**Types of Application Deadlines**

**Early Decision (ED):**  
Binding- a student who is accepted as an ED applicant must attend the college and withdraw all other applications. Our policy for ED applications is to send the student’s final transcript to one college only: anything else would be unethical.

**Early Action (EA):**  
Non-binding- students receive an early response to their application but do not have to commit to the college until the Nation Decision Day on May 1.

**Single-Choice Early Action/Restrictive Early Action (REA):**  
Some colleges (Stanford, Harvard) offer this nonbinding option, under which applicants may not apply ED or EA to any other colleges.

**Regular Decision:**  
Non-binding- Students typically apply early January during the normal admission process, and receive an admissions decision no later than April 1 of their senior year.

**Rolling:**  
Student can apply within a large application deadline window. Colleges evaluate applications as they are received, and typically offer an admissions decision within three weeks.

**Benefits of Applying Early:**

* Reduce stress by cutting time spend waiting for a decision
* Save time and expense of submitting multiple applications
* Gain more time, once accepted, to look for housing and otherwise prepare for college
* Reassess options and apply elsewhere if not accepted

**Drawbacks of Applying Early:**

* Pressure to decide: Committing to one college puts pressure on students to make serious decisions before they’ve explored all their options.
* Reduced financial aid opportunities: Students who apply under ED plans receive offers of admission and financial aid simultaneously and so will not be able to compare financial aid offers from other colleges. For students who absolutely need financial aid, applying early may be a risky option.
* Time crunch for other applications: Most colleges do not notify ED and EA applicants of admission until December 15. Because of the usual deadlines for applications, this means that if a student is rejected by the ED college, there are only two weeks left to send in other applications. Prepare other applications as you wait to receive admission decisions from your first-choice college.

**Does applying early increase the change of acceptance?**

Many students believe applying early (EA) means competing with fewer applicants and increasing their chances for acceptance. This is not always true. Colleges vary in the proportion of the class admitted early and in the percentage of early applicants they admit.

High admission rates for ED applicants may correlate to stronger profiles among candidates choosing ED. Students should ask the admission office whether their institution’s admission standards differ between ED and regular applicants, and then assess whether applying early makes sense given their own profile.