applicants sign a statement acknowledging that they will only submit one REA application. Students may apply to other schools through Early Action, as long as the admissions decision at that college/university is



non-binding. Schools that offer REA include: Boston College, The University of Notre Dame, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale.

Early Decision: Early Decision (deadline is usually November 1) is binding, so if a student applies through Early Decision and receives admission, he/she is obligated to attend that school as long as one can financially afford to attend. Sometimes Early Decision is less competitive, but that is not always the case. Upon acceptance to the school, a student must withdraw all other applications. For students who want or need to compare financial aid offerings, this option does not leave you the opportunity to wait until the spring to compare packages. Many competitive schools, such as Northwestern, Boston University, New York University, Bates, Wake Forest, and Vanderbilt, offer Early Decision options.

Regular Decision: Students must submit an application by a particular date (typically in January) and the school sends out decisions to all applicants at the same time (typically March or April). There are no restrictions with Regular Decision.

A couple of notes on applying early:

- Over 500 schools offer either Early Action or Early Decision options, so be sure to explore what each school has to offer and decide which option is best for you.
- Pay attention to scholarship deadlines, as they often align with Early Action deadlines (when the school offers EA).

Want to Learn More?

Work with us 1:1 and we'll guide you through it!