

THE GEORGETOWN BRIEF

How Georgetown *really* reads you.

The mechanics most families never learn: how the file is read, the four essays that decide it, and the change this year that is about to make it harder.

75%

OUR GEORGETOWN
RATE OVER SEVEN
YEARS

~12%

THE RATE FOR
EVERYONE ELSE

4

ESSAYS, AND THE
FOURTH DECIDES IT



Why this year is the year it gets *harder*.

For half a century, Georgetown's refusal to join the Common App worked as a quiet filter. Applying meant leaving the Common App and rebuilding everything on Georgetown's own portal, so casual applicants simply did not bother. That filter just disappeared.

I Georgetown joined the Common App, and demand will surge.

Starting the 2026 cycle, Georgetown accepts the Common App alongside its own application. When selective schools make this move, applications jump sharply (Rutgers rose about 35%) and admit rates fall. Georgetown is about to get more competitive, not less.

2 But the actual work did not shrink.

On either platform, Georgetown still requires its own supplemental essays and short answers, and still requires the SAT or ACT with no test-optional path. The flood of new applicants will assume the easy front door means an easy application. It does not.

THE PLAY

Move early in this window, before the surge fully lands, and treat it like the hard application it still is. That gap, between the families who coast on the Common App and the families who do the real Georgetown work, is exactly where offers are won.

How Georgetown *actually* reads a file.

Georgetown admissions is unusually personal. Charlie Deacon has run it for more than three decades, the longest-serving dean of admissions in the country, and the office still reads holistically, by hand, for fit with the university's Jesuit character. That has three consequences most families miss.

■ **Cura personalis is not a slogan. It is the lens.**

Care for the whole person. Readers are looking for who your child is and how they will add to the community, not only for numbers. A committee-polished, over-coached application is transparent to people who have read them for forty years.

■ **There is no Early Decision to buy an edge.**

Georgetown offers only non-binding Early Action, and it never denies you: a “no” becomes a deferral to Regular Decision. So the levers that actually move a file are the essays and the interview, not a binding commitment.

■ **Two realities other guides skip.**

Georgetown still weighs legacy as one factor among many, and since 2024 it considers Pell eligibility to widen access. Know honestly where your child sits, because it shapes the strategy.

THE STRATEGIC CHOICE

You apply to one school. *Choose it like a strategist.*

Georgetown makes you pick a single undergraduate school, and each one reads for a different student and asks its own essay. This is the most underrated decision in the whole application.

Georgetown College

ARTS & SCIENCES

Rewards students who can think philosophically about education itself and the Jesuit, integrated ideal, not just about a career. The least self-selecting school, and the default when the fit is genuinely broad.

Walsh School of Foreign Service

SFS

Wants the origin story of your interest in the world, formed as a high schooler, not a childhood anecdote. It rewards sustained international engagement, language study, and a real motivation for global service.

McDonough School of Business

MSB

Rewards genuine prior engagement with business and ethical thinking about it, business in service of the world, not titles and money. Empty ambition reads as empty here.

Health & Nursing

TWO SCHOOLS

Reads for a specific, demonstrated commitment to a health path, backed by real experience. "I want to help people" is not a motivation; a concrete history is.

THE PLAY

Match the school to the story your child can already tell with evidence. The wrong school, chosen because it sounds safe or prestigious, quietly sinks an otherwise strong file.

Four essays. The fourth is *where you win or lose.*

ESSAY 1 • THE UNDERRATED ONE

The half-page activity essay.

On the school or summer activity you have been most involved in. It is the shortest, and the one most applicants throw away. Treat it as a real essay about why that one thing mattered, not a resume line.

ESSAY 2 • 250 WORDS

Special talents or skills.

Specific and concrete, not a humblebrag. One real skill, shown in action.

ESSAY 3 • ABOUT A PAGE

The personal statement.

Who your child is, in their own words. One true thread followed through real scenes. A strong Common App personal statement usually works here.

ESSAY 4 • THE DECIDER

The school-specific “Why Georgetown.”

The trap that sinks most applicants: name-dropping professors and listing classes does not count as a genuine specific. It has to tie a real Georgetown offering to a real moment in your child’s life, and it rewards weaving in the Jesuit tradition, *cura personalis* in particular.

SFS, for example: “Describe your primary motivations for studying international affairs at Georgetown and dedicating your undergraduate studies toward a future in global service.” It is asking for an origin story, not a policy essay.

Nearly everyone is interviewed. Most walk in *unprepared*.

Through its Alumni Admissions Program, Georgetown matches almost every applicant with a local alumnus for an interview. The only accepted excuse is having no alumni in your region. It is conversational, it is evaluated, and it is one of the very few places a student can move their own file after the application is in.

What actually wins it:

- **Your story, said out loud.**

The same coherent thread the application tells, in the student's own words, not a recited brochure.

- **One real question.**

Evidence they have read enough about their specific school to be genuinely curious, not to perform interest.

- **A person, not a gatekeeper.**

Alumni remember warmth. Rehearse until it sounds unrehearsed.

Testing is *required* here. Plan it that way.

Georgetown is one of the last highly selective universities with no test-optional path. Every applicant submits the SAT or ACT. Three specifics catch families off guard.

- **It builds its own superscore.**

Georgetown combines your highest section scores across test dates internally, so multiple sittings can help rather than hurt, if they are planned.

- **The ACT Science section is strongly recommended.**

Not strictly required, but recommended enough that skipping it is a needless flag.

- **The plan starts sophomore year.**

Because a real score is mandatory, a junior-spring scramble caps the ceiling. Build the plan early, with one strategic retake held in reserve.

The four-year plan, and the *result.*

Grades 9 and 10 Build rigor toward a direction and turn two interests into real depth, the raw material every Georgetown essay will later draw on. Begin testing early.

Grade 11 Lock the testing plan. Choose the right Georgetown school and start living the story that essay will tell. Begin the “Why Georgetown” thinking now, not in October.

Summer and Fall of 12 Draft all four essays, in Georgetown’s voice. Rehearse the alumni interview. Target November 1 Early Action for the earliest read and the deferral safety net.

This is the work behind the number. Our seven-year admit rate against the schools that turn nearly everyone away:

COLLEGE	NATIONAL	LOVARE RATE	ADMITS
Georgetown University	12%	75%	45
Harvard University	3%	47%	36
Princeton University	4%	46%	44
University of Pennsylvania	6%	55%	43
Johns Hopkins University	7%	60%	55

Lovare rate reflects admissions among feasible candidates: students enrolled with us for at least one full cycle who applied to the school. National rates are approximate. Prompts and policies shift by cycle, so confirm the current requirements on Georgetown’s site before you submit.

BEGIN

Georgetown is where our record *speaks loudest.*

If your child is aiming for Georgetown, or any school that reads this closely, we review every request personally and will tell you honestly where they stand.

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BY APPOINTMENT, ACROSS THE DMV AND ONLINE

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