

US College Application Deadlines

Know the most important college application deadlines.

There are lots of important questions every college-bound student should ask during the application process, from “Is this school right for me?” to “Will this [essay with my application](#) make the admissions committee want to accept me?”

But perhaps the most important question, and one which carries no ambiguous answer, is “When is the college application deadline?”

At the very least, a late application can hurt your chances of being admitted. In a worst-case scenario, the school won't even look at your application.

Here's a rough guide to knowing when you should have your college applications in the mail – or e-mail.

Early College Application Deadlines

Every university and college has its own application deadlines, but they fall around the same time. [Early applicants](#) (early action, early decision or single choice early action) generally need to get their applications in by either November 1 or November 15.

Some colleges have also added a second deadline for early decision applicants, which is usually January 1. That's not very early, but early decision applications are binding, meaning you're committed to attending your early decision school if you're accepted. Because colleges like accepting students whom they know will attend, an extended early decision process works for both the school and the applicants.

Regular College Application Deadlines

The deadline for regular decision applications is normally between January 1 and February 1, depending on the college. Get the bulk of your essays done and confirm who will write your recommendations in November, so you won't have a lot of last-minute work to do during the holiday season.

The regular college application deadlines are late enough so that your first semester grades will be looked at. No slacking off – this is a very important semester!

Transfer and Rolling Admission College Application Deadlines

Transfer applicants generally have a deadline of around May 1 to submit applications for the following fall semester. Schools with [rolling admissions policies](#) – looking at applications as they come in, until all spaces in the class have been filled – also have deadlines as late as May 1.

Some may continue to accept applications even later, depending on how many open slots remain. However, virtually all rolling admissions schools recommend that you get your application in by March 1 or earlier to have the best chance at being accepted.

Supplemental Material Deadlines for US College Applications

Some schools ask that [supplemental material](#) be submitted with your application. Sometimes you can send it a couple of weeks after the application proper. And a few even want supplemental material sent before the actual application. It's best to check with each school to see what the requirements are.

Applying to College Online vs. Snail Mail

Most schools recommend applying using an online application form, and many will even waive the accompanying fees, which are generally around \$30-50 US. You'll also know for sure that your application was received by the deadline. With the post office, there's a slight chance that your application will be lost or damaged.

If you want or need to mail an application, or the school requires it, it's strongly advised that you get delivery confirmation for your applications and a receipt to prove you mailed it on time, in case something goes wrong.

The college application deadlines generally mean that you must have your application postmarked by that day – it doesn't necessarily have to be received by then. Check with your school to confirm this. Remember: It's always better to not wait until the last minute regardless!

How to Find Out the Application Deadlines for US Colleges

Finding out colleges' application deadlines can be trickier than it ought to be.

Most applications will indicate the deadline somewhere on the form. Each school's website should have their application deadlines listed, but the relevant dates can be difficult if not impossible to find. You can always call a school's admissions department during business hours to find out for sure.

Punctuality may not win you points with admissions committees, but not having everything in on time may wind up costing you. Being prepared and having your application materials ready before the last minute is the best way of saving a lot of stress come deadline day.

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