



*University counseling
Handbook*

2017-2018



LÉMAN CHENGDU
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

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Naviance (school postal code) <https://succeed.naviance.com/main/dashboards/dashboard.php> purpose of the

family connection link:

Family Connection links your counselors and teachers with students and parents to improve course, college, and career planning.

- provides a powerful link between school and home
- customized to save your personal profile secure website that supports planning and advising

CAREER PLANNING

- Learning Styles Inventory
- Interest Inventory
- Personality Inventory
- Write Resume
- Course, college, and career planning
- Local scholarships and aid opportunities
- See the university timeline in the appendix below

SAT Centre Number: 74349

ACT Centre Number: 874220

Cambridge Test Centre C

IB Code: 49378

CEEB Number: 694484

Cambridge Test Dates (usually November of the grade 12 year but the type of test depends on the UCAS application) CN 862

ACT Dates: see the ACT website for current international dates.

SAT and SAT subject test dates generally are run during these months but students should check the College Board site to get up to date international testing dates. The school calendar must be checked as well as we do not necessarily run each session. LIS DOES NOT offer the October test dates.

The SAT and SAT Subject Tests Dates

Test Date	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	MAR	MAY	JUN
	1	5	3	21	11	6	3

Part 1: Introduction to university counseling

The Léman IS helps students build upon their positive experiences at LIS to gain admission into colleges and

universities all over the world. Our university counseling program helps to guide and support students and parents as you research schools, make choices, select and visit universities, and complete applications. The main agent, however, in this process is you, the student. It is your responsibility to do the research, to use the tools we provide, to keep the dialogue open with your parents and us about your interests and choices. In the end, you determine if your applications are complete we are the support.

To assist with the university selection and application process, LIS provides this guide to outline the processes and to support students and parents. Special thanks to the International School of Paris on whose university counseling guide this is based.

LIS's university counseling services

Our comprehensive counseling program guides and supports students throughout the university application process, formally beginning in Grade 11 and continuing throughout Grade 12. Some highlights of the program include:

- A university presentation for Grade 11 students and parents detailing all aspects of the university application process.
- Initial individual student consultations in Semester 2 of Grade 11 followed by meetings with both students and parents in Grade 11 and throughout Grade 12.
- Consultations with students to discuss their choice of countries and the different academic systems in them, as well as the selection of schools, university courses and/or disciplines, depending on the system.
- Providing information and materials such as university brochures, catalogs, guides, and the LIS counseling webpage as resources for students in their university search.
- Offering the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) at LIS to Grade 10 every October.
- Advice on standardized testing, including the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude/Assessment Test), the ACT (American College Test), the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and the IELTS (International English Language Testing System).
- Identifying schools that are a good fit depending on the student's interests, academic strengths, athletic skills, and other factors relevant to the student.
- Assistance and guidance in preparation of applications including personal statements, essays, mock interviews, and contact with university representatives.
- Counselor/referee letters of recommendation that strongly support student's candidature to appropriate universities.
- Support via the counselor open door policy and in Semester 1 (grade 11 September during Explore China trips) of Grade 11 and Semester 1 of Grade 12 on conducting university research and selection as well as workshops on preparing applications and essays.
- Advice on extracurricular and summer activities.
- Counsel on how students can effectively communicate with universities in all aspects of the application

process.

- Maintaining relationships with universities and contacting representatives to support individual applications.

Organization of LIS university visits from admissions representatives in the UK, continental Europe, US, Canada, and other countries.

“Best Fit” advice after conditional offers and acceptances in the spring.

Advice on Wait List situations in the US and Canada.

Guidance on the UCAS system in the UK.

Student responsibilities in the university application process

For students in Grades 11 and 12, the university application process is the first step towards individual independence. It is a complicated, demanding and time-consuming process. It can also be an exciting and revealing experience. You will have to do a lot of research and spend a lot of time filling out applications and writing personal essays. However, this will give you a chance to look at who you are, what you value, and what you might want to do with your life. You will have to make some important decisions, develop self-reliance and confidence, and perhaps for the first time think about life on your own, outside the environment of your family life.

The LIS counselor emphasize that the student is the focus and in control of the university application process, supported by a team of our teachers, and of course, parents.

****This guide was based on input from the International School of Paris and Dulwich schools guidance programmes. We acknowledge the support of other international school university counsellors as well in their shared thoughts.****

General Guidelines

Plan Ahead and Act Early. Applications that are received before the deadline can give you an advantage.

LIS Integrity Agreement To demonstrate integrity with each university application, and to process any application, a LIS Integrity Agreement must be signed by both the student and parent and on file with your University Counsellor at the start of the university application season.

Your Decisions You need to decide where you want to study. This is a decision that you and your parents will make. Parents have a big influence on university decisions (and normally pay the fees) so start communicating with them about your educational goals. In some universities, your decision as to a specific major can be postponed for one to two years as you complete general graduation requirements. Some national systems, however, require the student to declare a major immediately and the student is locked into that area of study from the first day. Regardless of the country in which you choose to study, there are some very important questions you need to ask yourself and try to answer:

- Do I want to go to a new country?

- What will my life be like in a new country?
- Do I have the motivation to work hard?
- Why do I want to study a particular course?
- What subjects am I good at?
- Why am I suited for “X” university?

In working towards these goals, you—the student—must accept the following responsibilities:

- **Take the time to reflect and evaluate your goals and values**, assess your academic strengths, your special talents, skills and other aspects that distinguish you. This assessment is necessary in determining schools that offer an excellent university environment in which you will be most productive and happy (and therefore, successful).
- **Research appropriate courses**, programs, and schools so that your applications are effective and fulfill your specific academic, athletic, musical, social interests and any other elements that are important to you, as well as your future objectives.
- Be aware of the academic profiles required by highly selective colleges and universities.

If the student does not have the academic record necessary to be competitive for acceptance, LIS will not be able to fully support the student’s candidature to the university.

- **Meet application deadlines both for universities and LIS** when submitting application materials and requesting letters of recommendation and transcripts. Please note that universities have different deadlines depending on countries and application systems.
- **Be aware of any required tests**. Register online with respect to the deadlines for taking standardized tests, such as the BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, SAT, ACT, TOEFL, or IELTS.
- **Submit all required forms** and request all testing organizations to submit official standardized test results to universities.
- **Verify your correct name** on all official documents and use the same name on all documents (the name on your passport).
- **Notify schools of any changes** in your home address or email address as well as maintain an email address that is appropriate for applications.
- **Notify counselors of your application results and your final choice**. Complete any necessary final forms requested by the counselor or IB coordinator in order to have your final transcript sent as well as your IB results accessible to your university.

Planning Schedule

The university application process can be intense and lengthy. It can also be confusing and anxiety-ridden. It is a time when you are asked to evaluate yourself in ways you may not have done before. It is a time when you will be making important life decisions.

While the decision as to where to attend university is a personal one, and although the final decision involves your parents as well, the work involved is ultimately your responsibility. This handbook was prepared to provide you with answers to questions you might have as you face this process. The more you know, the better you are able to take control and the greater likelihood that you will make informed and appropriate decisions.

Your university counsellors are here to help guide you in preparing for and learning about university, making appropriate choices, applying for admission and financial aid, deciding among options, as well as making the transition to university. Starting in Year 10, we incorporate individual advising, group guidance, and a variety of resource materials into the university application process, and we pride ourselves on our attentiveness to individual students. Throughout the process we are dependent on family involvement and we encourage students to seek out the greatest challenges, select the best opportunities, explore new horizons, and look for the "right fit". While you, the student, ultimately make these decisions, remember that there are people at Dulwich ready and willing to help you.

Year (end of year 10)-11 - Counselling Fundamentals: Career Explorations, University Entrance Specifications

- This school year try different, non-academic activities that interest you - sports, the arts, publications, community service or leadership in clubs to clarify your interests and talents.
- Pay close attention to your grades – as some universities cite grades as the most significant factor in admissions; however, be sure to also concentrate on earning significant and meaningful experiences through extra-curricular activities. Universities want to see involved students who show consistency, drive and leadership in their selected extra-curricular activities
- Meet about future plans – Potential careers and education needed for these careers, what is being considered for university options
- Activities we will work on throughout Year 10:
 - Identifying academic strengths
 - The basics of university planning and entrance exams
 - Psychometric testing and feedback
 - Summer programme options
 - Creating resumes

Year 11 – Career Explorations, University Entrance Specifications, and Financial Needs

- Commit to a few major non-academic activities that fit you well and start new ones if time permits – be careful not to overload!
- Focused course selection conference with your counsellor/IB Coordinator. Some key course questions may have to do with advanced science, mathematics, fine arts or foreign language
- Continue to speak with your counsellor about academic and overall time management to make your final years of high school efficient and productive

- Continue to speak to your family about future goals and how they are developing: What is needed to meet identified goals?
- Notify your counsellor if you are considering Oxbridge candidacy.
- Activities we will work on throughout Year 11:
 - Individual meetings with counsellors
 - Updating the resume/activity lists
 - Finalise final two years of academic plan (IB/A-Level options)
 - Identify personality traits and understand their role in career selection
 - Match career interests with personality types
 - Create an admissions testing plan (if applicable)
 - Attend university and college visits on campus
 - Create university admissions testing plan
 - University research and finding "Fit"
 - Year 11 & 12 two-year calendar
 - Summer programmes
 - Craft the UK personal statement
 - Craft the US personal essay and supplements

Year 11 & 12 - Career Explorations, University Entrance Specifications, University Search and Identifying Financial Options and The Application

- Continue family meetings about future plans and university selection
- Register for autumn and spring sitting of SAT/ACT if looking at universities in the US
- US residents and citizens should consider taking the PSAT for National Merit Scholar Qualification during the autumn of Year 12 (US citizens only)
- Students needing to take SAT II and considering taking a language & listening test should do so during the autumn of Year 12
- Continue to visit university and college visitors on campus and ask questions

Beginning in the fall of Year 12, each student will schedule an individual conference with his/her university counsellor regarding the university process. These conferences will include the following and follow up on the grade 11 semester two January and late spring meetings:

- School records/transcript review

- A review of testing results
- Game plan for identifying and visiting universities
- Extracurricular activities/CAS projects (for IBDP candidates)
- Discussion of career interests and possible universities
- US and UK Personal Statements and Essays
- Requesting Letters of Reference/Letters of Recommendation from teachers and counsellors
- Discussion of Year 12 Interview Packet responses
- Discussion of Year 12 Parent Packet responses
- Creating the short and long list of universities and colleges

To have a productive meeting, we ask that each student complete your Naviance college list and add notes, test scores, questions, etc.

Upon completion and submission of the requested forms onto Naviance or Office 365, students should sign up for individual conferences (a sign up will be sent out on Managebac). Parents are encouraged and more than welcome to attend these meetings but they are often at break or lunch so as not to miss class time.

Most applications are sent during the first term of Year 12. If your deadline is January 1st or 15th, you will need to have completed your application by December 1st. This will give time for your counsellor to write references and process your application.

University Planning Schedule Table – Years 11 and 12

Year 11	Year 12
August/September/October ✓ Register & take PSAT/NMSQT/ SAT/ACT ✓ Check the entry requirements for the universities in which you are interested. For example, do you need any SAT IIs? ✓ Consider doing the Language with Listening SAT. It is only available in November ✓ Continue with commitment to a select few major non-academic activities that you have found you truly enjoy – remember it is quality not quantity that counts	August/Early September ✓ Make an appointment to see your counsellor ✓ Review transcripts and/or predicted grades with your counsellor ✓ Register for October SAT and ACT if required ✓ Finalise college and university lists ✓ Early Decision/Early Action applications completed ✓ Continue revising personal statements and essays ✓ Continue with commitment to a select few major non-academic activities – remember it is quality not quantity that counts ✓ Complete personal statements and essays for ED/EA/Oxbridge/Medicine Applications
October/November/December ✓ Work on college list, questions, upload your previous transcripts from other schools (from gr 9) test scores, etc. into Naviance	September/October/November ✓ Review transcripts and/or predicted grades with your counsellor ✓ Complete personal statements and essays for

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Begin in depth research of colleges and universities to develop initial university list ✓ Keep your grades up; study hard and get good grades! Your grades this year will help to select a proper range of universities to which to apply ✓ Start thinking about university choices ✓ Discuss universities and financial costs ✓ Attend university fairs and presentations ✓ Visit university websites/start research ✓ SAT Language with Listening if applicable in November ✓ Consider the registering for the January SAT (especially for subject tests) 	<p>regular decision applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Request test scores to be sent to universities (IELTS/TOFEL/SAT/ACT) ✓ Search for scholarships ✓ Finalise university choices and apply. ✓ Update Naviance/BridgeU
<p>January/February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Make appointment with your university counsellor ✓ Visit colleges and universities during break ✓ Oxbridge candidate preparation begins ✓ Prepare for SATs, which you will sit in January or June ✓ Re-check the requirements for entry for the courses in which you are interested. For example, do you need any SAT IIs? ✓ Prepare for April ACT (if applicable) ✓ Update your Family Connection page <p>March/April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Request letters of reference/recommendation from teachers and counsellors ✓ Register for ACT/SAT tests ✓ Consider summer schools or start planning your summer activity ✓ Continue your university research ✓ Update your resume ✓ Take the April ACT (if applicable) ✓ Update your Naviance Page 	<p>December/January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Oxbridge interviews take place in December ✓ Oxbridge/Medicine/ED & EA offers begin to arrive ✓ ED/EA offers arrive ✓ Complete college and university applications for UCAS and US universities ✓ Submit Financial Aid Application (FAFSA @ www.fafsa.ed.gov) if applicable ✓ Universities like to see strong second term grades, so work hard ✓ Go to university websites to check the status of your applications. Send any missing documents. ✓ Assure mid-year reports are sent <p>March/April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Regular decision acceptances and denials begin to arrive ✓ Review acceptances and rejections with your counsellor and parents ✓ Notify your counsellor of college admission decisions/update Naviance ✓ Notify counsellor to where final scores should be sent (IB/CIE will send them directly) ✓ Students should reply to their offers of admissions. STUDENTS MAY NOT MATRICULATE TO MORE THAN ONE COLLEGE or UNIVERSITY ✓ Application deadlines for many European and Asian universities are due – check deadlines with counsellor ✓ Complete college and university applications (UCAS, Common Application, etc.) if applicable ✓ Final transcripts are sent to universities and colleges – These MUST Be requested by students
<p>May/June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Begin drafting personal statements/personal essays ✓ Take the SAT/ACT 	<p>May/June</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Send deposit to chosen school ✓ Let guidance counsellor know of your final decision and update it on Naviance

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take the TOFEL/IELTS if applicable (talk to your counsellor about where) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Take IBDP/A Level exams. They might lead to scholarships and credits ✓ Finalise Financial Aid package if offered ✓ Complete Year 12 Exit Survey on Naviance ✓ Graduate
<p>Summer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visit colleges and universities ✓ Draft personal statements/personal essays ✓ Complete college and university applications (UCAS, Common Application, etc.) if applicable ✓ Begin to narrow your choice of schools and finalize your university list ✓ Visit universities if possible 	<p>Summer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Start packing ✓ Keep in touch. Consider being a university mentor for Dulwich and a spokesperson for your university

University Notifications

The University and Careers Office does not hear from each university regarding admission decisions. To have a clear picture of the year’s results, we ask that students maintain updated records and notify counsellors regarding university decisions as they come in.

LIS UK/US Early Application Policy

While schools within the LIS network support Early Application programmes throughout the world, it is important that students and parents understand the implications of deciding to apply through such programmes. Students intending on applying through an Early Application programme, whether in the US or UK, will be asked to fill out a LIS Early Application Policy Agreement and should be very clear about what the decision to participate in the ED/EA application process means. Below are some common questions and information about Early Decision and Early Action applications.

What is Early Decision (ED) and Early Action (EA)?

Early Decision and Early Action are two types of an accelerated university application process in which students must typically complete their applications in November of Year 13. In most cases, students will receive a decision from the university before the new year. Early Decision or Early Action is not for everyone. It is a big commitment to apply to a university or college using an Early Decision plan.

Early Decision

Early Decision requires students to commit to a university at the time of application to which, if admitted, she/he will enrol. Once admitted under Early Decision, a non-refundable deposit will be required. If the student is accepted by the institution with an ED application, then the student MUST attend that university. It

is a legally BINDING agreement across nations. Applying ED to a university means that if you are denied, you cannot then apply Regular Decision (RD) to the same university.

An application made through the Early Action process is non-binding (except from some universities and colleges who offer single-choice early action or restricted early action); however, the commitment to the application process is the same.

Are There Benefits to Applying Early Decision?

Early decision and early action plans can have its benefits, however, only if students have a clear preference for one university or college and have done their research. Overall, if applying to a top school, while you are demonstrating a commitment and undeniable interest, an ED application is considered among a generally more highly qualified, smaller batch of sincere and committed students; i.e. it may be more difficult to get accepted as those you are competing against are the best of the best. While students applying ED may have a slight advantage due to smaller applicant pools, they are also generally very strong candidates. While some universities and colleges admit higher percentages of early applications, others do not. Students should ask admissions officers whether or not their particular institutions accept more students during early decision or not.

Who is an Ideal Candidate for an Early Decision Application Program?

An ideal candidate for Early Decision program applications should fit both of these profiles:

- You have researched universities **extensively** (at least 3 or 4) and are absolutely sure that your ED school is your first choice. If you are accepted under an Early Decision program, you have committed yourself to attending that university and **must** withdraw all other applications.
- You meet or exceed the admissions profile of students at your ED university (i.e., your SAT scores should be comparable to students at your ED university.) You should have completed admissions testing - either the SAT Reasoning Test and SAT Subject Tests or the ACT by October of Year 13 (Some universities, however, will accept November test scores if the scores are rushed to the admissions office). You have an academic record that has been consistently solid over time according to your academic transcript.

Who is NOT an Ideal Candidate for an Early Decision Application Program?

While the idea of applying to a university for Early Decision or to an early application program may seem exciting and like a good idea, it is not for everyone. In some cases, it is not advisable to apply ED/EA. For example, if the university is not well researched, if you are doing it just because a friend is or to avoid paperwork or stress. It is also not advisable to apply to an ED/EA program if you are considering requesting financial aid from the university; remember, an ED application is binding and a university is expecting a commitment from you despite the financial package in most cases.

Can I apply to more than one school Early Decision?

Applying to a binding Early Decision (ED) university indicates that this institution is your first choice for further study and, therefore, students may not apply ED to another university. If admitted ED, other applications must be withdrawn. Schools within the LIS network will thereafter not process requests for transcripts to be sent to other universities. Students applying ED may apply Early Action unless specified by

the university within the Early Action plan. Additionally, students who apply ED₁ and are rejected may apply for ED₂ to another university. Please see the handbook for further ED application information and code of conduct.

Can an Early Decision Application Be Withdrawn?

No. By applying ED, you, your parents and counsellor have all signed an agreement that serves as a binding contract stating that your acceptance will result in your matriculation. If hardship arises, it is best to contact the university directly to discuss your concerns and refer to your signed contract. Breaking an ED contract can result in the ED school contacting other school about your recanting your agreement and you could be blacklisted.

What if I want to apply to the US and to Oxbridge?

Students who are seriously applying to Oxford or Cambridge should make this their first choice and be prepared to accept the offer if one is given after the interview; however, students with a first choice university in the United States must apply ED and withdraw the Oxford or Cambridge application immediately if accepted by the ED university or college – this may be before you know whether or not you have been accepted to Oxford or Cambridge.

Early Action

Early Action permits you to apply to a university of your choice and receive a decision early in your senior year, well in advance of the normal spring response dates. You are not committed to attend and may apply to other universities. You are not required to make a commitment before May 1.

Agents, Expensive Seminars and Empty Promises

The Dulwich College Network prides itself on hiring experienced and professional university and careers counsellors who are recognized in the field, serve on international committees and maintain professional relationships with university admissions officers and representatives throughout the world.

Often parents ask us about hiring private consultants or agents or paying for private seminars. While we understand that you want the very best for your sons and daughters, it is also critical to understand that all too often these agencies and consultants lure parents into their offices by preying on their fear of the unknown.

There is no “secret” formula to university admissions. All schools within the Dulwich network implement the LIS Success Plan, which ensures that all students are provided with a comprehensive and thorough university and career education program, ensuring that all students are educated and knowledgeable in all aspects of university admissions including: testing, courses, deadlines, recommendations, personal statements and navigating the sometimes overwhelming world of simply choosing the right university. All Colleges in the LIS network offer university and career counselling services as part of a holistic learning process and nurturing the whole child. Counsellors are there to mentor students from the beginning to the end of the application procedure and only counsellors are able to provide universities with documentation on your behalf, host universities on Dulwich campuses and speak to university representative regarding your application. Not only do we try to provide parents and students with information whenever requested through a variety of means, we are also available to meet with families whenever questions arise.

While we urge students to actively engage in the process of university and college research and completing applications for themselves, for families contemplating seeking outside help, there are a essential points to remember including the fact that only a school counsellor can speak to a university in regards to a student's application – many agents cannot. Additionally, only the Dulwich counsellors can create and send documents to universities on behalf of students.

The National Association of College Admissions Counsellors has published a guide for parents in regards to hiring outside consultants that can be found here in both [Mandarin](#) and [English](#), but some other important points to consider are:

- **Credentials** – an advanced degree in counselling and experience as either an admissions officer for a university or at a high school
- **Membership** – International Association for College Admission Counselling (IACAC), National Association for College Admission Counselling (NACAC), Independent Educational Consultants Association (IECA)
- **Involvement** – numerous university visits on a yearly basis and attendance of international and national counsellor conferences
- **Communication** – willing and able to contact and communicate with school counsellors if issues or conflicting opinions should arise
- **Integrity** – never pay an outside agency, or anyone for that matter, to significantly edit, write, change or rewrite a personal statement or university essay. Not only is this unethical, universities are very aware when an essay comes across their desk that is written by an adult, which could call a student's entire application into question and could result in automatic denial of acceptance

What to Ask

- What are your credentials? – Ask if the counsellor belongs to the Independent Education Consultant Association (IECA), which requires an advanced degree in counselling, at least three year's admissions counselling experience, extensive campus visits and student experience
- What training did you receive and when?
- What professional memberships do you hold and to which university admissions conferences have you attended?
- How many of your previous students have applied and been accepted to the kinds of universities I am considering?
- Can your personal connections help get my son/daughter into the university of his/her choice? Counsellors cannot get you admitted – students get themselves admitted
- Will you write my essay or personal statement for me? If he answers yes, run far away and fast. This is unethical and can result in automatic denial of acceptance.
- What services will you provide beyond what I am already receiving at my current school? Be sure you

know what you are paying for and that you are not already getting it for free.

If after expressing concerns or asking questions to our counsellors you feel you would still like to seek outside assistance, please continue working with your counsellor. Only we can send universities letters of recommendation, student grades and transcripts, school reports and speak directly to admissions officers and university representatives regarding students.

Letters of Recommendation

Requesting Teacher Letters from Teachers

Some universities will require recommendations. A recommendation describes an applicant's personal characteristics and academic abilities. The recommendation usually gives a more detailed analysis of your qualifications than the information received from the high school.

Before asking someone to write a recommendation, you need to consider:

- Who should write your recommendation? It is important to choose teachers who know you well, like you, and will write a strong recommendation for you
- Writing a letter of recommendation is time-consuming. Be sure you follow your campus letter of recommendation request policy give the person writing the letter a minimum of 15 school days before the letter is due. Request recommendations only for those schools to which you are definitely applying.

All students, regardless of future plans, must ask teachers to write letters of reference in person at the end of Year 12. Because teachers move between schools and students sometimes change their minds, we want to ensure that students are able to access recommendations at any given time and that they do not have problems tracking down teachers from whom they may want a letter.

In general, students are not shown letters of reference, and a copy is kept in the student's file. Students applying to different countries will need different letters from teachers and your counsellor can help you decide which teachers should be asked for different courses as well as university systems throughout the world. If a student requests that letters of reference be sent to universities after graduation, a gap year or military service, we are happy to work with students, families and universities.

Please say "Thank you" to teachers who have agreed to write your letter of recommendation. They do this during their free time and do not get anything for writing your glowing letters of recommendation. A special thanks or small gesture to show you appreciate them speaks volumes.

Contact your University Counselling Office or College and Career Centre to determine the proper procedure and timeline for requesting recommendations.

Counsellor Letters

In most cases, students applying to the United States and in addition to some universities in South Korea and other countries, will be required to have a counsellor letter as part of their applications. Admissions officers take counsellor letters very seriously and trust what counsellors have to say. Most universities surveyed say that the counsellor letter comes in right after the student's personal essay in order of importance. Additionally, counsellors are in charge of compiling letters of reference for adding needed information to

UCAS applications and are often asked to provide universities in other parts of the world with information about students.

To provide students with the most favourable letters possible, students are asked to fill out the Year 12 Interview Packet. Not only does this serve as a starting place for the Year 12 student interview, it provides counsellors with necessary information for writing the counsellor letter. Often, students will notice that they are also told that they need to provide universities in the United States with a Secondary School Report. This report contains the counsellor letter, a school profile and an official copy of the student's transcript, which students request on Naviance or Bridge U when finalizing university lists.

Transcripts, Predicted Grades and Final Test Scores

While transcripts are not common in many parts of the world, some university systems require them to be sent along with other application materials. A final transcript contains a student's grade for each semester/trimester from Year 10 to Year 13. While transcripts cannot be considered final until IB/A-Level grades come out after final examinations in the summer, many universities ask for transcripts and the information they contain from Years 10, 11 and 12. Transcripts sent to universities before February of the application year will not contain Year 13 grades; in other words, each and every grade on a transcript from Year 10 to Year 12 of the three years counts. For 33% of the transcript that is seen for the first time by admissions officers at universities. For this reason, it is important that students do their very best at all times and not wait until examination time to start studying.

Often, universities request mid-year reports from schools. The mid-year report contains a student's December report grade and will be provided to universities in late January. Final transcripts will be sent after IB/A-Level final results come out in July. While many believe that firm acceptances into universities means that student grades no longer impact a student's application; this is not the case. Universities that accept students based on consistent transcript scores and predicted grades expect the mid-year report and final transcript to reflect the same student achievement. Universities can and have retracted offers from students who have not demonstrated consistent grades through graduation. Currently, the United States, Canada, Singapore, Hong Kong and South Korea, Japan, Australia and the Netherlands ask for student transcripts in addition to predicted grades and final IGCSE certificates.

Predicted grades are sent to all universities that have application cycles that end before final IB or A-level results are released in July and August. Predicted grades are calculated using data and evidence collected by teachers starting during Year 12 when students begin the IB Diploma or A-level Program and courses. Students who do not put their best foot forward during Year 12 cannot expect to be predicted scores any higher than the effort they have exhibited in class to their teachers.

In the spring of a student's final year, students will be asked to provide the school with the name and address of the university to which they would like their final scores sent. Students applying to university systems with application cycles that are after IB/A-Level final grades are released can also submit the names and addresses of schools to which they would like their scores sent to your counsellor or may contact the IBO directly to have scores sent to universities.

University Admissions Tests

The University and Careers Counselling Office strongly encourages all students and parents to use this information to help understand testing requirements for U.S. university admission and to plan ahead.

Standardized testing is an important factor in admission decisions at most highly selective universities. On the other hand, there are a good number of excellent, accredited institutions that have downplayed the importance of scores and have eliminated test requirements entirely, over 900 in the United States to be exact. A comprehensive listing of those universities can be found at FairTest.org.

Students who plan carefully and familiarize themselves with the test formats through use of practice materials are able to attain scores that accurately reflect their school performance. When difficulties with scores arise, the University and Careers Counselling Office is prepared to help individual students find appropriate resources for assistance.

We want our students to understand the testing requirements and, just as importantly, to keep testing in perspective. Students' academic achievements are more important than test scores, both in terms of acquiring a first-rate education and in terms of enhancing their chances for admission to selective institutions. Do not let these tests impact your performance in your IB or A-level courses!

PSAT

The Preliminary SAT (PSAT) is the practice test for the SAT. The PSAT is offered on some campuses to students in Years 11 and 12. The PSAT is the first opportunity for most students to take a university entrance test, and it allows them to become familiar with the test format. It also offers an early opportunity to note strengths and to focus on areas that may need improvement. If your campus does not offer the PSAT, your counsellor can provide you with resources to take free practice exams for interested students.

The PSAT is a 2-hour and 10-minute test that measures critical reading skills, mathematical problem-solving skills and writing skills. All three sections use multiple-choice questions. For Year 12, the PSAT is also the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST) and is used as the basis for selecting the National Merit, National Achievement, and National Hispanic Recognition Program. This generally is only applicable to students with US passports or permanent residents. The NMQST selection index is calculated by adding a student's critical reading, mathematics and writing skills scores. The results from this test are for the information of the student and parents only. They do not make up any portion of a university application.

The SAT?

Originally, SAT was an acronym for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Now called the SAT Reasoning Test, or simply the SAT, this test assesses students' reasoning based on knowledge and skills developed through their coursework. According to the College Board, the SAT measures the students' ability to apply what they have learned in school through analysis and problem solving as they would in university.

The Redesigned SAT is a 3-hour test (with an additional 50 minutes allowed for the optional Essay section). Results are reported in three areas: Evidenced Based Reading and Writing, Mathematics and Writing. However, now only two sections will be scored on the traditional 200-800 scale. Therefore, the highest total score on the Redesigned SAT is 1600. The essay will be reported separately on a 2-8 scale.

In the Reading Test, students will read passages and interpret informational graphics. Then they will use what they have read to answer questions. Some questions ask them to locate a piece of information or an idea stated directly. But students also need to understand what the author's words imply.

Questions on the Writing and Language Test measure a range of skills.

Questions that test command of evidence ask you to improve the way passages develop information and ideas. For instance, you might choose an answer that sharpens an argument's claim or adds a relevant supporting detail.

Some questions ask you to improve word choice. Students need to choose the best words to use based on the text surrounding them. The goal will be to make a passage more precise or concise, or to improve syntax, style or tone. Students will be asked to read passages about topics in history, social studies, and science with a critical eye and make editorial decisions that improve them.

Some questions ask about a passage's organization and its impact. For instance, you will be asked which words or structural changes improve how well the passage makes its point and how well its sentences and paragraphs work together.

This is about the building blocks of writing: sentence structure, use and punctuation. Students will be asked to change words, clauses, sentences and punctuation. Some topics covered include verb tense, parallel construction, subject-verb agreement and comma use.

The Mathematics Test allows calculator work on one 50-minute section. There is a further non-calculator section that lasts 25 minutes. This section measures mathematical skills in four main areas: Heart of Algebra, Problem Solving and Data Analysis, Passport to Advanced Math and Additional Topic in Math, which covers relevant concepts learned in secondary mathematics, such as the Pythagorean theorem.

SCORE CHOICE

Beginning in March 2009, the College Board instituted a new policy, Score Choice, which gives students the freedom to send scores to universities (by test date for the SAT and by individual test for Subject Tests) that they feel best represent their ability, at no additional cost.

This score-reporting feature is optional to students. If a student chooses not to select his/her scores, all of his/her scores will be sent. Again, it is important to note the policy of each university to which you apply.

For the College Board's own FAQ statement about Score Choice, go to the SAT link on the College Board website (collegeboard.org).

ACT

ACT stands for American College Testing, a battery that combines elements of aptitude and achievement tests in a single instrument.

All universities now accept the ACT in place of the SAT Reasoning Test.

The ACT can provide a helpful basis of comparison between the SAT and ACT, providing scores the student will eventually submit. The ACT can also take the place of Subject Tests at a number of universities. We strongly encourage students having difficulty with Subject Tests or with the Critical Reading section of the SAT, to consider taking the ACT. One caveat: Students should make sure to familiarize themselves with the Science Reasoning section of the ACT before taking the test.

An optional 30-minute Writing Test is available as a component of the ACT. Students should take the optional writing component.

Specific Advice for Year 10

- It is not appropriate for Year 10 students to take the SAT or ACT.

Specific Advice for Year 11

- If your campus offers PSAT and/or PreACT exams, Year 11 students should take them PLAN PreACT or PSAT test in the fall. This will be held on campus, and students can register with the University Counselling Department to sign up to take either or both tests. Both the PSAT and the PreACT PLAN are preliminary or practice tests for the SAT and ACT. Scores are for student and counsellor use only; they will not be sent to universities.

Specific Advice for Year 12

- Year 12 students can take the PSAT in October if offered. This will be offered on campus, and students can register with the University Counselling Department. The PSAT is a preliminary or practice test and Year 12 scores of US citizens and permanent residents will be used as the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Examination Test. The results of this test are not reported to universities. A practice SAT, similar to the PSAT will be offered on the Suzhou High School campus by an external organization based in China.
- All Year 12 students who plan to take the SAT or ACT should do so in October, November, December or January and then again in March or May April or June if looking to improve their scores. Each student should plan ahead to determine which date suits best. Students are responsible for individual registration. Students must register online at www.collegboard.org (SAT) or https://services.actstudent.org/OA_HTML/actibeCAcdLogin.jsp (ACT).
- Most Year 12 students will take several Subject Tests during the year. While some students will be ready to take Subject Tests in the fall (Math Level 1 or a foreign language test), most students will take Subject Tests in the spring, most likely in May or June. The tests most often taken include Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Math Level 1, Math Level 2, and Chemistry or Physics. Students should seek advice from tutors, classroom teachers, and/or one of the university counsellors about which tests to take. We recommend that students register online at www.collegboard.org as soon as possible so that they can secure their first-choice test site.
- Students interested in Subject Tests in foreign languages should be aware of two options. One is the listening test (in Spanish, Chinese, etc.), which is offered only in November of each year. The regular reading version of the language tests is given on various other test days. Students interested in taking any Subject Tests in foreign languages should check the SAT website, www.collegeboard.org. An example of a Year 12 student who might take the November test is one who has just spent the summer in China and is now enrolled in Chinese at IB or one who is a native speaker. Students who are considering taking a Subject Test in foreign language should discuss their decision with their language teachers.
- Students who are unable to use the January and March SAT Reasoning Test dates but who wish to have an official set of test results in hand while formulating initial university lists with the University Counselling Office in the spring should consider taking the April ACT. https://services.actstudent.org/OA_HTML/actibeCAcdLogin.jsp.

Specific Advice for Year 13

- Most Year 13 students will have taken the SAT or ACT before the start of Year 13 and are focusing on Extended Essays, IAs, TOK and IBDP and A-Level studies; however, some do decide to retake the SAT in October, November or December or the ACT in October. October scores will be processed and available to the colleges in time for early applications. Historically, the November scores have also been available in time for the early decision deadlines.
- Students who are interested in taking a foreign language test in the fall should be aware that only the listening version of the language tests will be given in November. The reading version of these tests will be given on various other test dates; students interested in taking Subject Tests in foreign languages should check the SAT website, www.collegeboard.org.

SAT and ACT Registration

To register for either the SAT or the ACT, students must do so on the College Board or the ACT websites first and then sign up for the test. After the test, students will be able to access test results through their accounts when test scores are released. It is also recommended that students sign up before late registration deadlines to avoid problems.

Whenever possible and where permissible, Dulwich offers students the opportunity to sit the ACT and SAT tests except the March administration of the SAT test and the September administration of the ACT test on their home campus. If your campus is an official test centre, test takers must arrive at the designated room before 8am with approved writing utensils and calculators, their passport and admission tickets; failure to do so will result in non-admission to the testing room. When asked for the CEEB code on the SAT testing document, students should use their campus CEEB code. Please ask your counsellor for further information.

*Register at www.sat.collegeboard.org

Test dates and registration deadlines:

*Register at https://services.actstudent.org/OA_HTML/actibeCAcdLogin.jsp

Test dates and registration deadlines: [http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/taking-the-test.html#Outside US 2016-2017](http://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/taking-the-test.html#Outside%20US%202016-2017)

Departmental Guidelines for the SAT Subject Tests for IB Students

ENGLISH

The Dulwich English curriculum emphasizes the richness, complexity and ambiguity of literature. Students used to class discussion and essay writing may find the one-correct-answer format of the SAT Subject Test in Literature to be overly simplistic. In addition, some of the literary terms used on the test may be unfamiliar. We suggest that you consult one of the many preparation books and take a couple of practice tests before undertaking the real thing.

Foreign Languages

Students who are doing well at IB level language are usually prepared to take the SAT Subject Test in that

language. The department advises students to consult their teachers to decide which of the two Subject Tests (regular Subject Test or Subject Test with Listening) is appropriate.

UK Admissions Exams

While many universities in the UK do not require admission tests, some universities do require you pass an admissions exam for particular subjects. It is important that students check whether or not an admissions exam is needed for entry into specific programmes. Students should check the Entry Profile for chosen courses on UCAS to verify testing requirements and information.

Information is available on UCAS at <http://www.ucas.com/students/choosingcourses/admissions/>. UCAS provides a link to the test website where you will find more information and practice papers.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.admissionstestingservice.org/for-test-takers/thinking-skills-assessment/>

- TSA: Thinking Skills Assessment used by Oxford for entry to philosophy, politics and economics (PPE), economics and management (E&M), Cambridge, UCL and Leiden in the Human Sciences etc.
- PAT: Physics Aptitude Test used by Oxford for Engineering, Material Sciences, Physics
- MAT: Mathematics Admissions Test used by Oxford for courses such as Mathematics, Computer Sciences and their joint programs and Imperial College, London for Mathematics
- BMAT: Bio-Medical Admissions Test used by nine universities in UK for courses such as Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Biomedical Science, Dentistry
- LNAT: The National Admissions Test for Law for entry into a number of Law programmes
- Test of Mathematics for University Admission: Encouraged for Durham and Lancaster Universities Mathematics students
- UKCAT: UK Clinical Aptitude Test used by 26 universities in UK for courses such as Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, Biomedical Science, Dentistry
- STEP: Used by Cambridge and some other UK universities, such as Imperial College for undergraduate Mathematics

UK Admissions tests are used to supplement information contained in the application and to assess skills and knowledge of the student. Students will not be tested on material beyond the syllabus. The admissions testing website provides an outline of what students are expected to know. Additionally, previous tests are available online along with the answers. Universities in the UK discourage paying for tutors and outside classes to help students pass. Universities may not release exam results to students and will use them to determine selection for interviews and/or offers.

English Proficiency Tests

PTE

- Established by Pearsons 2009, this is a newer English proficiency test accepted by thousands of top

universities worldwide.

- Preparation: the PTE offers a multitude of preparation materials online, including sample tests and free materials. Please see their [webpage](#) for further information.
- Format: 3 hours in a single session with the Speaking and Writing is 20 minutes. The PTE speaking is evaluated by a computer program and a human rater.
- Scheduling: You can schedule with 24 hours' notice - results back within 5 days. For some international students – where availability is not an issue, speed could be a key factor
- Scores: Pearson has established the Global Scale of English. Online there is a converter tool that matches up the 3 test scores: <http://www.english.com/gse>
- Registration: <http://www.studyinternationalmag.com/advice/english-language-tests/25-pte-toefl-ielts-what-s-best>

IELTS

- More widely accepted in Australia, Canada and the UK - the UKV1 test is the only test one now permitted for UK student visas.
- Preparation: The official IELTS websites offers a plethora of information and study materials on its website free of charge for download - <https://www.ielts.org/>
- Format: Speaking: section is separate, can be a week before or a week after other four sections. Real life conversation
- Scheduling: With over 1,100 locations in 140 countries, scheduling a test is relatively easy at one of many IELTS testing centres. To find one, please visit, <https://www.ielts.org/>
- Scores: Scores are available 13 days after testing date by mail; however, a preview is available online.

TOEFL

Managed by New Jersey-based ETS, the most widely accepted exam by US colleges and universities; however it is not accepted by UK universities for visa issuance.

Preparation: There are a multitude of preparation courses available online and in various cities. TOEFL offers a free prep course [here](#) and also offers paid materials on their website as well [here](#).

Format: TOEFL is a web-based test that is given in four sections that takes about four and one half hours to complete. Students are asked to read, listen and speak as well as write given various tasks

Scheduling: More than 30 test dates per year.

Scores: Scores are available approximately 10 days after the test date and are valid for two years

Other Tests

College- Level Examination Program (CLEP)

CLEP can help students earn college credit for what they have acquired through independent study, prior coursework, on the job training, cultural pursuits, professional development, or internships. It is a program that is administered on university and college campuses; however, it can be an invaluable piece of information for many students. Students can earn university credit for prior language skills as well as other abilities simply by sitting a test. It is important to speak with a university advisor for further information regarding CLEP testing.

Sending Test Scores

Dulwich does not report scores from IGCSE, A-Levels, TOFEL, IELTS, ACT, SAT or any other standardized tests that students may take. It is the student's responsibility to have official scores sent to each university directly from the testing organization.

Choosing Universities and Colleges

Application Limit

Why ten applications? While there is no magic number of schools to which a student should apply, the College Board recommends a student apply to between six and eight universities. For one, we truly believe in students finding the appropriate "fit" for university. Students who have done their research have well-prepared university applications and in turn, receive multiple offers from appropriate universities. Additionally, students are busy during Year 13; trying to manage more than 10 applications is no easy task. Finally, many universities accept students based on yield; that's to say that they expect the students they accept to attend their university. By letting universities know that students within the LIS network of schools are selective in their own choosing of universities to which they apply, we in turn maintain our reputation with universities worldwide.

Compiling the University List - "Likelys, Targets and Reach" Universities

Students are advised to choose wisely when compiling their list of schools. While there is no acceptable number of likely, target and reach schools, it is always advisable to have at least one likely and three target schools on an application list. Below is a loose definition of these commonly used terms. Often students use the overall acceptance rate of a university as a determining factor as to whether a school is a safety, a target or a reach school. This is absolutely not the case. Not only do overall grades and test scores play a huge role in overall acceptance rates, other factors such as government acceptance regulations for residents or sports programming can also have huge role in overall acceptance percentage rates.

To determine reaches, targets, and safety schools, students should check the scores needed for admission if available. This could be based on predicted grades, SAT/ACT scores and past year admission statistics depending on the country being researched and programming. This information is available on websites and in university handbooks and your university counsellor is always a great source of information.

It is important to remember that there is an element of unpredictability at highly competitive schools. Students must remain realistic about grades, SAT scores and the rest of their application, and understand that only the most exceptional students are accepted at the most highly ranked and prestigious universities throughout the world. Harvard, for example, only accepts less than 8% of all students who apply...and 90% of those who apply are at the top or close to the top of their high

school graduating class!

Likely University

A university, which based on the student's overall grades and/or standardized test scores, will more than likely accept the applicant. The student is performing well above the middle fifty percent of the average student at the university, and therefore, has an excellent chance of getting accepted. This term is often used dually: financial likely as well as academic likely. Students should be sure that the likely schools are ones which he/she would be happy to attend if necessary. It is imperative to remember that what may be considered a likely school for one student may be a reach for another; there are no guarantees in admissions.

Target University

A target, or match university is a school which given the applicant's overall grades and/or standardized test scores fall right within or exceed the middle fifty percent of the average scores of the school's first year, or freshman population. Given this, the student has a probable chance of getting accepted. It is, however, extremely important to note that simply because test scores and grades match the overall profile of the student population does not guarantee acceptance. More often than not, especially in more competitive universities, admissions officers will look for a "hook" or a unique attribute that helps an academically suitable application stand out.

Reach University

A reach university is one where a student's scores fall below those of the average first year student, or freshman at the university. Reach schools are long shots, but they should still be possible to be considered a reach; reach doesn't mean out of reach academically, or hoping to reach in the future. So scores should be just below in the 50th percentile range of the average first year student.

Self-Evaluation

You need to take a close look at your academic record as well as your strengths, weaknesses, needs and goals as you try to select universities. You need to research what universities offer and how that fits with your needs. Keep in mind that what is good for one person is not necessarily good for you.

Location

Urban? Suburban? Rural? Long, cold winters? Sunshine year-round? Near a city? Not a city within hours? One of the easiest ways to start narrowing your search is to consider where you want to be. You are not only selecting a university but a place to live. Campus settings range from places such as New York University and George Washington University blending right into the urban setting with no identifiable campus at all to campuses of 10,000 acres of forests and hills several hours from a city. Your happiness is going to depend greatly upon the environment in which you study so you must consider the actual location of universities. If being near family or friends is important, use that importance to pick out possible locations. Keep in mind that being in a small town does not mean nothing to do and being in a large city does not mean necessarily mean loads to do. Large cities can be lonely. A small university may be friendlier.

According to The Princeton Review, "A match school is one where your academic credentials fall well within (or even exceed) the school's range for the average first year student, or freshman. There are no guarantees, but it's not unreasonable to be accepted to several of your match schools. A likely school is one where your academic credentials fall above the school's range for the average first year admit."

Programmes of Study

Students who have a specific major or programme in mind need do little more than assure that the universities that they are researching and considering offer the programme or major. Students who are undecided about specific programmes or majors may want to think about applying to universities that have a range of majors and programmes and/or offer the option to combine multiple disciplines. This is also known as a double-major, conjoined degrees or joint degree programmes. Contrary to popular belief, studying more than one subject at university will not necessarily result in more years at university. While some universities offer multiple course options as honours studies, others allow students to combine multiple majors.

Students deciding to apply to a university and chose a specialty or professional programme should be sure that his/her interest in studying the subject is strong. For example, students who enrol in a school that specializes in business and then decide to change majors or course study will may have to transfer to a different university to study something else.

University Rankings

Each year several publications provide local and world-wide university rankings. Each one uses a different set of criteria based upon what they think is important – and, more importantly, what will result in the selling of a large number of guides.

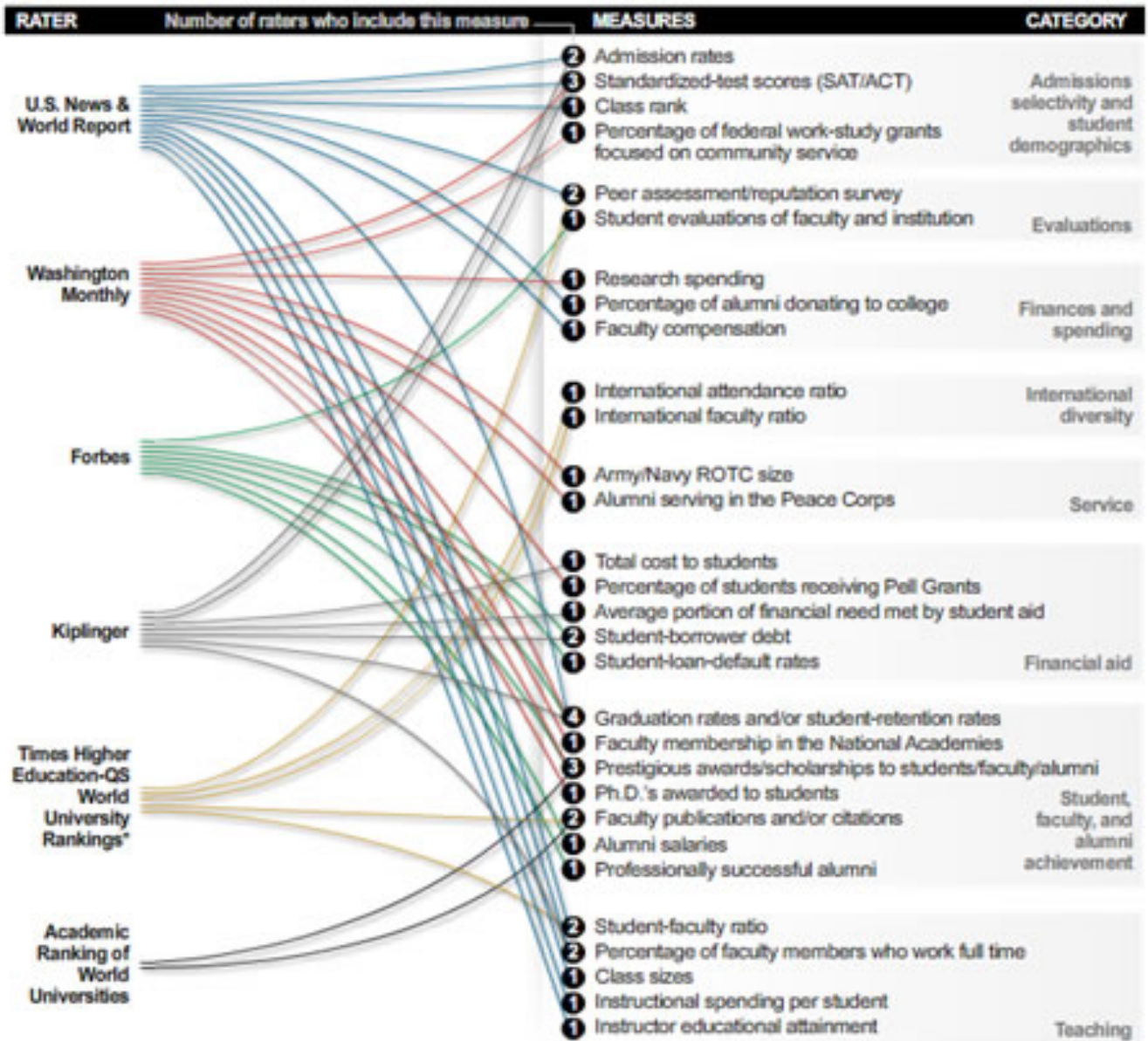
If you are ranking obsessed, it's unfortunate because there are thousands of universities where invigorating education changes people's lives and happens daily. Education is not just about what happens in the classroom. It happens by living, experiencing and developing academic knowledge and critical thinking, analytical thinking and communication skills. You have lots of opportunities to grow and be challenged. Take a serious look at your options. To sort all this out, write it down rather than try to evaluate it all in your head.

There is no wrong choice in where you go to university except second-guessing your final choice. Make the decision and go. Don't look back; don't think, "If I only went to... I would be richer, happier, more productive..." Just make the decision, send the deposit by the deadline and make the most of your education!

Perhaps US News & World Report publishes the best-known rankings for universities in the United States. According to a report issued by the National Association for College Admission Counselling ([NACAC](#)), the rankings present a confusing statement about university quality. "College rankings have evolved over time to adapt to concerns about their methods and their meaning," said Peter Caruso, Associate Director for Campus Development and Staff Programming at Boston College and Chair of the NACAC Ad Hoc Committee on US News & World Report Rankings. "We have reached another juncture where concerns about the ways in which rankings are compiled and presented justify further change in the rankings." The NACAC committee recommended that US News & World Report:

- Remove the "class rank" and "standardised testing" metrics from rankings methodologies in favour of factors that measure student satisfaction and engagement.
- Reduce the weight of the reputational survey.
- Encourage emphasis on fit through customized rankings.
- Continue to evolve rankings methodologies through the association's communication channels.

The chart below, developed by The Chronicle of Higher Education, identifies the measures each of the ranking guides used in their formula for ranking universities. Notice how few measures two or more rates share. This indicates a lack of agreement among them on what defines quality. Much of the emphasis is on "input measures" such as student selectivity, faculty-student ratio, and retention of freshmen. Except for graduation rates, almost no "outcome measures," such as whether a student comes out prepared to succeed in the work force, are used.



Summary of Ranking Publications

[US News](#) has been publishing rankings annually since 1985. While the managing editor defends the U.S. News magazine's use of SAT scores, alumni donations and administrators' opinions to rate American universities, critics say the system is flawed. Presidents assign ratings to other institutions, accounting for 25 percent of each school's total score. If the two sports teams are up against one another in an important playoff and you ask the team manager what he thinks of the other team, would you expect an objective

answer? Same should be said about the ranking system used for US news and world reports.

[Washington Monthly's](#) approach relies in significant part on a comparison between a university's actual graduation rate and the graduation rate that would be predicted by the students' economic backgrounds. The ranking yields unusual results. Public universities fare well because of their strength in research and fairly high marks for serving low-income students.

[Forbes](#) findings may surprise you. The rankings are based on five general categories: post graduate success (32.5%), which evaluates alumni pay and prominence; student satisfaction (27.5%), which includes professor evaluations and freshman to sophomore year retention rates; debt (17.5%), which penalizes universities for high student debt loads and default rates; four-year graduation rate (11.25%); and competitive awards (11.25%), which rewards universities whose students win prestigious scholarships and fellowships like the Rhodes, the Marshall and the Fulbright or go on to earn a Ph.D.

[Kiplinger's](#) offers its ranking of the top 50 values in public, four-year institutions of higher education in the United States. According to Kiplinger's, these are universities "where students can graduate with a high-calibre education, but without a mortgage-size debt." Rankings were first published in 1998.

[Newsweek's](#) annual ranking includes a list of top 25 most affordable universities, least affordable universities, top party universities, and more.

International Rankings

[QS Rankings](#) – An interactive ranking table that uses six performance indicators within the realm of research, teaching, employability and internationalization. Indicators carry different weighting based on both hard data as well as surveys. A common criticism is the use of normalizing citations, or number of citations per faculty member, which counts for 20% as well as academic reputation, which accounts for a whopping 40% of overall score.

[Times Higher Education](#) In 2010 the Times began using a new ranking system. It uses 13 individual performance indicators, combined under five broad categories, to create rankings.

[Academic Ranking of World Universities/Shanghai Ranking](#) - Universities are ranked by several indicators of academic or research performance, including alumni and staff winning Nobel Prizes and Fields Medals, highly cited researchers, papers published in Nature and Science, papers indexed in major citation indices, and the per capita academic performance of an institution. The rankings ignore retention and graduation.

[Maclean's](#) - For over 20 years Maclean's has been offering annual rankings of Canadian universities.

[The Guardian University League Tables](#) - Published yearly, the Guardian offers rankings for UK universities based on a variety of aspects related to student life. They offer subject as well as overall university rankings by subject as well as overall university ranking.

The University of Illinois offers these [cautions and controversies](#) about the business of university rankings. Finally, if you think that only those students who graduate from an elite university go on to earn their Ph.D., take a look at this [Ph.D. productivity list](#).

Researching University Programs – Finding the Right Fit

Not knowing where to begin and getting conflicting messages are two of the biggest challenges of starting the college search. Here are a few strategies that successful students have told us have worked for them:

Reflect – think about who you are and who you want to become. Take a good look at the things you enjoy doing and ask yourself what you want to continue doing at university. Different universities have different sets of values and ethos – a close match makes for a happy future.

What are some of the things you most care about? What kinds of activities do you most enjoy? What is your learning style and in what setting do you learn best? What are some of the things you are most curious about? Where do your passions lie? As you think of these, write down your thoughts and research things like the size of the university, location, faculty/student ratio, percentage of returning freshmen, internship possibilities, graduate school acceptance (and where), career options, companies that hire from that university, first year courses (core requirements, distribution requirements, freshman seminars etc.), and potential majors.

You will find that as you do research, certain universities will match your needs more than others. Ask your counsellor for a research chart to help you keep organized!

Be Open Minded – remember that there are thousands of universities out there, many of which you have never heard of before and some of which may be your perfect fit! Research, ask questions, and figure out what is important to you. Do you like small classes? Big campuses? Research? Your counsellor has resources to help in your research or use one of the many search engines out there to help you. There is definitely more than one university out there for you, just keep an open mind!

Do not listen to your friends – just because he or she is happy at his or her university is a terrible way to make a decision! You are almost an adult, which means you should be making your own decisions not following the latest trends.

Have Fun - most students don't realize that looking for a university should be exciting and fun. Thinking about where you will spend the next stage of your life can be invigorating and exciting. If you start this process early and don't wait until two weeks before applications are due, you can enjoy the process.

Plan trips to see universities if you are able, visit universities when they visit your city and other schools' university and college fairs, spend time on social networking sites learning about universities (they all use Facebook, Twitter, etc.), and feel free to ask admissions officers to connect you with university students on campus if you have questions. It's meant to be fun and exciting. Make it so!

As you develop a list – mental or otherwise – of universities that interest you, be sure you can answer the following things about them that are most important to you:

The Basics

- Where is the university located? Is it too far or too close to home? Can you handle the climate?
- Have you either completed or are in the process of completing the coursework required for admission?
- Are you comfortable with the size of the university? The size of the student body, campus area, etc.
- Does the university offer courses or majors that are of interest to you?
- Is the university co-ed or single sex?

- What percentage of students live off campus, and is there guaranteed housing for first year students if needed? Are first year students made to stay in student housing on campus?
- How many students graduate in three or four years? Five years? Six years?
- How many first-year students return for their second year?
- What type of financial aid is available? Are there scholarships available?
- What type of career preparation and/or internship program is offered?

When contacting the Office of Admissions to obtain applications materials, ask to speak with an admissions representative, introduce yourself, and ask a few questions that are important to you.

Get organized. Make a file for each university that you pursue. Keep all written and computer related correspondence in the file. Make a copy of every application to keep in the file. Your counsellor also has a variety of research and organization materials that can help you in your search.

Be proactive and request transcripts from your university counsellor well in advance of the deadline. Ask teachers to write recommendations for you, and supply them with all required materials.

Find out and remember all deadlines for test registration, admission, financial aid applications, and scholarship applications.

Make sure your application and all other materials are your own work. You can have people review your essay and application, but they cannot complete them for you.

One important thing to remember is that getting into university is your responsibility. As your counsellors, we are here to advise you in the process of picking universities, but applying to them lies solely with you. Thus, following the checklist, organising information and meeting deadlines is your responsibility. If you are successful with these tasks, you will save yourself a huge headache later on in the year.

University Visits and Presentations to LIS Campuses

September to December is normally the time for admissions officers to make school visits and attend university fairs. At these events you should always research the university and ask intelligent questions. The person to whom you are talking may be the person who decides on your admittance or scholarship. The following are some examples of the type of questions that can be helpful in the university search. Be sure to avoid asking questions whose answers are available on the website: One of the best ways to demonstrate interest and learn about a university is to visit; however, if you are not able to visit the university campus in person, there are many admissions officers who visit schools throughout the LIS network every year.

Questions to Ask the University Representative (courtesy of the *College Counseling Source Book*)

College representatives, as well as college students, admissions counsellors and faculty, genuinely enjoy talking to high school students. They like to share their ideas about their college, and they all appreciate students who have thought about the college and want to know more than is in the course catalogue, in the view book, or on the Web site. They like thoughtful questions, and their answers can help you make a good college match. Ask questions of interest to you in the following categories.

Initial Meeting

- Shake hands and introduce yourself with a hello and your name.
- Ask specific questions and try not to be too vague. Some suggestions are given below.

Concluding your visit

Don't forget to ask for a direct email address for an admissions officer and get a business card, and be sure to give them your Dulwich email address.

Visiting Colleges and Universities on Your Own

There is no better way to learn about a college or university and demonstrate interest than to visit the campus when the college is in session. A live campus gives you better insight to the right fit for you when you are on campus while students are learning, professors are teaching, and the campus culture is in full swing.

Preparing for the Visit

Arrange for the visit at least two weeks in advance to give the university time to arrange for the things you may like to do while visiting:

- a campus tour
- Interview with an Admissions Counsellor
- Sitting in on a class
- Staying overnight in the residence halls
- A tour of the campus
- Meeting with students at the college
- Eating in the cafeteria Check to see if the college has special recruiting weekend events and tours.
- Allow sufficient time for a visit. Preferably a full day but not less than a half day.
- Familiarize yourself with the college before you visit.
- Inform the college about your areas of interest.
- Take a copy of your high school's profile with you.
- Take a copy of your resume with you. Take an unofficial copy of your transcript with you.
- Give careful attention to your appearance, grooming, and conduct. This will be your first contact with the school and first impressions do count. Follow up the visit with a thank-you email or note.

The Visit

- Visit several classes.

- Talk with students. If possible, stay overnight in the dorm to see what living at college is really like.
- Ask to meet a faculty member from the department in which you are interested.
- Eat in a dining hall.
- Pick up a copy of the student newspaper.
- Take notes. Jot down what you liked and didn't like.

What to ask university admissions officers or representatives.

*Be sure you understand the system of the country to which you are looking to apply when choosing appropriate questions to ask university representatives. Remember to talk to your counsellor with any country-specific questions you may have.

This is a great way to find "fit". Chose questions that are important to you and your learning. Getting answers helps you make informed decisions about schools that are, or aren't, right for you!

Ideally, you'll want to talk with more than just the admission staff if you have the chance to visit the school in person. Stop a few students during your stay and ask them what they like and don't like about their school. If you can talk to a professor or two even better.

Academics

What academic programs is your college most known for?

What makes your college unique?

How much time do students typically spend on homework? What is the academic pressure and workload?

How much writing and reading are expected?

What is the average class size of introductory classes?

How widely used are teaching assistants on your campus?

What is the average class size of upper-division courses?

What is the average class size for introductory, general education classes taken by freshmen and sophomores?

Overall, what is the undergraduate student faculty ratio?

How easy or difficult is it for freshmen and sophomores to enrol in courses they want?

Who typically teaches freshman & sophomore courses - professors, T.A.'s?

How easy is it to double major? How easy is it to major in one area such as science, and minor in another such as business?

How writing-intensive is your curriculum?

Are there any new programs scheduled for the next four years?

Is the honour code working? How widespread is cheating?

Can I get credit for International Baccalaureate/A Level courses I have taken?

How available are faculty members? What are typical office hours? Do they give home numbers?

Is there much informal student-faculty contact outside of class such as students and faculty having lunch or dinner together or playing sports together?

Does each student have a personally assigned advisor, or is advising conducted by an "advisement centre?" Does the student have an opportunity to select or change his/her advisor? Will my professor act as my advisor?

Is there an early-alert system at the college whereby first semester students receive feedback about their progress before they receive their final grades?

What services are offered to students needing help or tutoring?

Does the college have any special programs or courses for college seniors designed to serve as a "capstone" experience that ties together the students' university experiences?

How much time do students typically spend on homework?

What is the neighbourhood surrounding the campus like? How do the students get involved in the local community?

Describe student-computing facilities. What is the ratio of campus computers (available for student use) to students?

What is distinctive about education here? What is the educational philosophy of the university? Has it changed much in recent years?

Academic Support

What type of tutoring program do you have and how do I access it?

What's the faculty like? How accessible are they outside of class?

How do you provide academic advice to students?

What kind of learning disability resources do you have?

Admissions

What are the ranges of SAT and ACT scores and grade point average of entering freshmen? Grades for IB/A Level scores?

What are the deadlines for admission? Do you offer alternatives to regular admission such as early decision, early action, rolling admission? How many applications did you receive last year? What % were admitted?

What academic preparations do you expect in order to be admitted - which qualities and experiences are you looking for in a student? What kind of student is most successful at your university?

What sort of student would not be happy at your institution?

Do you have any pointers on writing essays that your school requires with the application?

What is the college's retention rate? What percent of freshmen return for sophomore year?

Academic Perks

What opportunities are there for undergraduate research?

How many students participate in undergraduate research?

Is there a culminating senior year experience?

Do you have an honors college?

Do you have a learning community or other freshman experience?

Financial Aid

What is your average financial aid package? Do you offer financial aid for international students?

Do you offer academic scholarships? What is the application process?

What is the typical breakdown of loans versus grants?

What percentage of financial need does the school typically meet?

What is the average merit award?

What percentages of students receive college grants?

What is the average college debt that students leave with?

What work-study opportunities are there? Are international students eligible?

Graduation Track Record

What is your four-year graduation rate?

What is your five-year graduation rate?

What does it take to graduate in four years?

What percentage of freshmen return for sophomore year?

How long does it usually take for full-time students to complete a degree in (insert specific major here) at your college/university?

What percentages of students who start at the college actually finish and get their degree?

Housing and Student Life

What kinds of housing choices are there: suites, apartments, etc.? Do you have honours housing?

What percentage of student live on campus? Do you guarantee housing for (international) students for all years spent on campus?

How many students live on campus?

What percentage of students stays on campus on weekends and holiday breaks?

What percentage of the study body belongs to a sorority or fraternity?

What activities are offered to students?

What clubs do you have on campus?

Are freshmen guaranteed housing? Is housing guaranteed beyond freshmen year?

What activities on campus are the most popular with students?

What transportation means are available? Around campus, to closest city, airport etc. Is there a campus bus to town (or the local community) and back?

Which religious services are available on campus? Are religious denominations available on campus for social and/or counselling purposes?

Tell me about Greek life on your campus: Are there fraternities and sororities? How big a part do they play on campus? Which ones have the highest grade point averages?

Diversity and internationalism

How ethnically diverse is the campus? What percent of the student body is composed of international students?

What are the opportunities for study abroad? Does your institution have some unique programs? What percent of your student body studies abroad?

Can financial aid and scholarship monies be used to study abroad? If so, for how many semesters?

Service and Internships

What is the availability of campus work opportunities?

What volunteer/community service opportunities are available for students at the college?

What percent of students do internships? How does your college assist students in finding internships?

What percentages of students who study abroad?

What type of career services do you have? Is there job placement help for graduates? For international students?

Safety

What campus security measures do you have? Is an escort service provided to/from the library, for night classes?

Tell me about the crime statistics on your campus– assault, rape, robbery, car theft, etc. What are the most typical incidents of crime?

Choosing Courses and Majors Around the World

While in some parts of the world, students can begin their university careers without a clear course or major in mind, other university systems require that students choose courses during the university application process.

Important points to consider:

1. The content of a course may vary widely from institution to institution, especially in subjects such as Computer Science, Business Studies or Modern Languages.
2. The structure of a course may also vary. It can be highly focused from the start, or less specialised. It may be modular. It is sometimes possible to change subjects within a course. The course may include a year abroad or an exchange programme with a term in a different country.
3. Contact time with the department is another consideration. The size of lecture groups, amount of personal supervision, number of examinations, system of assessment, number of hours of lectures a week will all affect the learning experience.

What is a Liberal Arts Degree?

Liberal Arts degrees are often misunderstood and based in a plethora of stereotypes; however, LACs (liberal arts and sciences colleges) are becoming more and more popular throughout the world. Liberal arts degree programmes differ from university to university; however, it includes studies in humanities, social sciences, natural sciences and formal sciences like mathematics. A recent survey of CEOs in the US showed that employers appreciate a liberal arts education because they feel it is an excellent way to prepare for success in today's global economy because of the critical think, problem solving and communication skills student earn by studying a broad-based education in lieu of concentrating on sole area of study. Because of the nature of a liberal arts education, it is said that a degree in the liberal arts helps students become better thinkers, writers and problem solvers. Students who know they will be going into graduate programmes often find liberal arts colleges to be good preparation because of the broad-base exposure to many disciplines they receive.

But don't just take our word for it. To quote Thomas Sowell, currently a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University with degrees from Harvard University, Columbia University and the University of Chicago, from his book about choosing colleges:

"If your interest is not so much in your prospects immediately after college, but rather in your career after finishing graduate school or medical or law school, then there is even less reason to select a big-name undergraduate institution, as such. The quality and renown of your postgraduate training will undoubtedly have a very real influence on your career prospects-but at that point no one will care where you went to college before you received your M.B.A. from Wharton, your Ph.D. from Stanford, or your M.D. from Johns Hopkins. Perhaps you are concerned about getting into such postgraduate programs and think that a big-

name college will help your chances there. But the people who run the leading graduate and professional institutions are unlikely to be dazzled by big names. They know from long personal experience which colleges' students actually perform well, regardless of whether or not those colleges are known to the general public. It was the deans of law schools who ranked Davidson College ahead of most Ivy League schools for the calibre of its students' performances in law school. It was the deans of engineering schools who ranked the students from Rose-Hulman Institute ahead of those from Princeton."

The biggest difference between a typical LAC in the US and other universities is the size, emphasis on student-teacher interaction, mentorship, collaboration and the reliance on student participation. While large universities tend to concentrate on research and therefore, depend on a combination of graduate students and professors to teach undergraduate classes LACs have more staff members dedicated to teaching. Additionally, students in need of financial aid will find that LACs in the US are more generous than public universities.

Liberal Arts Colleges are most prevalent in the United States; however, countries like The Netherlands, Canada and Japan are also known for a large number of liberal arts degree offerings. Additionally, the UK, South Korea, France, Germany, Italy, Hungary, Sweden and Australia among other countries have begun adding more and more liberal arts degree programs at top universities. For a listing of liberal arts programmes around the world, please click here.

Applying to Australia

There are 43 accredited universities in Australia comprising of 40 Australian universities, two international universities and one smaller private university. Australia is the 4th most popular student destination for international students after the UK and the US in the world. Before applying, students will need to decide on an institution and a degree course. Australia offers a lot of flexibility in their programming

Degree Structure

Bachelor's Degree – 3-year undergraduate program

Bachelor's Degree with Honours – 4-year program (including a thesis in your last year)

Law and Medicine – Professional programs only (University of Sydney and Melbourne the exception)

Double Degree - 4 to 6 years

Application cycle

While applications are accepted throughout the year, applying with predicted scores will earn conditional acceptances only. Certain universities and programs will permit July intake for incoming students, while others will not. It is important to check with individual programs and universities for exact information. Students applying for college housing to a residential college will need to do so up to six months ahead of entry depending competitiveness of residential college and university.

Academic Calendar

The Australian academic year typically runs term 1 February or early March until June and term 2 July through December.

Admissions Tests

Non-native English speakers will be asked to take an English proficiency test for admittance into Australian universities. Most universities will require a band score of 6 or 7 for students whose first language is not English on the IELTS. In addition to a university requirement, this is also a visa condition.

The Selection Process

Australian universities select mainly on academic qualifications that students supply to the university based on a student's ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank). Non-Australian students will be selected on the equivalent academic qualification. These equivalencies are determined by individual universities. Additionally, students planning on applying to a residential college at the university will need to submit additional documentation, usually in the form of a character letter from a trusted teacher.

The Decision

Depending on if students apply after final A-Level/IB scores are released published or not will determine if students receive conditional or unconditional offers. Students will usually receive decisions in about three to four weeks directly from the state Tertiary Application Centre with an application number after final admissions decisions are made. Applying to a university and course with final scores will, if accepted, result in a firm acceptance to the university/programme of choice. On the other hand, applying throughout the year with predicted grades will result in a conditional acceptance hinging on final test scores.

The Application

Each university has its own application fee and application, which can be downloaded from the relevant university. If you are successful in receiving an offer, you will obtain a "Letter of Offer". The Letter of Offer is a contract between you and the institution. It sets out the course you will be enrolled in, enrolment conditions, the fees you need to pay, and the refund payable if you don't complete your course with that provider. This contract is very important – if you don't start your course, or finish your course, this written agreement will be used to determine if you will receive a refund. Check each university for its own specific deadline.

What You Will Be Asked for with Your Application

- Full details of courses taken – IGCES/AS/A-Level/IB
- Non-English speaking countries passport holders (ask about waivers) – IELTS (most common)/TOFEL (Please send these directly)
- Application – individual

Admission Guidelines

Most commonly, Students interested in studying in Australia can apply to university before or after graduation with AS/A Level/IB qualifications and/or predicted grades. Students applying without final exam results may receive conditional or unconditional offers. and receiving final IB/A-Level qualifications. Students applying with final exam results will have scores are then compared to ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admissions Rank) scores, which are taken by Australian students each year, to determine minimum entry level scores for applications. These comparison scores are published by individual university by course and country of study

on their websites. For more general information about ATAR, please click this [link](#). Students interested in applying earlier for term 1 entry (January/February) may do so, depending on university, and can earn conditional and/or unconditional offers that are generally released in late December. Additionally, most universities will require a band score of 6 or 7 for students whose first language is not English on the IELTS. In addition to a university requirement, this is also a visa condition.

Government Agents

Many universities in Australia work directly with education agents. These agents work with and are approved by the Australian government as well as the universities themselves. Under Australian Government law, if an institution works with an agent, the agent must have a list on their website of every education agent it has appointed to represent them in each country in which they are represented. The use of agents outside of an appointed university agent is not only unnecessary and expensive, it is not helpful nor guaranteed by the university. To assure that all agents are authorized to represent the university, ask for a letter of appointment from the institutions to which you want to apply.

Australia University Search

www.Australia.edu is an excellent place to begin searching by territory, and is chockfull of useful information about undergraduate study throughout the country.

<http://www.australianuniversities.com.au/> offers listing of universities by state, city and program of interest

<http://www.uac.edu.au> UAC (University Admissions Centre) If you are considering a higher education degree in Australia, a great place to get started is at for Australian residents and citizens or <http://www.uac.edu.au/international> for international students. Here you can find ATAR (Australian Tertiary Admission Rank) conversion tables and additional information and international student information, which will be used to compare your international external assessment results for admission, apply and track your application and search for courses for 24 popular universities throughout Australia.

<https://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/global/apply-to-study> Australian government official page dedicated to international students who want to study in Australia full of useful information about the Australian education system, applications, living in Australia and the visa process.

Tertiary Admissions Centres

[The South Australia Tertiary Admissions Centre](#)

[Queensland Tertiary Admissions Centre](#)

[Victoria Tertiary Admissions Centre](#)

[New South Wales University Admissions Centre](#)

[Tertiary Admissions Service Centre, Western Australia](#)

Scholarships and Funding

A listing of Australian University Scholarships - <http://www.australianuniversities.com.au/scholarships/>

Australian Government Development Scholarships - <http://www.ausaid.gov.au>

Visas

Check student visa information on the [Department of Immigration and Border Protection \(DIBP\)](#) website

Part 2: Choosing a country and an academic system

“Where do you want to study?”

When asking this question, students should first realize that the IB Diploma is a rigorous and demanding program that provides them with a first-class preparation for their future after LIS. Students follow a course of study with a global reputation for academic excellence, and universities throughout the world recognize the IB Diploma as an entrance qualification to higher education degree courses. In some countries, such as the United States and Canada, the IB Diploma qualifies students for advance placement or academic credits; furthermore, students with the IB Diploma are accepted at a higher rate at selective US universities than those with other qualifications. In general, European universities prefer the IB Diploma for entrance over IB Diploma Programme (DP) courses results or the high school diploma. European and Canadian universities may require a standardized test (SAT), if a student only has the high school diploma or the high school diploma with DP course results.

Being at LIS has probably also made you aware that there is a world of opportunity waiting for you after you receive your IB Diploma. You have so many university choices that it may be difficult to know where to begin. While the majority of LIS graduates attend UK universities, many go to Canada, the US, Japan, continental Europe, and Korea. The following provides a brief overview of the university systems in the UK, the US, and Canada. Many other systems throughout the world follow some form of the “course” based system of the UK or the liberal arts approach of the US and Canada. Additional information and helpful links can be found on the LIS [university counseling website](#).

Finally, students and parents should make sure that subject choices in their Diploma Programme meet specific university entrance requirements for the country in which students plan to apply. Helpfully, the

International Baccalaureate Organisation has a page on the [IBO website](#) which can give you information about each country's individual requirements where there are any.

Introduction to UK universities

The academic system in higher education in the UK is course (subject) based. Students apply for a specific course to pursue at university, such as English, and focus solely on the one or combined subject program they have selected to study. The majority of the undergraduate degree programs in the UK (except for Scotland) take three years to complete. Within this system, there are no general education requirements and few elective subjects outside of the course area. If you have a specific interest in a subject area and are certain this is the subject you would like to study at university, then the UK system is a good choice. If you would also like to focus in one or two areas of study and not have to take classes in other areas, this system provides that opportunity. Some of the course areas are more open to an interdisciplinary approach than others, such as European Studies or combined honors programs.

In Scotland, courses are four-year degree programs and have a more general approach that also allows the student to study more elective subjects. While students still apply for a course, the system is more multi-disciplinary and allows for greater flexibility in changing courses.

Applications to all UK public universities are completed through the [UCAS system](#). Students may select a total of five courses, which could include several courses at the same university. Usually, conditional offers are based only on IB predicted grades that are submitted by the counselor to UCAS. Every course from each university lists the entry requirement for IB predicted grades that are required for acceptance into the course. The UCAS application system is very straightforward, with clear explanations of the entry points required, specific courses offered at every university, suggestions for writing the personal statement, and a tracking system for following university offers. This system is advantageous for students who did not perform well academically until Grades 11 and 12 and whose predicted IB grades are much stronger than their semester grades. For this subject-based system the students need to choose their six IB subjects carefully in order to ensure that they select courses at High Level which are related to the course they plan to pursue at university. In most cases, students' applications are accepted by the tutors in specific departments at the university after being reviewed by the general admissions. (This course-based system is common in Europe.)

UK universities have several tuition structures: UK and EU students generally pay the same fees (except for Scotland) while international students pay a much higher tuition. With the UK leaving the EU, it is still anticipated that EU fees will probably remain the same as UK fees in the near future.

More detailed information on applying to UK universities is under the UK section of this guide.

Introduction to US universities

In the US, students apply to schools as part of a general admissions process, not to departments within schools. The terms "college" and "university" are used interchangeably when referring to US institutions. Usually, college refers to an institution devoted primarily to undergraduate education. The standard undergraduate program lasts four years and students graduate with a degree (Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science). A university is usually a larger institution offering a combination of undergraduate and graduate (Master's or Doctorate) degrees. Typically, universities are committed to research as well as teaching. Both institutions are equal in providing excellent academic programs and both offer four-year bachelor's degrees.

Universities and colleges in the US are based on a liberal arts system in which students choose the institution and study a broad range of subjects during the first two years before selecting a final subject as a major for the final two years. Except for certain majors, such as engineering and other professional programs, most students take a variety of courses that provide a general, broad education. The “core” requirements of a liberal arts education help ensure all students have a breadth of knowledge when they graduate, in addition to their specialized area. This academic approach is great for students who are not sure what course or major they would like to study.

The application process in the US is somewhat more complicated than other systems, such as the UK and Canada. Universities and colleges in the US set their own criteria for determining who gets admitted. Although many schools take the Common Application or the Universal Application which allows students to fill out one form to submit online to schools, most competitive schools also have supplemental essays. In addition, schools have a variety of deadlines and set their own policies regarding standardized testing requirements and other required materials. For this reason, it is very important for you to keep track of what each school requires and to be very organized with your applications.

Acceptance to US schools is based on a holistic evaluation of many aspects of the student – grades, predicted grades, talents, extracurricular activities, leadership skills, recommendations from teachers and a counselor, student essays, and standardized test scores (if required). However, since US universities think the best predictor of college success is academic performance in secondary school (Grades 9 through 12), the grades earned on semester reports (the transcript) and the rigor of the courses taken are the most important factors considered. The IB Diploma is well recognized in US institutions as a highly challenging, pre-university program that is an excellent preparation for success at university. Students should choose their IB subjects in their areas of strength. IB predicted grades are also included in the application materials sent to schools.

Since the university application process in the US requires students to complete very personalized, thoroughly researched applications and essays in order to maximize positive results, LIS strongly recommends limiting the number of applications to eight institutions, unless a student depends on a financial aid award. In addition, you are strongly encouraged to make yourself known to admissions officers through personal contact and indicate why you have a strong interest in attending a particular school.

Private US colleges and universities make no distinction in the tuition structure between US residents and international students, whereas, public institutions have a fee structure for in-state students and another for out-of-state students.

Please see the Applying to Colleges and Universities in the US section of this guide for more information.

Introduction to Canadian Universities

Canada offers a great academic system for studying at university and has developed a first-rate education system with high standards and academic credentials valued the world-over. The academic approach is closer to the liberal arts than the course-based system, although students apply to general programs or faculties within the university. In addition, the application process is amazingly simple – it is academic-based, so acceptances are evaluated on transcripts (semester grades) and predicted IB grades. Most universities place emphasis on Grades 10, 11, and 12, although some schools may require Grade 9 grades as well. The application does not require essays, teacher or counselor recommendations, or standardized tests. For students who have completed only DP courses results, standardized tests (SAT/ACT) may be required from

some schools. Students apply on-line for an academic program or faculty at the institution, for example the Applied Sciences program, or the Faculty of Humanities. Each university in Canada has its own policy regarding admission requirements and indicates on its website the IB Diploma points the school seeks in a candidate, although both the transcript and the predicted IB grades are equally important. Students with an IB Diploma are accepted at McGill University and some other schools into the second year, and therefore the undergraduate degree programs are three years. Since students apply for a faculty, you should be aware of the requirements for your general area of study. For example, in the Sciences and Math Faculties, IB Math Studies is not acceptable, although it is for the Humanities Faculties. In the Canadian system, there is a distinction between a university and a college. Universities offer academic degrees at all levels, from bachelors to advanced degrees, whereas colleges only focus on technical training and applied arts, similar to a community college.

Canadian universities make a distinction between Canadian and international students regarding the tuition structure. An interesting benefit for French students is the Quebec policy on granting them the same university fee status as Canadian residents. Please note: Previously French students were granted the same status as Quebec citizens – the status changed in 2015.

Please see the Canadian section in this guide for more information.

Other English-speaking universities

Every year, students apply to other English speaking universities all over the world including Ireland, Australia, South Africa, and Singapore. The IB Diploma is accepted at English speaking schools around the world and therefore, students submit their IB results for admission. Students must notify the IB Coordinator to request that the IBO makes their results available to the university. The counselor will help prepare your application and gather all necessary supporting documents, wherever you decide to apply. Usually, the student's application section is completed online and paid for with a credit card. The school will send paper copies of transcripts and recommendations, unless an online system is available. The countries in the southern hemisphere have school years that begin later (usually around February) so the applications are usually submitted from July to September, after the student has already graduated. Students are responsible for submitting all the required documents for admission within the deadlines. [For further information, check the LIS University Counseling site](#) for links to universities as well as the specific university websites for undergraduate admissions.

Selecting “best fit” universities

The key to finding the best university for you is knowing what you want... and knowing what you want requires you to know who you are. This important piece of self-knowledge applies wherever you decide to study in the world. Remember, you are at the center of the university application process; you are the person deciding what are the best “fit” universities for you. Selecting your schools first requires a self-assessment of your academic standing, educational values and goals, interests, talents, and aspirations. Once you know what is important to you, then you will be able to research universities to select the systems and schools that fit your criteria.

Questions to ask

The following categories of assessments and questions may help you in starting to think about what interests

you as well as what distinguishes you from other students. Self-assessment will help you know what to look for when researching and selecting universities. These questions are just a beginning to start thinking about you and how you will decide your “best fit” universities.

Goals and values

- How do I spend my time when I’m not studying?
- Am I an independent, intellectually curious learner?
- What kind of students would I like to have around me?
- What are the focus of discussions with friends and family?
- Do I challenge myself academically?
- How do I define success?

Academic considerations

- What do I choose to learn on my own?
- Do my grades reflect my ability and potential? Why or why not?
- What are my academic strengths and weaknesses?
- What are my favorite courses? (They should be the HL courses)
- Do I strive to be academically challenged? Does my academic profile correspond to a highly, rigorous course or university – how do I evaluate my academic standing with the demands of a specific course or university?

Activities, interests and character

- What activities do I enjoy the most?
- In what extra-curricular activities do I participate and how involved and/or committed am I?
- Do I take a leadership role or do I just like participating?
- Am I an extrovert or an introvert in activities and in the classroom?
- Do I feel passionate about a cause, a subject, an activity?
- Do I have a special talent or interest? (Playing music, singing, chess, etc.)
- Do I have any athletic skills or actively participate in a sport?
- Am I an independent individual who is able to organize myself and take initiative?

Defining your own university selection criteria

Once you have evaluated yourself, it now becomes clearer what considerations you may be looking for at

university. While you are researching courses and universities as well as visiting or talking with representatives, the following list of considerations may help you compare your findings with your criteria. You may think of many other concerns that are important to you when looking at universities.

University characteristics

- Appearance of campus
- Size of student body, number of undergraduate students and graduate students
- Atmosphere: satisfaction level of current students with undergraduate experience. Student retention rate and graduation percentage
- Facilities: library, sports, dormitories
- Public or private
- Degree of selectivity in admissions
- Diversity of students
- Geographic location: Specific country and area of country as well as urban versus rural or suburban: enclosed campus versus an open-city integrated setting
- Climate

Academic environment

- Degree of competitiveness and intensity
- Quality and availability of faculty; class size - student/faculty ratio; teaching faculty or teaching assistants
- Courses and programs offered
- Degree requirements
- Special interest or honors programs
- Flexibility in course selection
- Credit/advanced standing for IB diploma
- International study opportunities
- Internships and research opportunities
- Specific academic facilities
- Proximity to family or friend

Student life and campus culture

- Students (caliber, diversity); number of international students

- Housing facilities (availability, quality, variety)
- Food options (variety, meal plans)
- Support services (counseling, ESL, career services)
- Campus activities: social organizations, clubs
- Cultural opportunities
- Athletic programs
- Social life and activities: How do students spend their time outside of class, what issues are important to them?
- Security

Expenses

- Costs: tuition and fees, room/board, books and supplies, travel expenses
- Availability of scholarships, bursaries, financial aid

Entrance requirements

Can I get in? Do I have the academic record or special talents (if applying to art or music schools) that are competitive with the specific university student profile. Do an objective appraisal to determine if you are an eligible candidate. Although LIS counselors are your advocates, we will not be able to fully support your application to universities that are not a good fit for you academically. For example, Oxford and Cambridge courses require a minimum of 38 and 40+ IB predicted points, respectively, for entry consideration.

Life after graduation

- Job placement record for graduates
- General academic reputation
- Alumni accomplishments
- Admission to graduate programs
- Career planning and placement program

Resources for researching courses and universities

Web Resources

The LIS university counseling webpage

The LIS university counseling webpage is an extensive section on the LIS website full of information about the college application process. There are articles, a listing of university news and events, timelines for Grades 11 and 12, and links to other university-related sites. Virtually everything you could possibly want to know about

selecting and applying to university is on this site.

The official UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Services) site

Students applying to UK universities must apply through the UCAS site (www.ucas.com) for most courses (except for Art Foundation and other Foundation Year courses). This site has all the information students need to research courses, universities, get advice for writing the personal statements, and more.

University websites

Every college and university maintains its own website offering all information on courses, programs, course and application requirements, and even virtual tours of the campus.

Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter

Universities offer social networks with current students as well as videos and other forms of communication for prospective students to gather more information about schools.

Reference materials

The school maintains a university reference section in the school library and the counseling office which includes college catalogues, university brochures, and university guidebooks. Some of the very helpful guidebooks include: The Guardian University Guide, The Times Good University Guide, The Fiske Guide to Colleges, The Princeton Review - The Best 371 Colleges, The Student's Guide to Canadian Universities

LIS Counselors are always available to advise and counsel students on their university choices.

Admissions office representatives

Each year LIS hosts many college and university representatives to our school. Students should take advantage of these visits to learn more about university life and the application process in general as well as the specific school. Representatives from the US and some European universities are usually the person reading your application and deciding to admit you. Therefore, it is extremely important to attend the university visits.

College fairs

The Chengdu College Day is scheduled every year at the end of September. More than 90 universities throughout the world are represented at this event where students meet representatives, ask questions, and gather information. There are other university tours visiting LIS, such as the London World Class Tour of Imperial, LSE, UCL, and Kings College in October.

Summer and school vacation visits

Students should plan to visit schools where they have an interest in applying. This is an excellent way to help narrow your choices. In the UK, Open Day – when the university departments open their doors to introduce prospective students to the facilities, tutors, and programs – is an excellent way to learn more about the course and university. Universities list their Open Days on their websites as well as under Open Days on the UCAS site. Most schools also offer daily tours or self-guided walks.

Other resources

Teachers, alumni, family friends, and current students are all great sources for discussing your university choices.

Interviewing with universities

There will be many opportunities for students to meet with university representatives in Grades 11 and 12 and gather information, which will help you in deciding where to apply. Each year, LIS hosts university representatives from around the world; in addition, students may also meet with university alumni who live in Chengdu. If you are being considered as a candidate for Oxford or Cambridge, you will be invited for an interview (please be aware that LIS provides mock interviews for OxBridge). Other courses in the UK, such as medicine and some art programs may also require interviews. Few schools in the US require interviews for admittance and many may not offer them on campus, however, students are still encouraged to schedule interviews, if given the opportunity. Except the interview process for Oxbridge, UK medical schools, Art courses, and several other programs, the interview will not make or break your chances for acceptance; the purpose of the interview is to give the interviewer an idea of the candidate's suitability for the university and also to provide information to the candidate about the school and program.

Here are some general suggestions to think about when meeting with university representatives, whether it is a college visit at LIS, meeting with alumni, or an interview at a university.

- Be on time.
- If on a university visit, remain standing until you are invited to sit down.
- Be respectful: Do not chew gum, slouch, or use "informal, inarticulate language", turn off your cell phone and do not text messages.
- Look directly at the representative during your conversation or presentation. If it's a college visit at LIS and the representative hands out brochures, do not read the brochure and stop paying attention to the presentation!
- Research the college or university, be aware of requirements, programs of study and be prepared to state why you are interested in the school.
- Try not to have vague questions such as, "Tell me about your university." Be specific with questions, such as, "Could you tell me about class spirit? Can you give me examples of some campus traditions? In my first semester what will my class sizes probably be? What is the college's greatest asset? How would you describe the student body?" and any other questions regarding courses, financial aid, scholarships, or student life that are important to you.
- Be sincere in your answers, questions, and attitudes. You don't want to be boastful, but don't be over-modest either. Speak to the point concisely and completely without monopolizing the conversation.
- Practice answering questions, such as, "Why do you want to attend this university/college? What is your intended area of study, why? What do you like to read? Whom do you admire? What do you enjoy doing outside of your academic work?"

- Wait for the interviewer to begin, listen attentively without interrupting, and answer all questions tactfully, firmly, honestly, and to the best of your ability. Don't be afraid to ask questions that you feel are important. Don't be afraid to say you don't know the answer to a question you may be asked.
- Whether it is an LIS school visit or an interview at university, always thank your interviewers for their time and interest.
- Within 48 hours of the interview, write a thank-you note!

Standardized admission tests

Standardized tests refer to the college entrance examinations used by universities in an attempt to measure general aptitude and serve as a benchmark for differing academic systems. Currently, many universities throughout the world use standardized tests (mostly the SAT) as an entry requirement. If students are not taking the IB Diploma, the SAT may be required for admission to some Canadian and UK universities as well as other European schools. Other university systems, such as in Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong, may also require SAT scores. Standardized tests are optional at many colleges and universities in the US (please see the US section). With all of these different requirements at schools all over the world, it is important for students to check individual university standardized test requirements. The following offers a brief explanation of these admission tests.

The SAT and the ACT are both accepted by US colleges and universities. The SAT is more widely accepted by other university systems, such as the UK and other European and Asian schools. Students register online for all standardized admission tests at the test center where they prefer. (LIS is not a test center, except for the PSAT.) When you take an SAT, ACT, or TOEFL, you are the person who receives and “owns” the scores. Universities require that test scores be “officially” sent, which means that you must request the testing agency to send your scores to the schools. You may pay to have your scores sent at the time you register for the test online at the testing website; you may also request additional test scores to be sent through your login at any time. Please remember your user name and password to access your account and to get your scores.

The PSAT

PSAT – the preliminary SAT is available for LIS students in Grade 10, who would like to practice, and Grade 11 who are interested in applying to US schools. US citizens who take the test in Grade 11 might qualify as National Merit Scholars for US schools. The PSAT is given once a year in October at LIS.

The SAT

The SAT is administered by the College Board and created by Educational Testing Service (ETS). The new SAT has sections on Reading, Writing and Language, and Math, with an optional essay. It takes three hours to complete plus fifty minutes for the optional essay. It is highly recommended students complete the essay section when taking the SAT. The new test is designed to measure skills and knowledge more aligned to high school subjects (similar to the ACT). The best time to take the test is in May or June of Grade 11. You can retake the SAT again, if you would like, in the fall (October, November, and December) of Grade 12. Please see the [College Board](http://College Board website) website.

SAT Subject Tests

SAT Subject Tests are one-hour tests on a variety of subjects studied in school (math, literature, biology, chemistry, physics, US history, world history, and languages). They are required by more selective universities. For those schools that do require subject tests, generally math and a second exam of your choice are requested. Only a very few highly selective schools require a third exam. You cannot take the SAT and SAT Subject Tests on the same test day. Students usually take the Subject tests in May or June in Grade 11 or in the fall of Grade 12.

The ACT

The [ACT \(American College Testing\)](#) is a subject based, three-hour test that consists of four sections: English, Mathematics, Reading Comprehension, and Science Reasoning. Scores range from 1 to 36 for each of the subtests, with a final average or composite score. An optional 30-minute writing test is part of the ACT-Plus Writing test. It is highly recommended that students complete the Writing/Essay test, if they take the ACT.

Test optional US schools

Test optional US schools – Every year more colleges and universities change their standardized testing requirements. For a list of test optional schools, please refer to [FairTest](#). Some schools have also established testing alternatives, such as submitting predicted IB scores instead of standardized tests. Students must check school websites for all testing requirements and options!

IELTS

[IELTS – The International English Language Testing System](#) is another standardized test for English language proficiency developed in the UK and accepted by schools all over. The IELTS is offered through the

British Council in Chengdu.

TOEFL

[TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language](#) is another accepted standardized test for English language skills. If students have not been in an English speaking school for at least three years, if they don't take English HL, or if they score low on the SAT or ACT, the TOEFL or IELTS may be required at English speaking universities.

Part 3: Applying to universities in the UK

The country known as the United Kingdom (UK) is comprised of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern

Ireland. Universities in all four of these lands are subject to the same government regulations and processes, but the system of education in Scotland is different from that in the other parts of the UK. Thus the application process is consistent throughout Great Britain, but what you experience as a student would be different, depending on whether you enroll in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK. Most degrees in the UK can be completed in three years, whereas in Scotland, the usual length is four years.

What to study?

If you are applying in the UK, you are required to indicate your course of study at the time you apply. Unlike the US, where students can apply without having decided about their major, there is no such thing as “undecided” at UK universities. If you like the idea of studying in the UK, you must be prepared to launch into quite a specific course of study, and to stay with it for three years until you complete your degree. The word “course” is used to describe the subject of study, including all the specific classes that a student will take over the three or four years of enrollment. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the course of study is usually quite specific—for example, “Psychology” at the University of Durham, or a joint course such as “Business Management with French” at Queen Mary University. Once your studies begin, all courses relate to that subject area, or two subject areas in a joint degree. If you change your mind about your course, you have to reapply to a different course, and unless it’s a closely related field, you may have to begin your degree over from the beginning. For this reason, students who are not certain of their interests may not be a good match for studying in England, unless the course is very broad and more multi-disciplinary. Universities in Scotland offer a more liberal arts based program in which students have more electives and flexibility in their courses.

Researching courses and universities

The UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) website is the best place to begin the research process. Go to the [UCAS website](#) and click on “Course Search.” You can then enter a search by courses.

As you find courses of interest, you will notice that all the universities offering a specific course will be listed. You can click on the specific university to find more information about the course as well as the “entry requirements” required for the course. Each university listing contains information about why one would study a course, what are the key skills and qualities sought in applicants (which are important as you write your personal statement!), where to obtain more information, and what academic qualifications are needed. The required predicted points for the IB Diploma indicate what is needed to be given an offer for the course. In addition, the information under each university as well as the university’s website will indicate exactly what classes you will be required to take during each year of the course, which will help you decide if this subject is realistic for you.

Once you’ve decided on a course, you could consult [Unistats](#), a website that allows you to compare a particular course – for example, Advertising, at all universities in the UK that offer it. You also have access to student satisfaction data, based on a survey of students in their final year of the course. Finally, Unistats also reports the percentage of graduates who are employed or enrolled in post-graduate degree courses within six months of graduation.

There are numerous other resources available for investigating courses. Many students have found the Higher Education League Tables, published by the major British newspapers such as the Guardian and The Times to be very helpful. There is a link to these websites on the LIS university counseling site, as well as to other useful links.

Application process

UCAS serves as the central clearinghouse for university applications in the UK. Applicants fill out a single online form, a reference is added, and once the form is submitted, UCAS forwards the application to the universities that the student has indicated. Each university then makes a decision about the application, forwards that information to UCAS, and it is then posted in the student's UCAS account, under TRACK. The UCAS application limits you to a maximum of five courses, or four choices in clinical areas such as medicine or dentistry. These course choices could be at five different universities, or two courses or more could be chosen at the same university (e.g., one course called Psychology and another called Social Psychology at University College of London would make up two course choices).

Starting the application

LIS students apply through our school's section of the [UCAS website](#). The school buzzword for the class of 2018 is "LISaris2018".

Once you have set up an account (registration begins in June), you can begin completing the UCAS form. It requests demographic information, a list of courses to which you are applying, a list of your IB courses with a pending completion date of July 2018, and a one page personal statement which is described below. You pay the application fee online by credit card when you submit your form. After submission the referee (counselor) checks and approves the data you entered, provides your IB predicted grades, and completes the reference, which will be written by the counselor with input from your teachers in your IB High Level subjects. The counselor then submits your application to UCAS, which forwards it to your chosen universities. An admissions tutor determines whether your background, ability, and examination scores suggest success in your intended course of study.

Since the UCAS application deadline is January 15, our school deadline for your completed application is December 1, so the reference can be added and the application submitted before school closes for the winter holiday. It is highly recommended that students complete their applications by early November.

There are earlier deadlines for specific universities and courses. Students applying to Oxford or Cambridge or medicine and veterinary courses must submit the UCAS form by October 15 to UCAS. If you plan to apply to Oxford or Cambridge, discuss this with the counselor at the end of Grade 11 in order to begin planning for submission of the work samples and tests which are often required by these two institutions. Students applying for OxBridge as well as for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, and Veterinary Medicine courses must complete their applications by October 1 in order for the reference to be completed and the application to be sent to UCAS by the October 15 deadline. Interviews are required for candidates to OxBridge as well

Personal statement

Your personal statement is your chance to make a convincing case for your admission. The personal statement can be no longer than 47 lines or 4,000 characters, including spaces, and should focus on why you have chosen to study the courses you have listed, and what interests you about your subject. Details about what you have studied, read, or experienced in relation to your course will help the admissions tutors assess your suitability for admission. Tutors are looking for intellectual ability, potential, commitment and determination as it relates to your selected course. The UCAS website has a section on writing the personal statement. University websites also offer advice on what they are looking for in candidates for specific

courses.

UCAS is very serious about detecting plagiarized personal statements. Each incoming personal statement is checked against a library of personal statements from previously submitted applications and sample statements on websites and in paper publications. After your application is processed, your personal statement will also become part of the library of statements. Any statements showing a potential level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed closely.

The reference

Since you apply for a particular course of study at UK universities, the UCAS reference should specifically concentrate on your suitability for the proposed course of study, and will include predicted IB exam results as reported by your teachers. Don't even think of suggesting to your teacher that your prediction be increased a bit—because your offer could reflect that higher prediction and you will then have to achieve that score – or lose your chance to attend that university, in addition, our school will lose credibility for future students if we over-predict. The counselor will write your UCAS reference and will include content or quotations from relevant teachers to emphasize how you are suited to study the course for which you are applying. In order to write a detailed, effective reference, the counselor will need background information from you. Students who have decided to apply to UK universities are therefore required to complete the "Student Background Questionnaire" available on the LIS ManageBac.

After applying

After your application has been reviewed, you will be informed of your admission decisions through a section of the UCAS website called "[Track](#)".

Instead of an outright acceptance, UK universities give "offers" of admission which are usually contingent upon meeting specific conditions. An offer requires certain IB diploma exam results. The more popular the course of study, the higher examination scores needed. Some universities will make an offer contingent upon IB exam scores in particular subjects. For example, if you apply for a chemistry course, you would need to be taking Chemistry HL and Math HL or SL and earn particular scores on both exams.

Each time a UK university makes a decision on one of your applications, UCAS will post the offer in your

Track account, including all the details. You will also eventually receive a formal offer in the mail. You cannot respond to any offers until you receive all of them. When the last decision is posted, discuss your choices with the counselor and then use your Track account to reply to your offers. You will be asked to code all of your offers (you could have as many as five) as "Firm," "Insurance" or "Decline." Choose one firm and one insurance offer; all others must be declined. Since most offers are conditional upon examination scores and you will not have received the exam results, this can be a difficult decision, so please be sure to select an "Insurance" choice that requires less points than your "Firm". Please discuss your choices with your counselor, if you have any concerns.

If you did not receive any offers, you can participate in a process in February called "Extra" in which you can apply one at a time to additional courses until you receive an offer. See the counselor for help with this process. Students who receive offers, but do not make the scores required by their firm or insurance offer can enter a process called "Clearing" in which they can compete for available places based on their actual IB scores. Clearing begins in mid-August, when the British A-level results are received. Universities have also

developed "Adjustment", a system for allowing students who have performed higher on their IB diploma than predicted to re-apply for a course that they may now qualify. If students are eligible for Adjustment, UCAS will contact them directly through TRACK on the UCAS site.

Mock interviews

Students who are invited to an interview for Oxbridge, medicine, art, or other areas are encouraged to participate in the mock interviews offered by LIS teachers. Please let the counselor know when you have an interview and she will help arrange mock interviews with appropriate subject teachers. We also keep notes and feedback from previous interviews which may be helpful for students applying to those courses.

For further information about UK universities, review materials in LIS's library, meet with the counselor, research courses on the UCAS website, and check the links on the [LIS university counseling site](#).

Interesting research links for UK universities

- [UCAS](#): the universities and colleges admissions service website for the UK
- [LIS](#): the LIS website that has useful links for your university searches
- [Unistats](#): course comparisons at universities
- [Guardian university guide](#): the Guardian online newspaper with UK university rankings and other useful information
- [The Times Good University Guide](#): The Times online newspaper with UK university information
- [The IB guide](#) for IB students applying to UK institutions

UK university applications: Grade 11 timeline

Semester 1

- Focus on your studies and perform to the best of your abilities.
- Plan and pursue your CAS activities.
- Participate and be involved in extended curricular activities in areas of interest to you.
- Attend the Chengdu College Day fair in September.
- Participate in meetings with UK university admissions representatives who visit LIS.

Semester 2

- Continue to concentrate on your studies and be engaged in your classes and activities.
- Attend the University Presentation for Grade 11 at LIS.
- Attend the UK Tour of Higher Education in the spring.
- Schedule an individual university counselor meeting and a parent/student counselor meeting.

- Explore personal qualities, abilities, academic goals, and special interests.
- Research specific universities. Learn about the UCAS admission process and specific course requirements. Sources include: [UCAS](#), university websites, LIS website, publications, and catalogues in the LIS library, LIS teachers, alumni, friends, relatives, and contacts.
- Develop an initial list of potential universities.
- Write your Extended Essay on a topic related to your course area for which you plan to apply.
- Plan summer university visits, check Open Days on the UCAS site, and consider taking summer programs or other enriching activities related to your course area.
- Notify the counselor if you are interested in applying to Oxford, Cambridge, or courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and veterinary medicine, which must be submitted to UCAS by October 15.
- Attend the Personal Statement Writing Workshops to begin writing your personal statement. [Summer](#)
- Visit schools, if possible, and continue researching courses and universities.
- Attend “taster courses” offered by some universities or summer programs.
- Check the Course Search for on UCAS universities and any requirements for the course, such as special tests or interviews.
- Continue working on the draft of your personal statement.
- Pursue activities or internships related to your course interests, especially if you are applying for medicine courses, which require practical experience.
- Read and prepare for the Grade 12 Extended Essay and other coursework.

UK university applications: Grade 12 timeline

September

- Bring a draft of your personal statement and your list of universities to the Grade 12 UK university workshop. Register online at UCAS during the workshop, if you have not already opened an account in June.
- Complete and submit the [student background questionnaire](#) by September 15.
- Check the ManageBac calendar and message board to see if schools that interest you will be visiting
- LIS. Attend these sessions.
- Attend Chengdu College Day Fair in September.
- Students applying to Oxbridge or courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and veterinary medicine, must meet with the counselor the first two weeks of school.

October

- Applications for OxBridge and medicine, dentistry, veterinary science courses must be completed on UCAS along with any required supplements by October 1. The UCAS submit deadline is October 15.
- Check if there are any special tests or written work that must be submitted for courses.
- Meet periodically with the counselor over the next few months.
- Complete your final personal statement and put on your UCAS application before the end of October. Your reference cannot be started until your personal statement is completed.
- Complete your course research and finalize your university choices.
- Complete your UCAS application and discuss it with the counselor.

November and December

- The LIS deadline for submitting all UCAS applications is December 1. Although the UCAS deadline is January 15, due to the winter holidays, you must finish your UCAS application by December 1. For very competitive courses and universities, it is strongly recommended to complete your UCAS application in October or November, if possible. After you have checked and completed all sections, you may pay the fees by credit card and then send to the referee (the counselor) online.
- Students who have applied to OxBridge or medical courses may be invited for interviews.
- Students invited to interviews should schedule mock interviews with LIS faculty. See the counselor for advice on arranging mock interviews.
- Plan to visit universities you have applied to, if possible, during the vacation breaks.
- Talk with visiting LIS alumni, friends, and teachers about their university experiences.

March and April

- Universities usually are expected to have sent all decisions by March 31st. You cannot give your response until you have received all offers, unless you delete the course from your choices.
- The UCAS "Extra" begins in February. If you have not received any offers, you may use Extra to select additional courses.
- Discuss your choices with your counselor and others and select your Firm, Insurance, and Declined choices. Submit a list of your offers, including the conditional IB Diploma points, to the counselor.
- Fill in any forms regarding finance and accommodations as soon as possible.
- Focus on your studies and prepare for the IB examinations. Your acceptance is contingent upon completing your IB diploma at the level of your offer.

May

- Indicate your Firm, Insurance, and Declined choices on the UCAS Track website no later than the first week in May (your deadline will be indicated by UCAS). The earlier you can respond the better for your choices of accommodations.

- Take the IB examinations.
- Make sure you arrange with the IB Coordinator to have your IB Diploma results sent to UCAS to forward to the universities.

July

- Get your IB examination results and hope that you have met your offers (“Firm”, or if necessary, “Insurance”). If you met your offer(s), you are automatically confirmed to attend the university.
- If you do not make your offers, you can contact the course admissions departments and see if they will still accept you. Also, contact the counselor and we will write letters to support your candidature. If you miss by one or two points they may still accept you, although if the course is very competitive, they may not. You may have to wait until mid-August after the British A-level results are released to have a confirmation on your acceptance.
- If your IB results are higher than predicted, you may qualify for Adjustment, a procedure where you are able to apply for higher predicted courses. If you qualify, UCAS will automatically contact you through Track. Make sure you continue to look on Track!

August

- Mid-August is the start of vacancy information for courses, known as “Clearing”, if you did not meet your IB points for your Firm or Insurance offer. Also, check if you have been offered Adjustment to trade up your course selection.
- Late September is the last date for receipt of applications for 2018 university entry.

Part 4: Applying to universities in Ireland and Europe

Studying in Ireland

The universities in Ireland offer state-of-the-art education and training through a broad range of Honors Bachelor's, Master's and PhD programs. These universities are attractive destinations for Irish, European and international students, reflecting the unique combination which a quality education and an exciting cultural experience offers to students studying and undertaking research in Ireland.

The Irish university application process is relatively simple, requiring students to register for the course of study in an online process through the [CAO](#) (Central Applications Office). The CAO lists all the courses on offer and gives information on how to apply. Entry requirements for courses may vary from year to year, depending on the number of places available and the number of applicants, thus there exists a great deal of competition for the more sought after programs. Students will know if they are accepted once their IB results are available. The online discounted closing date for applications is usually around January 20. Before submitting your application it is essential to gather as much information as possible about:

- The course of study you are planning to take;
- The institution you are planning to attend;
- Student visa;
- Funding;

- Accommodation.

How to apply to a higher education institution in Ireland depends on whether you are an [EU or a non-EU candidate](#). Once you are happy with your choices you will need time to gather the necessary paperwork, arrange [accommodation, visa,](#) and [funding](#).

For more details on courses and the application process for applying to universities in Ireland, visit the following sites:

- [The Central Application Office](#): the online registration site for undergraduate courses
- [Education in Ireland](#)
- [Universities Ireland](#): promoting Irish universities
- [The Irish University Association](#)

Applying to Europe

Europe is home to many excellent universities that offer programming in both English and other languages. While some countries, like the Netherlands, are known for its liberal arts offerings, other countries are known for their high standards and low cost. Europe boasts thousands of accredited universities. The Bologna Process, which now comprises of 48 countries, has made it easier for students to move throughout Europe with recognized degrees attained in participating members. Additionally, the 4000 member strong Erasmus exchange program is an attractive option for students studying in Europe as well. Generally, with a few exceptions, before applying to university in Europe, you will need to decide on an institution and a degree course, or major. Below is some important useful information for study in Europe.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 3 to 4-year program

Bachelor's degree with honours – 3 to 5 -year programs that vary by country

Law and Medicine – varies by country

Application cycle

While applications are accepted throughout the year, applying with predicted scores will earn conditional acceptances only. Certain universities and programs will permit July intake for incoming students, while others will not. It is important to check with individual programs and universities for exact information. Students applying for college housing will need to do so up to six months ahead of entry depending competitiveness of residential college and university.

Academic Calendar

The European school year is generally divided into terms, and each country has a different system for school holidays. While many of the holidays are in the same period, they can vary in length and include a winter and summer holiday. Spring and autumn break are also common.

Admission Tests

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not generally required for European applications, although recently some programmes are requiring that students submit SAT scores. Additionally, any student with strong SAT/ACT scores may be able to use them to support their application in certain countries. Some universities will ask you to sit a specific university admissions test; however, if required to do so, you will be asked by the university.

English language requirements for universities that provide English language instruction is important for non-native English speakers. While some universities and colleges accept IGCSE, A-Levels and IBDP curricula delivered in English as a sufficient measure of English language ability, others will not. If you are a passport holder from a non-English speaking country, it is important to check with individual university admission requirements. Other universities that deliver programming in languages other than English may require language tests in the language of delivery. Please check with individual universities or speak with your counsellor for further information.

The Selection Process

Just as universities throughout Europe vary in application cycle calendars and timelines so do they in regards to the selection process. English language proficiency, university home language proficiency examination, IGCSE coursework and grades, current coursework and predicted grades will be asked for invariably. Additionally, some universities and programs may assess resumes, portfolios and letters of recommendation from teachers or counsellors as part of the selection process.

The Decision

Depending on the university, students could hear from admissions offers as little as a few weeks after application submission to their university. Other universities will request students log onto a portal to track status of application. Acceptances from European universities come in the form of unconditional offers or conditional offers depending on country of application, university and programme choice. Students applying to university systems after graduation will receive firm offers from universities.

The Application

Application systems in Europe vary by country and university. It is important that you check with individual universities for specific requirements.

Application forms vary from university to university; some are comprehensive while other applications ask for little more than qualification grades. Most universities throughout Europe, however, will require IGCSE certificates, predicted and/or final IB/AS/A-Level grades and certificates. While some universities want to know about your extra-curricular activities, interests and awards most do not require essays or letters of recommendation; however, for some more competitive courses, you may be expected to write a personalized essay.

What You Could Be Asked for with Your Application

- Full details of courses taken – IGCSE/AS/A-Level/IB and predicted grades
- IELTS/TOFEL scores for English courses (Please send these directly)

- Language proficiency exams for Non-English speaking countries (i.e. – Germany, France)
- Application – individual
- Financial documentation depending on country of residence and country to which applying

Admission Guidelines

Universities within Europe vary in the information regarding course requirements they provide to students. It is important to note that the states numbers and qualifications for IGCSE, AS, A-Levels and IBDP are minimum grades and that applications are often asked and expected to present grades that are higher than the minimum depending on course and the number of applicants to a program in any given year.

Links to Websites and University Information by Country

[Austria](#)

[Germany](#) and the German [University Application Service](#) for International Students.

[Finland](#)

[France](#) – French [application portal](#) (EU/UK nationality use only and in French)

[Italy](#)

[The Netherlands](#).

[Spain](#)

[Switzerland](#)

European University Search

[bachelorsportal.eu](#) helps you compare bachelor's programs in Europe and worldwide. The website allows for program searches as well as individual university searches by providence including admission requirements and costs

[studyineurope.eu](#) is a unique database with information about programs throughout Europe including programs, language of instruction, country and more

<https://europeanuniversities.eu/bachelor-programs> contains a small number of European Universities Consortium offering English taught bachelor's programs, fully accredited by their respective countries.

<http://euroguidance.eu/> is a network of centres linking together the careers guidance systems in Europe. They promote mobility, helping individuals to better understand the opportunities available throughout Europe.

<http://www.eahep.org/> EU-Asia Higher Education Platform is a project finalized in 2011; however, the website continues to provide useful information on higher education systems in Europe and Asia, study and research opportunities, cooperation projects and initiatives, events and funding schemes between European and Asian universities. Information from the Universities Canada website where you will find an overview of the university, number of students enrolled, tuition fees, links to the university websites and more.

Scholarships and Funding

Scholarship-positions.com – grants, scholarships and financial aid

Scholarshiplinks.com – Scholarships all throughout Europe from Bachelors to Post-Doctorate

Visas

Ninety-day Schengen Visas for students will be needed for non-EU citizens. Please visit

<http://www.schengenvisainfo.com/student-schengen-visa/> for more information.

Part 5: Applying to colleges and universities in the US

There are approximately 4,500 institutions of post-secondary education in the US, about 1,500 of which are bona fide 4-year schools offering bachelor's degrees. Even considering only the "top level" schools, there are still at least 150 or more institutions from which to choose. Making the right choice of schools to apply to is probably the most important part of the application process. Amongst all of these institutions, there will be many, perhaps hundreds which would be appropriate schools for you. However, you do not have the time to apply to 100 schools, not even 50 or 20. So the problem is not to choose six to eight schools out of 3000, but out of 100. Going from 3,000 to 100 is much easier than you might think. To help you eliminate many schools which would not interest you, review the criteria listed in this guide on Selecting "Best Fit" Universities. Think about them when researching schools and making your list and when you meet with the counselor, your choices of the criteria will help you to shorten the list of schools.

Normally, students should apply to six to eight institutions (ten, if requiring financial aid): two "likely admit" schools which you are an extremely strong candidate; two to four "possible" schools – those that generally accept students with profiles similar to yours; and one to two "reach" schools – colleges that normally accept students with grades and test scores higher than yours or that are highly competitive even if you have the grades/test scores. Because of the large numbers of outstanding students applying to the most selective schools, many acceptance decisions will be made based on extremely subjective distinctions.

A few very important points:

- LIS strongly encourages students to limit the number of applications to a maximum of eight. This policy, which is common among college preparatory schools in the US and overseas, is designed to maximize the chances for all of our students. Your list should include "eight first choices" of schools that you have researched and know you want to go there. Applying to more than eight suggests you have not done your research well.
- The US application process is very time-consuming and requires a lot of effort in filling out forms and completing essays. Your applications will be much stronger if you concentrate on a reasonable number to produce excellent results. In addition, you need to keep up with your school work which may be difficult if

you are not well organized and are spending too much time filling out applications.

- LIS teachers and counselors are required to indicate the level of academic skills and achievements of the student as well as indicating the level at which they would recommend the student for a particular university. If students do not meet the university's academic profile, LIS may not be able to strongly support the student's candidature.
- Schools admit students who are likely to enroll. This means you need to show you are interested in attending the university by attending LIS school visits, requesting information, visiting the campus, and writing the admissions officers with thoughtful questions about academics, extra-curricular activities, sports, campus life, and any other areas you are interested. You need to have a correspondence - a relationship -with the admissions officer of each school where you are interested in applying! After you have submitted your applications, be sure to check the status of your application on your student account. Your account will indicate that your application is complete or if any documents are missing. Some schools check to see if you have accessed your account – it shows you are interested and engaged!

How an applicant is assessed for admission

This is the question that many students and parents ask: "How does a US college or university decide who gets admitted?" Admittance to US institutions is much more complicated than for other systems. Each college may ask for a different set of information and each one weighs application components differently.

The following is a list of most schools' decision-making criteria. The US takes a holistic approach in reviewing each applicant and no single factor is considered in isolation.

Academic record

All university admission officers give major importance to your semester grades as recorded on the transcript. Your grades are the best predictor of college success, and therefore, colleges look at grades earned since Grade 9. Of course, admissions are impressed with an improvement in grades over the years with Grade 11 and Semester 1 of Grade 12 being the most important. Schools are interested if the student is taking the most challenging courses and the IB provides the rigorous pre-university program universities value. LIS does not rank students or calculate an overall GPA, which is typical of many independent and international schools. In any case, each university has its own system of calculating a GPA or reviewing grades.

Standardized tests

Most universities are interested in standardized test scores, although they are evaluated in the total context of a student's school performance and make up one part of your application. The more selective the institutions, the more interest there seems to be on scores since all of the applicants have top grades. There are more than 300 universities that have made standardized tests optional (see www.fairtest.org for the list). In addition, colleges and universities may not require standardized tests from students attending high school outside of the US. Or, some schools have testing alternatives. Make sure to check the testing policy of each school!

Extra-curricular involvement

Schools are looking for students who are members of a learning community and get involved outside the classroom. Quality of involvement, commitment, and leadership in activities are important.

Community service

Service is highly recommended and valued as a sign the student will contribute to the university community and beyond. CAS credits help strengthen the student's application.

Essays

College essays allow the student to come alive and show who you are, how you write, and what distinguishes you. The essay can make the difference in your application!

Counselor and teacher recommendations

These recommendations have an impact on your chance of admission. Make sure you select teachers who know you well and provide both the counselor and teacher with the requested background forms (Student Questionnaire and Teacher Questionnaire). Of course, your motivation to learn, class involvement, and positive, polite behavior will make it easier to write about you.

Individual factors

Admission officers also look at individual factors that can play a role in acceptance, such as unusual talents or achievements, alumni affiliations or ethnic background.

Character

Never underestimate the role that character plays in your application and how you distinguish yourself. Does your application have evidence that you possess individuality, responsibility, a concern for others, and self-reliance?

The application

Most colleges and universities encourage online applications. The student begins an online application by creating an account – make sure you remember your password and user name! The Common Application, used by many colleges and universities, is available at the [Common Application](#) website. Answer all questions accurately, with correct spelling and grammar.

A complete application usually includes the following:

- Application form;
- Personal essay and for some schools supplemental essays;
- Application fee;
- Transcript and IB predicted grades;
- School profile;
- School report (counselor's recommendation) and teacher(s) recommendations;

- Proof of finances for international students.

On the application form, it is highly recommended that you do not list the other places where you are applying.

Essay questions should be completed off line as word documents, then cut and pasted. The essay is probably the most important element of the student's part of the application. (See the section on "The Essay")

Do not include your standardized test scores on your Common Application if you are applying to test optional schools.

Keep a copy of your online application.

Some helpful tips

The student is responsible for sending (online) the application form, fee, and essay(s) as well as mailing any additional materials (art portfolio, voice tapes, video, financial statement, etc.).

The school counselor sends online or via mail the transcript, IB predicted grades, school profile, school report, and teacher recommendations (if not completed online). For schools using the Common Application or other online forms, the student must provide the online systems the correct email addresses for the counselor and teachers so that we are linked and have access to completing the online forms.

Students are responsible for the following:

- Making sure teachers have the online access to complete recommendations. If recommendations are sent via regular mail, teachers must hand them in on time to the counselor. Students should clearly indicate to teachers when they need the recommendations.
- Providing the counselor with the application list of schools, addresses, deadlines, and required forms (common app or other forms) either online or paper.
- Requesting from the appropriate testing agencies to have their SAT and/or ACT scores officially reported to the universities as well as required English Language Proficiency tests (IELTS or TOEFL), if required.
- Requesting all application materials (transcripts, recommendations) at least three weeks before the application deadline (not including school holidays).

The essay

The essay is the opportunity for the student to come alive in the application and show who she is as a person. It is a chance to hear the student's voice - to show how you think and write and what is interesting about your "story". You have the choice of a variety of questions and so trust your instincts and choose what interests you and what feels right. There is no set style or subject matter, just make sure the essay is grammatically correct and appropriate. It is essential to show you are a decent writer and an interesting person with something to say. Give yourself plenty of time to write the essay and several drafts before your final one. More detailed information and samples of successful essays are available in the counseling office and in the

essay workshop. Please provide the counselor with your essay draft and get feedback before you submit it to schools.

Important standardized test registration information

If your Grade 11 scores are not satisfactory, you will want to repeat the SAT and /or the ACT, if applicable. (Remember: the LIS CEEB code is 731668.)

Note that not all subject tests are offered at each test administration. The American School of Chengdu, the Ecole Internationale Bilingue Chengdu, and the Ecole Jeannine Manual are the closest test centers. Stand-by places may be available at ASP on some of these test dates, for more information please see the counselor.

Students for whom English is a second language should be aware of the [TOEFL](#) or the [IELTS](#) requirement for all schools to which they are applying.

Other important sites:

- [CollegeBoard](#): to register for the SAT and for all information about the PSAT and SATs
- [ACT](#): more information about the ACT test
- [TOEFL](#): more information about the test for students with English as a foreign language
- [IELTS](#): more information about the International English Language Testing System

Financial aid and financial certification for a US visa

A major concern regarding a US college education is cost. For US citizens, federal financial aid is available, if you demonstrate “financial need” as determined by a federal formula. Need-based financial aid in the form of grants, low-interest loans, and student work-study programs may be available to qualified students on the basis of the information submitted (online is recommended) on the [FAFSA website](#) (Free Application for

Federal Student Aid). On the FAFSA, parents provide information concerning their assets, income, and other data from their US income tax forms. This information will be subjected to a formula to determine the amount the family can reasonably be expected to contribute toward education. The difference between your family’s contribution and the total college costs is your financial need. To apply for need-based financial aid, your parents complete the FAFSA after January 1 of Grade 12. Most schools also require an additional form such as the CSS/Financial Profile, designed by the College Scholarship Service (CSS) of the Educational

Testing Service. The Profile is used by many colleges and universities to award their own private funds (CSS/Financial Profile is available on the [CollegeBoard site](#)). These institutions combine Profile and FAFSA information to make their funding decisions. All of the financial aid forms can also be accessed through the university’s Financial Aid section on its website.

Schools clearly state their policies toward financial aid, for both US citizens and international students.

“Need-blind” means they make decisions that are not based on financial need—they admit qualified students and then provide whatever financial aid they determine the student may need. “Need-aware” schools consider if a student can pay or not, awarding financial aid to those who demonstrate a financial need. With budget cuts and the current economic situation, financial need awareness may play a role in some admission

cases.

Not all institutions offer financial aid to non-US students. Many colleges and universities expect international students to find their own sources of money and clearly state, if the applicant cannot fund college expenses, do not apply. Universities require financial information for international students as part of the application, although a few ask for it at a later date (International Student Certification of Finances, on the [CollegeBoard site](#)). Students must provide proof of funds, generally a statement from a bank official proving sufficient funds are available. If schools offer funding for international students, there are specific forms that students requesting aid need to provide, such as the International Student Financial Aid Application or the CSS/Profile. Every university has its own policy on financial aid, the required forms, and the deadlines for forms. All the required forms can be accessed through the university's Financial Aid section on its website. Students should be aware that financial aid for international students may be very limited and highly competitive.

Since each university determines its own financial aid policy, it is very important that students check the university websites for the financial information required. In addition, there are Financial Aid Administrators or Advisors at each institution to help answer your specific questions. When in doubt, call them!

Non-US citizens are required to obtain a visa from the US Department of Immigration before entering the US to attend college. To be eligible for a visa, you must have sufficient funds to pay for university expenses. After accepting a candidate, the university will issue an I-20 Form. A student visa is issued to the student by the American Embassy upon receipt of the I-20 Form.

Interesting research links for the US

- [LIS](#): the LIS website has all of the following links as well as many others. Look under "Student experience" and select "University counseling".
- [CollegeBoard](#): information about SATs, scholarships, My College QuickStart, and college searches.
- [The Common Application website](#)
- [The Princeton Review site](#) for college information
- [The Chronicle of Higher Education](#) publication website
- [NACAC](#): the National Association for College Admission Counselors
- [Unigo](#): an interesting research website from the student's perspective
- [College Prowler](#): college guides written by students covering every aspect of college life
- [IB guide](#) for IB students applying to US institutions

US university applications: Grade 11 timeline

Semester 1

- Focus on your studies and perform to the best of your abilities.

- Plan and pursue your CAS activities.
- Participate and be involved in extra-curricular activities in areas of interest to you.
- Attend Chengdu College Day Fair in September.
- Make plans to take the PSAT at LIS in October.
- Participate in meetings with university/college admissions representatives who visit LIS.
- Research colleges on websites, publications, university view-books, visits.

Semester 2

- Continue to concentrate on your studies and be engaged in your classes and activities.
- Attend the University Evening Presentation for Grade 11 at LIS.
- Schedule an individual university counselor meeting and a parent/student counselor meeting.
- Register online and take in May and June the SATs, and/or the ACT in April or June, and if necessary, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which is scheduled regularly at test centers, or the IELTS at the British Council in Chengdu, if these tests are required.
- Explore personal qualities, abilities, academic goals, and special interests.
- Research specific colleges and universities. Learn about the admission process and specific requirements. Sources include: college counselor, college websites, LIS website, college visits at LIS, publications: guidebooks and catalogues in LIS library, LIS alumni, friends, relatives, contacts.
- Create a file system to organize your college search, testing, and application information.
- Development an initial list of potential colleges (ideally not more than 12) and contact for additional information.
- Explore financial aid possibilities through internet, counseling, parents' connections (employers, professional organizations, affiliations).
- Plan summer college visits, consider summer programs or other enriching activities, including a summer job or an internship.
- Attend the college essay workshops at LIS

Summer

- Visit campuses, research schools of interest, contact schools with relevant questions and express interest in programs.
- Check requirements and application documents for schools, i.e., Common Application (CA), supplementary forms, essays, standardized tests.

- Continue working on your drafts of the “college essay” title you select from the CA and any other required essays.
- Check out the [LIS university counseling webpage](#).
- Attend a summer program, internship, volunteer, get a job, or actively pursue an interest.
- Read and prepare for the Grade 12 Extended Essay and other coursework

US university applications: Grade 12 timeline

September

- Register for the SAT and SAT Subject Tests in October, November, or December, if you are not satisfied with your previous test scores. If you are taking the ACT, register for the ACT Plus Writing test. Take the TOEFL or IELTS, if necessary.
- Attend Chengdu College Day Fair and talk with the colleges you are interested in making applications.
- Narrow college choices to a maximum of eight.
- Complete and submit the “Student Background Questionnaire” (available on ManageBac) to the counseling office.
- Bring drafts of your college essays and your list of schools to the Grade 12 US college workshop.
- Check the ManageBac calendar and messages as well as the LIS weekly newsletter to see if schools that interest you will be visiting LIS or EJM. Attend these sessions.
- Meet periodically with the counselor over the next few months.
- Begin completing applications online, especially if an application is for Early Decision or Early Action, which may have application deadlines as early as November 1st. Notify the counselor of your intention to apply Early Decision or Early Action!

October

- Take the October SAT, SAT Subject tests, or ACT plus Writing (if you haven’t already).
- Complete the “Teacher Recommendation Questionnaire” form, available on ManageBac and politely ask in person for your teachers to write your recommendation. The TRI will help provide teachers details and information about you to help them write a very supportive letter of recommendation. It is the student’s responsibility to obtain recommendations, often from two teachers. These letters and forms are confidential and should be turned in by the teacher directly to the counselor, if not using the online submission. Requests for teacher recommendations and the forms (online or paper) should be submitted to teachers at least three weeks before the college application deadline (not including vacation days).
- Early Action/Early Decision applications should be finished this month with the appropriate deadlines met for teacher recommendations and counselor report forms.
- Continue to meet college representatives, your counselor, and visit schools.

November

- All applications with deadlines in December and January must be finished and submitted to the counseling office by December 1. It is the student's responsibility to check and meet deadlines for all colleges, as well as submit all required student forms and materials (whether paper or online). All documents to be completed by the counselor must be submitted to the counseling office at least three weeks in advance of deadlines. For schools not using the Common Application or using an online system, students must submit a "Final University Form" which lists all documents required (e.g. transcripts, predicted grades, recommendations and individual college forms) by each college along with the deadlines and the admission's mailing address, telephone, email, and fax.
- Take the SATs, if necessary. This may be the only month the SAT Language with Listening Subject
- Tests are offered.
- Send SAT scores online to meet Early Decision/Early Action deadlines.
- Students applying to public universities in California have to submit their applications online only during the month of November.
- Complete [CSS/Financial Aid profile](#), if required.
- If you will need a student visa (non-US citizen) to attend college in the US, download the financial certification form from each college website and ask your parents to start obtaining the required documents from their bank.

December

- All applications for December and January deadlines are due by December 1.
- Take the December SAT, if needed.
- Talk with visiting LIS alumni about their college experiences.
- Make certain you have the appropriate testing agency send your official SAT, ACT, and/or TOEFL or
- IELTS scores directly to the colleges.

January and February

- Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) financial aid form if you are a US citizen and will be requesting financial aid. Your parents must figure their US taxes (but they do not need to file their taxes) to complete this form. The FAFSA should be completed online and submitted by the deadline.
- Continue to complete all applications with later deadlines or with rolling admissions policies.
- Go to the college's web page to see if you can check the status of your application. Check that all supporting documents have been received.
- If you do not receive confirmation that your application was received, contact the college.

- Midyear reports go out in mid-January. The counselor automatically submits the Midyear report to the Common Application system or other online systems.

March and April

- Focus on your studies and prepare for the IB examinations. Your acceptance is contingent upon your completion of Grade 12 with acceptable grades. If your grades drop, your acceptance may be withdrawn.
- Letters of acceptance begin to arrive depending on the schedule used by each college. As you receive decisions, please email your counselor so our files can be updated.
- Review college acceptances and financial aid packages; talk with college financial aid officers.
- You have until May 1 to make your final decision (except in the case of Early Decision applications).
- Notify the chosen college of your decision to attend and send a deposit to hold your acceptance. If your reply is not postmarked by May 1, your acceptance can be withdrawn.
- Once you have made your decision, notify all of the schools you did not choose, so they can offer admission to others.
- If you are placed on a “waitlist” see your counselor to review your options

May

- Take the IB examinations.
- Tell your counselor and IB Coordinator what school you have chosen so that your final report you're your transcript and your official IB Diploma results will be sent to the appropriate university or college.

Part 6: Applying to Canadian universities

In Canada, there is a distinction between a university and a college. Universities grant undergraduate bachelors and advanced degrees while colleges focus on vocational and technical training. The academic system takes a liberal arts approach, where students can study across disciplines before deciding on a concentration or major. Most universities are organized within faculties (schools), such as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences or the Faculty of Applied Sciences and students make their application to a specific faculty or program.

For students completing the IB Diploma, the application process is very stream-lined and simple. Students apply online directly to the university, except for universities in Ontario. Universities in Ontario use a centralized application process called [Ontario Universities Application Centre](#) (OUAC). Students submit a single application to OUAC, which is then forwarded to students' selected universities.

The universities' online applications request basic background information as well as an online fee payment of approximately 100 CAD. Letters of recommendation and personal statements usually are not required. Some universities, such as McGill and Concordia, request that students upload their transcripts and predicted grades electronically and if accepted the transcripts are then officially sent by LIS. If you are uploading your transcript to the application, please request a copy of your transcript. Other schools require that transcripts and predicted grades be mailed directly by the school, after the student has completed the online application.

Please provide the counselor with a list of the Canadian schools where you are applying along with the correct Admissions Office mailing address, if transcripts and predicted grades need to be sent via mail. Also, please provide your personal student candidate number, such as the OUAC Student ID#, given to you by the university when you apply which is important to include on all documents. Transcripts, predicted IB grades, and a school profile will be sent to Canadian universities in early January and will include the first semester grades from Grade 12. Final transcripts will be sent at the end of the second semester and students should inform the IB Coordinator which university should have access to the final IB Diploma exams.

Deadlines vary for schools so please check each university and program for specific dates. The earliest deadline is January 15 for McGill University.

Canadian universities notify students of acceptances as they make their decisions, any time from three weeks after receiving transcripts and predicted grades to several months, if they are waiting for additional results on which to base their decision.

Interesting research links for Canada

- [Study in Canada](#) is a useful guide for higher education in Canada
- A [directory of all Canadian universities](#) is available from the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada
- Macleans magazine conducts an [annual ranking](#) and review of Canadian universities
- [Scholarships Canada](#) is Canada's most comprehensive scholarship portal. This extensive database can help find scholarships, student awards, bursaries and grants, in addition to information about student loans, applications and budget planning.
- Additional sources for financial aid for international and Canadian students can be found on the [eduPASS site](#) and the [Canlearn interactive site](#).
- The [Ontario Universities Application Center](#) is the standard on-line application site for Ontario universities.
- The [IB Guide](#) for IB Students Applying to Canadian Institutions

EDIT

Applying to Canada

There are over 160 provincially accredited universities and colleges in Canada comprising both private and public institutions of higher education referred to as universities, university colleges, institute or school.

Canada is one of our most popular university destinations. Before applying, you will need to decide on an institution and a degree course, or major; however, academic programming in Canada is extremely flexible, and students can change majors and degree programmes quite easily. Canada is home to a plethora of liberal arts programming, concurrent degree plans and double-major options in many of its universities. Below are a listing of important websites and information.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 3 to 4-year program

Bachelor's degree with honours – 4-year program

Law and Medicine – graduate only options

Application Cycle

University applications in Canada usually open in October. The application deadline date varies with each university. Generally, the deadline dates are at the end of January or in February but can run well into the spring. You may hear from the university within a month of receipt of the application.

Academic Calendar

The Canadian school year is generally divided into two terms, term one beginning in late August or early September and running until December followed by a winter break. Term two begins in early to mid-January and runs until May.

Admission Tests

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not required for Canadian applications, although any student with strong SAT/ACT scores can use them to support their application.

English language requirements for Canadian universities is important. While some universities and colleges accept IGCSE, A-Levels and IBDP curricula delivered in English as a sufficient measure of English language ability, others will not. If you are a passport holder from a non-English speaking country, it is important to check with individual university admission requirements.

Selection Process

Depending on the university and program, universities in Canada may look to portfolios, admission essays, interviews, auditions, etc. when selecting students for admission to specific programs. It is important that students visit individual school websites for further information.

The Decision

Acceptances from Canadian universities very often come out on a rolling basis, so sending in applications sooner than later will result in earlier knowledge of acceptance. Students will receive conditional offers from the majority of universities within Canada, although sometimes unconditional offers will be made depending on the university and programme of study.

The Application

All universities will require that your College send your full high school transcript and predicted grades. Universities will be looking to see that you are maintaining your grades or they are increasing.

Application forms vary from university to university; some are comprehensive while other applications ask for little more than qualification grades. While some universities want to know about your extra-curricular activities, interests and awards most do not require essays or letters of recommendation; however, for some more competitive courses, you may be expected to write a personalized essay.

Depending to which province you are applying, the application and admissions process will vary in terms of application deadline dates and what will be asked of you to complete your application. Generally, the deadline dates are at the end of January or in February. You may hear from the university within a month of receipt of the application,

Links to application pages for Canadian universities by province:

<http://www.canadian-universities.net/Campus/Applications.html>

What You Will Be Asked for with Your Application

- Full details of courses taken – IGCES/AS/A-Level/IB; transcripts and predicted grades
- Non-English speaking countries passport holders (ask about waivers) – IELTS/TOFEL (Please send these directly)
- Application – individual
- Financial documentation depending on country of residence

Admission Guidelines

Universities within Canada generally state the minimum academic requirement on the admissions section of their webpages. It is important to note that the stated numbers and qualifications for A-Levels and IBDP are minimum grades and that applications are often asked and expected to present grades that are higher than the minimum depending on course and the number of applicants to a program in any given year. Universities in Canada also often supply comprehensive guides to high school specific prerequisite courses that students should take if considering specific courses and majors at university. Minimum qualifications vary by university, and it is recommended that students visit individual institution websites for further information.

Canada University Search

Council of Ministries of Education in Canada Study Guide - [http://www.educationau-
incanada.ca/educationau-incanada](http://www.educationau-incanada.ca/educationau-incanada)

Canadian Education Centre - Learn about the education system in Canada, school requirements, school costs, climate, cost of living, accommodations, history and visa information. Published in 15 different languages, it is linked to the 13 Canadian Education Centres worldwide - <http://www.studycanada.ca/>

[Canadian Universities.net](http://www.CanadianUniversities.net)- Canada's Higher Education Career Guide

[UniversityStudy.ca](http://www.UniversityStudy.ca) - Tuition, profiles, courses and more

[Universities Canada](#) is a comprehensive website that offers information for anyone looking to study in Canada.

www.studyincanada.com - Helpful information about Canadian universities. The website allows for program searches as well as individual university searches by province including admission requirements and costs

<http://www.univcan.ca> offers information from the Universities Canada website where you will find an overview of the university, number of students enrolled, tuition fees, links to the university websites and more.

Scholarships and Funding

Scholarships www.scholarshipscanada.com

Student Loans Programs <http://www.osap.gov.on.ca/>

Visas

Check student visa information on the [Government of Canada Immigration and Citizenship](#) website

Part 7: Applying to Japanese, Korean, Hong Kong, New Zealand and Singapore universities

The school's Japanese and Korean families are two very important groups of the LIS community, and we have a college counselor dedicated to each. For obvious reasons of language and alphabet, we do not cover these universities in this handbook; however, the school has a wealth of expertise and experience in preparing students for successful entry to Japanese and Korean universities.

Japan

Applying to Japan

Japan is home to 86 national universities and 95 local public universities. They also have over 500 colleges and specialty schools, which provide undergraduate and vocational degrees. While many schools in Japan still teach in Japanese, the number of schools offering courses in English is increasing. Japan has one of the most competitive admission processes in the world but also boasts highly respected programming as well. Japan offers a much lower tuition than the Canada, the US and UK and the Japanese government awards international students substantial scholarships to attract foreign talent each year.

Japan is home to a great number of liberal arts and science programs as well as partner programs with US and

other English speaking university programs. Many universities, offer flexibility in their study options allowing students to choose their schools before choosing a major a year or two into their studies, while other universities do not offer as much flexibility in their study options for students going into professional programs. Before you apply, you may need to decide on a specific course to apply to or do your research to make sure your university is flexible. Below are a listing of important websites and information.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 4-year program

Law and Medicine – 6-year professional program

Application Cycle

The application deadline date varies with each university. . Depending on the university and enrolment periods for international and/or local students, individual universities have varied application periods. For example, Keio University opens application in September and has two different application periods, while Ritsumeikan University accepts applications in two cycles, from July through September and then again from January to March, depending on desired enrolment dates. While some schools offer different batches of applications for September entry, receiving applications between October and February, the typical first semester intake The Japanese school year. Generally, the deadline dates are from September until December for the following academic year. Once notified of acceptance, students are given sometimes only once month to make a deposit.

Academic Calendar

Universities in Japan are split into two terms, and some universities, like Waseda and the University of Tokyo for example, divide semesters into two terms. In general, semester one begins in April and runs until June, July or August. Semester two commences in September and runs until January or February depending on university. There are also special programmes (University of Tokyo PEAK programme) that commences in September and has an altogether different application cycle.

Admission Tests

Some universities may require international applicants to take the Examination for Japanese University Admission for International Students (EJU).

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not required for universities in Japan although if you have taken the SAT or ACT, you may send your scores if you choose to.

A student who does not have English as his or her first language will need to demonstrate proficiency through submission of IELTS or TOFEL scores.

Selection Process

Academic achievements are the most important part of a university application Japan. Additionally, if asked for a recommendation letter for a specific program, it will play a role in the overall application. While specific courses may look to portfolios, interviews and auditions, universities in Japan want to see academic potential when selecting students for admission to specific programs. It is important that students visit individual

school websites for further information on minimum score requirements for specific programs.

The Decision

Since the majority of applications to Japanese universities will take place after graduation, most decisions will be in the form of an unconditional acceptance. Depending on when applications are submitted, student will receive either conditional or unconditional offers to their universities of choice. In some cases, even after sending all documentation students will received a conditional offer pending additional information which could be in the form of extra documents, portfolio pieces or interviews. Students applying to progammes commencing in the fall of the academic school year will generally receive conditional offers pending final examination grades.

The Application

Each university has its own specific requirements; however, many universities in Japan require applicants to take the Examination for Japanese University Admission – this excludes partner programmes with western universities and English only programmes. The exam so it is best to start by visiting the respective websites, which should spell out exactly what documents you will need to submit.

Universities within Japan will require that your College send your full high school transcript and predicted grades if applying to a programme that permits autumn entry. Each university requires a separate application. Students will complete an online application form, and the student will be asked to upload complete transcripts and graduation certificate along with any standardized test scores (SAT, ACT, IGCSE, AS, A-Levels, IBDP). As a general rule, students whose first language is not English may not be asked to provide TOFEL/IELTS scores if they have graduated from a high school that uses English as a teaching medium; however, it is important that students check with individual universities to verify English and Japanese language requirements.

What You Will Be Asked for with Your Application

- Examination for Japanese University Admission (EJU)
- Full details of courses taken – IGCES/AS/A-Level/IB; transcripts and predicted grades
- Non-English speaking countries passport holders – IELTS/TOFEL (varies) Please send these directly)
- Language or other competency or ability test Chinese language test results or another language ability
- Statement of Financial resources
- Short essay
- SAT scores
- Resume/Activity list
- Application – individual
- Letters of Recommendation (varies by university and programme)

Admission Guidelines

Universities within Japan will generally state the minimum academic requirement on the admissions section of their webpages. It is important to note that the states numbers and qualifications for A-Levels and IBDP are minimum grades and that applications are often asked and expected to present grades that are higher than the minimum depending on course and the number of applicants to a program in any given year. Some universities in Japan also often supply comprehensive guides to high school specific prerequisite courses that students should take if considering specific courses and majors at university. Minimum qualifications vary by university, and it is recommended that students visit individual institution websites for further information.

Japan University Search

[Japan University English Programming Search](#) sponsored by The Asian Students Cultural Association and Benesse Corporation.

[Japan Student Services Organization](#) runs a Japanese Colleges and University Search page in English.

[Education Japan](#), sponsored by Japan International Corporation Center allows students to search programmes at Japan's top 20 universities.

Scholarships and Funding

<http://www.uni.international.mext.go.jp/scholarship/>

Visas

Check student visa information on [The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - Immigration Department](#) website

Korea

Applying to South Korea

There are over 40 public and 180 public accredited universities and colleges in South Korea, four of which are American and Belgian universities housed on an international campus in Songdo, a small city outside of Seoul. South Korea is a complex application system that is clearly divided between domestic and non-domestic students. South Korean passport holders are further delineated and applications are defined by years spent outside of the country attending school outside of South Korea. South Korea offers many courses in certain subjects and majors in English. Korea offers a wide range of courses and is very flexible in its offerings, boasting liberal arts offerings as well as established research programs. Before applying, you will need to decide on an institution or college to apply to, but not necessarily a major or course depending on the university. Below are a listing of important websites and information.

The Korean school year is typically starts in March, but many times some universities and programmes admit students for March and/or September starts. It is important to understand admissions processes in Korea because they vary from university to university and also can be decided by citizenship as well as year out of

the country for Korean citizens.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 4-year program

Law and Medicine – 6-year professional programs

Application Cycle

The application cycle in South Korea varies by university and type of applicant. Depending to which university you are applying, applications will be due anywhere between December (KAIST, 12-year privilege South Korean passport holders and international students) up until July after Year 13 graduation. You may hear from the university within a month of receipt of the application depending on the university.

Academic Calendar

The South Korean school year is generally divided into two semesters. Term one commences early August and runs through December. Semester two starts in January and runs through May. Summer vacation runs from May to July or August. Students are given a winter holiday that runs from December to January and a summer break that runs from April or May until August. Most universities also offer optional summer terms. Sometimes, universities will take international students for fall intake and US universities based in South Korea run on the same two-semester cycle, however semester one begins in autumn and semester two begins in the spring.

Selection Process

Academic achievements and personal accomplishments are the most important part of a South Korean university application. The admissions committee reviews a number of factors including, past studies, study plans, personal statements, and letters of recommendation. Language proficiency and other achievement records as well as academic and personal potential is also taken into consideration. While specific courses may look to portfolios, admission essays, interviews, auditions, universities want to see academic potential and academic goals and suitability of preparation for the proposed programme of studies will be assessed when selecting students for admission to specific programs. Applicants will be notified individually as necessary if additional documentation and application requirements are needed. It is important that students visit individual school websites for further information on minimum score requirements for specific programs.

The Decision

Just like every other aspect of the South Korean university application, acceptances from South Korean universities vary from university to university and depend on applicant type. Students applying to KAIST, for example, receive results in March or April, while students applying the regular cycle for very often come out on a rolling basis, which means sending in applications sooner than later will result in earlier knowledge of acceptance. Students will receive an offer that is contingent on final grades. Students are able to accept their offers from January until May or June depending on the university.

The Application

Universities within Korea will require that your College or high school send your full high school transcript and

predicted grades. Korean universities consider high school beginning in Year 11. Universities will be looking to see that you are maintaining your grades or they are increasing.

Application forms vary from university to university, some are comprehensive, while other applications ask for little more than qualification grades. Depending on the type of application, some universities will want to know about extra-curricular activities in the form of a resume. Additionally, some universities will want essays and letters of recommendation from teachers and counsellors. This also varies depending on the type of application the student fills out. It is very important that students identify the type of application he/she needs to fill out – 3-year, 12-year, domestic or international – before applying to a South Korean university. Your counsellor can help you decide which is appropriate and also help fill out the paperwork necessary for your application as well as get the final embassy stamping required by the South Korean university to which you will matriculate.

What You Will Be Asked for with Your Application

- Full details of courses taken – IGCES/AS/A-Level/IB; transcripts and predicted grades
- Non-English speaking countries passport holders (ask about waivers) – IELTS/TOFEL Please send these directly)
- Korean citizens will be asked for Korean Language proficiency (TOPIK)
- SAT scores – optional but considered
- Resume/Activity list
- Application – individual
- Please see special considerations for Korean citizen applications
- Financial documentation depending on country of residence

South Korea University Search

[Study in Korea](#) run by the Korean government, provides information to international students.

The [National Institute for International Education](#) also offers good information for international students

Scholarships and Funding.

[Scholarships](#) for international students to study in South Korea.

Admission Guidelines

Universities within Korea generally state the minimum academic requirement on the admissions section of their webpages. It is important to note that the states numbers and qualifications for A-Levels and IBDP are minimum grades and that applications are often asked and expected to present grades that are higher than the minimum depending on course and the number of applicants to a program in any given year. Universities in Canada also often supply comprehensive guides to high school specific prerequisite courses that students should take if considering specific courses and majors at university. Minimum qualifications vary by university, and it is recommended that students visit individual institution websites for further information.

Admission Tests

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not required for South Korean applications, although any student with extremely strong SAT/ACT scores can use them to support their application; however, reporting scores that are not strong can count against you.

Language requirements for Korean universities is important. While some universities and colleges accept IGCSE, A-Levels and IBDP curricula delivered in English as a sufficient measure of English language ability, others will not. Other universities will require Korean language proficiency as well through administration of the TOPIK. It is important to check with individual university admission requirements.

Visas

Check student visa information on the [Hi-Korea Immigration website for foreigners](#) website

Applying to Hong Kong

There are 20 higher education institutions in Hong Kong with local degree awarding power, nine public and 11 private. Additionally, Hong Kong offers sub-degree programs from 20 post-secondary institutions that can lead to a local degree in some cases. Hong Kong also has a number of joint degree programs with well-known universities from around the world. In fact, there are over 160 locally accredited courses offered by international entities within the country. Most degree courses in Hong Kong are in English, however there are short courses offered in Mandarin and students planning on studying medicine in the country must be demonstrate academic proficiency in Cantonese. Additionally, sometimes Chinese nationals need to be fluent in both Cantonese and Mandarin for some degree programmes. Some universities, like Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, offer flexibility in their study options allowing students to choose their Schools before choosing a major a year or two into their studies, while other universities do not offer as much flexibility in their study options. Before you apply, you may need to decide on a specific course to apply to or do your research to make sure your university is flexible. Below are a listing of important websites and information.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 4-year program

Law and Medicine – 6-year professional program

Application Cycle

Applications for HK universities can open as early as September for Fast Track/Main Round Applications, which are due in November. Most regular decision applications are due in December or January for decision release dates in March onwards. Additionally, some universities in Hong Kong, like Hong Kong University have a late application cycle that opens in January.

Academic Calendar

The school year in Hong Kong is generally divided into terms or semesters. First semester runs from July, August or September (depending on university and course) until December. Second semester runs from

December or January (depending on university and course choice) until May. Most universities also offer summer school options that run from June to August.

Admission Tests

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not required for Hong Kong applications, although any student with strong SAT/ACT scores can use them to support their application; however, reporting scores that are not strong can count against you.

A student who does not have English as his or her first language will need to demonstrate proficiency through submission of IELTS or TOFEL scores.

Selection Process

Academic achievements and personal accomplishments are the most important part of a Hong Kong university application. Additionally, the personal statement will play a role in the overall application. While specific courses may look to portfolios, admission essays, interviews, auditions, universities want to see academic potential when selecting students for admission to specific programs. It is important that students visit individual school websites for further information on minimum score requirements for specific programs.

The Decision

Depending on the type of application submitted, students can find out about admission decisions as early as November (for Fast Track students applying in September). Offers from Hong Kong are conditional and requirements specified in the offer letter should be maintained to insure admittance to the university. Typically, once an offer is made, students are given a very limited timeframe to make a decision give a deposit. Invariably, this means that students may have to make a deposit before other application decisions have been received. Students thinking about applying to university in Hong Kong should consider this before applying.

The Application

Universities within Hong Kong will require that your College send your full high school transcript and predicted grades. Each university requires a separate application. Students will complete an online application form, provide a personal statement and the school will be asked to upload a current transcript and school reference. Students who have applied to the UK can adapt the details of their UK application to meet HK requirements.

Some universities accept things through counsellor portals, and many counsellors have direct contacts with Hong Kong admissions officers at universities. In any case, you will be asked for different things from different universities, first and foremost your current courses and grades. Universities will be looking to see that you are maintaining your grades or they are increasing.

Application forms vary from university to university and Hong Kong does not have a universal application system, so students will have to apply to each university individually. While some applications are more comprehensive and ask for more information including resumes, essays and letters of recommendation (which are to be written UK style), others ask for less. It is also important that students understand the difference between a non-JUPAS and JUPAS student when applying as to not get confused as students will see the term often while filling out applications for Hong Kong universities. All students studying abroad, and

therefore, not participating in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) examination results are non-JUPAS applicants.

What You Will Be Asked for with Your Application

- Copy of your passport
- Full details of courses taken – IGCES/AS/A-Level/IB; transcripts and predicted grades
- Non-English speaking countries passport holders – IELTS/TOFEL (Please send these directly)
- Chinese language test results or another language ability
- SAT scores
- Resume/Activity list
- Application – individual

Admission Guidelines

Universities within Hong Kong generally state the minimum academic requirement on the admissions section of their webpages. It is important to note that the states numbers and qualifications for A-Levels and IBDP are minimum grades and that applications are often asked and expected to present grades that are higher than the minimum depending on course and the number of applicants to a program in any given year. Some universities in Hong Kong also often supply comprehensive guides to high school specific prerequisite courses that students should take if considering specific courses and majors at university. Minimum qualifications vary by university, and it is recommended that students visit individual institution websites for further information.

Hong Kong University Search

[HK Education Bureau University Programme Search](#) is *the* go to for programmes and universities in Hong Kong. There is even an APP download option.

[The Government of HK Education Bureau](#) offers a list of degree awarding, higher-education institutions.

Scholarships and Funding

[Study Subsidy Scheme for Designated Professions/Sectors \(SSSDP\)](#) provides information for scholarships for designated professions and sectors decided on annually by the HK Bureau of Education.

[Life Planning Education Bureau](#) comprehensive listing of Local and Non-Local scholarships throughout Hong Kong.

Visas

Check student visa information on [The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region - Immigration Department](#) website

Applying to New Zealand

There are 54 post-secondary institutions in New Zealand, consisting of eight official universities and about 46 post-secondary institutions that range in size from about 34,000 students at the University of Auckland to about 2,500 students at Lincoln University. Universities in New Zealand are home to the majority of researchers within the country and is respected world-wide for their academic and research. Students interested in research will find many opportunities within a variety of programmes. Before applying, you will need to decide on an institution and a degree course, or major; however, universities within New Zealand offer a number of conjoint programmes that allow students to study two undergraduate bachelor's degrees at the same time without affecting the amount of time spent at university. Below is a listing of important websites and information.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 3 to 4-year programme

Bachelor's degree Honours – 4-year programme

Medicine – Bachelor of Science in Biomedical Science (3-years) with specialist study after (4-5 years)

Law – Professional programme combined with conjoint degree programmes.

Application Cycle

University applications in New Zealand should be submitted before November in the year proceeding graduation from high school for February matriculation. Students interested in applying for the July following June graduation may do so for some universities; these applications are due in the spring of your Year 13 year. You may hear from the university within a month of receipt of the application.

Academic Calendar

The New Zealand school year is generally divided into two semesters. Semester one begins in late February to Early March with exams running from June until July. The second semester begins after an inter-semester break in July. The semester runs until November or December, depending on the university, followed by summer break. International students are able to start during the July proceeding graduation of the same year if interested.

Selection Process

Universities in New Zealand are very welcoming to international students and have very clear guidelines regarding admission. Universities within NZ look to academic merit when evaluating applications and each university offers minimum entry requirements for international students to specific programmes on their websites. Additionally, students interested in applying for creative arts and industry degrees will be asked to provide complete portfolios and/or auditions and written statements ([example of requirements from the University of Auckland](#)). Because each programme and university varies in requirements, it is important that students visit individual school websites for further information.

The Decision

Acceptances from New Zealand universities very often come out very quickly, within a month upon receipt of documents and completion of application files, which means sending in applications sooner than later will result in earlier knowledge of acceptance. If applying before IB or A-Level grades are submitted (for July intake), students will receive an offer that is contingent on final grades. Students are able to accept their offers from January until May or June depending on the university.

The Application

If applying for conditional acceptance before graduation, universities in New Zealand will require that your College send your predicted grades as part of an initial application. Upon completion of IBPD and A-Level examinations, it is important that scores are sent directly to the university if admitted and plan on matriculating.

Application forms vary from university to university, but for the most part, academic merit is the most important component of an application. Specific programmes within universities will ask for portfolios, personal statements and/or auditions depending on the programme to which a student is applying.

What You Will/Could Be Asked for with Your Application

- Full details of courses taken – IGCEs/AS/A-Level/IB; transcripts and predicted grades
- IELTS/TOFEL - Non-English speaking countries passport holders (Please send these directly)
- Application – individual
- Portfolio (programme specific)
- Personal Statement (specific programmes only)
- Financial documentation depending on country of residence

Admission Guidelines

Universities within New Zealand do generally state the minimum academic requirement on the admissions section of their webpages for specific programmes. It is important to note, however, that these are minimum requirements and depending on the competition of any given year; students achieving minimum requirements may not be granted admission.

New Zealand University Search

[New Zealand University Directory](#) offers comprehensive information on all eight universities including links to individual university websites and course offerings.

Scholarships and Funding

Scholarships [available from the NZ government](#)

Other scholarships can be found on individual university websites

Admission Tests

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not required for admittance into New Zealand universities.

English language requirements for universities in New Zealand is important for students holding passports from non-English speaking countries. While some universities and colleges accept IGCSE, A-Levels and IBDP curricula delivered in English as a sufficient measure of English language ability, others will not. If you are a passport holder from a non-English speaking country, it is important to check with individual university admission requirements.

Visas

Check student visa information on the [New Zealand Visas government page](#)

Applying to Singapore

There are 34 official universities in Singapore, six of which are national. Additionally, Singapore is home to over 300 private schools and institutions offering a range of courses from certificate to post-graduate levels. Singapore is known for providing excellence in post-secondary education and is renowned for its many partnerships with US, US and Australian universities, offering students the chance to study internationally and/or obtain dual degrees. Singapore is one of our most popular university destinations. Polytechnics are popular three-year choices in Singapore for students wanting to obtain professional, practice-oriented studies. Before applying, you will need to decide on an institution and a degree course, or major; however, universities within Singapore offer a large amount of concurrent degrees and double major programmes that allow for flexibility. Below is a listing of important websites and information.

Degree Structure

Bachelor's degree – 3 to 4-year program

Law and Medicine – graduate only options, double degree law programmes available

Application Cycle

University applications in Singapore usually open in October with different closing dates depending on a student's individual qualification. The application deadline date varies with each university but usually runs until February or March (Yale NUS offers an Early-Application that closes in November). You may hear from the university within a month of receipt of the application or in the case of Yale-NUS not until April or May. It is also important to note that since term one commences in August, when A Level results have yet to be released, some universities will not permit students to apply. In this case, students will not start until one year after graduation.

Academic Calendar

The Singaporean school year is generally divided into two semesters. Term one commences early August and runs through December. Semester two starts in January and runs through May. Summer vacation runs from May to July or August. Students are given a winter holiday that runs from December to January and a summer break that runs from April or May until August. Most universities also offer optional summer terms.

Admission Tests

Sitting the SAT or ACT is not required for all Singaporean applications, but is required by some. Any student

with strong SAT/ACT scores can use them to support their application to any Singaporean university that does not require the exams.

English language requirements for Singaporean universities is important. While some universities and colleges accept IGCSE, A-Levels and IBDP curricula delivered in English as a sufficient measure of English language ability, others will not. If you are a passport holder from a non-English speaking country, it is important to check with individual university admission requirements.

Selection Process

Universities in Singapore can be extremely competitive. Most universities look too academic merit when evaluating applications, but other universities have a holistic application process and consider personal accomplishments beyond academics as part of the selection process. Cut off points for admission vary from year to year, but students are able to review the university indicative grade profile (IGP) for individual universities to understand and compare themselves to the previous year's accepted cohort. Here is an example of the IGP from [National University Singapore](#). Depending on the university and program, universities in Singapore may require face to face interviews for shortlisted applications. Look to portfolios, admission essays, interviews, auditions, etc. when selecting students for admission to specific programs. It is important that students visit individual school websites for further information.

The Decision

Acceptances from Singaporean universities very often come out on a rolling basis, which means sending in applications sooner than later will result in earlier knowledge of acceptance. Students will receive an offer that is contingent on final grades. Students are able to accept their offers from January until May or June depending on the university.

The Application

All universities will require that your College send your predicted grades as part of an initial application. Upon completion of IBPD and A-Level examinations, it is important that scores are sent directly to the university if admitted and plan on matriculating.

Application forms vary from university to university, but for the most part, academic merit is the most important component of an application. Other universities, like Yale-NUS, are more comprehensive in nature when reviewing applications; however, academic ability and accomplishment is still the most important part of an application. While some universities want to know about your extra-curricular activities, interests and awards most do not require essays or letters of recommendation; however, for some more competitive courses, you may be expected to write a personalized essay.

Depending on the university and program, universities in Singapore may require face to face interviews for shortlisted applications. Look to portfolios, admission essays, interviews, auditions, etc. when selecting students for admission to specific programs. It is important that students visit individual school websites for further information.

What You Will/Could Be Asked for with Your Application

- Full details of courses taken – IGCSE/AS/A-Level/IB; transcripts and predicted grades

- SAT/SAT II Scores – varies by university and course choice and/or want to be considered for early admission
- Non-English speaking countries passport holders (ask about waivers) – IELTS/TOFEL (Please send these directly)
- Application – individual
- Teacher Recommendations
- Personal Essay
- Interview for Short-Listed Candidates
- Resume
- Financial documentation depending on country of residence

Admission Guidelines

Universities within Singapore do not generally state the minimum academic requirement on the admissions section of their webpages. Some universities in Singapore do however provide students with an indicative grade profile to help students understand competitive grades for course entry.

Singapore University Search

[Ministry of Education in Singapore](#) – Offers a list of Singaporean universities and basic information

[Singapore Post-Secondary Brochure](#) by the Ministry of Education includes an overview of post-secondary education in Singapore, a listing of colleges and universities and funding information,

Scholarships and Funding

Scholarships [Ministry of Education information brochure](#) (see page 23)

[Ministry of Education](#) funding and scholarship information for Singaporean citizens and international students (also provides a list of university scholarships)

Visas

Check student visa information on the [Singapore Immigration and Checkpoints Authority](#) website.

Part 8: Other applications

Applying to Art Schools and the Portfolio

The Portfolio

The most important thing about an art portfolio is that it shows process. For example, one portfolio example we have seen was a student portfolio was based on the theme of butterflies. The student's whole book, around 25 pages, was for one project. She created 3 dresses centered on the butterfly theme. Each page

detailed a small step, like experimenting with materials, colors, butterflies etc., but some pages did not show anything, but were just decorated, and in their own way, elaborated the journey. IB does not require this of you - You only need about 3 or 4 pages per project, which is a difference between IB and A levels. A-levels have few very long projects, and IB has many short projects.

A way to get an edge is by taking professional photos of your work, or by having someone wear your work, and taking photos in an all white background. This will show you that you are dedicated to your work and that you are proud of it. Use a high-end camera, perhaps the school art camera. You could also take photos in a park; go just after sunrise or just before sunset, you will get beautiful lighting. There are plenty of flowers and great backgrounds for your work to be photographed. This could also benefit your IB or A Level art grade.

Most universities will understand that students cannot fly over and bring their work, so they will schedule a Skype video interview, and students will be required to send photos of their portfolio and work to them prior. Many universities will also accept a portfolio website. A portfolio website allows them to access student work without having to send a massive folder though email. Students can scan in pages and upload them. We recommend students Photoshop out any errors and use the art high-resolution scanner, not the regular printer scanners. Students can then also upload videos that show off their work and portfolio. Some universities hold portfolio reviews in major cities at which individual universities will inform students of portfolio requirements. Students should also be very careful to be sure and read the requirements on individual university webpages to which they are applying.

Carbonmade.com is a website some universities specifically ask for. It's free, but students may have to pay for the basic account in order to fit in all of their work. Another good website is squarespace.com. Have a look at both and see which one suits best. Carbonmade is very easy to use.

(When typing carbonmade in emails to universities, make sure it doesn't autocorrect to carbonnade!)

Check out how one student's online portfolio looks here: eleanorshort.carbonmade.com

Also, having a good photo of yourself on your website may seem narcissistic, but it lets the university get a better idea of who you are, and allows them to get a picture of you in their head. I would recommend getting a friend or an art teacher to take one of you with a white background.

Art teachers, counselor and previous students can be invaluable assets in art school portfolio creation journey. Students should also be sure to attend portfolio review days that in the area – usually in the fall. It will give them a great opportunity to meet with university representatives and talk about portfolio as well as their potential!

Student Athletes Applying to the United States

Talented student athletes from within the Dulwich network have the opportunity compete in sports clubs and divisions throughout the world. Students looking to compete at the university and college level in the United States will need to register themselves with the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which consists of 1,100 colleges and universities within the US across three divisions competing in 24 different sports. Division I is the most competitive of the three divisions; however, even being offered a place within a school to participate in Division III sports is very competitive and requires immense dedication.

Students planning to participate in Division I or Division II college athletics must be certified by and registered

with the NCAA Initial-Eligibility Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse insures that each student meets certain academic and athletic ability standards in order to be eligible as an amateur student athlete at a university or college level.

Students should register with the [Eligibility Center](#) at the beginning of Year 11 in order to be considered for recognition and competitive participation at the Division I or II levels. Additionally students need to work closely with their counselors to assure that they are on track with their course selection, ACT/SAT testing and submission of transcripts and test scores. [eligibility center](#). Students interested in participating at the Division III level do not have to register with the NCAA, however, students can and are encouraged to create a profile page that will provide students with a NCAA number which could be helpful if changing divisions in the future. Students who are interested in learning more about qualifying to play sports at the competitive level should speak with their counselors and coaches before signing up and registering on the NCAA website. Additionally, counselors will hold yearly sessions for interested athletes and their parents.

Student Responsibilities

Student athletes and their parents should sign a release form from the counsellor's office so records can be released to coaches for recruiting purposes.

When should a student register with the NCAA Eligibility Center?

Students should register with the Eligibility Centre at the beginning of their Year 11. At the end of Year 12, a transcript, which includes six semesters of grades, should be sent to the Eligibility Centre from the high school. Additionally, students should have their SAT or ACT scores forwarded directly to the Eligibility Centre (by using code "9999") whenever they take the exam.

How do parents learn more about the recruiting process?

Free, reliable information is available to all student athletes and parents. Don't pay anyone for recruiting services! For more information, contact your high school coach, athletic director, the NCAA Parent resources at web1.ncaa.org, and a free webinar sponsored by college athletics at

<http://www.freerecruitingwebinar.org/>

What if a student isn't attending a Division I-II university? Can he/she still be an athlete?

Regardless of size, most colleges offer athletic programs. Other non-NCAA programs include NCAA Division III schools, NAIA schools (National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics), and NJCAA schools (National Junior College Athletic Association). These smaller athletic associations have academic standards for student athletes, but they do not require participation in the NCAA Eligibility Centre.

College intramurals is another option for students who enjoy sports and friendly competition. Intramurals are open to all students with all ability levels, and intramurals do not require a commitment to a college or coach. Check out the student life and recreation centres during campus visits to learn more about intramural competition.

Part 9: Summer suggestions

Summer is a time for:

- Rejuvenation
- Relaxation
- New Experiences
- Challenge (academic or personal)
- Exposure
- Time with Family

Use your summer to help you define your interests and build a sense of responsibility

Read:

Whatever you decide to do this summer — work, volunteer, intern or study —read. Reading opens your mind and introduces you to other worlds, while sharpening important skills such as comprehension and vocabulary. Additionally it will help you maintain your English skills.

Explore: skills, vocation, abilities, interests

- If I could do anything this summer, what would it be?
- What career fields am I interested in? How can I explore what that field is like?
- What cause or issue am I passionate about? How can I have an impact?

How do students do this?

A student has a passion for French and an interest in politics... she approached the French Consulate in HCMC to arrange a summer internship.

This student loves to write, take photographs and meeting new people... she created a blog to share her work with followers around the globe.

A student is passionate about history... he connected with a doctoral student working at Angkor Wat and assisted in an archeological dig.

One student absolutely loves food! She is taking a course with the New York Times Institute for Teens and experiencing all things food with leading NY Food critics/chefs and other professionals in the industry!

Research Opportunities:

- Naviance has search feature
- Meet with counselor
- www.summpeprogramfinder.com
- www.nais.org - Various independent US based schools offer summer programs
- <http://www.experiment.org/>
- www.goputney.com
- www.rusticpathways.com
- www.oxbridgeprograms.com/
- <http://www.interlochen.org/>
- <http://www.concordialanguagevillages.org/>
- <http://summer.berkeley.edu/student-types/high-school-students>
- <https://osc-ib.com/mid-ib-summer-schools/overview>

- Parents - talk to your colleagues!
- www.usummer.com
- www.summerdiscovery.com
- <http://www.internationalacac.org/summer-programs-2017#AsiaOceania>

Questions to consider:

Do you want to volunteer?

Do you wish to earn academic credit?

Do you want to be uncomfortable?

Does adventure travel interest you?

Do you wish to gain field experience as a burgeoning scientist?

How will you reflect upon your summer experiences to further your sense of identity, uniqueness, and purpose?

Unitours:

Summer *may* be a good time to visit university campuses:

- Use a private company that will help to coordinate a tour for you; *or*
- You can work with Mrs. Hawken or Mr. K to identify universities to visit on your own.

www.tscollegetours.com

Volunteer:

Spending a summer working for a local charity is a great way for you to learn about life and yourself.

- Develop leadership skills
- Combine your skills and interests to serve others

Demonstrate your commitment to other

How to get started:

1. Reach out now to an organization you want to work with.
2. Present a plan for *engaged* and *sustained* work over the summer.
3. Think of this like a job: set goals, show up regularly, contribute actively.

Summer programme expenses:

- Program Fees:

- 1500 USD to 1700 USD per week
- Travel Costs (Airfare, etc.)
- Pocket money:
 - 150 USD to 250 USD per week
- Visa (if needed)
- TOEFL/IELTS may be needed

Most programs are roughly 2 to 4 weeks with longer programs available.

Appendix: frequently asked questions

How can we find out about the many university options around the world?

There is a wealth of information on educational and university websites which details the requirements and university options in all countries. In addition, embassies and consulates devote departments to providing information on educational opportunities in their countries. To narrow your search, the LIS school website has many research links for schools in the US, Canada, the UK, and continental Europe. The IBO website also has worldwide university information. In addition, our library has a section with university brochures and application information for schools in Europe, Japan, Canada, the US, Australia, the UK, and Korea. LIS has college counselors who specialize in applying to colleges and universities in the UK, Canada, the US, and other English-speaking schools, (Ms Hopkinson), Japan (Mr Ishimura), Korea (Mr Seo), and Continental European universities (Ms Debans).

What do families need to consider when they make plans for university?

Planning for university involves many considerations, including financial, academic, social, and geographic. Parents and students need to talk about the choices that are available, the student's interests and needs, and the realistic possibilities.

Financial

The costs of universities vary greatly from country to country. The US is the most expensive (on average \$35,000, as high as \$70,000+), which includes tuition, room, and board; the current cost in the UK for UK/EU nationals is approximately £9,000 (just tuition), with costs for international students ranging from

+£10,000 to £35,000 for science/medicine-based courses, while France has minimal fees. Although scholarships are available in many countries, students cannot always depend on them.

Academic

What system of study would be best for the Student? In the UK and Europe, students usually apply directly to a course of study, such as History, English Literature, Physics, while in other countries, including the US and Canada, the academic approach is known as “liberal arts”. Students apply to the university without a course of concentration; they study broadly from a wide range of subjects the first two years and then select a major during their junior year. In general, an undergraduate program in the US is four years while in the UK and other European countries it is three years.

Social

What type of educational environment would best suit the student, i.e., a campus setting with sports and social activities, a more academic environment, living at home, living with other students? According to many studies, the greatest predictor of success at university is determined by how comfortable the student is in the school environment – is the university a “good fit” for the student. Students are able to become engaged in their studies when they are comfortable with their environment. Some determining factors in the decision-making process of selecting a university that is a good fit include: gender, religious affiliation, student population, urban vs rural setting, campus setting, campus culture, sports programs, social activities, and international student population.

Geographic

What are the realistic possibilities for both the student and parents? Close to home or far away on the other side of the world? In what environment is the student comfortable and how will it impact his/her engagement in his studies?

How do we research for university and prepare our children?

Research

Discuss with your children their academic, social, and extra-curricular interests. Incorporate your research and preparation for the next level of education as part of your overall approach to preparing your child for life. Listen to your child: what interests them, what are their strengths and passions. Encourage them to read, pursue worthwhile activities, turn off the TV and computer, and get involved in helping others, i.e., community service. If your child is interested in visiting universities, take them for visits when you are in the area.

Understand and discuss the different systems of study—Subject related vs. Liberal arts. Research the various resources available.

Preparation

Parents are often concerned with when and how college preparation begins and if they are already behind in the process. Enrolling students at LIS, even as soon as the Early Years Program is already a beginning in the process. Our students, as IB learners, are already striving to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective—all characteristics that

selective universities seek in students. The IB curriculum is a pre-university program that has already put students on a path for university preparation. Even in the PYP and MYP, intellectual inquiry and critical thinking are the basis of the curriculum. Students are supported in pursuing extracurricular activities as well as volunteering for community service. Universities world-wide recognize the rigors and value of the IB program as evidenced by the higher rate of acceptance for IB Diploma students in comChengdu to other academic programs.

Parent-child relationship

Planning for university can be a complex and emotional process. Adolescents are sometimes reluctant to discuss issues with their parents and communication may not always seem open. LIS teachers and counselors are advocates for the students and place them at the center of the process while emphasizing the importance of family involvement. During the application process, parents play a significant role in encouraging their child to take responsibility for university applications as well as listening to their ideas and empowering them to make important decisions.

How do we decide on prospective universities or a specific field of study, e.g., engineering, medicine, law?

Obviously, the student's academic success at LIS is a major factor in determining which universities the student is qualified to attend. Also, the subject areas in which the student excels play a significant role in the specific field of study.

In schools around the world, academic standing determines the level of university opportunities. In the US, schools are primarily interested in the student's transcript, a record of grades from Grade 9 to Semester 1 of Grade 12. In the UK, universities usually only require the predicted grades in the IB Diploma to be considered, while in Canada schools are interested in both predicted IB scores and grades from Grade 10 to 12.

The specific field of study depends on the strengths and interests of the student. To succeed in engineering courses, math and physic skills are required. In some universities, such as the UK and Canada, Math HL/SL and Physics at SL/HL are required. In medicine, an interest and aptitude for chemistry (as well as biology or physics) and math are important. However, in the US an undergraduate degree in any subject, even art, is accepted for medical school as long as chemistry requirements are met.

Additional tests are usually required in most countries to apply for medicine and law.

Other resources

Career day

LIS offers students the opportunity in Grades 10 and 11 to participate in Career Day in order to learn more about a diverse range of professions. In the past three years, Career Day has presented speakers from the Arts, Fashion Design, Medicine, Business, NGOs, Media, Government, Law, and Humanitarian agencies.

College Board

CollegeBoard: online American career counseling and college search tools are available for all students who take the PSAT.

What kind of financial assistance is available for students at universities?

At most universities throughout the world, there is financial assistance available in the form of scholarships and financial aid (funds which do not have to be paid back), bursaries (small funding, not repaid), and loans. Many countries also offer financial assistance to attend universities outside of the home country.

Some US universities offer the most assistance through need-blind financial aid, which may also be available to international students. Need-blind means that if a school accepts the student, it will meet all of the financial needs of the student based on the parent's economic needs. Schools indicate on their websites if they are need-blind. Schools may also offer merit-based scholarships if they are really interested in the student, regardless of the financial needs. Some Ivy Leagues and highly selective schools in the US provide full funding for accepted students (within a certain income range). Financial aid in the form of Federal loans is available to US citizens applying to US universities.

Canada, the UK and other European universities may also offer some funding for students (from their country as well as international and EU students). Scholarships for IB Diploma students are also available.

Can students study in English in a non-English speaking country?

Yes, many countries offer English speaking programs. There are excellent courses in the Netherlands, Sweden, Germany, Norway, and India as well as American universities all over the world.

Why don't the counselors start college meetings with students in Grade 9?

LIS feels that during these years of Secondary School, students should concentrate on doing well in an appropriately challenging academic program, and should become involved in extracurricular community activities. The MYP provides an excellent preparation for the university admissions process, developing students who are critical thinkers and independent learners as well as helping them contribute with their community service activities. The school provides initial university and career guidance in Grade 10 and, continues more intensively in Grades 11 and 12 with one-on-one sessions, workshops, university visits, and presentations. By Grade 11, students will be more mature and better equipped, intellectually and emotionally, to make decisions that are right for them.

Shouldn't LIS provide class ranks?

No. Hardly any private college preparatory secondary school provides rank-in-class since to do so would put students at a disadvantage. Our grade level class sizes are small and therefore, ranking students is meaningless. In addition, the IB program does not really fit with the concept of ranking. Since there are such a large number of schools like LIS that do not report class ranks, even those universities that appear to "require" class ranks are able to evaluate our students' performances using other criteria.

What does it mean to "send official test scores?"

Colleges require students to send their "official" SAT, ACT, TOEFL, and/or IELTS scores. A score is official if it is sent from the testing agency directly to the college. This can be done through the test company's website. LIS does not have and cannot send official scores for students.

When should students begin taking the SAT/ACT?

Usually, students take the SAT or the ACT during the second half of Grade 11. Grade 10 and 11 students interested in applying to the US may take the Preliminary SAT (PSAT) in October.

University background information: student profile

In order to help you through the college application process and to enable me to write a relevant, thorough recommendation, please answer the following questions as completely as possible. These questions may seem lengthy and time consuming, but they will also help you when you begin filling in applications and serve as a guide in writing your essays. I will need your answers before I can begin writing your recommendations. Thank you.

Name: _____

Describe your background, where you lived, went to school and the languages you speak.

Describe your strengths and weaknesses as a student. Include not just academic subjects but also your approaches to learning, i.e., study skills, participation in class, interest in learning and willingness to undertake challenges.

What have been your contributions to LIS or to previous high schools?

What three words would you use to describe yourself? Give examples to illustrate these characteristics.

Do you have any special interests, talent, or hobbies? If so, please describe.

What do you think you would bring to a university; what would you contribute to the school?

What would you most like a university to know about you, or what do you think is your most distinguishing characteristic?

Teacher recommendation questionnaire

Students: Please complete this form for the teacher who will write a recommendation for you. In responding

to the questions, provide as much detail as you can. You may have a maximum of two teacher recommendations; however, some colleges may require only one. Please check college requirements before requesting a second recommendation. Answering these questions fully can result in a more helpful recommendation and enhance your chances of admission.

Teacher's name: _____

Date: _____

Student's name: _____

Email address: _____

I will be applying to an Early Decision or Early Action college

Yes

No

Note: students must request recommendations at least three weeks prior to deadlines, not including school vacations.

I tentatively plan to apply to the following colleges/universities:

What subject areas do you think you will study in college?

A teacher's recommendation usually concentrates on your academic performance. In general, how did you contribute to this class? More specifically, give two incidents or examples to illustrate your contributions.

What out-of-class experiences have you had that are related to this subject area (e.g., summer courses, reading, activities, things you did but weren't required to do for the class, etc.)?

Describe a project, paper or activity in this class you were proud of or especially enjoyed?

What contributions have you made as an LIS student overall?

Have your academic success and grades in this subject been affected by any personal or family obstacle (change of schools, illness, etc.)? If so, also mention how you have managed to overcome any difficulties.

What three (positive) adjectives could this teacher use to describe you? Give a concrete example for each of these qualities to illustrate how you display them.

Tell this teacher something else that will help him or her write an effective recommendation about you. If there is anything that should be explained, please make sure you also include that information.

University Timeline

UNIVERSITY CALENDAR**SENIOR YEAR - AT A GLANCE**

June, July and August

- Before school is out ask 2 teachers to write on your behalf
- FILL OUT QUESTIONNAIRE – connection.naviance.com/ (for students) click on the About Me tab and it is on the left-hand side
- Visit campuses if possible (see campus visit handout)
- Research online potential universities
- Think about ACT, SAT, TOEFL, IELTS retakes in fall
- Whittle down list to 10 or add new ones to prospective list on Naviance
- Start making a list of essays that you must write (UCAS website, Commonapp or from university websites)
- Create athletic video and resume if necessary

September

- Download applications or make a list of online apps
- Save portal passwords and usernames
- Finalize university list – make ED/EDII/EA/EASC choices
- Uni essay(s) due (common app, UCAS, University of CA, or other statement)
- Check for any supplements on the Common Application for your schools
- Remind/Choose two teachers that will write on your behalf. Usually this is one Math/Science and one Humanities teacher.
- Sign-up for any retake tests needed for university
- Meet with your University Counsellor
- Meet with university representatives!
- Cambridge Asia deadline end of September

October

- Meet with university representatives (very important)
- UCAS Medicine/Vet Science deadline October 15
- Take the SAT/ACT/SAT subject tests if applicable to you
- Retake TOEFL/IELTS
- College Essay/Personal Statement, Interview, Application process
- Explore China DP work day University Preparation/TOK/EE camp – **REQUIRED**
- Continue downloading applications/filling out online
- ED/EA/EASC materials due October 4h
- NCAA applicants (recruited athletes for USA) must send forms/transcripts
- Complete Athletic resume/DVD (if applicable)
- Send all test scores to colleges/universities in Canada, US, UK, Europe other

November

- Essays/statements continued to be returned with comments
- Take the SAT/ACT/SAT subject tests
- UC/CSU deadline November 30th
- Send all SAT/ACT/TOEFL/IELTS/AP scores to colleges/universities

December

- All applications due Friday, December 1 for ANY January deadlines
- ED/EASC results are in – please have EDII schools or other applications ready
- Last SAT/ACT scores to be considered for UC/CSU and January deadlines.
- Send all SAT/ACT/TOEFL/IELTS/AP scores to colleges/universities

SPRING SEMESTER

January

- Add another school or two after consideration over break if applicable to you
- Australia – intensify up uni search (see above semester)
- Follow all IB instructions from coordinator
- Follow through with universities/colleges – phone, email, letters

- Continue to stay in contact with universities/colleges
- All Mid-Year Report forms sent by late January (25th??) to schools requiring them (most North American schools)
- SNU in Korea deadline in January or February
- Korean applicants gather all forms necessary

February

- Study for your mocks during the Chinese New Year break
- Call schools with any questions/concerns
- Submit any European applications if not done already

March/April/May

- Many decisions are released by April 1 (USA and Canada)
- Last Wednesday of April is your last DP class
- Short spring break: revise for your May exams
- Give university name to IB Coordinator for results release by May 1st
- Hear from uni/colleges by May 1 and make final decision
- Send in tuition and HOUSING deposits to college/uni of choice (if decision known)
- IB Exams or other university entrance testing
- Australian and Korean applicants round 1 - submit applications, sign into portals, gather documents needed and submit the form required two weeks in advance
- Make final decisions for most students by May 1 and June 1
- Firm/insurance choices are clear by May 1
- Wait for IB actual results in early July 6 - make adjustments

Grade 10 Guidance

High school grades count and are submitted to universities

Grade 11 Guidance

Get adjusted to your DP courses and focus on academics

Continue involvement in athletics, activities, service

Tell us more about you

Self-care and organization

Take SAT before June if you need it

ACT if applicable before June

Make sure you have take the IELTS or TOEFL

January to June individual meetings with the university counsellor (formal) and drop in

March to June uni conferences including parents and students

Maintain your wellness

The College Interview

Purpose: To help the college gather further information about your suitability as a candidate and to help you determine if this college is a good match.

Before the Interview: Evaluate yourself: identify your strengths, interests, weaknesses. Compose a list of questions about this college and its admissions process. Dress comfortably but appropriately.

At the Beginning: Shake hands with the interviewer; look the interviewer directly in the eye; know the interviewer's name-ask him or her to repeat it if you did not hear it the first time; introduce your parents, if they are with you, and then invite them to leave.

The Interview: An interview can last an hour and can be divided into six different parts:

Personal Background: Where you have grown up, your parent's occupation/interests, information about siblings and colleges attended by family members. The purpose is to put you at ease.

Academic Background: Information about Indian Springs and your curriculum. Why you have taken certain classes and any academic awards.

Extracurricular: What activities mean the most to you and why? Have you had any specific roles within an activity?

Academic Interest: What are you interested in studying and how have these interests developed? What are you future career goals?

College Choice: What are you looking for in a college/university? What expectations do you have in a school?

Why this school: What brings you to this particular school? How does this school fit into your criteria?

Questions to expect:

- Tell me about your high school – what kind of environment does it have?
- What has been the most difficult course you have taken during high school?
- Is there a specific teacher or course that has really caught your interest? Can you explain why?

- What has been the most exciting academic project you done in high school? What has been your most significant academic accomplishment?
- Tell me what you have read outside of school lately.
- How would you use your talents at our university?
- What has been the most significant personal challenge you have ever faced?
- If I were to visit your school and talk with some of your friends, how would they describe you to me?
- What are your plans for after college?
- What specific questions can I help you with?

After the Interview: Thank the interviewer, shake hands, say good bye. Write a thank you note to the person who interviewed you.

INDEPENDENT UNIVERSITY AGENT/COUNSELOR POLICY

Independent counselors or commercial counseling centers should NEVER replace the role or function of school-based counselors.

Students using a counselor outside of the school environment must still be prepared to take an active part in the college search. It is important for students to keep in mind that their academic performance (grades, rigor in academic courses, test scores) achievements, school counselor and teacher recommendations make them competitive candidates for college admission NOT their affiliation with an independent counselor.

Fancy packaging of college application materials will not replace the importance of good academic performance.

If you do choose to work with a private counselor please choose the counselor carefully. Prior to working with them please ask them some of the following questions.

Questions to Ask About Professional Qualifications and Experience:

- What national and/or regional professional organizations do you belong to as an independent college counselor?
- Do you have counseling experience, certification, a credential or a master's degree in counseling or a counseling related discipline?
- How long have you been an independent counselor?
- Do you have experience in a high school counseling office or as a college admission officer?
- How long has this counseling center been functioning?
- How long have your counselors been active in the field, and in what roles for companies/agencies?
- Are you familiar with the academic program in my high school?

- Do work closely with the school counselor and in which ways?
- Do you visit college campuses regularly?
- Have you attended professionally directed conferences, college counseling institutes or workshops?

Services and Fees

- Do you have a brochure or contract that lists and describes your services and fees?
- If you have a package program, what services are included?
- Do you write the essays? (The answer should be NO)
- Do you fill out the applications? (The answer should be NO)

Independent counselors/counseling centers should:

- Insist that students be the sole author of their college applications and essays
- Help students understand that no one can guarantee admission to any college or have influence on admission decisions reached by institutions
- Encourage students to consider a range of institutions for admission, not just emphasizing admission to highly selective or prestigious universities

ADVICE FROM A COLLEGE ADMISSIONS DEAN ON THE COUNSELOR RECOMMENDATION

Remember: The purpose of your recommendation is to help the admissions staff make an accurate, fair assessment of the applicant.

DO

- Support your points with examples and details.
- Place the student in the context of the class or the school.
- Help us understand your situation and how well you know the student - e.g., you have a very large counseling load; you are new to the school.
- Address attitude/character as well as academic ability.
- Address growth if you have known the student over a significant period of time.
- Be candid and comprehensive; include negatives if you are comfortable doing so.
- Explain any unusual circumstances that may have affected the student's performance (within your rights given confidentiality constraints).
- If you don't know the student very well, state that fact, and explain the source of the information you used in writing your letter.
- Keep your letters to one to two pages; a shorter, more specific letter is preferable to a long, general one.

- Feel free to write a note to a specific college on a copy of a standard letter.
- Proofread — be sure your pronouns are the same gender as the student.
- Write legibly if handwriting a letter; make clear copies if photocopying a letter.
- Attach your letter to the counselor evaluation form of the application; if your school has its own form, attach that as well.
- Realize that the college accepts at face value what you say: Don't be surprised if someone you support is admitted and someone for whom you wrote a less supportive letter is denied.
- Realize that the counselor recommendation is sometimes used as a road map to interpret the transcript — if there are blunders on the transcript, address those in the letter.

DON'T

- Underestimate the impact a compelling letter can have at selective colleges.
- List all the student's activities or courses; that information is available elsewhere in the application.
- Assume that high grades are sufficient for selective colleges to admit a student — most of their applicants have high grades.
- Use the same paragraph or even the same sentence in more than one recommendation, unless you are doing so to provide a description of the school or the class; otherwise, the boilerplate approach hurts your credibility.
- Comment on the student's appearance.
- Use one college's name in the first paragraph and a different name in the closing paragraph.
- Be concerned if you prefer to ignore check boxes or if your school prohibits rating students in this way. Colleges will work with what they receive.

Other points to ponder

- Students who can be most helped by a compelling recommendation include merit scholarship candidates at any college, borderline admissible candidates at any college, and competitive candidates at the most selective colleges.
- Explain why you think a student is a good match for a particular college — and especially so for Early Decision candidates and for borderline candidates.
- The more history your school has with a college, the more important your letters become. In sorting through candidates from your school, colleges rely on your candor and your assistance.
- Your recommendations will be read thoroughly by at least one person evaluating the application. It will help that person, as well as subsequent readers, if your opening sentence commands attention and your closing paragraph summarizes your evaluation.

Source: Terry Cowdrey, St. Lawrence University, New York

Sample request form for Teacher Letter of Recommendation at Léman International School

Dear grade 12 students:

Below are some guidelines for successfully requesting a recommendation letter. Students must recognize that these letters take much time and that such a letter is a privilege and not a right. Every letter written by a teacher must be followed up with a "thank you" note. This is good practice and just polite. Once you have asked a teacher and he/she has confirmed your request in person, use this template, (steps 1-12) to provide your teachers with important information.

Your teachers have been asked to submit your letters into Naviance or to me directly.

Mrs. Mindorff

1. Date requested (at least three weeks before due date): _____
2. Date due: _____
3. To: (Name of Recommender)
4. From: (Student Name)
5. Thank you for writing one of my two teacher recommendations. (academic subjects: Humanities, Math, Science, English, Language acquisition – suggested teachers for the Common Application)
 - 1) (Teacher's Name)
 - 2) (Teacher's Name)
6. I will be using this letter for (an application to university **AND/OR** scholarship applications). Please use LIS letterhead stationery when possible.
7. I will be applying to the following university(ies). **AND/OR** I will be applying for the following scholarship(s): _____.
8. I plan to plan to waive my right to see this letter for use with... (Choose all that apply from the following)
 - the Common Application form, which you will receive online. **OR**
 - the attached form. **OR**
 - this application. Please mail it in the self-addressed stamped envelope I have provided. **OR**
9. In your letter, please highlight the following (experience/ project/ perspective) that I benefitted from in your class _____. **OR** Please highlight the following in your letter _____.
10. Finally, so that you may better understand my background, I hope to study (intended major) in university

and

I have attached my LIS activities list, CAS activities or summary from Managebac (or resume).

AND/OR I have described my activities below: (customize for your needs)

- * My noteworthy academic moments, projects, achievements consist of _____.
 - * My personal (career or academic) goals are _____.
 - * Please emphasize the following in your letter (specific strengths or aptitudes—reference the IB learner profile): _____.
 - * I have participated in the following high school activities, stress your CAS (add leadership roles for each):
 - * I have experienced (personal or academic and again reference the IB learner profile) hardships that might be helpful to know about when writing my letter: _____.
 - * My post-high school plans include _____.
11. Thank you again for taking the time to write a letter of recommendation for me. If you have any questions, please contact me at _____.

Sincerely,

Student Name

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UNIVERSITY CALENDAR

SENIOR YEAR - AT A GLANCE

June, July and August

- Before school is out ask 2 teachers to write on your behalf
- FILL OUT QUESTIONNAIRE – connection.naviance.com/ (for students) click on the About Me tab and it is on the left-hand side
- Visit campuses if possible (see campus visit handout)
- Research online potential universities
- Think about ACT, SAT, TOEFL, IELTS retakes in fall
- Whittle down list to 10 or add new ones to prospective list on Naviance
- Start making a list of essays that you must write (UCAS website, Commonapp or from university websites)
- Create athletic video and resume if necessary

September

- Download applications or make a list of online apps
- Save portal passwords and usernames
- Finalize university list – make ED/EDII/EA/EASC choices
- Uni essay(s) due (common app, UCAS, University of CA, or other statement)
- Check for any supplements on the Common Application for your schools
- Remind/Choose two teachers that will write on your behalf. Usually this is one Math/Science and one Humanities teacher.
- Sign-up for any retake tests needed for university
- Meet with your University Counsellor
- Meet with university representatives!
- Cambridge Asia deadline end of September

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- Meet with university representatives (very important)
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- College Essay/Personal Statement, Interview, Application process
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- Continue downloading applications/filling out online
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- NCAA applicants (recruited athletes for USA) must send forms/transcripts
- Complete Athletic resume/DVD (if applicable)
- Send all test scores to colleges/universities in Canada, US, UK, Europe other
- Complete Ontario universities by October 1st

November

- Essays/statements continued to be returned with comments
- Take the SAT/ACT/SAT subject tests
- UC/CSU deadline November 30th
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- Hear from uni/colleges by May 1 and make final decision
- Send in tuition and HOUSING deposits to college/uni of choice (if decision known)
- IB Exams or other university entrance testing
- Australian and Korean applicants round 1 - submit applications, sign into portals, gather documents needed and submit the form required two weeks in advance
- Make final decisions for most students by May 1 and June 1
- Firm/insurance choices are clear by May 1
- Wait for IB actual results in early July 6 - make adjustments