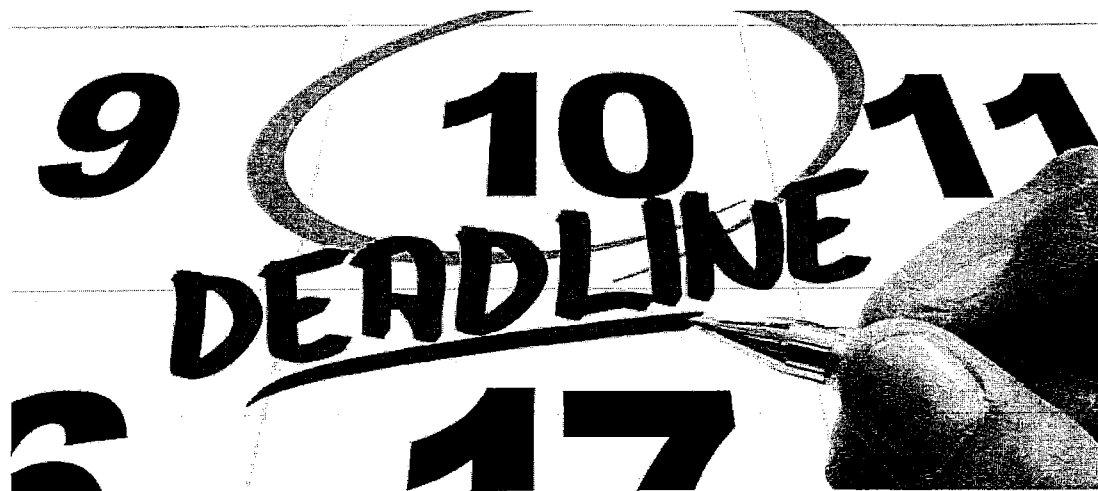


5 Types of College Application Deadlines

by [CollegeXpress](#)

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Your college applications are perfectly polished, and you're *this close* to the end of the college admission process...but not yet! You still need to decide *when* you'll be sending in those apps, and there are a *bunch* of application deadline options out there to choose from.

Here you'll find a basic breakdown of the five main college application deadlines. Keep in mind that these will vary from school to school, and you may also have different deadlines if you're an international or transfer student. And to complicate things further, all of these deadlines are just for applications for admission—your colleges may have different deadlines for their financial aid forms.

Confused yet? That's normal. Just remember: the only way to be sure about a college's given deadlines is to look them up yourself. So once you have a short list of colleges you'd like to apply to, make sure you track down *exactly* when everything is due, then mark your calendar so you don't forget!

1. Early Decision

With Early Decision, you submit your application around November and usually get your decision by December. Though Early Decision deadlines have a similar timeline to Early Action (see below), it has one huge difference: they are *binding*. That means by applying to a school Early Decision (and you would only apply to *one* school Early Decision), you are agreeing to enroll if you are admitted. If accepted, you *must* contact any other colleges you applied to and withdraw your applications. Early Decision is not for the faint of heart—or the unsure applicant. Only apply Early Decision if you are 100% sure the college is the one for you.

2. Early Action

Of the two most common early application options (see Early Decision), Early Action is the *non-binding* one—aka, the less intense one. With Early Action, you'll also submit your application around November and usually get your decision by December, but you can still apply to other schools Early Action, and you don't have to commit to a school if you're admitted. Some schools also split these deadlines, with an "Early Action I" falling a few weeks before "Early Action II" (but still before Regular Decision deadlines).

Related: [Early Bird Gets the Worm? Early Decision vs. Early Action](#)

3. Single Choice Early Action

Single Choice Early Action is a non-binding but exclusive deadline; it functions much like the typical Early Action deadlines, except you can only apply to one school this way (hence "single choice"). Not many schools offer this option, but for those that do, it shows you're that much more interested in attending the institution (and admission counselors like to see that!).

Related: [The Pros and Cons of Applying Early \(http://www.collegexpress.com/counselors-and-parents/college-counselors/blog/pros-and-cons-applying-early/\)](http://www.collegexpress.com/counselors-and-parents/college-counselors/blog/pros-and-cons-applying-early/)

4. Regular Decision

Ah, good ol' Regular Decision. Nothing too crazy to report here: these deadlines are non-binding and widely available. Regular Decision deadlines for fall admission usually occur in the preceding January or February, and students will receive a decision by April.

5. Rolling admission

Schools with [rolling admission deadlines](#) (also non-binding) accept applications until their programs fill up, often as late as April and through the summer. However, there's a chance of losing your spot if the class fills up, and you could miss out on scholarship opportunities, so it's best not to wait *too* long. (Many rolling admission schools recommend applying on the same timeline as their Regular Decision counterparts.) Also, some colleges with rolling deadlines will still have set admission deadlines for particular academic programs (such as Physical Therapy). Again, check with your schools to be sure!