



THE COLLEGE CONNECTION NEWSLETTER

FOR HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS AND SENIORS

December 2021

Volume 29 Issue 4

UC SLAMS THE DOOR ON STANDARDIZED ADMISSIONS TESTS, NIXING ANY SAT ALTERNATIVE

(msn.com)

The University of California has slammed the door shut on using any standardized test for admissions decisions. Faculty could find no alternative exam that would avoid the biased results that led leaders to scrap the SAT last year.

UC Provost Michael Brown declared the end of testing for admissions decisions at a Board of Regents meeting, putting a conclusive end to more than three years of research and debate in the nation's premier public university system on whether standardized testing does more harm than good when assessing applicants for admission.

Testing supporters argue that standardized assessments provide a uniform measure to predict the college performance of students from varied schools and backgrounds.

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UNDERSTANDING THE FACTS ABOUT DEFERRALS

(ivywise.com)

For students expecting early decisions this December, it's easy to imagine how they'll react to their decision – whether it's an acceptance or a rejection. But there's another possible outcome on the table that many students forget to prepare for – a deferral.

What Is a Deferral?

Simply put, a deferral is a second chance at admission. Rather than rejecting good-fit students with strong profiles, applications are instead deferred to the regular round where they'll be reviewed again within the context of the regular applicant pool, as if they hadn't been reviewed previously. This allows colleges the opportunity to make decisions on strong applicants with the whole view of the applicant pool.

For many students, this can be an advantage, as the regular decision pool is typically not as strong as the early pool.

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STRATEGIES TO BOOST YOUR COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE ODDS

(yahoo.com)

The best way to get "You're Accepted" letters (or emails) is to present yourself as an ideal candidate for each college to which you apply.

If you're a legacy, let them know. Many colleges strongly favor applicants whose parents are alumni — especially if they've been donating over the years. If you're the first in your family to seek a college education, let them know. Most colleges favor students whose parents are not college educated.

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SCHOLARSHIPS

APIA SCHOLARSHIP

Provides scholarships to underserved APIA students with a special focus on those who live at or below the poverty level, or are otherwise of low socioeconomic status and are the first in their families to attend college. Deadline Jan. 26, 2022



RON BROWN SCHOLAR PROGRAM

Offers four-year renewable awards for \$10,000 per year to African American high school seniors who plan to attend college full-time. Scholarship is based on financial need, academic achievement, essay, extracurricular activities, leadership experience, community service and recommendations. Early Deadline: January 9, 2022



CIRKLED IN SCHOLARSHIP

The Cirkled In “No Sweat” Scholarship is a \$2500 CASH scholarship you can use for any educational purpose, from books to summer camp. In just two steps, you’re in! Apply by signing-up for a Cirkled In account and then complete your portfolio. Deadline: December 31st, 2021



TOP TEN LIST SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship gives you the chance to show what's truly special and different about you for a chance to win a \$1,500 scholarship. Deadline: December 31, 2021



SENIOR CHECKLIST

-  Ask for teacher recommendations
-  Register for the Common Application
-  Check out the newer Coalition Application
-  Keep a close eye on deadlines
-  Check portals for Early Decision and Early Action offers

CALIFORNIA STATE SUMMER SCHOOL FOR THE ARTS

A four week summer program for talented and motivated high school students in California and beyond. Application Opens in December



HORATIO ALGER ASSOCIATION

Manages 70 of the largest need based scholarship opportunities in the country for high school juniors who have faced or overcome obstacles. Scholarships by state and by career.



Fun Fact:

In the United States alone, there are over 5,000 institutions for higher education

HOW TO CHECK YOUR FAFSA STATUS

(forbes.com)

Your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is your biggest ticket to college financial aid. After you submit it, keep tabs by checking the status of your application. Here's how.

Where to Check Your FAFSA Status

If you completed your FAFSA online or through the myStudentAid mobile app, you can check your status in either of those places. If you completed a paper application, allow seven to 10 days from the date you mailed it before checking the status online.

Start by logging in to your FAFSA account: Go to FAFSA.gov or the myStudentAid mobile app and enter your FSA ID username and password. This login information is your ticket to all FAFSA-related tasks, so keep it close by or in a safe spot so you never lose the details.

What Each FAFSA Status Means

Once you go to the "My FAFSA" page, you can check your form's status. There are a few stages your application could be in, including:

- **Processing.** This means your application has been received but is still being processed. It can take a few days for your application to get finalized; remember, you're not the only one requesting federal financial aid. For the 2019-2020 application cycle, there were about 18 million applications.
- **Processed successfully.** This means your application was successfully processed and there's nothing else you need to do.
- **Missing signatures.** If you sent in your application without some signatures, you'll see this message. You'll need to go back in and add them before the application can be finalized.
- **Action required.** Contact your school if you see this status. If you listed multiple schools on your FAFSA, you might need to contact all of them to resolve the issue.

If you can't view your account or have questions about your status, you can contact the Federal Student Aid information center.

What to Expect After Your FAFSA Is Processed

When your FAFSA status says your application was processed successfully, you can take a little breather before the next steps.

Your Student Aid Report (SAR) will be available anywhere from three days to three weeks after you've successfully completed your FAFSA. Your SAR will likely be emailed to you from the Department of Education and should outline your basic eligibility for federal student aid. It will also include the information you added to the FAFSA, so review it carefully to make sure everything is correct.

Your FAFSA information is also sent to your school. Your college will use that data to calculate the exact financial aid that's available to you, which it will outline in an award letter. You'll receive one of these letters from each school into which you've been accepted. When you get this letter varies by school; you could receive it the winter before you start the next school year, or you may not get it until right before the school year starts.

Remember that your FAFSA needs to be renewed every year you're in school. While filling out the form for the first time is always the most daunting, don't put off completing the FAFSA. Try to fill it out as soon as possible after it becomes available on Oct. 1 each year. Some aid is first-come, first-serve, so the earlier you submit the form, the more award money you could be eligible for.

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COLLEGE NEWS

The **University of Michigan** is among the many college campuses experiencing early outbreaks of influenza, with nearly 530 students diagnosed since the beginning of October.

The **NCAA** will increase the number of teams in its Division I **Women's Basketball Championship** from 64 teams to 68 teams starting in 2022. It's making the change after commissioning a report on gender equity following outcry over disparities between men's and women's basketball tournaments this year.

After 33 days of protest, student demonstrators reach an agreement with **Howard University** administrators over housing conditions and student representation on the board.

The number of students receiving Cal Grants at the **California Community Colleges** increased by about 99,000 this fall, the California Student Aid Commission announced.

UA President Pat Pitney announced that the **University of Alaska** will implement a vaccination requirement for all employees working on the UAF Troth Yeddha' campus in Fairbanks and at UAF research sites, as well as university employees at all locations who are funded by UAF federal contracts.

Old Dominion University removed a controversial scholar from campus, in part for safety reasons. Some say the scholar is really being punished for bringing taboo topics out into the open.

CLIMATE JUSTICE SCHOLARSHIP

\$1,000 awarded to one lucky applicant. Jamie Sarai Margolin co founder of Zero Hour created this scholarship. Deadline April 15th.



FILENE MUSIC SCHOLARSHIP

Four to six \$60,000 Filene Music Scholarships are awarded each year through a performance competition coordinated by Skidmore's Department of Music. Deadline January 15, 2022

More than 150 scholarships for Latino students with or without US citizenship.



JUNIOR CHECKLIST

-  ACT - Next test date is February 12. You must register by January 7th. It takes 30 minutes to complete registration and you will need a photo
-  SAT - Next test date is March 12. You must register by February 11th
-  Attend virtual college visits
-  Make plans to visit college campuses

GE REAGAN FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Honoring the legacy and character of our nation's 40th President, the GE-Reagan Foundation Scholarship Program rewards college-bound students who demonstrate exemplary leadership, drive, integrity, and citizenship with financial assistance to pursue higher education. Deadline January 6, 2022

AROUND THE CORNER FROM COLLEGE

\$1,000 scholarship to one applicant each season. Deadline is Dec. 31st and June 30th



HSF SCHOLARSHIPS

UNDERSTANDING THE FACTS ABOUT DEFERRALS

(Continued from page 1)

A deferral also allows students the opportunity to show an improvement in grades, especially if they're taking a challenging senior year course load, which can significantly help chances of admission since grades and curriculum are the most important factors colleges consider when making admission decisions.

Why Was I Deferred?

There are a number of reasons why a student applying Early Decision or Early Action might have been deferred to the regular admission round. Many times, it's to encourage students to provide additional materials, like final semester grades, in order to see what else that student has been doing senior year. Applicants can use this to their advantage, by providing more information on recent accomplishments, awards, grade improvements, and more, in order to boost their application in the Regular Decision round.

Sometimes, a deferral is less about the applicant and more about the school. It's hard for colleges to predict exactly what their Regular Decision pool will look like, so this is one more tool they can use to ensure they're building a well-rounded class.

What Should I Do After Getting Deferred?

A deferral can be especially confusing as many colleges have different approaches to handling deferral applications. Some might only ask for updated grades, while others might accept additional materials that can add context to a student's application. Here's what students need to do if they are deferred:

- First, determine if that college is still a top-choice. A deferral can evoke feelings like disappointment, sadness, anger, or even relief. This decision can often offer clarity to students who might have mixed feelings about an early college after applying.
- Next, find out what the college wants from you. Most will ask for an updated grade report, which students will need to request from their high school. For many colleges, that's all they will require. Some, however, will let students submit additional materials like recommendation letters, updates on extracurricular activities, or a deferral letter. Students should determine what the college requires, what's appropriate to provide, and heed those preferences.
- If appropriate, write a deferral letter. Colleges want to admit students who want to attend, so by writing a letter reaffirming their commitment to the college, students can improve their chances of admission. Students should reiterate their interest in the college, why they think they're a good fit for the institution, and provide some updates on what they've been doing since they submitted their early application.
- Finish up regular decision applications. Hopefully, students who applied in the early round kept up with completing their regular decision applications. If not, there's still time to put together outstanding applications. Stay positive and on track.



CAN I REAPPLY IF I'M REJECTED EARLY?

collegeconfidential.com

Question: If I apply to a college through Early Decision or Early Action, but I am not accepted, can I apply again through Regular Decision?

If you are denied outright ("rejected") in the Early Decision or Early Action round, then you CANNOT reapply. In most cases, if a college thinks that you are at least a borderline candidate but they aren't willing to commit to you during the Early Action or Early Decision process, they will "defer" you and then reevaluate your credentials with the Regular Decision pool. (I said, "In most cases" because there are a handful of colleges, such as New York University, that do not ever defer Early applicants ... they *only* admit or deny them.)

If you are *deferred* via ED or EA, you do not have to reapply. The college will automatically consider you along with the Regular Decision candidates. However, you would be wise to stay in touch with admission officials after a deferral by sending an update letter that highlights your accomplishments since you initially submitted your application.

Although a denial in the Early round is disappointing, the silver lining to this cloud is that it can help you to reset your sights while there is still time and to position yourself to get good news in the spring from a college you're truly excited about.

STRATEGIES TO BOOST YOUR COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE ODDS

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If your family can afford to pay the full sticker price and not seek financial aid, let them know. Some colleges are "need blind," and admit students regardless of whether they are applying for financial aid. Other colleges are "need-aware" or "need-sensitive," and may consider financial need when deciding whether to admit an applicant.

Aside from the factors outside of your control, there are several things you can do in advance to help your applications stand out.

The first is to develop leadership skills, and then emphasize these skills on college applications. Graduates of elite universities often talk about having started a club during their high school years, having initiated a community event, or having launched a nonprofit in some area of passion. They believe these leadership experiences helped to secure their acceptances to the nation's top colleges and universities.

It's also ideal to demonstrate an awareness of, and empathy for, the global community. Colleges encourage students to travel abroad and become immersed in a foreign culture. It's impressive when students have already done so in high school, and many opportunities exist with reputable organizations. Let colleges know about your travel and cultural experiences to date, and about the specific study abroad opportunities at their school that you hope to engage with during your college years.

Also, be sure to let colleges know about your meaningful volunteer work during your high school years. Colleges offer limitless opportunities for students to participate in volunteer work in almost every area of life on the local, national and international arena. If you've already demonstrated a long-term commitment to helping others during your high school years, colleges are more likely to look favorably on having you join their community as you will likely continue your altruistic tendencies during your college years.

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UC SLAMS THE DOOR ON STANDARDIZED ADMISSIONS TESTS, NIXING ANY SAT ALTERNATIVE

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But UC ultimately embraced opposing arguments that high school grades are a better tool without the biases based on race, income and parent education levels found in tests.

Given UC's size and influence, the prolonged debate was closely followed nationally as a harbinger of the future of standardized testing in admissions. Its decision to permanently drop testing requirements is likely to embolden other campuses to do likewise and accelerate the national movement to seek more equitable ways to assess a student's potential to succeed in college.

"When you have the most prestigious university system in the nation's most populous state functioning without test scores and developing ways to do admissions fairly and accurately without them, it's very significant," said Bob Schaeffer, executive director of FairTest: National Center for Fair & Open Testing. "UC already is and increasingly will become a national model for test-free admissions."

He said the number of campuses that don't require test scores for admission has increased to 1,815 today from 1,075 two years ago — in part due to the difficulty of securing appointments for SAT and ACT tests during the pandemic. The share of students who submitted test scores to the Common Application, a consortium of 900 public and private colleges, fell to 43% in the 2020-21 admission season compared with 77% in 2019-20.

Board Chair Cecilia Estolano called her vote to eliminate SAT and ACT testing requirements one of her proudest moments as a regent. She said the next pressing task is to double down on ways to prepare more students for UC admission and support them once enrolled.

"We know we're dealing with generations of educational inequity baked in discrimination, baked in structural impediments to our students," she said. "If we're going to continue to try to expand educational access in an equitable way ... we have to provide the supports to enable our students to succeed."

STRATEGIES TO BOOST YOUR COLLEGE ACCEPTANCE ODDS

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Lastly, be sure to personalize each application, sharing the specific qualities of each college that you find most appealing. By demonstrating sincere interest, you will have the best chance of having your application placed in the "accepted" pile from a stack of applications, all with similar GPA's and SAT scores.

NROTC SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY

The purpose of the Navy ROTC Program is to educate and train qualified young men and women for service as commissioned officers in the Navy's unrestricted line, the Navy Nurse Corps and the Marine Corps. Due January 31st 2022



2022 GE-REAGAN FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

High school seniors nationwide who demonstrate leadership, drive, integrity, and citizenship are invited to apply. Deadline is Jan. 6th, 2022



DON'T ASSUME YOU CAN'T AFFORD COLLEGE

(collegeadmissionsstrategies.com)

Don't assume the answer is no...you might be pleasantly surprised by a financial aid package.

One of the biggest mistakes many families make is assuming they won't receive any aid from colleges and universities. Parents frequently put a stranglehold on their child's college list and tell them that they can only attend an in-state institution because that's all they believe they can afford. The myth of one price for all is simply not accurate.



The reality is that paying for college is more similar to paying for an airline ticket, i.e., you could be sitting next to someone who paid twice what you paid or, unfortunately, that person across the aisle or in the dorm room next door may have paid remarkably less than you.

Financial aid is more available and abundant than a lot of families realize. This is especially true at the most selective and most expensive colleges. These colleges and universities have exceptionally large endowments. As college tuition has soared beyond the grasp of many families, these institutions have been pressured to raise the income threshold that allows families to receive aid.

Lynn O'Shaughnessy, a best-selling author and nationally recognized higher education expert illustrated this phenomenon with this example:

"The parents in my hypothetical family have a gross income of \$300,000, with \$100,000 in taxable assets. (Aid calculations don't take into account retirement assets, so a family could have millions in retirement accounts without jeopardizing aid.) My couple has one Princeton-bound student and another headed to another university. When I ran the numbers, Princeton would provide the student with a grant of nearly \$26,000 for freshman year."

It does seem remarkable that a family earning \$300,000 annually would qualify for \$26,000 in need-based aid. It also seems counter-intuitive that a pricier college might end up being cheaper than the sticker price on a less expensive school, but that is why financial advisors recommend that everyone complete the financial aid forms.

The two basic forms are the FAFSA – Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the CSS Profile – The College Scholarship Service Profile. The FAFSA is a need analysis document required by virtually all higher education institutions for students seeking any aid, including the unsubsidized Stafford loan. The CSS Profile is the customized financial aid application form required at certain colleges to determine eligibility for institutional aid.