

College Admissions Processes and Decisions

A Quick Guide for Families



UNIVERSITY of
SOUTH FLORIDA

Let's break down the admissions process. (Life's short. We'll talk fast.)

Admissions Processes: What They Mean

EARLY DECISION ADMISSION

Students apply early, usually by the fall, and get an admissions decision as early as mid-December. If they are accepted, they are obligated to attend the school.

EARLY ACTION ADMISSION

Students still apply early, by the fall, and get a decision back as early as mid-December, but are not contractually obligated to attend.

REGULAR ADMISSION

Students usually apply by January-February and admission decisions are released in the spring. This is the most common type of admission process.

ROLLING ADMISSION

Students apply within a wide timeframe, and the school admits qualified students on an individual basis until all spaces are filled. A decision should be released a few weeks after your student submits their application.

MATERIALS DEADLINES

Students must submit remaining documents and pay the application fee by this date to be considered. Deadlines vary based on the school, so mark your calendar.

Admissions Decisions: What to Do

DENIED ADMISSION

Manage your own emotions so you aren't projecting your disappointment onto your student. If your student is denied admission to all universities they applied for, focus on alternate paths like a gap year, a technical or vocational program, or a pathway program like USF's [FUSE](#).

ACCEPTED ADMISSION

Time to celebrate! If your student has more than one acceptance, ask open-ended questions to help them make up their own mind about what's best for them. Attending an [Admitted Students Day](#) can give valuable insight, too.

DEFERRED ADMISSION

The school is still reviewing your student's application and hasn't made a decision yet. Help your student manage their anxiety and promptly submit any additional information the school requests.

REFERRED ADMISSION

The school has accepted your student's application, but has placed them in a different academic program than they applied for. Encourage your student to keep an open mind: This program is a better academic fit for them.

WAITLISTED

The school thinks your student is a competitive candidate, but they're out of space. Advise your student to accept a spot on the waitlist and express interest — but they should also submit a deposit to a school where they have definitely been accepted.

ACCEPTED TO A DIFFERENT CAMPUS

Multicampus schools might accept your student to a different campus than they applied for. Sometimes this is because your student didn't apply soon enough in the admissions cycle, and spots have filled up. Or the school might feel that your student will have a smoother transition by starting out at a smaller campus. Either way, help them get excited for their new campus home.

ACCEPTED TO A DIFFERENT TERM

Sometimes students are admitted to a different term than they applied for. Starting in summer, for example, can help your student adjust to college life before the chaos of fall semester. This is why it's always a good idea to keep the summer after senior year open. Make sure all your celebratory plans are flexible!

ACCEPTED TO A SPECIAL PROGRAM

Your student might be admitted to a special support program within the school, like USF's [Student Support Services Program](#). Programs like these are designed to help your student access extra resources and support as they start their college journey.



If you have questions about USF's admissions process or decisions, [reach out to us online](#), or give us a call at (813) 974-3350.