

Highly Selective Institutions

Applying to the Ivys & other
competitive schools

A Highly Selective University...

- Admits less than 20% of applicants
- High Academic Admission Requirements (Minimum 3.8+ GPA)
- Rigorous Transcript (AP expectations)
- High ACT/SAT scores (28+)
- Ranked amongst the most prestigious in U.S. or Internationally - US News & World Report

What is a highly selective college?

A highly selective college is a college that does not accept all or almost all of the students who apply.

Who are the elites?

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Princeton | 11. Dartmouth |
| 2. Harvard | 12. Cal Tech |
| 3. U of Chicago | 13. Northwestern |
| 4. Yale | 14. Brown |
| 5. Columbia | 15. Cornell |
| 6. Stanford | 16. Rice |
| 7. MIT | 17. U of Notre Dame |
| 8. Duke | 18. Vanderbilt |
| 9. U Penn | 19. U of Mich |
| 10. Johns Hopkins | 20. Georgetown |

Some Scary Statistics-Class of 2024

Brown

- 36,794 Applied
- 2,533 Accepted

Duke

- 39,783 Applied
- 3,057 Accepted

Harvard

- 40,379 Applied
- 1,980 Accepted

U of Michigan

- 65,899 Applied
- 7,188 Accepted

U of North Carolina

- 44,784 Applied
- 10,446 Accepted

U of Chicago

- 34,372 Applied
- 2,511 Accepted

More Scary Statistics

"The simple math of the story is that applications are up and the spaces are fixed." *Fulton County Daily Report*

- 39,000 high schools across the country, each with a top ten list of students.
- 390,000 superstars applying to the same group of highly selective schools.
- Perfect GPAs and near perfect ACT/SAT scores not unusual within this group
- Only 3% of 18 yr. old students in the U.S. get to go to these selective schools.

Top Grand Rapids Christian students become pretty "typical" looking in this group.

How NOT to get in ...

- Do not show academic focus
- Do not become a leader or show leadership potential
- Do not visit these colleges or demonstrate any interest
- Do not spell check or proof read your application
- Do not take initiative
- Post inappropriate stuff on social media

What Does It Take For Acceptance? (GPA and Curriculum)

GPA Calculation - unweighted 4.0 scale (often no value given to plus or minus)

Positive Indicators (not rules)

- GPA in the median 50% or higher (3.8+)
- A challenging curriculum (judged within the context of each high school) Take the most challenging courses and still do well
- 19 or more academics (core), 4 in the senior year
- AP & honors throughout high school curriculum - not just the senior year
- 1 yr. of Chemistry required & 1 yr. of Physics and Calculus suggested for engineering students.

The Essay - the most difficult part of the application

Students are given ambiguous writing prompts to elicit how they think. The essay is crucial to acceptance! One of the most distinguishing factors.

1. Generic Essay - Common App.
 2. Specific Essay - Included in specific college supplement. Sometimes more than one.
 3. Optional Essay - DO it!
- *One of the essays must speak directly about the university.

Important that students answer the question asked!

Write in the first person

Do your research

Don't start with a quote

Don't "adopt" another persons event.

Start early - summer

Students need to tell about themselves, not a list of what they do.

Talent?

Artistic, athletic, and musical talent can add weight to any application

Quality over Quantity - looking for dedication, commitment, passion, leadership - not a large number of activities.

Activity Resume Includes:

- Activity description
- Years involved/hours per week
- Leadership positions

Standout tips:

- Passion Project: Tangible indicators of their passion: a project, experiment, portfolio, or an endeavor on which they spent substantial time learning, tinkering, or creating. (Build a weather station, turn school's cooking oil into bio fuels)
- Join something that shows you took some risk & stretched your comfort zone.
- One extra curricular that isn't obvious, but instead unique.

Demonstrated Interest

Get on the college's radar! Do not be a stealth applicant.

- Visit if at all possible! Why Harvard? Why Yale? A lot easier to answer if you've visited
- Visit their website and sign up to receive information
- Contact the regional admissions representative. It is important that the student makes all contacts - not the parent!
- Attend admission visits to our school and any they host in the Grand Rapids area.
- Apply Early!

How to Apply

- Common Application - Most highly selective colleges use this streamlined process. All online
www.commonapp.org
- A few schools use their own online application (Georgetown, a few UC schools)
- Deadlines are SO IMPORTANT!!!

Letters of Recommendation

The Counselor - Request early, especially if going ED or EA

Teacher #1 - From junior or senior year in a core academic course

Teacher #2 - May be optional, but also academic core course.

Supplements - May be a coach, clergy, mentor, etc. Only submit if it is an option. College reps may think you can't read directions if you submit recs that are not optional.

When to Apply?

ED/EA/REA/Regular Decision?

Advantages of Early Decision and Early Action applications. Higher probability of acceptance. ED and EA have early Fall deadlines. Usually Nov. 1.

ED 1 - May only apply to one ED school - Binding!

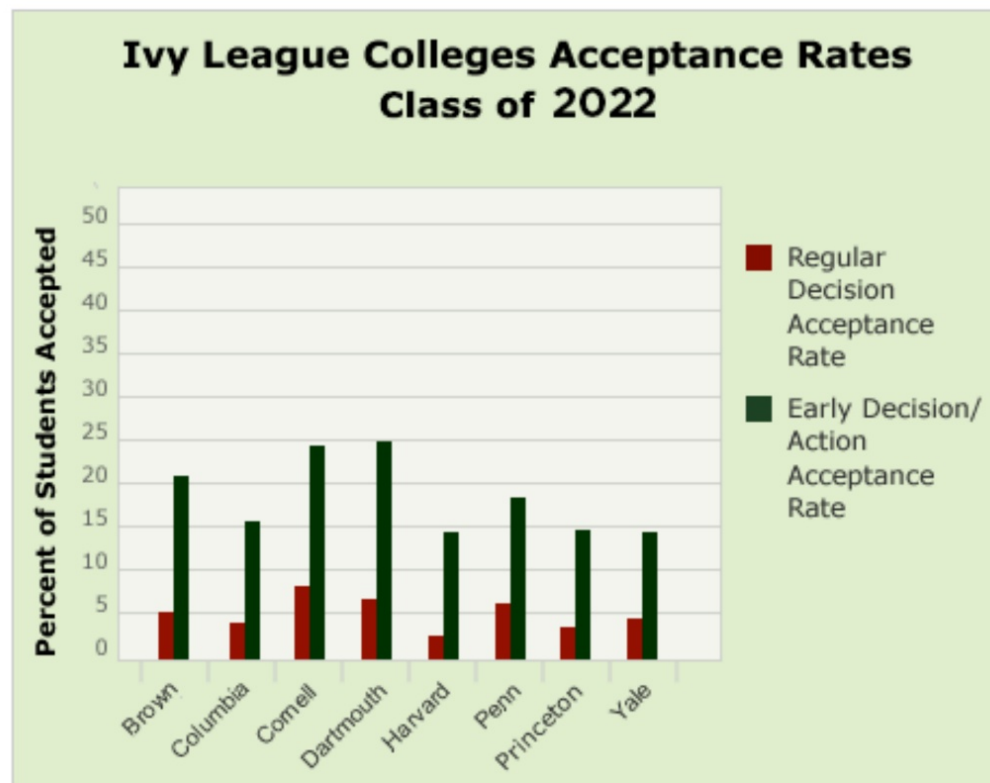
EA - May apply to as many schools as you like.

Restrictive Early Action - May only apply to one school early; indicates this is your first choice school. (Stanford, Harvard, Yale, Notre Dame, Princeton)

Regular Decision - May apply after the EA deadline. Some EA applicants may be deferred and reviewed again during regular decision.

The Wait! ED answer before winter break, EA usually by Dec.24. Deferred and Regular decision - some time in the Spring.

Acceptance Rates



The Good News, Financial Aid

Ivy League and many highly selective schools are working toward removing all economic barriers.

Schools will try to meet full financial need

- No contribution expected of parents with income under \$60,000
- No Tuition expected of parents with income under \$100,000

The Interview

- The Alumni Interview - local college alumni will conduct an interview. They are informational only and sometimes used for admission.
- Group Interviews - may be done for scholarship purposes. Some done via skype/zoom.
- Requested Interviews - often a box checked on the application.
- Campus Interviews - scheduled when you visit the college.

How Do They Decide?

Holistic Admission Process - Objective (academic) and subjective (non-academic)

- Rigor of Student's Curriculum
- GPA
- ACT/SAT scores
- Recommendations
- Activities Resume, Essay, Interview
- Talent, Level of Interest, Special Affinity

The operative question in selective college admissions is - What will this student add to our college?

When do you reach for a reach school?

- Placing in the upper end of the mid - 50% of the reach school's average GPA, and ACT/SAT statistics
- If you understand the culture and personality of the school
- If you are willing to put 100% effort into the application process
- If you have prayed about it and feel God is leading you in that direction

Final Thoughts

- Highly selective institutions are just that-highly selective! Not everyone can get in even if their academic profile meets the requirements.
- Most decisions are based on subjective variables beyond the control of the applicant.
- Ultimately, each student at GRCHS will have many strong viable options for college admission.
- Have a "balanced" list of schools.
- "Know that what you do in college is a better predictor of future success and happiness than where you go to college." (education Conservancy)

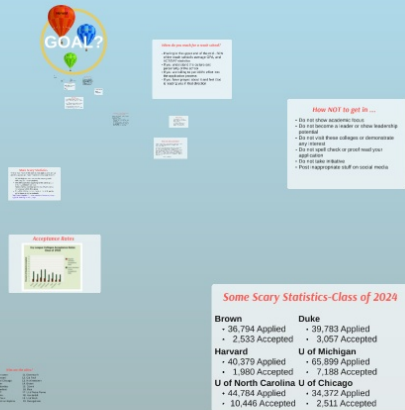


How do they decide?

The goal of these college admission offices is to enroll a well-rounded class - a community of individuals who add a unique talent or characteristic to the class.

“When we read applications, we don’t have a list of things to look for. Rather, we look at each applicant and his or her abilities and accomplishments as presented in the completed application...From that large group, we select a smaller number who together will bring us a varied, interesting and able freshman class. For every applicant offered admission, there are usually several others who are similarly qualified but who, because of the limited size of our freshman class, cannot be offered admission.”

~Princeton University



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