



FAST TRACK ADMISSIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS *for Students and Families*

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 from participating districts will receive a notification through US mail and email during the fall listing the universities where they have earned automatic acceptance – without even having to apply! Students must then activate their Fast Track Admission by selecting their universities of interest on the Fast Track Activation Form provided with their notification.

HOW DID I GET SELECTED FOR FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

Your high school volunteered to participate in the Fast Track Admission program, and you were included because the South Dakota Board of Regents determined that you are (1) on track to graduate and (2) meet the specific academic criteria for general admission the universities identified in your Fast Track Admission letter.

WHERE CAN I GO FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

Check out the Fast Track Admission website at sdbor.edu/fast-track for more information! If eligible students have questions, please complete their Fast Track Activation Form, so the universities of their interest can work with them directly.

WHAT HIGH SCHOOLS ARE PARTICIPATING?

During the 2024-2025 school year, high schools in three school districts—Aberdeen, Spearfish, and Sioux Falls — are participating in the Fast Track Admission pilot program. 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.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE FAST TRACK ADMISSION PROGRAM?

The Fast Track Admission program aims to help students easily transition from high school to college. By removing the traditional application process and assuring students they have already met admissions criteria, we hope to reduce students' anxiety around accessing college so they can focus on which school is their best fit based on interests and financial aid opportunities.

DO I HAVE TO PARTICIPATE IN FAST TRACK ADMISSION?

Fast Track Admission doesn't obligate you to attend any of the universities on your list.

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)

South Dakota technical colleges are not part of the current pilot program. The South Dakota Board of Regents and the Fast Track Admission workgroup felt the program should start small and with institutions under its jurisdiction.

HOW DOES THE SOUTH DAKOTA BOARD OF REGENTS HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT DATA (NAMES, ADDRESSES, TRANSCRIPTS)?

South Dakota Codified Law (13-28-50) allows school districts to share directory information with the South Dakota Board of Regents. In addition, participating high schools, the South Dakota Department of Education, and the Board of Regents completed the necessary data-sharing agreements and memorandums of understanding to ensure compliance with all applicable data privacy and security regulations. To share a high school transcript, applicants must complete the Fast Track Activation, and consent must be given by either a student over 18 or the parent/guardian of a student under 18.

Questions About Next Steps:

WHAT DO I DO ONCE I RECEIVE MY FAST TRACK ADMISSION LETTER?

The first thing you should do is activate your Fast Track Admission by selecting your school(s) of interest on the Fast Track Activation Form found with your notification letter.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I SUBMIT MY FAST TRACK ACTIVATION FORM?

After you submit your Fast Track Activation Form, representatives from your universities of interest will follow up with you to address needs, answer questions, discuss financial aid, scholarships, etc. You will not be committed to any institution until you notify an admissions representative that you've made the decision to enroll to their campus.

Turn over!

CAN I ACCEPT MY APPLICATION AT MORE THAN ONE COLLEGE LISTED ON MY FAST TRACK ADMISSION LETTER?

Yes! Selecting more than one school can be a great idea, especially if you're still deciding what you want to study. Be sure to name all the colleges of interest when you submit your FAFSA. This will ensure you receive financial aid information for all potential schools; use this comparison to help you make your final choice.

WHAT IF I CHANGE MY MIND ABOUT THE INSTITUTIONS I AM INTERESTED IN AFTER I SUBMIT MY FAST TRACK ACTIVATION FORM?

No problem! If you want to update the information you originally entered into your Fast Track Activation Form, you can submit a brand-new Fast Track Activation Form without the need to edit your original form.

DO I STILL NEED TO COMPLETE AN ADMISSIONS APPLICATION?

No! You do not need to complete an application for the universities you have been directly admitted, however some majors may have additional requirements. You just need to activate your Fast Track Admission by selecting your school(s) of interest on the Fast Track Activation Form included with your notification letter. If you are interested in colleges not on your Fast Track Admission list, please apply through their regular application process.

DO I NEED TO PAY AN APPLICATION FEE TO ANY OF MY FAST TRACK ADMISSION COLLEGES?

No, participating universities are waiving application fees for students who have earned Fast Track Admission.

WHAT IF I ALREADY APPLIED TO SOME COLLEGES ON MY FAST TRACK ADMISSION LIST? WILL THIS AFFECT MY APPLICATION?

No need to worry about any applications you may have already submitted! Your application will still be processed and there is no need to re-apply. Please note that if you have already paid an application fee, it will not be refunded.

WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO ATTEND A SCHOOL LISTED ON MY LETTER?

No problem! If you do not want to attend one of the schools listed in your Fast Track Admission letter, do not select that school on the Fast Track Activation Form.

DO I STILL NEED TO TAKE A PLACEMENT TEST OR STANDARDIZED TEST LIKE ACT OR SAT?

While the universities participating in the Fast Track Admission program do not require students to submit ACT or SAT scores, students should still consult their websites to learn more about their current testing recommendations. Be aware that certain scholarships require an ACT or SAT score.



Questions About Choosing a College:

DO I HAVE TO ATTEND ONE OF THE SCHOOLS LISTED ON MY LETTER?

No! Fast Track Admission just shows which schools you've been accepted to without applying.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT A SCHOOL?

The best place to get more information about programs or campus life is to visit each university's website or at *OurDakotaDreams.com*. When you select the school(s) you are interested in, university representatives will follow up to provide information. Campus visits are also a great way to learn more!

I DON'T SEE THE COLLEGE THAT I'M INTERESTED IN ON MY FAST TRACK ADMISSION LETTER. DOES THAT MEAN I CAN'T BE ADMITTED THERE?

Just because you don't see a college of interest on your list, doesn't mean you can't be admitted there. It just means either the necessary academic criteria weren't met for automatic admission or the college you are looking for isn't participating in the Fast Track Admission program. You are encouraged to complete applications to any colleges you are interested in even if you weren't offered Fast Track Admission.

Questions About Paying for College:

HOW CAN I RECEIVE HELP WITH PAYING FOR COLLEGE? DO I STILL APPLY FOR FINANCIAL AID?

We encourage all students to apply for financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) which is used to determine eligibility for both federal and state financial aid programs. Grants are based on the cost of the college chosen, family size, and income.

CAN I GET A SCHOLARSHIP OR FINANCIAL AID FOR ATTENDING A FAST TRACK ADMISSION SCHOOL?

There is not a scholarship connected with your Fast Track Admission offer, but we encourage all students to complete their FAFSA as soon as possible to determine all financial aid they may be eligible for. Colleges themselves also offer many scholarships, so you'll want to check with your top choices to learn more and apply. Additional financial aid information and scholarship resources can be found on Our Dakota Dreams.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT WHAT COLLEGE COSTS?

The best place to get up-to-date information on tuition and fees is through the college website. However, you can learn more generally about the cost of college attendance at *OurDakotaDreams.com*. Please note that listed costs are likely to be before financial aid is applied, so your actual costs may vary depending on your financial aid eligibility.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FINANCIAL AID?

The federal Student Aid website or the Our Dakota Dreams website are great places to start. You may also want to check out the financial aid section of each college you are interested in to find out more about their deadlines and application process for scholarships and other types of college funded aid.