



Doing College
And beyond



College Admissions Newsletter

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Summer 2025 Issue

Rising Senior To-Do List for the Summer

1. Complete your main Common App essay.
2. Work with your advisor on how best to use the “Additional Information” section on applications.
3. If applying to the UC system, decide which 4 of 8 essays you will respond to. Start writing.
4. Continue to update your resume throughout the summer.
5. Depending on the schools you will apply to, fill out the busy work on the Common Application and Coalition Application.
6. Keep researching colleges. Your goal is to create a well-balanced application list by the end of summer.
7. Once you have asked for recommendations, use the summer to fill out counselor rec packets (if required) and any forms teachers would like. Have these ready to go when school starts.
8. If a musician, artist or performer, work on portfolio/audition materials.
9. **Do something that makes you happy this summer!**

The Power of Being Undecided

Choosing a college major can feel overwhelming, and many students share this experience. Nationally, an estimated 12% to 14% of first-year college students enter higher education without having declared a major. One contributing factor is concern about an evolving job market shaped by rapid technological advancements and shifting career landscapes. Beginning college as an undeclared student can offer the opportunity to explore personal interests, identify academic strengths, and become informed about emerging industry trends.

Undeclared students typically begin their academic journey by completing General Education requirements (sometimes referred to as the Common Curriculum). These foundational courses fulfill degree requirements regardless of the major eventually chosen and help ensure that students can remain on track to graduate in four years. Courses in the liberal arts, sciences, and humanities also provide students with a broad perspective and encourage them to consider the world through multiple lenses.

It is important to note, however, that certain degree programs may not permit students to transfer in from an undeclared status once enrollment begins. Many institutions allocate a limited number of seats for competitive majors such as engineering, computer science, business, nursing, and the arts. As a result, students interested in these fields are generally encouraged to apply directly to the program rather than beginning as undecided.

Career exploration can also play a valuable role in identifying an appropri-

ate academic path. Many colleges offer programs that combine academic advising, career planning, and professional development. High Point University, for example, refers to itself as a “life skills university” and emphasizes career readiness from the outset. Students are paired with a dedicated Success Coach, complete a required Life Skills course, and those who engage in career planning are guaranteed an internship before graduation.

Similarly, Indiana University’s Exploratory Program supports students who have not yet declared a major and wish to use their first year to consider their options. Approximately five percent of incoming students begin as Exploratory, and the university’s research shows that those who take the time to explore before selecting a major are more likely to graduate within four years.

At the University of Toledo, undecided students participate in the QUEST program, which allows them to complete required core courses while investigating potential majors and career paths. During their first semester, students enroll in a course focused on career and self-evaluation, helping them navigate the uncertainty of being undecided and envision possible future directions. Regular advising check-ins offer additional



support to ensure students remain on track academically and professionally.

Ultimately, there are many advantages to postponing the decision to declare a

major. It allows students to explore a range of disciplines, develop interests organically, and gain meaningful real-world experience—all while progressing toward timely graduation.

The future depends on what you do today. ~ Mahatma Gandhi

School of the Month: Johns Hopkins University



Founded in 1876 as America's first research university, Johns Hopkins is a school that's often linked closely with the study of medicine, biomedical engineering or other engineering specialties. Just over 30 percent of Johns Hopkins seniors earn degrees in science or engineering. The university also receives more funding for academic research than any other institution—public or private—in the United States.

With about 6,000 undergraduates, Johns Hopkins is a mid-sized institution, highly selective and test mandatory. More than 45,000 students applied for fewer than 1,300 spots in the most recent freshman class. The middle 50 percent scored between 1530 and 1570 on the SAT and between 34 and 36 on the ACT. The average unweighted GPA was 3.95 in a notably rigorous curriculum. Students who view Johns Hopkins as a top choice are strongly encouraged to apply Early Decision (ED I or ED II), through which between 50 and 60 percent of the freshman class is admitted. ED I and ED II rates are not disclosed, but I suspect the vast majority of applicants are admitted ED I.

Except for Biomolecular Engineering, Johns Hopkins operates as a "single-door" admissions school—students are admitted to the university as a whole, not a specific major. This allows admitted students to switch between the

Krieger School of Arts & Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering—even before their first day on campus. More than two-thirds of undergraduates double major, often bridging both schools, and many also pursue multiple minors. Students can begin conducting paid research with faculty or receive funding for independent projects as early as their first year.



There is no such thing as a weak academic department at Johns Hopkins. Recent expansions include a growing Computer Science major and new academic offerings such as Latin American, Caribbean & Latinx Studies, Moral & Political Economy, and Systems Engineering. New minors include Civic Life, Cultural Diaspora Studies, and Energy. Students may also pursue a dual degree with the university's renowned Peabody Institute—the nation's oldest music conservatory—or enter direct matriculation pathways toward master's degrees in Global Public Health and International Relations. Additionally, undergraduates may apply to one of 14 combined bachelor's/master's programs after completing eight semesters. Admitted students receive the Dean's Master's Fellowship, which provides a 50 percent tuition discount for the fifth year of full-time master's study.

The university's main campus, located in Baltimore's Homewood neighborhood, offers the traditional collegiate atmo-

sphere many families seek—complete with red-brick buildings, tree-lined walkways, an iconic clock tower, a spacious quad, and a scenic area known as "The Beach," where students gather to relax, read, and socialize in warmer weather.

Baltimore—affectionately called "Charm City"—is full of cultural opportunities, and Johns Hopkins is deeply integrated into the local business and medical communities. Students can access free citywide transportation through the Collegetown Network, and the university's Blue Jay Shuttle provides convenient on-campus travel. Compared to some peer institutions, Johns Hopkins has a stronger campus spirit and sports culture, largely thanks to its nationally recognized lacrosse program, which competes in the Big Ten. The university also hosts multiple student-run spring fairs, and roughly one-quarter of undergraduates participate in Greek life.

For a highly qualified student who aspires to be a musician, philosopher, physicist or physician, and hopes to be admitted to a super selective, research-intensive urban university—with a campus that still feels like a true college community—a visit to Johns Hopkins is a must. If the fit feels right, and your profile is exemplary, consider applying ED to this fine research university.

**Private: 6,090 undergrads;
24,273 grad students**

**8% acceptance rate;
mid-SAT: RW 750-780, M 780-800;
ACT range: 34-35;**

**63% diversity; 15% intl.; 86%
out-of-state; 6:1 student to faculty**

Elizabeth LaScala, Ph.D., is dedicated to providing personalized college and graduate school admissions expertise to students and their families locally, nationally and abroad. College and graduate school admissions are more competitive than ever. Doing College utilizes exclusive admissions tools, customized strategies and a network of dedicated professionals to help each student navigate the complex college and graduate school admissions process with confidence and success. [FIND OUT MORE](#)