

University Application

Planning your extracurricular activities



Ms Yanyan Wu
Head of University & Careers

What does extracurricular activities mean?

The word extracurricular is a combination of the prefix extra, which translates to “on the outside” and curriculum, which translates to “a running course/career.” It refers to activities that fall outside the scope of your regular curriculum

Does playing football with my friends for fun over the weekend count as extracurricular activity?

Unfortunately, no. You can see this as one of your leisure activities or hobbies. Completing extracurricular activities means you are going above and beyond your school requirements. It requires commitment and initiatives, such as the following activities:

- ~ Academic competitions
- ~ Student leadership
- ~ School sports teams
- ~ Online courses on areas of interest
- ~ Summer School
- ~ Internships
- ~ Project Leadership
- ~ Community Service
- ~ Music

You are required to finish homework and exams, but you can choose to do the above activities. Those students who choose to do them, and have been doing them consistently, demonstrate qualities such as proactivity, commitment and desire for challenge, as well as skills such as leadership, teamwork and time management.

How to plan extracurricular activities?

- ~ Explore as many options as possible, then gradually you will know which ones suit your interests.
- ~ **Be true to yourself.** If you are not interested in sports or community service, don't worry about it. It is not the type of activity that matters — what matters the most is to demonstrate a deep and considerate commitment. If you choose something unique but you don't like, it's very likely that you will give up half-way, and it will be difficult for you to achieve anything meaningful.
- ~ **Focus on depth, not breadth.** Students who pursue leadership and selectively participate in one or two roles extensively will always out-shine those who spread themselves too thin. *A long list of activities with limited commitment to each will not make you stand out, but make people think you have trouble choosing and prioritizing.*
- ~ **Take advantage of the weekends and winter/summer holiday.** Using your off-school time wisely demonstrates you are serious about the activities you have chosen and you are keen to develop yourself.
- ~ **Do it rather than just show it.** The ultimate goal of extracurricular activities is to develop yourself to become a happy and better person.

Where to find extracurricular activities?

Make good use of the resources and opportunities around you. They can be found from the school, your local community, your parents' companies, other family members or your friends.

If you don't know where to start, you can always make an appointment with our Head of University & Careers, Ms Wu at yanyan.wu@bsg.org.cn.



How can BSG help with extracurricular activities planning?

School-wide activities:

- ~ ASA
- ~ Academies
- ~ Academic competitions
- ~ Sports competitions (intra-school and inter-school)
- ~ Student Leadership
- ~ STEAM
- ~ Juilliard Performing Arts
- ~ Model United Nations
- ~ UNICEF projects and summits
- ~ International Award (IA)
- ~ NAE Global challenge in many areas, such as creative writing, photography, etc.

Sixth Form enrichment opportunities:

- ~ Sixth-Form-specific ASAs
- ~ Extended Project Qualification
- ~ Sixth Form Leadership Opportunities (SLC)
- ~ Tanzania Expedition
- ~ Year 13 residential
- ~ FutureLearn online course
- ~ Work experience
- ~ Summer Schools
- ~ Service work
- ~ Year 12 June workshops e.g. Critical Thinking

Careers Guidance Service at BSG

Year 9-10 Structured Careers PSHE sessions focusing on self awareness.

Year 11 Structured Careers PSHE sessions focusing on understanding different career pathways and university choices; one-to-one careers meetings.

Year 12 Tailored guide on subject choices, work experience and summer schools

Year 13 Tailored guide on university applications including how to use students' extracurricular activities to add value to their applications.

BSG has purchased online platform **Kudos** and **Bridge U** to assist students' study in careers and university, and our dedicated Careers and University Advisor is available to chat and provide support anytime.

4 questions with our alumna...

Valerie Lye

Studying Social Anthropology at the University of St Andrews (UK), Valerie reflects briefly on her time at BSG and what helped her gain placement at the top-100-ranked institution before she graduated.

1. How did BSG help you prepare for the University of St Andrews?

In terms of academics, the geography department was really good for me, and the way I write at university comes naturally now because of the way BSG teachers taught essay writing. The fun courses that Sixth Form ran, like cooking and ironing, were also a big help in preparing me.

We also had lots of talks from the visa office and universities, so they went through all the documents needed and I could follow their advice. BSG has a great support network now with Ms Wu as careers advisor.

2. Has your subject option changed at all since joining university?

I've just changed my course after a year and a half, because I was doing 3 subjects — social anthropology, mathematics and geography in my first semester.



I'm now taking first and second-year psychology as two separate subjects, together with social anthropology, so it's quite flexible.

3. What do you recommend current Sixth Form students do between now and when they apply?

Definitely build leadership skills — BSG offers a lot of opportunities. Participating in sports teams helps a lot for leadership, and the Tanzania trip was amazing — covering community projects and seeing a lot more than you'd ever imagine. It's good to do charity work to add to your personal statement, or be involved with music and drama. Consistency is the key.

4. Is there any personal advice you would give, based on your first experiences of university?

Keep in touch with family and friends because it's easy to feel lonely straightaway. Meeting new people at university can be daunting, but being an international school student really helps you, because you're used to people coming and going all the time and you can make friends quickly.