

Applying for Schools & Early Admission

Opening:

Hi, my name is Allison O’Hanlon, from the Oregon Student Access Commission, also called OSAC for short.

Today, I am going to talk about the process of applying for college and also early admission.

Body

The college application process can seem daunting at first, but after breaking down the steps, it becomes manageable. The components of a college application usually entail contact information, intended major, college entry exam scores (such as the SAT or ACT), admissions essay, references or letters of recommendation, and an activities chart. Some colleges require more, such as, interviews, multiple essays, SAT II exams, auditions for musical programs, and portfolios for art programs. My best piece of advice is to check the websites of the schools you are planning to apply to and check for requirements and deadlines.

Usually the first step in applying to college is taking the ACT or SAT or both. Most prospective students take these exams at the end of their junior year and, if necessary, again at the beginning of their senior year. This allows time to review your first test results and better prepare for the second one.

The two most common ways to apply to a college is to submit a paper application or an online application. Either way, the application often requires a college essay. College application essays usually include a prompt for you to respond to. In my experience, colleges offer many prompts to choose from such as writing about a challenging experience you have faced or writing about your career aspirations. The essay is a chance for you to personalize the application for an admissions representative and give a fuller picture of who you are. In the essay, don’t just tell a story with the essay; share what you learned, how it changed you as a person, and how it will help you in college. This essay should have gone through a few drafts and be well polished by the time you submit your college application. Make sure your essay does not exceed the word limit and completely answers the question or prompt.

Letters of recommendation, if required, are very important to the application. This is the only piece of information not coming from you. When choosing the best recommendation writers, it is preferable to choose adults who have known you for a good amount of time (over one year). Besides knowing you better, they can speak to how you’ve grown in the time that they have known you. Once you have decided on the writers for your letters of recommendation, make sure to give them plenty of time to write their letters. It is better to give too much time than too little. Also, make sure to remind them a week before the application is due. After they have submitted the recommendation, make sure to write a thoughtful thank you note.

Finally, a few words about early admission – there are two types of early admissions: early decision and early action. Early decision is binding while early action is not. You can only apply to one school on early decision. By applying early decision, you are promising that you will commit to attending this school if

you are admitted. You can apply to as many schools as you want for early action. The benefit of early action is that you find out the admission decision sooner! All early application deadlines call for the applicant to start early on college applications.

Conclusion:

The college application process is the gateway to going to college. Every aspect of the college application holds significance. Set time aside and plan accordingly for deadlines.

Closing:

Thank you for taking time to learn about the steps to apply to college. For more podcast topics, please visit our website at www.oregonstudentaid.gov . From all of us here at the Oregon Student Access Commission, this is Allison O'Hanlon. We look forward to helping you again soon.