

Admissions

Admissions to a two or four-year colleges may seem confusing unless you understand that:

1. Each college sets its own admission standards
2. Each college defines its own categories of students for admissions' purposes
3. Admission to a college or university does not automatically mean admission to a specific major
4. Community colleges may offer Dual enrollment four-year universities within the same state.

Admission Standards

Admission standards are usually based on one or more of the following criteria:

1. High school and/or college GPA
2. Completion of specific courses or categories of classes at high school or college level
3. Standardized test scores
4. Participation in extra curricular activities and/or community service
5. Unique contribution such as musical talent, athletic achievement, etc.
6. Under represented populations

High school and/or college GPA requirements can vary from the minimum of a 2.00 GPA to as high as a 3.75 GPA. Some colleges only consider the college GPA and do not consider the high school GPA if the student has completed a specific number of college credits.

Completion of specific courses is most often required at the high school level and includes such standards as specific number of credits in writing, mathematics, science, social science and foreign language. Some institutions may accept college level course work in place of high school work. When college courses are used for the admission standard, mathematics, writing, and sometimes foreign languages are most likely to be the only specific course work required.

SAT and ACT - Standardized tests' results are sometimes required. Although these tests may be required, the scores may or may not be used in the admissions process. Some schools use them only when the applicant does not meet the subject and GPA requirements. Others use test results for advising or placement into specific courses. Minimum score standards are more likely to be applied at independent (private) colleges and for international students.

Unique contributions a student may be able to bring to the institution may be utilized for selection criteria. Perhaps the most widely known of these is athletic achievement or potential, and musical talent where "tryouts" are part of the selection process. Noteworthy community service or demonstrated/documented exceptional leadership may also be considered.

In order to broaden the learning environment, some colleges consider under represented populations. Separate consideration is given to populations which will enhance the college environment. Cultural background, ethnic background and age are among the factors considered.

Admission Categories

The most common categories of students for admission purposes are:

1. Freshman
2. Transfer
3. Out-of-state
4. International
5. Special admit
6. Co-admission/dual enrollment

Freshman Admission

The most common criteria used when admitting freshman is their high school GPA. Some colleges consider overall GPA whereas others compute the GPA based on completion of specific courses. It is common to require students to reach a certain level of math in high school and to have a designated number of credits in specific subjects. Scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or American College Test (ACT) are usually given strong consideration by the more selective colleges. They also are utilized for students with low high school GPA's and strong test scores.

Transfer Admissions

To be considered a transfer student for admission purposes, colleges designate how many transferable credits you must have earned. Some, such as Oregon State University and University of Oregon require that you complete certain courses before transferring, i.e., Math105 or higher and WR121. Some of these requirements can be fulfilled with CLEP or Challenge Exams for credit.

The number of transferable credits that must be completed in order to be considered a transfer student varies between 12 and 36 credit hours. If a student has fewer than the required transfer credits, most colleges will require the student meet both the freshman and transfer admission's requirement.

Most Oregon colleges do not require the high school transcript or ACT/ SAT scores of students who meet transfer admission's requirements.

Out-of-State Admissions

Out-of-state students usually meet a higher GPA standard and pay a higher tuition rate than in-state students.

Out-of-state admissions include any student who is living out of state prior to enrolling at the college/university. The "out-of-state" category usually is only applicable at state-supported colleges. Independent or private colleges do not receive state support for students and do not differentiate between in and out- of -state students.

The definition of out-of-state students varies among states. Oregon University System schools require a student to have lived in the state 12 months before attending college (either at a community college or a four-year institution) to be considered in-state for admission and tuition purposes.

International Students

International students usually must meet minimum scores on the test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). The required score varies among colleges. Special forms are also required in addition to standard admissions requirements.

Special Admit

Some colleges allow a small number of students to be admitted who do not meet the admissions' criteria. These are students who are deemed promising students by an admission's committee. Examples of "Special Admit" students are those from an underprivileged background who have excelled in one area; who did poorly in the first three years of high school and then made marked improvements in their senior year; transfer students who did poorly when they first attended college and returned later and demonstrated ability to excel, etc. In order to be considered for special admission, applicants must usually complete additional application procedures. This often includes completing an essay and/or submitting reference letters to the admissions committee.

Independent Colleges

Independent colleges are sometimes referred to as private colleges because they do not receive state funding. Their funding is limited to the money they can raise through private donations, tuition, and their own fundraisers. Because of this, they are limited in the number of students which they may accept and therefore are often selective in admissions.

Besides grades in high school and/or college, these schools likely will consider any one or a combination of the following:

1. Test Scores
2. Activities
3. Community Service
4. Unique contribution (to develop a diverse student body)
5. Writing ability as demonstrated through application.

Co-admission/Dual enrollment

Another category of admission that has become common is referred to as either co-admission or dual enrollment. This category has evolved as many students have begun taking classes from more than one institution at the same time. The major challenge students have faced in taking classes from more than one college is getting the proper amount of financial aid. In order to solve this problem, schools who often have students taking courses at both institutions have developed agreements with each other regarding how financial aid will be handled with these students. In addition, they often create admissions applications specifically for students who plan to take classes at both institutions.

When to Apply

There are two types of admission “deadlines”-specific dates and rolling. Specific date means that you must apply by a certain deadline or your application will not be considered. Selection of those students who will be accepted for enrollment will be made from those who apply by the deadline.

Under a rolling admission policy students are continually being accepted when they apply if they meet minimum admissions criteria. Even with rolling admissions, there is an absolute deadline that must be met for each term so that applications can be processed in time for registration each term.

Students who also apply for financial aid should apply for admissions by January or February. Most colleges will not award financial aid unless the applicant has also applied for admission.

Application Requirements

Although the application process varies among colleges the following are usually part of the process:

1. College transcripts (high school transcripts often not required with minimum number of college credits unless you are using them to show foreign language completion for admission).
2. Application fee (\$50 and higher for OUS Schools) Can sometimes be deferred or waived. (OUS website)
3. Application form
4. References (for independent colleges)
5. Essay statements (for independent colleges and for OSU)
6. Test scores (required by a limited number of colleges)

Completing Application

The completed application is the college admission staff's first impression of you so it is very important when applying to a college with selective admission or you are "borderline" in meeting the schools minimum requirements.

It is recommended that you:

1. Use ink or type application
2. Write legibly so staff members don't spend extra time understanding what you have written
3. Keep the application neat and clean while completing it
4. Apply online - Colleges usually prefer electronic applications because it saves them time

Hint: Make a copy of the application and complete the information and then copy that info neatly onto the other application, (leaves less room for error).

References

If the college requires references, you should give this careful attention.

1. Choose your references carefully. Your favorite instructor may not be you best reference.

Consider the following in choosing a reference:

- Someone who knows you well
- Someone who is a good writer
- Someone you can depend on doing a good job

2. Ask references well in advance of a deadline for references
3. Complete your name of the reference form
4. Provide addressed stamped envelope
5. Be sure references can identify you if you don't give them the reference form in person

Hint: Provide a resume or list of activities and accomplishments to aid the reference writer.