


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

low

middle

YOU

high



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

YOU



Finding Your Fit

REACH SCHOOL

Typically your GPA, test scores, and class rank put you in the college's bottom 25% of students. **BUT**, 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

low

middle

high

YOU

A horizontal black line with solid black circles at both ends. Three vertical tick marks are placed along the line. The word 'YOU' is written in bold red text above the first tick mark from the left. The labels 'low', 'middle', and 'high' are positioned above the line, roughly corresponding to the first, second, and third tick marks respectively.

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



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	ACT	SAT
Acronym Meaning	American College Testing	Scholastic Assessment Test
Type of Test	Achievement Test Measures what a student has learned	Aptitude Test Tests reasoning and verbal abilities
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 as applicable:
 - Notify you if they need additional documentation
 - Place you on a “wait” list pending additional information or further review
 - Notify you that your 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



www.studentaid.gov

