Glossary of Commonly Used Admissions Terms

Holistic Review An admissions review process and philosophy that is utilized by colleges and universities across the US. This individualized review looks at all components of a student's application (academic, nonacademic, and contextual) to get to know them as a person and understand how they would both contribute to and benefit from their school's college experience. Some factors colleges and universities may consider in this holistic review include:

- Personal Qualities & Characteristics
- Accomplishments & Involvement
- Fit & Engagement

Early Action (EA) Early application deadline that is non-binding. Students admitted during this round will have until the 1st of May to accept or reject the offer of admission.

Early Decision (ED) An early application round. If admitted, students agree to enroll and withdraw their other college applications. Colleges may offer ED I or II with different deadlines.

Deferred Admission A response to early applications wherein the student is not admitted but retains eligibility in the regular admission pool.

Regular Decision (RD) A round of application where students submit their applications by a specified deadline (typically in January) and are notified of a decision within a clearly stated period. Students have until May 1 to accept or reject the offer of admissions.

Wait List Wait lists give students who were not initially admitted another opportunity to be considered for admission, and they help colleges manage their enrollments.

Demonstrated Interest Various ways in which a student shows their interest in attending a specific institution prior to the official application process.

First-Generation College applicants who are the first in their families to apply and attend a postsecondary institution in the United States or outside of the United States are considered first generation. Students whose parents or guardians have not completed a four-year bachelor's degree are considered first-generation.

College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS Profile) An online application used by colleges and scholarship programs to award non-federal institutional aid.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Required application for anyone filing for federal financial aid, including all federal loans. Eligible students should apply for aid using the FAFSA application if seeking financial assistance.

Need-Blind A review policy colleges and universities employ that does not take a student's financial status into consideration when reviewing an application.

Need-Based Aid Financial aid awarded to a student based on a student's financial need.

Merit-Based Aid Financial aid awarded based on the student's academic, athletic, artistic or other achievements rather than financial need.