How and when does the admissions committee make selections from the waiting list? Does Duke rank the students on its waiting list?
May 1 is the reply deadline for students offered admission or offered a place on the waiting list. In early May, when we have been able to process all responses to our offer of admission, we determine how many, if any, spaces are left in our entering class. We then assemble the applications of the students who have indicated that they wish to remain on our waiting list, and the admissions committee reviews them again. At that point, we consider the makeup of the entering class to determine the order in which offers will be made. Since we use the waiting list to “fine-tune” the characteristics of the incoming class, and since that depends on who has already responded to our offer of admission, we do not rank students on our waiting list.

In the past few years, how many students have stayed on the waiting list and how many have subsequently been offered places from those lists?
In the last several years, around 1,000 students a year have decided to stay on Duke’s waiting list. We consider the waiting lists in Trinity College of Arts & Sciences and the Pratt School of Engineering separately. In the last decade, the number we have been able to accept from the waiting list in each school has ranged from a low of 1 to a high of 200.

Can you predict how many students will be admitted from the waiting list this year?
Unfortunately, no. We predict as well as we can how many students will accept our offer of admission, but we need to wait until May to process and analyze the actual responses. At that point we begin to determine how many students can be admitted from the waiting list.

When and how will students be offered places from the waiting list?
We will begin making offers in early May. We generally complete the admissions process by early July. If you remain on our waiting list and the committee decides to offer you a place, the Admissions Office will contact you with the offer of acceptance. Students will have one week to respond to the offer of admission. If you plan to be away for an extended period of time in May or June, please provide us with a phone number or email address where you can be reached. Once the class is fully enrolled, all students remaining on the waiting list will be notified by letter by the middle of July that we will not be offering admission to any more applicants.

How is financial aid handled for students accepted from the waiting list?
Duke remains need-blind for U.S. citizens and eligible noncitizens during the waiting list process. Once an offer of admission has been made, the Admissions Office notifies the Financial Aid Office to process the student’s need-based aid award. The student will be contacted by the Financial Aid Office as soon as possible after admission. Please be aware that any award will likely be delayed if you have not submitted all necessary financial aid forms. This includes the Non-Custodial Parent’s Statement and Business/Farm Supplement, if appropriate. Because all merit scholarships have been awarded, students admitted from the waiting list will be considered for need-based aid only.

Will I lose my deposit to another school if I am ultimately admitted to Duke from the waiting list?
Schools vary in deposit requirements, and some have nonrefundable deposits. Since we do not know how many students we will be able to accept from our waiting list, you should accept an offer at another school and consult that school’s literature regarding their deposit policy. Duke does not require a deposit for enrollment.

Is there anything I can do to increase my chances of being admitted from the waiting list?
Students who decide to remain on Duke’s waiting list may contact their regional admissions officer to express their continued interest in Duke and may update their application with information (end of year grades, recent activities or awards, etc.) that they feel will be helpful to the committee. These materials should be sent to the regional admissions officer.
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