

What does my deferral really mean?

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Being deferred is NOT the same as being rejected. It may feel that way for students, but this year with a record number of early applications there has also been a record number of deferrals. A student who applies through either early action or early decision is deferred when a college determines that the student has potential but they want to see first semester senior grades to confirm. So without sounding overly Pollyanna-ish, being deferred gives a student a second chance to impress the admissions office.

So how should a student respond to a deferral?

1. Visit the college – If possible, if you haven't toured the campus, this is a great time to make the visit. Even if you have visited previously, a follow-up visit where you sit in on a class and/or meet with someone from admissions is an opportunity to set yourself apart from other deferred applicants. Also, a campus visit can really help you determine where this college ranks in your desirability scale. Plan to eat lunch in the cafeteria and have conversations with current students. These informal discussions can often provide insightful comments.
2. Contact your admissions representative – Find out which person in the admissions office handles your geographic territory. Take the opportunity to introduce yourself via email and ask that person if they can share any thoughts on how you could improve your application. Listen to what they say, don't argue or complain. It is important to be upbeat and leave a positive impression.
3. Write a letter – Send it to the Director of Admissions as well as your admissions representative. The letter should focus on your strongest attributes and how you will be able to contribute to the college community. Demonstrate your interest and your commitment. If you are 100% sure that if you are accepted you will attend, then say so. Talk about college fit; why the college is a good fit for you and why you are a good fit for the college. Use the letter to update the admissions office on any new information such as leadership roles in clubs, athletic accomplishments, awards, scholarships, etc.
4. Send your mid-year transcript. Most colleges will specifically request that you send your seventh semester grades. Follow instructions to the letter and get it done as quickly as possible. Timing can be an important factor.

Here's what not to do?

- Don't whine and complain to the Admissions Office that you really deserve to be accepted
- Don't send volumes of emails, snail mail or packages hoping to change their minds

- Don't accuse the admissions office of making a mistake in their decision
- Don't compare your SAT scores and GPA with someone else's
- Don't over-boast about small accomplishments, tell it like it is. It is not really worth it to share that your SAT score went up 10 points.