FINANCIAL EXPERTS NETWORK

Sponsored by: PRIVATE COLLEGE 529 PLAN by CollegeWell

The Truth About Early Admission: Helping Families Navigate Admission & Affordability

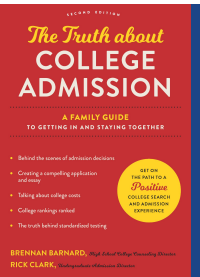
Brennan Barnard

Director of College Counseling, *Forest School*
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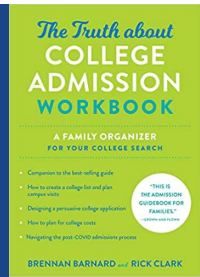
Rick Clark

Vice Provost,
Enrollment Management- Georgia Tech
admission.gatech.edu/blog
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The Truth About College Admission: A Family Guide to Getting In and Staying Together



October 13, 2026




GRATITUDE


Restrictive
Early Action
Early Decision
Rolling Admission
Early
Action

https://www.nacacnet.org/understanding-the-different-types-of-college-admission-processes/

DEFINITIONS OF ADMISSION OPTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Which College Admission Process Best Suits You?

NON-RESTRICTIVE APPLICATION PLANS

REGULAR DECISION

Students submit an application by a specified date and receive a decision in a clearly stated period of time.

COMMITMENT NON-BINDING

ROLLING ADMISSION

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and render admission decisions throughout the admission cycle.

COMMITMENT NON-BINDING

EARLY ACTION (EA)

Students apply early and receive a decision well in advance of the institution's regular response date.

COMMITMENT NON-BINDING

STUDENTS ARE NOT RESTRICTED FROM APPLYING TO OTHER INSTITUTIONS AND HAVE UNTIL MAY 1 TO CONSIDER THEIR OPTIONS AND CONFIRM ENROLLMENT.

RESTRICTIVE APPLICATION PLANS

EARLY DECISION (ED)

Students make a commitment to a first-choice institution where, if admitted they definitely will enroll. The application deadline and decision deadline occur early.

COMMITMENT BINDING

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA)

Students apply to an institution of preference and receive a decision early. They may be restricted from applying ED or EA or REA to other institutions. If offered enrollment, they have until May 1 to confirm.

COMMITMENT NON-BINDING

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR DETERMINING AND FOLLOWING RESTRICTIONS.

FOR A COPY OF THIS FLYER, PLEASE VISIT WWW.NACACNET.ORG

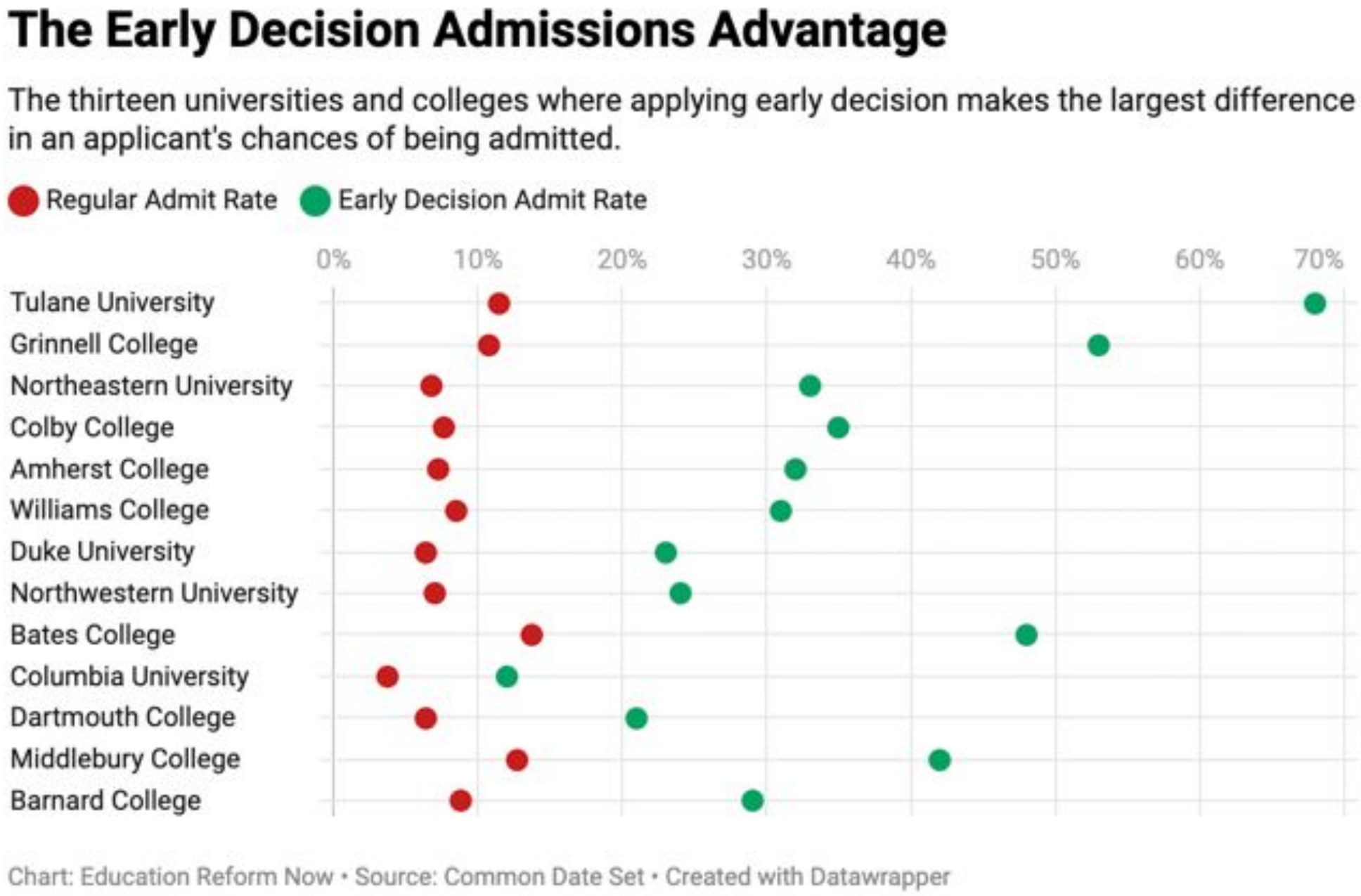
NACAC

But wait...there's more!

- ED2
- ED0
- Rolling ED
- EA2
- Priority Deadlines
- Athletic Recruiting Deadlines
- Portfolio Deadlines
- Scholarship Deadlines
- Instate Deadlines
- Free Application Periods: ie: Colorado Free Application Days

Benefits of Early Decision	Drawbacks of Early Decision
Increased Admission Odds — Higher acceptance rates for ED applicants at many selective colleges.	**Binding Commitment** — If admitted, the student must attend and withdraw all other applications.
Demonstrates Interest — Shows the college that the applicant is highly committed, which can be a positive factor.	**Limited Financial Comparison** — You only see one financial aid offer, making it hard to compare packages.
Earlier Notification — Find out admissions results sooner, reducing uncertainty.	**Less Merit Aid Potential** — Some colleges offer less or no merit aid to ED applicants.
Potential for Merit Aid — Some students do receive merit scholarships through ED (though not guaranteed).	**Accelerated Timeline** — Application materials and decisions are due earlier in senior year.
Streamlined Process — If admitted, the college search and application process ends early.	**Less Flexibility** — No opportunity to change your mind or consider other schools after acceptance.

Yield/ Admit Rate Implications



- Often 2x greater admit rate vs. other rounds

- 10 publics now offering ED
  - U. Michigan, U. Florida, FSU, UVA,Christopher Newport, William & Mary, UConn, U. Vermont, College of Charleston, Charleston Southern

Early Decision acceptance rates at 51 colleges

At 48 of the 51 colleges here, Early Decision applicants were admitted at a higher rate than everyone else: a median 34.6% versus about 16.7%. Part of that gap is who applies early (recruited athletes and legacy applicants often use ED), so the round itself explains only some of it. ED is binding, so it fits only a clear first choice.

Get your real chances
CollegeCalcAI computes a personalized acceptance estimate from your GPA, scores, and activities. Free, no account to start.
Open the calculator

Early Decision vs everyone else, by college

Ranked by the ED advantage: the Early Decision admit rate divided by everyone else's. From each college's own Common Data Set; click a college for its full early-round numbers.

COLLEGE	ED ADMIT RATE	EVERYONE ELSE	ED ADVANTAGE	ADMITS VIA ED	CDS
Northeastern University	43% 1,492 of 3,466	~3.8%	11.3x	29.1%	2024–25
Dartmouth College	21.6% 768 of 3,552	~3.8%	5.7x	45.2%	2025–26
College of the Holy Cross	67.1% 511 of 761	~16.7%	4x	27.9%	2023–24
Middlebury College	39% 460 of 1,179	~9.9%	3.9x	30.4%	2024–25
Tufts University	32% 1,071 of 3,344	~8.5%	3.8x	29.6%	2025–26
Fairfield University	82.1% 566 of 689	~23.1%	3.6x	10.6%	2024–25
Columbia University	14% 819 of 5,868	~4%	3.5x	27.8%	2025–26
Northwestern University	20.4% 1,212 of 5,939	~5.8%	3.5x	30.8%	2025–26
Amherst College	22.2% 216 of 971	~6.8%	3.3x	17.7%	2025–26
Claremont McKenna College	22.1% 216 of 978	~7.4%	3x	33%	2024–25
Davidson College	29.1% 358 of 1,232	~10%	2.9x	31.8%	2025–26
Haverford College	32.6% 229 of 702	~11.1%	2.9x	25.6%	2025–26
Washington University in St. Louis	27% 1,333 of 4,934	~9.3%	2.9x	33.6%	2025–26
Boston University	31.3% 2,165 of 6,907	~11%	2.8x	22%	2025–26
Cornell University	18.8% 1,889 of 10,057	~6.7%	2.8x	31.1%	2025–26
Swarthmore College	17.8% 228 of 1,281	~6.4%	2.8x	23.3%	2025–26

Early Decision and Regular Decision Acceptance Rates Class of 2028

Big J Educational Consulting

PLEASE SEE KEY AND CAVEATS/EXPLANATIONS/DISCLAIMERS AT BOTTOM OF CHART

Compare smaller groups of institutions by selecting them from the 'Institution' box below:

Institution

Institution	Additional Application Plans	Early Decision (ED) Acceptance Rate (1)	Regular Decision (RD) Acceptance Rate (2)	ED to RD Acceptance Ratio	ED Admits as Percent of Freshman Class
Agnes Scott College	EA, EA II	53%	62%	0.9	3.8%
Albion College	EA		81%		0.0%
Allegheny College	EA	31%	55%	0.6	12.3%
American University	ED II, EA	80%	61%	1.3	34.8%
Amherst College		29%	8%	3.7	45.0%
Assumption University	EA				
Augustana College	EA	90%	63%	1.4	8.0%
Babson College	ED II, EA	28%	16%	1.8	48.8%
Bard College	ED II, EA				
Barnard College		26%	6%	4.3	61.1%
Bates College	ED II	27%	12%	2.3	62.7%

Early Decision with Common App

If a student is applying online and applying Early Decision to an institution, it is necessary that he/she complete the Early Decision Agreement. In order to complete and submit this form the student must first select the Early Decision term option for one institution. Once this decision is selected, the ED Agreement will be available as a follow-up question within the institution's questions.

1. The student must read and sign the agreement from within his/her Common App account. He/she must then notify the counselor that he/she is applying ED.

2. The counselor must read and sign the agreement from within his/her recommendation account (if the counselor has agreed to complete recommendations online).

3. The parent/legal guardian must also read and sign the agreement. The parent/legal guardian must go to the URL (provided in the invitation), enter their email address (enter it exactly as it appears on the notification email; it is case sensitive), read and sign the ED Agreement, then submit it.

4. Students must select a parent/legal guardian at the bottom of the page in the Recommenders and FERPA section before the online agreement is sent to this person. The student should enter the 'Parent/Legal Guardian' details and save the page.

Lastly, the counselor will log in to his/her account to read, sign, and submit the ED Agreement as well (if the counselor has agreed to complete the recommendations online). If the counselor is not completing the recommendation online, the student must print the ED Agreement from within the Recommenders and FERPA section, obtain all required signatures and give it to the counselor to send directly to the institution. Please note the counselor is responsible for the submission of the ED Agreement once the student has completed it.

After the student has selected the Parent/Legal Guardian within the drop-down, he/she will receive an email with the URL to the ED Agreement (only if the email address was provided). If the parent/legal guardian does not have an email address, his/her signature is not required online. However, the counselor must still sign his/her portion to complete the online ED Agreement process.

Application(s) for Advisors



Applicant #1

Student Profile

- GPA: 3.9 unweighted
- SAT: 1480
- Strong extracurricular involvement
- Clear first choice, i.e. would attend Emory University if admitted

Financial Situation

- Family can afford estimated cost
- Little chance of qualifying for need-based aid
- Merit scholarships are not a major consideration
- Family income: $290,000

Pros/Cons of ED?

Applicant #2

Student Profile

- GPA: 4.0
- ACT: 34
- National Merit Finalist
- Leadership and research experience

All Five Top Schools offer ED/EA

Financial Situation

- Family income: $160,000
- Can contribute $9,000 annually to college cost
- Student needs significant merit aid to make attendance affordable

Pros/Cons of ED?

Applicant #3

Student Profile

- GPA: 3.95
- SAT: 1400
- Class rank: Top 5%
- First-generation college student
-

Financial Situation

- Family income: $48,000
- Limited college savings
- College affordability is the primary concern

Additional Information

The institution's Net Price Calculator estimates:

- Tuition, room, board: $88,000
- Institutional aid: $74,000
- Family contribution: $4,500
- Loans/work-study: remainder

	A	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	
1	College	Decision Plans -- EA/ED/RD/Rolling	Deadline(s)	Date Application Submitted	Expected Date of Decision	Application Types Accepted	Requires CSS Profile?	Link to Common Data Set (Google the name of the college and 'common data set')	Test-Optional?	Requires Official Testing?	Requires Transcri Record S
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Resources

Different Types of Application Plans

Early Decision & Regular Decision Admit Chart

College Application Planner

Early Admission Rates & Plan Changes

Resources & Offerings

Presentations & Employee Benefit Packages

The Truth about COLLEGE ADMISSION

HOLISTIC ADMISSIONS

www.truthaboutcollegeadmission.com
holisticadmission@gmail.com

Personal Consulting Packages

EDUCATIONAL FUTURES

www.educationalfutures.com
bbedufutures@gmail.com

Questions & Discussion

