

Wait and See? Tips for Getting Off the Waitlist

What Is The Waitlist?

Being waitlisted often means that you will be considered for admission in the event that the school needs additional students for the freshman class. This can leave waitlisted students feeling confused and uncertain about where to enroll. Waitlisted applicants are usually considered for admission after enrollment decisions from accepted students are in. Some schools will admit students from the waitlist as early as April, while others wait until July or even August.

So what can waitlisted students do to improve their chances of being accepted off the waitlist?

Don't Take "Waitlist" Literally: Don't wait to take action! While the situation may seem out of your hands, there are a number of steps to take now in order to improve your chances of getting off the waitlist and prepare for your back up plan.

Think It Over: Take some time to consider whether you still want to attend the school. If the college where you are waitlisted is no longer one of your top choices, you should write to withdraw your name from the waitlist. If the waitlist school remains your top-choice, accept your spot on the waitlist and move forward with these next steps.

Enroll at Your Second-Choice College: Even if you choose to remain on the waitlist, you should still enroll at your next choice school, because you don't know if you'll be accepted from the waitlist.

Secure your spot at your next choice school by sending your non-refundable deposit (which you will lose if you decide to enroll elsewhere) by May 1st.

Reiterate Your Desire to Attend: Before May 1st, write a letter to your admissions representative and copy a dean of admissions. Be upbeat in your approach and do not show frustration or disappointment. In the letter, include a paragraph explaining how you see yourself at this school. Include the courses you would like to take, the professors with whom you would like to study and/or

conduct research, and the activities in which you would participate. Show how you would enhance the school community. This should be different from your application essays and should highlight new or additional reasons that the school is a great fit for you academically and socially. If the college remains your first choice and you will definitely attend if you get in, state that. Only write this to your first choice school, especially if you are on several waitlists. The letter will reiterate your commitment to attending if admitted off the waitlist, which helps the admissions committee determine its final student count and, in turn, can help your chances for getting in.

Give Updates: Be sure to update the college on everything important you have been doing in school and in the community since you submitted your application. Inform them of any updated grades, honors, awards, or new standardized test scores that you have received. Also consider submitting an additional letter of recommendation from someone who can add new information and depth to your application file (for example, a senior year teacher who has come to know you well and could highlight your scholastic growth and achievement). Only send what is absolutely necessary – you don't want to overload the admissions office.

Keep Up Your Grades: Maintain senior year grades, study hard for AP exams and finals, and above all maintain a great attitude in school! The entire year's performance is factored into the admissions decision and for waitlisted students, this can be the deal maker or breaker.

Keep an Open Mind: If you don't get off the waitlist at a particular school, it's not the end of the world. If you applied to a balanced list of best-fit colleges, you should have a number of acceptances from good fit colleges that meet your social, academic, and financial needs. Remember, college is what you make of it! There are likely many other great choices that fit your goals, where you'll be a happy and productive student. Good luck!