



**Franconian  
International  
School**

# University Admissions Handbook

## 2019-2020

Revised August 2019

## Content

<b>Responsibilities in the university admissions process</b>	<b>4</b>
Higher Education Advisors	4
Students	7
Parents	11
<b>Grade 11 top 10 list for success</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Grade 11 higher education calendar</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Grade 12 top 10 list for success</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Grade 12 higher education calendar</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Career goals and decisions</b>	<b>22</b>
Step one: Looking at yourself	22
Step two: Self-assessment	25
Step three: Career Research	26
What if I don't want to go to university?	27
Taking a gap year	29
<b>Choosing a university or other institution</b>	<b>31</b>
Develop a prospective list	31
IB Student Registry and CIS Student Registry	33
Factors to consider when researching a university	34
A checklist	39
Visiting universities	40
When you can't visit the university	48
<b>The application process</b>	<b>50</b>
Having your IB results sent to universities	50
Scholarships and financial aid worldwide	50
Successful interviews	51
<b>Universities in Australia</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>Universities in Austria</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Universities in Canada</b>	<b>60</b>
Overview of the admissions process	60
Factors that influence Canadian university admission decisions	62
<b>Universities in Denmark</b>	<b>64</b>
<b>European universities in general</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Universities in Germany</b>	<b>66</b>

<b>International universities</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>Universities in Japan</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Universities in the Netherlands</b>	<b>71</b>
Application process	72
Deadlines and decisions	73
<b>Universities in Sweden</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Universities in Switzerland</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Universities in the United Kingdom</b>	<b>76</b>
An overview of the admissions process	76
Factors that influence UK university admission decisions	81
The UCAS personal statement	83
<b>Universities in the United States</b>	<b>88</b>
An overview of the admissions process	88
Types of U.S. admissions plans	90
Types of U.S. admissions decisions	91
U.S. style or U.S.-affiliated universities overseas	92
Factors that influence U.S. university admission decisions	93
Standardized admissions tests for U.S. universities	96
The U.S. application essay	101
Financial aid	109

**Disclaimer:** The information in this booklet is for your guidance. It has been carefully checked and produced in good faith. The FIS does not accept legal responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained.

## Responsibilities in the university admissions process

### Higher Education Advisor

- 1. Act as an advocate.**  
Promote the best interests of each student throughout the university application process.
- 2. Keep students and parents informed.**  
Provide information regarding application procedures, deadlines, timelines and the overall management of the university application and decision-making process. Announce university fairs and representative visits. Communicate all information regularly through meetings, announcements, and ManageBac.
- 3. Meet regularly with students.**  
The Higher Education Advisor will meet frequently with groups of students as well as in individual one-to-one sessions, to discuss the university search and application process.
- 4. Coordinate university representative visits.**  
Schedule visits from university representatives to the FIS. Inform students and parents of dates, times and locations of meetings.
- 5. Provide resources for self-assessment.**  
Provide information, surveys, assessment tools, and one-to-one counselling to assist students in the process of identifying their strengths, areas for development, interests and abilities. Help students use this information to identify universities, which will meet their personal and academic needs.
- 6. Provide university search and decision-making materials.**  
Develop university-related resource materials to meet the particular needs of parents and students. Provide students with materials to help them with the university admissions process.
- 7. Help students develop a list of prospective schools.**  
Get to know each student well enough to advise them about a selection of universities and programs that may be suitable. Assist students in developing a balanced list of schools that includes a range of schools in terms of selectivity (reach, target, likely) for each country/countries, they are interested in. Assist students applying to universities to select those courses and universities where they meet or exceed all entrance course requirements, as well as the DP requirement guidelines suggested by each individual university.
- 8. Advise students about university entrance examinations** they need to take (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, TOEFL, IELTS, BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TMS, German C1, etc.) as well as options for preparing for each exam.
- 9. Write comprehensive letters of recommendation / reference letter** when required by universities. The purpose of the school recommendation is to give an overview of the student.

Generally, this comprehensive letter includes information about academics, extracurricular and outside activities, and most importantly, provides a sense of the character of the applicant. Information for this letter may come from personal interviews with the student and parent, student questionnaires, the parent questionnaire, academic records, information from activity supervisors and comments written by teachers over the high school years and in particular, the grade 12 year.

10. **Provide assistance to FIS faculty and staff with writing letters of recommendation.**  
The Higher Education Advisors will give guidance and advice to teachers who are asked to write a reference letter for a student.
11. **Establish and maintain relationships with admissions officers and tutors.**  
The Higher Education Advisors will develop and maintain strong, honest, ethical working relationships with admissions officers and admissions tutors.
12. **Establish and maintain relationships with other university counselors and advisors.**  
The Higher Education Advisors will develop and maintain strong, honest and ethical working relationships with colleagues in other international schools and in doing so, stay abreast of current admission developments and trends.
13. **Maintain and update resources.**  
Maintain and update the FIS university materials, including catalogues, prospectus guides, magazines and books.
14. **Stay current in the field.**  
The Higher Education Advisor will attend university-related conferences to keep up to date with the latest trends in university admissions and to meet and maintain relationships with university admission representatives and other counsellors.
15. **Assist students with completing all application materials.**  
The Higher Education Advisor will provide guidelines and assistance for the completion of all applications and supporting materials and will review each application before it is submitted by the student.
16. **Complete the Secondary School Report (SSR) for U.S. Universities.**  
For students applying to universities in the U.S., the Higher Education Advisors is responsible for completing the SSR. This report includes a summary letter of recommendation, an evaluation of the student's academic ability and achievements, information about the student's personal skills and character, and a copy of the High School Transcript. The information provided is based on the student's records, personal interaction with the student, as well as the information provided by teachers, administrators and parents.
17. **(E)mail supporting documents.**  
The Higher Education Advisor are responsible for submitting academic records (i.e. transcripts and predicted DP grades) and all other confidential reports to the universities on time, either by post, or electronically. **Please note that official documents are only sent directly from school**

**to school and that we do not provide students and/or parents with copies.** We will send all relevant application materials to each university, which may include the application, essays, teacher recommendations, school recommendation, transcript, SSR and the FIS High School Profile. The profile provides universities with the information they need to interpret the transcript in the context of the High School and its programs. It includes information about the school community, faculty, grading system, curriculum, academic requirements, standardized testing statistics, DP statistics, extra-curricular activity offerings and a list of universities where FIS students have been accepted. An International Baccalaureate Profile and a FIS High School Profile are also sent to universities when appropriate. These profiles explain the IB Diploma Program worldwide and the FIS IB Diploma Program in particular.

**18. Keep records.**

The Higher Education Advisor will maintain copies of all applications sent to the universities where possible. In the age of online applications, students are strongly encouraged to print a paper copy of each application for their records and bring a second copy to their Higher Education Advisor.

**19. Mid-year reports/transcripts.**

The Higher Education Advisor will send all official mid-year reports by 1 February of the senior year to universities as required. Mid-year reports include achievement grades up to January of Grade 12.

**20. Final transcripts.**

The Higher Education Advisor will send a final transcript to the one university each student has chosen to attend.

**21. Follow-up.**

If any problems or questions arise with regards to an application, the Higher Education Advisor will correspond with the university in a timely fashion.

**22. Gap year planning.**

The Higher Education Advisor will provide students who intend to take a gap year with relevant information and materials. We will assist students with developing the best plan possible that will allow them to take full advantage of their gap year experience.

## Students

- 1. Commit to doing your best.**  
Keep your academic options open by committing to achieving a strong academic record right through to the end of your senior year.
- 2. Know thyself!**  
Engage in a thoughtful and honest reflection of your goals, values, aspirations, strengths and weaknesses and apply this information to the university decision-making process.
- 3. Be familiar with your academic record.**  
It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with your academic record. You should be aware of the level of difficulty of your courses, grades you have earned, and standardized testing results (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, TOEFL and/or IELTS). You should be aware of how your academic credentials compare to the admission standards of your selected universities.
- 4. Review your FIS High School Transcript.**  
The FIS High School Transcript is your permanent high school record. Make sure that your personal information, courses and grades are listed accurately and completely. **Please note that official transcripts are only sent directly from school to school and that we do not provide students and/or parents with official copies.**
- 5. Be mindful of your social media presence!**  
You have worked hard to position yourself as a strong applicant. To destroy that by being careless with your digital footprint is just plain silly. Know your privacy settings, who can see what you are posting, and be aware of what is being posted about you. Your online persona should be consistent with your application profile.
- 6. Meet often with your Higher Education Advisor.**  
Schedule regular appointments to meet to discuss your university plans and your academic progress.
- 7. Attend meetings and pay attention to announcements.**  
Attend any meetings, workshops or presentations given by the Higher Education Advisor and take time to read email and announcements on university-related topics.
- 8. Meet with university representatives visiting the FIS.**  
You are strongly encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with visiting representatives in order to gather information about course options, admissions policies, campus life, etc.
- 9. Complete all surveys and questionnaires on time.**  
It is your responsibility to complete all surveys and questionnaires by the stated deadlines.
- 10. Check your email regularly.**  
Respond to all messages from your Higher Education Advisor within a reasonable amount of time. Admissions Officers will also use email to contact you regarding your application, required

documents, and to remind you about deadlines, etc. Not checking your email regularly may jeopardize your chances of admission!

11. **Research your university options.**

It is your responsibility to research university options and to develop a list of schools that match both your academic and personal needs. If you are applying to schools in the UK, it is your responsibility to be aware of the specific entry requirements for the subjects/universities you are interested in. For example, if a course asks for HL Mathematics or HL German, you must be able to offer this within your IB Diploma Program. You must also be aware of the minimum number of DP points the universities expect. This information should be requested *directly* from the universities that you are considering. If you are applying to schools in the U.S., you should be comparing your academic credentials (transcript/GPA/SAT scores) to those of currently enrolled first-year students.

12. **Demonstrate interest!**

Request catalogues, prospectus guides and financial aid/scholarship information. Follow universities on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter. Universities appreciate students who demonstrate an interest in learning about their campus and their programs. This is how they know you are a serious applicant.

13. **Develop a final list of universities.**

If you are applying to North American universities, your final list should include schools of varying degrees of admission difficulty for *you*. Choose at least two schools in each category: Reach, target and likely. It is important to research these schools thoroughly; you should want to attend any school on your list regardless of the category. If you will be applying to universities in the UK, your *final list* may include up to five choices of subject and university. The courses you choose must reflect consistency and a commitment to a particular subject. It is your responsibility to be aware of the DP entry requirements for the courses/universities you are interested in, as well as any subject-specific requirements.

14. **Visit universities.**

Arrange campus visits, attend open days and participate in interviews. Research shows that a campus visit is an integral and often deciding factor in the university decision-making process.

15. **Be realistic.**

It is unrealistic to expect that you will be admitted to every university to which you apply. Even the most qualified students are routinely denied places, simply because the competition is so great. Your Higher Education Advisor will help you to make sure that your university list is well balanced so that you have options to choose from.

16. **Understand the admission procedures, financial aid policies and deadlines of each school on your list.**

It is your responsibility to understand the admission procedures and financial aid policies for each school. You are responsible for meeting all deadlines for applications, financial aid forms, scholarships, interviews and deposits.

**17. Meet all FIS internal deadlines.**

It is your responsibility to complete all application materials by the deadlines set by the Higher Education Advisor. **FIS deadlines are earlier than those set by the universities so there is enough time to review your application materials prior to submission.**

**18. Know the standardized testing requirements of all schools on your list.**

It is your responsibility to find out which university entrance examinations are required at each university you will be applying to and that you register for and take the required tests (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TOEFL and/or IELTS, TMS, German C1, etc.).

**19. Research portfolio/audition requirements.**

If you are applying to art, music or theatre programs, you may have to submit a portfolio or participate in an audition. Check the admission requirements and deadlines for these programs and the policies and procedures for submitting a portfolio or participating in an audition.

**20. Complete each application yourself.**

Your Higher Education Advisor will review each application before you send it. Although you will receive support with preparing each application, the final product should be entirely your own work.

**21. Write thoughtful essays, personal statements and letters of motivation.**

It is your responsibility to write your own essays, personal statements and letters of motivation. As this is a critical part of the application, it is important that you take the time to write careful, thoughtful, well-constructed pieces of your own original creation. Your Higher Education Advisor will help you revise, edit and update your work before you submit a final copy to the universities.

**22. If applying Early Decision/Early Action to a U.S. university, [know the application policies and procedures](#).**

Students are allowed to apply to *one* university under the Early Decision plan. If accepted, you have made a binding commitment to attend that university and must withdraw all other applications. If you apply Early Action, you are allowed to apply to other universities. However, if you apply under a Single-Choice Early Action program, candidates are not allowed to apply under any other early admission scheme. Always verify the Early Decision/Early Action policy and deadline with each individual school.

**23. Send all *official* test results to universities.**

Universities only accept official test reports sent from the testing agency. You must arrange for the results of all standardized tests (SAT/SAT Subject Test/ACT/TOEFL/IELTS) to be sent to the universities where you will be submitting applications.

**24. Request recommendation letters.**

It is your responsibility to request recommendation letters from your teacher(s). At least two weeks' notice is required.

**25. Keep records.**

Make photocopies or keep electronic copies of everything that you send to the universities and

scholarship committees. If you need to speak to a university representative, take their name and title and write yourself a short memo about the conversation, noting the date, time and what you discussed.

26. **Maintain open communication** with your parents regarding the university search and application process.
27. **Apply for financial aid/student finance.**  
It is your responsibility to make sure that you and your parents have made the appropriate arrangements for paying for your university education.
28. **Apply for housing/accommodation/study visa.**  
It is your responsibility to make sure that you have applied for and made the appropriate arrangements for on or off-campus housing, meal plans, personal/health insurance, etc.
29. **Make the final decision.**  
U.S. and Canadian applicants must notify each university that has accepted you whether you are accepting or rejecting their offer of admission by May 1, the Candidate's Reply Date (June 1 in Canada). For UK applicants, UCAS will send a final decision letter that lists the decisions made by each university. By the deadline stated in the letter (or listed through Track), you must choose a Firm (first) and Insurance (second) choice from your offers. Offers are finalized for admission when the student meets the required points outlined in the offer.
30. **Make timely deposits.**  
You may accept admission and submit a deposit to ONE school. Making multiple deposits is unethical and limits the options of other students.
31. **Notify your Higher Education Advisor of each university decision.**  
We maintain a database of all decisions in order to be able to better advise future applicants about the likelihood of admission. Please inform us about each decision.
32. **Notify Higher Education Advisor if you do not meet your UK offers.**  
UK applicants who do not meet the requirements outlined in your conditional offers must notify their HE Advisor immediately.

## Parents

- 1. Allow your child to take ownership of the process.**  
It is your child applying for university, so let their decisions be paramount and allow them a significant say in determining their future.
- 2. Ensure that your child's feelings are valued and respected.**
- 3. Make sure the decisions your child makes are well thought out** rather than wishful thinking.
- 4. Trust them** to meet deadlines and to put enough time and care into their applications and essays. Be ready to step in with organizational advice if you find that your child is not planning realistically or in a timely manner.
- 5. Stay in close touch** with your child about university choices and strategies.
- 6. Be honest and open** with your child in terms of limitations (financial, geographic, etc.). Do not let them believe that the United States or Australia are good options if you honestly do not want them to go that far or if the price tag is too unrealistic.
- 7. Ask your child** how they would like you to help. If you are worried about the progress your child is making with their applications, contact the Higher Education Advisor.
- 8. Remember that it is your child's choice.**  
Make sure the universities your child is applying to reflect their preferences, not yours. You should certainly have input, but remind yourself that it is your child's three or four years and that s/he should be in the driver's seat.
- 9. Be thoughtful of living your dreams through your child.**  
"I did not get into University X and I can feel better about myself if I can tell everyone else that my child goes there" can be a typical syndrome.
- 10. Be supportive.**  
The best university for your child may not be the most selective one or the one ranked highest on some list. As much as parents want the best for their children, 'the best' university may not be 'the right' university for your child's individual talents, academic ability and personality. Too many parents discount certain universities because they do not deem them 'selective' enough. Your child can feel as if they have failed you if they go to a university that you have declared is 'beneath' them. [Where You'll Go Is Not Who You'll Be.](#)
- 11. Be informed.**  
If you are unsure, contact the university directly or speak with your child's Higher Education Advisor.
- 12. Let your child develop their own impression** of a university during a visit. It is not fair to your child to cloud their impressions before they have expressed their point of view. Let them ask the questions. You may embarrass your child if you take over, no matter how on target your questions are. Use the advice in this guidebook to prepare for a visit.
- 13. Listen to our advice.**  
We use years of historical data and our professional knowledge to judge how easy or difficult it will be for students to gain admission to certain universities. In general, we discourage

students from applying to universities where their academic profile does not match with the typical undergraduate entry requirements.

14. **Listen, listen, listen!**  
Hear what your child is saying. What is important to them? Do not tell your child what you think until you have heard what they think first.
15. **Keep an open mind.**  
Universities have changed dramatically. Do not rely on impressions based on old stereotypes. There are many excellent universities in countries around the world that you may not have heard of.
16. **Read over your child's essay(s)** to see if it communicates who they are, how well they think and how well they write.
17. **Make sure your child applies** to at least two universities where they are likely to be admitted and that you can afford.
18. **Make the appropriate arrangements for financial aid/student finance.**  
As the ones who will likely foot the bill, it is important to ensure that you and your child are aware of what you need to do in order to finance your child's university education. This includes applying for scholarships, grants, bursaries, loans and other forms of financial support.
19. **Make the appropriate arrangements for housing/study visa.**  
Again, it is important to make sure that your child has applied for and made the appropriate arrangements for on or off-campus housing, including meal plans, personal/health insurance, etc.
20. **Begin the process of preparing to let go.**  
Give your child the foundation s/he will need to be independent and successful as they head off to university. Allow you and your child the time to go through this process.
21. **Enjoy your child's final year of high school together with them.**  
This is an exciting time, full of possibilities. Celebrate successes and learn to grow from disappointments. There are bound to be both during this process.

## Grade 11 top 10 list for success

1. **Register for DP courses that fulfil the high school preparation requirements for the universities and courses/subjects you are interested in *and* strive to achieve the best possible academic record.**

Admissions officers from most universities around the world will be evaluating your transcript from 9<sup>th</sup> grade onward, looking at the grades you have earned and the level of difficulty of the courses you have chosen. In particular, admissions officers are looking for a transcript that lists solid grades in demanding courses. Admissions tutors in the UK will be reviewing your UCAS application to make sure that you have selected the required DP courses for your chosen program and that you meet or exceed the DP predicted score requirements. Working hard and **keeping up with internal and external DP deadlines** throughout your high school years will help you to achieve strong DP predicted grades.

2. **Self-assessment is an important step in the university decision-making process.** A realistic, thoughtful and thorough self-evaluation will help you to clarify the types of schools where you will be most happy and successful. Without this foundation, it will be impossible for you to make good decisions about the types of universities that will be right for you. Take time to think about your unique interests, skills, abilities, personal preferences and goals. Have a solid understanding of your academic profile (grades, test scores, etc.) and how that profile compares to the admission standards set by the universities you are interested in. See the free tools available in the self-assessment section of this handbook.
3. **Discuss your university plans with your parents** and meet regularly with your Higher Education Advisor throughout the second semester of grade 11.
4. **Communication is key!**  
Read and respond to all emails from your Higher Education Advisor.
5. **Get involved!**  
University admissions officers/tutors are looking for students who will make a valuable contribution to the school community. **The emphasis is on quality and not quantity – dedication, diversity and depth.** Focus on a few activities (in-school or out-of-school) that you can pursue in-depth and try to take on a leadership role.
6. **Check your official transcript!**  
See your Higher Education Advisor to make sure that this document is complete and correct.
7. **Use a variety of resources to explore your university options.**  
Research universities using the guidebooks, catalogues and prospectus guides in the Higher Education Advisor's office. Search the internet and visit university home pages for the most up-to-date information available. Contact the universities you are interested in to get on the mailing list and request informational materials and admissions information. Follow each school on Facebook and/or Instagram. Talk to your Higher Education Advisor, parents, friends and former FIS students about the higher education options available to you. Visit as many schools on your list as possible.

8. **Register for, prepare and take the appropriate standardized tests** for the country and program/course you are applying to (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TOEFL, IELTS and/or Oxbridge, TMS, German C1).
9. **Take advantage of your time during the summer break:**
  - Start the applications for universities you know you will be applying to.
  - Begin working on personal statements, essays and/or letters of motivation.
  - Visit universities on your list.
  - Enroll in a summer academic program in an area of interest.
  - Gain work experience in your chosen field. Work/internship experience in your subject area demonstrates a serious level of commitment to the field. For some subjects in the UK, work experience is **expected** – i.e. Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Science.
10. **Create a well-researched and well-balanced list of universities** by the time you return to school in August of Grade 12.

## Grade 11 higher education calendar

### September

- Read the FIS University Admissions Handbook, available on the FIS website. Have your parents read it too.
- Make plans to take the October PSAT test, if considering studying in the **US**.

### October / November

- Register with the [CIS](#) Student Registries
- Take the PSAT if you will be applying to university in the **US**. Before taking the test, read the PSAT/NMSQT Student Bulletin and take the full-length sample test.
- Meet with university representatives who visit the FIS.
- Attend the international university fair in Munich or Frankfurt.
- Continue your search for universities. Use the resources in the University Admissions Handbook for finding schools that meet your criteria.
- If you need assistance in career and/or higher education course choice exploration, plan a meeting with FIS Higher Education Advisor, visit the [BiZ](#) in Fürth, or take an online occupational interests and/or values inventory, such as those indicated in the “Self-assessment section of this handbook.

### December

- Create a spreadsheet to manage your university search, testing, application, and deadline information, or use this [template](#).
- Look into universities about their IB policies and check the minimum IB point requirements for courses that interest you.

### January

- Explore scholarship and financial aid possibilities.
- Meet with your Higher Education Advisor to discuss university plans.
- Check your transcript for accuracy.

### February

Look into taking the SAT Subject Tests this spring, if considering studying in the **US**. Even if a university does not require them, Subject Tests can often add support to an application. Look at major requirements at the universities you are interested in to determine which Subject Tests you will need, and whether or not you are required to take the SAT with Essay.

## March

- Look into summer programs on university campuses or start planning campus visits for the summer, if possible.
- Arrange to take the SAT or TOEFL in the spring, if necessary.

## April

- Arrange a mock interview with your Higher Education Advisor and provide more information about yourself for the school recommendation.

## May / June

- Update your LinkedIn profile—be sure to record all of your accomplishments, involvements, and work experiences over the past three years.
- Be sure to attend all info sessions at school regarding the various countries that you are interested in applying to.
- End the year with strong grades. Many universities will base their offers to you on your year-end predicted grades.
- If you are considering applying for a **Duales Studium** program in **Germany**, double-check all deadlines and application requirements. Be sure to get any necessary documentation from school before July, as your deadlines may occur during summer.

## July / August

- If possible, visit universities, having interviews whenever available. Keep a journal, compare universities, and discuss your findings and opinions.
- Narrow choices down to less than ten. (You'll narrow it even more in early fall.) Be sure you include a range of selectivity, including "likely," "realistic," and "reach" programs.
- Stay involved: work to help pay for university or gap year, attend a summer program on a university campus, or get involved in an internship relevant to your career choices.
- If applying to the **UK** or the **US**, begin working on the essays and personal statements.
- Check the application deadlines now if applying to **Japanese** universities—they are different for each university, and earlier than most others in the world.

## Grade 12 top 10 list for success

- 1. Create a comprehensive calendar that incorporates both your academic deadlines and the various steps in the university admissions process.**  
Initially, you should be working with a four month overview from August to December. Consider purchasing a wall calendar for this purpose so you can have a visual representation of the big picture, which will allow you to better plan your time during the busy university application season.
- 2. Keep up the effort in your classes and work on achieving the best possible academic record.**  
Admissions officers will be reviewing your transcript looking for strong grades in demanding courses. For students applying to schools in the UK, admissions tutors will be making decisions based primarily on your predicted DP grades.
- 3. Verify that you are taking courses that fulfil the high school preparation requirements for the universities and courses you are interested in.**
- 4. Meet regularly with your Higher Education Advisor** to discuss your applications, requirements, deadlines, and any other university-related questions.
- 5. Check your emails regularly and respond promptly** to all requests from your HE Advisor and/or university admissions officers.
- 6. Stay involved!**  
University admissions officers/tutors are looking for students who will contribute to their campus. Focus on one or two activities that you can pursue in-depth and take on a leadership role.
- 7. Narrow your list of universities down to your final list.**  
For students applying to North American universities, your list should include a range of schools (reach, target and likely). For those students applying to the UK, remember that your DP predictions must meet or exceed both the overall and subject specific DP point requirements for each course/university you will be applying to. Your final list of universities should include somewhere between **6 to 10** schools.
- 8. Take every opportunity to meet with university representatives** who will be visiting the FIS. If possible, visit universities during school holidays.
- 9. Register for, prepare and take the appropriate standardized tests** for the country and program/course you are applying to (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, BMAT, UKCAT, LNAT, TOEFL, IELTS, Oxbridge, TMS, German C1, etc.).
- 10. Keep track of all application and financial aid deadlines.**  
Send in applications and financial aid forms well in advance whenever possible.

## Grade 12 higher education calendar

### September

- Meet with your Higher Education Advisor to talk about what you accomplished over the summer, to discuss your final list, and/or to get help in finalizing it.
- Narrow down your list of universities to five or six. Be sure to include “likely” schools as well as “realistic” and “reach” schools.
- If taking the SATs or TOEFL, register early for October or November test dates.
- Request letters of recommendations from teachers.
- Meet with university representatives who visit the FIS.
- Make sure you are certain of application deadlines for all universities and university systems you are applying to worldwide. This [template](#) can help keep deadlines in order.
- **German Duales Studium:** Many program deadlines are in September.
- **U.S.:** Begin completing the applications, especially if an application is for Early Decision, Early Action, or if a university sends out a decision on a “rolling” basis. Look into what needs to be done for financial aid paperwork.
- **UK:** If you are applying to the UK through UCAS, check your application deadlines. The final deadline for most programs is 15 January, but it is best to apply early. For Oxford and Cambridge; as well as Art, Music and Medicine, the final deadline is 15 October.

### October

- Finalize university choices.
- Work on application essays. Ask your Career and Higher Education Advisor and your teachers to read these as you draft and redraft to come to strong works of writing.
- Keep your CV and LinkedIn profile updated.
- Attend university representative visits.
- **U.S.:** If applying Early Decision or Early Action to the US, complete applications by the end of the month. These must be finished at least two weeks before their deadline. Take the SAT one last time.
- **UK:** 15 October is the final deadline for UCAS application for Oxford, Cambridge, and Medicine. 3 October is the final deadline for Music at the Conservatoires. Better to get applications completed well before the deadline.

## November

- Meet all deadlines. Adhere to the FIS's application processing deadlines. If uncertain, speak with your Higher Education Advisor.
- At least a month prior to financial aid deadlines: If applying for aid, complete all necessary forms and send to any universities requiring them.
- At least three weeks prior to deadlines, finish your essays and send/bring to your Higher Education Advisor for review.
- All applications with deadlines in December and January must be finished and submitted by 1 December.
- **U.S.:** If applying Early Decision to the US, check the deadline; it will fall sometime between 1 November – 15 November. It is recommended that all US applications, regardless of type, are completed by the beginning of November.
- **Canada:** Check the application deadlines now if applying to Canadian universities—they are different for each university.
- **Germany:** Check the application deadlines now if applying to German universities—they can be different for each university.
- **Other European Universities:** Check the application deadlines now if applying to European universities—they are different for each university.
- All other countries: Many applications are due before winter break—check these dates now in case you need any school documentation before the break.

## December

- Do any financial aid forms need completion this month?
- Take the December SAT if necessary.
- If you have not already done so, make certain you have the testing agency send your official SAT and/or TOEFL scores directly to the universities.
- December – April: Inform your Higher Education Advisor right away about all university offers and decisions.
- Applications that are due before we return from winter break must be completed by 1 December. The earlier, the better.

## January

- Research scholarship opportunities through the counselor, internet, and through the universities themselves.
- Continue to complete all applications with later deadlines or rolling admissions policies.
- **U.S.:** If you are a US citizen, check the FAFSA deadlines. Your parents must figure their US taxes (but they do not need to file their taxes). Best is to file the FAFSA as soon after January 1 as possible.
- **UK:** 15 January is the final UCAS deadline for most programs.

## February

- Be sure that all necessary materials have been sent to your chosen universities.
- Don't let grades fall! Universities want to see strong second-semester grades.
- **Republic of Ireland:** Application deadline is 1 February for EU citizens. **Non-EU students:** application deadlines vary greatly depending on the study program. Therefore, we recommend you check at the study program or course website the specific application deadline.
- 

## March

- Continue searching for scholarship opportunities.
- **Denmark:** Application deadline for Danish universities is 15 March.
- **Canada:** Application deadlines generally fall between March and May.

## April

- **U.S.:** Admission decisions will arrive. Review financial aid packages; talk with university financial aid officers. Send a deposit to one (and only one!) university prior to 1 May (even if remaining on waiting lists.) If waitlisted where you still hope to attend, see the Higher Education Advisor to discuss procedures. Respond in writing by 1 May to all other universities that admitted you or placed you on a waiting list.
- **Netherlands:** Most applications due in May.
- **Germany:** Start the application process at ZAST for the [IB Diploma recognition](#).
- Let IB DP Coordinator know which universities you would like your IB results to be sent to via.

## May

- Keep up the momentum in your academic studies. Your acceptance may be contingent upon you completing your Grade 12 year successfully. If your grades drop, your acceptance can and will be withdrawn.
- Notify universities you did not choose, so they can offer admission to others.
- **Australia:** Gather all necessary documents from the FIS to prepare your application if studying in Australia. (Application deadlines are in September—after you have left the FIS.)
- **Germany:** Find out when your application to university is due. You may only have a few days to get your IB diploma officially recognized through the [Kultusministerium](#) before your application is due. See full details in the “Germany” section of this handbook.
- **U.S. and UK:** Notify the university you choose of your decision to attend and send a deposit.

## June and July

- IB Grade Reports are mailed.
- Make sure to enjoy time with family and friends before you leave!
- Attend orientation sessions offered by the university.
- **Germany:** Obtain recognition of IB diploma through the [Kultusministerium](#).
- Your FIS email account and access to FIS Google Documents will be closed at the end of July. Please ensure that you have a record of contact details and a copy of any important materials.
- Hard copies of IB Diplomas and Transcripts are sent to the FIS in early September. They will be sent on to you as soon as they are received. Please ensure that any address changes are updated on SchoolBase.

## Career goals and decisions

### Step one: Looking at yourself

The search for a university, technical school, or other institution where you will thrive doesn't start with standardized test scores, odds of admission or institutional prestige. It starts with you. The better you know you, the greater the likelihood that you will find a solid match. Here are some questions – with no right and wrong answers – to stimulate that reflection. You probably will discover these questions later in different settings – as interview questions and essay topics – so reflection now also may help you present yourself effectively and clearly to universities.

#### Your goals & values

- What aspects of your high school years have you enjoyed the most? If you could live this period over again, would you do anything differently?
- What values are most important to you? How have they developed and evolved? How do they mirror or differ from those of your family and why?
- How do you define success? Are you satisfied with your accomplishments to date? What do you want to accomplish in the years ahead?
- What kind of person would you like to become? Of your unique gifts and strengths, which would you most like to develop? What would you change about yourself?
- Is there anything you have secretly wanted to do or be? If you had a year to go anywhere and do whatever you wanted, how would you spend that year?
- What events or experiences have shaped your growth and way of thinking?

#### Your education

- What are your academic interests? Which courses have you enjoyed most? Which have been most difficult? What areas of study would you like to try in university which were not available in high school?
- What do you choose to learn when you can learn on your own? Consider topics chosen for research papers and independent projects, independent reading, school activities, job or volunteer work, and travel. How do these choices reflect your interests and the way you like to learn?
- How do you learn best? What methods of teaching engage your interest and effort the most? Do you prefer structure and clear expectations, or lots of leeway for creativity and interpretation? Do you profit most from a lecture format, small group discussion, reading text on your own, doing hands-on projects?
- What has been your most stimulating intellectual experience in recent years? How interested are you in the substance of intellectual life: books, ideas, issues, and discussion? What is your attitude towards studying – enthusiasm, toleration, avoidance?
- Are there any outside circumstances (in your recent experience or background) which have interfered with your academic performance? Consider such factors as: home responsibilities or difficulties, excessive school activities, illness or emotional stress, parental pressure, limited English skills, course scheduling conflicts, changes in

style/expectations of schooling, adjustment to moving, or other factors which are unique to you.

## Your activities and interests

- What activities have claimed your time outside the daily routine of school and other responsibilities? Which have meant the most to you? Looking back, would you have made different choices?
- Do your activities show any pattern of commitment, competence, or contribution? What do you consider your most significant contribution?
- How would others describe your role in your school or home community?
- What are your favorite ways to spend free time? How would you spend an uncommitted Saturday?

## The world around you

- How would you describe your school? How has your school environment encouraged you to develop your interests, talents, and abilities? To take intellectual risks? What would you preserve or change about your school if you had the power to do so?
- How do you feel you have been affected by living overseas? How have your perspectives – on yourself, on others, on education, on world issues – changed? (If you are German, how do you feel you have been affected by attending an international school?)
- How would you describe your family? Your hometown? How have these influenced your way of thinking and your goals? How have your interests and abilities been nurtured or limited?
- What was a recent controversy in your school or community? Did you become involved? What is your opinion about the issue and how it was handled?
- When have you encountered people who thought and acted differently than you did? What viewpoints have challenged you the most? How did you respond? What did you learn about yourself and others?
- What issues (school, local, world, ethical, etc.) do you feel particularly strongly about? Assuming the obligation and opportunity to do your part to change the world, where would you start?

## Your personality and relationships

- How would someone who knows you well describe you? Your finest qualities? Your most conspicuous shortcomings? How have you grown or changed during your high school years?
- Which relationships are most important to you and why? In what ways are they similar to or different from you?
- Describe the groups in your school. To which do you feel you belong? Do you stick with one or move among several? From which do you feel alienated? What is your social style? Do you prefer solitude, one-on-one, small groups, large parties? Do you see yourself more as an initiator, follower, or in-between?

- How do you respond to pressure, competition or challenge? How important is recognition, praise, moral support? How do you react to failure, disappointment or criticism?
- How do you feel about choices and making decisions for yourself? What are the best decisions you have made recently? Which would you do differently? How much do you rely on direction, advice, or guidance from others? Do you prefer the tried-and-true or the new-and-intriguing?

## Step two: Self-assessment

Trying to determine your personal preferences and priorities? Here are some options for a little self-discovery...

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Holland Code Career Test are two self-assessments that are well-researched and proven to be valid. They can help you identify your values, interests, abilities, and personal preferences. But please don't take the results as the be-all and end-all. You, and not a simple test, are the only one who can truly answer the "Who am I?" question. And the answers to that question can and will most definitely change as you grow and develop and discover yourself through time.

The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) is a personality assessment. It measures how you perceive the world and make decisions. Based on the results of the assessment, you'll be given a personality type, which is a combination of four traits from the following characteristics: extraversion (E) or introversion (I), sensing (S) or intuition (N), thinking (T) or feeling (F), and judgment (J) or perception (P). Give your answers some thought and be as honest as you can in your choices. And don't spend the rest of your life believing that you can do nothing to change the fact that you are "ESFJ," or anything else for that matter.

<http://www.16personalities.com/>

After taking the Myers-Briggs, plug your results into one of the following to get some career possibilities:

<http://www.truity.com/search-careers/personality-type>

<http://www.personalitypage.com/html/careers.html>

The Holland Code Career Test is an interest assessment. It purposes to show how interested you may be in six (very) broad categories of careers: Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional (RIASEC). Based on your results, you'll be shown areas in which you may excel, as well as career areas that may be interesting.

<http://www.truity.com/test/holland-code-career-test>

Career Outlook, another RIASEC-type career interest profiler, generates a comprehensive database of potential careers, with many links for further exploration.

<http://www.careeroutlook.us/assessment/short.shtml>

## Step three: Career Research

Not sure what career you'd like to pursue? Here are some ideas to explore... First of all, to maintain an easy-going perspective, it's good to keep in mind that it's completely normal to change your career path through time and experience. And that you can change courses once you're at university and decide that it's not right for you (though it's much easier in some countries to do that than in others). And also that just because you focus your studies in a certain direction, it doesn't mean you're forever restricted to a career just in that field.

Explore university majors, U.S. universities, and careers

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/?affiliateId=cbhomeblk&bannerId=cp>

Thousands of careers in the US, with educational paths

<http://www.bls.gov/k12/>

Careers in Germany, and education that will prepare you for them

<https://www.arbeitsagentur.de/web/content/DE/KarriereBA/SchuelerundSchulabsolventen/index.htm>

Exploring interests and matching them to careers and educational paths (in German)

<http://www.planet-beruf.de/BERUFE-Universum.119.0.html>

Morrisby charges a fee, but offers a comprehensive self-assessment and career exploration tool

<https://www.morrisby.com/>

## What if I don't want to go to university?

Many people do not know what they want to do after they leave high school. For some it's just a matter of not being sure what it is that they want to study when they go on to further education; for others it is a question of whether they feel themselves ready for further study or whether they would be better doing something else for a year or two before resuming their studies. And for others it is a belief that no further purpose can be served by prolonging the educational process beyond high school.

If you think that you don't want to go on studying next year, consider which of these categories you fit into:

I don't know what I want to study, so I am not going to study anything.

How much research have you really done? Have you looked thoroughly through such sites as the [U.S. Labor Department Index of Occupations](#) or [Which Degree](#) in Britain? These resources offer an abundance of suggestions for areas in which study is possible, and, a lot of these subjects can be studied wherever in the world you choose to go. Another possibility is to look into self-exploration and career research tools, such as those included in this handbook.

Should I take a year out before I go on to higher education?

The answer to this question is not automatically "no," of course, because it is the optimal choice for some people. But do ask yourself why you want to take a year off, and what you will gain. There is no real point in just taking a year off if you have no specific plan for how you will spend the time, because a year spent at home is likely not going to bring much personal development. What about learning a language? Participating in an exchange program? Or even working in a field related to one that you think you might like to work in permanently? Of course, you are going to have to make some inquiries into all this to see what is possible and how you would go about doing it (and those inquiries might be just as exhaustive and time-consuming as applying to college would be), but if something appears feasible, then it is certainly worth discussion and consideration.

If your year off is mainly to give you academic respite, it could be worthwhile to apply to universities in any case and then have your entry deferred for one year. Some universities will do this and some won't, but it is certainly worth finding out from those you are interested in whether this is possible. It is a good feeling to go off and do what you want for a year secure in the knowledge that you already have a place to go to the following academic session.

What if I know that I definitely don't want to go to college or university?

Then what are you going to do? There are a lot of alternatives to higher education, and college or university is not for everyone. The first and most obvious choice is to look for some form of employment, but there are certain drawbacks to this. Consider first what kind of a job you are likely to get with only a high school or IB diploma and what the prospects are likely to be in that job? Are you totally satisfied with where that job would lead you? What if you don't know what you want to do or where you want to do it? Obviously the first thing is to take steps to find out, but don't be too upset if you don't know where to start. Statistics prove that an increasing number of people make three or four false starts in their occupational choice before they eventually settle down to one profession, so it is not a matter of sink or swim, the first time. But don't just do nothing! You should

have a plan of some sort - even if it later proves to have been the wrong one! If you really don't know what to do, talk it over with someone: the counselor, your parents or your friends, but don't leave school with only a vague idea of what you are going to do - your time is far too precious to waste and far too valuable not to use positively.

## Taking a gap year

A year off before going on to higher education, or a “gap” year as it is often called, is an attractive option for a number of students after the pressure of the IB.

### Advantages

Academics, employers, parents and students single out the following main benefits of a gap year:

- **Self-reliance** - unless you spend the entire year commuting from home to workplace you will experience living away from home, learning to look after yourself and coping with everyday situations on your own. This is excellent preparation for university and working life.
- **Maturity** - this will almost certainly result from getting out in the world, working or studying in a different adult environment, meeting people from different backgrounds, and perhaps learning firsthand about problems experienced by those less fortunate than you.
- **Teamwork** - whether working for pay, volunteering or travelling with a small group, you will learn to work as part of a team and to make your own contribution; a useful experience for working life.
- **Managing money and making plans** - deciding what to do with your year, working out a budget for travel, organizing your itinerary, trying to make sure you do not run out of money on the other side of the world - all these activities develop useful life skills.
- **Thinking time** - away from school and exam pressures you have time to think about your future and to be sure about your choice of higher education course. It is often less of a problem to change your mind before you have committed yourself than to decide you are on the wrong track when you have already started. Your experience in the few months after leaving school might prompt an interest in a vocational course, travel might lead to an interest in a particular language or culture, or you might decide to switch from full-time to a sandwich course. Whatever you decide, you are likely to return to academic life refreshed and well-motivated.

Course-related experience - you might be able to do something that gives you insight into your chosen subject. Language skills or knowledge of a country are obvious examples, but you might also learn more about architecture or art history, hospital or social work, environmental sciences, engineering, or other aspects of industry or commerce.

Money to study - many students use part of their gap year to earn money to help them through their courses.

## Disadvantages

The most commonly mentioned are:

- **Time** - a gap year adds to the length of an already long higher education and training route. For this reason it may not be attractive to students of medicine, dentistry, architecture, veterinary science and law, for example.
- **Continuity** - many mathematics and science tutors advise against a break for their students, believing that their study should not be interrupted and that they might lose much of what they've learned. Not all share this view.
- **Distraction** - parents fear that the student might be distracted and lose interest in higher education. In fact, only a few decide against going on to higher education at the end of the year. Also some students feel it is best to go straight to college and get qualified as soon as possible.

## A post-graduate gap year

A recent trend has been for students to postpone the graduate job hunt in favor of a year out after they have completed their degree. There are again pros and cons to this. You need to think carefully before you make such a decision.

## What do you need to do?

There is a wide range of opportunities for a gap year, but all successful ones will involve considerable planning. The most successful generally have several different elements; i.e., work, travel, study, volunteering.

You can still apply now for a higher education place (a sensible option - all the facilities you need are at school) and then ask for deferred entry. Or wait until you know your results have arrived and then apply (you really should ensure that you are in Germany for some period in late August and September to successfully complete the application process). It is vital to find out what the universities and departments think about the idea of you taking a gap year for the particular subject in which you are interested.

A few places to help begin your gap year planning:

<http://www.gap-year.com/>

<https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/gap-year>

<http://www.americangap.org/data-benefits.php>

And a thought-provoking insight into making sure you're volunteering with the right skills and for the right reasons: <http://epicureandculture.com/volunteering-at-an-orphanage-truth/>

## Choosing a university or other institution

### Develop a prospective list

Once you know yourself well, know what you are looking for in a university, and have researched your options, it is then time to develop a prospective list of universities. Your prospective list may contain as many as 20 or more universities that you are interested in and wish to explore further. You can keep track of your prospective list on your BridgeU shortlist.

### Refining your list

By the beginning of Grade 12, your goal will be to narrow down your prospective list of universities to a more manageable number. This step is slightly more difficult because your research must become more in-depth and focused. Consider how each university on your list will evaluate you. Look realistically at your academic statistics (how challenging are your high school courses, the grades you have earned, your standardized test results, your extra-curricular involvement, etc.) and compare your profile to the admission requirements at each university you are interested in.

Are you taking an IB Diploma Program that meets or exceeds the standards set by each university/subject you are interested in? Do you have the required higher level courses? Do you have the right level of Mathematics? Do your predicted grades fall into the range set out by the university?

Contact the schools on your list to request catalogues, prospectus guides, viewbooks and department guides. Follow each school on Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and/or Twitter. Always use a variety of resources to do your research. Do not rely solely on the glossy catalogues; use the internet, university guidebooks and talk to those who know you well.

By the fall of Grade 12, after a considerable amount of research and discussions with your Higher Education Advisor, parents, family, friends and teachers, you should have enough information to determine your final list of 6-10 schools.

### For students applying to the UK

You may apply to a maximum of 5 universities/courses. It is important that you use these choices wisely and apply only for those courses you are qualified for. If you are applying for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science, you may choose a maximum of 4 courses in these subject areas. You may use your 5th choice to apply to a course in a medical-related subject area.

For admission to a UK university, you must meet or exceed the minimum DP point total and the specific subject requirements set by each university/course. For example, if you wish to study Chemical Engineering at the University of Bath or the University of Birmingham, both schools require Mathematics HL and Chemistry HL. However, if you wish to study the same subject at Imperial College London they require Mathematics HL, Chemistry HL and Physics HL, Biology HL or Economics HL. It is important that you contact each school to verify their entry requirements.

## For students applying to North America

Your final list of universities should contain 6 to 10 schools of varying degrees of selectivity for your particular academic and personal profile. You should choose at least two schools in each category: Reach, target and likely. To divide your list into these categories you will need to compare your academic program (GPA, grades, standardized test scores and extra-curricular involvement) with those of recently admitted students. Regardless of the category, you should be excited to attend any school on your final list.

### Reach schools

At reach schools, the average class rank, high school grades, standardized test scores and extra-curricular involvement of currently enrolled first year students is higher than yours. A reach university may also be a school where the percentage of admitted applicants is extremely small, thereby limiting the chances of admission for everyone. The most selective schools admit 5% to 15% of applicants. Obvious examples are Harvard, Brown, Princeton, Dartmouth, Yale and Stanford. Each year these schools deny thousands of students who have achieved all 7's and have perfect SAT/ACT scores. It is important to be realistic about your chances at reach schools.

### Target schools

At target universities, your class rank, high school grades, standardized test scores and extra-curricular involvement closely matches that of currently enrolled first year students.

### Likely schools

Likely schools are those schools where the average class rank, high school grades, standardized test scores and extra-curricular involvement will be lower than yours. The main question to ask is, "Would I be happy to attend this school if I am accepted"?

Give careful consideration to providing for diversity in the admission standards of the universities on your final list of schools. No student should ever apply exclusively to schools that have a reputation for being highly selective. Unfortunately, highly selective schools have far more qualified candidates applying than they can accept. Even if you are over-qualified that does not guarantee admission.

This is where it all starts. Think carefully about the types of schools where you will be most happy and the factors you will use to develop your university wish list. Consider your academic strengths, weaknesses, interests, goals, personal preferences and financial resources. Remember, you are the best judge of how well a particular school will meet your unique academic and personal needs.

## CIS Student Registry

[The CIS Student Registry](#) is a resource, which provides connections for IB students, and universities looking to recruit them.

## Factors to consider when researching a university

With so many higher education options available, how do you determine if a school is right for you? As there are a number of factors to consider, you need to decide which are most important and then determine the universities that best suit your academic goals and personal needs. Not all of these factors will be important to you, but considering your preferences in the following areas is a good place to start.

### Location

- In which country/countries would I like to study?
- Is there a particular region that I am interested in?
- How far away from home am I willing to live? How far away are my parents willing to let me go?
- Do I prefer a large city, a suburban area or a small university town?
- In what type of climate will I be happiest?

### Size

- Do I want to be a big fish in a small pond or a small fish in a big pond?
- Would I be happy at a small (under 5,000), medium (5,000-15,000 students), large (15,000-30,000 students) or extra-large (30,000+ students) university?
- What is the size of the first-year/freshman class?
- What is the average class size?
- What is the student/teacher ratio?

### Type of school

- Am I interested in attending a single-sex or co-educational university?
- Do I want to go to a public or private school?
- Do I want to attend a 2-year, 3-year or 4-year university?
- Do I want to attend a large university with many schools or a small university/college?
- Do I want to attend a religiously affiliated school?
- Do I want study at a specialized school (business, liberal arts, technical, music, art, etc.)

### UK applicants

- What is the minimum required DP predicted score for this course?
- Do I have the required level of mathematics?
- Do I have the required DP higher-level courses?
- What is a typical conditional offer for the course?
- Will my DP predicted grades meet or exceed the standards set by the university for my particular course?

## Student body

- Is a diverse university community important to me?
- Would I like there to be a large number of international students on campus?
- Do I want to attend a school with only undergraduate students or a mixture of graduates and undergraduates?
- What is the male/female ratio?
- What are the primary interests of the student body (arts, sciences, business, etc.)?
- What campus groups, clubs or activities are most popular?

## Degree of competitiveness

### U.S. applicants

- What are the typical admission standards of this school?
- How selective is the admission process?
- How difficult is it to gain admission?
- How competitive are my academic credentials (grades, DP predictions, level of courses, standardized test scores, extra-curricular activities, etc.)? Is my academic record competitive enough for admission?
- Which standardized tests are required and what are the average scores of admitted first year students?
- What percentage of first-year applicants were accepted last year?
- What is the average rank/grade point average of currently enrolled first-year students?

### UK applicants

- What is the minimum required predicted DP score for this course?
- What DP Higher Level subjects are required?
- What is the typical conditional offer for my subject?
- How popular is this course?
- How many applications do they receive vs. the number of available spaces? What is the applicant:place ratio?

## Academic pressure

- Do I thrive under pressure or would I prefer to work at a more comfortable, less competitive pace?
- How competitive are the students with each other?
- What is the level of work expected of me?

## Majors/courses & subjects offered

- Am I interested in a career-oriented program or a more general Liberal Arts program?
- Does this particular school offer a wide variety of subject areas to choose from or do they focus on specific areas such as Engineering or Business?

- Do I know what major or subject I would like to study at university?
- How flexible are the course requirements?
- How diverse are the course offerings?
- Is this course more theoretical, more practical, or a combination of theory and practice?
- Looking at the core course requirements and the syllabus, would I be happy studying those subjects over the next 3 or 4 years?
- Does the university offer a strong program in my field and do they have adequate facilities?
- Is there an opportunity to do internships, cooperative education or research in my chosen field?
- Is it possible to do research as part of my studies?
- How is the course assessed (project work, dissertations, exams, etc.)?
- What percentage of students from this particular subject, program or course go on to graduate school and where do they go?
- What percentage of students find jobs in their field immediately following graduation?

## UK applicants

- How flexible is this course?
- Can I take subjects outside of my degree program?
- Is there an opportunity to gain work experience or complete an internship (sandwich program)?
- What exchange or study abroad programs are available?

## Faculty

- What is the student/professor ratio?
- What are the average class sizes of introductory courses?
- Who teaches introductory courses? Faculty members or teaching assistants?
- How available are faculty members outside of class time?

## Special program offerings

- Does this school offer study abroad, internship and cooperative education programs, self-designed majors, double-majors, community service, ESL and honors programs, etc.?
- Is this school part of a consortium, allowing me to take courses at other schools?
- UK applicants
- Does this school offer sandwich courses, modular courses, or combined subject programs?

## Extra-curricular offerings

- Is this an active university community?
- Are there a number of sport programs, clubs or activities I am interested in?
- Does this university offer an intramural and/or intercollegiate sports program?

## Social life on campus

- Are there theaters, bars or restaurants, concert halls, sport complexes or galleries nearby?
- Does the university regularly sponsor dances, concerts, guest speakers, etc.?
- How safe is the campus?
- Are cars allowed on campus?
- Is public transportation readily available?
- What are the school rules regarding alcohol on campus?
- How politically active is the student body?
- How religiously active is the student body?

## Student services

- What student support services are available?
- Is there an international student advisor on campus?
- Is there an orientation program for first year students?
- Is there a special orientation program for international students?
- Is career counseling available?
- Does the school offer assistance with job placement following graduation?
- Is there assistance with graduate school applications?
- Are personal counseling services available?
- Is there a learning development center or is tutoring available if necessary?
- Are ESL classes available?
- Will I be assigned a faculty member, tutor or academic advisor to help me select my courses?

## Physical facilities

- In what condition are the campus buildings?
- Does the campus feel like a comfortable place to live and study?
- How well equipped are the classrooms, labs, library, computer rooms, sports fields, etc.?

## Housing and dining facilities

- Do most students live on campus or do they commute?
- How active is the campus during the weekend?
- Is there a variety of housing options available (co-ed, single sex, single rooms, double rooms, self-catering, etc.)?
- What is the quality of the housing?
- What are the dorm rules regarding alcohol, visitors and quiet hours, etc.?
- Can I see myself living here?
- Does this school guarantee housing for undergraduate students?
- Does this school guarantee housing for international students?

- Does this school offer specialty housing such as non-smoking, honors, international, etc.?
- Am I required to live on campus my first year?
- Will the school assist me in locating off-campus housing?
- How close are the dorms to the classes, the dining hall and other facilities?
- Is there a variety of food plans available?

## Accreditation

- Is the college/university accredited by the national government?
- If I am planning to apply to a career-oriented field, is the degree approved or recognized by professional organizations in that field?
- If I study in one country and want to work in another will my degree be recognized?

## Cost

- What is the total cost to attend this university (tuition, room and board, books, travel and living expenses)?
- Will I be able to work while I study?
- Are there job opportunities on campus or in the local community?
- Does this school offer financial aid or scholarships to international students?
- How many students receive financial aid?
- Is merit/scholarship aid available?

## A checklist

Use this checklist to select the most important factors that will guide your university research. Check as many boxes that apply to your preferences. What are you looking for in the right university for you?

- Academic competitiveness
- Accommodation/ housing options
- Accreditation (who validates the degree?)
- Admit rate of first-year students
- Admission programs
- Admission selectivity
- Application deadlines
- Assessment procedures
- Availability of career advising
- Average class size
- Climate/weather
- Clubs/organizations available on campus
- Community service opportunities
- Cooperative education programs (work experience)
- Core requirements
- Cost
- Course requirements
- Degree of competition
- Degree requirements
- Distance from airport
- Distance from home
- Diversity of the student body
- Dormitory options/quality
- Dual majors
- Early action admission program (U.S.)
- Early decision admission program (U.S.)
- Exchange programs
- Extra-curricular offerings
- Facilities/buildings
- Financial aid availability
- Fraternities/sororities/Greek life
- Grading system
- Graduate school opportunities
- Graduation rates
- DP credit policy
- DP point requirements

- DP HL and/or SL requirements
- Independent study options
- Internship possibilities
- International student numbers
- International student services
- Job placement services
- Learning development services
- Length of academic degree program
- Location
- Majors/subjects offered
- Philosophy/school mission
- Private university
- Public transportation availability
- Public university
- Religious affiliation
- Reputation of faculty
- Reputation of the university
- Reputation of the program
- Research opportunities
- Retention rate of first-year students
- Rolling admissions plan
- Sandwich course options (UK work experience)
- Scholarship availability
- School calendar
- Setting (urban, suburban, rural)
- Size of the first-year class
- Size of the university
- Size of the surrounding community
- Social life
- Specialized school (i.e. Medical, Engineering, Business...)
- Sports offerings
- Standardized test requirements
- Strengths of program/subject
- Student/professor ratio
- Student support services
- Study abroad options
- Teaching qualifications of professors
- Type of school
- University affiliation
- Waitlist policy
- Work permit possibility

## Visiting universities

**Campus visits are a vital part of the university decision-making process.** If it is possible for you to visit schools during one of the vacation breaks or the summer holidays, do it! **Of all the steps you can take to discover the types of schools that are right for you, visiting different campuses will have the greatest single impact in helping you to determine which university is best for you.** A university visit provides you with an in-depth look as well as a “feel” for what the university is really like. Remember, you are choosing your “home” for the next three to four years. Seeing the campus first-hand will be invaluable in helping you to make your final decision.

The goal of a university visit is to gather enough information about the university to make an informed decision about whether or not a particular school is right for you. While on campus you can meet with a member of the admissions staff, take an official university tour, spend time with students, attend a class, meet faculty members, spend a night in a dorm, pick up a copy of the student newspaper, eat a meal in the cafeteria and check out the facilities. You will spend three or four years of your life as a member of a university community so take the time to look around and speak to a variety of people.

### Why take the time to visit a university?

- **Research shows that a campus visit will have the greatest single impact in helping you to determine which university you will eventually decide to attend**
- A university visit gives you the opportunity to see the campus first-hand. It will give you a feel for what life is really like on campus, something that cannot be gained from a catalogue or prospectus guide
- Visiting a variety of different universities will often help you to clarify the size and type of university where you will be most happy both academically and personally.

### When should you visit?

- Arrange a visit only after you have thoroughly researched the university. You should have a good idea about where you stand academically (grades/test scores) and the types of schools that interest you most.
- Ideally, the best time for a visit is when school is in session and students are on campus. If that is not possible, try to arrange your visits during school breaks and the summer holidays.

### Open days

Many universities host open days throughout the year. These events are a great way to see the campus, meet current students and faculty members, learn about programs and find out more about admissions.

### What to do while you're there

- **Take a tour** – but remember that while some tour guides are dynamic and well informed, others are not. This is not a reliable indicator of the university as a whole.

- Sit in on an **admissions information session**, if offered. It will round out your knowledge of the distinguishing features of the school and may offer helpful admissions hints.
- Have an **interview**, if offered.
- **Eat a meal**. The food will probably be less than memorable, but the sense of ambiance is important. Look around you. Does everyone look similar or is there lots of diversity? Do people of certain types clump together? If you're brave enough, sit with students and ask lots of questions!
- **Meet with faculty and coaches**, if appropriate. Set these visits up ahead of time or you may be disappointed – even if they're there, they might not be able to squeeze you in.
- **Stay overnight** in a dormitory whenever possible at your top choices. This will give you more opportunity to meet students and faculty and get a broader view of the place where you would live and study for three or four years. Many universities have hosts available, if you call a couple of weeks in advance.
- **Attend a couple of classes**, ideally one larger lecture and one seminar. You may need to set this up ahead of time. Do students seem generally interested in learning? Do the professors seem to value the opinions of the students? This is only a small sampling, so be sure to talk to students and/or faculty about their general impressions of each other as well.
- **Visit with students** in an academic setting (such as within the department where you might end up) and a nonacademic setting an extracurricular activity, the student center, the cafeteria). If any FIS graduates attend that university, meeting with them is often a great way to get inside information plus meet other students.
- Find a **university newspaper**. Read it with an eye for controversial issues to discuss further with students. Also, what – and how much – is happening on campus?
- Check out the **bulletin boards** on campus. What types of events are going on? What does the assortment imply about the university?
- Stop in on one of the popular student hangouts and talk with people.
- **Gather as many different opinions as possible**. The first student with whom you talk may hate the school, but the next dozen may love it. See "Possible Questions to Ask and Interviewer" for suggestions about questions equally appropriate for faculty, students, career centers, etc. Students are especially helpful to discover how academically demanding the school is, when and where students usually study, when and where they usually party, where students hang out, how accessible professors are, how good advising is, and opportunities for part-time jobs. Ask what a student likes best and least, what the controversial issues on campus are, and if they'd still choose it if given another chance.
- **Write down your impressions**. What is clear on Thursday will be all mixed up by Saturday. Pay special attention to your overall "gut" impression. Do students seem happy? Friendly? Comfortable? Interested? Challenged? Active?

## What to do after the visit?

- When you return home, send a thank you email to the people you met with in the Admissions Office. Also, send thank you emails to anyone who was particularly helpful during your stay on campus (faculty members, advisors, etc.).
- Take time to review your notes from each visit.
- After gathering information, review your evaluations and start to develop and refine your list of universities.

## Questions to consider

- How competitive is admission for my chosen subject (number of applications received vs. number of conditional offers given out)?
- Do my predicted grades meet or exceed the overall minimum requirements?
- Do I meet the subject specific minimum requirements?
- How strong is the department I am interested in?
- What do current students think about the course?
- Looking at the course requirements, would I be happy studying this subject in-depth for the next three or four years?
- What is the structure of the course? Is it flexible? Can I study more than one subject?
- How active is the student body?
- What is the social life of the university like?
- What clubs or societies are on offer?
- What does the Student Union offer for activities, clubs, etc.?
- What teaching methods are used (group work, seminars, labs, tutorials, projects, placements, dissertation, lecture, field trips)?
- How will I be evaluated (progress reviews, continuous assessment, end of term exams, end of semester exams, end of year exams, presentations, etc.)?
- How available are faculty members outside of class hours?
- Are there opportunities for study abroad or work/internship experience?
- Will my degree be recognized when I return to my home country?
- What is the job placement rate for students in my subject following graduation? How many students go on for further education?
- Do I like the location?
- How close am I to the city or the country?
- Do I like the surrounding community?
- Am I comfortable with the size of the university?
- Am I comfortable with the average class size?
- What is the atmosphere of the university?
- Are people welcoming and friendly?
- Will I be assigned an academic advisor/tutor?

- What student support is available?
- Would I be happy spending the next three or four years living and studying here?
- How well equipped are the labs, lecture rooms, libraries, etc.?
- Do I like the look of the buildings, grounds, surrounding areas?
- If I want to take a gap year, what is the policy on deferred entry?
- What is the standard of accommodation?
- What are the common rooms like?
- How many students live on-campus?
- Are there any self-catering facilities?
- May I keep a car on campus? If not, is public transportation available?
- Is there an “alternative prospectus”, a university guide written for students by students?

## Questions to ask when on campus

The following are examples of questions that you may wish to ask during your campus visit. The answers may help you to clarify the type of school where you will be most happy. You cannot ask them all, so choose the most important questions that will help you to determine whether or not a particular university is right for you.

## Admissions

- What type of student is your university looking for? How will my application be evaluated (grades, test scores, DP predicted grades, activities, recommendations, essays, etc.)?
- How competitive is admission to this school/program/course? How do my grades, test scores and extra-curricular involvement compare with other students that apply to your school?
- Is the university aware of the level of difficulty of DP courses?
- How do I compare in terms of extra-curricular involvement with other students?
- How many applicants apply vs. how many are actually admitted?
- Am I the type of student that would fit in well here?
- When are applications and all supporting documents due?

## Academics

- What is your policy for giving academic credit for successful completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program?
- Does this school offer the subject/major I am interested in? How strong is the department? Looking at the course requirements, would I be happy studying this subject in-depth over the next 3 or 4 years?
- What are your strongest departments and most popular subjects/majors/courses?
- How large are the first year classes? Are introductory courses taught by faculty members or teaching assistants?

- How difficult is it to get into the courses I need? Do classes fill-up quickly at course registration? What is the average number of courses I will be taking each semester?
- How much choice or flexibility will I have in my chosen program?
- Will I be assigned an academic counsellor, tutor or a faculty advisor to help me choose my courses?
- What required courses do I need to take in order to graduate?
- Can I take courses that are assessed on a pass/fail basis?
- How rigorous is the academic program? Approximately how many study hours are required per course?
- Tell me about \_\_\_\_\_ (major/course) (Business, Art, Psychology, Biology, etc.)?
- Are there any core or general education requirements for graduation?
- What teaching methods are used (group work, lecture, projects, etc.) and how will I be evaluated?
- How available are faculty members outside of class hours?
- Does this school offer the special programs I am interested in, such as study abroad, honors, internships, cooperative education, dual-majors, independent study, research, self-designed majors, etc.?
- Is this school part of a consortium? Can I take classes on other campuses for credit?
- What is the student/faculty ratio? How available are faculty members outside of class? What percentage of your faculty have earned PhD's?
- What percent of graduates attend graduate school? Where have your students gone to graduate school?
- What is the job placement rate of students at your school? In my course/degree/major?

## Facilities

- Do I like the look of the buildings, grounds, surrounding areas?
- How well equipped are the labs, lecture, rooms, libraries, etc.?
- What are the library hours? Do you have inter-library loan if the university library does not have what I need?
- Does the bookstore carry new and used textbooks, school supplies, food, health care products, etc.? Does the bookstore buy back books at the end of the semester?
- Is there a student center on campus – a place for students to hang out?
- Is there a \_\_\_\_\_ (TV studio, radio station, art studio, etc.) on campus?
- What are the sports facilities like (gym, pool, weight room, track etc.)?

## Campus / social life

- What is the size of the student body? What is the male/female ratio?
- How diverse is the campus? How many international students attend your school?
- Is this school is religiously affiliated? Will I be required to attend church services?

- Is this an active campus? How involved is the student body? What sports, activities and clubs are available?
- How do students spend their free time? Are students around during the weekend? Are dorms closed during holidays?
- Do I like the location? How close is the city, the country, mountains, water, etc.?
- Is public transportation available?
- Do I like the local community? Are there restaurants, bars, cinemas, concert halls, etc. nearby?
- How frequently does the school sponsor lectures, dances, concerts, speakers and other social activities?
- How politically active are the students? What are the current issues?
- What clubs and organizations are active on campus?
- How active is Greek life on campus (fraternities/sororities)?
- Are students allowed to have a car on campus and is parking available?
- What recreational facilities are available (gyms, pools, etc.)?
- What varsity sports are offered? Do you have intramural sports?
- How many students drop out or transfer to other colleges? Why?
- What do you like best about this school? What do students complain about?
- What type of student is happiest at this university?
- What do you think is unique about this school?

## Student support services

- Do you offer any special services for international students? Do you have international student advisors?
- What support services are available to students (career advising, international student services, academic advising, health services, personal counselling, etc.)?
- What career services do you offer (job announcements, resume preparation assistance, job fairs, job placement, career testing, etc.)?
- Are there academic advisors, tutors or faculty advisors that will help me choose my courses and make future educational plans?
- Is there a learning center or a place where I can get tutoring if needed?
- What health/medical services are available to students?
- Is health insurance available to students and is it required?

## Housing

- How many students live in on-campus vs. off-campus housing (apartments, fraternities or sororities)?
- What is the standard of accommodation? Could I live here? Are the dorms close to classrooms and the cafeteria?
- How many students live on campus? How many commute? Do most students stay on campus during the weekends?
- Am I allowed to have a car on campus? If not, is public transportation available?
- Does the school guarantee housing for the first-year? Are first-year students required to live in dorms?
- How many students are typically assigned to a room? Are single rooms available?
- Does the school guarantee housing every year?
- What are the procedures for choosing roommates? Do I have input into the decision?
- When are the housing application deadlines and fees?
- Are there specialty dorms available (smoke-free, single-sex, co-ed, international, honors, etc.)?
- What kind of security is available in the dorms?
- Other than my room, is space available in the dorm to study?
- Are there quiet hours in the dorms?
- What are the dining facilities like? How is the food? What are the dining hours? Where are the dining rooms in relation to the dorms? Am I required to enroll in the school food plan?
- Are there self-catering facilities? Are there a variety of food plans and cafeterias available?

## Costs & financial aid

- What are the total fees per year for attendance (tuition, room and board, fees, etc.)?
- How much do you think I will need for living expenses (books, activities, trips, etc.)?
- Do you offer financial aid or scholarships to international students?
- Will I be able to obtain a work permit?
- What is the average financial aid package?
- May I work while living on campus?
- How many students at your school receive financial aid? Do you offer merit-based / scholarship funds?
- What forms do you require for applying for financial aid? What are financial aid application deadlines?
- Does your office maintain a listing of available scholarships?

## Ask the students!

If you want inside information about a particular university, talk to the students on campus. Tour guides and admission officers are great sources of information, but their job is to *sell* you the university. One way of getting beyond the sales pitch is to talk to random students. They are not hired by the university to promote the school and often they will be more than willing to share their personal opinions and experiences about life on campus. Gather information from as many different students as you can and then balance that information with what you hear from tour guides, admissions officers and what you read in catalogues and guidebooks. Below are some questions you might want to ask. Not all of these questions will be important to you, so choose the issues that concern you the most and ask away!

- What do you like best about this university?
- What do you think needs changing?
- How would you describe this school (competitive, liberal, conservative, sporty, etc.)?
- What other universities did you apply to? Why did you choose this one?
- Has this school lived up to your expectations?
- Do you consider this to be a diverse community?
- How easy is it to meet people here?
- How challenging are the courses?
- Who teaches most of your courses, faculty members or teaching assistants?
- Do you have a faculty member, tutor or academic advisor to help you choose your courses?
- How often do you meet with him/her?
- Do you ever have difficulty registering for courses you need?
- What is the average class size of most of your classes?
- What can you tell me about the \_\_\_\_\_ department?
- How available are faculty members after class hours?
- What do you do for fun on nights and weekends?
- Do most students stay on campus during the weekend or does everyone leave?
- Where are the places to hang out on campus? Is there a Student Centre or Student Union?
- What is there to do in the surrounding area?
- How often does the university sponsor lectures, concerts, dances, etc.?
- What are the most active student organizations or clubs?
- What do you think of the university housing (loud, quiet, small, etc.)?
- Are some dorms better than others?
- How is the food on campus? Where are the best places to eat?
- How well connected is the campus? Is there access to computer labs? Lab hours?
- How well equipped is the library? Do you ever have trouble finding what you need?
- What do you think of the medical, counselling, career advising, academic counselling and international student services here?

## When you can't visit the university

The reality of living overseas is that it may be difficult for you to visit some – or even any – of the universities to which you plan to apply. How can you approach the search then so that you aren't just picking university names out of a very large hat?

**Individual university websites** are brimming with useful information, although it can be time-consuming to find your way to all the material you want. In the Admissions area, you can get on a mailing list, learn about admission criteria, and even access an online application. In Academics, you can find requirements of different schools and majors, even descriptions of specific courses. All sorts of extra-curricular activities have their own sites as well. In the Registrar area, you might be able to figure out class sizes and if certain classes are hard to get. You can take virtual tours and inspect professors' credentials. Finding the online version of the university newspaper can be particularly illuminating.

**University counseling websites** offer a variety of useful information, some about how to apply and/or financial aid, but also some about picking university choices.

**Admissions brochures**, which you receive once you put your name on those mailing lists, are a mixed bag. You discover what aspects of the university are considered most outstanding, but you also will discover that they tend to look alike – all pictures have diverse student bodies in a pretty campus setting looking happy and interested. All professors love teaching, all students love learning, if the view books are right. Hence, while they give you a sense of programs, priorities, and pictures, don't limit yourself.

**Emailing** admissions representatives is useful both to show the university you're interested and also to ask all sorts of questions. Your counselor can help you figure out which admission officer handles applications from overseas, if it's not clear from the admissions page.

**Discussing** universities with teachers, Higher Education Advisors, parents, friends, and alumni of the FIS can all give useful feedback. However, remember that even your closest friend may be looking for something very different in a university experience.

**Emailing** current students and/or professors is something that can be easily arranged. For the professors, you can access their names and email addresses through the university's website. For current students, it is recommended to contact the admission representative and have them suggest someone you could contact who shares some of your interests.

**Guidebooks** hold lots of useful information. Some – the *Encyclopedia of Universities* type – give mostly factual information – size, typical SAT's, admit rate, graduation rate, majors offered, etc. Others offer more of an inside view. Some students also like those that tend to focus more on social atmosphere than academic opportunities. You can find these in the FIS library and in Mrs. Ang's office.

**University search** programs, found at many different university guidance websites, are most useful if you have certain definite parameters – you must be in a certain region, you must have a major in

aeronautical engineering, you must have a women's volleyball team. For those students, it may efficiently identify a group of universities which meet your basic criteria.

**Alumni interviews** set up in the Nürnberg area can give you a local contact person who can share information about the university, academically and socially.

**Talking to people in the occupation** that you are interested in – if you have a clear sense – can alert you to what some particularly well-respected programs are.

**Career planning and placement** centers at universities should be able to tell you (perhaps at the university's website, perhaps though through a phone call or email) about what percentage of graduates go to graduate school, and which graduate schools they attend. They also can tell you what number, and what type, of employers come to campus. In addition, they can give information about the number of students who pursue internships.

**Your Higher Education Advisor** has a wealth of experience with a wide range of universities. Take full advantage of his or her presence, asking frequent questions and giving regular feedback as you read and talk to people.

## The application process

### Having Your IB Results Sent to Universities

The FIS can organize for your results to be sent directly to a university. Before results are released, you can request to have them sent to six universities, free of charge. Of these six, only one can be requested for the US and one for Canada.

Please indicate to the IB DP Coordinator at the FIS which universities should receive your results before the end of April 2020.

Additional transcript requests can be made and will incur a fee. Likewise, if you would like to add any requests after the above deadline, you will need to order and pay for them yourself. In both cases, refer to the [IBO website](#) for details.

Hard copies of IB Diplomas and Transcripts are sent to the FIS in early September. They will be sent on to you as soon as they are received. Please ensure that any address changes are updated on SchoolBase.

Your FIS email account and access to FIS Google Documents will be closed at the end of July of Grade 12 – please ensure that you have a record of contact details and a copy of any important materials.

### Scholarships and Financial Aid Worldwide

In most cases, the university office that deals with fees will also have information about ways to finance your education. Within the EU, each country will have its own processes to determine if a student qualifies for EU status for fees. If you are a citizen of an EU country, you can usually attend university in an EU member state for the same fees as citizens of that state. Additionally, you may be eligible for financial aid from that country's government. A good example is Scotland. Almost all EU students who are admitted to Scottish universities and who fill out the appropriate paperwork early enough get financial aid from the Scottish government that covers most of the costs of attending school. Again, the best source of information is the individual university website. If you are an international student, you will need to check with the appropriate university early in the university research process about what funds are available and if there are any restrictions on what programs of study you can pursue. Your own government may also provide funding for overseas studies.

[Scholarships for IB students](#)

## Successful Interviews

- If possible, interview at any university where you're applying which offers them, even if they are not required. If you cannot visit, you can sometimes arrange an alumni interview in the Erlangen/Nürnberg regional area.
- The interview is primarily for you to learn about the university and have a chance to ask questions. It also is a chance to "flesh out" your application and to communicate your values and priorities.
- Interviews are also valuable because they show you care enough about the university to visit. This is more important than you might expect, especially at many smaller, liberal arts schools. All else being equal, many universities will offer admission to those who have shown the most interest!
- Occasionally interviews help the impression you make, although this will only distinguish you among other equally qualified candidates. Very, very rarely is an interview negative, and then not because you are shy, awkward, or unprepared, but rather if you come across as close-minded, prejudiced, or really bored. If you feel your interview is uninspired, don't worry – the vast majority are, and every university knows the record and involvement you have built over four years is far more important.
- Your interview usually will be with an admissions staff member, but could be with a student, alumnus, or a part-time interviewer. All "count" equally. Keep this person's perspective in mind. Don't write off the university just because you didn't "click" with your interviewer.
- The interviewer is eager to get to know you and is looking for your positive attributes, not trying to trick you. Most realize you may be inexperienced at interviewing and will try to put you at ease.
- The philosophy of interviewing is different in the US than in the UK. For the US, you will not always be expected to be highly knowledgeable in a particular academic field, or even know what you want to study (unless you are applying to a specialized program). You will not be expected to "justify" why you should be admitted. It is much more like having a conversation with a friendly, interested adult.
- Some interviews will be short, others will be long. Don't read too much into that. It probably just reflects that interviewer's schedule for the day.
- Alumni interviews are used by many schools which draw nationally and/or have huge applicant pools. For most, alumni are both recruiters and interviewers. Their interviews are primarily informative – for you, by being a local contact to answer questions; for the school, by helping to flesh out your application. Only a few schools ask their alumni to make recommendations regarding an admission decision, and even in those cases, it will play only a confirming role.
- In some cases, the alumnus contacts you for an interview; in others, the university sends you a list of possible alumni for you to call. Some alumni organizations are not very well organized; if you don't hear from someone for a long time, take the initiative and call the admission office yourself.
- Most people prefer to do their first interview at a "likely" school. You'll be more relaxed!

## Interview Basics

- Be prompt (but not overly early). If you find yourself unavoidably late, call ahead.
- Dress comfortably, yet neatly. Choose something you like, that is comfortable, and that you feel reflects your own identity. Check student forums like [The Student Room](#) in the UK for advice if you are not sure.
- Know yourself. Review the common interview questions which follow. If you're nervous, practice responding out loud. Don't memorize a response; it will sound canned and insincere.
- Do some homework beforehand. Be prepared to ask questions which reflect a basic knowledge of that particular school. Don't shy away from more controversial questions, if asked politely. They reflect your preparation and your desire to separate rumor from fact. Don't ask questions listed in the first paragraph of every guidebook. See the following section for possible questions.
- Listen carefully to be sure you answer the question asked. If you don't understand the question, ask the interviewer to repeat or rephrase it.
- Use short-answer questions as a springboard for broader explanations. Concentrate on answering with "why," "how," and "how it influenced me" rather than rattling off "what" you have accomplished. Focus especially on what you have done which reflects initiative, curiosity, independence, compassion, commitment. Focusing on these deeper questions tells more about you and offers a vehicle to discuss yourself without starting every sentence with "I...I...I." If asked about controversial issues, give your own opinion, but show tolerance of other viewpoints.
- Be truthful. Don't try to package yourself – admissions representatives spot a sales job a long way off.
- Be positive. Don't argue or show bitterness.
- Don't just talk – listen. Don't just listen – talk.
- Don't make it sound as if you're only interested in university for a prestigious name on your diploma and/or a lucrative income upon graduation. As secondary factors, both are fine, but they're turnoffs as chief motivators.
- Don't forget eye contact – but don't stare. Don't fiddle with hair and clothing. Don't chew gum. Don't slouch. Look interested and use body language effectively. Don't speak in a monotone voice; let your voice reflect energy and enthusiasm.
- Use proper English, without being stilted. Try to avoid trendy expressions and interjections such as "you know" or "like..."
- Do not state scores or grades unless asked specifically. Concentrate instead on your personal reactions to what and how you've learned.
- Try to keep your parents in a background role. Too much parent involvement, even before and after the interview, can make a student look coddled and overly dependent.
- Don't expect interviewers to give you odds on admission. Some may tell you if you are a realistic candidate; others may tell you that you are, even if that's not the case.
- Don't pose as an expert on matters you know little about. It is okay to say "I don't know much about that" if you don't.

- Keep cool. If you get a tough question, take a deep breath, ask for a moment to think about it, and remain composed.
- Have questions in mind. Most interviews leave as much as ten minutes for your questions, and you don't want to just have the interview stop short. This is a good way to show your active interest and engagement with the process. Certainly, you don't have to use your prepared questions if you think of others instead.
- When you leave, remember to thank your interviewer. Ask for his/her business card. When you get home, e-mail the interviewer with both thanks and perhaps other questions you've come up with since your interview. Include at least one sentence which is unique to that interview (e.g. "I especially valued your perspective on the academic pressures at X University.").
- Smile, show enthusiasm, try to relax, and try to have fun! Most interviewers are really very nice people!

## Typical Interview Questions

Most interviews will start with the more familiar ("What courses are you taking this year?" "How long have you attended the FIS?" "What activities are you involved in?" "Where have you lived?"), then more gradually toward the more abstract. Here are some typical questions. Your own interviews may contain very few of these, but will probably deal with similar categories.

## View of University

- What are you looking for in a university?
- Why are you considering this university?
- Would you rather attend a university where people are mostly like you or one where many people are different from you?
- What do you hope to get out of university?
- Where else are you applying? Visiting? (If this is your "super-reach," you may not feel comfortable naming your "likely" and vice-versa. That's fine – they're being nosy!) Do you have a first choice? (You don't have to answer this. It's fine to say you're still figuring this out.)

## Your Own School

- How would you describe the FIS? Is there a typical FIS student? Do you feel you fit that image?
- What do you like best about the FIS? What would you change?
- What are you taking this year?
- Which courses have you enjoyed most? Which have been most challenging for you?
- What teacher has had the greatest influence on you? How?
- What have you liked about attending an international school? What was hard to adjust to when you first came?

## Personal

- If you had to take a year off and do anything, what would you choose to do?
- What is an accomplishment you're particularly proud of?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What is one of the most difficult experiences you have ever had? How did you deal with it?
- What is your greatest strength? Your greatest weakness? (You can address this in a positive way, such as, "I used to have problems with procrastination but last year I made real progress by ...")
- What kind of person would you like to be in 20 years?
- What would you change about how you've approached your high school years, if you could?
- How have you changed in the past few years?
- Do you have a tentative major/course or career goal?
- Tell me something about your family. How are you like them? Different from them?

## Extra-curriculars

- What extra-curricular activities have been most rewarding to you? Why?
- What do you do with the money you've earned?
- How have you spent the past couple of summers?
- What are your favorite ways to use free time?
- What are some good books you've read recently outside of class? ("None" is an embarrassing answer, so, even if you're a reluctant reader, you might want to find a couple to enjoy during the next few months.)

## World & community

- What is an issue you feel particularly strongly about?
- What do you see as the biggest challenge confronting the world right now?
- If you had the political power to do anything you wanted, what would you do?
- What do you think about (XYZ current event)? (rare)
- ...and the common add-ons...
- What haven't I asked you that you wish I had? Or
- What else should I know about you?
- Sometimes you will be asked for an absolute – THE greatest accomplishment, THE favorite teacher. Don't over think it – just pick ONE OF THE greatest, favorite, etc.

## Possible questions to ask an interviewer

Often, questions grow naturally out of your conversation with the interviewer, and you won't need to resort to prepared questions at all. Still, it's a good idea to have them tucked away in a corner of your brain (or even a pocket), just in case. Here are ideas to give you a sense of the categories of possible questions – not just for interviewers, but also for students, faculty, alumni, career

planning offices, etc. It's often illuminating to ask several people the same question and see if the answers are consistent. While interviewers will be honest, they probably will share their response as positively as possible.

## Students

- What do you feel is the most prevalent type of student on campus?
- Is there a type of student who might not feel comfortable here?
- Do most see the campus as liberal? Conservative? Mixed? How can you tell?
- What is the proportion of international students? What special support services or activities are available for them?
- Do students of different backgrounds mix or stick with others like themselves?
- What is the religious makeup of the student body? Would a (e.g. Jewish, Catholic) student feel isolated?
- What do students complain about? What do they value most?
- What can be toughest for first year students to adjust to when they first arrive?
- Do the students feel the administration respects their input? Can you give an example?
- What were some recent controversies on campus? How did the administration react? What was the resolution?
- Have there been recent reported incidents of alleged sexual discrimination or harassment? Do women feel fully equal, academically and social?
- How does the campus deal with problems of alcohol or drug abuse?
- What percentage of students leave campus for the weekend? (If >20%, ask why.)

## Extra-curricular/social

- How much school spirit is there? What types of activities are popular to get involved in? To attend?
- When/where do students study? Party? Hang out?
- In the US: What is the role of Greek life on campus? If I didn't join, how would my social life be? Do many students want to join but are excluded? When is rush?
- How difficult is it to make a team? What intramural or club teams are there? Are they competitive to join?
- How easy is it for freshmen to join activities?
- Do the parties on campus focus around alcohol? Will I feel comfortable if I choose not to drink?
- Can you tell me more about the \_\_\_\_\_? (e.g. newspaper, drama program, fencing team)

## Housing & dining

- Does the university provide housing all four years? What percentage live on campus? What alternatives are available, on or off-campus, for upperclassmen?
- Are some dorms reserved for particular ages or interests?

- Are the dorms quiet enough for studying? Are there study rooms?
- What shape are the dorms in? Are there convenient laundry and restroom facilities?
- What meal plans are available? Can you eat anywhere on campus? At alternative eating facilities? Are there vegetarian alternatives?

## Facilities

- What have been the new additions/renovations on campus in the past five/ten years?
- How safe is the campus? Have there been recent problems? What security options are available?
- Can any student use the gym/pool/weight room without being enrolled in a class or on a team?
- Are practice rooms and art studios available without being in a class? Are they free?
- How tough is it to access a computer and/or printer around exam time?
- Do most students find the library adequate? How quickly and easily can one get inter-library loans?
- Does the library have an open-stack system?
- What are the library's hours? Around exam time? Is there a 24-hour study room?

## Community

- What is there to do in town? How would I get there without a car?
- How well do the university students and the townspeople get along?
- Are there jobs in town for students? Internships?
- Are students involved in community service activities in town? What type? What percentage is involved?
- How safe is the surrounding neighborhood?
- Are there places students tend to drive to on weekends?

## Academics

- What is distinctive about education here?
- Which departments would be considered strongest and/or most distinctive? Weakest?
- How many students are in a typical freshman class? Who teaches them? Do they break into smaller discussion groups? Led by whom? Are freshman seminars available?
- What – and how many – courses are included in a typical freshman program? Are certain courses unavailable for freshmen?
- How easy is it to get the classes one needs/wants?
- Do students feel the focus is more on graduate students, undergraduates, or an even split? Does the same faculty teach both groups? Do all faculties teach at least one undergraduate course?
- Can a student change from one division or major to another without a lot of hassle? Until when? With what GPA?
- Are there any new initiatives underway?

- How many students have majored recently in \_\_\_?
- When does one declare a major? Are there many prerequisites? Are any majors selective? If so, how is one chosen? Can one double major?
- What percentage of students return for sophomore year? What percentage graduate within four years? If especially high or low, what do you consider the reason? (US)
- What proportion of students study abroad? Most commonly for how long and which year? Is it easy to do/encouraged or highly restricted/discouraged? Can \_\_\_\_ majors study abroad?
- What percentage of seniors go to graduate school? Do you have a list of the graduate schools they've attended in recent years? How many companies recruited on campus last year?

## General

- Which universities do you "overlap" with most in admissions? What makes your university distinctive among other similar universities?
- Have there been any recent budget cuts? Any planned? If so, what have they impacted?
- How has the university changed most in the last five years? How does it hope to change in the next five?

## Applying to universities in Australia

Applicants will need to begin to work on applications as early as August for March entry dates; as Australia is in the Southern Hemisphere, the normal school year begins in March, after their summer holiday. Since you'll be applying after you've left the FIS, it can be helpful to get your university application materials together before you leave so that it is easier to write back for supporting documents when they are needed. Many Australian universities offer midyear entry for certain courses; check with the individual universities. The deadlines for these mid-year intakes are usually in March.

New Zealand and Australia have a reciprocal agreement where students who are citizens of either country may attend university for in-country fees.

You will need to correspond with admissions people at the various universities that interest you to find out what qualifications are necessary for entrance.

International students

<http://www.studyinaustralia.gov.au/>

Find courses, explore university ratings and careers

<https://www.gooduniversitiesguide.com.au/>

Guide for IB students applying to Australian Institutions

<http://blogs.ibo.org/blog/2016/04/07/student-guides-for-applying-to-university-abroad/>

## Applying to universities in Austria

Most of the public Austrian universities require a B1/B2 level in the language of instruction; generally having a German at IB level is sufficient; however, it is not required that German is taken in the IB. A full IB diploma is required for study in Austria, with a minimum of 24 points. [Fees](#) are about 1450 Euros per year for international students. Consult the individual universities to determine application requirements and deadlines. Many courses have an entrance examination that takes place only one time per year, as well as online self-assessments. The application timeframe is generally from April to July, but varies by institution. It is recommended to apply as soon as possible after the admissions window opens.

Admission requirements

<http://www.migration.gv.at/en/living-and-working-in-austria/children-and-education/studying-in-austria/#c2326>

Complete IB recognition policy

<http://ibo.org/university-admission/recognition-of-the-ib-diploma-by-countries-and-universities/country-recognition-statements/>

Program selection

<http://www.studienwahl.at/Content.Node/allgemeines/allgemeines.en.php>

## Applying to universities in Canada

### Overview of the admissions process

- Canada is a multicultural and bilingual country. Depending on the province or territory, students may choose to study in either French or English, or at a bilingual university.
- Several Canadian cities rank amongst the best places in the world to live, work and study. According to the United Nations, Canada ranks among the top countries in the world in terms of the quality of life.
- For international students, tuition and the cost of living in Canada are generally lower than in other countries such as Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.
- Key characteristics of the Canadian system: High quality, internationally recognized, publicly funded, flexible programs, affordable tuition and living expenses, decentralized and diverse.
- Canada leads research in fields such as natural resource management, biotechnology, environmental engineering, communications, ocean studies, constitutional law, multicultural studies, engineering and genetics.
- Canadian universities offer both accelerated 3-year and regular 4-year Bachelor degree programs.
- Students apply to a specific program or a particular faculty (Arts, Engineering, Commerce, etc.). Applicants to Arts and Science programs do not need to declare a major prior to enrolling. Universities admit to a program not a specific concentration.
- The school year typically runs from September through April.
- Degrees from Canada are recognized around the world and have earned an international reputation for excellence.
- The most popular programs of study for undergraduate international students are Commerce (Business), Economics, Computer Science and Engineering.
- Admission requirements vary by institution and each university assesses candidates on an individual basis.
- Application deadlines vary from school to school but tend to be later than in the U.S., typically from January to March.
- Applications are assessed on a rolling basis from February through April (some schools send decisions later). It is therefore in the best interest of the student to submit their application as early as possible.
- Academic performance is the most important factor in the admissions decision, but non-academic information may also be considered.
- For IB Diploma Program candidates, admission offers will be based on the strength of the grade 9-12 transcript and on anticipated/predicted DP grades. For further information about DP policies at Canadian universities visit <http://www.wossworld.com/assets/canadian-universities-and-ib.pdf> (2011), and/or read the [IBO's Guide for IB students applying to Canadian institutions](#).
- Selective universities and programs are generally looking for scores between 32-36 points (some schools include bonus points while others do not).

- Interviews, essays and letters of recommendation are generally not required. Competitive programs at the more selective universities (McGill, UBC, University of Toronto, for example) may require these supplemental materials.
- For students whose first language is not English the TOEFL or IELTS is required unless you have studied the last 3-4 years of high school in English, in which case an exemption from the TOEFL/IELTS may be granted.
- For Canadian citizens or permanent residents, government loans and grants are available to help with tuition fees. Some schools offer merit-based scholarships. Athletic scholarships may also be available.
- Students interested in applying to universities in Ontario do so through the [Ontario Universities' Application Centre](#). Students submit an application to OUAC, which is then forwarded on to your chosen universities.
- Students interested in applying to multiple universities in British Columbia may do so through [Apply BC](#), or directly to the institution through the university website.
- Students interested in applying to multiple universities in Alberta may do so through [Apply Alberta](#), or directly to the institution through the university website.
- Once applications are submitted, universities will send an email or a letter confirming that your application has been received and they will also provide you with your personal student ID. We will include this number with all required supporting documents (transcript, DP predicted scores, etc.). Check your email regularly and respond immediately to any requests for additional materials.
- A wide range of support is available for international students who choose to attend a Canadian university. Most universities offer academic, career and personal counselling, international student advisors, help in finding off-campus housing, health services and scholarships.

Universities Canada: [www.univcan.ca](http://www.univcan.ca)

EduCanada: <http://educanada.ca/index.aspx?lang=eng>

Study in Canada: <http://www.studyincanada.com/>

CanLearn: <http://www.canlearn.ca/eng/common/help/contact/index.shtml?pedisable=true>

Study in Ontario: <https://www.ouac.on.ca/>

Study in Nova Scotia: <http://studynovascotia.ca/>

Study in Alberta: <http://www.studyinalberta.ca/>

Study in British Columbia: <http://studyinbc.com/>

British Columbia Council for International Education: <http://bccie.bc.ca/>

Maclean's Magazine: <http://www.macleans.ca/education-hub/>

Canadian University Report: [www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/canadian-university-report/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/canadian-university-report/)

\*Information provided by Universities Canada

## Factors that influence Canadian university admission decisions

### **The application**

The appearance and content of your application will reflect a great deal about you. It is important that you invest time and effort into completing each and every application carefully and answer all questions fully.

### **Academic achievement**

The most important factor in the Canadian university admission decision is proven academic achievement as demonstrated by your academic record/transcript for grade 9-12. Your performance in high school is the best predictor of your ability to succeed at university. Your transcript lists the FIS high school courses you have taken and grades you have earned. Admissions officers look for strong grades in an academically challenging program, including the variety of courses you have taken, the degree of difficulty of those subjects, the overall number of courses, and the grades earned. Admissions officers like to see consistency or an academic trend that demonstrates an improvement over time. Do not be discouraged by a few low grades; schools look at the total record and appreciate an upward trend. Grade 12 grades are important. Universities will request a mid-year report with your January grades. Do not fall into the senior slump and “check out” once you have submitted your applications – admissions officers will notice.

### **IB Diploma Program courses and predicted grades**

Canadian universities will check for the appropriate DP courses related to the degree you intend to study. In particular, B.Sc. and B.Eng. programs generally require or recommend two DP Higher Level science courses (including Physics and Chemistry) and Standard Level Mathematics. For B.Com. (Business) degrees, Mathematics Standard Level is generally the minimum expectation. Some universities also require particular grades at the Higher/Standard Level for certain degree programs. Always verify DP course requirements directly with each university.

### **Essays / short answer profile**

For more competitive programs at some Canadian universities, the essay and/or personal profile can be a critical factor in the admissions decision. It is the part of the application where you have an opportunity to give a “voice” to your application. Admissions officers will be looking for strong writing skills, as well as a glimpse into your personality. The essay is your opportunity to express who you are, what you value, what your interests are and what you hope for in the future.

### **School recommendation**

Though not normally required by Canadian universities, we may send a school recommendation, especially for admission to more competitive degree programs as it is to your advantage in the application process. As your primary advocates, we aim to present an assessment which is fair, out honest and accurate and which emphasizes your unique achievements and talents. This comprehensive letter includes information about academics, extra-curricular involvement and most importantly, gives a sense of who you are both as a student and as a person.

## **Extra-curricular involvement**

The emphasis is on quality and commitment. Admissions officers are looking for students who have invested their time, energy and commitment to activities that they are passionate about. They are looking for long-term involvement and evidence of leadership qualities. In short, admissions officers are looking for individuals who will make a genuine commitment and contribution to the university community.

## **Special talents**

Admissions officers are looking for unique individuals, students with special talents and experiences that set them apart from other candidates – musicians, writers, athletes, actors, activists, advocates... Universities want to enroll students who they believe will make a significant contribution to their school community.

## **The “you” factor**

Universities value such qualities as personal integrity, leadership abilities, compassion, independence, originality, etc. They are looking for individuals who will make a contribution to their school communities. The kind of person you are, your enthusiasm for learning, your motivation, your unique background and experiences, talents, interests, and contributions to your school, family and community are taken into consideration.

## **The interest factor**

Universities want to admit those students whom they believe will attend their school if accepted. Some schools take into account your “interest factor”. You may demonstrate interest in many ways: By visiting the campus, contacting the admissions office, communicating with a department representative, or meeting with a representative in the area.

## Applying to universities in Denmark

Most university courses are taught in English, and education in Denmark is free for EU citizens. A full IB diploma is required for studies. The application deadline for most universities is March 15; apply directly to individual universities.

Danish students: [www.ciriusonline.dk](http://www.ciriusonline.dk)

International students: <http://studyindenmark.dk/>

Applying: <https://www.optagelse.dk/admission/index.html?>

## Applying to European universities in general

Students who are a resident of an EU country can attend a university in an EU country for the same price as a student who lives in that country, generally, if they:

- Meet all entrance requirements of that university
- Pass a proficiency test in the language classes are taught in. However, more and more countries are offering a wide range of courses taught completely in English. Access your own BridgeU profile for possibilities, as well as [EUNICAS](#).
- Have lived in the country where they have citizenship for three year prior to age 18.
- Usually need to have the full IB diploma.

As all country requirements vary, be sure to find out the specific requirements of the country you would like to study in.

## Applying to universities in Germany

Public universities usually expect applications to be completed after school has finished in June and final school documents are available. Make sure you have a clear understanding of what documentation will be needed prior to the FIS's closing for summer holidays. You will need to get your *Hochschulzugangsberechtigung* from the Zeugnisanerkennungsstelle. If you are applying to universities in multiple states, check with each individual university to find out if they will accept a Hochschulzugangsberechtigung from another state, to possibly be able to avoid going through the IB recognition process in multiple states. In order to meet the qualifications for this special document, you must do more than simply pass the IB. You must take a specific set of courses, ensure that you take all of your courses for the full two years of Grades 11 and 12 (no switching courses!), and meet other [requirements set by the Kultusministerium](#).

The IB Diploma must include six subjects with minimum grades of 4. When a candidate has only 3 points in one subject, compensation is possible with 5 points in another subject at the same level, with a minimum overall score of 24 points. An award of two 3 grades makes an IB Diploma ineligible for the *Hochschulzugangsberechtigung*.

There are various guides and magazines with ranking charts and admissions information about various German universities available in the Higher Education Advisor's office. Every university has a different process for enrolling new students – often each individual department has its own process. Please check carefully as there are always changes.

**Obtaining recognition of the IB diploma to study in Germany:** Upon receiving final IB marks, students must apply through the Zeugnisanerkennungstelle to obtain Bavarian recognition of their IB diploma, in order to study in Bavaria. Students applying to courses with a Numerus Clausus—the most popular courses, such as Medicine, Business, Law, Engineering, etc., must be particularly quick to have their documents converted and recognized, as for many of these courses, the universities require a July 15 admissions registration deadline. As the IB results come around the July 6 or 7, you will have enormous time pressure to get your results and supporting documents converted. Those students applying to courses without Numerus Clausus may have a little more time to get this done.

Your Higher Education Advisor and the IB Coordinator will support you in putting together your file to send to the Zeugnisanerkennungsstelle in March / April. You will need to prepare several [documents](#) for this file.

**German language requirements:** Before being accepted to a university in Germany, students who are not native speakers of German (and in some rare cases, also native speakers), will need to prove their German language proficiency (minimum B2, usually C1/C2) through official language tests. As different universities can require different tests, check the language requirements well in advance and take exams well before applying.

Students can demonstrate the required proficiency by the successful completion of:

- the DSH-exam (at least DSH-2) or
- the TestDaF (at least 4XTDN4) or
- the Goethe-Zertifikat C2 or
- the TELC C1.

Please be aware that we do not provide certificates of German proficiency at the FIS, but students can take these exams at the [Goethe Institut](#), at the [VHS](#) or at a [TestDaF Institut](#). However, we can support and advise students with the preparation for such an exam.

If you do not obtain B2/C1/C2 certification by the time you graduate from high school, you are still eligible to take a bridge semester or year, called a [Studienkolleg](#), which will bring you to the required level of proficiency required for study at a German university. Some students prefer to enroll in a Studienkolleg, so that they do not need to prepare for an external German exam during their high school studies.

Comprehensive sites

<http://www.uni-assist.de/>  
[www.hochschulkompass.de](http://www.hochschulkompass.de)  
[www.studienwahl.de](http://www.studienwahl.de)

For international students

<https://www.study-in.de/en/plan-your-studies/>

Bridge year to study in Germany without IB diploma: [Studienkollegs](#)

Guide for IB students considering studying in Germany

<http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/5895a05412144fe890312bad52b17044/recognition-international-student-guide-germany-17-en.pdf>

Careers in Germany, and education that will prepare you for them

[www.arbeitsagentur.de](http://www.arbeitsagentur.de)

Exploring interests and matching them to careers and educational paths

[www.machs-richtig.de](http://www.machs-richtig.de)

**Scholarships are available through the following institutions**

[Bundesverband deutscher Stiftungen](#)  
[Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst](#)  
[Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk](#)  
[Evangelisches Studienwerk e.V. Villigst](#)  
[Freunde und Förderer des Touro College Berlin e.V.](#)

[Hanns Seidel Stiftung](#)  
[Friedrich Ebert Stiftung](#)  
[Hans Böckler Stiftung](#)  
[Heinrich Böll Stiftung](#)

[Friedrich Naumann Stiftung](#)  
[Konrad Adenauer Stiftung](#)  
[Stiftung der Deutschen Wirtschaft](#)  
[Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes](#)  
[Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung](#)  
[Hildegardis Verein \(Förderungen für Frauen\)](#)

## Find the right scholarship

[My Stipendium](#)                      [Stipendienleitfaden by My Stipendium](#)

## Grants

[Study Foundation of the Berlin House of Representatives](#) (for citizens from the US, Great Britain, France and successor states of the former Soviet Union)

## Public education loan program

Information about German education loan programs can be found on the website '[Studienkredite](#)'

## Other helpful sites

[Aufstiegsstipendium](#)    [Stipendienlotse](#)  
[Bildungsserver](#)    [Stiftungsindex](#)

## Applying to international universities

There are an increasing number of quality post-secondary institutions worldwide where the instruction is in the English, with more American-style programs. Many of these are associated with institutions in their host country and/or the US. For many students of international schools these institutions allow for a smooth transition from an international school with an English curriculum to an international university with an English curriculum. Although the tuition can be high, substantial scholarships are available. If you are considering one of these universities, remember to take either the ACT or the SAT – they are often required for admission. See the “applying to the United States” section for a list of US-style or US-affiliated universities overseas.

## Applying to universities in Japan

University applications tend to fall due from October until January for March/April entry. There are also some schools with April deadlines for a September starting date. The deadlines usually coincide with the entrance examination dates. FIS students who are Japanese citizens are ordinarily classified as kikokushijo or “returning students.” Students generally must travel to Japan to take their university examinations usually during the months of October, November, or December. For Japanese FIS students, a wise use of their time after June is to return to Japan and attend a “juku” to prepare them for their entrance exams and interviews.

For most Japanese universities, admission decisions are primarily based upon examination results. SAT test results, English-proficiency test results, letters of recommendation, and essays may be required. Scholarships for international students may be available, depending on degree program. The application period is different for each university, and ranges from November-February.

Comprehensive guide: <http://www.studyjapan.go.jp/en/faq/faq01e.html>

Intensive Japanese studies: <https://www.yamasa.org/en/index.html>

Degree programs in English: <http://www.uni.international.mext.go.jp/>

## Applying to universities in the Netherlands

- In 2019-2020, universities in The Netherlands will offer over 480 English-taught study programs at the Bachelor level.
- The Times Higher Education Supplement [ranks](#) 13 universities in The Netherlands among the top 200 in the world: Amsterdam, Utrecht, Leiden, TU Delft, Maastricht, Erasmus, TU Eindhoven, Wageningen, Groningen, VU Amsterdam, Twente, Radboud, Tilburg.
- Dutch universities offer international students an intellectually exciting learning environment with high academic standards. The focus is not just on knowledge transfer but also on debate and critical thinking whereby students' ability to think independently is greatly stimulated.
- Dutch universities have a reputation for being at the forefront in the development and introduction of new teaching methods. The Netherlands has received international acclaim for its 'Problem-Based Learning' system, which trains students to analyze and solve practical problems independently through emphasis on self-study and self-discipline.
- The Netherlands has [18 Research Universities](#), the oldest of which is Leiden University, which was established in 1575. The University of Amsterdam and The University of Utrecht are the largest universities in the Netherlands, with about 30,000 students each. Average enrolment at a Dutch research university is 12,000. Research universities offer 3-year Bachelor programs that can be followed with a Master program taking another 1-2 years depending on the study field.
- There are now 9 Liberal Arts and Sciences colleges (usually an honours college of a research university) that offer English-taught Bachelor programs with a more broad-based focus. Similar to a North American style undergraduate education, the programs are comprised of courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. The open curriculum gives students great freedom in deciding which academic fields they would like to explore. Liberal Arts and Sciences colleges offer 3-year Bachelor programs that can be followed with a Master program taking another 1-2 years depending of the study field.
- The Netherlands has 43 [Universities of Applied Sciences](#) offering higher professional education or [Bachelor degrees](#). They are more practically oriented and prepare students directly for careers in several sectors: Economics and Business Administration, Engineering, Technology, Commerce, Finance, Leisure, Tourism, Marketing, and Health Care. Graduates obtain a Bachelor degree after 4 years and are fully qualified to practice their profession. The additional year is due to internships that are an obligatory and integrated part of any University of Applied Science course. In addition, the diploma qualifies them for admission to several types of further study, including shortened university study programs leading to Master's degree programs.
- The following [degrees](#) are offered at Dutch Universities:
  - Bachelor and/or Master degrees at [Universities of Applied Sciences](#) (Hogeschole)
  - Bachelor and/or Master degrees at [Research Universities](#)
  - Bachelor degrees at Liberal Arts and Sciences Colleges

- PhD degrees at Research Universities or at special international post-university institutions
- Most Popular fields of study:
- Research Universities: 1. Economics 2. Behaviour & Society 3. Engineering 4. Language & Culture
- Universities of Applied Sciences 1. Economics 2. Language & Culture 3. Behaviour & Society 4. Engineering
- The Dutch government is committed to supporting the internationalization of universities curricula and student bodies. Higher education is heavily subsidized in the Netherlands. Thanks to this support, tuition fees are kept relatively low in comparison to countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States.
- The annual tuition fees for enrolment in a degree program or course at a Dutch higher education institution are €2,087 per year for EU students. The costs of programs or courses for non-EU students are generally higher, usually between €6, 00 – €15,000 per year.
- Non-EU students may qualify for student finance if you have a residence permit type II (permanent), type III or type IV. If you have a residence permit type I, your entitlement to student finance depends on the reason or restriction stated on your residence permit.
- Students from outside the European Union do not qualify for the national grants from the Dutch authorities. However, the Dutch Ministry of Education offers scholarships to nationals from a wide range of countries under the terms of various cultural agreements and other agreements of co-operation.
- Living in the Netherlands for one year costs between €680 euros and €810 per month. In total, a year can cost between €10,000 – €25,000 (inclusive of all living expenses) depending on your EU status and the level of the program.

## Application process

[How to apply to a program with a Numerus Fixus](#)

[Guide for IB students considering higher education in the Netherlands](#)

- For most programs, applicants must first register their university choices with [Studielink](#). Some institutions may want to do their own application review first, before registering in Studielink. Always check with the institution to verify their application procedure. If you do need to apply via Studielink, you need to do this by 15 January.
- Students may submit a total of four enrolment applications each year via Studielink. Of these, no more than two may be a study program with a selection procedure (Numerus fixus). Medicine, Dentistry, Dental hygiene and Physiotherapy programs are an exception; for these programs you can only submit one application per program per academic year. For example; you can't apply for Medicine at two different universities, but you are allowed to apply for Medicine and Dentistry.
- If the number of students who apply exceeds the number of available places, a selection will take place between 15 January and 15 April. The education institution decides what the selection will look like and will provide you with further information.

## Deadlines and decisions

- Application deadlines for programs without a Numerus Fixus vary from school to school. For EU-students this can range from 1 March to 1 July. Non-EU students may have an earlier deadline in order to allow additional time for Visa processing. For example, Amsterdam University College and University College Utrecht have both set 15 January as the deadline for non-EU applicants to apply to their Liberal Arts and Sciences programs. It is therefore very important that students pay particular attention to the deadlines that apply to them.
- Applicants in the selection procedure (Numerus Fixus) will receive a ranking number via Studielink on 15 April. This number is determined by the institution, based on their selection criteria. Depending on your ranking number and the number of places available, you may or may not be offered a place.
- If you are offered a place, you have to accept this place via Studielink within two weeks. If you don't accept the place within two weeks, your place will be assigned to another student automatically.
- If you are not offered a place, there is still a small chance that one or more selected students do not accept their place. These places become available for the next student in line. For example, if there are 100 places available and one of the 100 selected student does not accept, their place will be offered to the person with ranking number 101.

Study in Holland: [www.studyinholland.nl](http://www.studyinholland.nl)

Studyfinder: <https://www.studyfinder.nl>

Studiekeuze 124 (in Dutch): <https://www.studiekeuze123.nl/>

Elsevier Beste Studies: <http://bestestudies.elsevier.nl/onderzoek/beste-studies-2016/7>

Eurogates: <http://www.eurogates.nl/>

Dutch University Open Days: <http://www.dutchopendays.com/>

Open Dagen (in Dutch): [https://www.studiekeuze123.nl/open\\_dagen/](https://www.studiekeuze123.nl/open_dagen/)

Grantfinder: <https://www.studyinholland.nl/scholarships/find-a-scholarship>

DUO (Student Finance): <https://duo.nl/particulier/international-student/>

Studielink Application Service: <https://app.studielink.nl/front-office/#52>

[Guide for IB students interested in studying in the Netherlands](#)

## Applying to universities in Sweden

Sweden has over 1,000 Bachelors and Masters Programs on offer in English. The first round of applications are open from October to January. Sweden offers a coordinated application system, so students can apply to multiple universities through one [portal](#). [EU/EEA/Swiss](#) citizens do not pay fees at Swedish universities. The fees for other international students vary per institution and program. Some [scholarships](#) are available for international students.

[Study in Sweden](#)

[University Admissions](#): All English programs on offer, as well we application guidelines

## Applying to universities in Switzerland

Most of the public Swiss universities require a B1/B2 level in the language of instruction. All universities except EPFL and ETHZ require a minimum of 32 IB points, not counting bonus points. EPFL and ETHZ require a minimum of 38 points, as well as entrance exam. Each university has specific [course requirements](#) and all applications are submitted to the individual universities. Fees are about 750-1200 Euros per year for international students. Some scholarships are available for international students. Consult the individual universities to determine application requirements and deadlines. The application timeframe is generally from November to April, but varies by institution.

[IB Admission requirements for all universities](#)

## Hospitality schools in Switzerland

Switzerland, the pioneer country in hotel management education training, has more than a century of history in preparing world leaders for the hotel business. Tourism today has become one of the largest economic factors in the world. The Swiss hotel schools became famous due to the mixture of practical, theoretical education, training, and dedication to professionalism and discipline in a multicultural environment. Switzerland's hotel management schools teach their programs in French, German, and/or English.

[List of all Swiss hospitality schools](#)

## Applying to universities in the United Kingdom

### An overview of the admissions process

- **In the UK you apply for a specific subject, or a selection of closely-related subjects, that must be declared at the time you submit your application.** It makes sense, therefore, for you to choose your subject first and then research universities that offer your subject of interest. You are accepted to a particular course within the university and the courses you will be required to take will be related to your chosen subject area.
- **The most popular subjects by application in the UK:** Subjects allied to Medicine; Business & Management Studies; Creative Arts & Design; Biological Sciences; Social Studies; Engineering; Law; Computer Science; Medicine & Dentistry; Physical Sciences; Education.
- **When you are choosing a course** it is important to keep in mind that although a course might have the same title, it won't necessarily have the same content. If you are applying for Medicine, Dentistry, Law (which gives you the requirements to train as a solicitor or barrister) and Veterinary Medicine, the course will cover the same core, although there may be some variance- for example some Medicine courses allow you to complete a degree in addition to qualifying as a medic. The opposite can also be true, however: Some essentially equivalent subjects come under many names; e.g., Geology, Earth Science, or Geosciences. In the case of other courses, you should look at all of the units available across the whole course. For many courses, the first year will be quite general, so you should look at what is available in the second and third year because these will form the specialisms which are available to you.
- **If you are choosing a course which has an application in the world of work**, for example Business or Accounting, look to see which companies the university has links with, and how easy it is to secure internships; this is also important in law courses in terms of the pro bono opportunities that the university provides.
- **Once you have started your studies, changing subjects in the UK can be difficult.** If after your first year of studying Business you decide that you would rather pursue your passion for History, you may have to reapply via UCAS for History courses and begin your studies over.
- **The [UCAS website](#) is the most comprehensive source of information for students interested in studying in the UK.** There are over 50,000 undergraduate courses available at over 390 providers in the UK. Through the UCAS website you may search a database of available subjects, learn about entry requirements and link to universities.
- **The IBO's [Guide for IB students applying to UK institutions](#).**
- **Most undergraduate programs in the UK can be completed in three or four years.** Four year courses leading directly to a Masters degree are also available. In general, you can earn a Bachelor degree in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in three years, whereas a Bachelor degree in Scotland typically takes four years. Scottish degree programs are flexible. The first one or two years are designed for broad-based studies allowing students to study up to three different subject areas before choosing a specialization.

- **A Single Honours degree is one subject studied in-depth. Joint Honours courses involve the study of two subjects studied equally (50/50).** These subjects may be related (Math and Physics for example), or they may be quite different (Math and German). Combined Honours courses can involve two or three subjects. Students may opt to combine two or more areas of study equally (such as Italian and Spanish), as a major and minor (Law with Italian for example), or an integrated degree studying a variety of disciplines such as European Studies. In a Modular System, students choose options from a variety of self-contained units or modules. This allows students to put together a course of study from a wide choice of different subject modules. Although there is flexibility with a modular system, there are core or compulsory modules that students must follow to complete their degree.
- **A Sandwich Course** combines academic study with a period of time spent working in industry and usually extends the length of a course by up to a year.
- For applications to the UK, you must meet or exceed the minimum overall IGCSE, DP point, *and* subject requirements set by each university/course you are interested in. **This information can be found on the UCAS website, but should always be verified directly with the institution you are interested in applying to.**
- **For university ranking, course ranking and league tables,** refer to the online version of the *Times Good University Guide* and *The Guardian University Guide*. **In the UK, Law and Medicine are undergraduate degrees.** Five years of medical studies will qualify you to begin work as a doctor (there are further requirements for qualification). However, a three year degree in Law does not qualify a student to become a lawyer. That requires further training. Please note that some schools will require students to take a pre-admissions entrance examination in these subject areas (BMAT, UKCAT and/or LNAT).
- **In the UK, you apply to universities through a central processing centre called the Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS).** There you complete one application – the online UCAS Application Form through the section called “APPLY”. You may apply to a maximum of five universities/courses through the UCAS. Make sure you apply through the FIS, using the FIS buzzword to begin the application. This will allow the UK Higher Education Advisor to support with the application from beginning to end.
- **If you are applying to the UK for courses in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science, you can apply to a maximum of four universities/courses.** The remaining choice on the UCAS form may be used to select a medical-related course. **Medicine is extremely competitive. Thousands of highly qualified students are rejected each year.**
- Some universities require students to take an admission test when applying to certain courses. **You are expected to know the testing requirements of all the schools on your final list, including registration dates and deadlines.** Some of the more common tests are:
  - **Medicine** – [BioMedical Admissions Test](#) (BMAT) and/or [UK Clinical Aptitude Test](#) (UKCAT).
  - **Law** – National Law Admissions Test. (LNAT)
  - **Cambridge** – Students applying to Modern and Medieval Languages to take the Modern and Medieval Languages Test (MML). Applicants for Mathematics must take the Sixth Term Examination Papers (STEP), and students applying for

Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Engineering and Economics must take the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA).

- **Oxford** – Students interested in Modern History must take the History Aptitude Test (HAT). The Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) course requires the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA), and students applying for English must take the English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT).
- **Shortly after submitting your application you will receive a *Welcome Letter* from UCAS confirming your personal details and course choices.** It is important that you check this information carefully and contact UCAS if there are any mistakes. Also listed in this letter are your official UCAS application number and personal ID and username, which you will need to access TRACK. Through the TRACK section on the UCAS website you will be able to follow the progress of your application, respond to offers and amend personal details.
- **Once your application has been processed by UCAS, universities can access it online.** Subject tutors will be able to view your entire application but will not be able to see where else you have applied. In the UK, the subject tutors make admission decisions (not a central admissions office as in the U.S.), which are then forwarded to UCAS and posted on TRACK.
- **If necessary, you can change a university choice on TRACK within 14 days from the date of your *Welcome Letter*.** If you do not want to change your university but wish to change the course code or year of entry you must write to the university directly.
- **Applications are accepted by UCAS from September 1 – January 15, with earlier deadlines for Oxford and Cambridge and courses for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Science (October 15).** Students may apply to either Oxford or Cambridge, but not to both. **Internal FIS deadlines are earlier than those set by UCAS, with applications required to be completed a week before winter break.**
- **Applications for courses in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine or Dentistry may be submitted to UCAS from 1 September with a deadline of 15 October. *Internal FIS* deadlines are earlier than those set by UCAS.**
- **We encourage students who are planning to take a gap year to apply in Grade 12 between 1 September and 15 January.** You can then ask to defer your entry after being accepted by the university, although it is not guaranteed that the university will grant your request.
- **On the UCAS application** students must list their DP subjects and the results of any DP exams and IGCSE exams they have already taken.
- **A critical part of the UCAS application is the Personal Statement.** In the personal statement, you have 4,000 characters (including spaces) to discuss the following: Your reasons for choosing a particular course, current knowledge of your chosen subject, how your current studies feed into your course choice, inter- and intra-personal skills, career aspirations, any work-related experience, as well as your interests and involvement in extra-curricular activities. In all, it should be approximately one third academic and one third extra-curricular.
- **The final section of the UCAS application is the school reference.** The reference is a comprehensive letter written by the UK HE Advisor after gathering information from you and your teachers. It includes academic and personal information about you and lists your predicted DP results.

- **Although university course tutors make admission decisions, all decisions are sent to students through UCAS.** Offers are not considered *official* until you have received a formal decision letter from UCAS, or notification through the TRACK section of the UCAS website. You will receive either a conditional offer, an unconditional offer, or the application will be regarded as unsuccessful. A conditional offer means that a university is offering you a place contingent upon certain conditions, usually that you achieve a certain number of overall DP points or specified points in particular DP subjects or a combination of both. An unconditional offer means that you have met all academic entry requirements (unusual for students still enrolled in the DP) and are being offered a guaranteed place. An unsuccessful application means that the university has decided not to admit you.
- **Depending on when you submitted your application, the majority of admission decisions will be made between 1 December and 31 March.** If you have applied by 15 January, universities and colleges must communicate their decisions by 5 May *at the latest*, otherwise UCAS will make any outstanding choices 'unsuccessful' on your behalf.
- **Once all of the universities on your list have made their decision regarding your application, UCAS will send you a Replying to Offers letter.** This letter verifies the decisions that have been made by the universities and states the deadline by which you must reply to your offers. This letter has your UCAS TRACK password so you can apply to your offers through the online TRACK system. At this time, you are asked to select two choices from the schools that have made offers: A *Firm Acceptance* and an *Insurance Acceptance*. It is important that you choose an *Insurance* course that has less stringent requirements than the *Firm* choice, thus increasing your chances of gaining a place if your DP results do not meet expectations. You must also decline all other offers at this time.
- **You must respond to UCAS by the date displayed on TRACK and printed on the Replying to Offers letter.** The date listed on the letter and on TRACK is based on when you received the last decision from your universities. This is your individual reply date. If you do not reply by the date shown, all of your offers will be withdrawn automatically. Students who receive all decisions from their universities/colleges by 31 March will need to reply by 5 May. Students who receive all decisions from their universities/colleges by 8 May will need to reply to their offers on or before 8 June.
- **If you meet the conditions of your firm and/or insurance choices,** UCAS will confirm your place once your DP results have been received.
- **If you do not meet the requirements of a conditional offer, please contact the UK Higher Education Advisor immediately.**
- **For students who are either unsuccessful in gaining offers from all five courses/universities they applied to,** or after receiving all five decisions decide to decline all offers, UCAS offers a service called [UCAS Extra](#). *Extra* allows students without a place early in the admissions cycle to make an additional choice between February and the end of June. This means that students do not need to wait until Clearing to try and find a place. *Extra* allows students to make additional course choices one at a time. Courses available through *Extra* will be listed on the UCAS website. Universities will make decisions within 15 days after receiving the *Extra* application.
- **From July onwards, students who do not meet their offers or received no offers will be eligible for [Clearing](#),** a UCAS service that helps students without any university offers find placements. Students can apply through Clearing if they have already applied through

UCAS but were unsuccessful in securing any offers. If students are eligible for *Clearing*, UCAS will automatically send them an information booklet. *Clearing* runs from mid-August until late-September.

- **Each year some applicants pass their DP exams with better results than expected.** This may mean that some will have not only met the conditions of their firm choice, but will have exceeded them. UCAS has introduced [Adjustment](#) for these applicants – an opportunity for students to reconsider where and what to study. If you want to use *Adjustment*, you will need to register in Track. The option to register will be displayed for all applicants whose place has been confirmed (status has changed from conditional firm (CF) to unconditional firm (UF)). However, **you are only eligible if you have met and exceeded your original CF offer conditions.** It will be up to the universities and colleges to verify this.

## [Higher education fees in the UK](#)

- **Students are classified into two categories for tuition fees in the UK: Home/EU and Private Finance.** You are entitled to pay Home/EU fees if you are a national of a member state of the European Union or the child of an EU national *and* for the three years before your course will begin you have been “ordinarily resident” in the European Economic Area, which includes the EU plus Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein. If you are an EU student studying at a university in England, Northern Ireland or Wales you can participate in the deferred tuition fees scheme and repay your fees following graduation. However, you are not entitled to maintenance support (living expenses).
- **The impact of the Brexit vote** means there is a lot of uncertainty regarding tuition fees for EU students. What we know for certain is that the funding bodies in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have all confirmed that EU students starting a course in 2019-2020 will continue to be eligible for home fees and will also have access to student loans for the duration of their course. What the picture will look like for 2018-2019 and beyond is unknown.

## [EU Referendum: what we know for EU students / UKCISA priorities and concerns over Brexit](#)

- **Universities and colleges in England, Northern Ireland and Wales may charge Home/EU students up to £9,250 per year for their courses.** The actual tuition fee may vary between courses, as well as between different universities and colleges.
- **If you are studying in Scotland and you meet the eligibility conditions, EU students may be entitled to free tuition, in which case your fees will be paid direct to your university by the Scottish government.** The standard rate for each year is as follows: HNC, HND or equivalent £1,285; Degree or equivalent £1,820; Medicine degree £2,895. ***Fee payment does not happen automatically. You must apply to the SAAS to have your fees paid in each year of your course.*** You can apply for your fees at [www.saas.gov.uk](http://www.saas.gov.uk). You must apply before the closing date of 30 June 2018 if your course starts in the autumn term.
- **Northern Irish, English and Welsh students starting their courses in Scotland are liable for tuition fees of up to £9,250 per year depending on the course and the university.** Please visit the ‘Fees and Funding’ page of each individual university for more specific information.
- **Home/EU students are eligible to take out [loans](#) to pay tuition fees at universities in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.** Interest is charged on the loan from the time of the first

payment in university until the loan is paid back in full. The amount of interest charged varies and is dependent on the rate of inflation. Full-time students have to pay back any loans plus interest upon graduation, once they begin earning more than £21,000 a year, at which time they will pay 9% of their income over the threshold of £21,000 a year. Students do not have to pay back grants, scholarships or bursaries.

- **The [Welsh Government](#) will allow Welsh students a maximum fee loan of £4,296 plus a non-means tested tuition fee grant of up to £4,954** to account for the balance of the actual fee charged (up to £9,250) wherever they study in the UK and for EU students planning to study in Wales only. This means that the subsidy will vary dependent on what the institution charges, eg, if an institution charges £7k, the fee grant will be £2,704. Welsh domiciled and EU students will therefore pay the same fees as other students for the course at their chosen institution, but will receive assistance from the Welsh Government towards the costs.
- **Scottish students studying in England, Wales or Northern Ireland will be liable to pay the variable tuition fee of up to £9,250 a year.** Payment may be deferred until after graduation by taking out a loan. Graduates repay 9% of their annual income over £17,495 a year. For information regarding university fees in Scotland, visit the [Student Awards Agency for Scotland](#) (SAAS).
- **If you do not meet the requirements for Home/EU fee status you will be considered a private finance student and will pay higher tuition fees.** Private finance fees are set by the individual universities. The following are approximate examples of tuition costs per year. Please refer to the university websites for the most up to date information: Foundation Courses – £4,000 to £12,000; Humanities/Social Sciences – £7,000 to £15,450; Sciences and Engineering – £7,600 to £19,570; and Clinical courses – £9,600 to £36,050.
- **You are also responsible for living costs – rent, food, books, transportation, entertainment, etc.** [Living expenses](#) will vary considerably depending on where you choose to study. Average living costs (housing, food, clothing, entertainment, travel, books and supplies) for an international student range from £9,000 per year to £12,000 depending on the location of the university. UK students studying full-time are eligible to receive Maintenance Loans and Maintenance Grants for their living costs.

## Factors that influence UK university admission decisions

### IB Diploma Program / IB Diploma courses (certificates) subject requirements

**First and foremost, when an admissions tutor reviews your application s/he is looking to see if you meet or exceed the minimum overall DP point requirements set for the course and that you have fulfilled all DP subject pre-requisites.** In other words, does your IB Diploma Program prepare you for the course? For example, if you wish to study Chemical Engineering at the University of Bath, the admissions tutor will look to see that you have HL Mathematics and HL Chemistry and that you are predicted to achieve a minimum of 6 DP points in each subject and 36 points overall. On the flip side, if you apply for a course which requires a much lower point total than you are predicted, it is quite possible that you would not be offered a place. Admissions tutors look closely at the suitability of your high school program for your intended area of study.

## Examination/test results already achieved

The TOEFL or IELTS examination may be required for students whose first language is not English. Although not required for admission to UK universities, admissions tutors will consider the results of any standardized testing such as the SAT, SAT Subject Tests and/or ACT Plus Writing.

## IGCSE exam results

If you have taken IGCSE exams, you must declare the results, and they will be taken into account. If you are applying for very competitive courses such as Law, Medicine or to competitive universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial College London, your IGCSE subjects and results will play an important part in the first stage of the selection process.

## Predicted IB Diploma Program points

As mentioned above, universities outline their expectations for a specified number of total DP points, as well as their expectations for achievement in certain subjects. Keep in mind that you should contact the department you are interested in directly for the most up-to-date DP and subject-specific requirements. It is very important that you do not select courses where you fail to meet the minimum DP requirements or where you have not taken the prerequisite courses. **Your Higher Education Advisor will use the predicted grades from your Grade 11 report card on your application.**

## Personal statement

The [personal statement](#) plays a critical factor in the admissions decision. Admissions tutors will be looking for a well thought out statement which demonstrates strong writing skills, genuine interest, commitment and suitability for the courses chosen, a sense of motivation and energy, background knowledge in the subject, relevant work experience, and/or extra-curricular activities/interests (breadth of interests and responsibilities). The main focus should be on your academic skills and how these have been developed through your IB subjects. The statement should include any relevant practical experience or qualifications that are not detailed elsewhere. Admissions tutors will be looking for evidence that you have the ability, motivation and commitment to be a successful student in the subject you have chosen.

The personal statement should be roughly two thirds about academic achievements and interests and one third about extra-curricular activities and the skills that you have developed, for example leadership skills.

## Extra-curricular involvement / work experience

The emphasis is on quality. Admissions tutors are looking for students who have invested their time, energy and commitment to activities that they are passionate about. They are looking for students who will make a genuine commitment and contribution to the university community and to the subjects they have chosen. They want you to tell them about the skills and insights you have gained through these experiences rather than just what you have done.

## Interviews, auditions, and / or portfolios

Interviews are required of applicants applying for teacher training, Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and other health-related fields. Performing Arts and Visual Arts courses often require an

audition or portfolio review. Students are responsible for verifying all interview/audition/portfolio requirements directly with each university.

## School reference

The UK Higher Education Advisor will write the school recommendation incorporating feedback from your teachers. As your primary advocate, we aim to present an assessment that is fair, accurate and emphasizes your special achievements and talents. This comprehensive letter includes information about your academics, grade predictions, suitability for your chosen course of study, extra-curricular involvement, work experience, as well as information about your personal qualities and strengths. The more detailed information that you provide on your BridgeU profile, the better informed the Advisor will be in writing your reference.

## The UCAS application

It is extremely important that students invest time and effort into choosing appropriate courses, writing a strong personal statement and completing all required sections of the UCAS application completely and accurately.

## The "you" factor

Universities value such qualities as personal integrity, leadership abilities, compassion, independence, originality, etc. They are looking for individuals who will make a contribution to their school communities. The kind of person you are, your enthusiasm for learning, your motivation, your unique background and experiences, talents, interests and contributions to your school, family and community are also taken into consideration.

## The UCAS personal statement

The [personal statement](#) is a critical part of the UCAS application. It is your opportunity to tell admission tutors information about you that cannot be gained from the rest of the UCAS application. Admissions tutors will be evaluating your statement looking for your suitability for the courses you have chosen. In particular, they will be looking at your motivation to study a particular subject, your knowledge in the subject area, your academic qualifications, your interests, relevant work experience, career aspirations and any relevant background experience you may have in the field. They will also be evaluating your ability to write clearly and effectively. **In short, admissions tutors will be looking for students who can give a clear and concise statement about the experiences that have led them to selecting a particular subject.**

UCAS uses plagiarism software called "Copycatch." This system identifies personal statements that show similarity and quantifies the amount of copied material. Statements showing a level of similarity of 10% or greater will be reviewed by the UCAS Similarity Detection Service and plagiarism cases will be reported to universities.

## Consider the following

- Why have you chosen the courses you are applying for? How did you become interested in this subject? What do you enjoy most about the subject? What aspects of the course are you looking forward to pursuing in-depth? Do you have any background knowledge in the field? Have you attended any workshops, conferences or seminars related to the subject you wish to study?
- Do you have any relevant practical experience in the subject? Have you participated in any extra-curricular, work experience, placement or voluntary work that is relevant to your chosen subject?
- What particular interests do you have in your current studies? What are your favorite DP subjects? Why?
- What have you gained from studying the DP and attending an international school?
- How have the subjects you have studied in the DP helped you to develop your academic skills, as well as interest in your course choice?
- What is your background? What have you learned or gained from your experiences of living in different countries? How many languages do you speak?
- Have you received any academic honors or awards?
- What are your future plans and goals?
- Describe your non-academic interests (social, sporting or leisure interests), but emphasize the personal qualities and skills you have learned from these experiences (teamwork, communication, problem-solving, etc.). Have you received any awards in these areas? Have you taken on any leadership roles (team captain, president of an organization, representing the school in some capacity, fund-raising, etc.)?
- Are your DP Extended Essay and your IAs relevant to your chosen subject? If so, mention the title and why you chose the topic. What have you learned from writing it? What did you learn from TOK?
- Have you faced any major difficulties in the last two years? How have you faced those challenges?
- Describe your CAS experience and what you have learned from it.
- If you are planning to do a gap year, what are your plans and why have you decided to take a year off before going to university?

## Personal statement advice from Durham University

### How to write an effective personal statement

The first thing you must remember is that your personal statement will probably be the only opportunity you get to "speak" directly to the admissions tutor for the program you want to study. It is therefore vitally important that you make this statement as effective as possible! If you apply to a program that invites candidates to interview, your personal statement may also form the basis of your interview.

Your personal statement is an opportunity for you to demonstrate why you think you would be a good student for the program you are applying to and why the university should select your application over those of other candidates. **It is primarily an academic statement and you must target it specifically towards the subject(s) in which you are interested**, although a university will also want to know something about your more general interests.

We recommend that you cover three main areas in your personal statement in the following order:

1. Why do you want to study the subject(s) you have chosen?
2. What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the subject(s)?
3. What else have you done that would contribute to your suitability for the course and the university community, and what makes you an interesting and unique individual?

### Why this subject?

This could be a short sentence and needs to capture the reason why you are interested in studying the course you are applying for. Some of the most effective personal statements start simply, for example, "I want to study History because..." With this opening statement you are trying to communicate to the admissions tutor your enthusiasm for the program. You might want to think about these questions and areas:

- Why does the subject interest you in general?
- Your previous knowledge and experience in the subject area.
- What does the course entail?
- What are some of the features of the course that you are most excited about?
- Where could studying the course lead you to in the future? What do you plan to do after graduation?

### Why you?

Once you have outlined your reasons for being interested in the program you are applying to, you need to demonstrate why you would be a good student. In this section, you are trying to convey your ability to succeed in the program. You need to be able to show the admissions tutor that you have the right background in terms of academic preparation and the right interest. That is, that you know what the program you want to study involves. For example, if you want to be a primary school teacher but have never worked with children of that age, the admissions tutor will wonder

what your inclination to study to be a teacher is. When writing this section you will need to think about and quote evidence from:

- Your academic studies.
- Any volunteer work.
- Your hobbies and interests.
- Things you have learned from books, newspapers, TV programs and so on.
- Experiences in your gap year (if you are taking one).
- Any relevant work experience.
- Particular project work in your studies (such as the Extended Essay).

Are you interesting and unique?

Finally, you should write about what makes you an interesting and unique person – all those extra things you have done or experienced which will bring something extra to the community of the university you want to join. It does not matter what you have done. **More importantly, you need to reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned and write about that.** You may want to cover:

- What you enjoy doing outside of school.
- Your hobbies and leisure activities.
- Sports you participate in.
- Other sorts of extra-curricular activities.
- Significant responsibilities you hold, at home or in clubs or societies.
- Special achievements.
- What you have learned if you have had a job.

**Remember to mention these parts of your life and the skills you learned that will help you with the course.**

Some common questions:

**Q. How can I write a personal statement about the program I want to study when I want to apply to three (or more!) different degree courses?**

A. You cannot. It is possible, but harder, to write a statement that covers two related areas, but three is much more difficult. Remember, your personal statement needs to convince an admissions tutor that you are the right student for their program and trying to do that for several different degree courses in one personal statement does not work.

**Q. How far back should I go when mentioning my extra-curricular activities?**

A. You should only mention those things that help support your application. Picking one or two things and writing about the skills you learned through them is much more impressive than a long list of everything you have done. Also, remember that recent activities may be of more significance than those from a long time ago. The activities you took part in over the summer will carry more weight than awards you won when you were in grade six!

**Q. I think I have achieved some truly great things in my life, should I make sure these achievements make up the bulk of my personal statement?**

A. Anything that makes you a unique and interesting individual is important, but always remember that an admissions tutor is primarily interested in your academic preparation and why you want to study the degree course.

**Q. I am not interesting or unique!**

A. Yes you are! Everyone has special skills, experiences or achievements to mention. Admissions tutors do not have any set ideas for what they are looking for, they just want to know what makes you, you.

**Q. Do I need to use long words and elaborate language to impress the Admissions Tutor?**

A. No! An Admissions Tutor will be impressed by the use of proper English. A personal statement needs to be well written, in simple English and laid out carefully. If you try too hard to impress with clever language you will normally make your statement harder to read and your reasons for wanting to study a particular program less clear.

*\*From the Durham University undergraduate admissions [website](#)*

[University of Essex Personal Statement Guide](#)

## Applying to universities in the United States

An overview of the admissions process

- There are more than **4,000** colleges and universities in the United States.
- In the U.S., there is **no standard application procedure** – admission policies, requirements, procedures and deadlines vary from school to school. For IB Diploma candidates, see the IBO [Guide for IB students applying to US institutions](#).
- **A Bachelor (B.A./B.Sc./B.Eng.) degree in the U.S. is typically a 4-year program.** Some schools offer credit and/or advanced standing for the IB Diploma or DP Courses.
- **If you are not sure about your major in do not worry!** Many students in the U.S. begin their university career unsure about which major to choose. At most schools, students are required to take a broad range of courses in the first two years in different subject areas. These are called **General Education** or **Core Requirements**. There is a significant amount of choice within each subject area, as well as the flexibility to take elective courses. Many students apply “undecided” and spend the first two years sampling a variety of courses before choosing their major.
- **The most important factor in the admissions decision in the U.S. is the quality of the high school transcript.** Admissions officers will review your academic record from grade 9 through to grade 12, looking at the grades earned and the level of difficulty (rigor!) of the courses.
- **You should apply to a range of schools** of varying degrees of admission difficulty - reach, target and likely. To determine your list, you will need to compare your academic program (GPA, courses, grades, test scores and extra-curricular involvement) with those of recently admitted students. A great resource for doing so is [Colleges Simply](#). **Regardless of the category, you should be happy to attend any school on your final list.**
  - **Reach** – Your academic statistics are slightly below that of recently admitted students and there is a small chance of admission. A reach university may also be a school where the percentage of admitted applicants is extremely small, thereby limiting the chances of admission for everyone – Stanford, Harvard, Brown, Princeton, Dartmouth, Yale are obvious examples.
  - **Target** – A university where you have a realistic chance of gaining admission. You meet most of the admissions criteria and your academic record and extra-curricular involvement closely matches that of currently enrolled first year students.
  - **Likely** – A school where you have a high probability of gaining admission. Your academic statistics and extra-curricular involvement is above that of currently enrolled first year students.
- **Applications:** Some are easy to complete, requiring only basic information, while others are quite long and require a substantial amount of supplementary materials that could include teacher recommendations, essays, short answer responses, graded work samples, a portfolio, resume, etc. In addition to your application, most universities will require some or all of the following materials: An application fee; copies of your high school transcript(s); the FIS High School Profile; a Mid-Year Report (first-semester senior grades) and if applicable,

[financial aid and scholarship applications](#). All international students will require the [Certification of Finances](#) form for Visa purposes!

- **Standardized testing requirements vary significantly.** Not all schools require the same tests (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and/or TOEFL/IELTS) or the same amount of tests. You must inform yourself of the testing requirements for each university you are interested in and arrange for official results to be sent to each university.
- **Teacher recommendation requirements vary**, but it would be rare for a school to request more than two. It is important that you are aware of the recommendation requirements for each school/program you are interested in. Some universities may request a reference from an English teacher, a Math or Science teacher or someone who has taught you in Grade 11 or Grade 12. Please give your teachers **at least two weeks** to write a reference, using the request form on BridgeU. Always waive your right to read the reference. Universities will place little weight on a recommendation if they believe a teacher made positive comments about you simply because they knew you would be able to read to what they had written.
- **Over 800 colleges and universities currently accept The Common Application.** Using this application form, students complete one online application and then send copies to other participating schools on their list. **Although the Common Application does save time in the application process, many schools require supplemental forms and may also request additional essays or recommendations.**
- **Almost all universities have systems that allow students to apply online.** This is the fastest and most efficient way for you to apply from overseas.
- **May 1 is the Candidate's Reply Date.** By this date, you must notify each school on your list whether or not you will enroll. Please note that you may submit a deposit to only **ONE** university.

## Types of U.S. admissions plans

### Regular decision

Regular decision applications are the most common. Applications are submitted by a set date, usually in December, January or February. Decisions are sent between 1 March and 15 April. Students have until 1 May to decide to enroll.

### Rolling admission

Universities review applications as they are submitted and make decisions throughout the admission cycle until the first year class is full. Under this program, a university will consider your application as soon as all of the required application materials have been received. Notification of acceptance or rejection is mailed as soon as a decision is made, usually within six to ten weeks. **Under a rolling admission plan, it is extremely important to submit your application at the beginning of the application period and not at the end when fewer spaces are available.**

### Early Action (EA)

Early Action plans allow candidates to apply early, usually between 1 November and 15 November. Decisions are made by mid-December. To be competitive, students must have a strong academic record at the end of Grade 11 (GPA and standardized test scores). Early Action is a non-binding commitment. If accepted under an EA program you may apply to regular decision schools and wait until 1 May to make your final university choice. You may also apply to more than one non-binding, non-restrictive Early Action program.

### Restrictive Early Action (REA)

**Under this plan, you submit an application early and receive a decision early. You may, however, be restricted from applying Early Decision, Early Action or Restricted Early Action to any other school.** To be competitive, students must have a strong academic record at the end of Grade 11 (GPA and standardized test scores). If offered enrolment, you will have until 1 May to decide. Restrictive Early Action is a non-binding commitment.

### Early Decision (ED)

[Early Decision](#) allows students with a **clear first-choice** to apply early and receive a response early. Seniors who apply ED must be 100% sure that the university is their first-choice and should have a strong academic record at the end of the junior (grade 11) year (GPA and standardized test scores). **ED is a binding commitment to the university – once accepted you are making a commitment to enroll.** The application deadline is typically between 1 November and 15 November, with a decision made by mid-December. Some universities have a second round of early decision (usually in January or February). If accepted under an ED plan, you must withdraw applications to all other universities. If you are not accepted under the Early Decision program, the university may choose to reject your application at that point or to defer you. If deferred, the university will reconsider your application with the regular decision candidates and will notify you of a decision in April.

## Types of U.S. admissions decisions

### Acceptance

You are in! Always read these letters carefully and be sure to complete all of the necessary follow-up steps on time. Once you are accepted, schools will send you information about tuition deposits, course registration and housing.

### Deferral

If you have applied Early Decision or Early Action and are deferred, the university believes you are still a potential candidate for admission and will review your application again once all regular applications have been received. In this case, universities may have deferred their decision to review your first semester senior grades and/or standardized test scores or they are waiting to compare you against the regular decision applicant pool.

### Denied

The university has decided not to accept you.

### Wait list

Universities often admit more students than they have space for simply because they know that some students will choose to go elsewhere. If after May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Candidate's Reply Date, a university still has room, they will use the wait list to fill vacancies. Most schools will aim make final decisions by 1 June.

### May 1-candidate reply date

Once you have received all your offers you must then decide which school you would like to attend. Students applying to the U.S. have until May 1<sup>st</sup> to make this decision. By this date, you must choose the **one** school you wish to attend, pay your deposit and decline all other offers.

## U.S. style or U.S.-affiliated universities overseas

### Austria

Webster University Vienna  
[www.webster.ac.at](http://www.webster.ac.at)

### Belgium

Vesalius College  
[www.vesalius.edu](http://www.vesalius.edu)

### Bulgaria

American University in Bulgaria  
[www.aubg.bg](http://www.aubg.bg)

### Egypt

The American University in Cairo  
[www.aucegypt.edu/](http://www.aucegypt.edu/)

### France

American University of Paris  
[www.aup.edu](http://www.aup.edu)  
Parsons Paris The New School  
[www.newschool.edu/parsons-paris/](http://www.newschool.edu/parsons-paris/)

### Germany

Bard College Berlin  
[www.berlin.bard.edu/](http://www.berlin.bard.edu/)  
Jacobs University  
[www.jacobs-university.de](http://www.jacobs-university.de)  
Touro College Berlin  
[www.touroberlin.de](http://www.touroberlin.de)

### Greece

The American College of Greece  
[www.acg.edu/about-acg/](http://www.acg.edu/about-acg/)  
The American College of Thessaloniki  
[www.act.edu](http://www.act.edu)  
The American University of Athens  
[www.aua.edu/main.htm](http://www.aua.edu/main.htm)

### Ireland

American College Dublin  
[www.amcd.ie](http://www.amcd.ie)

### Italy

American University of Rome  
[www.aur.edu](http://www.aur.edu)  
John Cabot University  
[www.johncabot.edu](http://www.johncabot.edu)

### Japan

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University  
[www.en.apu.ac.jp/home](http://www.en.apu.ac.jp/home)  
Temple University, Japan Campus (TUJ)  
[www.tuj.ac.jp](http://www.tuj.ac.jp)

### Lebanon

American University of Beirut  
[www.aub.edu.lb/](http://www.aub.edu.lb/)

### Monaco

International University of Monaco  
[www.monaco.edu/](http://www.monaco.edu/)

### Netherlands

Webster University Leiden  
[www.webster.nl](http://www.webster.nl)

### Qatar

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar  
[www.qatar-weill.cornell.edu/](http://www.qatar-weill.cornell.edu/)  
Texas A&M University at Qatar  
[www.qatar.tamu.edu/](http://www.qatar.tamu.edu/)  
Mellon University in Qatar  
[www.qatar.cmu.edu/](http://www.qatar.cmu.edu/)  
Virginia Commonwealth University  
School of the Arts in Qatar  
[www.qatar.vcu.edu/](http://www.qatar.vcu.edu/)

### Spain

La Salle University, Barcelona  
[www.lasallebarcelona.com](http://www.lasallebarcelona.com)  
Saint Louis University, Madrid  
[www.slu.edu.madrid](http://www.slu.edu.madrid)  
Suffolk University, Madrid  
[www.suffolk.es](http://www.suffolk.es)

### Switzerland

Franklin University Switzerland  
[www.fus.edu](http://www.fus.edu)  
International University in Geneva  
[www.iun.ch](http://www.iun.ch)  
Webster University Geneva  
[www.webster.ch](http://www.webster.ch)

### Thailand

Webster University Thailand  
[www.webster.ac.th](http://www.webster.ac.th)

### United Kingdom

Hult International Business School  
[www.hult.edu/undergraduate/index](http://www.hult.edu/undergraduate/index)  
Regent's University London  
[www.regents.ac.uk](http://www.regents.ac.uk)  
Richmond, The American International  
University in London  
[www.richmond.ac.uk](http://www.richmond.ac.uk)

## Factors that influence U.S. university admission decisions

### National Association for College Admission Counselling (NACAC)

Each year, NACAC releases their annual ‘**State of College Admission**’ report – an invaluable resource for students and parents who wish to better understand the key factors that U.S. colleges and universities consider when making an admission decision. Their research confirms that grades in university-preparatory courses, the strength of the high school curriculum and admission test scores are among the top factors. The [College Board](#) also has a page to help students understand what really matters.

### Academic achievement

**The most important factor in the admission decision is proven academic achievement as demonstrated by your academic record/transcript.** Your performance in high school is the best predictor of your ability to succeed at university. Your FIS transcript lists the high school courses you have taken since grade 9 and the grades you have earned. Admissions officers will look for strong grades in an academically challenging program. In particular, they will look at the courses you have taken, the degree of difficulty of the curriculum, the overall number of courses you have taken and the grades earned. Admissions officers like to see consistency or an academic trend that demonstrates an improvement over time. Do not be discouraged by a few low grades; schools look at the overall record and appreciate an upward trend. **Grade 12 achievement is important. Universities will request a mid-year report with your January grades. Do not fall into the senior slump and “check out” once you have submitted your applications –your admission may be rescinded or you may jeopardize any scholarship money you have been awarded.**

### Standardized test scores

**The amount of weight placed on standardized test scores (SAT, SAT Subject Tests, ACT Plus Writing, TOEFL, IELTS) varies from school to school.** As a general rule, selective universities expect strong standardized testing results. These universities are looking for students who will be able to cope with the rigorous demands of their programs. Universities with large numbers of applications tend to place greater emphasis on test scores and GPAs. Standardized scores provide universities with a measure to compare students from different schools around the nation and around the world. *Most* universities will use your highest scores in each of the test sections regardless of the date taken. It is important to keep in mind that test scores are just *one* of the many factors that admissions officers consider when evaluating an application. There are also an increasing number of schools in the U.S. that have made the submission of standardized scores optional: Pitzer, Bates, Bowdoin, Hampshire, Wheaton, Sarah Lawrence and Hampshire to name a few. For a full list of test-optional schools visit [www.fairtest.org/university/optional](http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional).

### Extra-curricular involvement

**The emphasis is on quality and commitment.** Admissions officers look for students who have invested their time, energy and commitment to activities that they are passionate about. They look for long-term involvement and evidence of leadership qualities. In short, admissions officers look for individuals who will make a genuine commitment and contribution to the university community.

## Essays

**The essay is a critical factor in the admissions decision.** It is the part of the application where you have an opportunity to give a “voice” to your application. Admissions officers look for strong writing skills, as well as a glimpse into your personality. The essay is your opportunity to express who you are, what you value, your interests, and your hopes for the future.

## Interview

**A small number of universities require or recommend an interview.** If interviews are offered, the information provided may or may not be used during the application decision-making process. You should contact each school on your list to find out about individual interview policies and procedures.

## School recommendation

**If a school recommendation is requested, your Higher Education Advisor writes it with input from your grade 11 and 12 teachers.** As your primary advocates, we aim to present an assessment which is fair, honest and accurate and which emphasizes your unique achievements and talents. This comprehensive letter includes information about academics, extra-curricular involvement and most importantly, gives a sense of who you are both as a student and as a person.

## Teacher recommendations

**Each university has its own specific requirements for teacher recommendations.** As a guideline, the teachers you choose to write a letter on your behalf should be from your grade 11/12 years and should be able to speak to your abilities and accomplishments both inside the classroom and out. You do not necessarily have to choose the teacher of the course in which you have received the strongest grades. If you are working tenaciously to achieve a “5” in a particularly difficult course, the teacher may be able to illustrate your determination, perseverance, willingness to take risks and personal responsibility – all qualities that universities are looking for in an applicant.

## The application

**The appearance and content of your application will reflect a great deal about you.** It is important that you invest time and effort into completing each and every application carefully and answer all questions fully.

## Special talents

Admissions officers look for unique individuals, students with special talents and experiences that set them apart from other candidates – musicians, writers, athletes, actors, activists, advocates... Universities want to enroll students who they believe will make a significant contribution to their school community.

## Legacy status

**Almost all schools will ask if you have relatives who have attended their school.** At some universities, the sons and daughters of alumni receive special consideration in the application process. Although legacy status is not a guarantee for admission, the children of alumni may get a *second* look provided that their academic qualifications are within a reasonable range for admission.

## The "you" factor

Universities value such qualities as personal integrity, leadership abilities, compassion, independence, originality, etc. They look for individuals who will make a contribution to their school communities. The kind of person you are, your enthusiasm for learning, your motivation, your unique background and experiences, talents, interests, and contributions to your school, family and community are taken into consideration.

## Demonstrated interest

Universities want to admit students who will choose to attend their school if accepted. More and more schools are taking the ['interest factor'](#) into account, and will be more likely to admit a student who has engaged with the university prior to submitting an application. You may demonstrate interest in many ways: By visiting the campus, contacting the admissions office, communicating with a department representative, meeting with a representative in the area, or following them on social media.

## Standardized admissions tests for U.S. universities

It is absolutely critical that you verify the testing requirements for each school you are interested in and that you register for and take the appropriate tests.

### The Preliminary Sat / National Merit Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT)

The [PSAT/NMSQT](#) takes place once a year in October. The PSAT measures what you learn in high school and what you need to succeed in college. Although the test is optional, we highly recommend that students take the PSAT. The PSAT is a practice test for the SAT, an admission test required or recommended by many universities in the U.S. The PSAT/NMSQT is divided into three sections: a Reading Test; a Writing and Language Test; a Math Test. Score reports provide two different section scores on a 160 to 760 scale - one score for Evidence-Based Read and Writing, and one score for Math. PSAT scores are not sent to universities; results are available online to students, along with a score report form. This report form allows students to compare themselves with other test takers and to identify strengths and weaknesses, thus allowing them time to get extra help in needed areas in order to improve performance on the SAT. The PSAT/NMSQT also serves as the National Merit Qualifying Test for Grade 11 students. U.S. citizens and residents who do well on the PSAT may qualify for National Merit Scholarship Awards.

### The SAT

The [SAT](#) focuses on the skills and knowledge at the heart of education, and will measure what you learn in high school and what you need to succeed in college. It includes a **Reading Test, Writing and Language Test, Math Test**, plus an optional Essay. Scores for each section (Evidenced-Based Reading and Writing; Math) range from 200 (low) to 800 (perfect) for a total of up to 1600 points. When universities receive your scores they will have the option to view and print a copy of your essay. **Students should take their first SAT in spring of grade 11 at the latest and if necessary, retake it in the fall of grade 12.**

### The SAT Subject Tests

The [SAT Subject Tests](#) measure knowledge and its application in specific subject areas. There are 20 tests available in the following subjects: Literature, U.S. History, World History, Math Level 1, Math Level 2, Biology E/M, Chemistry, Physics, Chinese with Listening, French, French with Listening, German, German with Listening, Spanish, Spanish with Listening, Modern Hebrew, Italian, Latin, Japanese with Listening and Korean with Listening. Each exam is one hour and is multiple-choice. Students may register to take up to three different subject tests on a single testing date. SAT Subject Tests should be taken at the end of a course or when a student has reached the highest level of study in a particular subject area, when the information is still fresh in the student's mind. **Not all universities require SAT Subject Tests or the same amount of Subject Tests.** For schools that require SAT Subject Tests, results may be used as part of the application review process and/or as a means of placing students into appropriate course levels. Scores for the SAT Subject Tests range from 200 (low) to 800 (perfect).

### Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL)

The [TOEFL](#) evaluates the English language proficiency of non-native English speakers. It is a test required for non-native English speakers planning to attend most English language universities

around the world. The test is Internet-based and consists of four sections (Reading, Listening, Speaking and Writing), which are scored on a scale from (0 to 30) with a total score of (0-120). The test is administered in on fixed dates throughout the year and takes approximately four hours to complete.

## International English Language Testing System (IELTS)

[IELTS](#) tests English proficiency. It has four parts – Listening (30 minutes), Reading (60 minutes), Writing (60 minutes) and Speaking (11–14 minutes). The total test time is 2 hours and 45 minutes. The Listening, Reading and Writing tests are done in one sitting. The Speaking test may be on the same day or up to seven days before or after the other tests.

## Test taking information and advice

Standardized admission tests are not the most important factor in admissions decisions. They are just one of the many factors admissions officers consider when making decisions. Your four years of hard work in high school, demonstrated by the courses you have taken and the grades you have earned, are the most important factors.

- Many schools in the U.S. require one or more of the SAT, SAT Subject Tests, and/or TOEFL/IELTS.
- The FIS offers the PSAT, SAT, and SAT Subject Tests on our campus.
- The amount of weight placed on those scores during the admissions process varies from school to school.
- As a general rule, standardized tests are not required for UK universities. However, UK admission tutors are familiar with these examinations and a solid score could be helpful in the admissions process. If you are interested in studying International Business and German, a high score on the German and/or Math SAT Subject Test could be beneficial.
- Most English-language university programs around the world require students whose first language is NOT English to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) or the International English Language Test (IELTS). Having a bilingual diploma often cancels out the need to take an English test.
- TOEFL/IELTS scores are *not substituted* for SAT or ACT scores. In combination with an SAT or ACT score, the TOEFL/IELTS gives admissions officers a better understanding of the students' English language ability.
- Not all schools require the same tests or the same amount of tests. *It is very important that you check the testing requirements of each school you are interested in and that you register for, and take the appropriate tests.*
- Students with officially documented disabilities (i.e. learning disability or attention deficit) may qualify for testing accommodations including extra time, use of a word-processor or calculator. Please see your Learning Support teacher and/or counselor well in advance of when you intend to take the test to apply for testing accommodations.
- Although the SAT and SAT Subject Tests are offered on the same date, it is not possible to take both exams on the same day. If you register for the SAT Subject Tests, you may take up to three Subject Tests on the same test date.
- The June SAT sitting is the only opportunity for students to take the German SAT Subject Test.
- Plan to take the SAT at least twice, but not more than three times. You should prepare thoroughly before each test to achieve the best possible score. Be careful in taking exams multiple times. Although the SAT allows you to select which sitting you would like sent, universities will still see the scores for each individual section for that sitting. In any case, *most* universities will use the highest score you achieve in each section of the test.
- If you are a United States citizen and do not have a social security number you should apply for one now. This number is used to identify you on university applications and testing materials.

- Fill out the test registration forms in exactly the same way each time you take the test, using the name(s) in your passport. Using initials one time and the full spelling of your name the next may cause delays in your score reporting.
- If you know which universities you will be applying to, write their CEEB code on your registration form so that your scores can be sent directly to the schools on your list. *Universities require official score reports to be sent directly from the testing agencies. You are responsible for sending your official score reports to each university.*
- Most Early Decision/Early Action admission policies state that you must complete all university testing by October or November of grade 12.
- Recommended SAT test preparation materials are available for free through [Khan Academy](#).
- Always review your test admission ticket for errors and if necessary, fill out the correction form.
- There are over 850 colleges and universities in the United States that admit a substantial number of students without regard to test scores. *For a comprehensive listing of schools that do not require or who de-emphasize standardized test scores visit [www.fairtest.org/university/optional](http://www.fairtest.org/university/optional).*

## U.S. University standardized testing schedule at the FIS (2019/2020)

Test	Test Date	Registration Deadline	Test Center Number	School Code
SAT & Subject Tests	October 5, 2019	September 6, 2019	57670	734074
PSAT	October 16, 2019	Registration Done Internally	N/A	N/A
SAT & Subject Tests	December 7, 2019	November 8, 2019	57670	734074
SAT & Subject Tests	May 2, 2020	April 3, 2020	57670	734074
Subject Tests	June 6, 2020	Not yet published	57670	734074

### SAT and SAT Subject Tests

You should take the SAT for the first time in May of grade 11 *at the latest*. Students applying to selective universities should begin testing in December of grade 11 *at the latest*. If necessary, you will be able to take the test again in October and December of grade 12. **If required**, you should take the SAT Subject Tests for the first time in June of grade 11 at the latest. **June is the only opportunity to take the SAT German Subject Test.** Contact schools you are interested in to find out if SAT Subject Tests are required, and if so, which ones. If you would like to take the SATs on dates that are not offered at the FIS, the nearest testing centers are in Munich and Frankfurt.

### TOEFL/IELTS

Both the [TOEFL](#) and [IELTS](#) tests are offered at fixed dates throughout the year. Dates tend to fill quickly for the TOEFL, so it is important that you register as far in advance as possible online.

### Sending your official score reports

Score results are not considered official by a university unless they are sent directly from the testing agency. **As the owner of your test scores, you must arrange with the testing agency to have your scores sent directly to your chosen universities.**

## The U.S. application essay

**Essays are a key part of the university application.** The questions will be as varied as the applications themselves. Some universities will ask you to answer a specific question, while others will allow you to select your own topic. The purpose of the essay is twofold – to add a personal dimension to your application and to demonstrate your writing abilities. When an admissions officer reads your essay, he or she is hoping to learn something about you that cannot be found elsewhere in your application. They are looking for a glimpse into who you are as a person – beyond your grades and test scores. Admissions officers want to learn more about you – your values, interests, opinions and goals. The essay is your opportunity to make your application come alive by providing those reading your application with some insight into your unique personality. Take it seriously, start early and revise, revise, revise! Listed below are sample essay questions and factors to consider when writing your application essay.

### Sample essay questions from actual university applications

- Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story. (Common Application)
- The lessons we take from failure can be fundamental to later success. Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience? (Common Application)
- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again? (Common Application)
- Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma—anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took or could be taken to identify a solution. (Common Application)
- Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family. (Common Application)
- In French, there is no difference between "conscience" and "consciousness." In Japanese, there is a word that specifically refers to the splittable wooden chopsticks you get at restaurants. The German word "fremdschämen" encapsulates the feeling you get when you're embarrassed on behalf of someone else. All of these require explanation in order to properly communicate their meaning, and are, to varying degrees, untranslatable. Choose a word, tell us what it means, and then explain why it cannot (or should not) be translated from its original language. (University of Chicago)
- Were pH an expression of personality, what would be your pH and why? (Feel free to respond acidly! Do not be neutral, for that is base!) (University of Chicago)
- On a separate sheet of paper, write an essay which conveys to the reader a sense of who you are. Possible topics may include, but are not limited to, experiences which have shaped your life, the circumstances of your upbringing, your most meaningful intellectual achievement, the way you see the world—the people in it, events great and small, everyday life—or any personal theme which appeals to your imagination. (Columbia University)

- New York City is an essential element of academic and cultural life at NYU. If you could start a club or service organization at NYU, what would it be and how would you envision it impacting the larger community? (New York University)
- You have been selected to sing in a talent show. What song would you choose? Why? (New York University)
- Describe a trait or characteristic that has been passed along to you by your family. Tell us why you like or dislike this part of yourself. (New York University)

## Factors to consider when writing the essay

Brainstorm ideas before you even start writing your essay. Consider the following:

### Your goals & values

- What kind of person would you like to become?
- What events or experiences have shaped who you are today?
- Where do you see yourself in ten years?
- What is important to you and how do you incorporate that into your daily life?

### Your education

- What are your academic strengths?
- Is there a piece of work that you are particularly proud of?
- What areas do you find more difficult? How have you challenged yourself to overcome those weaknesses?
- What do you choose to learn when you are on your own?
- Are there any outside circumstances that have interfered with your academic performance?

### Your extra-curricular interests

- What do you most enjoy doing outside of school hours?
- What activities have been most important to you and why?
- What contributions have you made to your school and/or the community?

### Outside influences

- How has your environment (school, family, home) influenced you?
- What books, movies, music, etc. inspires you?
- Who are your heroes or heroines?
- Who has had the most influence on your life and your development as an individual?
- How has studying at an international school influenced you as a person and as a student?
- What issues, concerns and values do you feel most strongly about?

## Your personality

- What makes you special and unique?
- How would your family and friends describe you?
- What relationships are most important to you and why?
- What obstacles have you faced and how have you overcome them?

## Essay suggestions

Do	Do not
Do know yourself. It sounds simple, but the key to writing an effective application essay is knowing yourself well enough to be able to express your goals, values, academic interests and abilities to the admissions officer reading your application.	<b>Do not</b> write a list of specific events or talents (summer trip, science award, winning a sports event). Instead, explain how a particular experience has affected your life, character, values and future plans. In other words, do not describe your science project in detail – describe your curiosity for the subject.
Do brainstorm ideas. What are your major accomplishments? What do you feel most strongly about? What makes you unique? What are your personal strengths? What are you passionate about?	<b>Do not</b> write a 1,000 <b>word</b> essay if the university asks for 1,000 <b>characters</b> .
Do write your own application essay. Your work should be original and entirely your own.	<b>Do not</b> repeat information that may be found elsewhere on your application.
Do be sure that you have a strong opening. Grab the reader's attention from the start and use imagery throughout. Tell your story.	<b>Do not</b> ignore an <i>optional</i> essay. Always answer those questions listed as 'optional'.
Do allow your unique style and individuality to come through in your writing.	<b>Do not</b> seek too much help. The essay should be your work and represent your voice.
Do start early and revise, revise, revise!	<b>Do not</b> use the same essay for every application.
Do write about something that is personal and that you feel passionate about.	<b>Do not</b> submit an essay before it has been checked for misspelled words, typographical and grammatical errors.
Do follow all instructions and be sure to answer the question that is being asked of you.	<b>Do not</b> write about what you think an admissions officer wants to hear. Instead, write about what you know.
Do abide by the guidelines in length set by the university, making note of the limit in words or characters.	<b>Do not</b> draw attention to the negative.
Do get feedback from your Higher Education Advisor, friends and parents. Be sure to proofread for content, grammar, structure and spelling.	<b>Do not</b> use exclamation points and <b>do not</b> use a thesaurus for every word.
Do talk about your strengths or how you have overcome a weakness or obstacle.	<b>Do not</b> talk about subjects everyone else is taking about – how you saved the big game, your trip to France...
Do keep your essay strong from start to finish. Often students neglect the importance of a solid conclusion.	<b>Do not</b> use the essay to excuse poor grades or low SAT scores.



## Essay advice from admissions officers

### From the National Association of College Admission Counselors Listserve

- Provide us with insight into who you are as a person.
- Be detailed. Do not write a biography of your grandfather but rather focus on how he influenced you. In other words, how are you different for having had him in your life?
- Express your unique ideas and opinions.
- Highlight your most significant interests, commitments and achievements.
- Do not tell me about Aunt Sally's death. Tell me about how Aunt Sally's death affected you.
- Tell a story only you could possibly tell.
- If it is the first time you have thought about it, do not write your university essay about it.
- Avoid topics such as drugs, sex or other subjects that could embarrass the reader.
- Respond creatively. Demonstrate a depth of insight and clarity of thought.
- Write about your values, experiences, relationships and goals.
- Demonstrate evidence of critical and abstract thinking, in addition to technically sound writing skills.
- Distinguish yourself from other applicants.
- Show us the human being behind the grades, test scores, and stellar accomplishments.
- Fill in the gaps, what should I know?
- Regard the essay as a window to your personality, values and goals.
- Help me create a full (and hopefully memorable) picture of you.

## Advice from Connecticut College – Essays that worked

**Even the students who absolutely love to write struggle with the application essay.** So if you've been biting your nails or tearing your hair out even a little, you're not alone.

The good news is, I can help. I've been in the Admission business long enough to have gleaned a few tips that I think are worth passing along. I also want to recommend our Essays that Worked: real essays submitted by real students who have since matriculated at Connecticut College. These essays are terrific, and if you were wondering what in particular we liked about each one, check back in late September to read the comments that my staff will be adding to their favorites. Now for my tips:

1. Allow yourself plenty of time to write the essay. Do not wait until the last minute. I know this sounds absurdly simple, but it really does make a difference to be as relaxed as possible when you sit down to write.

2. Choose the prompt that comes closest to something you'd like to write about. The purpose of the prompt is to help you reflect on something that matters to you. Your application will be full of information that illuminates dimensions of you and your abilities, but only the essay gives you a vehicle to speak, in your own voice, about something personally significant. Choose something you care about and it will flow more naturally.
  - a. **Fallacy:** If you haven't experienced a life-changing event, you have nothing to write about. Wrong. You care about things now. Write about one of them and show us why it matters to you.
  - b. **Fallacy:** If you haven't had a major international service experience, you're sunk. Wrong again. If you've had such an experience and you feel it says something important about you, great. If you haven't, just choose something that says something important about you. That's all.
3. When you've written a first draft, let it sit. Then go back to it another day. Ask people you trust for their feedback, but don't let anyone else tell you how you should write it. This is your story, or some small but significant part of it, as told or reflected upon by you.
4. When you've revised it to your heart's content, proofread with care. Spellcheck isn't always the most reliable friend, as I have learned on occasion with a quickly typed email that gets sent before it was proofread!
5. Submit it, and treat yourself to something nice — like your favorite film, or a run, or quality time with your dog, or whatever it is that you enjoy.

That's it for tips. Now you should read the Essays that Worked, and be inspired by their example!

Sincerely,  
Andrew K. Strickler  
Dean of Admission and Financial Aid

The following are two of Connecticut College's "Essays That Worked."

For additional samples visit <https://www.conncoll.edu/admission/apply/essays-that-worked/>

Rachel Schwartzbaum '19  
Scarsdale High School, Scarsdale, N.Y.

*When people ask me what it feels like to perform a stand-up routine, I lie to them. I tell them that it's an incomparable experience. Using passionate imagery, I describe the rush of standing on stage to face a crowd of eager eyes. With alliteration and flowery language I boast that I've bared my vulnerable comedic soul. And just to be sure that I sound as pretentious as possible, I'll recite my entire response in iambic pentameter.*

*My true feelings about performing stand-up are not nearly as poetic. If I were to honestly describe my pre-routine thoughts, I would use a very different set of literary devices. There would be repetition: "Oh my god! Oh my god! Oh my god!" Some innovative use of simile: "I can't do this, like, you literally*

*don't understand." And, of course, a great deal of hyperbole: "I'm going to walk on stage, lose my notes, forget my entire routine, and then fall down on the floor and cry. And then spontaneously combust."*

*Junior year, as I paced backstage before my first routine, dangers such as spontaneous combustion dominated my thoughts. Armed only with a microphone and two pages of one-liners, I prepared myself to face a room of menacing teenagers. I began to wonder why I had arrived at this moment, hoping that my answer would allow me to rationally conquer my fears.*

*I thought of my younger self, a seventh-grade girl drowning in braces, acne and Pink Sugar perfume. There was nothing I wanted more than to be adored by my peers, and I had aimed to achieve that adoration through comedy. Unfortunately, my intentions were far better than my execution. In hopes of earning status through laughter, I would make poor attempts at telling jokes. The worst of which started with setting my watch two minutes slow, then, when someone would announce the time, I would shout, "Not on my watch!" I soon learned that it is immensely difficult to find respect through comedy — especially when you're bad at comedy. Not only was I consistently met with a sea of blank stares and the ever-dreaded "pity laughter," but the incorrect time on my watch would frequently make me late.*

*Backstage, as I made my fifth lap around the pacing track I had created, it became apparent that obsessing over my comedic origins would not provide me with the comfort I needed to perform. I began to wonder if pursuing comedy was even worth the effort.*

*My anxiety had now trapped me in a firm headlock. I rapidly began flipping between my two pages of notes, while reminding myself to breathe. Reading through the pages again and again, it struck me that nearly all of the jokes were at my own expense. "Self-deprecating jokes are always great," I smiled bitterly, "well, maybe except for when I tell them."*

*But in that moment I realized that the self-deprecating jokes were there for a reason. When attempting to climb the mountain of comedic success, I didn't just fall and then continue on my journey, but I fell so many times that I befriended the ground and realized that the middle of the metaphorical mountain made for a better campsite. Not because I had let my failures get the best of me, but because I had learned to make the best of my failures. By the time my shaking legs arrived on stage, I had resolved to embrace my flaws, and use them to my advantage. After all, even if I did walk on stage, lose my notes, forget my entire routine, fall down on the floor, cry and spontaneously combust, it would make for one hell of an opening joke.*

*"Hey guys, my name is Rachel Schwartzbaum. I'm going to try my best to do some stand up for you tonight, but if it doesn't work out, don't worry. I do accept pity laughter."*

**Morgan Elliot '19**

**Monadnock Waldorf High School, Keene, N.H.**

*The shop floor is always dirty. A century of grease and grit has been ground into the concrete beneath the shoes of men. Some of the last train tracks in Cheshire County are set in the shop floor from when it was a shoe factory. Years ago, someone poured concrete over the rails to level the floor, but the repairs crumbled away, leaving the tracks exposed in broken channels that quickly gather gunk and grime. The building's ancient, ugly bunker-like walls stand as proudly as ever, but rough, like the face of an old man, and the boarded-up windows give it an air of tomb-like secrecy, mysterious and lonely.*

*I began working at the shop at age twelve, and I have gone there on my bike almost every day since. It isn't far, but in the standard six-month New England winters, biking can be challenging. Imagine the fading light of a February afternoon: it's snowing, but I'm on my bike charging down unploughed roads as soon as school lets out. I can't wait to get to work. I love to fly along the asphalt with complete abandon; I keep a stopwatch fixed to the handlebars to time my rides, only stopping the clock when I've skidded to a stop at the shop's entrance. I enter through the door marked by the shop's only sign, a tiny peeling thing with the name "Fix" in black on yellowed plastic. I stash my bike behind the rack of windshield wipers, and I take it all in again: the air compressor's racket, the bitter scent of solvents, and the '75 Datsun 280z, its three shades of primer oddly resplendent in the flickering fluorescent light. I survey the work ahead of me while snapping on a pair of Black Lightning powder-free nitrile gloves.*

*I love working on a car, my arm thrust deep into its convoluted innards. I love a caked greasy Volvo 240 underside suspended above me as I remove a cancerous rusty hole before welding in a new piece of steel. In face shield and earmuffs, I saw out the disintegrated portion. With my real-life light-sabre, I plasma-cut a piece of new sheet metal the size of the hole and, once it is hammered and trimmed into submission, it becomes one with the car by way of the trusty Lincoln Electric welder. Then I grind the seams until they disappear and the panel becomes whole. Equally, I love to build custom side-pipes or re-animate an engine — the roar of a newly modified Saab 99E 1703cc, that just last week was swaying on a chain like a stripped animal carcass, is sublime. But even the simplest tasks — changing a set of tires or replacing brake pads — delight me.*

*Outside lie some fifty cars on which I might ply my trade, some just waiting for an oil change, but many others lost in the limbo of passing years. Rot and decay consume them; eager knotweed bursts through their bellies. All around the building grasses and trees grow unhindered, an unsightly jungle, teeming with life. Crickets by the dozens hop aside as I walk through the waist-high grass, stray cats coolly ignore me. It is common to see the cats strutting down the dusty driveway, or to hear them fighting amongst the sea of cars in the untamed thicket.*

*Being at the shop alone in the evening is magical: looking out across the cars, as the sun silhouettes the dead treetops. At age twelve, I was sure I would be a mechanic but, having fulfilled that wish, I've come to realize that my intellectual and creative aspirations extend far beyond this gloriously dirty old shoe factory that I love so much. Even so, my time at Fix always seems too short, and, as I race home in the dark, I can think only about what I will work on when I return tomorrow.*

## Financial aid information for U.S. universities

- The total [cost](#) of attending university in the U.S. varies from school to school, with prices ranging up to \$60,000+ U.S. dollars or more **per year**, including tuition, housing, meal plan, books and supplies, transportation and miscellaneous expenses. For students who qualify for in-state tuition, the fees at public universities in that particular state can be much less.
- Many U.S. citizens/residents attending university today receive some form of financial aid. Financial aid is monetary assistance given to a student and his or her family to help meet the total cost of attending university (tuition, fees, room and board, transportation, books, supplies and personal expenses). Financial aid funding comes from a variety of resources including the federal government, state government, universities, private sources, organizations, corporations and banks.
- Financial aid can be awarded to students in three ways: [Grants \(also known as gift or scholarship aid\)](#), [loans](#) and [work-study](#).
  - **Gift aid** is money that does not need to be repaid and can take the form of scholarships (money awarded for academics, sports, the arts, service, etc.) or grants which are based primarily on need.
  - **Loans** are funds that must be repaid, but are given at a low interest rate.
  - **Work-study** is a job arranged by the university and the money earned goes towards the total cost of education.
- Financial aid can be both merit-based and/or need-based, with need-based being the most common.
  - **Merit-based aid**, often called grant or scholarships, is money awarded to students for such things as academic achievement and/or special talents and skills (sports, music, art, leadership abilities, etc.).
  - **Need-based aid** is the most common type of aid and is awarded on the basis of *need*. Most need-based aid comes from the U.S. government. Need is simply the difference between the cost of attending a particular school and what you and your family can afford to pay toward these costs.
- **Only U.S. citizens, dual-nationals and permanent residents are eligible for Federal Aid.** Students apply for Federal Aid by having their parents complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid ([FAFSA](#)) form online. **This form should be completed in grade 12 as soon as it becomes available on October 1<sup>st</sup>.** The data used to complete the form comes from your parent's U.S. income tax forms from the previous year. The information provided on the FAFSA is then used in a formula called Federal Methodology, resulting in a calculation called the Expected Family Contribution (EFC). For more information on this and other changes to the FAFSA application, please see the U.S. Department of Education's [FAQ's document](#).
- The EFC is the amount you and your family will be expected to contribute to your education and is determined by a formula established by Congress that indicates how much of a student's family's financial resources should be available to pay for school. This financial information is collected through the FAFSA form. Your EFC is used to determine your

*financial need* at a university and is reported directly to the schools you apply to. *Need* at a particular institution is determined by subtracting the EFC (what you and your family are expected to pay) from the total cost of attendance at a particular university. If there is a gap between what you are expected to contribute and what the university actually costs, you have *financial need*.

- Financial aid packages will vary from school to school depending on the gap between the total cost to attend that institution and your EFC. Your financial aid package will typically be a combination of grant/scholarship money (which does not have to be repaid), loans and/or work-study. Never rule out any school based solely on the *sticker price*. Although the cost of your chosen universities may vary, your EFC remains constant. If you qualify for aid, the school with the high *sticker price* just might be able to provide you with a financial aid package that helps to make that university affordable.
- In addition to the FAFSA, many private universities also require the College Scholarship Service's [PROFILE form](#) and/or their own financial aid form. Many universities use the information collected on the CSS PROFILE to award private non-federal student aid. There is a registration fee that covers the cost of customizing your CSS PROFILE application, as well as a fee for each school to which you want the information sent.
- Check the financial aid policies, procedures and deadlines for every school on your list. For specific questions regarding the FAFSA or the CSS PROFILE form, contact the Financial Aid Administrators at the universities you have applied to.

## Financial aid in the U.S. – International students

- Financial aid for international students wanting to attend a U.S. university is limited. Some schools have a clear and upfront policy stating that they do not offer any financial aid for international students. **The College Board “[International Student Handbook](#)” publication is a fantastic resource for international students.**
- International students should contact the Financial Aid Office at each school they are interested in for information about the availability of funds for international students and the policies and procedures for applying for aid.
- The [National Association of International Educators](#) website may also be helpful
- For those schools that do provide aid, most will ask you to submit [the International Student Financial Aid Application](#) published by the College Board. This form is designed for non-U.S. citizens seeking financial assistance to U.S. universities.
- In the U.S., a visa for study cannot be granted until it is proven that the family has the financial resources to pay the tuition and living expenses. **For visa purposes, all international students will be required to complete the [College Board Certification of Finances Form](#), or a similar form created by the individual university.** These forms are typically verified by an employer or a bank official and inform the university that the family is financially able to pay the full amount for tuition, books and expenses for one academic year.

## Financial aid in the U.S. – Questions for financial aid officers

- What is the total cost of attending your university (tuition, room and board, books, fees, supplies, etc.)?
- Approximately how much should I expect to spend on *extras* (transportation, living expenses, entertainment, etc.)?
- Do you offer financial aid to international students? If so, what is the average package for an international student? What are the deadlines for applying?
- Are you “need blind” or does financial need impact the admission decision?
- If I apply Early Action or Early Decision, how will this impact my financial aid package?
- Which financial aid forms do you require (FAFSA, CSS PROFILE and/or your own institutional financial aid form)?
- What are your deadlines for the receipt of financial aid applications and documentation? Do you have priority deadlines?
- When will I know if/how much aid I will be receiving? When will I get notification of my financial aid award package?
- What happens if, even after you have put together a financial aid package, I cannot afford to pay the *gap* in tuition? What can the university do for me in that case?
- How can I find out about available university scholarship or grants?
- Is there a separate application for applying for merit-based aid?
- What are your deadlines for scholarship applications?
- How will the awarding of outside scholarships impact my financial aid package?
- How can I find out about job opportunities on campus or in the surrounding area?
- How is the financial award package determined after my first year of studies? Will my package remain the same? Will it be reduced? Will I receive greater funding?
- Does the school offer payment plans or payment schedules?