



A Guide to the Direct-Admission Landscape

What Radical Streamlining of Students' Path to Matriculation
Means for Enrollment Leaders



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Brief Exit Survey



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Education's Trusted Partner to Help Schools and Students Thrive



Your Imperatives Determine Ours

INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY

Prepare Your Institution for the Future

Executive guidance rooted in research to support your strategic priorities

MARKETING AND ENROLLMENT

Achieve Your Enrollment and Growth Goals

Tailored partnerships powered by a recruitment ecosystem with unrivaled reach to enroll your future classes

STUDENT SUCCESS

Build a Student-Centric Campus

Technology trusted by 850 schools to retain, graduate, and empower more students

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Advance DEI on Campus and in Your Community

Technology, research, and bold initiatives to strengthen your DEI strategy and eliminate equity gaps

DATA AND ANALYTICS

Embrace Digital Transformation

Data and analytics solutions built for higher education to guide decisions and accelerate innovation

We partner with **2,500+** institutions to
accelerate progress and enable lasting change.

95%+ of our partners return to us year after year
because of results we achieve, together.

Unlock Every Recruitment Advantage with **Enroll360**



Enroll360 Solutions to Outperform the Market at Every Stage of the Funnel



Cultivate



Apply



Aid



Yield

Tailored partnerships that work in concert to generate unmatched search, recruitment, and yield results.

What Makes Enroll360 Solutions Different

Comprehensive Suite of Services



High-touch Service Model



Strategies Rooted in Research and Testing

Enroll360 Products to Elevate Student Awareness and Engagement with Your School

Audiences

Build awareness and influence and grow applications with leads from our expansive ecosystem.



Tours

Engage Gen Z in immersive virtual tours that tell your brand story and build affinity.



Match

Enroll students from all backgrounds with our unique "reverse admissions" model.



Powered by the Leading Student-Facing Platforms



An Insight Paper on Today's Topic

This Session Consists of Highlights from a More Extensive Resource

EAB

INSIGHT PAPER

A Guide to the Direct-Admission Landscape

What Radical Streamlining of Students' Path to Matriculation Means for Enrollment Leaders

40+ pages of guidance on direct admission

College-Run DA Initiatives

A direct approach

While most existing DA programs are managed by third parties, such as state offices of higher education or search-aggregator platforms, some schools are piloting their own versions of it. As illustrated at right, the basic idea is that a school sends proactive notices of eligibility directly to students whom they have deemed admissible—based, for example, on GPA and test score information acquired from list sources.

Early days

Why is DTY DA not more widespread? Part of the explanation probably lies in the fact that the higher education community's intense and widespread interest in DA is a relatively recent phenomenon—i.e., it is possible that many schools for whom it might be a good fit have simply not yet gotten around to it.

Some other institutions may wish to initially test out DA via programs sponsored by third parties.

A Generic Example of a College-Run DA Approach

Two Key Components

Proactive Notification

Keep it short and to-the-point

Recruiting school → "Congratulations! You qualify for admission to Karmann University, with a minimum scholarship of \$11,000. All you need to do to be officially admitted is complete this **short form**, which takes around 10 minutes." → Students with HS GPA above DA cutoff obtained from list buys and/or other sources

Radically abbreviated "application"

Mandatory fields	Optional fields
<ul style="list-style-type: none">NameBirthdateEmail addressMobile phone numberMailing addressDesired entry termAnticipated majorGender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">CitizenshipMilitary service history: selfMilitary service history: familyFirst-gen statusHistory of higher ed attendanceHistory of disciplinary actionCriminal historyUnofficial transcript uploadEthnicitySSNInterest in honors collegeHousing plansParent contact infoParent education levelName of high schoolAnticipated graduation date

Some approaches give students the option to do this later

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- 1 **Defining direct admission**
- 2 Does direct-admission work?
- 3 Direct-admission program types and their prevalence
- 4 Should you adopt direct admission?
- 5 What is it like to work under direct admission?



direct admission

A Fuzzy Term



Several Very Different Things Get Called “Direct Admission”

Guaranteed-admission plans

States guarantee any student with a minimum GPA admission to a public college or university

Proactive admission

Colleges reach out to students with offers of admission before they apply

Straight-to-program admissions

Students are admitted directly to particular academic programs, bypassing the general admissions process

Stripped-down applications

Ultra-streamlined forms that minimize information students must provide to get an admit offer

Automated admission

Admit offers are generated automatically for any student whose self-reported GPA/test score meets a minimum threshold

Talent-recruitment programs

Colleges proactively offer admission to students with particular talents (e.g., student athletes)

Animating Principles of Direct Admission



Effective Programs Share Two Features

Proactive Assurance

“You qualify for admission”

“If you apply, you will be admitted”

“Congratulations—you are admitted!”

Students are informed, prior to applying, that they are eligible for admission

Radical Streamlining

“Passive search”

Under some DA approaches, students need not reach out to or even be aware of a college in order to receive an offer of admission from it.

Minimal information requirements

Information students must submit to receive and confirm offers of admission is kept to an absolute minimum and is easily obtained or generated

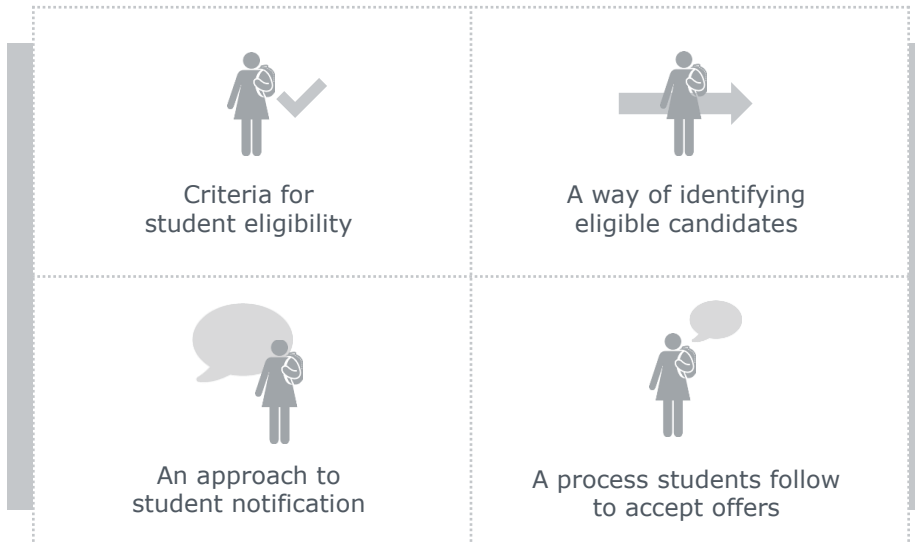
How Direct Admission Is Operationalized



Direct-Admission Programs Have Four Key Components

e.g. minimum HS GPA

e.g. via search-aggregator sites



e.g. comm flows

e.g. fill out a form

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How DA Is Meant to Benefit Students



Lots to Like



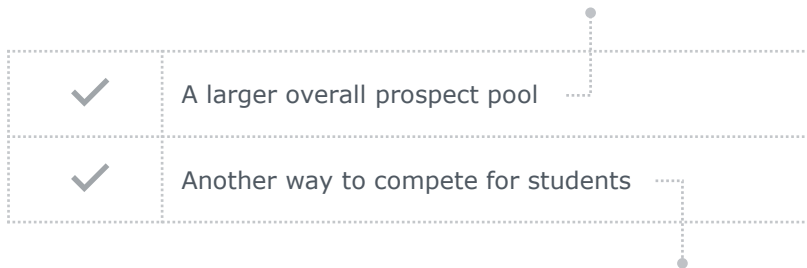
✓	Increased odds of receiving an admit offer
✓	Definitive reassurance on eligibility
✓	Reduction in stress
✓	Lessened research burden
✓	A morale boost
✓	Potential to reduce undermatching
✓	Reassurance on affordability

How DA Promises to Benefit Colleges



Potential for Increased Enrollment

Direct admission can increase the college-going rate, especially among underrepresented students



Direct admission can be a competitive advantage for schools adopting it (especially if their competitors have not done so or are not as good at it)

What the Research Says

Demonstrated Impact, Unrealized Potential

From a Study Examining the State of Idaho's Program

+4-8%

Increase in first-time undergraduate enrollments

+8-15%

Increase in in-state undergraduate enrollments

- Enrollment gains mostly **benefitted 2-year, open-access** institutions
- Minimal to no impact on enrollment of **Pell-eligible** students

From a Randomized Control Trial Via the Common App

+2.7%

Percentage point-increase in proportion of students submitting a college application¹

+2x

Higher likelihood of students applying to schools offering DA versus schools not offering it

0%

Change in likelihood of students enrolling

1) A 12% proportional increase over the baseline rate.

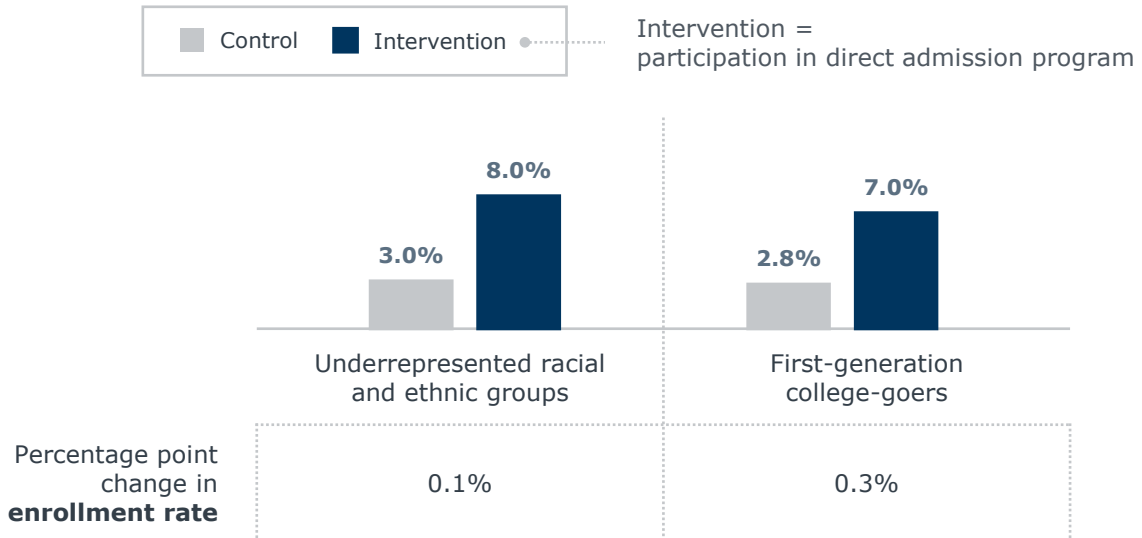
Latent Potential for Underrepresented Groups



We Must Improve Yield to Make Good on Direct Admission's Full Promise

Percentage of Students who Applied

From Common App Randomized Control Trial

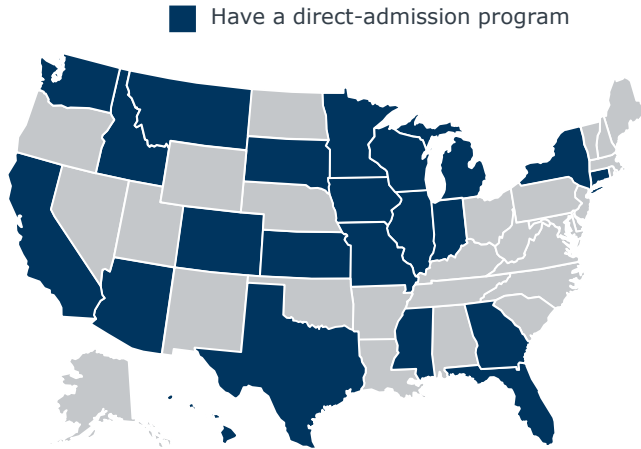


Source: Taylor K. Odle and Jennifer A. Delaney, "Experimental Evidence on 'Direct Admissions' from Four States;" EAB research and analysis.

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State-Run Programs

A Recent Surge in the Number of States Implementing Direct Admission



*A direct-admission
bandwagon*

27%

Of programs started in
the past 12 months

Not all state programs have both characteristics of the most effective direct-admission approaches (proactively notifying students of eligibility and radically streamlining the application)




Non-State Programs



Private Third-Party DA Initiatives Also on a Steep Growth Curve

Number of Colleges Participating in Private Direct-Admission Initiatives Sponsored by Third Parties

Selected Platforms, Entering-Class Year 2023 vs. 2024

		2023	2024	% change
 EAB	Enroll360 Match ¹	125	164	+31%
	Common App DA	14	70	+400%
	Niche DA	24	68	+183%

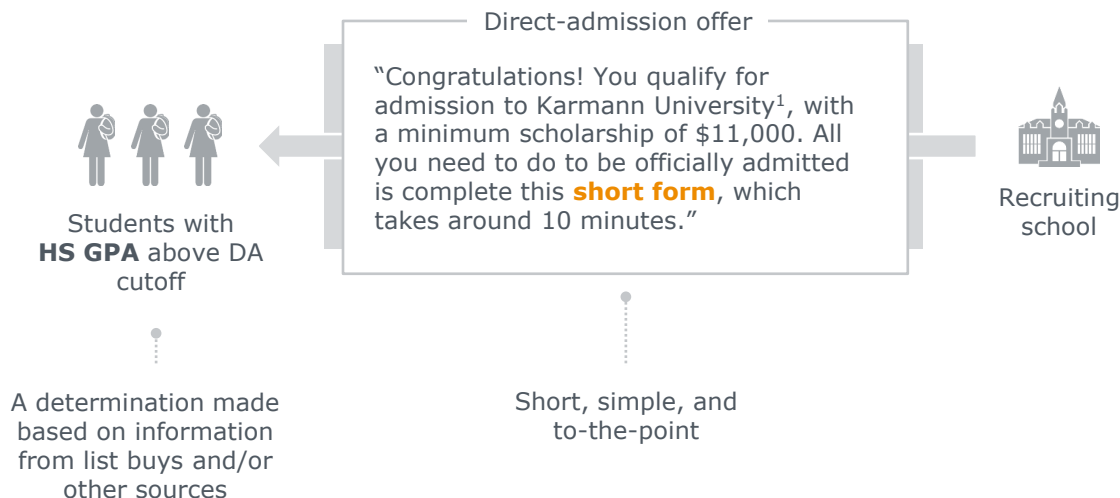
85%
aggregate growth rate
across the three platforms

1) Formerly "Concourse."

College-Run Direct-Admission Initiatives

Two Key Components

Component 1: Proactive Notification



1) A hypothetical institution.

College-Run Direct-Admission Initiatives



Two Key Components

Component 2: A Radically Abbreviated “Application”

An Example of a Form Currently in Use at an Institution Piloting Multiple Direct-Admission Initiatives

Mandatory fields	Optional fields
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name• Birthdate• Email address• Mobile phone number• Mailing address• Desired entry term• Anticipated major• Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ethnicity• SSN• Interest in honors college• Housing plans• Parent contact info• Parent education level• Name of high school• Anticipated graduation date

• **Unofficial-transcript upload**

Some approaches give students the option to do this later

Different Approaches Seen in the Field

DA Models By Timing and Amount of Student Effort Required

● = amount of student effort required

Approach #1:

No up-front student effort required



Approach #2:

Student effort backloaded



Approach #3:

Student effort frontloaded



Student notified of admissibility



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Addressing Three Concerns

Unwarranted Worries Holding Some Enrollment Leaders Back

Concern

Market optics

“Direct admission will lower our quality in the eyes of prospective students.”

An unfamiliar funnel

“Direct admission will reduce our ability to predict enrollment outcomes.”

Staffing constraints

“Direct admission will create more work for our team.”

Reality

Students are more likely to focus on the positive message a proactive admit offer sends about their desirability and on the relief they feel at being freed from the stress of the standard application process.

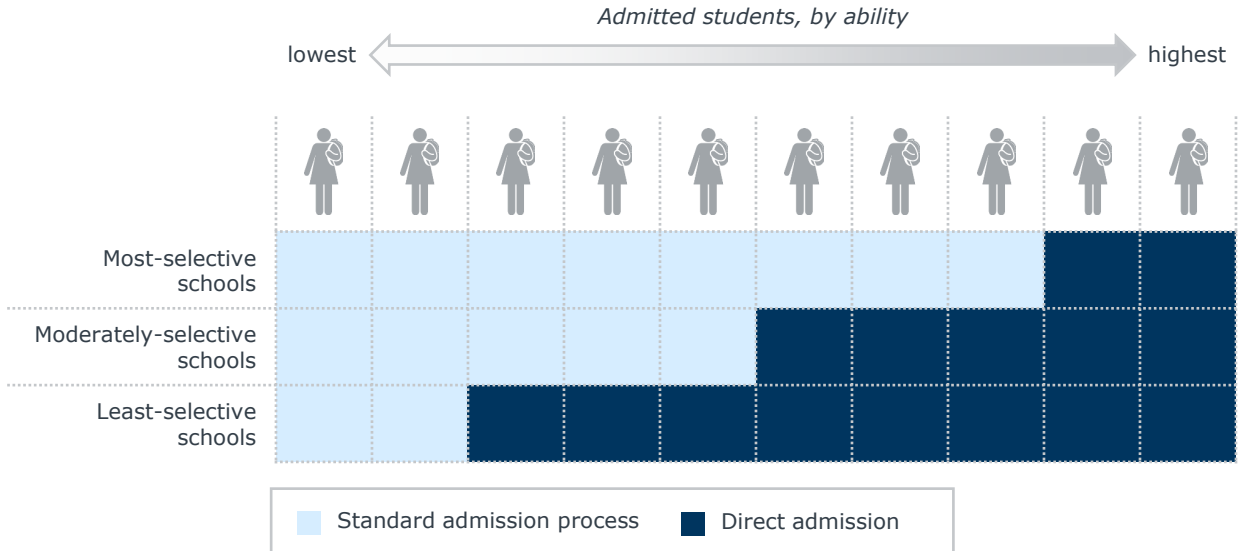
A few admission cycles under DA will furnish us with new benchmarks to use. Enrollment teams can additionally lean on increasingly available predictive-analytics tools for this purpose.

While DA can entail new and unfamiliar tasks, it can also greatly reduce the time invested in work such as generating applications and reviewing applicant files.

Not an All-or-Nothing Proposition

Reflections on the Potential Range of Application for Direct Admission

By School Selectivity



Should You Adopt Direct Admission?



Complete the Self-Test Included in Our Insight Paper to Find Out

Institution characteristics

Current admissions practice



Market context

- We struggle to fill our classes and/or are having trouble enrolling enough students of the right kind
- Our state has a program that guarantees students admission to public colleges and universities (e.g., so-called “percent plans”)
- Schools we compete with offer direct admission
- We are looking to enter new markets

Which Approach/Partner is Right for You?



Complete the Self-Test Included in Our Insight Paper to Find Out

Effective communications

Insight into prospective students

Extensive reach



Streamlined student processes

- Students do not need to be aware of your institution in order to receive an admission offer from you
- Students do not need to complete a traditional application at any point, before or after admission, in order to matriculate
- Information students must provide to receive an offer is kept to an absolute minimum and is very easy for them to obtain or generate
- The approach enables students to be admitted to multiple colleges based on a profile they need complete only once

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Recruitment Marketing Remains Crucial



The Imperative to Engage Students Does Not Go Away Under DA

Eight Core Activities You Still Need to Execute to an A+ Standard

- 1 Identifying students to recruit
- 2 Building affinity with students
- 3 Ensuring that students see your offers
- 4 Framing your offers in terms that appeal to students
- 5 Differentiating your offers from other schools'
- 6 Getting competitive aid awards into your offers
- 7 Getting students to submit required information
- 8 Yielding admitted students

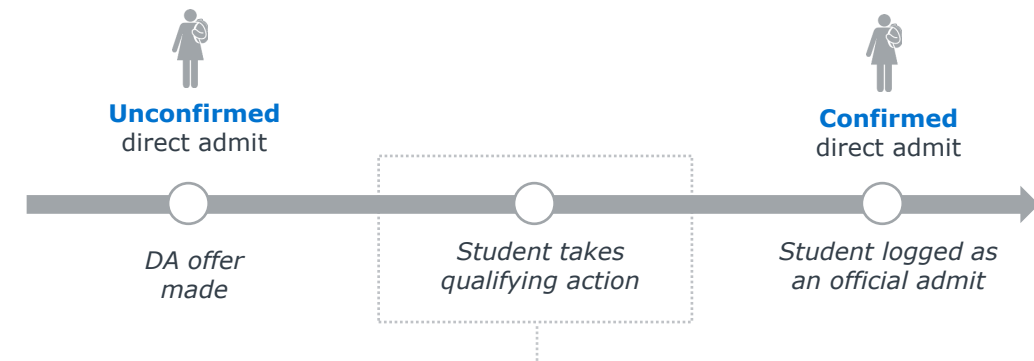
DA students tend to yield at lower rates. You can counteract this tendency by cultivating your relationship with them before and after making your admit offer.

Work you used to put into generating applications now goes toward getting students to take the additional steps you need them to in order to officially admit them.

Yield analytics become more important than ever.

New Funnel Entities

What Should We Call Direct Admits at Different Funnel Stages?



In **back-loaded** DA programs:

The student submits additional information the school needs to officially admit them (e.g., by filling out an application)

Most DA programs are of this type

In **front-loaded** DA programs:

The student simply confirms that they want to accept the school's offer of admission

An Area of Ongoing Research and Discovery



Each Day Brings New Learning on Direct Admission

A Few of the Many Areas We're Tracking

Comprehensive aid-award info in direct-admit offers

Could schools estimate students' total aid awards (not just merit aid) easily and accurately enough to include this information in their offers?

Access to student academic records, at scale

Is there a way for schools to reliably get access to student academic records, at scale, prior to making direct-admit offers?

What impact will the newest direct-admit approaches have?

Many newer DA models differ significantly from the older state-run programs that many studies are based on. Will they deliver better results?

How to talk to students about direct admission

How do students feel about direct admission, and how can we use this knowledge to improve their engagement with our offers and related communications?

EAB's "Match"

Flip the Script With Our Unique "Reverse Admissions" Model



Expand your pipeline

Proactively extend admission and scholarship offers to qualified, net-new students.



Personalize your process

Keep students and counselors connected with your team via customized offers and in-platform group chats.



Prepare for the future

Build meaningful relationships with schools and counselors that bring lasting benefit to future recruitment cycles.



EdTech
Breakthrough
AWARD

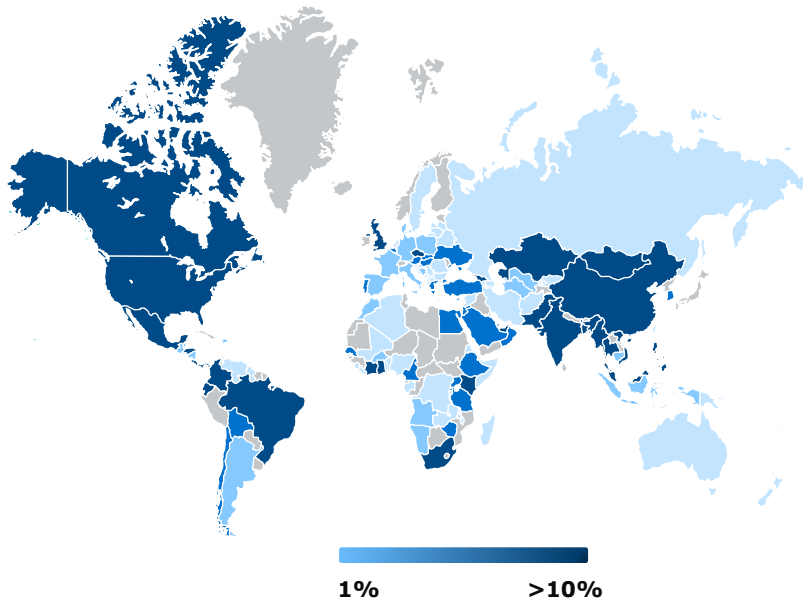
Fast Company
WORLD CHANGING IDEAS
2023

Match Traction Is Increasing Rapidly

Some Key Stats on Match's Reach

Match Students, by Country of Origin

As a Proportion of All Match Students



100 +

Countries represented
on the platform

650+

International high
schools represented on
the platform

290+

US high schools, school
networks, and CBOs on
the platform

5x

Projected growth in
student adoption
between 2023-2024

Match is Welcoming and Student-Centric

Meet Lydia



4.0 unweighted GPA with aspirations to study Biochemistry in college

First-generation, undocumented student facing significant barriers to accessing higher education

Lydia created a Match profile with support of her high school counselor

She received offers with scholarships ranging from \$18,000 to \$59,000 annually

She enrolled at Knox College

Her college admissions process took 1 month

I'd Like to Speak More About...

1

Is direct admission right for me?

2

Direct admission models that may be relevant for my school

3

EAB's Match platform

Choose all that apply



Additional Resources Available to You



Request a copy of the webinar
recording and slides



Set up some time to talk with Lori



Request a copy of the insight paper

*Submit your
request in the
survey at the
end of the
webinar*



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