



FAST TRACK ADMISSIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *for High School Partners*

WHAT IS FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

Fast Track Admission is a new pilot program in South Dakota that lets high school seniors bypass the college application process for participating universities based on their academic achievements. Students will receive a Fast Track Admission notification through the United States Postal Service and via email in late September. To activate their acceptance status, students must complete a Fast Track Activation Form which will be provided with their September notification.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOLS ARE PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM?

During the 2024-2025 school year, high schools in three school districts will participate in the Fast Track Admission pilot program. Those districts include the Aberdeen, Spearfish, and Sioux Falls school districts. Only students enrolled in those participating high schools are eligible to participate. The program aims to expand to additional South Dakota high schools in future years.

WHICH COLLEGES ARE PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM?

South Dakota has both comprehensive regional and research universities participating in the Fast Track Admission pilot program. These include the following:

- Black Hills State University, Main Campus – Spearfish
- Black Hills State University – Rapid City (non-residential)
- Northern State University – Aberdeen
- South Dakota State University – Brookings
- University of South Dakota, Main Campus – Vermillion
- University of South Dakota – Sioux Falls (non-residential)

WHO OVERSEES FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

The South Dakota Board of Regents coordinates the Fast Track Admission program. The pilot is a partnership between the selected high schools, participating universities, and the Board of Regents.

HOW WILL INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS FIND OUT ABOUT FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

High school staff are encouraged to begin conversations about Fast Track Admission with seniors at the beginning of the school year. Students will receive the official Fast Track Admission communication in September, notifying them of their automatic admission opportunities to a specific list of schools. High schools will be provided with an FAQ document designed for students and parents, a printed and digital fact sheet for students and parents, promotional posters, and other informational materials to be used by staff and/or students. School districts will receive optional social media graphics, newsletter copy, and website copy that can be used to share information about Fast Track Admission with their students and families.

WHAT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA ARE USED TO DETERMINE FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

Students eligible for Fast Track Admission are high school seniors who (1) are on track to graduate in the spring with a regular high school diploma and (2) have a GPA of 2.0 or greater at the end of their junior year.

Students with a GPA of 2.0 – 2.59999 will gain Fast Track Admission to four university campuses:

- Black Hills State University, Main Campus – Spearfish
- Black Hills State University – Rapid City (non-residential)
- Northern State University – Aberdeen
- University of South Dakota – Sioux Falls (non-residential)

Students with a GPA of 2.6 and above will gain Fast Track Admission to six university campuses:

- Black Hills State University, Main Campus – Spearfish
- Black Hills State University – Rapid City (non-residential)
- Northern State University – Aberdeen
- South Dakota State University – Brookings
- University of South Dakota, Main Campus – Vermillion
- University of South Dakota – Sioux Falls (non-residential)

WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SENDING THE LETTERS? ARE THEY PHYSICAL LETTERS?

To maximize students' privacy, the Board of Regents, partnering with the high schools, will send letters and e-mails notifying students of their Fast Track Admission.

HOW WILL THE BOARD OF REGENTS OBTAIN THE LIST OF STUDENTS AND ADDRESS INFORMATION FOR THOSE WHO SHOULD RECEIVE FAST TRACK ADMISSION LETTERS?

Participating high schools will provide the Board of Regents data files of information regarding eligible high school seniors (SDCL 13-28-50) for the purpose of post-secondary opportunities. The following information is required by late August or early September.

- Student Name
- Student Email
- Student ID
- Student Home Address

ARE THERE FINANCIAL AID, SCHOLARSHIPS, OR GRANTS ASSOCIATED WITH FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

No, there are no scholarships or grants associated with Fast Track Admission. However, all students should be encouraged to complete the FAFSA as part of their college search process and research funding opportunities at each university. When selecting their universities, students should contact the university admissions offices to learn more.

OurDakotaDreams.com provides additional resources on the estimated cost of colleges, financial aid information, and scholarships.

WHAT DO STUDENTS DO ONCE THEY GET THEIR FAST TRACK ADMISSION LETTER?

To participate, students must activate their Fast Track Admission by selecting their university or universities of interest on the Fast Track Activation Form found with their Fast Track Admission letter, or by visiting sdbor.edu/fast-track.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A STUDENT SUBMITS THEIR FAST TRACK ACTIVATION FORM?

The university or universities will be informed when a student selects them as a school of interest on the Fast Track Activation Form. Those universities will then communicate with students to address needs, answer questions, discuss financial aid, scholarships, etc.

DO STUDENTS STILL HAVE TO APPLY TO THE UNIVERSITY THROUGH THEIR ADMISSIONS PROCESS?

No. Students do not need to complete an application for the university or universities to which they have earned Fast Track Admission. However, they must complete the Fast Track Activation Form included with their Fast Track Admission notification letter. If a student is interested in attending a university not participating in the Fast Track Admission program or a university they have not been directly admitted to, they should apply through that university's admission process.

IS THERE ANY COST TO THE SCHOOL OR STUDENTS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM?

Participating in this Fast Track Admission pilot program is free for the school, students, or families.

AM I ADMITTED TO ALL MAJORS OR PROGRAMS WITH THE FAST TRACK ADMISSION PROGRAM?

Fast Track Admission guarantees students general admission into a university. Some programs or majors may have additional admissions criteria or require an additional application, portfolio submission, or other steps as determined by the school. Students interested in space-limited or capped programs should work with the university to understand the additional steps required.

ARE WE ALLOWED TO SHARE STUDENT DATA (NAMES, ADDRESSES, TRANSCRIPTS) WITH YOU?

Yes. South Dakota Codified Law provides authority to share mailing lists. In addition, participating high schools, the South Dakota Department of Education, and the South Dakota Board of Regents complete the necessary data-sharing agreements and memorandums of understanding to ensure compliance with all applicable data privacy and security regulations.

WHY WAS OUR SCHOOL SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE?

The South Dakota Board of Regents and the Fast Track Admission workgroup sought participation from high schools that represent multiple geographic regions in the state. The initial pilot high schools have a university presence in their location.

WILL THIS INCLUDE INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS WANTING TO ENTER TRADE PROGRAMS?

South Dakota technical colleges are not part of the current pilot program.

WHAT HAPPENS IF A STUDENT DOES NOT GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL?

Fast Track Admission requires a high school diploma to be eligible for admission. Students who complete a GED may apply through the university application process.

