

A young woman with a colorful headwrap is sitting on the grass under a large tree. She is wearing a green jacket and blue jeans, and is looking at a laptop. A black backpack and a water bottle are next to her. The background shows a building and more trees.

Tufts
UNIVERSITY

Selective College Admissions Overview

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What is a selective college?

SELECTIVITY	ACCEPTANCE RATE	EXAMPLES
Selective	30-60%	University of Wisconsin – Madison, Macalester College, Wake Forest University
Very Selective	15-30%	University of Michigan, Carleton College, University of Virginia
Highly Selective	<15%	UCLA, Rice University, Tufts University, Williams College



In Perspective...

Only 63 (out of 1,362 4-year colleges and universities in the US!) admitted fewer than 20% of applicants in 2017

More than *half* of 4-year colleges and universities in the US admitted *at least* 2/3 of applicants in 2017

So what matters?

Selective admissions is *not* an exact science. Most selective institutions utilize **holistic review** in their evaluation process. “Context, context, context” is my motto in holistic review.

Academics

Extracurriculars

Recommendation Letters

Essays





Supplemental Essays

Short, school-specific,
VERY important
(depending on the school)

Examples:

- Why University of X?
- Intellectual/academic interests
- Elaborate on an activity
- Impact/goals for the future

Tips to Remember

- Part of the power of the essay is how it makes the reader think and feel
- Be true to your authentic voice
- Don't squeeze too much in
- Celebrate, but don't brag
- Don't repeat your resume
- Dramatic and traumatic are not a requirement
- Make the most of each essay
- Ask for input from a select number of people you trust



Terminology

Financial Aid

Need-Based Aid
Merit-Based Aid
FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)
CSS Profile
Net Price Calculator
MyinTuition Quick College Cost Estimator

Admissions

Demonstrated Interest
Early Decision (ED, ED1, ED2)
Early Action
Regular Decision
Need-Blind, Need-Aware
Defer
Waitlist
Testing Policies (Blind, Optional, Flexible, Required)





What can I do now?

Work on your college list

- Be honest with yourself about what you want and need out of your college experience
- Have a variety (related to acceptance rate and financial aid) of schools on your list

Put your best academic foot forward

- Challenge yourself, but don't overdo it!
- Take classes and participate in student organizations that fit your interests (your time in school is for you, after all)

Think about both school-specific questions and supplements *and* the broader application (Coalition, Common, QuestBridge, etc.)

- Selective schools want to admit students who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about their community
- Help us see who you are and who you might be on our campus

Don't be afraid to ask questions!

Questions?

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