



The Early vs. Regular Decision Summary

A Quick Guide for Muslim Students & Families

CATEGORY	EARLY DECISION (ED)	REGULAR DECISION (RD)
Deadline	November 1 (sometimes Nov 15)	December to January (varies by school)
Binding?	Yes → Must attend if admitted; must withdraw all other applications	No → Can apply to multiple schools and choose later
Notification	Mid-December	March–April
Number of Applications	Only one ED school allowed	Multiple schools allowed
Admission Rate	Often higher than RD (because applicant pool is smaller and highly committed)	Usually lower (larger pool, more competition)
Best for Students Who...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Have a clear #1 choice - Are academically strong - Have researched financial & campus fit - Family agrees on affordability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Want flexibility - Still finalizing college list - Need fall semester to raise GPA or retake standardized tests (ACT/SAT) - Want to compare aid packages
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Demonstrates strong interest to school - May boost chances of admission - Decision arrives early → less stress in spring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maximum flexibility - More time to strengthen application - Ability to compare financial aid and scholarships - Apply broadly to many schools
Considerations for Muslim Students & Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited ability to compare financial aid packages - Must ensure halal food, prayer space, MSA, and Muslim community are available <i>before</i> committing - Family discussion is essential before applying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competition is higher - Later results = less time to prepare housing/visas/travel - Stressful wait until spring decisions
Faith & Family Lens	Best when family is confident in both academic fit and Islamic environment at one school	Best when family needs time for financial planning and exploring multiple campuses' Muslim life