

# What to Do If You're Wait-Listed

Being put on the wait-list by your first-choice school can be worse than being rejected—it hangs you up. If a college tells you that's where you are, try to decide whether you *really* want to attend that school before you agree to remain on the list.

But it doesn't have to be a passive waiting game. Here are some things you can do.

## **Get a better sense of your chances of admission**

Colleges sometimes rank waiting lists. The higher you rank on the list the better your chances of being accepted. Contact the admission office to find out if it ranks wait-listed students or if it has a priority list. Most admission officers will tell you what you need to know.

## **Write a letter to the admission office**

Being wait-listed means the school has already determined you have the academic credentials; so it's the nonacademic factors that count most now. Tell them about any achievements or new information that didn't make it onto your application. Emphasize your strong desire to attend the college and make a case for why you're a good fit. You can also enlist the help of an alumnus and your high school counselor.

## **Request another (or a first) interview**

An interview can give you a personal contact—someone who can check on the status of your application.

## **Finish high school strong**

This is no time to slack off. If you're wait-listed, you may be reevaluated based on your third- and fourth-quarter grades.

## **Stay involved**

Show admission officers you're committed to sports, clubs, and other activities.

## **In the meantime, protect yourself**

Look, chances of being accepted off of a wait list are never very good, and you won't find out if you've made it in or not until after the May 1 deadline to accept admission elsewhere has passed. So:

## **Reconsider the colleges that have accepted you**

Your next-best choice isn't a bad choice—otherwise you wouldn't have applied there. Send in that deposit and plan to attend. You'll be surprised how much better you feel knowing that you have secured a place at a college that really wants you.

## **If you do get in, make sure it's still a good deal**

Pay close attention to the conditions attached to being wait-listed; you may lose priority housing or financial aid options. Be sure to carefully compare the financial aid awards before you decide to forfeit your deposit and place at the other college.

## **Realize that you've already achieved something**

Don't beat yourself up. You were wait-listed, not turned away. Many students were not as successful.