



How many colleges should you apply to?

A common recommendation is that students should apply to six colleges with some going as high as ten. These recommendations usually suggest applying to a certain number of [Reach](#), Match, and [Safety](#) schools. These are often defined in terms of where your academic record places you relative to those students the colleges accept.

There are several other factors that influence how many colleges you should apply to. The first is cost. Each school adds another [college application fee](#) and college test score reports. For the more competitive colleges, this can add up quickly.

Some high schools have placed limits on the number of colleges students can apply to by restricting the number of counselor letters students may request.

Another consideration is the actual time involved in completing the applications. While the [Common Application](#) has made it easier to apply to multiple colleges at once, many colleges require supplemental essays that will require extra time to complete.

In the past, students might apply to many schools to increase their chances of receiving financial aid. The use of [Net Price Calculators](#) should allow students to target schools most likely to meet their financial aid needs.

However, [merit aid](#), non-need based aid that colleges award as [scholarships](#), isn't easily predicted by most Net Price Calculators. Therefore, students will still have to apply to a variety of colleges to maximize their chances of receiving merit money.

For students looking for financial aid, merit or need-based, ten schools is a reasonable number. Ultimately, students should not increase the number of colleges they apply to as a way to compensate for failing to [research](#) their options before applying.

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