

COLLEGE PLANNING GLOSSARY

Types of Higher Education Institutions:

College - an institution of higher learning that provides education to undergraduates and awards bachelor's and sometimes master's degrees. There are usually no academic subdivisions.

University - an educational institution for higher learning that typically includes an undergraduate college and graduate schools in various disciplines, as well as medical and law schools and sometimes other professional schools. The divisions within the school may be referred to as Colleges or Schools (i.e. College of Arts and Sciences or School of Business)

Liberal Arts – an academic program which emphasizes a broad range of undergraduate studies. Pre-professional or professional training may not be available.

Application Programs:

Regular Decision - application procedure where there is a set deadline for applications to be submitted. Decisions are usually sent to the student in late March or Early April

Early Action (E.A.) - Apply to a school at a set date in the fall (October/November) and receive a response in December/January. There is no obligation to enroll. With the exception of a small number of Restrictive Early Action Colleges (Yale, Harvard, Stanford) students are free to apply to multiple colleges Early Action.

Early Decision (E.D.) - Apply to a school at set date in the fall (usually October or November) and receive a response in December. This is a BINDING decision, thus if admitted the student must enroll in that school and withdraw all applications to other colleges. You may apply to only one college early decision.

Rolling – Program where there are no application deadlines. Applications are reviewed as they are submitted and decisions are “rolled” back to the applicant. Turnaround time varies but is usually between 3-5 weeks.

College Admissions Testing:

College Board - This is the commonly used name for the College Entrance Examination Board. College Board programs include the SAT, PSAT, Subject Tests (SAT II) and AP programs. (collegeboard.com)

SAT (SAT I) – A College Board standardized test used by colleges for admission purposes. Composed of three sections: Critical Reading, Math, Writing.

Subject Test(s) (SAT II) - A College Board administered exam. One hour tests in a multiple choice format in specific subject areas. Required by some colleges for admission.

ACT – Standardized Test used by colleges for admission purposes. Accepted by all colleges and universities. Four sections: English, Math, Science, Reading and an optional Writing section. (act.org)

Super-Score – An unofficial term used to describe the process by which colleges use sub scores from exams taken on separate dates to recalculate a new top score. All colleges super-score the SAT. A more limited number super-score the ACT.

Financial Aid Instruments:

FAFSA – “Free Application for Federal Student Aid” This document must be submitted to the United States Government in order to qualify for Financial Aid. (www.fafsa.ed.gov)

PROFILE – Also known as the CSS Profile, it is a financial aid document created by the College Board. Some schools may require this in addition to the FAFSA in order to receive financial aid. (www.collegeboard.com)

Application Options:

College Application - The document required by a college in order to apply for admission. Some colleges have their own application, while others will accept the common application.

Common Application – A uniform application accepted by almost 500 colleges and universities. It allows you to send the same application to each college. (www.commonapp.org)

- **Supplement** - Required by many colleges that use the Common Application. The supplement will ask for additional information about the applicant and/or additional essays. Colleges requiring a supplement will have their own unique form which can be filled out and submitted right on the Common Application website.
- **Priority Applications** - (Fasttrack, VIP, Advantage Application, Candidate Choice, etc). These are special applications used by some Common Application colleges. However this application is separate from the Common Application and generally requires less information and work (i.e. no essay, no recommendations, faster decision, no application fee).

Application Decisions:

Admit/Acceptance – Applicant is offered a space in the incoming class.

Deny – Applicant is not offered admission. Student generally must wait another year before re-applying.

Deferral – Early Action and Early Decision candidates who are not initially offered admission may be deferred for further review in the regular applicant pool.

Waitlist – The college feels you are a qualified candidate for admission, but does not currently have space available in the incoming class. The college will notify you as the spring and summer progresses if a space becomes available.