

Choosing the Right University

**By Mark Weston,
Head of Higher Education Guidance**

Thank you for attending our workshop.

This workshop is for parents who wish to support their children in researching and choosing universities, with the aim of enabling students to reach their academic and career aspirations.

Applying to colleges and universities is an exciting and revealing experience which gives students a chance to explore who they are, what they value, and what they might want to do in the future.

For some students this can be a very simple process, and for others it can be more complicated, demanding, and time consuming.

Thinking about some key questions now can be useful, whatever stage your child is at.



Today's Agenda

Studying Internationally

- What are the main differences between universities in different countries?
- What do different countries offer?

What to study?

- How to choose a course?
- What subjects would be most useful for employment?
- Should I worry if my child does not know what they want to study in the future/does not know what career path they would like to follow?

Which University?

- What is the best university for my child to attend?
- What makes a good university?
- Which is a good university for the study of a particular subject (e.g. engineering/law/medicine/business)

Preparation, and Providing Support

- How can I support my child in preparing to apply for university?
- What activities should my child be engaging in, in order to give them the best chance of acceptance at their chosen universities?



Quick Question!

Which type of cuisine would you place above all others?



- Chinese
- Thai
- Italian
- Korean
- French
- American
- Fusion
- Other?



Task 1

Choosing the right restaurant

- On your tables you have information about three different restaurants.
- They all have good reputations, but offer different ways of dining and have different reservation policies.
- Which might you like to make a reservation at?



Explanation of Restaurant Ratings:

- World Top Restaurant Rankings: criteria decided upon and judged by a prestigious food magazine.
- Best Restaurant App Ratings: derived from customer reviews

'Best/Good Customer Ratings':

- Think DiDi



Restaurant 1 – ‘Le Poulet de Puxi’

Type of food: French
Price: \$\$\$
Distance from Home: 10km
Size: Medium
‘Best Restaurant App’ Rating: 87%
World Top Restaurant Ranking: 9

Reservations accepted from diners with a ‘Best Customer’ rating of 86% or above.

Restaurant Style: Choice of Set Menus

Set Menu 1:

Appetizer: Snails in Garlic Butter
Main: Beef Steak
Dessert: Apple Tart **OR** Pear Tart **OR** Ice Cream

Set Menu 2:

Appetizer: Asparagus & Poached Egg
Main: Salmon Fillet
Dessert: Ice Cream **OR** Chocolate Fondant

Other Set menus available online

Restaurant 2 – ‘The BISS Buffet’

Type of food: “Fusion”
Price: \$\$\$\$
Distance from Home: 18km
Size: Large
‘Best Restaurant App’ Rating: 84%
World Top Restaurant Ranking: 5

Reservations accepted from all customers, but last year the average successful diner had a ‘Best Customer’ rating of 85%. Customers with a rating of 96% or above are more likely to be able to reserve a table.

Restaurant Style: Buffet

Note 1: Customers with a demonstrated interest in making a difference to their local community would enjoy eating here, as, in line with its owners’ religious beliefs, the restaurant serves free meals to orphans on the weekend.

Note 2 Customers who play the cello may receive a discount, as the restaurant owner would like to find a player for his string quartet. The restaurant is keen to diversify its clientele, and is hoping to attract customers from Brazil and Sweden. These last 2 pieces of information are not available to customers.

Restaurant 3 – The Lancaster Lotus

Type of food: Thai
Price: \$\$
Distance from Home: 5km
Size: Medium
‘Best Restaurant App’ Rating: 87%
World Top Restaurant Ranking: 21

Reservations are accepted from Diners with a minimum ‘Best Customer’ rating of 50%, but on some busy nights of the week you will be more likely to get a table if you have a rating of 78% or above.

Restaurant Style: You can choose **one** of the following Buffet Categories: Meat, Fish, Salad or Pasta OR you can declare which specific dish you would like to eat when you make your reservation

Note 1: If you are successful in making a reservation, you will need to pay a deposit of \$80 to secure your table. It is easier to reserve a table at this restaurant than at restaurant 1 & 2, but it’s not guaranteed that you will be able to stay for more than 1 hour.

Note 2: Automatic Discount of 15% for ‘Best Customer’ ratings of 75% or above.

Task 1

Choosing the right restaurant for two particular diners.

Look at the dining preferences of Max and Laura. Which would be the best choice for them?



MAX

- Would like to attend a "World Top 20" Restaurant
- Would like fish as a main dish but is not sure which *type* of fish
- Has a "Good Customer" Rating of 84%
- His Budget will cover a price of \$\$ comfortably, but \$\$\$ will be more difficult
- Is an accomplished piano player



LAURA

- Likes French food but is open to different types or styles of cuisine
- Has a "Good Customer Rating" of 87%
- Would prefer to dine in a restaurant with a "Best Restaurant" user rating of 85% or above
- Feels happier if she knows if the restaurant's food is ethically sourced; she has a weekend job caring for farm animals at her local city farm





MAX

- Would like to attend a “World Top 20” Restaurant
- Would like fish as a main dish but is not sure which *type* of fish
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Studying Internationally

- What are the main differences between universities in different countries?
- What do different countries offer?



Where in the World?

- Universities in different countries have different teaching and application systems.
- Different countries *assess* applicants in different ways and require students to *prepare* differently.
- Within individual countries there may be a range of different types of university

If studying in a number of different countries is an option, what system would suit your child more? If only one country is an option, how should a student prepare?



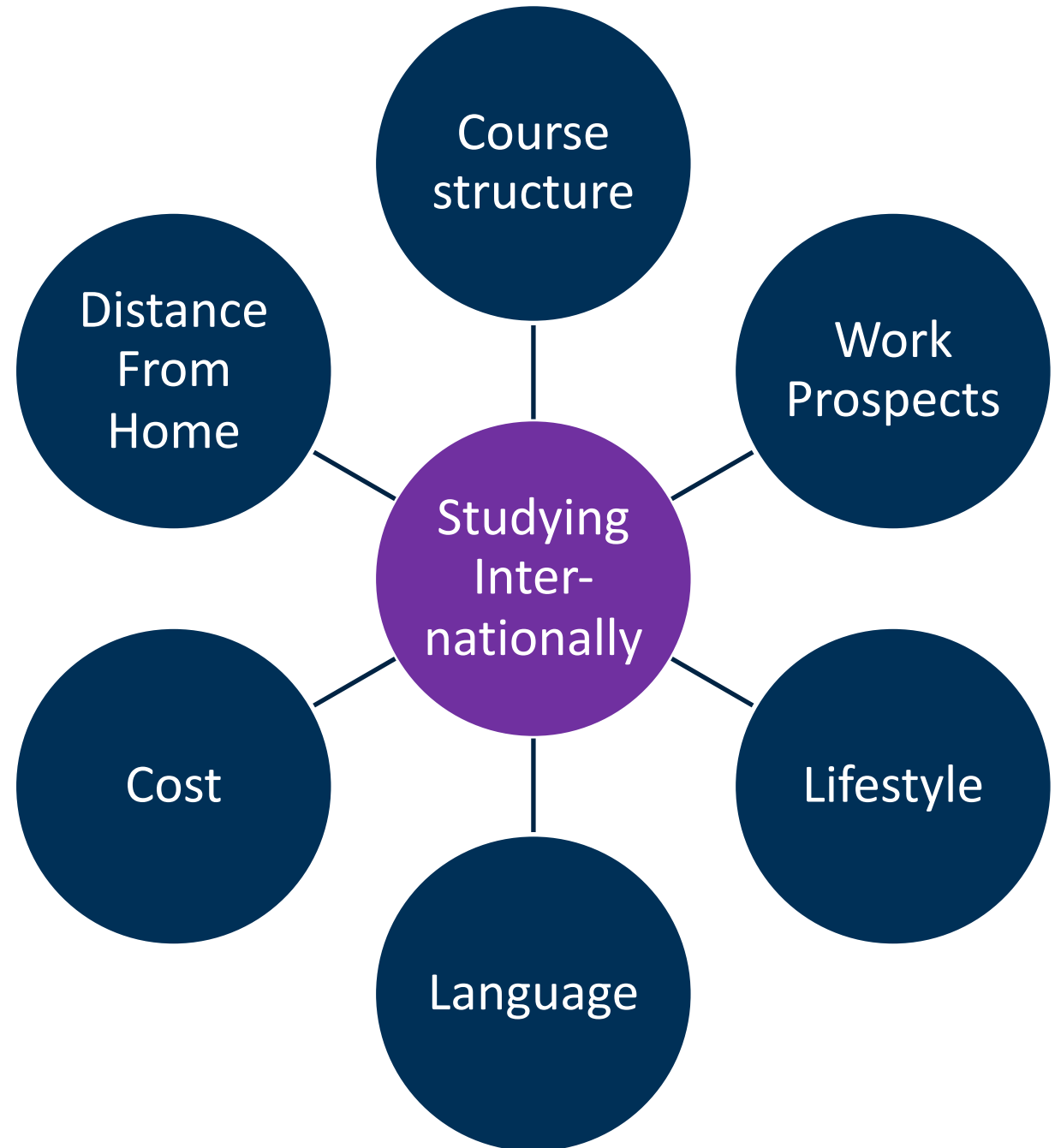
Task 2

a) Values Exercise

b) Essays Exercise

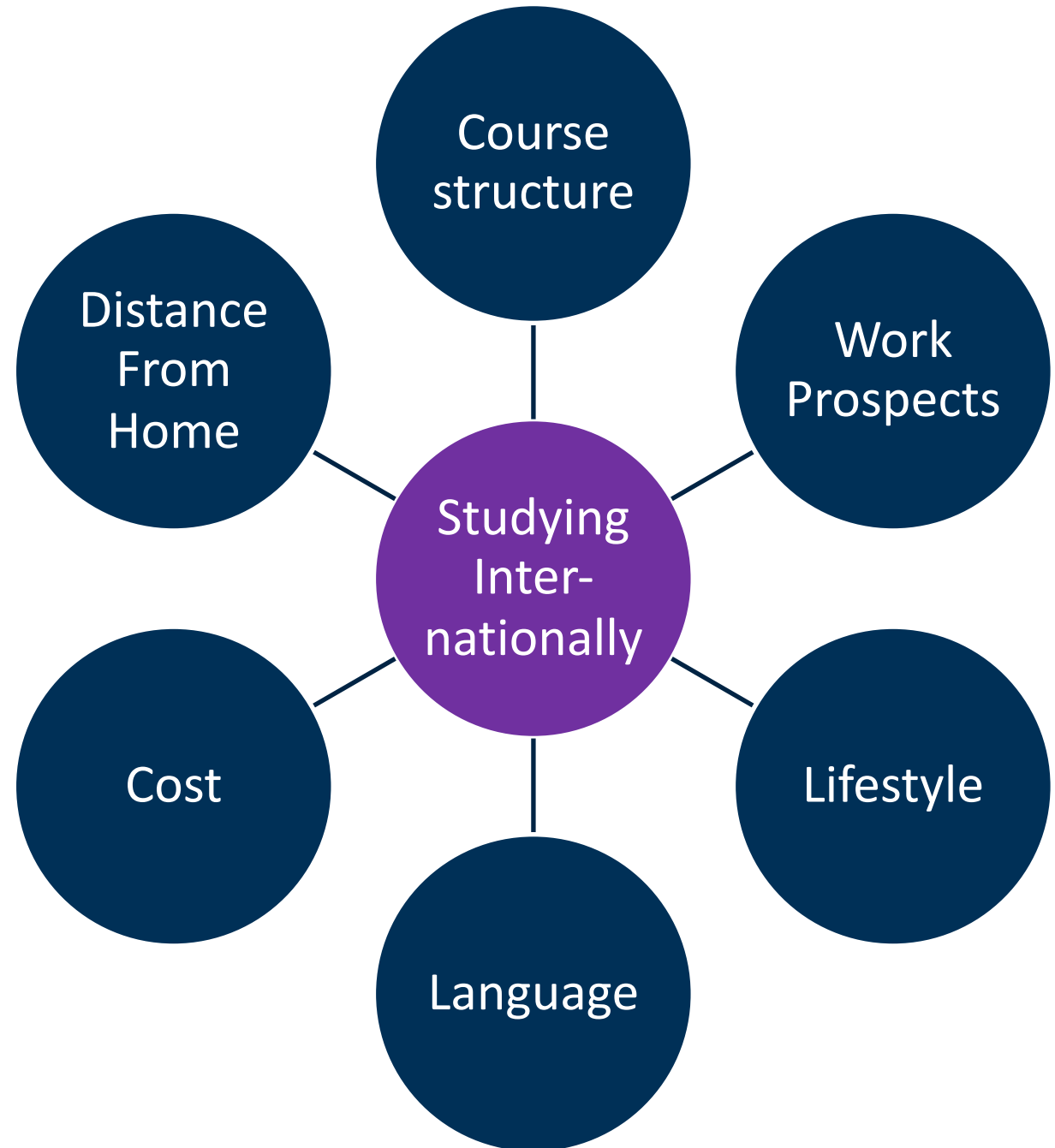


Other Considerations



Other Considerations

If a student applies to many different countries, they should be clear on their reasons why.

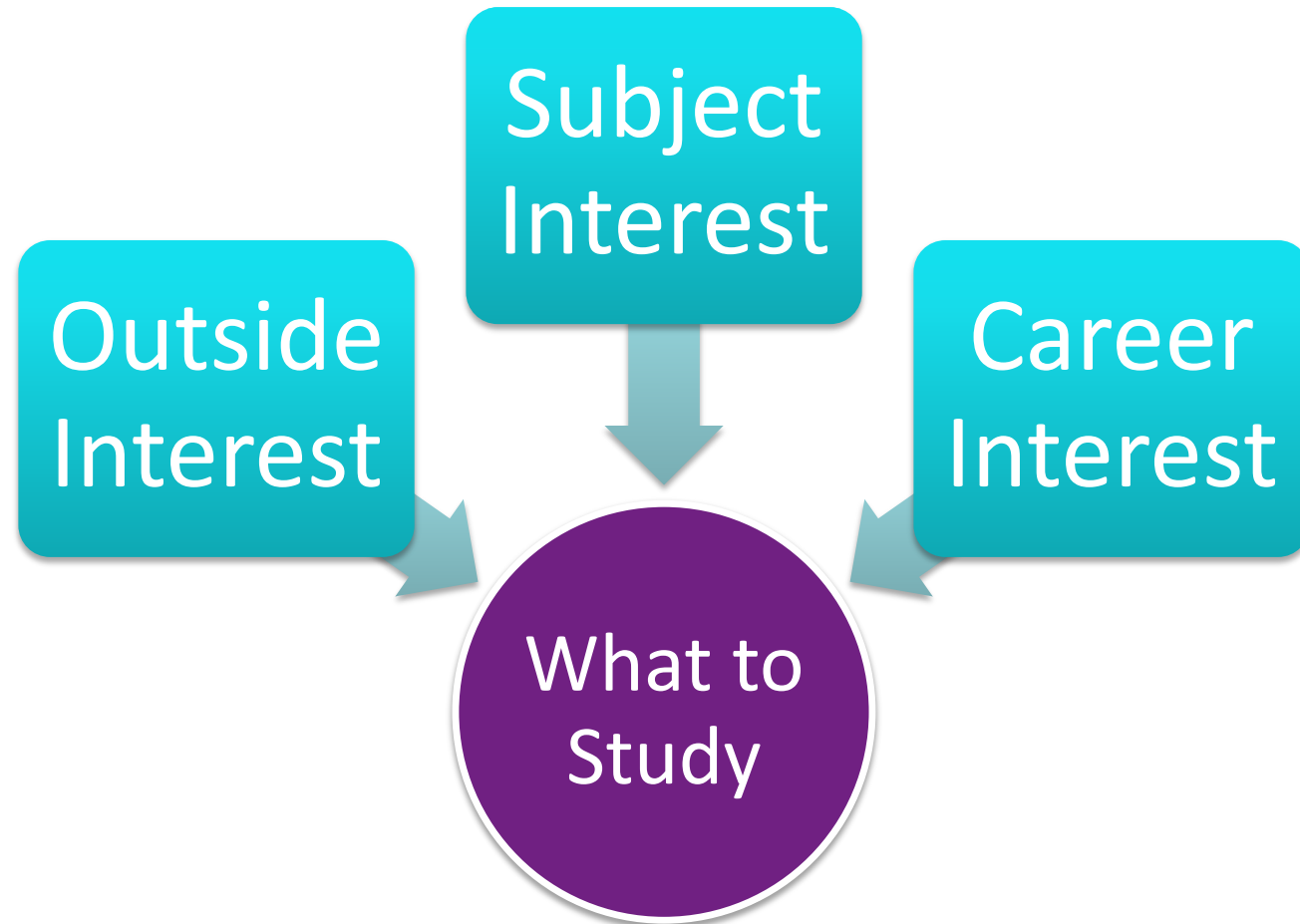


What to study?

- How to choose a course?
- What subjects would be most useful for employment?
- Should I worry if my child does not know what they want to study in the future/does not know what career path they would like to follow?

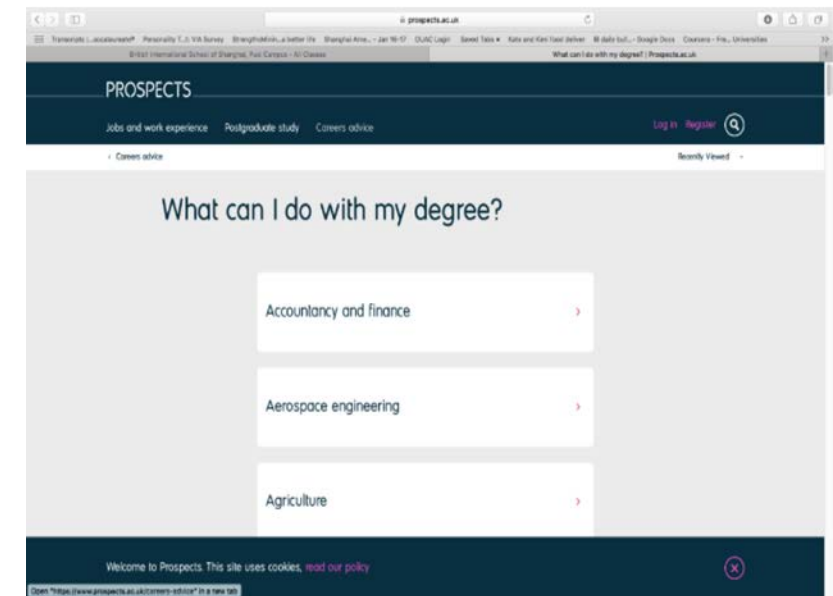


What to study – how to choose a course



Choosing what to study – career interest

- What degree subjects/majors would be most useful for employment?
- Nature of future careers is very fluid and what employers are looking for is changing.
- Moving beyond 'Jobs' to Skills - collaboration, problem-solving etc.



Choosing what to study – career interest



However ...

- Some careers require specific degrees/majors/post-graduate study, especially those requiring high levels of mathematical or scientific knowledge (e.g. Medicine, Engineering)
- Employers in different countries may have different attitudes towards the degree you study.

Choosing what to study – career interest

If students know what career they would like to pursue:

- Do some research into chosen career and *work backwards* to see how to reach the final outcome.
- Investigate alternative routes to the same outcome

Examples:

- Becoming a lawyer in UK vs. Germany
- Becoming a biotechnologist in the UK

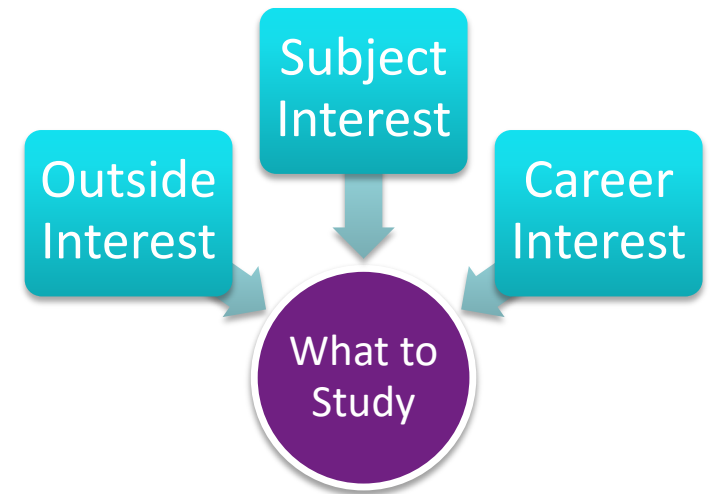


Should I worry if my child does not know what they want to study in the future/does not know what career path they would like to follow?

Choice of degree subject/major - may be more or less important depending on education system (e.g. UK/USA) or type of degree (modular courses; broad degree areas; liberal arts etc.)

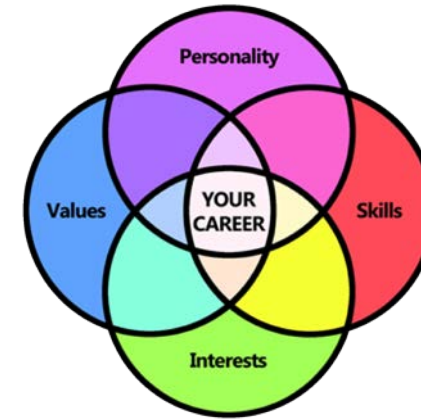
Choice of career - some students are very clear about their future pathways, but it's normal for many young people not to have clear idea about their future careers:

Students may want to do some research (careers events, careers matching quizzes work experience etc.) but in many cases it's not necessary to make definitive decisions during their time at school.



The Career Decision Making Process

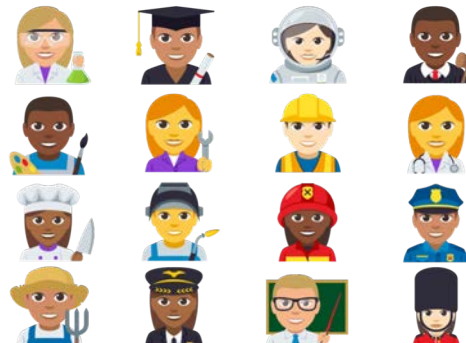
1. Self Assessment and Self Reflection



2. Research



3. Work Experience





How can Parents help?

Encourage your children to:

- research, explore different ideas, and develop relevant academic and/or practical knowledge or experience.
- Undertake work experience
- Talk to people in careers of interest to find out how they reached their goals
- Undertake activities that develop relevant knowledge and skills: take advantage of opportunities at school (ECAS, BridgeU)

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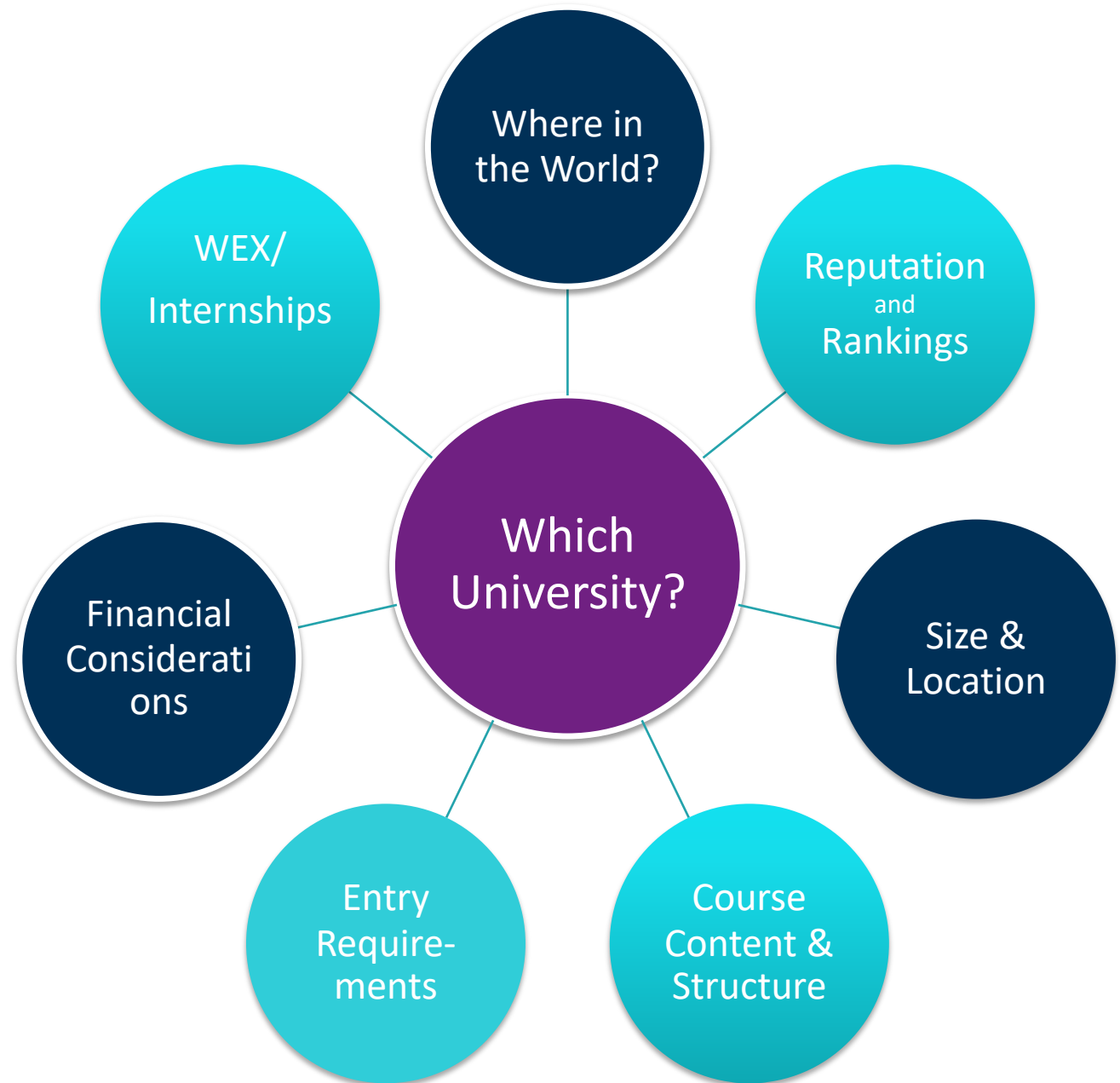


Which University?

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Which is the best university for my child to attend?



The Right University - Entry Requirements



- IB Scores/ Predicted Grades (including specific HL/subject requirements)
- English Language Requirements
IB English A or B at SL 5 or HL 4 is usually enough to meet the majority of requirements, but it depends on the university
- Admissions Tests & Interviews



The Right University - The Course

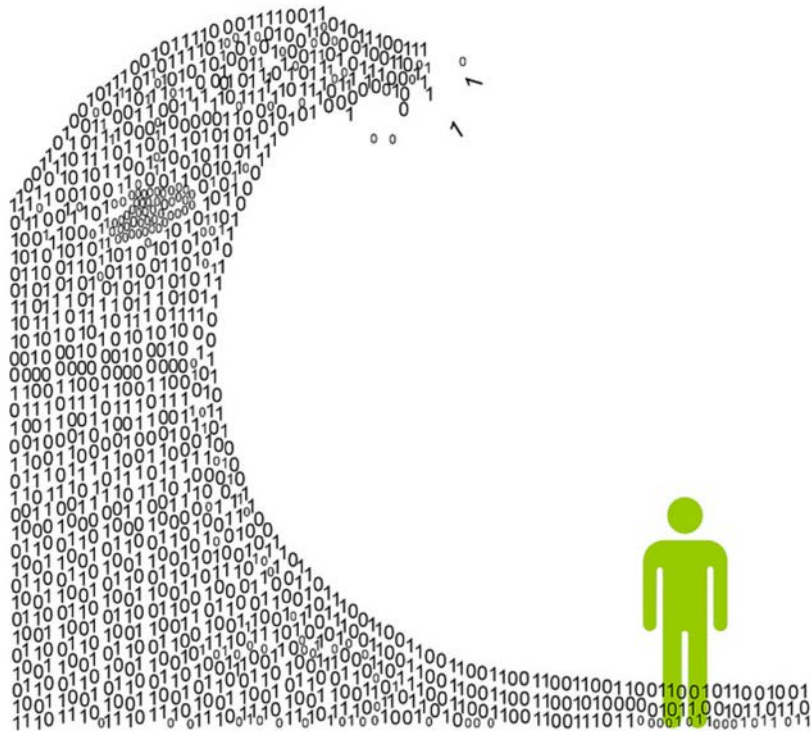
- Is the course/major on offer?
- What modules/core curriculum?
- Reputation?
- University-level
- Subject-level
- Does it give students what they need for the future?
- Ratio of coursework to exams?
- Practical vs. theoretical?

The Right University – Other Considerations

- Location
- Size and type
- Accommodation
- Work Placements
- Study Abroad Opportunities
- Professional Qualifications
- Retention Rates

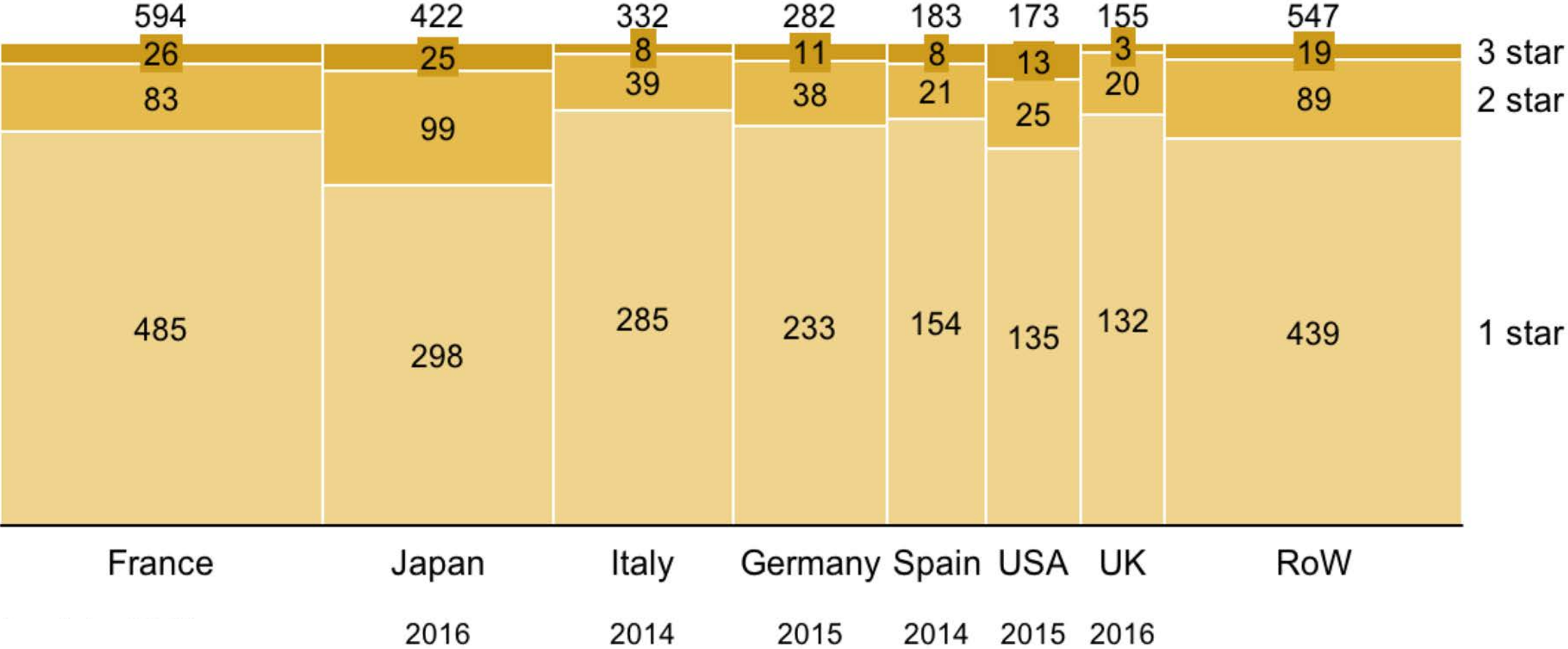


The Right University – Reputation and Rankings



- League Tables can be useful tools, but not always relevant to undergraduate students.
- Use subject-specific league tables, not just overall university ones.
- Use them to investigate institutions you haven't thought of

Michelin Starred Restaurants



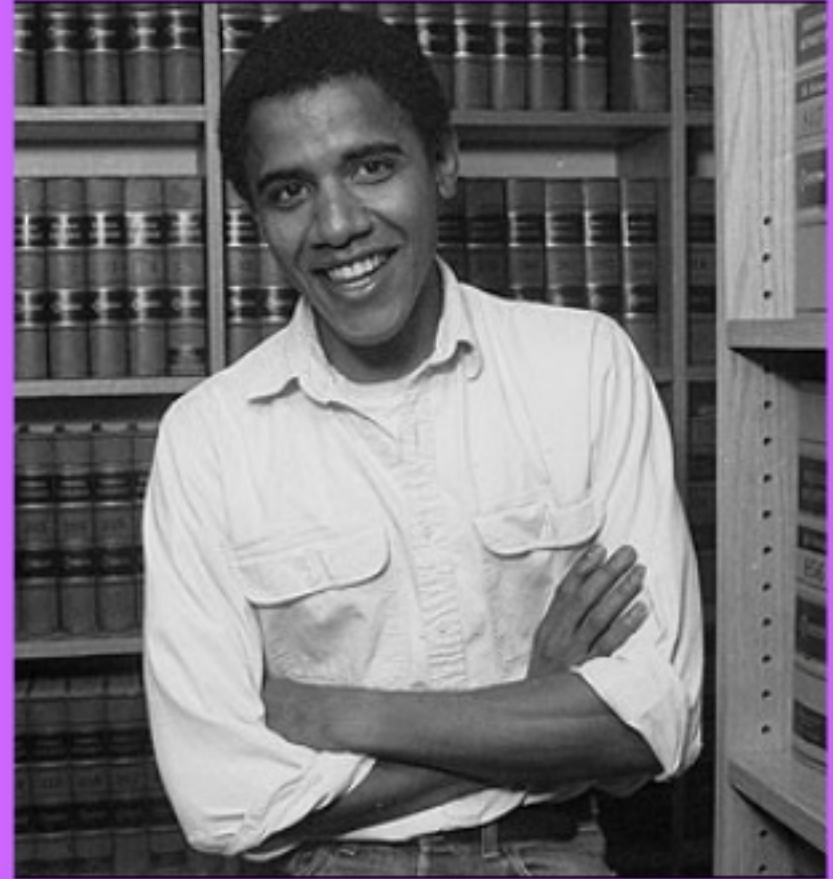
Undergraduate degrees are often just the first step in students' educational/career journey



Education of Barack Obama



- Occidental College
(2 years)
- Columbia University
 - Political Science
 - International Relations
- Harvard Law Degree
 - First A-A President of the Harvard Law Review



Task 2

a) Values Exercise

b) Essays Exercise



Preparation and Providing Support

- How can I support my child in preparing to apply for university?
- What activities should my child be engaging in, in order to give them the best chance of acceptance at their chosen universities?



How does BISS help students prepare?

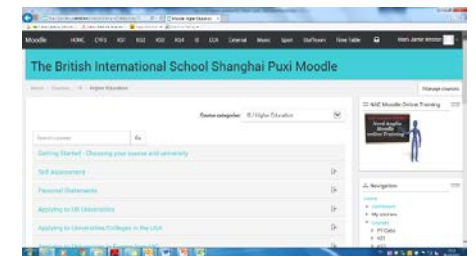
- Individual Interviews with every student
- Advice on IB subject choices, and personalized action plan for students in Y12
- Choosing Courses & Universities – Student Session
- University Fairs
- Presentations & Lunchtime Sessions:
 - Applying to Oxford & Cambridge
 - Applying to Medical School
 - Applying to the UK/USA/Europe/Asia
 - Writing the Personal Statement
 - Writing College Essays
 - Choosing ‘Best Fit’ Colleges
- SAT Preparation Provision
- Interview Preparation
- Bridge-U (new this year)



How can students develop their interests?

Different students are at different stages, but it always helps for students to follow and develop their interests

- Visit museums, galleries, exhibitions
- Find relevant work experience
- Online Courses: FutureLearn, iTunes University, Coursera (<https://www.coursera.org/learn/applying-to-college>)
- Read newspapers and relevant journals,
- Podcasts - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio>
- The School Library
- Websites (beyond Wikipedia) e.g. www.oxplore.org and www.myheplus.com
- Take advantage of opportunities in school, online, and in school holidays
- Try things out! (ECA's, CAS, MUN etc)
- Talk – Teachers, Family, Friends



What activities should my child be engaging in, in order to give them the best chance of acceptance at their chosen universities?



- Identify differences in admissions requirements/focus (e.g. UK/US/HK etc)
- Show Commitment
- Depth and/or coherence vs. breadth of activities

Thank you.
Questions?

