# **College Application Process**

The Admissions Process and College Applications

#### Who We Are

#### "Making college accessible and affordable for all Illinois students."

- Mission Statement

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission is the financial aid agency in the state of Illinois. We are a mission-driven, non-profit, state agency that administers nearly \$400 million in scholarships and grants. Illinois has set a goal to increase the proportion of adults in Illinois with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by the year 2025

## Illinois Student Assistance Corps

- Approximately 80 Corps members from diverse backgrounds
- Every community in Illinois
- Changing the conversation about higher education



## Overview

- Types of Admission Processes
- Finding the right college fit
- Components of a college application
- What happens next

# **Types of Admissions Processes**

- Early decision
- Early action
- Priority
- Regular
- Rolling
- Alternative admissions

# Selectivity

- Highly-selective, selective, open
- What's the difference?
  - Number of applications vs. number of students admitted
  - Levels/number of criteria
    - Average/Minimum GPA
    - Class rank
    - Test Scores
    - Essay(s)
    - Interview

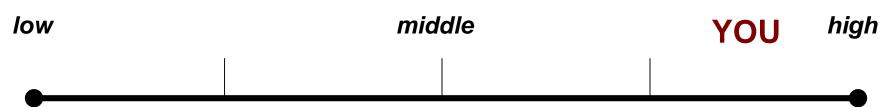
# **Finding Your Fit**

#### SAFETY SCHOOL

College that you will *almost certainly* get into because your GPA, test scores (ACT), and/or class rank are well above the college's average (typically top 25%)

Includes "open" admissions schools

GPA, test score, and class rank of a college's admitted students



#### Finding Your Fit MATCH SCHOOL

College that you are *pretty likely* to get into because your GPA, test scores, and/or class rank fall into the college's middle range of admitted students (you are higher than the bottom 25% of students, but lower than the top 25% of students)

GPA, test score, and class rank of a college's admitted students

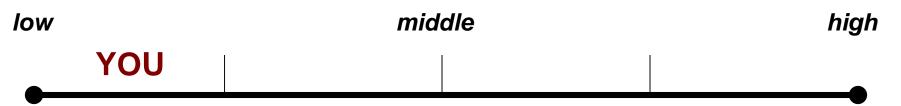
low	middle	high
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#### **Finding Your Fit**

#### **REACH SCHOOL**

Typically your GPA, test scores, and class rank put you in the college's bottom 25% of students. <u>BUT</u>, with very good recommendations, an excellent essay, and a one-on-one interview with an admissions rep, you *might* be able to get into these colleges.

GPA, test score, and class rank of a college's admitted students



## Where to Find College Applications

- College web sites primarily "admissions" pages
- Types of applications
  Online vs. paper applications
  Common Application
- Graduate vs. undergraduate applications

## **Common Application**

- Non-profit organization
- Partnership with many colleges
  19 schools in Illinois, over 500 total members
- Fill out one application for multiple schools!
  - Can send it to up to 20 different schools
  - Schools can't see where else you applied

#### What Makes up a College Application?

- Application form
- Academic records
- Possible items
  - Extracurricular activities
  - Personal essays
  - Letters of recommendations
  - Possibly an interview

#### **Academic Records**

- Transcripts
  - End of fall semester of senior year
  - Final transcript at end of last semester
- ACT/SAT scores
- Awards and Honors
  - List all academic awards/honors received since freshman year
  - List by title, description of award, and year

## **Purpose of the Standardized Tests**

- Used along with your GPA to measure your college readiness
- Colleges use scores to place you in course levels that match your knowledge and abilities



	ACT	SAT	
Acronym Meaning	American College Testing	g Scholastic Assessment Test	
Type of Test	Achievement Test Aptitude Test Measures what a student has learned Tests reasoning and verbal a		
Components	English Mathematics Reading Science Writing (Optional)	Critical Reasoning Mathematics Writing (Required)	
Guessing	No penalty for guessing	Correction for guessing	
Test Preference of Colleges	Typically in the Midwest	Typically on the Coasts	
Score Ranges	1-36	600-2400	
Number of Scores Sent for Free	4	4	

#### **ACT Scores**

Middle 50% for ACT Composite Scores, GPA and Class Rank for Entering Freshman Class of 2013

University	ACT	GPA	HSPR
CSU	19	3.1	71.5
EIU	19-24	2.8-3.6	N/A
GSU	N/A	N/A	N/A
ISU	22-26	3.15-3.83	N/A
NEIU	19	N/A	Top 50%
NIU	19-25	2.72-3.52	46-80%
SIUC	21-24	2.81-3.22	60-78%
SIUE	20-25	N/A	48-84%
UIC	22-27	3.03-3.60	67-89%
UIS	20-25	2.96-3.75	50-85%
UIUC	26-31	N/A	83-96%
WIU	18-23	2.69-3.48	Top 40%

## **Resources for Tips and Test Prep**

- act.org
  - Information about the test, practice tests and questions, test tips
- sat.collegeboard.org/home
  - Test practice, registration, and scores

## **Extracurricular Activities**

- Athletics
- Clubs and activities
  - Student council, NHS, band, chess club, and Glee club
- Community service/volunteer work
- Work experience
  - Part-time job, internship, job shadowing, etc.
- Non-work summer experiences
  - Outward Bound, summer school, camps, travel
- Interests and hobbies

## Writing Your Essays

- Choose a topic that will highlight you
- Keep your focus narrow and personal
- Show, don't tell
- Use your own voice
- Have a teacher or parent proofread

### **Letters of Recommendation**

- Getting a good letter from teachers/counselors
  - Choose someone with whom you have a good relationship
  - Give at least 2-4 weeks notice
  - Provide list of activities, honors and awards, class schedule, and the universities you are interested in



#### Interviews

- Not always required
- Opportunity to shine
- Remember
  - Be on time
  - Do not under dress
  - Do not chew gum...but have good breath
  - Give more than the simple YES or NO answer
  - Be honest

## **Deadlines and Costs**

- Deadlines vary
  - November 1 March 1 of senior year
  - Some schools have no deadline (ex: open admissions)
- Application fees
  - Average: \$50
  - ALWAYS ask about fee waivers
    - Could be need-based
    - May be free if you apply online

# What Happens after I Apply?

- The admissions office will review your application and <u>as</u> <u>applicable</u>:
  - Notify you if they need additional documentation
  - Place you on a "wait" list pending additional information or further review
  - Notify you that you application has been rejected
  - Accept your application for enrollment
- Watch your student portal for updates regarding your application status

### **Action Items**

- Write down your interests, achievements, and what do you want to study?
- Start thinking about who would offer you a good letter of recommendation – talk to them
- Find out the deadlines for the colleges you are interested in attending.
- Apply!

#### **Additional Resources**

www.studentportal.isac.org

www.isac.org



STUDENT PORTAL

www.studentaid.gov

