

COLLEGE APPLICATIONS

The college application is one of several documents a college will use in making admission decisions. The application itself contains demographic information about the student and parents, schools and colleges attended, grades, tests scores, activities and awards. Most applications also include one or more essay questions. Applications should be started early in the fall of the senior year to allow enough time for thoughtful completion and proofreading. Most colleges charge an application fee of approximately \$50 per application. Some colleges waive the application fee if the student applies online or in cases of financial hardship.

Today, most colleges prefer students to submit applications online. Some colleges make paper applications available but online applications are preferred because they are easier to read and can be automatically checked for missing information.

ADMISSION TYPES

There are several types of admission applications and variations on each type. **Students are responsible for understanding the type of admission offered by the colleges to which they apply and for meeting all deadlines.**

- **Early Decision:** Students apply in the late fall, generally November or December, and are bound to attend the college if admitted. Admission decisions are typically made by February. Students apply to only one college as an early decision candidate and commit to withdrawing all other applications if accepted. This admission type makes the most sense for students who have a clear and overwhelming preference for a particular college and do not need significant financial aid.
- **Early Action:** Students apply in the late fall, generally November or December and typically receive decisions by February. The commitment is not blinding which means that students may apply to other colleges and are not obligated to attend if admitted as an Early Action candidate.
- **Single Choice Early Action:** This type of admission is similar to Early Action except that a student agrees to apply to only one college as an Early Action candidate.
- **Rolling:** Some colleges make admission decisions as soon as all the components of the application are received. Some California State Universities process applications on a rolling basis.
- **Regular:** Application deadlines typically fall between January and March with most admission decisions mailed by April 1.
- **Preliminary Applications:** Some colleges ask prospective students to complete a preliminary application, containing basic demographic information, prior to the actual application deadline. Be careful to meet such deadlines.

APPLICATION TYPES

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA (UC)

All nine UC campuses share a common application that can be found at www.univeristyofcalifornia.edu/admissions. At the end of the application, the student is asked to indicate which campuses he/she is applying to and additional questions specific to those campuses are then displayed. There is an application fee (\$60 in 2006-07) for each campus. UC applications do not require teacher or counselor recommendations but they do require test scores and essays. Applications are available online in October, can be submitted starting in November and are due by November 30.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITIES (CSU)

Students can apply to any of the twenty-three CSU campuses with the application found at www.csumentor.edu. A separate application fee applies for each campus (\$55 in 2005-06). Students must have their test scores sent to the CSU system (SAT code 3594) by the testing agency. Teacher and counselor recommendations and essays are not required. Applications are made available online in October and the priority deadline is November 30. While some campuses continue to accept applications after November 30, it is strongly recommended that students apply prior to November 30.

THE COMMON APPLICATION

Approximately three hundred colleges across the nation use the common application found at www.commonapp.org. These colleges agree to use the Common Application but often also require a supplemental application. Detailed information is available on the Common Application website. The Common Application includes both short and longer essay questions. Most colleges that use the Common Application also require teacher and counselor recommendations and require the student to ask the testing agency to send test scores to the college. There is a separate application fee for each college. The Common Application is revised every year and is generally available by mid July.

INSTITUTIONAL APPLICATIONS

Most colleges and universities have developed their own applications and make online and paper versions available in September. There is great variety from college to college in terms of what questions are asked and what additional documents, recommendations and essays might be required. Students should take care to make certain they meet all requirements.