

Gann's Preferred College Application Timeline

This timeline includes only your original preferred colleges:

- Columbia
- Johns Hopkins
- Boston University
- Boston College
- Brown
- Yale
- Harvard
- Colgate

To keep all eight options open, the default strategy would be to apply **Regular Decision to all eight**. You could instead select one binding ED school or choose Harvard REA or Yale SCEA, but you cannot use all of those early plans together.

August 2–31, 2026: Complete the Common Application Foundation

Complete the portions shared by all eight colleges:

- Personal and family information
- Education and testing
- Activities
- Honors
- Personal statement
- Additional Information
- Transcript request
- Counselor recommendation request
- Teacher recommendation requests

You should also confirm the individual supplemental requirements for each college.

September 1–30: Draft the First Group of Supplements

Begin with:

- Columbia
- Brown
- Yale
- Harvard

These schools require thoughtful, highly specific responses. The goal should be to develop strong drafts during September rather than trying to complete all eight applications near the January deadlines.

October 1–20: Draft the Second Group of Supplements

Complete initial drafts for:

- Johns Hopkins
- Boston University
- Boston College
- Colgate

By October 20, you should have at least one complete draft of every required essay and short response for all eight colleges.

By October 20: Make the Early-Application Decision

You and your family should decide whether you will:

- Apply binding ED I to one college
- Apply Harvard Restrictive Early Action
- Apply Yale Single-Choice Early Action
- Keep all eight colleges as Regular Decision

You cannot apply through several binding or restrictive early programs at the same time. If you do not have one clear, financially workable first choice, Regular Decision keeps the most options open.

November 1, 2026: Possible Early Deadline

You may submit **one appropriate early application**, depending on the strategy selected:

- Columbia — Early Decision
- Johns Hopkins — Early Decision I
- Boston College — Early Decision I
- Brown — Early Decision
- Yale — Single-Choice Early Action
- Harvard — Restrictive Early Action
- Colgate — Early Decision I

These are alternatives, not seven applications that can all be submitted early together. Columbia, Johns Hopkins, Boston College, Brown, and Colgate use binding Early Decision. Harvard and Yale use nonbinding but restrictive early plans.

November 2, 2026: Boston University ED Deadline

- Boston University — Early Decision

BU's Early Decision plan is binding. You would use this deadline only if BU is your clear first choice and you are not using another binding or restrictive early plan.

November 3–December 15: Finalize All Regular Decision Applications

Regardless of whether you submit one early application, you should continue preparing the remaining applications until you receive the early decision.

During this period, you should:

- Revise every supplemental essay
- Confirm that each response is specific to the college
- Review the activities and honors sections
- Check recommendations and transcripts
- Proofread the entire application
- Prepare any permitted supplemental materials
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You should not wait until January to begin the remaining applications.

December 15–20: A2 Achieve Submission Target

Unless a binding ED acceptance ends the process, your internal goal should be to submit all remaining Regular Decision applications by **December 20, 2026**.

This allows time to correct missing materials or portal problems before the official January deadlines.

January 1, 2027

- Columbia — Regular Decision
- Harvard — Regular Decision

Both colleges currently list January 1 as the Regular Decision deadline.

January 2, 2027

- Johns Hopkins — Early Decision II or Regular Decision
- Yale — Regular Decision

Johns Hopkins uses the same January 2 deadline for ED II and Regular Decision. Yale's Regular Decision deadline is January 2.

January 4, 2027

- Boston College — Early Decision II or Regular Decision

Boston College currently lists January 4 for both plans. ED II is binding; Regular Decision is not.

January 5, 2027

- Brown — Regular Decision
- Boston University — Early Decision II or Regular Decision

Brown's Regular Decision deadline is January 5. Boston University uses January 5 for both ED II and Regular Decision.

January 15, 2027

- Colgate — Early Decision II or Regular Decision

Colgate currently lists January 15 for both ED II and Regular Decision.

Application Count

By November 1 or 2: Up to one early application, if selected

By December 20: All remaining applications submitted under the A2 Achieve timeline

Total possible applications: Eight

If you are admitted through a binding ED plan, you must enroll and withdraw the other applications. If you apply to Harvard REA or Yale SCEA and are admitted, the offer remains nonbinding, so you may continue with your Regular Decision applications.