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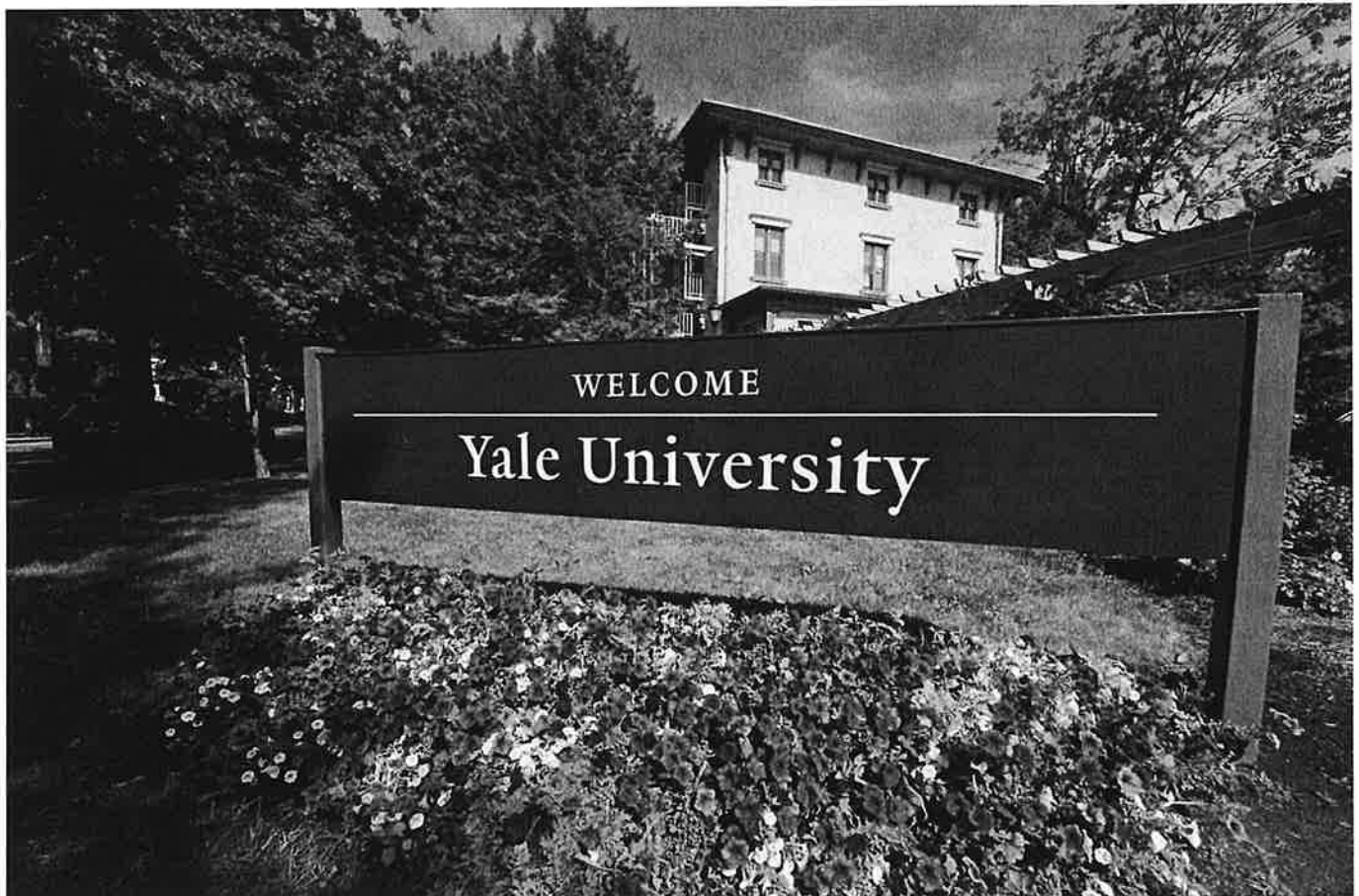
Top Colleges Release Their Admissions Decisions—Here Are The Admissions Rates For The Class Of 2030

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New Haven, Connecticut, USA - July 25, 2016: Welcome to Yale University sign located along Trumbull Street in New Haven, Connecticut. Photograph taken with purple flowers blooming in the foreground

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Yesterday, students across the globe received their admissions results from the Ivy League and select top schools, an annual tradition of coordinated admissions releases known as “Ivy Day.” As in previous cycles, a number of Ivy League schools—including Harvard, Princeton, Cornell, and Penn—chose to withhold their admissions data, continuing to distance themselves from their reputations for hyperselectivity.

In the lead-up to this admissions cycle, the landscape of elite higher education has faced a new wave of changes, resulting from ongoing sparring between the Trump administration and Ivy League schools, as well as immigration-related policies that have threatened international student admissions. The results of this admissions season may offer some indication about the direction of U.S. higher education on the global stage, as well as trends in U.S. student application and preferences.

Here’s what this year’s results reveal about elite college admissions today—and what younger students should know as they prepare for upcoming admissions cycles:

1. Political Strife May be Impacting Desirability of Some Top Schools

The Trump administration’s sustained campaign to cut federal research funding to elite universities, which began in earnest in 2025, has continued to subtly influence how students and families perceive the Ivy League. After years of political clashes and PR crises, Columbia, in particular, saw Early Decision applications fall 6.4% for the Class of 2030, continuing a multi-year downward trend that reflects the university’s ongoing struggles with campus tensions and administrative fallout. While Columbia did manage to attract an applicant pool of 61,031—the largest in its history—resulting in an acceptance rate of 4.23%, the decline in Early Decision applications suggests that the most motivated students are increasingly hedging their bets at other institutions that may be more desirable.

2. Students Are Increasingly Leveraging Early Decision Strategy

Columbia’s ED application decline is particularly conspicuous in light of the broader increase in Early Decision applications. At Northwestern, more than half of the incoming class was admitted in the early decision round in mid-December, from a pool of over 5,600 applicants. At Yale, 779 students were admitted through Early

Action in December, out of the second-largest applicant pool in the university's history (a 10.1% acceptance rate). Brown saw an early decision acceptance rate of 16.5%, compared to an overall rate of 5.35%, constituting a gap of more than eleven percentage points. Students who apply early to their first-choice school continue to have a significantly higher probability of admission, and demonstrating genuine interest through ED pathways is increasingly the most consequential strategic decision a student can make during the application process.

3. Generous Aid Packages Are Attracting Larger Applicant Pools

Amidst rising economic uncertainty, financial concerns are not only driving families' college admissions considerations, but also institutional policies at prestigious schools. For instance, Emory recently announced the Emory Advantage Plus program, under which students whose families earn \$200,000 or less will attend the university tuition-free starting in Fall 2026. Similarly, Notre Dame used its Ivy Day

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financial aid program, under which families earning up to \$150,000 will pay zero tuition and those earning up to \$200,000 will receive aid covering at least half of tuition. In their admissions results announcement, Tufts noted that students in the Class of 2030 with families earning less than \$150,000 will be the first to benefit from the Tufts Tuition Pact, announced last September.

These financial packages are strategic enrollment tools that drive application volume, boost socioeconomic diversity, and benefit the institutional brand at a moment when the value proposition of elite higher education is under intense public scrutiny—and they may be working. Emory saw total applications climb to 43,269, an increase of more than 5,000 applicants over the prior year, and admitted 5,317 students to the Class of 2030. Notre Dame saw an admissions rate of 9%.

4. Application Volume is Surging at Public Flagships

This admissions cycle saw extraordinary growth in application volume, particularly at well-respected public universities. More than 82,000 students applied to UVA for the Class of 2030, a whopping 27% increase over the prior year's already record-breaking number, with the university ultimately extending offers to 4,317 Virginians and 5,970 out-of-state students. The University of Michigan likewise received

108,666 applications in this cycle, marking a 29% increase in applications over the last five years. At Georgia Institute of Technology, early in-state applications rose by 7.3% this year, producing the largest early applicant pool in the school's history, with roughly 8,700 submissions. The university admitted 2,640 students from that group. These highly competitive state schools are becoming increasingly desirable for their extensive research facilities, world-renowned faculty, and slightly eased competitiveness compared to their Ivy League counterparts.

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5. Renewed Emphasis on Academic Metrics

As top schools reinstate their standardized testing policies, institutions are returning to an emphasis on USC, for instance, touted that this year marked their highest average GPA for an incoming class at 3.92, a signal that the bar for academic achievement at even second-tier selective schools continues to rise. While UPenn did not release admissions data, the institution noted that this cycle was the first since reinstating their standardized testing policy, a change that could account for the sharp decrease in applications this cycle.

Admissions Rates for the Class of 2030

Below are admissions statistics for top institutions that have released data by March 26, 2026:

Brown University

Number of Applicants: 47,937

Number of Accepted Students: 1,674

Admissions Rate: 5.35% (Total); 3.94% RD

Columbia University

Number of Applicants: 61,031

Number of Accepted Students: 2,581

Admissions Rate: 4.23%

Cornell University

Number of Applicants: Not Released

Number of Accepted Students: 5,776

Admissions Rate: Not Released

Emory University

Number of Applicants: 43,269

Number of Accepted Students: 5,317 (Emory College + Oxford College)

Admissions Rate: ~12.3%

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Number of Applicants: 28,349

Number of Accepted Students: 1,299

Admissions Rate: 4.6%

Northwestern University

Number of Applicants: 54,000+

Number of Accepted Students: ~2,100 (class size)

Admissions Rate: ~7%

University of Notre Dame

Number of Applicants: 36,102 (REA and RD)

Number of Accepted Students: N/A

Admissions Rate: 9%

Swarthmore College

Number of Applicants: N/A (RD decisions April 1)

Number of Accepted Students: 969 (per your link — final class; RD pending)

Admissions Rate: ~7% (estimated, consistent with Class of 2029)

Tufts University

Number of Applicants: 36,000+

Number of Accepted Students: N/A

Admissions Rate: 10%

University of Virginia

Number of Applicants: 82,118 (Total, all cycles)

Number of Accepted Students: 10,287

Admissions Rate: In-State: ~7.4% (RD); Out-of-State: ~7% (RD); Overall ~12.5%

University of Pennsylvania:

Number of Applicants: Over 61,000

Number of Accepted Students: Not Released

Admissions Rate: Not Released

Princeton University

Number of Applicants: Not Released

Number of Accepted Students: Not Released

Admissions Rate: Not Released

Yale University

Number of Applicants: 54,919

Number of Accepted Students: 2,328

Admissions Rate: ~4.24%

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