

## Question 9: How And When Do I Apply?

Early Decision is a variation on the college application process. Applications are completed in November in an attempt to secure a place in the college of your choice as soon as possible in the fall, rather than having to wait for application results the following spring. You can apply to only one college for Early Decision. If you are offered a spot you must accept it immediately. Early Decision application acceptances are binding.



Early Action is like Early Decision but not binding. Restrictive Early Action (or Single Choice Early Action) allows candidates to apply to only one Early Action institution and to no Early Decision institutions. Non-Restrictive Early Action has none of these limitations. Regardless, the applicant is still permitted to reject any offer of admission in both types of Early Action. You may or may not wait until spring to give your answer to an Early Action offer.

**Viv:** *What admissions options are you choosing?*



**Rakeem:** *I am choosing Early Decision. I know what my first choice is for a college. I've dreamed of going there forever. My marks and test scores are excellent. They had better be, because I have given up so much for the time I have spent preparing for the day I would get in. I have, thankfully, amazing letters of recommendation. Being captain of a winning team doesn't hurt either. I am not applying because the college is one of the most prestigious Ivy League schools in the world but because I will be able to do cutting edge research and I will make great networking connections. My parents started an educational fund for me the week I was born so I don't have to worry about money. Since I have nothing to lose, then, I am going to apply for Early Decision. I'm sure that this decision will let the admissions panel know how interested I am in their school. If they accept me you can bet that I will have no doubts about committing then and there! If I am not accepted there will still be the opportunity for me to accept one of the other schools which I applied to by Regular Admission. I can't really lose. What option are you choosing Ahmad?*



**Ahmad:** *I'm choosing Early Action. I'm not as lucky as you. I know that we both have pretty amazing portfolios, letters, marks and test scores because we have studied together and used our competitiveness as means to spur us on and bring out the best in both of us. My problem is money. Although I would love to go to the same college you have chosen I cannot afford not to compare the financial aid packages from a number of schools. So I'm applying to the same schools that you are but I don't have my heart set on just one. The best for me will definitely depend on who gives me the best package.*

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*I've chosen Early Action, however, to let my top choices know that I am proactive, organized, ready and keenly interested in them. What about you Viv?*

**Viv:** *Both of you are so amazing. I am choosing Regular Admission because I need more time to show myself in the best possible light. I have just recently started to work really hard and my marks are definitely improving a lot. I know that it would be ridiculous to apply for Early Decision, especially since only a quarter to a third of students are picked that way. I need time to get my act together academically as well as financially. I'm just happy that college has become a real option for me. I will likely wait until May 1 to respond, however.*



**Bao Yu:** *I'm also applying for Regular Admission. With so many amazing colleges out there I am still having a hard time deciding which is best for me. Since I would like to visit a few more campuses I won't be ready for early admission but I am narrowing down my choices. Since I have a good GPA and pretty good SAT scores I am hoping that with Rolling Admission I might have enough acceptances by the Spring Break to make a good decision and relax for the next few months, especially since at least a couple of my choices let you send a pre-application. Then it doesn't take them as long to process it. I don't know a lot about it but I know that I will ask each college if they have that option.*



### How To Apply

The *Common Application* form is available both online and in paper/pencil format. Both are accepted but the online version is preferred. Since not all colleges use the *Common Application*, for some of your choices you may be using that college's specific form. Many colleges that use the *Common Application* use it as their sole form but some require an additional supplementary form which addresses issues specific to that college.

Anders has some questions for his guidance counselor.

**Anders:** *What is the Common Application?*

**Anders's Guidance Counselor:** The *Common Application* is a college admission application which students may use and submit to any of 346 colleges which are participating members.

**Anders:** *Is it a good idea to use it?*

**Anders's Guidance Counselor:** Definitely. You can complete it online or in print and then send copies to as many participating colleges as you like. It is really time saving, especially when you consider the fact that

