

College deferral FAQs for seniors:

Q: What does it mean if I was deferred?

A: A deferral means that you are a strong candidate for admission at the college, and although not a clear admit, your application will be reviewed again within the context of the regular applicant pool.

Q: Why do colleges defer students?

A: College admissions can be complicated! Every year colleges have institutional goals and targets that they must hit to balance out their incoming classes, meet the demands of different departments within the college, meet their financial requirements. The size and strength of an applicant pool can also change each year. Has the college been in the news? Did the college win a national championship the prior year? Colleges are also attempting to make educated guesses about which applicants will attend their college if accepted. These are all factors that can influence admissions decisions. With this perspective, it's easier to understand that this is not a personal judgment.

Q: What should I do if I'm deferred?

A: A constructive step to take if you are deferred is to reach out to the college. A call to the admissions counselor who works with SHS would be best, and if that's not possible or not your strong suit, an email can be sent instead. With a quick online search, you can identify our school's admissions counselor from a college, or you can reach out to your SHS counselor if you're having trouble finding your contact person. Thank the admissions counselor for taking the time to review your application and express your continued strong interest in attending. If it is your first-choice school, let them know that. If you know you'll attend if accepted, state that clearly. You could also ask for feedback in helping to better understand where your application fell short relative to candidates who were accepted.

You can ask if there is additional information you could submit to support your application and be sure to communicate any new information you might have that wasn't included in your original application. (Did you earn any new awards, assume any new positions of leadership, etc.?) However, don't repeat information that has already been provided, and don't feel badly if you have no new information to share. Remember, it was only a short time ago that you submitted your application!

Q: What should I expect following a deferral?

A: Approaching a deferral with an optimistic, yet practical mindset is wise. It is certainly possible that you could be admitted through the regular applicant pool, although we must be clear minded in understanding that the regular applicant pool will be larger and presumably more competitive. After you've reached out to the admissions counselor, the most important thing to do is to shift your focus to other colleges. All too often students become so enamored with a school from which they've been deferred that they lose precious time that should be devoted to doing further research on other colleges. Generating equal enthusiasm for other schools and other opportunities is essential. The reality is that most students can find a home and be successful at many different colleges. Getting to that point of emotional acceptance can be a process. Parents and school counselors can work together with students to help them move to this point of emotional acceptance. From that point we can refocus on other, amazing opportunities in front of them.