Application FAQs

At Southwestern University, we value all our applicants and want to help you understand how we make decisions and what you can expect from us. Our intent is to treat all applicants fairly and with respect. In all cases our decisions are reached by individuals reviewing the application and voting in a manner they believe is in the best interest of both the student and Southwestern University.

We take our responsibility seriously and realize that we are dealing with the lives and future directions of our applicants, who have honored us by their statement of interest in our educational community.

When my application arrives, how will you notify me of what you have received, and what you still need to complete my application?

If we have the minimal required items (your application, $40 application fee or fee waiver, high school counselor recommendation, high school transcript and the results of either the SAT or ACT), we will send you notification that your application is complete. If we do not have the above-required items, the notification will inform you of what is still needed. For incomplete applications, a second notification will be sent once the required items are received.

Will you ask for additional information other than those items mentioned above?

Yes. In some cases we will ask for mid-year grades (first semester of your senior year), college transcripts for dual credit work, additional recommendations or a personal interview.

Whose responsibility is it to be sure my application is complete?

Ultimately, it is your responsibility. Beyond our reminders, you are encouraged to contact your admission counselor whenever you have questions. For example, when we ask for mid-year grades and/or a personal interview, you must take responsibility for being sure the additional grades are received by Southwestern and the interview is completed.

If I have questions about my application, whom do I contact?

You are assigned to an admission counselor based on the location of your high school. If you have any questions about which admission counselor is working with you, please call our office at 800-252-3166, 512-863-1200 or visit our counselor Web page at: www.southwestern.edu/admission-finaid/adm-counselors.html. Your admission counselor is your "advisor" and "guide," representing you and your application through the admission, scholarship and financial aid process.

How important is the individual interview?

We STRONGLY RECOMMEND personal interviews with ALL applicants by February 1. These can occur on or off campus. Individual hotel interviews are offered annually in several Texas cities and a number of locations outside Texas. When a student lives a considerable distance from Southwestern and has not been able to arrange for an interview in person, a phone interview can be requested. It should be noted that phone interviews are rarely as illuminating as those done in person. In some cases, the lack of a personal interview can result in an admissible candidate being offered admission to the wait list.

Who reads the application, and how are decisions made?

Our admission decisions are governed by procedures established each year by the Admission Committee. Membership on the committee consists of four faculty members, each from one of the three academic divisions in The Brown College of Arts and Sciences and one from The Sarofim School of Fine Arts. The remainder of the committee includes all members of the admission staff.

The committee allows the admission staff to make decisions in most cases. The admission counselor assigned to you does the first review of your file once it is complete. At this point, mid-year grades or a personal interview could be requested before final review. If your credentials meet certain criteria established by the committee, your admission counselor may vote on your application and send your file for additional staff reviews.

In recent years, about 10 to 15 percent of our decisions have been made by the full Admission Committee. When this occurs, each faculty member has a vote, and there are four votes from the admission staff. A majority of the voters must support your application for an acceptance to be possible. Generally, if you do not rank in the top quartile of your high school class, score below 1150 on the SAT (critical reading and math combination) or 24 on the ACT, or if you do not have the recommended college preparatory courses, then your application will be reviewed by the entire Admission Committee to determine if an offer of admission will be made.

When will I be notified of my admission decision?

This is determined by your method of application, your overall academic credentials and when your application becomes complete.

A. Early Decision applicants with completed applications will receive notification by December 1. The majority of students will either be offered admission or denied admission. A few students may be deferred to a later decision date when we believe new information is necessary and potentially supportive of a positive decision.

B. Regular Decision applicants with completed applications will receive notification by April 1. Some students with very strong credentials will be offered admission on a "rolling" basis. Rolling decisions occur once the application is complete. We begin reviewing applications in September of each year and try to give priority to Regular Decision applications received before January 1. We typically have more qualified applicants than we have available spaces in the entering class. This usually means more applicants are held until late March, at which time we mail our final decisions.

Southwestern University

2007
2008

Application Instructions

Application

Fill out the Southwestern University Application for Admission and Merit Scholarships as carefully and completely as possible. Feel free to attach additional sheets of paper if and when additional space is needed. Please label each additional sheet with your full name and address. A typed or computer-generated application is preferred unless your handwriting is very legible.

While not necessary, you also may wish to submit a sample of your creative work (poetry, photography, art, music, research, etc.). Because we are unable to return materials that you submit, please send only copies, slides, CDs or photographs. In addition, the Office of Admission is unable to forward any materials submitted as part of the student's application to any other institution.

Mail your application along with a $40 application fee (made payable to Southwestern University) or approved fee waiver in the enclosed envelope.

Essay

This is your opportunity to tell us more about yourself as a person and distinguish yourself from others in ways not directly related to courses, grades, test scores, etc.

Counselor Recommendation and Mid-Year Report

These are required elements of your application to Southwestern University. As an official document from your high school, it provides general information necessary in our decision making. Please request that mid-year grades be sent as soon as they are available after the first semester, but no later than March 1. An official transcript should accompany each of these documents.

Optional Recommendations

Although not required, every applicant to Southwestern University is encouraged to submit a Teacher Recommendation and/or a Parent/Guardian Recommendation. You should ask a teacher who has taught you in an academic subject and knows you well enough to speak to your academic accomplishments. The Parent/Guardian Recommendation form should give us a more personal observation of your background, interests and ambitions.

Interviews and Campus Visits

While not required for admission review, an official campus visit and interview are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED and may be considered as a factor in the overall evaluation process. Personal interviews for scholarship consideration must be conducted by February 1. To schedule your visit or interview, please call 800-252-3166.

Early Decision Applicants

Students for whom Southwestern is their clear first choice may apply under Early Decision. We strongly encourage students to submit all supporting materials by November 1, but no later than November 15. The student will be notified of admission by December 1. Ours is a binding program: if admitted, the enrollment and housing deposit of $500 (made payable to Southwestern University) will be due by January 10, and the student must withdraw applications from all other schools. Early Decision applicants also must file the Early Decision Commitment enclosed in this packet.

Regular Decision Applicants

Students are encouraged to complete an application as early as possible in the senior year. In many cases, the Office of Admission tries to give priority to applications received before January 1. Students applying by the merit scholarship deadline must submit an application postmarked no later than January 15. All other applications must be postmarked no later than February 15. All regular decision applicants will be notified no later than April 1.

Late Decision Applicants

Students applying after February 15 will be considered late applicants and will receive admission consideration on a space-available basis only. It is not uncommon for late applicants that we consider admissible to be offered a waiting list option until space becomes available.

Waiting List

Because Southwestern is a residential campus with a commitment to providing campus housing for all students offered admission, some students may be placed on a waiting list of admissible applicants. First-round waiting list decisions are made mid-May. Final waiting list decisions are typically made by the end of June.

Enrollment Deposit

Following an offer of admission, and if you choose to attend Southwestern University, you will be required to send a nonrefundable enrollment and housing deposit of $500 (made payable to Southwestern University) by May 1 (Early Decision applicants must deposit by January 10). The May 1 National Candidate's Reply Date is established by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC), of which Southwestern University is a member. Students are to commit to just one college or university. Please remember to withdraw applications from all other schools once you have submitted your deposit to your school of choice.

Housing

Living on campus is an important element of the collegiate experience. To assist in the transition to college and to enhance academic success, all new students are required to live on campus. Because several housing options are available, it is to your advantage to notify the Office of Admission as soon as you have reached a decision. The order in which deposits are received will determine the priority list for meeting housing preferences. Housing brochures and applications will be mailed to accepted students in February.

A Note to Transfer Students

This application is intended for college-bound high school students. Transfer students should fill out the Common Application for Transfer Admission at www.commonapp.org. For deadline dates, criteria and general information call 800-252-3166 or visit our transfer Web page at www.southwestern.edu/admission-finaid/adm-transfer.html.

Southwestern University

Application Checklist

To the Applicant

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the arrival of all materials necessary to complete their application, including transcripts and recommendations from high school counselors and teachers. Applicants also are responsible for contacting the Office of Admission to determine whether their files are complete prior to deadline dates.

Required

☐ ***SOUTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION AND MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS***
Complete all parts of the application and return to Southwestern University in the enclosed envelope. Please be sure to make or print a copy for your records. To access our online application, visit www.southwestern.edu.

☐ ***APPLICATION / SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY***
The written essay must be submitted with the Application for Admission and Merit Scholarships.

☐ ***APPLICATION FEE***
Enclose a nonrefundable application fee of $40 (made payable to Southwestern University) or approved fee waiver with your application. Do not send cash. In cases of financial hardship, the fee may be waived through the College Board fee waiver program or upon written request from your high school counselor.

☐ ***EARLY DECISION COMMITMENT***
If you are applying Early Decision, you must return the enclosed Early Decision Commitment form, with all required signatures, with your application. This document is not required for Regular Decision applications.

☐ ***SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION & TRANSCRIPT***
Complete the top portion of the enclosed Secondary School Counselor Recommendation form. Give the form to your high school counselor who will return it, along with your official high school transcript, to the Southwestern University Office of Admission.

☐ ***MID-YEAR REPORT***
Complete the top portion of the Mid-Year Report form and give the form to your high school counselor. The Mid-Year Report must be submitted as soon as grades are available, but no later than March 1.

☐ ***STANDARDIZED TEST SCORES***
If your Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT) results or your American College Test (ACT) results do not appear on your high school transcript, arrange for a formal report of all college entrance examinations to be sent to Southwestern University directly from the testing agency. Southwestern's identification code for the SAT is 6674; for the ACT it is 4186. College Board SAT Subject Tests are not required. Students whose first language is not English must take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Southwestern's identification code for the TOEFL is 6674.

☐ ***FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS***
A completed Certification of Finances Form and a Bank Verification Statement will be required of all international applicants. Visit our International Student Web page for links and information (www.southwestern.edu/admission-finaid/adm-intl.html).

Optional

☐ ***TEACHER RECOMMENDATION***
Complete the top portion of the Teacher Recommendation form. Ask a teacher who has taught you in an academic subject within the past two years to complete the form and return it to the Southwestern University Office of Admission. Extra Teacher Recommendation forms are available at www.southwestern.edu.

☐ ***PARENT/GUARDIAN RECOMMENDATION***
Provide your parent(s) or guardian(s) with the enclosed Parent/Guardian Recommendation form and ask them to return it to the Southwestern University Office of Admission upon completion.

Strongly Recommended

☐ ***PERSONAL INTERVIEW AND CAMPUS VISIT***
While not required for admission review, and official campus visit and interview are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED and may be considered as a factor in the overall evaluation process. Personal interviews for scholarship consideration must be conducted by February 1. To schedule your visit or interview, please call 800-252-3166.

Criteria for Admission

To reach admission decisions, Southwestern evaluates all candidates in a comprehensive manner using the following criteria. Students selected are those presenting the most competitive applications and considered most likely to become successful, contributing members of our community.

Academic Record is the most important element used in making admission decisions at Southwestern. A minimum, recommended college preparatory course sequence includes: four years of English, four years of mathematics, three years of science, three years of social science and/or history, two years of the same foreign language and at least one year of an academic elective (17 academic units, minimum). The number of courses identified as advanced placement, honors or accelerated is considered, along with overall preparation and performance.

SAT or ACT standardized test results are required and considered for admission, without prescribed minimum levels. The middle 50% of all first-year students is typically scored between 1150 and 1350 on the SAT (critical reading and math combination only) and between 24 and 29 on the ACT. Southwestern uses the highest score submitted for the student in decision making.

The Essay is required of all candidates who complete an application to Southwestern University. The essay provides a sample of original written work and further insight into the candidate.

Extracurricular Activities are reviewed to assess what a candidate has accomplished outside of the classroom, noting leadership and volunteer positions held, breadth of experience and sustained interest in individual activities.

A Recommendation is required from the high school counselor. Teacher and parent recommendations are optional, although highly recommended. All recommendations provide further information about the student's personal, academic and intellectual abilities and achievements.

The Personal Interview, while not required for admission review, allows a candidate to learn more about Southwestern and to discuss elements of his or her application file with a member of the admission staff. Interviews are STRONGLY RECOMMENDED and may be considered as a factor in the overall evaluation process. Interviews at Southwestern are evaluative and are used in both admission and scholarship decisions. Applicants are encouraged to conduct a personal interview by February 1. To schedule your visit or interview, please call 800-252-3166.

Financial Aid Checklist

- ☐ ***EDFAF***
  Due **December 1** for Early Decision students applying for financial aid based on need.*
- ☐ ***FAFSA***
  Due **March 1** for Early Decision and Regular Decision students applying for financial aid based on need. The FAFSA is available at www.fafsa.ed.gov.
- ☐ ***FAFSA VERIFICATION FORM***
  Some students will be randomly selected to verify information. Complete and submit to the Financial Aid Office as soon as possible.*
- ☐ ***SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES FORM***
  May be used if you have unusual circumstances not addressed in the data collected on the FAFSA. Complete and submit form to the Financial Aid Office as soon as possible.*

*You can access these forms and other information on our Financial Aid Web site at www.southwestern.edu.

Merit Scholarships

For Merit Scholarship consideration, applications must be received by January 15. The application for admission serves as the application for merit scholarships. No additional forms are necessary. All candidates are screened for scholarship eligibility. Personal interviews related to scholarship evaluations must be conducted by February 1.

Students eligible for merit scholarship consideration typically rank in the top 25% of their class and score at least 1200 on the SAT (critical reading and math combination only) and 27 on the ACT. Students planning to be considered for merit scholarships should complete all required components of the application by the January 15 deadline date. We consider academic achievement, personal attributes, demonstrated leadership in extracurricular activities, personal interviews and the written essay when making scholarship evaluations.

Scholarships in the general program range from $2,000 to full tuition, room and board. Students may be considered for a variety of scholarships. Please refer to the Southwestern University Merit Scholarship Program brochure for the most current scholarship information.