

Essential College Terminology

Alternative admission: The alternative assessment method, used by certain colleges and universities, personalizes the college admission process and offers students a chance to be evaluated individually and more holistically. There is less emphasis placed on standardized test scores and more on the interview, portfolio, recommendations, and essay.

Coalition Application: The Coalition Application is currently used by around 90 partner colleges and universities who must meet specific affordability criteria. Seeking to offer a broader picture of applicants, the Coalition App allows students to showcase classwork, personal writing, additional letters of support, and other supplemental materials.

Common Application: Informally known as the Common App, this college admission application is used by 693 member colleges and universities. We encourage students to create a Common App account as soon as possible.

Early Action(EA): Early action admissions programs do not ask applicants to commit to attending if they are accepted, giving students the benefits of early notification without the obligations of early decision. Even if accepted through early action, students are free to apply to other schools and to compare financial aid offers.

Early Decision(ED): Early decision applicants are expected to submit an early decision application to only one school because acceptance through early decision is binding, meaning that the student promises that they will attend the school if their application is accepted. Students can submit applications to additional schools under normal application procedures, but agree to withdraw those applications if accepted to their ED school. Early decision is not an obligation to be taken lightly, as usually students can seek release from an early decision obligation only on the grounds of financial hardship if the financial aid package they are offered is genuinely inadequate.

POSSE: The Posse Foundation identifies high school students with extraordinary academic and leadership potential to become Posse Scholars. Every year, Posse works closely with its network of high schools and community-based organizations to recruit Posse Scholars through a nomination process. Each Posse Scholar wins a four-year, full-tuition scholarship to attend one of Posse's partner colleges and universities. For additional eligibility information (including a list of POSSE locations), visit www.possefoundation.org.

Questbridge: A national college match program, Questbridge partners with 48+ highly competitive colleges and universities around the country. If accepted, students are given early admission to one of their preferred schools, and receive a full scholarship that covers all four years. Student who have demonstrated strong academic achievement in high school (top 5%-10% of class), scored a 1270 or better on the SAT (or 26 or better on the ACT) while experiencing financial hardships at home are encouraged to apply. For additional information please visit www.questbridge.org.

Retention Rate: Freshman retention rate is the percentage of students that return to college for their sophomore year. A lower retention rate could indicate issues such as a poor match between student and college or that the environment is not supportive of student success. Higher retention rates are a sign that something is being done right - students are satisfied, both academically and socially, and want to continue their studies in that environment.

Rolling Admissions: Under a rolling admission policy, there is no deadline for filing a college application. This concept is used most often by state universities. After you apply, you'll receive a response within three to four weeks. If accepted, you are not required to confirm your enrollment until May 1 (in most cases). If you are an out-of-state resident applying to a state university other than your own, you should apply as early as possible.