

Grinnell College

Office of International Admission

Frequently Asked Questions from International Students

Grinnell College understands that applying to colleges from outside the United States can be a particularly daunting task - often without the benefit of face-to-face contact with an admission counselor or an opportunity to visit campus.

These pages have been designed by admission staff and students to provide thorough answers to the most commonly asked questions we receive from international applicants. We hope that you will find the organization and content of this section helpful. Please use it often as your first and most comprehensive source for information, but do let us know if you have questions that are not addressed in this forum.

You'll notice that some of the information here is provided elsewhere on the Grinnell website. For your convenience, however, we've attempted to consolidate all of the internationally relevant information on this page. Below are the general categories of arrangement.

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APPLICATION TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS

- ***What are the requirements for applying for admission as an international student?***

If you are applying as a first-year student please refer to our [Instructions for International Students](http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/international/) (<http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/international/>) to see a detailed list of the requirements for applying to Grinnell College. Please note: this is general list and additional documentation may be requested on a case-by-case basis.

- ***How do I determine if I should apply as an international student or a domestic student?***

To determine this we look at your citizenship, not where you are currently living. For example, if you are a US citizen who is currently living abroad, you will apply as a domestic student and you are eligible for the same federal financial aid opportunities as other domestic students.

Conversely, if you are living in the U.S. but you do not have U.S. citizenship or permanent residency (green card) you will be required to apply as an international student.

- ***Can I apply for entry in the Spring semester?***

No, we only accept international and first-year and transfer students for the Fall semester.

- ***Can an international student apply Early Decision?***

Grinnell welcomes Early Decision (ED) applications from international students. We offer two Early Decision programs. **The ED I application deadline is November 15 and the ED II deadline is January 2.** Both options are the same except for their deadlines. Historically, the admission rate for Early Decision candidates has been higher than the admission rate for Regular Decision candidates.

When applying Early Decision, it is required that you read, understand, and submit the signed [Early Decision Agreement](https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/DownloadForms.aspx) (<https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/DownloadForms.aspx>.) You may not apply ED to more than one school and you must enroll if you are admitted under ED. You will also need to submit the [International Student Financial Aid Application](#) by the ED deadline.

ED applicants will be considered for any merit or need-based awards for which they are eligible. Eligible students would be packaged the same way they would as Regular Decision candidates. Students admitted ED will receive any applicable financial aid packages with their admission letter on their specified ED notification date; typically 3-4 weeks following the ED deadline.

If you have high need and are most interested in being considered for one of our highly competitive, comprehensive International Special Scholarships, you should apply as a Regular Decision candidate. These scholarships are awarded by special review committees which do not make their final recommendations until early spring.

If you begin an Early Decision application but are unable to complete their application by the deadline, you may have your application transferred to the Regular Decision pool upon request. Students denied in the Early Decision pool may not reapply or reactivate their applications for Regular Decision consideration in the same year.

When considering the Early Decision option, you might want to read the commentary on this page: <http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/options/earlydec/>

INTERNATIONAL TRANSFER STUDENTS

- ***If I have attended a post-secondary institution but would like to start my studies over, can I apply as a first-year student?***

No, if you have been enrolled full-time in any post-secondary educational institution, your application to Grinnell would be considered a transfer application. There are cases where students do not wish to apply as a transfer student and would rather start their university studies over again at Grinnell. This is, however, not an option available at Grinnell. All university-level course work must be assessed for transfer.

- ***What are the requirements for applying for admission as an international transfer student?***

If you are applying as a transfer student, please refer to <http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/international/transfer2/> to view our international student transfer policy online.

- ***I have graduated from secondary school, but have not yet attended a college or university. Under what status should I apply?***

You would apply as an international first-year student under either of the Early or Regular Decision options, but there is an additional requirement in this case. We require the submission of a supplementary short-answer essay to 'Describe your activities since your high school graduation.'

ACADEMIC CREDENTIALS

- ***Do I have to submit the TOEFL?***

We require the TOEFL for all international applicants. However, Grinnell College will typically waive the TOEFL requirement for any of the following reasons upon request:

- 1) you have a score of 600 or more on your SAT I Critical Reading section
- 2) you have studied at least 3 years of high school in the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, or New Zealand
- 3) you are a current sophomore in a US college or university and have earned satisfactory grades in humanities and social sciences courses.
- 4) UWC schools

Once we receive proof of one or more of the above conditions through receipt of your SAT score report or transcripts, we will automatically waive the TOEFL requirement in our database. The waiver should then be reflected on your Pioneer Web account.

Please Note: We do not accept the SAT II results in lieu of the TOEFL.

- ***May I still submit my TOEFL Score Report even if I meet one of the TOEFL waiver conditions?***

Yes. We suggest that you submit your score report if you already sat or plan to sit for the TOEFL exam. Presenting a strong TOEFL score, regardless of whether it is required, can only help your case for admission.

- ***Do you accept the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) exam?***

We will accept the IELTS in lieu of the TOEFL and we require a minimum score of **6.5**.

- **What are the minimum scores that you require for the TOEFL and SAT I or ACT?**

The minimum TOEFL requirement for admission to Grinnell College is 80 for the IBT (Internet-Based TOEFL) and 550 Paper-Based. Because of the high demands placed on our students in terms of reading and writing, we tend to look for applicants who can demonstrate a very strong command of the English language. For the class that is entered in August 2009, the average TOEFL score is 106 internet-based.

If you do not meet the TOEFL waiver requirements and you do not meet Grinnell's minimum TOEFL score of 80, you will not be considered for admission.

We do not have "minimum requirements" for the SAT I scores. For students admitted to the class entering in the fall of 2009, the average SAT I Critical Reading score was 617 and the average SAT I Math score was 701.

Please Note: We do not currently consider the SAT I Writing score in our academic evaluation.

- **What is Grinnell College's institution code for requesting official score reports from SAT, ACT, and TOEFL?**

For the SAT and TOEFL it is **6252**. For the ACT it is **1318**.

- **SAT and TOEFL offer examination dates in early or mid December. This means that the exam results might not be available until after Grinnell College's January 2 Regular Decision application deadline. Will Grinnell College still accept these exam results?**

Yes, we will accept them as long as we receive them no later than early January. We highly encourage you to request a "rush" report of the results. All of the other documents for your application file must be submitted by the January 2 deadline.

We strongly encourage students to sit for these exams on or before their December administrations to ensure full consideration at Grinnell. We will not consider exam results taken after the December administration under any circumstance.

- **Do you require the SAT and TOEFL for international transfer students?**

Yes. If you took these exams in order to be admitted to your current institution of higher education we will accept a photocopy of these results. The photocopy must be sent by postal mail and it must contain an original school signature and stamp on it attesting that the results are true and accurate.

If you did not take these exams before, you will be required to take them and submit the results by the application deadline. Your application will not be considered without them. The TOEFL waiver policy which applies to first-year applicants also applies to transfer students.

- **Do you accept the SAT II results?**

These results are not required by Grinnell College, nor do we record these results in our database. However, if you submit them we will add them to your application file and they are taken into consideration when your application file is being read by our admission counselors.

- **I have only taken the O-Level exams. Do you require the A-Level's?**

Yes. For A-level candidates we require Advanced Subsidiary (or equivalent) results and A-level predictions, usually indicated in the Secondary School Report and/or the counselor/headmaster recommendation letter. Applicants submitting O-level exams results only will not be considered for admission.

This requirement also applies to students who have studied in countries with similar education paths. Examples include, but are not limited to:

Ghana: GCE or BECE must be followed by the SSSCE
India: ISSCE must be followed by the ISSE, or
ICSE must be followed by the ISC

- ***I have taken IB, AP, or A-Level courses. Can I get Grinnell College credit for them?***

Yes, Grinnell recognizes the rigor of Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and A-level programs and awards divisional credit for strong performance on these examinations. For satisfaction of graduation requirements, the credits awarded are divisional credits, not assigned to an academic department. However, an enrolled student may request permission to apply any AP/IB credits awarded toward the satisfaction of requirements for a major. First-year students are limited to a maximum of 24 pre- and post matriculation transfer credits (AP, IB, A-level, or college credit).

IB Policy: Grinnell College recognizes International Baccalaureate (IB) level work and will grant credit for examination scores of 5 or better on Higher Level courses only.

AP Policy: A student entering Grinnell will be granted four credits for Advanced Placement (AP) examinations of the College Board upon presentation of a score of 3 (or higher) [calculus (BC), computer science (AB)], 4 (or higher) [art, biology, calculus (AB), chemistry, classics, computer science (A), economics, English language/composition, environmental science, French, German, government, history, music, physics (B or C), psychology, Spanish, and statistics], and/or 5 [English literature/composition].

A-Level Policy: Upon receipt of a transcript from the British Examination Authority, the College also will grant 4 credits for each British Advanced-level examination (A-level) score of B or higher.

German Abitur or French Baccalaureat: Grinnell will award a maximum of 16 credits. Exams to be accepted by Grinnell must be in subjects where we would also accept AP scores.

CREDENTIAL SUBMISSION PROCEDURES:

- ***Can I submit my application online and send the rest of my supporting documents by mail?***

Yes. This is the method that most of our applicants use. In fact, if you apply online the \$30 application fee is automatically waived!

- ***Can I submit some of my documents now and the rest later, or do I have to submit everything all at the same time?***

You may submit your documents by either method. You are certainly welcome to submit them individually (or in small batches) as they become ready. Please be certain each document contains your full name and, if possible, your date of birth. Once these forms are received and processed we will match them up with your application file.

- ***What is the mailing address for sending my documents to Grinnell College?***

Please send them to:

Office of Admission
John Chrystal Center
1103 Park Street
Grinnell College
Grinnell, IA 50112
USA

FAX: 1(641)269-4800
Email: askintl@grinnell.edu

- ***I can't afford to send official TOEFL or SAT score reports directly from ETS or the College Board. How can I send them?***

We will accept a photocopy of the test results. This photocopy maybe sent to us by postal mail, fax, or email attachment and it must have a school stamp and signature on it attesting that the results are true and accurate.

- ***I am from a West African country. Can I send you a photocopy of my WAEC and NECO results?***

No, we require that you purchase a scratch card and send us the scratch card information by email to askintl@grinnell.edu so that we can verify your WAEC or NECO results online.

- ***Do you need my transcripts in the original language or in English?***

If your original school transcript is not already in English, we ask that you send us a copy of your transcripts in the original language and a copy that has been translated into English. At least one of these must have an original school stamp and signature on it attesting that the results are true and accurate.

We prefer that transcripts come directly from the issuing authority by postal mail. We will, however, accept a photocopy of the documents which can be submitted via fax or email attachment that would preferably contain the school stamp and signature on it attesting that the results are true and accurate.

If there is any cause for concern regarding authenticity of documents, the admission office reserves the right to contact school officials for confirmation and/or request original, stamped and signed documentation in order to complete the application file.

- ***My mid-year grades can not be sent until late January or February. What should I do?***

We recognize that there are many school systems which run on a different time-line than the U.S. school system follows. Submit everything else for your application file by the January 2 deadline and then submit your mid-year report as soon as it becomes available, preferably no later than the end of February.

- ***Can I send supplemental materials?***

While they are not required, we will gladly accept art, music, or writing samples; additional essays, letters of recommendation; and other appropriate documents if you feel that they will enhance your application.

- ***Can I pay for my application fee or admission deposit by credit card?***

Yes, you can pay these fees by credit card. Simply provide us with the following information:

- 1) your full name and date of birth
- 2) the cardholder's name exactly as it appears on the credit card
- 3) name of the credit card company (VISA, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover)
- 4) credit card number
- 5) 3-digit number on the back of the credit card
- 6) expiration date of the credit card
- 7) cardholder's complete street address, including the zip/postal code

- **How can I get an application fee waiver?**

Grinnell automatically waives the \$30 application fee for students who submit their **Common Application** (<https://www.commonapp.org/CommonApp/default.aspx>) electronically. International students are strongly encouraged to apply online. If you cannot apply online, you may submit a letter, preferably from your school counselor, explaining why you need a fee waiver. In most cases, these requests are granted.

APPLICATION REVIEW

- **What do you look for when evaluating an application?**

There are three areas that we look at very closely when considering a student for admission to Grinnell College. First, we are looking for a student who has excelled academically in a challenging program. The student's grades achieved and teachers' letters of recommendation will give us insight into the applicant's academic talents. We also look at how well a student does on the SAT or ACT tests. Another factor that we look at is extra curricular activities, or things that the applicant does in addition to being a good student. We want to see how a student occupies his or her time, whether s/he has had any leadership experience or athletic talents or musical skills. This is an effort to learn about the applicant as a whole. All three of these components make up the application review process.

- **I cannot afford to pay the full cost of a Grinnell College education. Will my financial need hurt my chances of being admitted?**

Like the majority of highly-selective, private liberal arts colleges in the US, Grinnell employs a **need-sensitive** admission policy for international students. This means that your financial aid application is considered along with all of the other components of your application during the admission evaluation. Grinnell has a substantial, but limited financial aid budget for each international class. The need-sensitive model allows us to best distribute these resources in order to enroll a high-achieving, multi-talented, and geographically diverse class.

FINANCIAL AID OPPORTUNITIES

- **Do you offer financial aid to first-year and transfer international students?**

Yes, we offer a full range of financial aid opportunities including scholarships, grants, loans and work study. Admitted international transfers student are packaged in the same way as first-year applicants. There is no financial disadvantage to applying as an international transfer student. To view our detailed international aid policies and procedures as well as projected comprehensive fees for international students, visit <http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/international/finaid>.

- **How much aid do you give to international students?**

Grinnell annually awards roughly one million dollars to each incoming international class. The average aid award for students receiving aid for the class of 2013 was \$33,342.

- ***What are International Special Scholarships and how do I apply for one?***

Grinnell offers between ten and twelve extremely competitive comprehensive scholarships that will pay for the costs associated with attending Grinnell College (comprehensive fee of tuition, room, board, and fees, plus costs to cover insurance, books, and miscellaneous expenses) that the student and the student's family are unable to cover. These scholarships are reserved for students who are either a citizen of a country listed below, or a citizen of a country in the regions listed below:

- Africa
- Eastern Europe and Eurasia
- Latin America
- Middle East
- Nepal

Regardless of citizenship:

- Native Speaker of Russian (awarded in alternate years)

All of the above scholarships are renewable for three additional years of the student's studies at Grinnell College.

Application: There is no separate application form required for the Special International Scholarships. All students who meet the citizenship requirements above will automatically be considered. Simply complete and submit the Grinnell College Application for International Student Financial Aid and Scholarships or the International Student Financial Aid Application printed by the College Board by the Regular Decision deadline.

- ***I have high financial need. If I do not win an International Special Scholarship, what percentage of my demonstrated need is likely to be met by Grinnell?***

Grinnell offers international grants that typically meet between 70% - 85% of their need as determined by Grinnell's review of the financial aid application.

- ***How do students cover the resulting financial gap of an award that does not meet their full need as demonstrated by the ISFAA or Grinnell Financial Aid Application?***

Beyond additional sponsorship and/or loans from a student's family or friends, Grinnell offers further 'self-help' sources of financial aid to international students.

- ***Are my SAT results high enough to be considered for full financial aid?***

Grinnell's financial aid awards are based primarily on demonstrated need, not on exam results; nor is there a SAT minimum score that would guarantee a particular grant or scholarship amount.

- ***Can I work on campus?***

Yes. The majority of our international students work on campus. If you have campus employment in your aid package, Grinnell will pre-assign a campus job prior to your arrival, provided you submit the employment application. That job will provide sufficient hours to earn the amount awarded or more, in some cases. These jobs pay \$8.25 per hour in Dining Services, while other jobs pay between \$7.25 and \$8.85 per hour depending on where you work. You are, of course, responsible for keeping your job through good performance.

Summer campus employment is not guaranteed, but international students may make application for these positions. International students are allowed to work up to 20 hours per week while school is in session and up to 40 hours per week when school is not in session. Students are generally assigned 8-10 hours per week. Students who do not have a campus employment component in their aid package may apply for available campus positions.

- ***Does Grinnell raise tuition every year?***

How a college handles the inevitable annual tuition increases can have a significant future impact on your financial aid situation. Like most schools, Grinnell tuition typically increases by a small percentage annually. However, unlike many schools, Grinnell increases gift aid by 100% of any tuition increase.

- ***Does Grinnell give loans to international students?***

Unless you checked the loan box on your financial aid application, Grinnell does not package loan amounts in our initial aid awards; however, the College may approve students with unmet need for low-interest loans of up to \$4,000 per year with a credit-worthy US citizen or Permanent Resident as co-signer. A co-signer guarantees to repay your loan if you are unable or unwilling to repay what you borrow.

FINANCIAL AID APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

- ***How do I apply for financial aid?***

International Students intending to apply for financial aid from Grinnell must submit either the [2010-11 Grinnell Financial Aid Application for International Students](#) or the College Board's equivalent, the [2010-11 International Student Financial Aid Application \(ISFAA\)](#). Be sure to fill in all sections completely, and if you have no funds to enter in a particular field, please enter \$0.00, instead of leaving the field blank.

The aid application and any supporting financial documentation must be completed in full and submitted by the following deadlines:

November 15, 2008 for Early Decision I
January 2, 2009 for Regular Decision or Early Decision II applicants
May 1, 2009 for International Transfer Applicants

Students that do not hold a U.S. passport may not submit the Free Application For Federal Student (FAFSA). Non-U.S. citizens who submit the FAFSA will not be considered for financial aid at Grinnell and their applications for admission will be incomplete.

- ***I do not intend to apply for financial aid. Must I still submit Grinnell's Financial Aid Application or the International Student Financial Aid Application?***

Students who do not have financial need and do not intend to apply for financial aid from Grinnell must fully complete and submit the College Board's [2010-11 Certification of Finances](#) form to verify their financial resources. They must also submit the supporting financial documentation required and ensure that signatures from all sponsors claimed are provided on the Certification of Finances.

- ***What ‘supporting documents’ are required to be submitted with the financial aid application and Certification of Finances forms?***

Supporting financial documents would include bank statements, parental salary confirmation letters, tax returns, etc. Essentially, these documents need to provide solid proof of the funding you claim on the ISFAA or CF forms. The authenticity and accuracy of these documents are also a crucial to your F-1 Student Visa application in the event that you are admitted and enroll at Grinnell. They can be submitted via fax, mail, or email attachment and need to be signed by the responsible parties on corresponding letterhead.

COMMUNICATING WITH GRINNELL COLLEGE

- ***How can I receive information and mailings from Grinnell?***

The best way to notify us of your interest in receiving information about Grinnell is to submit our online [Inquiry Form](http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/international/requestinformation/) (<http://www.grinnell.edu/admission/apply/international/requestinformation/>) If online submission is not an option, you are welcome to email your request to askintl@grinnell.edu. Please include your full name, mailing address, academic and extra-curricular interests, and desired application term within your message.

- ***I haven’t received my prospectus mailing from Grinnell yet. How long will it take?***

Grinnell updates its prospectus materials each summer and the new versions are typically delivered to our office in mid/late August. During the first week of September we do a mass mailing of these materials to all the rising seniors in our database and a weekly mailing to those who are entered as new prospects thereafter. For example, if you are a rising senior who submits an inquiry in April, you would immediately be mailed a smaller, more general packet of information; you would then be mailed the full prospectus packet in September.

For international prospectus packet delivery we use a third-class international mail service (DHL Worldmail service or other) which can result in a 2-4 week delivery time depending on your location and the efficiency of your country’s postal system.

- ***I have questions that are not addressed in the International FAQ section. Where can I direct these questions?***

We have created the askintl@grinnell.edu address as a portal for all international admissions-related inquiries. Messages sent to this account are forwarded to the appropriate staff member and we strive for a 24-hour response time. In many cases, our student interns are able to field most questions, but more complex questions will be passed to the International Application Coordinator or the Associate Dean/Coordinator of International Admission for their prompt attention.

- ***Can I contact a current international student with my questions?***

Certainly! We encourage you to submit your student-oriented questions about life at Grinnell to our askintl@grinnell.edu email address. Our student intern, Gayatri, a junior from India will be the primary respondent for this account; however, she will also be happy to connect you with current international students from your particular country or region as well.

- ***When and how will I be notified of my admission/financial aid decision?***

Your admission decision will be most immediately available on your Pioneer Web account. We will post decisions to Pioneer Web no later than April 1. For admitted students, we will mail your admission letter along with your financial aid award letter via DHL Express Courier. We will email you with the tracking number for your convenience. For students who are placed on our Alternate List or are denied admission, we will mail those notification letters via regular international mail service which may take 2-4 weeks to receive. For this reason, all applicants should use Pioneer Web as their primary source for notification.

- ***What is the "Pioneer Web" account?***

The Pioneer Web account is an online service so that applicants can monitor the status of their application and to confirm Grinnell's receipt of the various application documents and the supporting documents. Once your application for admission has been received and processed we will create a unique username and a password for each applicant. Applicants will receive notification by e-mail of his/her username and password. Using the Pioneer Web account, the applicant can see a list of the documents that have been processed for his/her application and a list of the documents that are still outstanding. The applicant can also view his/her admission decision once the applicable deadline has arrived.

- ***I would like to arrange a personal interview with a Grinnell admissions representative or alumnus in my home city. How can an off-campus interview be arranged? Will international students who are able to have personal interviews have an advantage in the admission process?***

Grinnell College does not require personal interviews, nor do we give special preference to international students who participate in on or off-campus interviews.

The International Admission Coordinator and/or his admission colleagues may offer off-campus interviews to applicants in cities included in their international admission travel schedule. The admissions office will send interview invitations to students in its database who reside in these (designated) travel areas several weeks prior to the interview day. Simply reply to the email to make detailed arrangements with the admission counselor.

Admission counselors submit written summaries of all interviews conducted. These summaries may be considered in the evaluation process, but do not weigh heavily on the ultimate decision; largely due to fairness issues, because the vast majority of our international applicants are unable to have interviews.