

ADMISSIONS PROCESS: SUGGESTED KEY DATES AND DEADLINES

The following timeline outlines key dates and deadlines for admissions for a Fall cohort. We recommend programs work with their university to ensure dates and deadlines align with central admissions processes. Programs could also consider alternate admissions practices, such as rolling admission, to assess what works best for them.

Year Prior to Enrollment: Summer

1

Admission Information Session:

Held early in the summer months to reach prospective students who are planning on applying for the following fall. We recommend holding this session “in person” in a campus building that students might frequent often if they were to attend your program. Program staff should run these information sessions and use them as an opportunity to engage and connect with those who attend.

TIP: Connect with your central admissions office. Students can schedule a general campus/admissions tour at the same time. Aligning with central admissions can also be helpful for any recruiting and orientation events they hold, giving your students access beyond the program level.

2

Application Opens

Applications for the following year become available. Suggested application opening dates are July 1, July 15, August 1, or August 15, so students have plenty of time to fill out the application and assemble materials. Programs should work within their university admissions platforms and systems to identify a date that is best for them.

TIP: Promote, promote, promote! Post on social media, send the link out to your marketing listserv, and share with relevant school district staff.

Year Prior to Enrollment: Fall/Winter

1

Begin Financial Planning:

Prospective students should be encouraged to explore funding options as this process can be timely. Connect with your campus Office of Financial Aid and direct students to have conversations with the experts. FAFSA applications typically open December 1st, and the financial aid office is well-versed in supporting students and families to fill this form out.

TIP: There are lots of scholarships students can pursue. You can share links on your website, and they should also be encouraged to search for these opportunities on their own.

2

Fall Information Session:

A fall information session is another opportunity for prospective students and families to connect with your program before applying. This is recommended to be an “in person” event to allow your prospective applicants time to experience campus and imagine themselves being a student there.

TIP: Align on a fun football game weekend or a different campus-wide event to add more to their visit.

3

Fall Early Admissions Deadline:

Early Decision or Early Action is an opportunity for students to apply to a program before the regular deadline and receive an admissions decision earlier. Early Decision or Early Action deadlines can be something a program works towards implementing. It is important to find a regular admissions system that works for your program and campus, then provide the opportunity for Early Decision or Early Action once you have problem-solved your specific admissions challenges or barriers. Programs should use the deadlines their campus uses to limit confusion for prospective students.

TIP: As more IPSE options become available, Early Decision becomes a recruiting tool, as students want to make their college choice and plan early.

4

Winter Information Session:

An information session held at the end of the fall semester is recommended to provide one last opportunity for prospective students to gather information before the program's application deadline. This information can be held either "in person" or virtually depending on the audience the program is attempting to connect to.

TIP: You can promote this as a chance for students and families to get any last-minute application questions answered.

Year of Enrollment:

1

January 15: Application Deadline for Fall Enrollment.

Prospective students should submit their application and supplemental materials by this deadline. The program should follow up with clear communication about next steps and the timeline of a decision.

TIP: Schedule weekly admissions committee meetings to keep the selection process on track for completion in two months.

2

Early February: In-Person Interviews

In-person admissions interviews are an important way to get to know your candidates. We strongly recommend this approach to help program staff understand a student's support needs, their interests, and why college is an important next step for them.

TIP: Determine admissions criteria before creating interview questions. Be clear on program expectations for students, how you support students, and understand what you want to learn about them in their interviews.

3**March: Admission Decision Information Distributed:**

Have a set date to send admissions decisions. Decisions can be sent out through USPS mail or electronically, depending on the system your college or university uses. Some admissions platforms will send decisions through a portal or email, while others still rely on transitional mail. Ask your admissions office for copies of their letters (acceptance, denial and waitlist) and then tailor the language to fit your program. Additionally, you will want to identify documents a student needs to send back to you to accept their spot in the program.

TIP: Getting into college is a BIG DEAL! Send a small gift (pennant, university sticker, etc.) to communicate your excitement about their acceptance.

4**May 1: National College Decision Day**

Many programs align the deadline of acceptance to this day. Depending on a program's needs, identify a date that students need to commit to the program by.

5**May-August: College Prep and Planning:**

Programs should use the summer before enrollment to onboard and prepare students for college. Work with your university offices to align your processes in onboarding first-year students.

TIP: Some suggested areas to focus on are Technology and ID Set Up, Advising and Registration, Accommodations, Health and Wellness Requirements, and planning for support in academics, social experiences, and residential (if applicable).

6**Orientation: Welcome to College!**

New Student Orientation is a great way to ensure incoming students feel welcomed, informed, and prepared for their transition into college life. Programs should identify their campus' Orientation days, and ensure students can also participate in any campuswide events. Schedule orientation sessions that share essential information in a clear and organized format.

TIP: Students and families are excited and overwhelmed when they are beginning their college journey. Remind and reassure them that their feelings are valid and the program is there to support them.