



Key Terms and Definitions

2026-2027 School Year for the Class of 2027

Common App

The **Common App** is an organization that provides access to over 1,000 applications to various colleges and universities on a single website. Many Indiana institutions use the Common App, and if so, it is linked on [Learn More Indiana's Pre-Admissions webpage](#).

Deferred

If you applied to a college or university in its Early Action or Early Decision cycle and are told you have been **deferred**, then there is a second chance to be admitted! The institution has decided to reconsider your application again during the Regular Decision cycle. The individual institution will communicate to you whether it is expecting any additions to your application before the reconsideration.

Early Action Application Deadline

If a college or university has an **early action application deadline**, then this is the deadline for receiving an admissions decision sometime in the winter.

Like the priority application deadline, schools often admit a large percentage of their class in the early action cycle, so it is recommended to apply early. Some schools even require that you apply by the early action deadline to be considered for merit-based scholarships.

If a college or university has an **Early Action I** and an **Early Action II Application Deadline**, then these are simply two different opportunities to submit your application in the Early Action cycle. Applying by the first deadline will still offer you the best chances at both admission and scholarships.

Early Decision Application Deadline

If a college or university offers an **Early Decision Application Deadline**, then it is again an opportunity to apply early, but once the application is submitted, you are committed to the school upon acceptance. This type of application is a binding agreement.

Applying via Early Decision is a great option for students who are sure of the college they want to attend. Early Decision agreements will often require signatures from the applicant, so it is important to be certain of your decision prior to applying. If a college or university has an Early Decision I and an Early Decision II Application Deadline, then these are simply two different opportunities to submit your application in the Early Decision cycle.

**The only institutions in Indiana with an Early Decision option are Hanover College, DePauw University, Saint Mary's College, and Wabash College. Hanover College, DePauw University, and Wabash College each have Early Action Application Deadlines as well.*

Enrollment Deposit

When you are ready to commit to a college or university, you signify this commitment by submitting your **enrollment deposit**. The institution will communicate this important deadline to you.

Financial Aid

Financial Aid is a broad term to describe the options available for funding your college career. The [Federal Student Aid website](#) details different types of financial aid, and the [Learn More Indiana website](#) outlines Indiana's financial aid opportunities.

Institutional Application

Another option for submitting your application is via an **institutional application**, which would involve visiting the institution's website, creating an account, and submitting an application directly through the institution's website.

Priority Application Deadline

If a college or university has a **priority application deadline**, then it is recommended that you apply by this date. An institution with this deadline may admit students on a rolling basis, meaning it fills the spots as the applications are read.

Applying by this deadline will also provide you with the best chances for merit-based scholarships, and you will be provided with a decision from the school much earlier than if you wait until the regular decision application deadline.

Regular Decision Application Deadline

The **Regular Decision Application Deadline** is the final deadline to apply to a college or university. This deadline is typically in the late winter or early spring, and you will be notified of your admissions decision in the spring.

Restrictive Early Action Application Deadline

A college or university with a **Restrictive Early Action Application Deadline** operates this application cycle similarly to an Early Action Application Deadline (see definition above), except with one important difference. If you choose to apply via Restrictive Early Action, then you are allowed to also apply via Early Action at other institutions, but you are **not** allowed to apply via Early Decision at other institutions.

**The only institution in Indiana with a Restrictive Early Action option is the University of Notre Dame.*

Rolling Admissions

If a college or university uses **rolling admissions**, then it will begin to consider an applicant once all application materials are received. You will likely receive an admissions decision more quickly if the college or university uses a rolling admissions policy.

Waitlist

If a college or university has placed you on its waitlist, then there is still a chance to be admitted! If the college or university has seats available, then the institution will begin to admit students from the waitlist. These decisions can be made throughout the spring and summer, so make sure to check your email for communications from the institution. Stay aware of the deadline to submit your intent to enroll at the schools that have already admitted you! For most schools, that date is May 1.