



Early Decision Commitment: 5 Signs that You're Not Ready

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Are you ready to apply early decision? Here are five signs that you're not.

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By now, you're probably familiar with early decision deadlines in the admissions process. And if you're not, it's a pretty simple concept.

If you apply early decision to a school by submitting your application before the ED deadline, you are letting that college know that if you are accepted, you are 100% committing to that school. Essentially, the decision is binding and a submitted application is your way of saying, "Yes, I am definitely attending this school if I'm accepted."

It may seem like a tempting option, especially when more students than ever are waitlisted or rejected from their first choice schools during the admissions process. But

early decision isn't for everyone. In fact, it's for very few.

5 Signs that You're Not Ready to Apply Early Decision

You have a second favorite school. Is there a nagging whisper about your second choice school in the back of your mind? It may not seem like it, but November to January or February, when regular decision deadlines occur, is plenty of time to change your mind about your first choice school.

If you're applying early decision, you want to be 100% sure that you're ready to commit to that school because once you are accepted, there is no backing out.

Your grades for this semester are looking up. First off, congrats! Way to give [senioritis](#) the cold shoulder and demand more from yourself this last year in school. Second, the fact that your grades are outstanding will not only impact your GPA but could possibly have a positive effect on your merit award money. Cha-ching!

[Check out your scholarship matches and apply now.](#)

Submitting your application now with a lower GPA could mean getting less in scholarships from your school of choice. So if your grades are on the upswing, consider applying in late December or early January. It could make a thousand dollar difference...or more!

Your college decision depends a lot on financial aid. Nearly every college student has to consider cost when making his or her final college decision, and if you want the ability to [compare financial aid packages](#), then early decision isn't for you.

A more expensive college might surprise you with their large financial aid package. Or that state school might be the more practical option when compared to others. In sum, don't lock yourself into paying for a school that might be financially unrealistic – allow yourself to have options if you need them.

You just took an interest in this school. You know what they say, "It's easy to fall for a campus in the fall." Maybe you toured campus at the beginning of October and it was love at first sight.

Don't let your initial wanderlust for a school cloud your thinking. If it was that easy to fall in love with a school, it could be that easy for the school to fall off of your radar.

You have never visited the school. Hold up – are you crazy?! You need to *really* know a school if you're going to commit to an early decision deadline. If you haven't ever visited the school, how can you be 100% sure that it's the right fit?

Before you make any final college decision, you should [visit the college](#) campus. Tour the grounds, meet with an admission officer, sit in on a class and maybe even spend the night in the dorms with the current freshmen.

Bottom line, you need to be sure of what you want when applying early decision. If your gut is holding you back; there is a reason. Just wait for the regular deadline.