ADMISSION

Dating back to the founding of Rice University, our first president, Edgar Odell Lovett, mandated that we aspire to be a world-class university of the highest standing. Dr. Lovett challenged us “to assign no upper limit to our educational endeavor.” He envisioned students and faculty as a community of scholars, their minds exercised by spirited discourse (John Boles, A University So Conceived: A Brief History of Rice, p. 17, third rev. ed. 2006). Therefore, as an integral part of the university’s mission, we seek a broadly diverse student body where educational diversity increases the intellectual vitality of education, scholarship, service, and communal life at Rice. We seek students, both undergraduate and graduate, of keen intellect and diverse backgrounds who not only show potential for success at Rice, but also who will contribute to the educational environment of those around them. Rice selects a group of applicants who, considered individually and collectively, will take fullest advantage of what we have to offer, contribute most to the educational process at Rice, and be most successful in their chosen fields and in society in general. Our evaluation process employs many different means to identify these qualities in applicants. History shows that no single gauge can adequately predict a student’s preparedness for a successful career at Rice. For example, we are cautious in the use of standardized test scores to assess student preparedness and potential. An applicant is considered in competition with all other applicants. In making a decision to admit or award financial aid, we are careful not to ascribe too much value to any single metric, such as rank in class, grade point average, or standardized test scores.

We use a broader perspective that includes such qualitative factors as the overall strength and competitive ranking of a student’s prior institution, the rigor of his or her particular course of study, letters of recommendation, essays, responses to application questions, and (where required) auditions and portfolios. Taken together with a student’s academic record and test scores, these additional factors provide a sound basis to begin assessing the applicant’s potential on all levels.

Beyond indicators of academic competence, we look for other qualities among applicants, such as creativity, motivation, artistic talent, and leadership potential. We believe that students who possess these attributes in combination with strong academic potential will contribute to, and benefit from, a more vibrant, diverse educational atmosphere. Through their contributions and interactions with others, students will enrich the educational experience of all faculty and students. These qualities are not revealed in numerical measurements, but are manifested in the breadth of interests and the balance of activities in their lives.

Rice University strives to create on its campus a rich learning environment in which all students will meet individuals whose interests, talents, life experiences, beliefs, and world views differ significantly from their own. We believe that an educated person is one who is at home in many different environments, at ease among people from many different cultures, and willing to test his or her views against those of others. Moreover, we recognize that in this or any university, learning about the world we live in is not by any means limited to the structured interaction between faculty and students in the classroom, but also occurs through informal dialogue between students outside of the classroom.

To encourage our students’ fullest possible exposure to the widest possible set of experiences, Rice seeks through its admission policies to bring bright and promising students to the university from a range of socioeconomic, cultural, geographic, and other backgrounds. We consider an applicant’s race or ethnicity as a factor in the admission process and believe that racial and ethnic diversity is an important element of overall educational diversity. Though race or ethnicity is never the defining factor in an application or admission decision, we do seek to enroll students from underrepresented groups in sufficient and meaningful numbers as to prevent their isolation and allow their diverse voices to be heard. We also seek students whose parents did not attend college as well as students from families with a well-established history of college-level education. Rice places a premium on recruitment of students, regardless of their races or ethnicities, who have distinguished themselves through initiatives that build bridges between different cultural, racial, and ethnic groups. In so doing, we endeavor to craft a residential community that fosters creative, intercultural interactions among students, a place where prejudices of all sorts are confronted squarely and dispelled.

In assessing how well an applicant can contribute to enlivening the learning environment at Rice, we also try to determine the relative challenges that he or she may have faced. For economically disadvantaged students, this may mean achieving a high level of scholastic distinction while working a job in high school. For a first generation college student, it might mean achieving high standards for academic success within an environment relatively indifferent to intellectual attainment. Or it might mean overcoming a disability to excel in sports, music, or forensics. For students who do not have particular disadvantages, we also look at whether they chose a more challenging road than the normal path through high school. This might mean an especially strenuous course of study, a prolonged, in-depth engagement in a school project, or a particularly creative and wide-ranging set of extracurricular activities.

Rice does not view offers of admission as entitlements based on grades and test scores. Our admission process combines an examination of academic ability with a flexible assessment of an applicant’s talents, experiences, and potential, including potential diversity contributions; it precludes any quick formula for admitting a given applicant or for giving preference to one particular set of qualifications without reference to the class as a whole. Rice is a highly selective institution and receives many more applications from viable candidates than it has available spaces. An inevitable consequence of Rice’s approach is that some highly accomplished students will not be admitted. However, by selecting a wide range of matriculants of all types, the admission process seeks to enrich the learning environment at Rice and thus improve the quality of a Rice education for all students.

Due to the nature of the Rice education, Rice admits undergraduate degree candidates on a full-time basis only.

Applicants are selected on a competitive basis in six academic divisions: architecture, engineering, humanities, music, natural sciences, and social sciences. Candidates should give careful consideration to the category under which they wish to be considered. However, once enrolled, students are able to move freely among most divisions after consultation with their advisors. Music students must pursue the music program for at least the first year before changing divisions. The schools of music and architecture maintain limited enrollments; all majors are subject to faculty approval.

Those offered admission are expected to complete the remainder of their high school courses with the same superior performance that led to their admission.

First-Year Applicants

The areas of focus generally used in evaluation of first-year candidates for admission include: scholastic record as reflected by the courses taken
and the quality of academic performance, recommendations from high school, the application presentation of personal information, special talents, essays, and standardized testing.

The High School Record—Students must complete at least 16 college preparatory units as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory Science (e.g. biology, chemistry, physics)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A foreign language</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional credits in any of the categories above</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The natural science and engineering divisions require trigonometry (precalculus) or other advanced mathematics courses and both chemistry and physics. Students may substitute a second year of chemistry or biology for physics.

Students admitted with curriculum deficiencies will be asked to complete the required work by taking high school or college-level courses during the summer before enrollment at Rice.

Note: Because of the admission competition to enter Rice, successful applicants generally have taken 20 or more college preparatory courses in high school, many at the college level. Therefore, only those students who have more than 20 college preparatory courses may have the Office of the Registrar consider for Rice credit their college courses taken in high school.

Transfer of Coursework Taken During High School—College-level courses taken during high school years may be considered for credit at Rice University on receipt of the following documentation:

1. An official transcript of all college courses sent directly from the college(s) attended. The college courses should be part of the normal curriculum of the college and taught by regular members of the college faculty.
2. Official notification by letter from the high school principal or guidance counselor that the credit earned was not used to meet high school diploma requirements. College-level courses that appear on the high school transcript will not yield credits at Rice.

Recommendations—Candidates must submit evaluations from their counselor and two teachers. At least one teacher recommendation should relate to the applicant's intended area of study, and both should highlight their academic strengths and contributions in the classroom.

The Application—All first-year applicants must complete the Common Application, the Coalition Application, or the QuestBridge Application. The application and the Rice supplement provide the committee with important information on the student's background and gives the applicant an opportunity to provide statements on his or her interests, experiences, and goals. The application fee is $75. Students for whom this fee creates a hardship may apply for a waiver. First-year applicants should provide proof of a fee waiver for the SAT or ACT test, or a NACAC fee waiver form, or eligibility for the school free or reduced lunch program. In any case, a letter from the student's high school counselor is required. Financial stress created by application fees to other institutions is not considered a valid reason to grant a fee waiver.

Standardized Testing—All first-year applicants for Fall 2020 must submit at least one of the following:

- SAT (Reading/Writing/Language and Math). The SAT Essay is optional.
- ACT. Writing is optional.

These exams are administered by the College Board and the American College Testing Program. Applicants attending U.S. high schools can submit either self-reported or official scores during the application process. Admitted students who choose to enroll at Rice will be required to submit official test scores prior to matriculation. First-year applicants who will graduate from high schools outside the U.S. and all transfer applicants will be required to submit an official score report at the time of application. Rice uses the highest scores from any sitting on the SAT and the ACT in order to consider each applicant's most positive test results.

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate English proficiency, which can be achieved in one of two ways. Those who have received two years of full-time instruction in English at a high school or college are not required to submit English proficiency testing. Applicants who have not received two years of full-time instruction in English must submit official test scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The minimum acceptable score on the TOEFL Internet-based test is 100 or a 7.5 on the Paper-delivered test. The minimum acceptable score on the IELTS is a seven.

In addition to the standardized testing requirement, Rice recommends applicants submit two SAT Subject Tests related to their proposed area of study.

To be considered official, all scores must be sent directly from the testing organization. Rice's College Board code is 6609, our ACT code is 4152, and our TOEFL code is 6609.

Personal Interview—Although a personal interview is not a requirement, we recommend an interview for first-year applicants as an excellent opportunity to discuss the applicant’s interests, needs, and questions. On-campus interviews are conducted by the admission staff and a select group of Rice senior students. Off-campus interviews are conducted throughout the United States and abroad by Rice alumni. Important dates regarding interviews can be found on the admission website. The Rice Admission Committee makes no distinction between on-campus and off-campus interviews. Interviews are available to high school seniors only.

Music Audition—All applicants to the Shepherd School of Music must submit all required documents by December 1. An Audition Profile Form, preliminary recording, or portfolio of composition on music history is also required.

Architecture Portfolio—Architecture applicants must submit a portfolio along with the required application materials by the deadline for either the Early Decision or Regular Decision Plan.

Decision Plans

Early Decision Plan—Early Decision is a binding decision plan designed for students who have selected Rice as their first choice. Students may initiate applications to other colleges under nonbinding plans but must withdraw those applications if admitted to Rice.

Early Decision applicants must complete the required standardized testing prior to or by the November testing dates in their senior year.
All other materials should be submitted by November 1. Admission notices will be mailed by mid-December. The admission committee will admit, defer, or deny Early Decision applicants. Deferred applicants are considered with the Regular Decision pool.

It is important to note that, if admitted under Early Decision, a candidate must withdraw all other college applications, may not submit any additional applications after accepting the offer, and must accept Rice’s offer of admission by submitting a $300 nonrefundable deposit by January 1. An additional $100 housing deposit is required of those desiring on-campus accommodations.

Those accepted under Early Decision who demonstrate financial aid eligibility will receive a financial aid package in the admission packet. To apply for need-based aid, Early Decision applicants must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS PROFILE) and the student and parent income tax and W-2 forms by November 15, 2019. Complete the FAFSA at [https://fafsa.gov/](https://fafsa.gov/). Rice’s FAFSA code is 003604. Register for the CSS PROFILE at [https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile](https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile). Students will complete the PROFILE online. The PROFILE number for Rice is 6609. For more detailed information go to [https://financialaid.rice.edu](http://financialaid.rice.edu/).

**Regular Decision Plan**—Students who apply Regular Decision must submit their materials by January 1 to receive notification by April 1. Candidates who miss the deadline must do so in full knowledge that they are in a less competitive position. Regular Decision applicants must complete their standardized tests by December of their senior year of high school.

Regular Decision applicants who are offered admission must submit a $300 enrollment deposit by May 1 to reserve their places in the incoming class. Those who desire a room on campus must pay an additional $100 deposit. Enrollment deposits are not refundable.

Those accepted under Regular Decision who demonstrate financial aid eligibility will receive a financial aid package in the admission packet. To apply for need-based aid, Regular Decision applicants must submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), the College Scholarship Service Profile (CSS PROFILE) and the student and parent income tax and W-2 forms by March 1, 2020. Complete the FAFSA at [https://fafsa.gov/](https://fafsa.gov/). Rice’s FAFSA code is 003604. Register for the CSS PROFILE at [https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile](https://student.collegeboard.org/css-financial-aid-profile). The PROFILE number for Rice is 6609. For more detailed information go to [https://financialaid.rice.edu](http://financialaid.rice.edu/).

**Shepherd School of Music**—All candidates applying to the Shepherd School of Music must submit their application and all required supporting documents by December 1. Admission notification is April 1. Admitted students must submit a $300 nonrefundable deposit by May 1.

**Rice/Baylor Medical Scholars Program**—All candidates interested in the Rice/Baylor Medical Scholars Program must submit the Baylor College of Medicine application to Rice University by December 1. Rice application materials are due by November 1 for Early Decision or December 1 for Regular Decision.

**Accelerated Students**

Rice University will accept applications from students who are completing high school in less than four years. It is important to note that these students will compete with other candidates who will be completing four years of high school. Therefore, it is the candidates’ responsibility to demonstrate that they have exhausted all college preparatory course work at their schools. Further, because of the residential focus and commitment to student self-governance at Rice, candidates must also demonstrate the maturity and personal development that would allow them to participate fully and responsibly in campus life. Because of the unique circumstances surrounding the accelerated student, it is strongly recommended that these candidates have an on-campus interview with an admission officer well before the application deadline.

**Home-Schooled Applicants**

Rice recognizes that each home-schooled applicant is in a unique educational program. To ensure that our evaluation process is fully informed, home-schooled applicants are encouraged to provide clear, detailed documentation of their curriculum of study, assessment tools, and learning experiences. Rice requires a recommendation from an applicant’s counselor and two teachers. For home-schooled applicants, at least one of these recommendations must be from someone not related to the student.

**Transfer Students**

Students with superior records from two-year or four-year colleges or universities may apply as transfer candidates. Applicants should have completed at least 12 semester hours of college work since graduating from high school. Students with less than 12 semester hours should apply through the first-year admission process. High school students enrolled in an Early College program or Dual Enrollment program are not eligible to apply as transfer students and should apply through the first-year admission process. Students who have already completed a bachelor’s degree may not apply for transfer admission.

Applicants for transfer admission must file the following with the Office of Admission:

- The Transfer Common or Coalition Application and Rice supplement.
- Official transcripts of all high school and college work completed to date, as well as courses in progress
- Professional evaluation of transcripts from non-U.S. institutions. Recommended evaluators are [SpanTran](https://www.spantran.com/) and [Education Credential Evaluators](https://www.ece.org/).
- Two college instructor recommendations
- The college official’s report
- SAT or ACT
- A $75 application fee (non-refundable)

Applications with the appropriate documents must be submitted by March 15. Rice receives applications only for the fall term. Notification of the admission decisions are made on a rolling basis between May 1 and June 1. The criteria used in evaluating transfer applications are similar to those applied to applicants for the first-year class, except that special emphasis is given to performance at the college level. Because of the highly competitive nature of transfer admission, it is recommended that applicants have a minimum 3.20 (4.00 scale) grade point average on all college work. The SAT must be taken by December 2019 or the ACT must be taken by February 2010.

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate English proficiency, which can be achieved in one of two
ways. Those who have received two years of full-time instruction in English at a high school or college are not required to submit English proficiency testing. Applicants who have not received two years of full-time instruction in English must submit official test scores from the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). The minimum acceptable score on the TOEFL Internet-based test is 100 or a 75 on the Paper-delivered test. The minimum acceptable score on the IELTS is a seven.

Students for whom the $75 application fee creates a hardship may apply for a waiver. Transfer applicants must send a copy of the Student Aid Report that they receive after completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) along with a request for a fee waiver to the Office of Admission. Financial stress created by application fees to other institutions is not considered a valid reason to grant a fee waiver. U.S. citizens, permanent residents, DACA students, and undocumented students who have lived in the United States for an extended period of time are eligible for an application fee waiver.

Transfer students must be registered in residence at Rice for at least four full semesters during the fall or spring terms and must complete no fewer than 60 semester hours before earning a Rice degree.

**Advanced Placement/International Baccalaureate/International Certificate Programs**

**Advanced Placement**—Students who score a four or five on the applicable Advanced Placement College Board examinations taken before matriculation at Rice may receive university credit for the corresponding Rice course(s). For more information, see AP Credit ([https://registrar.rice.edu/students/ap_credit/](https://registrar.rice.edu/students/ap_credit/)).

**International Baccalaureate**—Students who complete the International Baccalaureate diploma and receive a score of six or seven on a higher-level IB exam may receive course credit for the corresponding Rice course(s). For more information, see IB Credit ([https://registrar.rice.edu/students/ib_credit/](https://registrar.rice.edu/students/ib_credit/)).

**International Certificate Programs**—Students who have completed various international certificate programs may receive course credit for corresponding Rice courses; however, each student’s documentation will be reviewed individually and on a case-by-case basis. The General Certificate of Education A-Level (United Kingdom), the Abitur (Germany), and the Baccalaureate (France) are eligible for review. For more information, see International Exam Credit ([https://registrar.rice.edu/students/international_exam/](https://registrar.rice.edu/students/international_exam/)).