Undergraduate Admission

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Admission Philosophy

At Carnegie Mellon, we select our first-year class from a large group of very qualified candidates. We don’t use a calculation to arrive at our admitted class. Calculations can’t take into account all of the factors we consider when making admission decisions. No single grade, factor, score or activity will automatically gain or deny you admission to Carnegie Mellon. We treat every applicant as an individual and take great care to make our admission decisions fair, thorough and sensitive. We’re interested in students who can be successful at Carnegie Mellon while taking full advantage of all the university has to offer and enriching our campus community.

Admission Criteria

The majority of our applicants are admissible and could be successful at Carnegie Mellon. We use a variety of factors (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/admission-consideration/) to select our first-year class from those admissible candidates.

Our admission process is designed to select a highly talented, diverse undergraduate population with high aspirations who will succeed at Carnegie Mellon. If you’re applying to academic programs, your high school performance will be a significant factor in our admission decision because it’s the most meaningful indication of your motivation and abilities. We pay close attention to your curriculum rigor, the grades you’ve earned and the work you’ve accomplished. We’re interested in seeing that you’ve challenged yourself within your secondary school environment. If you’re applying to programs in the arts, your artistic performance will be either the main factor or a significant factor (depending on the program) in our admission decision.

Standardized test scores add to our knowledge of your preparation, but we don’t make decisions on the basis of test scores alone. SAT and ACT scores are completely optional, but if you choose to provide them, they’ll work with your secondary school record to make up the academic portion of your evaluation. SAT Subject Tests are neither required nor recommended and aren’t considered in our admission process.

Your non-academic activities, including extracurricular accomplishments, part-time jobs, hobbies and community service also play a very important role in the admission process. We also consider leadership, motivation, out-of-class recognition, community and volunteer service and other experiences when making admission decisions. Our students make Carnegie Mellon an exciting campus. The positive qualities and diverse experiences you bring with you will enrich our community. By looking at this non-academic information, we develop a sense of your personality, motivation and responsibility.

Because we want to have a sense of who the applicant is as a person, we look closely at your Common Application essay, your short answer questions, your secondary school counselor’s evaluation and your secondary school teacher’s recommendation.

We don’t consider demonstrated interest in our admission process. Demonstrated interest is a term used in undergraduate admission that describes the ways in which a prospective student shows a college that they’re interested by visiting campus and submitting additional materials that aren’t required in the application. As a result, we don’t consider a campus visit or communication with the Office of Admission or other members of the Carnegie Mellon community when making admission decisions.

Carnegie Mellon doesn’t collect or review criminal history information as part of the admission process. However, individuals who are admitted to Carnegie Mellon will be required to disclose any past criminal conviction as part of the enrollment process. Learn how Carnegie Mellon considers criminal history information here (https://www.cmu.edu/hub/consumer-information/#criminaljustice).

Different Criteria for Different Colleges

Each college/program at Carnegie Mellon has admission criteria specifically related to each course of study.

Admission to the Schools of Drama and Music is based primarily on a pre-screen, audition or portfolio review (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/fine-arts-admission/). Applicants to the Schools of Architecture, Art and Design will be evaluated only on the basis of their portfolio review (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/fine-arts-admission/) but also on their academic performance.

Applicants to the College of Engineering, Mellon College of Science, School of Computer Science and Tepper School of Business will be evaluated on their academic performance, with emphasis on strength in mathematics and science. Applicants to the Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Information Systems program will be evaluated on their academic performance, with emphasis on reading and comprehension abilities along with mathematics coursework. We’ll also evaluate both groups of applicants based on their ability to communicate thoughts and ideas in writing.

Applicants should be aware of our admission requirements (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/undergraduate-admission-requirements/) (secondary school preparation, nonacademic information and counselor and teacher recommendations) when submitting applications.

Applying as a First-Year Student

If you’re applying to Carnegie Mellon as a first-year student entering in fall 2021, here’s how to apply. Graduate students should refer to the Graduate Education website (https://www.cmu.edu/graduate/admissions/) for application instructions.

1. Complete the online Common Application (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/) and submit the $75 application fee by the application deadline (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/). If you’re applying to the College of Fine Arts, there are additional fees (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/fine-arts-admission/) for your pre-screen, audition and/or portfolio. While these fees are required, payments are waived for students with a College Board/NACAC fee waiver or any of the Common Application’s listed economic indicators. If you have one or more of these, note this on your registration form and/or Common Application.

2. Request that your secondary school counselor submit all high school transcripts, including senior year courses, mid-year grades and a school profile, to the Office of Admission (preferably online) as close to the deadline as possible. Visit our website (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/) for Early and Regular Decision deadlines.

3. Apply for admission only to the specific college(s) or programs in which you’re interested.

a. Rank your program and/or major preference. Regular Decision and Early Admission applicants may apply to a maximum of two colleges/programs but are typically considered for their highest-preference academic program.

b. If you’re applying to more than one college/program, there’s no need to submit multiple applications and no additional application fee. However, your Carnegie Mellon writing supplement answers should describe your interest in each program.

c. Be sure to review the academic requirements (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/academic-requirements/) for each college/program.

d. Early Decision and transfer candidates will only be considered for their first choice college/program.

4. If you’re applying to the College of Engineering, Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Information Systems, Mellon College of Science, School of Computer Science, or Tepper School of Business, we strongly urge you to indicate a program and/or major preference at the time you apply. Although you might not declare a major until the end of your first or second years, we do limit access to certain majors, such as Electrical and Computer Engineering.

5. If you’re applying to the College of Fine Arts, apply directly to one of the following schools: Architecture, Art, Design, Drama or Music. If you’re applying to the School of Music, an additional pre-screen/audition/portfolio review fee of $30 is required. If you’re applying to the School of Drama, an additional pre-screen/audition/portfolio review fee of $45 is required. If you’re applying to the School of Art, Architecture or Design, an additional portfolio review fee of $15 is required. These fees are payable when you reserve your pre-screening, audition or portfolio review on our website (http://cmu.edu/admission/finearts/).

6. If you choose, submit standardized testing scores. The ACT and SAT are optional this application year, and SAT Subject Tests aren’t considered in our admission process. Review our standardized test requirements (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/standardized-test-requirements/) for more details.
1. If you choose to submit test scores, you must submit official scores electronically through College Board, ACT or the Educational Testing Service (ETS). When you register for the test, request that an official score report be sent directly to Carnegie Mellon. Make sure your name, address and birthdate on your application matches the information used to register for these tests. The Carnegie Mellon SAT code number is 2074 and the ACT code is 3534.

2. You may submit your application before we receive your official score reports.

3. You may also choose to have your counselor submit a copy of your SAT or ACT score report in place of ordering an official copy if the cost of additional score reports is prohibitive. International applicants must submit all official scores electronically through the College Board or ACT.

4. Standardized testing should be completed by October for Early Decision and November for Regular Decision. Results of the March tests arrive too late to receive any consideration.

5. Submit English language proficiency test results if English isn't one of your first languages. We recommend the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) for students without English as a first language. Carnegie Mellon requires (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/) standardized test requirements: TOEFL or IELTS scores of 7.5 or above. Please arrange to have these scores sent by the appropriate deadline (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/).

6. If you're applying to the College of Fine Arts, complete a pre-screen, audition or portfolio review requirements (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/). The Schools of Art, Architecture, Design, Drama and Music require that students apply to the university before registering for a pre-screen, audition or portfolio review. There's no Early Decision consideration given for Acting, Directing, Dramaturgy, Music Theater or the School of Music.

7. Sign the “Confidentiality Statement” on the Common Application School Report Form and give it to your secondary school counselor for completion. Your counselor should submit this form to the Office of Admission along with the school profile and your transcript.

8. Choose a teacher to complete the Common Application Teacher Recommendation Form and make sure it's submitted to the Office of Admission by the application deadline (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/).

9. If you're applying to the Schools of Drama or Music, apply by December 1. You must also submit your supporting materials by December 1. Submissions after December 1 may not be considered.

10. If you're applying for financial aid, please visit the Applying for Aid section of our website (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/applying-for-aid/) for more information. All students who require financial aid must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) (http://www.fafsa.gov). Carnegie Mellon's federal code is 003242. You must also complete the CSS Profile (https://profileonline.collegeboard.com) and submit signed copies of parent/guardian and student tax documents.

Application Notification

- Students applying under the Early Decision Plan will be notified of our decisions no later than December 15.

- Students applying under the Regular Decision Plan will be notified of our decisions no later than April 1.

- Students who are applying for financial aid will also receive financial aid decisions no later than April 1 provided they submitted their financial aid forms by the February 15 financial aid deadline.

If you're offered admission and wish to enroll at Carnegie Mellon, you're required to pay an $800 non-refundable enrollment deposit by May 1 in order to reserve your place in the first-year class and in university housing. This deposit will be credited to your first semester's charges. The admission staff assumes that a student's deposit to Carnegie Mellon is their only order to reserve your place in the first-year class and in university housing. If you're admitted, you're in an agreement to enroll, so this isn't the best plan if you want to compare financial aid offers from other institutions. We give three admission decisions for students applying this way: admit, deny or, in rare cases, defer to Regular Decision. This isn't for you if you're applying to Acting, Directing, Dramaturgy, Music Theater or the School of Music, if you're under the age of 17 or if you're applying Early Admission.

If you apply Early Decision, we encourage you to submit applications to other colleges/universities. However, you must agree to withdraw these applications if notified of Early Decision acceptance.

Applying Early Decision won't affect your overall admission decision. Students applying Early and Regular Decision are admitted at almost exactly the same rate.

Regular Decision (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/)

This is our most popular application option. You'll apply to up to two colleges by January 4 (December 1 for Drama and Music applicants). You'll be notified of your decision no later than April 1. Admitted students will have until May 1 to accept our offer of admission.

Early Admission (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/)

This is a rare opportunity for highly qualified high school juniors to apply early to Carnegie Mellon. Early Admission is ideal for mature, responsible juniors who have exhausted their high schools' most rigorous courses. Like Regular Decision, Early Admission applicants must apply by January 4.

While the campus environment is rich in educational and social opportunities, students younger than traditional college age often face unique challenges in becoming acclimated to the university community. It's the responsibility of students under the age of 17 and their parents to contact the Dean of Student Affairs Office to discuss services and resources available in addressing their specific needs. Only students 17 years of age or older are permitted to reside in university housing. The university doesn’t participate in any homestay programs.

Applying as a Transfer Student

Each year, Carnegie Mellon admits a very small number of transfer students (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/transfer-admission/) where space permits. The policy for transferring into Carnegie Mellon varies from college to college. If you’re interested in transferring into one of our academic programs, we must first make sure there’s space available in your program of interest. Please note that space in these programs is extremely limited. If there’s space, we’ll look closely at your official college transcript, professor recommendations, high school grades and test scores (all SAT, ACT or TOEFL/IELTS scores, if available). If you don’t have official ACT or SAT results, there’s no expectation to submit them.

In the College of Fine Arts, most transfer applicants are required to complete a pre-screen, audition or portfolio review (http://cmu.edu/admission/finearts/).

Transfer Application Instructions

1. Apply for admission to your specific college of interest, noting departmental preference if applicable. Transfer students will only be considered for one college.

Engineering, DC, IS, MCS, SCS or Tepper:

- Fall transfer is possible if space is available.
- Spring transfer is extremely limited due to space constraints.
- External transfers are unable to apply to BXA programs.

CFA:

- Only fall transfer is available for fine arts applicants.
- Transfer applicants are considered alongside first-year applicants and are likely to be given first-year status.
University Housing for Transfers

University housing isn’t guaranteed for transfer students. Housing Services has a webpage available to help you locate housing accommodations (https://www.cmu.edu/housing/our-communities/find-housing/off-campus-housing/) in the local area in the event that campus housing isn’t available.

Transfer Credit Evaluated on Individual Basis

The college/school to which you’re admitted will determine transfer credit for courses you’ve taken at other universities. No transfer credit evaluations are offered prior to application. Transfer credit is considered on an individual basis. We may award elective credit for courses with no Carnegie Mellon equivalent.

Transfer credit for courses you’re taking while we’re reviewing your existing college/secondary/high school and college transcripts may be pre-screened. Transfer credit for courses you’re taking while you’re attending Carnegie Mellon is evaluated after your application is complete. For courses that are evaluated after you’re admitted, you’ll be notified of the university degree requirements when we accept or decline your course work for admission.

If you’re applying to the College of Fine Arts, you must complete any pre-screen, portfolio or audition requirements (http://admission.cmu.edu/admission/finearts/) by the appropriate fine arts application deadline. If you’re applying to the School of Music, the additional pre-screening/audition or portfolio review fee is $50. If you’re applying to the School of Drama, the pre-screening/audition or interview/portfolio review fee is $115. These fees are payable at the time of reserving your audition online. If you’re applying to the School of Architecture, School of Art or School of Design, the additional portfolio submission fee is $15.

Applying as an International Student

International students should apply to Carnegie Mellon using the same procedures outlined for either first-year or transfer students. Also note this additional information (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/international-admission/international-students/):

- Carnegie Mellon doesn’t offer financial aid or installment plans to international students. International students aren’t eligible for application fee waivers.
- If English isn’t one of your first languages, you’re required (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/international-admission-requirements/) to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Carnegie Mellon requires TOEFL scores of 102 or better on the iBT TOEFL or an IELTS score of 7.5 and above. Sub-scores are also carefully reviewed, with consideration given to those with sub-scores of 25 or more on the TOEFL or 7.5 or more on the IELTS. Carnegie Mellon doesn’t superscore TOEFL results. Please arrange to have these scores sent by the appropriate deadline (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/application-plans-deadlines/).

If you live in mainland China and can’t take the TOEFL iBT, we’ll accept results of the alternate TOEFL iTP test plus a video speaking interview from Verican. While the TOEFL iBT and TOEFL iBT Special Home Edition remain our preferred TOEFL testing solutions to demonstrate English language proficiency, Carnegie Mellon will accept TOEFL iTP results and the Verican speaking interview until students in mainland China can again take the TOEFL iBT in nationwide testing centers. If you take the TOEFL iTP/Verican interview tests, you don’t need to retake either TOEFL iBT version when they become available.

InitialView interviews are recommended for non-native English speakers but aren’t required. Often these interviews can measure readiness for engagement in the classroom and also showcase a student’s personality, likes and dislikes, as well as the area of intended major. InitialView interviews can show English language proficiency while also corroborating the application with more details about the student.
Advanced Placement Consideration

Advanced Placement Program
Carnegie Mellon recognizes the Advanced Placement program and may grant advanced placement and credit for test scores of four or five (http://admission.cmu.edu/pages/standardized-test-requirements/). When you take the tests, be sure you request that the results be sent to Carnegie Mellon.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE PROGRAM
Carnegie Mellon also recognizes the International Baccalaureate Examination and may grant advanced standing and/or credit in various fields if scores on the higher level examination range from six and seven. (http://admission.cmu.edu/pages/standardized-test-requirements/) Make sure you send these examination results to Carnegie Mellon.

College-Level Work
We may grant placement or credit for college work you’ve completed while in high school. Please have your college transcript(s) sent to Carnegie Mellon for transfer credit evaluation. Please send the descriptions of the college courses as well.

Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Carnegie Mellon recognizes the Cambridge GCE A-Level (advanced level) examinations in various higher-level subjects and may grant advanced placement and/or credit for exemplary grades (http://admission.cmu.edu/pages/standardized-test-requirements/). Please note that we don’t accept GCE “O” level examinations for placement.

Special Administration Results during COVID-19
If your AP or IB tests were impacted by COVID-19, you may still be able to receive credit. Carnegie Mellon will accept official test results from AP special testing administrations offered during COVID-19 and taken at home. We’ll also accept calculated official IB results if your IB tests were canceled because of COVID-19. For more information, visit the university registrar’s site (http://cmu.edu/hub/registrar/registration/ap-transfer-credit.html).

College of Fine Arts Requirements
Detailed information may be found on the Office of Admission website (http://cmu.edu/admission/finearts/).

Deadlines
• Early Decision applicants must submit a complete admission application, including any required artistic evaluation, by November 1.
• Regular Decision applicants to Drama and Music must apply and make all pre-screen, audition or portfolio review reservations (http://cmu.edu/admission/finearts/) by December 1.
• Regular Decision applicants to Art, Architecture and Design must apply by January 4 and submit their portfolio (http://cmu.edu/admission/finearts/) no later than January 15.
• We recommend that you apply for admission as early as possible in order to register for a pre-screen, audition or portfolio review (http://cmu.edu/admission/finearts/), which fill on a first-come, first-served basis.

Communicating Admissions Decisions
• Final admission decisions aren’t made at the time of your audition or portfolio review. We’ll consider the artistic evaluation alongside the rest of your application and notify you of your admission decision no later than April 1 (December 15 for Early Decision applicants).

Visit our http://cmu.edu/hub/registrar/registration/ap-transfer-credit.html for details regarding the specific requirements for fine arts auditions and portfolio reviews.

BXA Intercollege Degree Programs
The BXA programs (https://www.cmu.edu/interdisciplinary/programs/) are intercollege degree-granting programs designed for students who’d like to combine and blend their interests in the fine arts and either computer science (BCSA), humanities/social sciences (BHA) or natural sciences/mathematics (BSA). To apply for a BXA program, select the College of Fine Arts school you wish to apply to. We’ll then ask if you’d like to be considered for a BXA program.

BACHELOR OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND ARTS (BCSA)
To be considered for the BCSA program, you must apply and be admitted to both CFA and MCS (you must select a CFA school and MCS major on the Common Application).

BACHELOR OF HUMANITIES AND ARTS (BHA)
To be considered for the BHA program, a student must apply and be admitted to both CFA and DC (you must select a CFA school and DC major on the Common Application).

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE AND ARTS (BSA)
To be considered for the BSA program, a student must apply and be admitted to both CFA and MCS (you must select a CFA school and MCS major on the Common Application).

In your accompanying application essay, please describe your interdisciplinary goals in both areas and how the BXA program would provide the opportunity and framework for you to accomplish these objectives. This essay is a central component in the selection process. You do not need to complete another essay. If you are selected for this program, you will be notified in your admission decision letter.

BXA options aren’t available for those applying to the School of Drama for Music Theater or Acting, or for external transfer applicants. Under Early Decision, BXA is only available for the School of Architecture, School of Art, School of Design and School of Drama options in Design/Production. Not all students admitted to both colleges are selected for a BXA program.

Exploring Carnegie Mellon
College visits are some of the best ways to discover which school is right for you. We offer both online visit opportunities and, once it’s safe to welcome you face-to-face, in-person visit opportunities. Here are just a few ways to experience Carnegie Mellon from home, on campus and in your area.

Carnegie Mellon Online
Virtual Campus Tours
When you can't make it to campus, we've got you covered. Our Tartan Ambassadors are hosting live Virtual Tours (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/remote_campus_visit/) so you can experience Carnegie Mellon’s campus from anywhere in the world. These Virtual Tours will offer you the opportunity to explore our campus while hearing more about the Carnegie Mellon experience.

Remote Information Sessions
Our remote Information Sessions (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/remote_campus_visit/) are live events designed for you to learn more about the Carnegie Mellon experience. Led by our admission counselors, these hour-long webinars feature student stories, faculty highlights and detailed information about academics, student life and the admission and financial aid processes. You’ll also have an opportunity to ask questions.

Carnegie Mellon Snapshot
If you’re looking for an abbreviated information session that’s still rich in content, check out our Carnegie Mellon Snapshot webinar (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/remote_campus_visit/). The Snapshot includes a 20-minute university overview and 10-minute counselor Q&A. The information session provides essential information on our colleges and programs and our admission and financial aid processes, while the Q&A is your opportunity to ask an admission counselor any of your questions.

Remote Admission Counseling Session
We're currently offering remote admission counseling sessions (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/adm_counseling_session_videocon/) for rising high school juniors and seniors. These virtual sessions allow students approaching the time of application to ask an admission counselor questions and seek guidance about Carnegie Mellon’s unique colleges/programs and the admission process. Students and their families can join these sessions via video or phone call. Admission counseling sessions last about 20-30 minutes and allow time for parents or families to ask questions.
Carnegie Mellon On Campus

Campus Tours
Campus tours (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/campus_visit/) are conducted by Andrew Ambassadors. We offer tours most weekdays and weekends during the academic year.

Admission Counseling Sessions
An admission counseling session (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/campus_visit/) gives rising high school seniors and their families the opportunity to ask questions about our admission process. You’ll meet with an admission counselor ready to guide you through admission policies, our unique colleges/programs, financial aid or anything else you’d like to learn.

Celebration of Diversity Weekend
The Celebration of Diversity weekend (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/celebration-of-diversity-weekend/) is a fly-in program open to all students and their families interested in Carnegie Mellon. The festivities stretch over three days and offer unique chances to meet Carnegie Mellon staff, professors and other prospective students.

Turn Tartan Overnight Weekends
The more information you have, the better decisions about college you’ll make! The Admission staff invites you to learn more about Carnegie Mellon by living like a university student for a day and a half in our Turn Tartan Overnight (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/turn-tartan-overnight/) program. Visits begin on Sunday morning and last through Monday afternoon.

Information Sessions
The Office of Admission offers information sessions (https://admission.cmu.edu/portal/campus_visit/) throughout the year. The session offers an experiential look at the university through student and faculty stories. You’ll have the opportunity to learn more about Carnegie Mellon’s areas of study, admission, financial aid and the city of Pittsburgh.

Departmental Tours and Events
If you want a closer look at one of Carnegie Mellon’s programs, many departments offer prospective students the chance to tour facilities, attend an information session or meet with a faculty member while on campus. You can learn more about these events on our website (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/departmental-tours-events/).

Contact Carnegie Mellon for Assistance
If you need assistance while visiting campus, please contact us at admission@andrew.cmu.edu or 412.268.2082. We’ll help meet your needs during your visit!

Getting to Campus
We want your trip to go as smoothly as possible. Plot out your trip with our Travel and Accommodations (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/pittsburgh-travel-accommodations/) page and set a course for Carnegie Mellon with our Maps & Directions (http://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/maps-directions/) page!

Carnegie Mellon in Your Area

Information Sessions Near You
We realize that it’s not always possible for you to come to campus. The Admission staff does travel to different parts of the country and may offer information sessions in a city near you. Check our website (https://admission.enrollment.cmu.edu/pages/visit-carnegie-mellon-in-a-city-near-you/) to find out if we’re coming to your area.