



The STEM Academy at Showalter

"Unlocking Young Minds for the Future"

APPLICATION OPTIONS AND DEADLINES

Read and think carefully about Early Decision, Early Action, Regular Decision, Rolling Admission and Priority Deadlines. Make sure you understand the distinction between these different type of application plans.

Regular Decision(RD)

- This is the type of deadline that you're likely most familiar with; most schools you apply to will have Regular Decision as an option. Students applying RD will generally turn in their applications between mid-December and mid-January, and hear back regarding their admissions status by March or April.
- The most confusing part about Regular Decision is that the "Regular" deadline isn't standard across all colleges. Although the majority of schools set January 1st as their RD deadline, many schools will have you turn in your application on January 15th, February 1st, or even at an earlier or later date. As with all deadlines, it's very important to keep track of each school's RD policy and deadlines.
- **Possible Outcomes:** Accepted, Denied, Waitlisted*
- *Universities create waitlists in case the number of students who confirm their spots in the incoming class is smaller than expected. Waitlisted candidates may have to confirm their place on the waitlist. You may not find out whether or not you've gotten off of a school's waitlist until as late as August.

Rolling Admissions

- Schools with rolling application deadlines offer a much wider window for students to apply; this window can be as large as July-April, though individual application periods at different schools vary (do your research on the schools on your list!).
- Like the name implies, they accept applications on a *rolling basis*, usually extending over several months until a final deadline, typically in the spring.
- Rolling admissions have the advantage of a quick turnaround; you'll typically hear back from rolling schools regarding your application in 4-8 weeks.
- These admissions *are not binding*; you won't have to decide whether you want to attend the school until the final deadline.
- **Applying early during the Rolling Admissions window may also give you a competitive edge, as the admissions office will have fewer applicants to compare you to and more spaces available. Apply to your rolling admissions schools as early as possible!**
- **Possible Outcomes:** Accepted, Denied, Waitlisted

Priority Deadlines

- According to schools (mostly public universities) offering priority deadlines applying by a Priority Deadline will increase your chances of being accepted, receiving financial aid, and/or winning scholarship money. Some schools reserve certain scholarships for students who apply by the Priority Deadline.
- Universities may also require students applying to special programs—e.g., an honors college—to apply by the priority deadline.
- **Possible Outcomes:** Accepted, Denied, Deferral

Early Decision(ED)

- If you have your heart set on a specific school which you *know* you'll attend if accepted and you can afford it, applying Early Decision might be the path for you. ED programs generally require you to submit your application by a deadline in October or November and typically provide you an admission decision in December or January, much earlier than Regular Decision.
- One of the major benefits of applying ED is having a higher chance of acceptance. Many schools, but not all, take a higher percentage of students through Early Decision than through Regular Decision. Showing your commitment for one special school is a strong consideration for admissions offices.
- Though ED programs are great for students who are extremely confident about attending their top choice school, there are certain caveats to applying ED that can't be overemphasized.
 - ❖ You can only apply ED to one school. Submitting an ED application to more than one school will get you in deep trouble, typically leading to your *automatic withdrawal from both schools*; don't play that game.
 - ❖ Early Decision is binding. If accepted, you must attend. It is a serious commitment. In submitting an ED application, you enter into a binding contract with the school pledging that you *will attend*. Acceptance means that you have to withdraw applications to all other schools.
 - ❖ If you're accepted ED, you won't be able to compare your financial aid packages from multiple schools to decide what works best within your budget.
 - ❖ **We discourage you from applying Early Decision to a college unless the school is one you know well; it is your strong favorite and has been for some time; you are willing to forego having a choice of college options next April; and you know that you can afford to attend.**
- **Possible Outcomes:** Accepted, Denied, Deferred to Regular Decision*
- *Note that, if your application is *Deferred*, this means that the Admissions Committee will reconsider your application alongside Regular Decision applicants, and you'll hear back regarding your final admissions decision in March-April. Being deferred also means that you're released from the binding contract ED demands. If accepted, you are no

longer *bound* to attend the school, nor are you prohibited from applying to other schools.

Early Action(EA)

- Like Early Decision, Early Action programs generally require you to submit your application by a deadline in October or November and typically provide you an admission decision in December or January. The major benefit of applying EA is that you get to hear back regarding your application much earlier than Regular Decision applicants.
- Unlike Early Decision, acceptance as an Early Action applicant is *not binding*. That means that you can prepare and submit applications to other schools before hearing back from your EA school.
- You should take note that some EA programs restrict you to only applying EA to one school; these programs are known as Restrictive Early Action. Some EA programs also prohibit applying ED to other schools. Schools with restrictions on where else you can apply are known as Single Choice Early Action, or Restrictive Early Action, programs. Read your school's application instructions carefully to find out what is and isn't permitted.
- **Possible Outcomes:** Accepted, Denied, Deferred to Regular Decision