

## Understanding College Admissions Lingo

As high school seniors prepare for the holidays and mid-year final exams, some have finished the college application process and some have not. This is acceptable since there are many different approaches to getting into college. Wide variation in deadlines and admission policies exist, and no single approach is right for every student. Students should select the admission program that is the most appropriate for them. Here are admission procedures for families to consider.

### Rolling Admission

Many state universities, including the Kentucky state schools and some private colleges and universities, have rolling admissions and decide on applications as they are received until all openings are filled. Seniors are encouraged to apply early fall while there are several spaces. If admitted, they will receive priority in scholarship and financial aid considerations, as well as housing preferences. This policy works well for seniors who have early on completed all college testing and have solid junior year grade point averages (GPA's). Seniors who need to re-take ACT or SAT tests and need good first semester senior year GPA's to improve admission prospects can still wait until later in the year to apply. However, it is gratifying for the senior who applies in September and finds out within a few weeks that he or she has been admitted to a "dream" school. Also, with rolling admission, the student need not commit a final deposit to the school until May, so one can still be applying to other schools using the rolling admission school as a "safety."

### Regular Admission

Most private colleges and universities have some sort of a regular admission deadline which ranges from January 1 to mid February. All application materials are due by the deadline and schools have an official notification date when all applicants finally learn if they have been admitted or not. Most seniors are encouraged to have materials turned into their high school counselors by early December to insure that deadlines are met.

### Early Decision

Early decision is an admission program offered by a number of private colleges. There is usually an earlier deadline around November 1, and the student is notified of acceptance status in early December. The student may only apply to one early decision school and signs an agreement that, if accepted, he or she will withdraw all other applications. This is a good strategy for a student who has a clear first choice college in mind and for whom the school is somewhat of a stretch, as most schools are slightly more generous with acceptance of early decision candidates. This strategy is recommended only for students whose families can fully afford college costs as the early decision candidate is essentially abandoning options for receiving scholarship offers from other schools. Early decision is therefore not a good avenue for any student who has financial aid needs. In recent years a few schools have eliminated early decision policies (Harvard and Princeton this year) because early decision is viewed by some as an elitist policy discriminating against students needing financial aid.

### Early Action

Early action is a policy similar to early decision where there is an earlier deadline and notification date but no commitment required before May. Students can hear earlier from the school and still apply to as many other schools as they wish.

If your high school senior has not yet begun the college application process, there is still time and hope for creating a good college match. College consultants at Jewish Family and Vocational Service (452-6341) are available to help students and their families with the entire college selection process.

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