



College App Guide

RISING SENIORS EDITION

College App Season

Y O U R S U M M E R
H E A D S T A R T

SMART START, STRONG FINISH

You've worked hard to get here. Now start
your senior year prepared and strong!



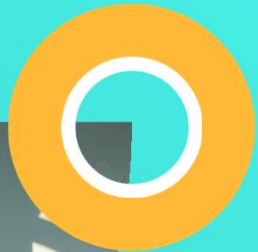
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Why Start Now?

The Summer Advantage

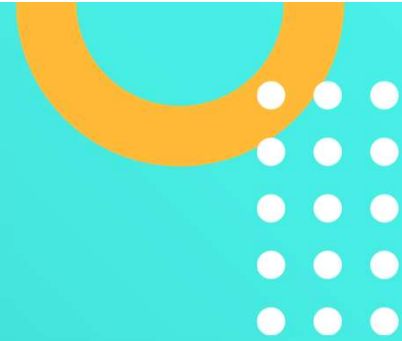
STRATEGIC TIMING, MAXIMUM IMPACT

Senior year hits fast—essays, recommendations, deadlines, plus school. Starting now means you'll enter fall with drafts done and stress minimized.





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Your Summer Roadmap

Three Months to Application Excellence

STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR STRATEGIC MINDS

June: Brainstorm essay topics and research schools.

July: Draft your personal statement and supplementals.

August/September: Polish, revise, and get feedback from trusted readers.





Building Your College List

Strategic Planning for Smart Applications

REACH, MATCH, SAFETY

Create a balanced list with 2-3 reach schools (dream big!), 3-4 match schools (strong chances), and 1-2 safety schools (guaranteed admits & scholarships). Track all deadlines in one place.



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Research Colleges

**Explore Smart. Compare Carefully.
Apply Confidently.**

**DO YOUR HOMEWORK FOR SMARTER COLLEGE
CHOICES**
Compare Campuses, Costs, and Opportunities

College Visits Matter

[College Visit Approval Form](#)

Schedule Your Senior IGP Meeting-Summer appointments available

[IGP Scheduling Link](#)





College App Guide



The Ivy League

The historic, ultra-selective private institutions in the Northeast

Selective College Acceptance Rates: Early vs. Regular Decision

College	Overall Acceptance Rate	Early Plan Admit Rate	Regular Decision Admit Rate
Harvard University	~3.6%	~7.6% SCEA	~2.6%
Princeton University	~4–5%	REA not published	~4–5% overall
University of Pennsylvania	~5–6%	~15–16% ED	~4–5% RD
Yale University	~3.9%	~10–11% SCEA	~3.2%

Note: Acceptance rates are approximate and can vary slightly from year to year. Students should verify the most current admissions data directly from each college.



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Elite Private Research Universities

Private powerhouses matching or exceeding Ivy League academic prestige and selectivity

Selective STEM & Research University Acceptance Rates

College	Overall Acceptance Rate	Early Plan Admit Rate	Regular Decision Admit Rate
California Institute of Technology	~3%	~4–5% EA	~2–3% RD
Duke University	~5–6%	~14–21% ED	~4–5%
Johns Hopkins University	~7%	~20–21% ED	~5–6%
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	~4.5%	~5% EA	~3–4% RD
Stanford University	~3.7%	~9–10% REA est.	~3–4%
University of Chicago	~5%	~15–17% ED est.	~4–5%

Note: Acceptance rates are approximate and can vary slightly year to year. Students should verify the most recent admissions data directly from each college.



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National Public Ivies & Elite State Research

Selective public institutions with top-tier national research and STEM programs

Public & Regional University Acceptance Rates

College	Overall Acceptance Rate	Early Plan Admit Rate	Regular Decision Admit Rate
Georgia Institute of Technology	~16–17%	~10–14% EA2	~7–10% RD
North Carolina State University	~40–45%	~45–50% EA	~40% RD
University of Florida	~24–30%	Same pool	Same pool
University of Georgia	~37–43%	~40% EA	~30–35% RD
University of Michigan	~18%	~20% EA	~15% RD
UNC Chapel Hill	~15–17%	~20% EA	~15–18% RD
University of Virginia	~16–17%	~24% EA	~16–18% RD
Virginia Tech	~55–57%	~55–60% EA	~45–50% RD
Wake Forest University	~21%	~25% ED	~18–20% RD

Note: Acceptance rates are approximate and may vary slightly each admissions cycle. Students should verify the most recent admissions data directly from each university.



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Prominent South Carolina Public Institutions

Diverse In-State Pathways: South Carolina's Comprehensive Higher Education Network

South Carolina & Regional University Acceptance Rates

College	Overall Acceptance Rate	Early Plan Admit Rate	Regular Decision Admit Rate
Clemson University	~42–49%	~49–55% EA	~40–45% RD
Coastal Carolina University	~80%	Rolling	~80%+
College of Charleston	~75–76%	~80% EA	~70–75% RD
Francis Marion University	~80%+	Rolling	~80%+
Furman University	~69%	~70% ED	~60% RD
University of South Carolina	~61–68%	~75–80% EA	~60–65% RD
Winthrop University	~75–78%	Rolling	~70–75%
Wofford College	~63–65%	~65–70% ED	~55–60% RD

Note: Acceptance rates are approximate and may change slightly from year to year. Students should verify the most recent admissions data directly from each college or university.



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Ways to Apply

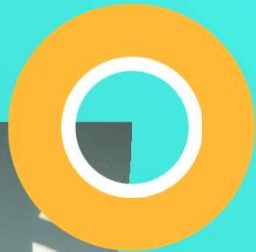
Understanding Your Application Platforms & Options

COMMON APP

INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS

QUESTBRIDGE

Early Deadline--
September 30, 2026
Income Based Eligibility





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TYPES OF ADMISSIONS

Apply Early, Strategically, and With Purpose

★ TYPES OF COLLEGE APPLICATION OPTIONS ★		
REGULAR DECISION  Students will be notified according to each college's notification date which is usually in early spring.	ROLLING ADMISSION  Applications are reviewed as they are submitted. Applicants will receive a decision 6–10 weeks after review is complete.	EARLY ACTION (NON-BINDING)  Allows students to apply early (normally October/November) and receive a decision in December or January.
RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA)  A non-binding early action option that allows students to apply early (usually November) but restricts them from applying early to other private colleges.	SINGLE-CHOICE EARLY ACTION (SCEA)  A non-binding early action option that allows students to apply early (usually November) but restricts them from applying early to other private colleges.	EARLY DECISION (BINDING)  A binding option that allows students to apply early (usually November) and receive a decision early (December/January). If accepted, the student must enroll.
RESTRICTIVE EARLY DECISION  A binding early decision option that allows students to apply early (usually November) but restricts them from applying early to other private colleges. If accepted, the student must enroll.	ED I / ED II  Some colleges offer two rounds of Early Decision. ED I is typically in November, and ED II is typically in January. Both are binding—if accepted, you must enroll.	PRIORITY DEADLINE  Not an admission plan, but an early deadline (often November 1) to be considered for maximum merit scholarships or priority housing.
PLEASE NOTE: These are general guidelines. Always check each college's official website to verify application options and deadlines, as dates and policies can change.		



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Estimated Application Deadlines for 2026-27

2026 College Admission Deadlines & Early Application Options

College	Early Option(s)	Binding or Non-Binding	Early Deadline(s)	Regular Decision Deadline
California Institute of Technology	Restrictive Early Action	Non-Binding (restrictive)	Nov. 1	Jan. 3
Clemson University	Early Action	Non-Binding	Oct. 15	Jan. 1
Coastal Carolina University	ED, EA	ED = Binding; EA = Non-Binding	Oct. 15 / Nov. 15	Feb. 1
College of Charleston	EA, ED I, ED II	EA = Non-Binding; ED = Binding	Nov. 1 / Jan. 15	Feb. 15
Duke University	Early Decision (ED)	Binding	Nov. 1	Jan. 2
Francis Marion University	Rolling Admission	Non-Binding	Rolling	Rolling
Furman University	ED I / ED II	Binding	Nov. 1 / Jan. 15	Jan. 15
Georgia Institute of Technology	Early Action	Non-Binding	Oct. 15 (GA) / Nov. 1 (OOS)	Jan. 4
Harvard University	Restrictive Early Action (REA)	Non-Binding (restrictive)	Nov. 1	Jan. 1
Johns Hopkins University	ED I / ED II	Binding	Nov. 1 / Jan. 2	Jan. 2
Massachusetts Institute of Technology	Early Action (EA)	Non-Binding	Nov. 1	Jan. 5
North Carolina State University	Early Action	Non-Binding	Nov. 1	Jan. 15
Princeton University	Restrictive Early Action (REA)	Non-Binding (restrictive)	Nov. 1	Jan. 1
Stanford University	Restrictive Early Action (REA)	Non-Binding (restrictive)	Nov. 1	Jan. 5
University of Chicago	EA, ED I, ED II	EA = Non-Binding; ED = Binding	Nov. 1 / Jan. 2	Jan. 6
University of Florida	Priority Deadline	Non-Binding	Nov. 1	Jan. 15
University of Georgia	Early Action	Non-Binding	Oct. 15	Jan. 1
University of Michigan	Early Action	Non-Binding	Nov. 1	Feb. 1
UNC Chapel Hill	Early Action	Non-Binding	Oct. 15	Jan. 15
University of Pennsylvania	Early Decision (ED)	Binding	Nov. 1	Jan. 5
University of South Carolina	Early Action	Non-Binding	Oct. 15	Dec. 1
University of Virginia	Early Decision / Early Action	ED = Binding; EA = Non-Binding	Nov. 1	Jan. 5
Virginia Tech	Early Action	Non-Binding	Nov. 15	Jan. 15
Wake Forest University	ED I / ED II	Binding	Nov. 15 / Jan. 1	Jan. 1
Winthrop University	Rolling Admission	Non-Binding	Rolling	Rolling
Wofford College	ED I / ED II	Binding	Nov. 1 / Jan. 15	Feb. 1
Yale University	Single-Choice Early Action (SCEA)	Non-Binding (restrictive)	Nov. 1	Jan. 2

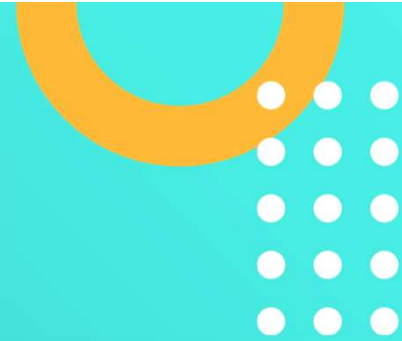
Important: Admission deadlines and application policies may change. Students should verify all dates and requirements directly with each college.



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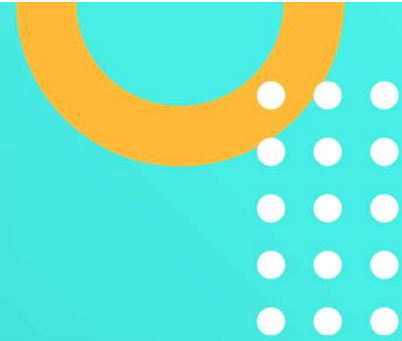
Five Pieces of the Admission Puzzle

- Standardized test scores
- Grades/Transcripts
- College Essay/Personal Statements/Supplementals
- Resume/Activity Sheet
- Letters of Recommendation





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SAT & ACT Test

Smart Testing Strategies

PLAN AHEAD

FEE WAIVER ELIGIBILITY

UNDERSTAND SUPERSCORING

KNOW WHEN TO GO TEST OPTIONAL





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UNDERSTANDING TRANSCRIPT ORDERING

COMMON APP TRANSCRIPTS

PARCHMENT

CCU TRANSCRIPTS

FALL/SPRING REPORTING



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Crafting Your Story

Find Your Authentic Voice



THE SECRET? WRITE LIKE YOU TALK

Your personal statement isn't about being impressive—it's about being genuinely you. Start by brainstorming moments that shaped your perspective, challenges that sparked growth, or passions that light you up. The best essays reveal how you think, not just what you've done.

Dr. Rabon will offer one to one sessions with you for essay support and additional resources to help you with the essay portion of your application.





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RESUME & ACTIVITY LIST

Tell Your Story Behind the Transcript

HIGHLIGHT YOUR STRONGEST ACTIVITIES FIRST

INCLUDE QUALITY OVER QUANTITY

SHOW COMMITMENT OVER TIME

DESCRIBE IMPACT, NOT JUST MEMBERSHIP





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LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Choose Recommenders Who Truly Know You

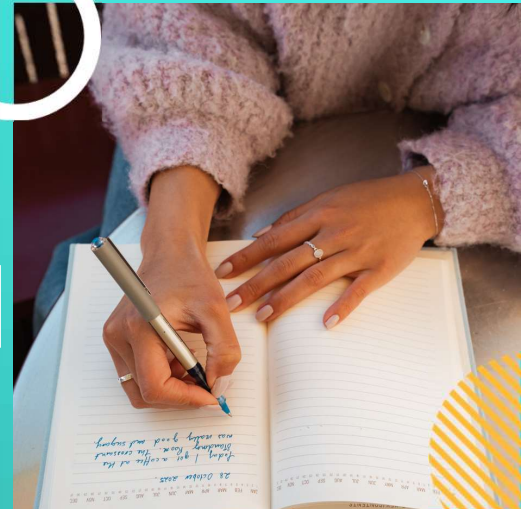
EVERYONE RECEIVES A LETTER FROM MRS. WILLIAMS

CHOOSE 2 TO 3 STRONG RECOMMENDERS

USE [THIS](#) LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FORM

ASK EARLY

ALWAYS FOLLOW UP WITH GRATITUDE





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Your Support Squad

You're Not Doing This Alone

RESOURCES AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

SCHOOLOGY(Advisory Section)

All major senior announcements shared here.

Scholarship information shared here.

ESSAY HELP

Dr. Rabon will send out a link to schedule individual sessions in August.

[BRAINSTORMING TIPS FOR YOUR ESSAYS](#)

[HOW TO HOOK YOUR READER & WRITE BETTER
ESSAYS](#)

COLLEGE/SCHOLARSHIP/PAYING FOR COLLEGE

[FAFSA](#)

[BIGARTURE](#)

[CSS PROFILE HOME](#)

COLLEGE APPLICATION PLATFORMS

[COMMON APP](#)

[QUESTBRIDGE](#)

[SC COMMISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGE APP RESOURCES](#)

[DIRECT ADMISSION--NICHE](#)

[SCHOLARS ACADEMY GUIDANCE
PAGE](#)



College App Playbook

You've Got This!

Start Strong, Stay Organized, Own Your Future

THE JOURNEY STARTS NOW

You've already proven you can handle the challenge. Now it's time to show colleges who you really are. Start early, stay consistent, and trust the process. Your future is waiting—go get it!

