

Q&A for Denied Students

1. How does the University of Pennsylvania make its decisions?
 - The Office of Undergraduate Admissions reviews all applications carefully, and all decisions are made by the Admissions Committee. An applicant's academic profile (transcripts, grades and standardized testing), letters of recommendation (Secondary School Report and two Teacher Recommendations) and personal inventory (essays, extracurricular and co-curricular activities) are considered. While a student's academic profile and extracurricular achievements are important, there is no formula for admission.
2. How can a student be sure that every component of the application was considered? (e.g. an extra letter of recommendation, the latest SAT scores, teacher recommendations)
 - An application will only be reviewed if all required pieces of the application have been received, and the Admissions Office evaluates all additional pieces that are submitted. Each application receives a very thorough review.
3. Was the applicant's legacy status considered?
 - Yes. Legacies are given maximum consideration during Early Decision, but family affiliation with Penn is noted in all undergraduate applications - Early Decision, Regular Decision, and Transfer.
4. Can an applicant learn why he or she was not admitted?
 - Please note that the staff of the Alumni Council on Admissions does not make admissions decisions and therefore, we are not privy as to why one application may be accepted over another. Given the size and selectivity of the applicant pool, it is not always feasible for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions to provide feedback to students. **In most cases, there is nothing "wrong" with a candidate's application. Approximately 80% of all applicants are "qualified for Penn," with outstanding academic and non-academic credentials. With a limited number of spaces in the class, the Admissions Office is forced to make some very difficult decisions.**
5. Why wasn't the application deferred or waitlisted?
 - The Admissions Committee always considers these options, but they prefer to give a final decision to applicants as soon as possible. Historically, a low percentage of deferred or waitlisted applicants are ultimately admitted. While a clear decision of "deny" is difficult to receive, it does allow the student to focus efforts on other colleges and universities.
6. Can the applicant appeal this decision?
 - No, all decisions are final.
7. May a student reapply to Penn for another program?
 - A student is permitted to apply to the University of Pennsylvania only once during an academic calendar year. If a student would like to re-apply, they may do so during the following academic year.
8. Does the University of Pennsylvania accept transfer students?
 - Yes, the University of Pennsylvania has a Transfer Admissions Application process. The University only permits fall entry for transfers and expects that students will have at least one year of college work completed prior to enrollment, but no more than two years of college work.
9. Because the applicant was denied, the alumnus no longer wants to be associated with Penn.
 - We understand the disappointment of our alumni, and we thank them for voicing their concerns. While there is nothing we can do to change what has occurred, we do take their sentiments to heart. We want prospective students to have a positive experience throughout the admissions process, especially our legacy candidates. We realize the circumstances may put a strain on an alumnus' relationship with the University, but we hope our alumni will regain a sense of pride regarding their affiliation with Penn.