EARLY DECISION CHECKLIST ✓

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Applying early decision or early admissions requires students to get informed, be prepared, and stay organized. Stay on top of your early college applications with our Early Decision Checklist:

EARLY DECISION OR EARLY ADMISSION

Identify which schools you plan to apply Early Decision or Early Admission. Remember, applying to a school Early Decision is a binding agreement with that school. If you apply Early Decision, you are committed to attending that school if you're accepted. Early Action is NOT binding; it just enables you to apply and receive your admissions notification earlier.

TAKE STANDARDIZED TESTS

You should first take the SAT or ACT during your junior year. This gives you a chance to see how you test and determine if you need to take again (or a few more times) to improve your score. There are two test dates for both the SAT or ACT before most Early Decision deadlines, but anything taken after those dates won't matter for your early application.

ASK FOR LETTERS OF RECOMMENDATION

Ideally, you will ask for these letters of recommendation during the spring semester of your junior year or over the summer. Send along your resume to whomever you ask to write these letters. Ask to have them back by September at the latest.

GATHER YOUR TRANSCRIPTS

You will need to ask your school counselor for a copy of your transcripts. It's best to contact them at the start of the school year with this request. If you are accepted Early Decision or Early Admission, you may be asked for mid-year and final transcripts as well.

COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

This part of the process is entirely up to you. Use your time management wisely so that you don't have to rush through the form, essays, and anything else that is necessary to apply.

SIGN THE EARLY DECISION AGREEMENT

Most colleges that offer Early Decision admissions will require students to sign a document that states they understand the decision is binding if they are accepted. This will be the final step before submitting an Early Decision application.