

Deciding About Early Decision and Early Action

Early Decision Self-Evaluation Questionnaire*

Answer the following questions to decide whether or not to apply early to a particular school. If you answer yes to every question, consider applying ED. If you answer one or more questions with a no, consider applying EA or regular decision.

Question	Yes	No
Have I completely researched this college and other colleges that interest me?		
Have I visited this college while classes are in session and met with someone at the admissions office?		
Have I explored my academic, extracurricular, and social options at this college?		
Have I talked with a financial aid officer to get an estimate of college costs and to find out how early decision could affect my aid package?		
Have I discussed this decision with my family and guidance counselor?		
Is this a true first choice, or do other colleges still interest me?		

*Excerpted from NACAC's Steps to College online newsletter

Pros and Cons of Applying to College Early

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bypass regular spring notification deadline • Avoid cost of submitting multiple applications • Reduce time spent waiting for a decision • Have to deal with less stress if accepted • May increase chances of getting into top schools and greatly increase chances of getting into less selective schools • May get financial aid bonus for applying early 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must make serious decision before exploring all options • Can only apply to one school • May not have time or opportunity to compare financial aid packages • May have no or fewer aid options and few scholarship options • Sometimes compete with a smaller but much stronger pool of candidates than during the regular application period • If rejected, may feel disappointed and discouraged

Early Decision Do's and Don'ts

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withdraw all applications upon being accepted• Request a release from your contract only if the college is unable to work out appropriate financial aid• Take your Early Decision seriously• Discuss the cost of the college before applying• Attend the college that accepts you	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apply to ED programs at more than one college• Have your counselor send transcripts to more than one ED school or to any other schools once admitted• Try to get out of an ED acceptance because you've changed your mind• Have someone else write or heavily edit your application essays• Submit deposits to more than one college• State an intended major you don't plan on pursuing because you think it might help you get admitted• Inaccurately describe your activities and accomplishments• State to more than one college that it is your first choice