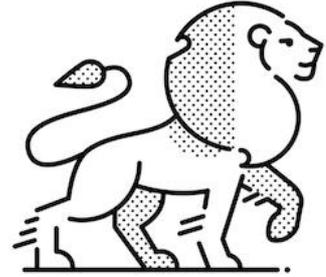




Counselling Department

INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL OF
DÜSSELDORF

SINCE 1968



The International School of Düsseldorf

Higher Education Handbook

A Reference Guide for ISD Students & Parents



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INTRODUCTION

Dear Students & Parents,

If you are reading this, then the higher education research and admissions process must be underway. We look forward to working with you as you journey through the process of discovering institutions that are a good match for **you** – both personally and academically. As the counsellors for UK, EU, North American and other institutions worldwide, we are here to offer information, advice, guidance, support, assistance, and encouragement every step of the way. In the end, however, you are ultimately responsible for making the key decisions about your future. You will need to evaluate your needs and preferences, research your options, choose the institutions to which you will apply, complete the applications, write the essays/personal statements/letters of motivation, take the standardized tests and most importantly, make the final decision about which institution to attend from all of the admissions offers that you receive.

Determining where to apply to is very much a matchmaking process. Students who find the greatest success in the process are those who have a clear understanding of their academic and personal abilities, interests, needs and preferences, and are therefore able to make **informed decisions** about the institutions where they will be happy and successful. The role of the counsellor is to facilitate the research and admissions process for you and your parents and to help you to determine which institutions are best suited to your individual talents, interests, and abilities. Our primary tasks are:

- To provide students and parents with accurate and timely information
- To encourage and help students identify institutions and programs that are a good fit
- To support students through the process of researching and evaluating their options
- To help students prepare applications that will highlight their unique academic and personal strengths

The **ISD Higher Education Handbook** is designed to guide you through the exploration and application process. It includes general information about admissions policies and procedures, timelines for key activities, as well as suggestions for completing your applications. **Please read the relevant sections of this guide thoroughly and keep it handy as a reference throughout the higher education research and application process as answers to many of the questions you may have are contained within these pages.**

To compliment this guidebook, we also recommend reviewing the **NACAC International Guide to University Admissions**. This excellent resource provides information about the admissions process in other countries that are of interest to ISD students, including **France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, and Spain**. You can also find more information on studying in Europe on the **European Commission** website.

http://www.isdcounselling.org/uploads/1/0/6/2/10624989/nacac_international_guide.pdf
www.ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe/country-profiles_en

The higher education research and admissions process goes far beyond helping you find an institution that is a “good fit”; the decision-making process is an opportunity for self-discovery, exploring possibilities and developing independence. It is a time for you to demonstrate your increased responsibility and growing maturity, and that you are ready to make the transition to this next exciting phase in your life.

We wish you the best of luck with your search and look forward to supporting you throughout your journey.

Sincerely,

[Keith Layman \(A-I\)](#) | [Marlene Mika \(J-R\)](#) | [Ginny Reiss \(S-Z\)](#)

Grade 9-12 Counsellors: UK | EU | North America | Worldwide

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RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Counsellor

- **Act as an advocate.** Promote the best interests of each student throughout the higher education admissions process.
- **Inform students and parents.** Provide information about application procedures, deadlines, timelines and the overall management of the higher education application and decision-making process. Announce higher education fairs, summer tours and DP preparation and revision courses. Communicate regularly through email, MaiaLearning, Google Classroom, the Weekly Announcements, the ISD Counselling Department website, Facebook, and Twitter.
www.isdcounselling.org | www.facebook.com/ISDCounselling | www.twitter.com/ISDCounselling
- **Meet regularly with students.** The counsellors will meet often with groups of students as well as frequent individual, one-to-one sessions to discuss the higher education search and application process.
- **Coordinate higher education representative visits.** Schedule visits from HE representatives to the ISD campus. Inform students and parents of dates, times, and locations of meetings through the ISD Counselling Department Event Calendar, MaiaLearning, Google Classroom, Weekly Announcements, Facebook, and Twitter.
www.isdcounselling.org/event-calendar.html | www.facebook.com/ISDCounselling | www.twitter.com/ISDCounselling
- **Provide resources for self-assessment.** Provide information, surveys, and one-to-one counselling to support students with identifying their strengths, areas for development, interests, and abilities, and help students use this information to identify institutions that will meet their personal and academic needs.
- **Provide higher education search and decision-making materials.** Develop higher education-related resource materials to meet the needs of parents and students. Provide students with materials to help them with the higher education admissions process.
- **Help students develop a list of prospective institutions.** Get to know each student well enough to advise them about a selection of institutions and programs that may be suitable. Assist students in developing a balanced list of institutions that includes a good range of selectivity (reach, target, likely) for each country they are interested in. Assist UK applicants to select courses and institutions where they meet or exceed all entrance course requirements, as well as the DP requirement guidelines suggested by each individual institution.
- **Advise students about required standardized examinations** they need to take (SAT, ACT, TOEFL, IELTS, Duolingo, BMAT, UCAT, LNAT and/or Oxbridge), as well as options for preparing for each exam.
- **Write comprehensive recommendation letters.** The counsellor recommendation gives a comprehensive overview of the student. It includes information about the academic programme, extra-curricular and outside activities, and most importantly, provides a sense of the applicant's character. Information for this letter comes from personal interactions 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 senior year.
All counsellor recommendations are confidential!
- **Assist ISD faculty and staff with writing recommendation letters.** ISD counsellors will give guidance and advice to teachers who are asked to write a reference letter for a student. **All teacher recommendations are confidential!**
- **Establish and maintain relationships with higher education admissions officers.** ISD counsellors will develop and maintain strong, honest, ethical working relationships with admissions officers and in doing so, will stay abreast of current admissions developments and trends.
- **Establish and maintain relationships with other counsellors.** ISD counsellors will develop and maintain strong, honest, and ethical working relationships with colleagues in other international schools and in doing so, will stay abreast of current admissions developments and trends.
- **Maintain and update resources.** Maintain and update the higher education materials in the North Building LRC, including catalogues, prospectus guides, magazines, and books.
- **Maintain professional affiliations.** The counsellors will maintain membership in appropriate organizations such as the National Association for College Admission Counselling (NACAC), the International Association for College Admission Counselling (International ACAC), and the Council of International Schools (CIS).
- **Stay current in the field.** ISD counsellors will attend higher education-related conferences to keep up to date with the latest trends in higher education admissions and to meet and maintain relationships with higher education admissions representatives and other counsellors.

- **Assist students with completing all application materials.** ISD counsellors 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.
- **Complete the U.S. Secondary School Report (SSR), Mid-year Report (MYR), and Final Report (FR).** These school reports include a summary letter of recommendation, an evaluation of the student's academic ability and achievements, information about the student's personal skills and character, a copy of the Senior School Transcript as well as DP predicted grades. The information provided is based on the student's records, personal interaction with the student, as well as information provided by teachers, administrators, and parents.
- **(E)Mail supporting documents.** ISD counsellors are responsible for submitting academic records (i.e., transcripts and predicted DP grades) and all other confidential reports to the institutions on time, either by post, or electronically. **OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS ARE SENT DIRECTLY FROM ISD TO THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE. WE DO NOT PROVIDE STUDENTS AND/OR PARENTS WITH COPIES.** We will send all relevant application materials to each institution, which may include the application, essays, teacher recommendations, counsellor recommendation, transcript, predicted grades, SSR/MYR/FR, and the ISD Senior School Profile. The SRS Profile provides institutions with the information they need to interpret the transcript in the context of the ISD Senior School academic program. It includes information about the ISD community, faculty, grading system, curriculum, academic requirements, standardized testing, DP results, extra-curricular activity offerings and a list of institutions where ISD students have been admitted. We also send an IB Profile and an ISD Senior School Profile to institutions when appropriate. These profiles explain the IB Diploma Programme worldwide and the ISD IB Diploma Programme in particular.
- **Keep records.** ISD counsellors will maintain copies of all applications sent to the institutions where possible. In the electronic/online age of applications, students are strongly encouraged to save a PDF copy of each application for their records where possible, as well as a copy of the confirmation that the application has been submitted.
- **Submit mid-year reports/transcripts.** The ISD counsellors will send official mid-year reports by January 31st of the senior year to each institution as required. Mid-year reports include achievement grades up to January of grade 12.
- **Submit final Senior School Transcript.** ISD counsellors will send a final Senior School Transcript confirming that the student has met all high school graduation requirements to the **one** higher education institution the student has chosen to attend.
- **Follow-up.** If any problems or questions arise with regards to an application, the ISD counsellors will correspond with the institution in a timely fashion.
- **Gap year planning.** ISD counsellors 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.
- **Post-graduation assistance.** ISD counsellors are available to help gap year students with their higher education applications during their year off. **We are available to assist students with their first application to a Bachelor program within two years of graduation from ISD.**

RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Students

*Please read and sign the 'Higher Education Collaboration Agreement' on p. 67 together with your parents.

- **Commit to doing your best.** Keep your higher education options open by committing to achieving a strong academic record right through to the end of your senior year.
- **Know yourself!** Engage in a thoughtful and honest reflection of your goals, values, aspirations, strengths and opportunities and apply this information to the higher education decision-making process.
- **Understand 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, your grade point average (GPA) and standardized testing results (SAT | ACT | BMAT | UCAT | LNAT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo). You should be aware of how your academic credentials compare to the admission standards of your selected institutions.
- **Review your ISD Senior School Transcript.** The ISD SRS Transcript is your permanent high school record. Make sure that your personal information, courses, and grades are listed accurately and completely. **OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPTS ARE SENT DIRECTLY FROM ISD TO THE ADMISSIONS OFFICE. WE DO NOT PROVIDE STUDENTS AND/OR PARENTS WITH OFFICIAL COPIES.**
- **Be mindful of social media!** 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.
- **Meet regularly with your counsellor** to discuss your higher education plans and your academic progress.
- **Use MaiaLearning | www.maialearning.com** Log in regularly, search for courses, update your institution choices, and use the free 'EXPLORE' resources to help you with your personal, higher education and career planning.
- **Attend meetings and pay attention to announcements.** Attend meetings, workshops and/or presentations given by ISD counsellors. Take time to read the Weekly Announcements and check Google Classroom regularly. Follow us on Facebook and/or Twitter. www.facebook.com/ISDCounsellingDepartment | www.twitter.com/ISDCounselling
- **Meet with higher education representatives.** Read the Weekly Announcements, check Google Classroom, and register for visits using MaiaLearning. You are strongly encouraged to take every opportunity to meet with visiting representatives to gather information about course options, admission policies, campus life, etc.
- **Complete all surveys and questionnaires on time.** It is your responsibility to complete all surveys and questionnaires by the stated deadlines.
- **CHECK YOUR EMAIL AND GOOGLE CLASSROOM REGULARLY.** Respond to all messages from your counsellor 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, including your JUNK/SPAM folder, may jeopardize your chances of admission!**
- **Research your higher education options.** It is your responsibility to develop a list of institutions that match both your academic and personal needs. If you are applying to institutions in the UK, it is your responsibility to be aware of the specific entry requirements for the subjects/institutions 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 Programme. You must also be aware of the minimum number of DP points the institutions expect. This information should be requested *directly* from the institutions that you are considering. If you are applying to institutions in the U.S., you should be comparing your academic credentials (transcript/GPA/SAT/ACT scores) to those of currently enrolled first-year students.
- **Demonstrate interest (PDF)!** Request prospectus guides and financial aid/scholarship information. Follow institutions that interest you on Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter. Institutions appreciate students who demonstrate an interest in learning about their campus and their programs. This is how they know you are a serious applicant.
- **Develop a final list of institutions.** Your final list of institutions in each country should include institutions of varying degrees of admission selectivity. We suggest **2-3 institutions** in each category: **Reach | Target | Likely**. It is important to research each institution thoroughly; you should be content to attend any of the institutions on your final list regardless of the selectivity. If you will be applying to the **UK**, your final list may include up to **5** courses/institutions. In **The Netherlands**, you are limited to a maximum of **4** courses/institutions. It is your responsibility to be aware of the DP entry requirements for the courses/institutions you are interested in, as well as any subject-specific requirements.
- **Visit institutions.** 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 higher education decision-making process.

- **Be realistic.** It is unlikely that you will be admitted to every institution to which you apply. Even the most qualified students are routinely denied, simply because the competition is so intense, particularly at the most selective institutions. Your counsellor will help you to make sure that your list of institutions is well balanced so that you will have several options to choose from in the end.
- **Understand the admissions procedures, financial aid policies and deadlines of each institution on your list.** Although the ISD Counselling Department will provide a timeline and reminders, ultimately, you are responsible for meeting all deadlines for applications, financial aid forms, scholarships, interviews, housing, study visas, and deposits.
- **Meet all ISD internal deadlines.** It is your responsibility to complete all application materials by the internal deadlines set by the ISD Counselling Department. ISD internal deadlines are earlier than those set by the institutions so there is enough time for your counsellor to review your application thoroughly and completely prior to submission.
- **Know the standardized testing requirements of all institutions on your list.** It is your responsibility to find out which entrance examinations are required at each institution to which you will apply and that you register as far in advance as possible to take the required tests (SAT | ACT | BMAT | UCAT | LNAT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo).
- **Research portfolio/audition requirements.** If you are applying to **visual or performing arts 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.
- **Complete each application yourself.** Your counsellor will review each application before you send it. Although you will receive support with preparing each application, the final application package should be entirely your own work.
- **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 counsellor will help you revise, edit, and update your work before you submit a final copy to each institution.
- **If applying **Early Action/Early Decision** to a U.S. institution, [know the application policies and procedures](#).** Students are allowed to apply to **one** institution under the **Early Decision** plan. If accepted, you have made a **binding** commitment to attend that institution and must withdraw all other applications. If you apply **Early Action**, you are allowed to apply to other institutions. 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 institution.**
- **Send all **official** test results to institutions.** Institutions only accept official test reports sent directly from the testing agency. You must arrange for the official results of all required standardized tests (SAT | ACT | BMAT | UCAT | LNAT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo) to be sent to each institution as required.
- **Request recommendation letters.** It is your responsibility to follow the correct process for requesting recommendation letters from your teacher(s). **At least two weeks' notice is required.** Use the official ISD Letter of Recommendation request form, which is available from your counsellor and requires Mrs. Massong's signature.
- **Keep records.** Make photocopies or keep electronic copies of everything that you send to the institutions and scholarship committees. If you need to speak to a representative from a particular institution, note their name and title and write yourself a short memo about the conversation, indicating the date, time and what you discussed.
- **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 your tuition fees, housing fees, and other required institutional fees.
- **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.
- **Make the final **decision**.** U.S. and Canadian applicants must notify each institution that has accepted you whether you are accepting or rejecting their offer of admission by **May 1**, the Candidate Reply Date (**June 1** in Canada). For UK applicants, UCAS will send a final decision letter that lists the decisions made by each institution. 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.
- **Make timely **deposits**.** You may accept admission and submit a deposit to **ONE** institution. Making multiple deposits is unethical and limits the options of other students who are also hoping to attend that institution.
- **Notify your counsellor of each admissions decision.** We maintain a history of all decisions to be able to better advise future ISD applicants and parents about the likelihood of admission. Please inform us about each decision.
- **Notify your counsellor if you do not meet your UK offers.** UK applicants who do not meet the requirements outlined in your conditional offers must notify their counsellor immediately.

RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION ADMISSIONS PROCESS

Parents

*Please read and sign the 'Higher Education Collaboration Agreement' on p. 67 together with your child.

- **Encourage and support your child to take ownership of this process.** It is your child's future. Their views and decisions should be paramount. Allow them a significant say in determining what and where to study.
- **Ensure that your child's feelings** are valued and respected. Guide them, but don't decide for them.
- **Encourage realistic thinking.** Make sure your child's decisions are well thought out rather than wishful thinking.
- **Trust your child** to meet deadlines and to put enough time and care into their applications and essays. Be ready to step in with advice and support if you find that your child is not planning realistically or in a timely manner.
- **Stay in touch** with your child about their higher education choices and application plan. Use **MaiaLearning** to monitor your child's choices and application progress. For log in information and access instructions please contact **Mrs. Massong** (massong@isdedu.de).
- **Be honest and open** with your child in terms of limitations (financial, geographic, etc.). Do not let them believe that the U.S. or Australia are good options if you do not want them to go that far or if the price tag is too unrealistic.
- **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 relevant counsellor.
- **Remember that it is your child's choice.** Make sure the institutions 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 they should be in the driver's seat.
- **Be mindful of living your dreams through your child:** "I did not get into Institution X and I will feel better if I can tell everyone else that my child goes there." can add some friction to an already stressful process.
- **Be supportive.** The best institution for your child may not be the most selective or the most highly ranked. As much as parents want the best for their children, 'the best' institution may not be 'the right' institution for your child's individual talents, academic ability, and personality. Too many parents discount certain institutions because they do not deem them 'selective' enough. Your child can feel as if they have failed you if they go to an institution that you have declared is 'beneath' them. We encourage parents to read **Frank Bruni's [Where You'll Go Is Not Who You'll Be](#)**.
- **Be informed,** but do not think that everything you read about an institution is always true and accurate. If you are unsure, contact the institution directly or speak with your child's counsellor.
- **Let your child develop their own impression** of an institution during a visit. Do not cloud their impressions before they have expressed their own 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.
- **Listen to our advice.** We use years of historical data and our professional knowledge to judge how easy or difficult it will be for a student to gain admission to a particular institution. In general, we discourage students from applying to institutions where their academic profile does not match with the typical undergraduate entry requirements.
- **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.
- **Keep an open mind.** Institutions have changed dramatically. Do not rely on impressions based on old stereotypes or 'When I applied to college...'. There are many excellent institutions around the world that you may not have heard of.
- **Read over your child's essay(s)** to see if it communicates who they are, how well they think and how well they write.
- **Make sure your child applies** to at least **two** institutions where they are likely to be admitted **and** that you can afford.
- **Make the appropriate arrangements for financial aid/student finance.** As the ones who will foot the bill, it is important to ensure that you and your child are aware of what you need to do to finance your child's higher education programme. This includes applying for scholarships, grants, bursaries, loans, and other forms of financial support.
- **Make the appropriate arrangements for housing/study visa.** Again, 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., and that they are able to enter the country under the correct Visa.
- **Begin the process of preparing to let go.** Support your child with building the foundation they will need to be independent and successful as they head off to the next stage of their education. Allow you and your child the time to go through this process.
- **Enjoy your child's senior year together with them.** This is an exciting time, full of possibilities. Celebrate successes and grow from disappointments. There are bound to be both during this process.

THE GRADE 11 TOP 10 LIST FOR SUCCESS

- 1. Verify that your grade 11/12 courses fulfil the high school preparation requirements for the institutions and courses/subjects you are interested in and strive to achieve the best possible academic record.** Admissions officers from *most* institutions around the world will evaluate your ISD Senior School Transcript from 9th grade onward, looking at the grades you have earned and the level of difficulty of the courses you have chosen. Admissions officers are looking for consistency and improvement in demanding courses. UK admissions tutors will review your UCAS application to verify 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 higher education decision-making process.** A realistic, thoughtful, and thorough self-evaluation will help you to clarify the types of institutions 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 institutions that will be right for *you*. Take time to think about your unique interests, skills, abilities, personal preferences, and goals. Develop your understanding of your academic profile (grades, test scores, etc.) and how your profile compares to the admission standards set by the institutions you are interested in. **There are many free self-assessment tools available in the ‘Character’ section of MaiaLearning (www.maialearning.com).**
- 3. Discuss your higher education plans with your parents** and meet regularly with your counsellor throughout the second semester of grade 11.
- 4. Communication is key!** Read and respond to all emails from your counsellor. Read the Weekly Announcements, check MaiaLearning, Google Classroom, Facebook, and Twitter for higher education-related information and announcements about higher education representatives who are visiting ISD.
- 5. Get involved!** Admissions officers/tutors are looking for students who will make a valuable contribution to the campus community. **The emphasis is on quality and not quantity – Dedication | Diversity | 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. Verify your ISD Senior School Transcript!** See Mrs. Massong to verify that this document is complete and correct.
- 7. Use a variety of resources to explore your higher education options.** Visit the higher education reference section of the North Building LRC and research institutions using the guidebooks, catalogues, and prospectus guides. Search the internet and visit individual institution websites for the most up-to-date information available. Contact the institutions you are interested in to get on the mailing list and request informational materials and admissions information. Follow each institution on Twitter, Facebook, and/or Instagram. Use MaiaLearning to conduct additional research about your options. Talk to your counsellor, parents, friends, and former ISD students about the higher education options available to you. Visit as many institutions on your list as possible.
- 8. Register, prepare for, and take the appropriate standardized tests** for the country and program/course you are applying to (SAT | ACT | BMAT | UCAT | LNAT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo | Oxbridge).
- 9. Take advantage of your time during the summer break:**
 - Visit institutions on your list.
 - Start the applications for institutions you know you will be applying to.
 - Begin working on personal statements, essays, and/or letters of motivation.
 - Enrol 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 institutions** by the time you return to ISD in August of Grade 12. Update your list of prospective institutions in MaiaLearning on a regular basis.

THE GRADE 12 TOP 10 LIST FOR SUCCESS

1. **Create a comprehensive calendar that incorporates both your DP deadlines and the various steps in the higher education 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 that will allow you to better plan your time during the busy higher education application season.
2. **Keep up the effort in your DP courses and work on achieving the best possible academic record.** Admissions officers will be reviewing your ISD Senior School Transcript looking for strong grades in demanding courses. For UK applicants, admissions tutors will make conditional offers based primarily on your predicted DP grades.
3. **Verify that you are taking courses that fulfil** the high school preparation requirements for the institutions *and* courses you are interested in.
4. **Meet regularly with your counsellor** to discuss your applications, requirements, deadlines, and any other higher education-related questions.
5. **Check your emails regularly and respond promptly** to all requests from your counsellor and/or institution admissions officers.
6. **Stay involved!** 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. **Determine your final list of institutions.** Your final list should include a range of institutions with varying degrees of selectivity (Reach | Target | Likely). For UK applicants, remember that your DP predictions must meet or exceed both the overall and subject specific DP point requirements for each course/institution you will be applying to. Your final list of institutions should include somewhere between **6 to 10** institutions.
8. **Take every opportunity to meet with higher education representatives** who will be visiting ISD. If possible, visit institutions during school holidays. Attend Open Days, Student for a Day, or other campus experiences.
9. **Register, prepare for, and take the appropriate standardized tests** for the country and program/course you are applying to (SAT | ACT | BMAT | UCAT | LNAT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo | Oxbridge).
10. **Keep track of all application and financial aid deadlines.** Send in applications and financial aid forms well in advance whenever possible.

CHOOSING A HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Where do I begin?

As an ISD **High School Diploma + Diploma Courses (Certificate) or Diploma Program (DP) student**, you can study **almost anywhere in the world**. With so many options, the task of choosing what to study and where may seem daunting. Starting the process early can alleviate a lot of stress, which is why we begin working with ISD students in 9th grade on planning the 'Road to Your Future'. At this point in 11th grade, it is time to reflect on your exploration so far and to actively review of your goals and aspirations so that you can engage more thoroughly in the higher education research process – all with the support of your counsellor and parents, of course.

It is your future. Your goal is to discover a range of higher education options that are well suited to **your** unique talents, skills, abilities, interests, and personal preferences - not those of your sibling, best friend, or boyfriend/girlfriend. In the end, you want to choose an institution where you will be happy to live and study for the next 3-4 years.

STEP 1 – SELF-EVALUATION

To find institutions that are a good match for you, take time to evaluate who you are as a person and as a student.

A realistic, thoughtful, and thorough self-evaluation can help you to determine the institutions where you will be most satisfied and successful. Without this foundation, it will be difficult to make informed decisions about the types of institutions that will be right for **you**. Gather copies of your ISD Senior School Transcript, standardized testing results, a list of activities you have participated in since 9th grade, and a list of any special recognitions that you have received. This information will help you to focus on your abilities, skills, interests, values, and goals. To begin, ask yourself some key questions:

- What are my educational goals?
- What are my personal goals?
- What are my strongest academic interests?
- In which subjects am I most successful?
- Is my academic record an accurate reflection of my abilities?
- What do I hope to do in the future for a job/career?
- How has studying at an international school influenced me?
- What activities or interests do I wish to pursue or develop?
- Where do I eventually want to live and work?

A thorough self-evaluation will help you focus your higher education search more clearly and enable you to identify the institutions that best suit your needs and future goals.

STEP 2 – WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR IN AN INSTITUTION?

Now that you have completed your self-evaluation and are prepared with a personal inventory of your unique strengths and preferences, you are ready to consider the factors that are most important to you when selecting an institution. Everyone will have their own individual preferences for what they are looking for in terms of size, location, academic programs, competitiveness, activity offerings, cost, etc. Your goal is to **determine those factors that are most important** to you so that you can begin the research process with a clear idea of what you are looking for. **Go to p. 15 for a comprehensive list of factors to consider.**

- What size institution would I be most comfortable in?
- Where do I want to live and study for the next three or four years?
- Would I prefer a big city, a small town, or the countryside?
- In what type of academic environment do I learn best?
- What level of academic challenge is best for me?
- How much structure do I need in an academic program?
- How does the total cost factor into my final decision?
- Is it important to attend an institution that values diversity?

STEP 3 – RESEARCH

Once you have done the self-evaluation and determined the factors that are most important to you in choosing an institution, you are ready to start your research and develop an initial list of institutions. As you begin this process, try not to limit your options to ‘brand name’ institutions because of preconceived ideas or a narrow list of rankings. There are many wonderful institutions out there to choose from so keep an open mind!

Where do I find the information that I need to make an informed decision?

You should use a variety of resources to research different institutions, including the ones suggested below. **For a more comprehensive list of higher education research resources please refer to page 29-31 of this handbook.**

- **You are surrounded by people eager to help you!** Talk to your counsellor, parents, friends, teachers, former ISD students, and visiting higher education representatives.
- **MaiaLearning:** www.maialearning.com
 - This comprehensive website has many excellent features you can use to support you with your higher education research. It contains the application history for all ISD students since 2005 and can provide you with valuable admissions data for institutions in countries where our students apply the most.
- **The internet** is your go-to source for information (Duh!).
 - Institution websites provide the most up-to-date information about admission requirements, course offerings and campus life.
 - Several sites provide information about institutions, careers, standardized testing and admission:
U.S.: www.collegeboard.org | www.collegescorecard.ed.gov; UK: www.ucas.com/; Ireland: www.cao.ie
Canada: www.universitystudy.ca/; The Netherlands: www.studyinnl.org;
Germany: www.daad.de/en/study-and-research-in-germany/;
EU: www.education.ec.europa.eu/study-in-europe
The IBO: www.ibo.org/university-admission/support-students-transition-to-higher-education/
- **Contact institutions you are interested in** and request information about their admissions policies and procedures, departments, subjects offered, fees, extra-curricular offerings, etc. **Demonstrated interest** is a growing factor in admissions decisions.
- **Bachelor courses** with the same name may be quite different in academic content and focus. For example, if you are applying for Psychology what is the focus of the program? Will you receive a **Bachelor of Arts** or the more scientific/research-based **Bachelor of Science** degree? What courses are required and how will you be assessed?
- **Nothing can replace the knowledge you will gain by visiting an institution.** Campus visits can help you to clarify the type of environment where you will be comfortable personally and successful academically.

STEP 4 – DEVELOPING A PROSPECTIVE LIST OF INSTITUTIONS

Once you know yourself better, know what you are looking for in an institution and have researched your options, then it is time to develop a prospective list of institutions. Your prospective list may contain as many as 20 or more institutions that you are interested in and wish to explore further. You can keep track of your prospective list in [MaiaLearning](#) in the ‘UNIVERSITIES’ section (**Considering List**).

STEP 5 – FINALIZING YOUR APPLICATION LIST

By the beginning of Grade 12, your goal will be to narrow down your prospective list of institutions to a more manageable number. **We recommend a maximum of 6-10 institutions.** This step is slightly more difficult because your research must become more in-depth and focused. Consider how each institution on your list will assess your application. Look realistically at your academic profile (how challenging are your high school courses, the grades you have earned, standardized test results, extra-curricular involvement, etc.) and compare your profile to the admission requirements at each institution.

If you are applying to the UK or elsewhere in the EU, does your IB Diploma Programme meet and/or exceed the standards set by each institution/course you are interested in? Do you have the required DP Higher Level courses? Do you have the right level of Mathematics? Do your predicted grades fall into the range set out by the institution/course?

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

By the fall of your senior year, after a considerable amount of research and discussions with your counsellor, parents, family, friends, and teachers, you should have enough information to determine your **final application list of 6-10 institutions.**

FOR UK APPLICANTS

You may apply to a maximum of **5 institutions/courses via UCAS**. 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 institution, you must meet or exceed the minimum DP point total and the specific subject requirements set by each institution/course. For example, if you wish to study Chemical Engineering at the University of Bath or the University of Birmingham, both institutions 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 essential to verify that you meet the entry requirements for each institution on your list.**

FOR U.S. & CANADIAN APPLICANTS

Your **final list** should contain **6 to 10** institutions of varying degrees of selectivity for **your academic and personal profile**. You should choose **2-3** institutions in each category: **Reach | Target | Likely**. To divide your list into these categories you will need to compare your academic profile (GPA, grades, standardized test scores and extra-curricular involvement) to those of recently admitted students. **Regardless of the category, you should be excited to attend any institution on your final list.**

- **REACH Institutions**

At **reach** institutions, the average class rank, high school grades, standardized test scores, and extra-curricular involvement of currently enrolled first year students are higher than yours. A **reach** institution typically admits a very small number of applicants, thereby limiting the chances of admission for everyone, no matter how qualified. The most selective institutions admit **5% to 15%** of applicants. Obvious examples are Harvard, Brown, Princeton, Dartmouth, Yale, and Stanford. Each year these institutions deny thousands of students who have achieved all 7's and have near-perfect SAT/ACT scores. It is important to be realistic about your chances of admission to reach institutions.

- **TARGET Institutions**

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

- **LIKELY Institutions**

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

OTHER COUNTRIES WITH APPLICATION LIMITS

The Netherlands: You may submit a maximum of **4** enrolment applications via Studielink, with no more than **2** Numerus Fixus enrolment applications.

Ireland: You may submit a maximum of **10** applications via the Central Applications Office.

No one should ever apply exclusively to institutions that have a reputation for being highly selective. Unfortunately, highly selective institutions have far more qualified candidates applying than they can accept. Even if you are over-qualified that does not guarantee you will be admitted.

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

DEVELOPING A PROSPECTIVE LIST OF INSTITUTIONS

Factors to consider

With so many higher education options available, how do you determine if an institution is right for you? As there are several factors to consider, you need to decide which are *most* important and then determine the institutions that best suit your academic goals and personal needs. Not all these factors will be important to you, however, 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 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 students), medium (5,000-15,000 students), large (15,000-30,000 students) or extra-large (30,000+ students) institution?
- What is the size of the 1st-year class?
- What is the average class size?
- What is the student/teacher ratio?

TYPE OF INSTITUTION

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

ADMISSION ROUTES

- What admission routes does this institution offer? Early Decision | Early Action | Regular Decision | Rolling Admission | Open Admission?
- How many students are accepted under each admission route?

STUDENTS

- Is a diverse campus community important to me?
- Would I like to have many international students on campus?
- Do I want to attend an institution with only Bachelor students or a mixture of Bachelor, Master and PhD students?
- What is the male/female ratio?
- What are the primary interests of the students (arts, sciences, business, etc.)?
- What campus groups, clubs or activities are most popular?

DEGREE OF COMPETITIVENESS/SELECTIVITY

- What are the typical admission standards of the institution?
- How selective is the admissions process?
- How competitive are my academic credentials (SRS transcript, DP predictions, standardized test scores, extra-curricular activities, etc.)? Is my academic record competitive 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?
- What is the minimum required predicted DP score for this course?
- Will my DP predicted grades meet or exceed the standards for this course?
- Which DP Higher Level subjects are required?
- Do I have the required level of Mathematics?
- How *popular* is this course?
- How many applications do they receive vs. the number of available spaces? What is the applicant-to-place ratio?

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

- 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 specific career-oriented program or a more general Liberal Arts program?
- Does this institution offer a wide variety of subject areas to choose from or do they focus on specific areas such as Engineering or Business?
- What major or subject would I like to study?
- How flexible are the course requirements?
- How diverse are the course offerings? Can I take subjects outside of my degree program?
- Is this course more theoretical, more practical, or a combination of theory and practice?
- Looking at the course requirements and syllabus, would I be happy studying those subjects for the next 3 or 4 years?
- Does the institution offer a strong program in my field? Do they have adequate facilities?
- Is there an opportunity to do internships, work experience, 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 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?
- What exchange or study abroad programs are available?

FACULTY

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

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

- Does this institution offer study abroad, internship and cooperative education programs, self-designed majors, double-majors, community service, EAL and/or honours programs, etc.?
- Is this institution part of a consortium, allowing me to take courses at other nearby institutions?
- Does this institution offer sandwich courses, modular courses, or combined subject programs?

EXTRA-CURRICULAR OFFERINGS

- Is this an active campus community?
- Are there any sport programs, clubs or activities that interest me?
- Does this institution offer an intramural and/or intercollegiate sports program?

SOCIAL LIFE

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

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 counselling available?
- Does the institution help with job placement following graduation?
- Is there assistance with graduate school applications?
- Are personal counselling services available?
- Is there a learning development centre or is tutoring available if necessary?
- Are EAL 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 & DINING FACILITIES

- Do most students live on campus, or do they commute?
- How active is the campus on the weekend?
- Are 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 institution guarantee housing for undergraduate students?
- Does this institution guarantee housing for international students?
- Does this institution offer specialty housing such as non-smoking, honours, international, etc.?
- Am I required to live on campus my first year?
- Will the institution assist me in locating off-campus housing?
- How close are the dorms to the classes, the dining hall, and other facilities?
- Are there a variety of food plans available?

ACCREDITATION

- Is the institution accredited by the national, state, or regional Ministry of Education?**
- 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 the institution (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 institution 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 higher education research. Check the boxes that apply to your preferences. What are you looking for in the right institution for you?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic competitiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> International student services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accommodation/housing options | <input type="checkbox"/> Job placement services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accreditation (who validates the degree?) | <input type="checkbox"/> Learning development services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admit rate of first-year students | <input type="checkbox"/> Length of Bachelor program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admission routes | <input type="checkbox"/> Location |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Admission selectivity | <input type="checkbox"/> Majors/subjects/courses offered |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Application deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Private institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Assessment procedures | <input type="checkbox"/> Public transportation availability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of career advising | <input type="checkbox"/> Public institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Average class size | <input type="checkbox"/> Religious affiliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Campus clubs/organizations | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of faculty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climate/weather | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of the institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community service opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Reputation of the program |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Co-op education programs (work experience) | <input type="checkbox"/> Research opportunities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Core course requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Retention rate of first-year students |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cost | <input type="checkbox"/> Rolling admission route |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Degree of competition | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandwich course options (UK work experience) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Degree requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Scholarship availability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distance from airport | <input type="checkbox"/> Institution calendar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Distance from home | <input type="checkbox"/> Institution mission/philosophy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity of the students | <input type="checkbox"/> Setting (urban, suburban, rural) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dormitory/housing options/quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Single-sex institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dual majors and major/minor combinations | <input type="checkbox"/> Size of the first-year class |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Action admission program (U.S.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Size of the institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Early Decision admission program (U.S.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Size of the surrounding community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exchange programs/study abroad | <input type="checkbox"/> Social life |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extra-curricular offerings | <input type="checkbox"/> Specialized institution (i.e. Medical, Engineering, Business...) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilities/buildings | <input type="checkbox"/> Sports offerings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial aid availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Standardized test requirements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fraternities/sororities/Greek life | <input type="checkbox"/> Strength of program/subject |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grading/assessment system | <input type="checkbox"/> Student/professor ratio |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate school opportunities | <input type="checkbox"/> Student support services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Graduation rates | <input type="checkbox"/> Study abroad options |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DP credit policy | <input type="checkbox"/> Teaching qualifications of professors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DP point requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Type of institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> DP HL and/or SL requirements | <input type="checkbox"/> Institution affiliation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Independent study options | <input type="checkbox"/> Wait list policy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internship possibilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Work permit possibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> International student numbers | |

Doing the research

The North Building LRC is home to a large section dedicated to higher education research materials, including viewbooks and catalogues from institutions around the world. There are objective guidebooks, such as the **College Board Handbook** or **Peterson's Guide** for institutions in the U.S., and **The Directory of Canadian Institutions**. These objective guidebooks contain information about location, cost, size, majors, types of degrees offered, admission requirements, admission statistics, sport and activity offerings, special academic programs, and application procedures. You can also find subjective guidebooks such as the **Insider's Guide to Colleges** and the **Fiske Guide to Colleges**, which are written by students, for students. They are filled with information about the academic and social life at institutions in the U.S. **The Virgin Guide to British Institutions** and the **Good University Guide** are similar books that focus on the academic and social climate at various UK institutions.

The internet is the most up-to-date and comprehensive tool you can use to conduct your higher education research. Visit individual institution websites to find information about admission, degree options and campus life. There are also several comprehensive search databases on the internet where you can create a personalized list of institutions by identifying the factors most important to you (size, location, degree of selectivity, etc.). Some examples for institutions in the U.S. are www.collegeboard.org and www.collegescorecard.ed.gov. For institutions in the UK, the most comprehensive source of information is www.ucas.com. For Canadian institutions visit www.universitystudy.ca/. For Dutch institutions visit www.studyinnl.org/. A comprehensive list of helpful resources sorted by country, subject area and topic is available in the 'RESOURCES' section of MaiaLearning (www.maialearning.com).

Use the internet to research financial aid and scholarship opportunities, read campus newspapers, access student clubs and organizations, take practice SAT, ACT, TOEFL, IELTS and/or Duolingo tests, contact professors in your subject, take virtual campus tours, complete applications and take advantage of social media platforms to communicate with professors, currently students, ISD alumni, department heads, international student advisors, athletic coaches, admissions representatives and financial aid officers.

Contact the institutions directly to request catalogues, prospectus guides, viewbooks, applications, financial aid information and any other important information. Keep in mind, however, that the marketing materials produced by the institutions and are created to **sell** the institution. It is important to view this information with a critical eye and to balance this with information from a variety of other sources.

Institution representatives are another great source of information. ISD hosts higher education representatives from a wide range of institutions throughout the year. Take the opportunity to meet with all representatives that visit ISD. Even if you are not planning to apply to their respective institution, the admissions representative may be able to provide you with information about other institutions in their city and/or country. More importantly, learning about a variety of institutions can help you to identify what you are looking for. These representatives will be available to meet with you during set meeting times. Check the ISD Counselling Department Event Calendar, MaiaLearning, Google Classroom, Facebook, and Twitter for announcements of upcoming visits.

www.isdcounselling.org/event-calendar.html

Other important sources of information about institutions are your counsellor, parents, friends, former ISD students and your teachers. We have all been through the higher education search process and are willing to share our experiences with you. Someone at ISD may be able to give you some *insider* information about an institution that you are interested in.

The best source of information about a particular institution comes from a **campus visit**. Visits to a wide variety of campuses (big vs. small, urban vs. rural) will help you to clarify the type of environment where you will be most happy and productive. Visiting an institution will give you the opportunity to see the facilities up close, to get a *feel* for the campus and to meet with members of the faculty, admissions staff, and currently enrolled students. **Most students and counsellors agree that visiting a campus has the greatest single impact in determining which institution you will ultimately choose to attend.**

Use multiple reference books and the most up-to-date publications available to verify your information. When in doubt, contact the Admissions Office of the institution directly with any questions you may have. Again, there is a wealth of information available about the higher education research process. The key is to start early, use a variety of resources and keep an open mind.

CAMPUS VISITS

An overview of campus visits & open days

Campus visits are a vital part of the higher education decision-making process. If it is possible for you to visit institutions during one of the vacation breaks or the summer holidays, do it! ***Of all the steps you can take to discover the types of institutions that are right for you, visiting different campuses will have the greatest single impact in helping you to determine which institution is best for you.***

A campus visit provides you with an in-depth look as well as a “feel” for what the institution 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 campus visit is to gather enough information about the institution to make an informed decision about whether or not it is the right place for you to study, learn and live. While on campus you can meet with a member of the admissions staff, take an official campus 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 the campus community so take the time to look around and speak to a variety of people.

WHY SHOULD I TAKE THE TIME TO VISIT AN INSTITUTION?

- **Research shows that a campus visit will have the greatest single impact in helping you to determine which institution you will eventually decide to attend.**
- A campus 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 you cannot learn from a website, catalogue or prospectus guide.
- Visiting a variety of different institutions will often help you to clarify the size and type of institution where you will be most happy both academically and personally.

WHEN SHOULD I VISIT?

- Arrange a visit only after you have thoroughly researched the institution. You should have a good idea about where you stand academically (grades/test scores), what you want to study, and the types of institutions 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 UK and Dutch institutions 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 admission. For more information about Open Days and when they are happening, please follow the links below.

UCAS Find Open Days: www.ucas.com/events/exploring-university/find-open-day

UK Open Day Calendar: www.opendays.com/calendar/

Dutch HE Open Days: www.dutchopendays.com | www.studiekeuze123.nl/open-dagen (in Dutch)

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR A VISIT?

- Phone or email the Admissions Office ahead of time to arrange for an interview with a member of the admissions staff and a tour of the campus. Some institutions, however, do not offer personal interviews. In that case, you can participate in a group information session. If you are travelling from overseas, they may be able to make special arrangements for you.
- If you have the time, ask to arrange to spend the night in campus housing.
- Do your homework! Read as much as you can about the institution prior to your visit. Be prepared to ask questions that are not easily answered in the institution’s own promotional materials.
- When setting up your tour schedule, visit the institutions that are at the top on your list or the most difficult to get into last. This will give you valuable experience and the time to further develop your interview skills.
- Ask the admissions office if there is anything you should bring with you (copies of academic work, transcript, test scores, portfolio, etc.).
- Never plan to visit more than two institutions in one day. Take time to thoroughly explore the campus and talk to a variety of people. Give yourself some free time to just wander around the campus and observe the activities.

WHAT DO I DO WHILE I AM THERE?

- Take an official campus tour of the facilities and attend any presentations made by the Admissions Office.
- Pick up a paper copy of the application form.
- Visit the financial aid office and speak to a financial aid officer about the application process, procedures, and deadlines.
- If possible, interview with a member of the Admissions Office.
- Check out the campus housing and if possible, spend the night.

WHAT DO I DO WHILE I AM THERE? (CONT)

- Sit in on a few different classes, not just one or two.
- Visit the department you are interested in and meet with professors in your chosen field, activity advisors in your area of interest and/or athletic coaches.
- Check out the library, career resource centre, computer labs, health centre, sports facilities, bookstore, classrooms, dorms and student centre.
- Talk to as many students as possible. Look up former ISD students living on campus to get first-hand information about campus life.
- Write down your impressions and thoughts about the institution while the memories are fresh. Make sure you write down the names of those who assist you while on campus in case you have any further questions.
- Check out the area surrounding the campus – is this a place you could live for the next four years?
- Pick up a copy of the school newspaper and read bulletin boards to see what is happening on campus.
- Take lots of pictures and keep a photo diary of your campus visits.
- ***While on campus you should be continually asking yourself “Is this a place where I would be happy to live and study for the next three or four years?”***

WHAT DO I 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 refine your list of institutions.

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 are the students?
- What is the social life of the campus 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 from this institution 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 to further education?
- What do I think of the location?
- How close am I to the city or the country?
- What do I think of the surrounding community?
- Am I comfortable with the size of the institution?
- Am I comfortable with the average class size?
- What is the atmosphere of the campus?
- 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 guide written for students by students?

Questions to ask when visiting a 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 institution 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 institution is right for you.**

ADMISSIONS

- What type of student is your institution looking for? How will my application be evaluated (grades, test scores, DP predicted grades, activities, recommendations, essays, etc.)?
- How competitive is admission to this institution/program/course? How do my grades, test scores and extra-curricular involvement compare with other students that apply to your institution?
- Is the admissions office 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 Programme?
- Does this institution 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 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/subject (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 institution offer the special programs I am interested in, such as study abroad, honours, internships, cooperative education, dual-majors, independent study, research, self-designed majors, etc.?
- Is this institution 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 institution? 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 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 centre 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

- How many students live on campus? What is the male/female ratio?
- How diverse is the campus? How many international students attend your institution?
- Is this institution religiously affiliated? Will I be required to attend church services?
- Is this an active campus? How involved are the students? 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?
- What do I think of the location? How close is the city, the country, mountains, water, etc.?
- Is public transportation available?
- What do I think of the local community? Are there restaurants, bars, cinemas, concert halls, etc. nearby?
- How frequently does the institution sponsor lectures, social events, concerts, speakers and other 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 institutions? Why?
- What do you like best about this institution? What do students complain about?
- What type of student is happiest at this institution?
- What do you think is unique about this institution?

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

- What special services do you offer 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 centre 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?
- Does the institution 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 institution 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, honours, 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 enrol in the campus food plan?
- Are there self-catering facilities? Are there a variety of food plans and cafeterias available?

COST & 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 institution 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 institution, talk to the students on campus. Tour guides and admissions officers are great sources of information, but their job is to *sell* you the institution. One way of getting beyond the sales pitch is to talk to random students. They are not hired by the institution to promote the institution 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 institution?
- What do you think needs changing?
- How would you describe this institution (competitive, liberal, conservative, sporty, political, etc.)?
- What other institutions did you apply to? Why did you choose this one?
- Has this institution 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 them?
- 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 institution sponsor lectures, concerts, social events, etc.?
- What are the most active student organizations or clubs?
- What do you think of the campus 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? What are the lab hours?
- How well equipped is the library? Do you ever have trouble finding what you need?
- How are the medical, counselling, career advising, academic counselling and international student services here?

THE ADMISSIONS INTERVIEW

What is it?

Not all institutions require or even offer interviews. For those that do, an interview is an opportunity for admissions officers to promote their institution, to learn more about you and to provide you with the opportunity to learn more about their institution. The interview is your chance to gather information to make an informed decision about whether or not the institution is a good match for you. It is your opportunity to meet face to face with a representative from the Admissions Office and to share your unique abilities, academic strengths, special talents and interests.

Contact the Admissions Office at each institution you are interested in to find out about interview requirements, policies and procedures. For those institutions that do offer interviews, some use the information gained from the interview as part of the application review process while others do not. For those that do, the information collected during the interview is evaluated in combination with your other application materials (transcript, test scores, essays, extra-curricular involvement, recommendations, etc.).

For students living abroad who cannot easily travel to the campus, some institutions will arrange for an alumni interview in the area. An alumni interview is an interview with someone who has graduated from the institution and has been trained by the Admissions Office to conduct the interview. Some institutions do not offer on-campus interviews and only offer an alumni interview once an application has been submitted.

If the institution does offer interviews, either on-campus or with an alumni representative, we strongly recommend that you take advantage of the opportunity. The interview may be beneficial to you. Taking time to meet with an admissions officer or alumni demonstrates your interest and enthusiasm for the institution and the subject – a quality that all institutions value.

An interview is a 50-50 proposition – a two-way street! Be prepared to discuss your academic and extra-curricular record, as well as your future educational and career goals. Do your research and be ready to ask questions about academics and life on campus, but do not ask questions that can easily be answered by reading the institution's own promotional materials. Be sure to ask those questions that will help you to decide if the institution is a good fit for you.

Finally, if you think you will be interviewing at several institutions, save the best for last. In other words, try to save your final interviews for your top-choice institutions. This will give you time to practice your interview skills and time to become more comfortable with the interview process.

For more advice, tips, and hints, please visit these websites:

College Board - www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/get-in/interviews

Princeton Review - www.princetonreview.com/college-interview.aspx

ThoughtCo. - www.thoughtco.com/college-interview-questions-788893

Suggestions for a successful admissions interview

DO	DO NOT
<p>Do take every opportunity to meet with higher education representatives visiting ISD. Read the Weekly Announcements and check MaiaLearning for announcements of upcoming visits.</p>	<p>Do not interview at your top-choice institution first. Save the best for last and allow yourself some time to practice and become more familiar and comfortable with the interview process.</p>
<p>Do introduce yourself and shake hands. Be attentive throughout and be sure to maintain eye contact.</p>	<p>Do not ask questions that indicate no meaningful interest in the institution. In other words, do not ask how many students they have on campus or if they offer Business – this information can easily be found on the website.</p>
<p>Do your research before the interview. Read as much as you can beforehand and ask the same or similar questions at each institution so you will have a good basis for comparison.</p>	<p>Do not bring your parents into the interview. Even if your parents come along, you should attend the meeting alone. The interviewer may invite your parents in at the end of the meeting to answer any questions they may have.</p>
<p>Do bring a copy of your transcript, copies of your standardized test results, a list of your extra-curricular activities and honours and samples of any work that you are particularly proud of.</p>	<p>Do not tell the interviewer what you think he or she wants to hear. Be yourself! Listen carefully and answer all questions honestly, confidently and to the best of your ability.</p>
<p>Do have in mind five or six questions that reveal your unique skills, abilities, interests and goals.</p>	<p>Do not answer questions with a 'yes' or 'no'. Elaborate on your responses. This is your opportunity to let an admissions officer know more about you both as a person and as a student.</p>
<p>Do be prepared to discuss why you are interested in the institution and why you have chosen to study a particular subject.</p>	<p>Do not wear anything inappropriate (t-shirts with interesting sayings) or clothing that is revealing and do not chew gum.</p>
<p>Do dress comfortably, but neatly. You do not have to wear a dress or a coat and tie, but you should be dressed appropriately.</p>	<p>Do not sit quietly. Participate in the discussion and let the interviewer learn about your unique interests, skills, abilities and goals.</p>
<p>Do arrive early.</p>	<p>Do not be afraid to say you do not know if you are unsure of an answer to a particular question. If you are confused by a question, ask for clarification.</p>
<p>Do be prepared to discuss current events and to offer your opinions.</p>	<p>Do not forget about posture and body language. Look interested at all times and do not fidget.</p>
<p>Do ask questions that will demonstrate to the interviewer that you have done your research and want to learn more.</p>	<p>Do not use your phone during the interview. It should be shut off and put away.</p>
<p>Do thank the admissions representative for his or her time and request a business card so you may send a thank you note when you return home.</p>	<p>Do not judge an institution by the interviewer alone. Do not let your negative feelings about an individual become a major factor in your decision-making.</p>

Questions you may be asked

Here are some typical interview questions. It may also be helpful to Google the institution and the course/degree/major to see if you can find a list of potential interview questions. Consider how you might respond to the following and you will be well prepared to answer any question the interviewer may ask. Keep in mind that admissions representatives want you to like their institution as much as you want them to like you!

- Why do you want to go on to higher education?
- Why are you considering this institution?
- What factors are most important to you when choosing an institution?
- Tell me about you. Describe yourself in three words.
- How would your best friend describe you?
- Who are your heroes?
- What is your greatest asset? What is your greatest fault?
- What part of yourself would you most like to improve over the next four years?
- How will you make the final decision about which institution to attend?
- What are your unique interests, talents, academic achievements, etc.?
- How has going to an international school influenced you?
- Tell me about your most positive ISD experience? Most negative?
- If you could change one thing about ISD to make it a better school, what would it be?
- What has been your greatest academic achievement?
- What has been your favourite subject in high school? Why?
- Tell me about an assignment that you are particularly proud of.
- Who has been your favourite teacher and why?
- Why have you chosen your particular major/course/degree?
- What do you already know about your chosen major/course/degree?
- Where do you see yourself ten years from now?
- What books not required by school have you read recently?
- Which activity in high school has been the most meaningful to you? Why?
- If you could go through high school all over again, what would you do differently?
- How have you contributed to your high school community?
- What can you offer our institution?
- What have you read, seen or heard about this institution that you are worried about?
- What are you most proud of?
- What other institutions are you considering?
- Tell me about your favourite book or author. What was the last book you read?
- How have you spent your free time during the summers?
- Have you ever had a part-time or summer job?
- What have been the three most important events in your life? Why?
- What decision do you regret the most? Why?
- Who has had the greatest influence on your life? Why?
- Do you have any questions? (Be sure to have some questions ready – refer to the next page)

Questions to ask the interviewer

An interview is also your opportunity to ask questions. Consider the factors that are most important to you in selecting an institution and ask questions that will help clarify if an institution meets your personal and academic needs.

- What are you looking for in an applicant?
- What type of student is successful in gaining admission to your institution?
- Does your institution have a specific research or teaching focus?
- What type of student is happiest at your institution?
- What is the first-year student retention rate?
- On what criteria are students evaluated?
- How familiar are you with the ISD curriculum and grading policy?
- What percentage of the students are international?
- What kind of support services do you have for international students?
- Do you require international students to complete a different application for admission? Are the deadlines the same as those for domestic students?
- What are your credit policies for students who have successfully completed the International Baccalaureate Diploma?
- Do you offer credit for DP Courses (certificates)?
- How will admission decisions be communicated to international students?
- Will it be possible for me to track my application online?
- Which financial aid forms are required?
- Do you offer financial aid for international students?
- Do you offer scholarship money for international students?
- Will I be able to work if I choose to?
- What are your strongest departments?
- What if I do not know what I want to major in?
- Will I be assigned an academic advisor or someone who will help me select my courses?
- When will I have to choose my major (U.S./Canada)?
- How difficult is it to register for the courses that I need to graduate?
- What percentage of students that enter your institution graduate from your institution?
- How many students complete their degree in four years (U.S./CAN) or three years (UK/NL/EU)?
- What study abroad opportunities do you offer?
- What dual-majors, independent study or research experiences do you offer?
- Are internships or cooperative education programs available?
- What student support services do you offer (career counselling, personal counselling, tutoring, learning support, etc.)?
- Do you guarantee housing for first year students?
- Is housing guaranteed after my first year?
- Do you offer specialty dorms (honours, single-sex, international, etc.)?
- How many students live on campus vs. off-campus?
- How are dorm placements decided?
- How much input do I have into selecting a roommate?
- How active are the students?
- What are the most active organizations on campus?
- What do students do for fun?
- What is the most important social event of the year?
- What is there to do in the local community?
- How safe is the campus?
- What security is offered in the dorms?
- What is your job placement rate for graduates?
- How many employment recruiters visit your campus each year?
- How many of your students go on to graduate school?

HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH RESOURCES

IN THE NORTH BUILDING LRC

Objective Guidebooks

These resources list information about: Location, size, cost, majors and subjects offered, admission requirements and statistics, sport and activity offerings, special academic programs and application procedures. For example:

- *The College Handbook (U.S.)*
- *Peterson's Guide (U.S.)*
- *The Directory of Canadian Institutions*
- *The Guardian University Guide (UK)*
- *Good University Guide (UK)*
- *The UCAS Guide to getting into University and College (UK)*

Subjective Guidebooks

These books are opinion driven with information about the academic and social life on campus. Some guides are written for prospective students by currently enrolled students. For example:

- *Rugg's Recommendation on the Colleges (U.S.)*
- *Fiske's Guide (U.S.)*
- *The Virgin Guide to British Institutions (UK)*

Catalogues & Prospectus Guides

There is a large selection of institution catalogues, viewbooks and prospectus guides available in the North Building LRC from institutions around the world.

Career Reference Materials

- *College Board Guide to Jobs and Career Planning*
- *A-Z of Careers and Jobs*
- *Careers with a Science Degree*
- *Careers in Law*
- *Careers for Foreign Language Aficionados & Other Multilingual Types*
- *Careers Uncovered Series: Psychology, Teaching, Design, Marketing, Journalism, Law, Music, Medicine...*

Test Preparation Books

There is a large selection of books to help students prepare for the SAT, the ACT and/or TOEFL standardized admissions tests. For the UK there are books available to help you prepare the National Law Admissions Test (LNAT), the BioMedical Admissions Test (BMAT) and the University Clinical Aptitude Test (UCAT).

INFORMATION FROM INSTITUTIONS

Contact the Admissions Office at the institutions you are interested in to request application materials, viewbooks, prospectus guides, financial aid information, scholarship information and subject guides or departmental information. At many institutions in the UK, currently enrolled students produce an **Alternative Guide** or the **Alternative Prospectus**, which gives inside information to prospective students.

HIGHER EDUCATION FAIRS

There are several higher education tours and higher education fairs that take place each year. In our area, Frankfurt International School hosts a UK and a U.S. higher education fair each year. There is also a large higher education and career fair, *EINSTIEG Abi*, that takes place in Cologne, as well as the British Council UK Higher Education Fair in Dusseldorf every January. ISD also hosts two higher education fairs, one in the fall and one in the spring. Upcoming fairs are always announced in the Weekly Announcements, Google Classroom, MaiaLearning ('Events') and on the Counselling Department Facebook and Twitter pages. Keep your eyes and ears open for these opportunities!

HIGHER EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE VISITS

Throughout the year, ISD plays host to several representatives from institutions around the world. These visits are a great opportunity for students to learn more about the variety of options available at that institution. Visits are announced in the Weekly Announcements, Google Classroom, MaiaLearning and on the Counselling Department Facebook and Twitter pages. Students should register to attend all visits via the 'Events' tab in **MaiaLearning**. Parents are always welcome to attend these presentations.

USEFUL WEBSITES

Below are numerous websites related to the higher education search and selection process. Given the nature of the Internet, these sites may change or even disappear with time. ***Direct links to these and many other helpful websites are always available on the MaiaLearning homepage in the 'Resources' section!*** www.maialearning.com

Austria

www.studyinaustria.at/en/

Australia

www.studyinaustralia.gov.au

Canada

www.universitystudy.ca/ | www.edu-canada.gc.ca/
www.univcan.ca/ | www.macleans.ca/education-hub

Denmark

www.studyindenmark.dk/

Europe

www.ec.europa.eu/education/study-in-europe/
www.eunicas.ie | www.bachelorsportal.eu/

France

www.campusfrance.org/en

Germany

www2.daad.de/deutschland/studienangebote/studien-gang/de/
www2.daad.de/deutschland/studienangebote/international-programmes/en/

Ireland

www.educationinireland.com/en/ | www.cao.ie

Netherlands

www.studyinnl.org/ | www.studielink.nl

Norway

www.studyinnorway.no/

Sweden

www.studyinsweden.se/
www.universityadmissions.se

Switzerland

www.studying-in-switzerland
www.studyprogrammes.ch

United Kingdom

www.ucas.com
www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide
www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk
www.discoveruni.gov.uk
www.prospects.ac.uk/careers-advice/
www.study-uk.britishcouncil.org/
www.ukcisa.org.uk/

United States

www.collegeboard.org | www.collegexpress.com
www.collegescorecard.ed.gov | www.niche.com/

Admissions Testing (U.S.)

www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat
www.act.org/

Admissions Testing (UK)

www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests

Career Information

www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org
www.myplan.com/index.php

English Language Testing

www.ets.org/toefl | www.ielts.org/
www.englishtest.duolingo.com/applicants

Fees/Scholarship Info (UK)

www.study-uk.britishcouncil.org/scholarships

Financial Aid/Scholarship Info (U.S.)

www.fastweb.com
www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college
www.finaid.org
www.studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa

Gap Year Opportunities

www.gooverseas.com/gap-year
www.teenlife.com
www.lattitudecanada.org

International Baccalaureate Organization

www.ibo.org/university-admission

NACAC International Admission Guide

www.nacacnet.org/international-admission/

U.S. Bound Athletes

www.ncaa.org/student-athletes/future
www.fs.ncaa.org/eligibility/Student_Resources/

UK Open Days

www.opendays.com

Unibuddy

www.unibuddy.com/for-students/
www.ucas.com/chat-to-students

Virtual Campus Tours (U.S.)

www.campustours.com
www.youvisit.com/collegesearch

More Links

BOOKS FOR PARENTS

Many of these titles are available from the **SRS Main Library**.

Where You Go Is Not Who You'll Be: An Antidote to the College Admissions Mania

by Frank Bruni

The Naked Roommate: For Parents Only - A Parent's Guide to the New College Experience

by Harlan Cohen

The iConnected Parent: Staying Close to Your Kids in College (and Beyond) While Letting Them Grow Up

by Barbara K. Hofer

50 College Admission Directors Speak to Parents

by MacGowan & McGinty

College Countdown: The Parent's and Student's Survival Kit for the College Admissions Process

by Jill F. Vongruben

Don't Tell Me What to Do, Just Send Money: The Essential Parenting Guide to The College Years

by Helen E. Schelhas-Miller & Christine Johnson

Getting in Without Freaking Out: The Official College Admissions Guide for Overwhelmed Parents

by Arlene Matthews

Letting Go: A Parent's Guide to Understanding the College Years

by Karen Levin Coburn & Madge Lawrence Treeger

Panicked Parents' Guide to College Admissions

by Sally Rubenstone

Parents' Guide to College Life: 181 Straight Answers on Everything You Can Expect Over the Next Four Years

by Robin Raskin

Paying for College: A Guide for Parents

by Gerald Krefetz

When Your Kid Goes to College: A Parent's Survival Guide

by Carol Barkin

You're On Your Own (But I'm here if you need me): Mentoring Your Child During the College Years

by Marjorie Savage

Almost Grown: Launching Your Child from High School to College

by Patricia Pasick

Empty Nest...Full Heart: The Journey from Home to College

by Andrea Van Steenhouse

Campus Visits & College Interviews: A Complete Guide for College-bound Students and Their Families

by Zola Dincin Schneider

UNITED STATES

An overview of the admissions process

- There are more than **4,000** higher education institutions in the United States.
- In the U.S., there is **no standard application procedure** – admissions policies, requirements, procedures, and deadlines vary from institution to institution. For IB Diploma candidates, consult the [Guide for IB students applying to US institutions](#).
- **A Bachelor (B.A./B.Sc./B.Eng/BBA) degree in the U.S. is typically a 4-year program.** Some institutions offer credit and/or advanced standing for the IB Diploma or Diploma Courses (Certificates).
- **If you are not sure about your major do not worry.** Many students in the U.S. begin their Bachelor programme **undecided**. At most institutions, 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 who initially apply **undecided** spend the first two years sampling a variety of courses before settling on their major.
- **The most important factor in the admissions decision in the U.S. is the quality of the ISD Senior School Transcript.** Admissions officers will review your academic record from **grade 9-12**, considering the grades earned, the level of difficulty (**rigour**) of the courses taken, and trends in academic consistency and improvement.
- **You should apply to a range of institutions** with varying degrees of selectivity – **Reach | Target | Likely**. To determine your list, you will need to compare your academic profile (GPA, courses, grades, test scores and extra-curricular involvement) to that of recently admitted students. **Regardless of the category, you should be happy to attend any institution on your final list.**
 - **Reach:** Your academic profile is slightly below that of recently admitted students and there is a small chance of admission. At a reach institution, 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:** An institution where you have a realistic chance of gaining admission. You meet most of the admission criteria and your academic profile and extra-curricular involvement closely matches that of currently enrolled first year students.
 - **Likely:** An institution where you have a high probability of being admitted. Your academic profile and extra-curricular involvement are 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 supplementary materials that may include multiple essays, short answer responses, graded work samples, a portfolio, resume, teacher recommendations, etc. In addition to your application, most institutions will require some or all of the following materials: An application fee; copies of your ISD Senior School Transcript(s) and DP Predicted Grades; the ISD Senior School Profile; a Mid-Year Report (first-semester senior grades) and if applicable, **financial aid and scholarship applications. All international students require the Certification of Finances form for Visa purposes!**
- **Standardized testing requirements vary significantly.** Not all institutions require the same tests (SAT | ACT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo) or the same number of tests. You must inform yourself of the standardized testing requirements for each institution you are interested in and arrange for official results to be sent to each institution.
- **Teacher recommendation requirements vary.** It is rare for an institution to require more than two teacher recommendations. It is important that you are aware of the recommendation requirements for each institution. Some institutions may require a reference from an English, Math or Science teacher, or someone who has taught you in Grade 11 or 12. ISD teachers require **at least two weeks'** notice to write a reference. You must use the form provided by your counsellor to request a teacher recommendation.
- **More than 1000 institutions accept The Common Application, and more than 150 institutions accept the Coalition Application.** Using these centralized services, students complete online application and then send it to each institution on their respective list. **Although the Common Application and Coalition Application save time in the application process, many institutions require supplemental forms and may also request additional essays or recommendations.**
- **May 1 is the annual Candidate Reply Date.** By this date, you must notify each institution on your list whether you will enrol or not and submit a deposit to the **ONE** institution you have chosen to attend.

U.S. admissions plans

REGULAR DECISION

Applications are submitted by a set date, usually in December, January or February. Decisions are sent between March 1st and April 15th. Students have until **May 1** to pay a deposit and enrol.

ROLLING ADMISSION

Institutions review applications as they are submitted and make decisions throughout the admissions cycle until the first-year class is full. Under this program, an institution will consider your application as soon as all of the required application materials have been received. Notification of acceptance or rejection is sent as soon as a decision is made, usually within 6-10 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 allows an applicant to apply early, usually between November 1st and November 15th. Decisions are released in 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 institutions and wait until May 1 to make your final choice. You may also apply to more than one non-binding, non-restrictive Early Action program.

RESTRICTIVE EARLY ACTION (REA)

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

EARLY DECISION (ED)

Early Decision allows students with a **clear 1st choice** to apply early and receive a response early. Students who apply ED must be 100% sure that the institution is their 1st 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 – if admitted you are making a commitment to enrol.** The application deadline is typically between November 1st-15th, with a decision made by mid-December. Some institutions offer **ED II** (usually in January or February). **If accepted under an ED plan, you must withdraw applications to all other institutions in every country where you have applied.** If you are not accepted, you may be deferred to the regular round, where your application will be reconsidered with the other regular decision candidates. You will be notified of a final decision in April.

<https://professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/applications/early>

U.S. admissions decisions

ADMITTED

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

DEFERRED

If you have applied Early Decision or Early Action and are deferred, the institution believes you are still a good candidate for admission and will review your application again once all regular applications have been received. In this case, institutions 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 institution has decided not to admit you.

WAIT LIST

Institutions often admit more students than they have space for because they know that some students will choose to attend a different institution. If after May 1st, the Candidate Reply Date, an institution has places available in their first-year class, they will use the wait list to fill vacancies. Most institutions will aim make their final decisions by June 1st.

MAY 1st CANDIDATE REPLY DATE

Once you have received all your offers you must then decide which institution to attend. You have until **May 1st** to make this decision. By this date, you must choose the **ONE** institution you wish to attend, pay your deposit, and decline all other offers from institutions that have admitted you.

U.S.-style or U.S.-affiliated overseas institutions

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

AUSTRIA

Webster University Vienna
www.webster.ac.at

Central European University
www.ceu.edu/about

BELGIUM

Brussels School of Governance
www.brussels-school.be/education

BULGARIA

American University in Bulgaria
www.aubg.edu/

EGYPT

The American University in Cairo
www.aucegypt.edu/

FRANCE

American University of Paris
www.aup.edu

Parsons Paris The New School
www.newschool.edu/parsons-paris/

GERMANY

Bard College Berlin
www.berlin.bard.edu/

Constructor University
www.constructor-university.de/

Touro College Berlin
www.touoberlin.de

GREECE

The American College of Greece
www.acg.edu/about-acg/

The American College of Thessaloniki
www.act.edu

The American University of Athens
www.aua.edu/

IRELAND

American College Dublin
www.iamu.edu/

ITALY

American University of Rome
<https://aur.edu/>

John Cabot University
www.johncabot.edu

Temple University Rome
<https://rome.temple.edu/>

JAPAN

Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University
<http://en.apu.ac.jp/home/>

Temple University, Japan Campus (TUJ)
www.tuj.ac.jp

KOREA

Incheon Global Campus
www.igc.or.kr

LEBANON

American University of Beirut
www.aub.edu.lb/

MONACO

International University of Monaco
www.monaco.edu/

NETHERLANDS

Webster University Leiden
www.webster.nl

QATAR

Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar
www.qatar-weill.cornell.edu/

Texas A&M University at Qatar
www.qatar.tamu.edu/

Mellon University in Qatar
www.qatar.cmu.edu/

Virginia Commonwealth University
School of the Arts in Qatar
www.qatar.vcu.edu/

SPAIN

La Salle University, Barcelona
www.salleurl.edu/en

Saint Louis University, Madrid
www.slu.edu

Suffolk University, Madrid
www.suffolk.edu/

SWITZERLAND

Franklin University Switzerland
www.fus.edu

International University in Geneva
www.iun.ch

Webster University Geneva
www.webster.ch

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

NYU Abu Dhabi
www.nyu.edu

UNITED KINGDOM

Hult International Business School
www.hult.edu/

Northeastern University London
<https://www.nulondon.ac.uk/degrees-2023/>

Regent's University London
www.regents.ac.uk

Richmond, The American International
University in London
www.richmond.ac.uk

Factors that influence U.S. admissions 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. institutions consider when making an admissions decision. The NACAC research confirms that **grades in higher education-preparatory courses**, the **strength of the high school curriculum** and admission test scores are **among the top factors**. For more detailed information and analysis, please follow the link to **Chapter 3** of the [2019 report](#). The College Board also has a page to help students understand what really matters. <https://professionals.collegeboard.org/guidance/applications/decisions>

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The most important factor in the admissions decision is proven academic achievement as demonstrated by your Gr. 9-12 ISD Senior School Transcript. Your performance in high school is the best predictor of your ability to be successful in your higher education programme. Admissions officers will look for strong grades in an academically challenging program. 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 a trend that demonstrates improvement over time. Do not be discouraged by a few low grades; institutions look at the overall record in context and appreciate an upward trend. **Achievement in grade 12 is important. Institutions will receive a mid-year report with your January grades. If you fall into the ‘senior slump’ and check out once you have submitted your applications and been admitted to an institution, 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 | ACT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo) varies from institution to institution. As a rule, selective institutions expect strong standardized testing results. These institutions are looking for students who will be able to cope with the rigorous demands of their Bachelor program. Institutions with a large applicant pool tend to place greater emphasis on test scores and GPA’s. Standardized scores provide institutions with a measure to compare students from different institutions around the nation and around the world. Many institutions 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 U.S. institutions that have made the submission of standardized scores optional: NYU, University of Chicago, Bates, Bowdoin, Wheaton, Sarah Lawrence, and Hampshire to name a few.

For a full list of test-optional institutions visit www.fairtest.org/university/optional (Top Tier).

EXTRA-CURRICULAR INVOLVEMENT

The emphasis is on quality and commitment. In other words, the 3 D’s: Depth | Diversity | Dedication. 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 campus 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 creative writing skills and a story that provides 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 institutions require and/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 institution on your list to find out about individual interview policies and procedures.

COUNSELLOR RECOMMENDATION

Your counsellor writes their recommendation with input from your grade 11 and 12 teachers. As your primary advocates, we aim to present an assessment that is fair, honest, and accurate, and that emphasizes your unique achievements and talents. This comprehensive letter includes information about your academic programme, achievement, and extra-curricular involvement. It gives a sense of who you are as a student and as a person.

TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS

Each institution has its own specific requirements for teacher recommendations. As a guideline, you should choose one of your grade 11 or 12 teachers. They should be able to speak to your abilities and accomplishments inside the classroom. 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 (HL Math, for example), the teacher may be able to illustrate your determination, perseverance, willingness to take risks and personal responsibility – all qualities that institutions are looking for in an applicant.

THE APPLICATION

The appearance and content of your application reflects a great deal about you. It is important that you invest time and effort into completing each 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... Institutions want to enrol students who they believe will make a meaningful contribution to their campus community.

LEGACY STATUS

Institutions may ask if you have relatives who have attended their institution. At some of those institutions, the sons and daughters of alumni receive special consideration in the application process. Although legacy status is definitely not a guarantee for admission, the children of alumni may get a closer look provided that their academic qualifications are within a reasonable range for admission.

THE “YOU” FACTOR

Institutions value such qualities as personal integrity, leadership abilities, compassion, independence, originality, etc. They look for individuals who will contribute to the campus community. 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

Institutions want to admit students who will choose to attend their institution if admitted. More and more, institutions are taking the 'interest factor' into account and may be more likely to admit a student who has engaged with the institution prior to applying. 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.

www.7-ways-show-demonstrated-interest/

<https://www.collegeessayguy.com/how-to-demonstrate-interest>

U.S. Standardized admissions tests

<http://www.isdcounselling.org/standardized-testing-for-us-institutions.html>

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

THE PSAT 10 & PRELIMINARY SAT/NATIONAL MERIT QUALIFYING TEST (PSAT/NMSQT)

The [PSAT 10](#) takes place **once a year** in the **Spring**. The [PSAT/NMSQT](#) takes place **once a year** in **October**. Both measure what you learn in high school and what you need to succeed in college. Although they are not required for admission and test scores are not sent to institutions, we highly recommend that students take both tests as they simulate the SAT structure and environment. The tests are divided into three sections: Reading Test; Writing & Language Test; Math Test. Score reports provide two section scores on a 160 to 760 scale - one for Evidence-Based Reading & Writing, and one for Math. **After taking the PSAT 10 and/or the PSAT/NMSQT, students can connect their score report to the [Official Khan Academy SAT practice site](#).** This **FREE** practice site will create a tailored practice plan based on the score report, identifying strengths and areas for improvement, thus enabling students to practice and prepare for 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 may qualify for National Merit Scholarship Awards.

THE Digital SAT

The [Digital SAT](#) focuses on the skills and knowledge at the heart of education and measures what you learn in high school and what you need to succeed in college. It includes a **Reading & Writing section** and **Math section**. Scores for each section (Reading & Writing; Math) range from **200** to **800** for a total of up to **1600** points. When institutions receive your scores, they will have the option to view and print a copy of your essay. **Students should take their first SAT in March of grade 11 at the latest and if necessary, retake it in May of grade 11, October of grade 12 and/or December of grade 12. There are a limited number of international SAT test dates per year, so students must plan their testing timeline accordingly!**

THE ACT

The [ACT](#) assesses high school students' general educational development and their ability to do university-level work. The multiple-choice exam measures students' knowledge and skills in four areas: **English | Math | Reading | Science**. Students also have the option to take the **Writing Test**. Each of the four sections is scored on a scale from **1** (low) to **36** (high), with the writing test being scored on a scale of **1** (low) to **12** (high). Students are also given a composite score from **1** (low) to **36** (high), created by averaging the scores for each section. The ACT also includes an interest inventory that provides information about career and educational planning. **Note that ISD is not an ACT test centre.**

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE TESTING FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

Non-native English speakers who have completed the last **3** or **4** years of high school in English **may be exempt** from providing evidence of their English language proficiency, especially students who are enrolled in DP English Literature or DP Language & Literature. Students who not qualify for an exemption may be required to take **either** the [TOEFL](#) (Test of English as a Foreign Language) **or** the [IELTS](#) (International English Language Testing System). Institutions do not prefer one assessment over the other. Both the TOEFL and IELTS are administered at private test centres in Düsseldorf on fixed dates throughout the year. The [Duolingo English Test](#) is also widely [accepted by many institutions](#) around the world and may be completed **online, at home in just 1 hour**.

Test taking information and advice

<http://www.isdcounselling.org/standardized-testing-for-us-institutions.html>

Standardized admissions tests are *not* the most important factor in the admissions decision. They are just *one* of the many factors that 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 U.S. institutions and some international institutions **require** the SAT, ACT, and/or TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo.
- However, there are **over 1,800** U.S. higher education institutions that are 'test-flexible' or 'test-optional'. For a **comprehensive list** visit www.fairtest.org/university/optional.
- ISD offers the PSAT 10, PSAT/NMSQT, and SAT on our campus.
- The weight placed on ACT and SAT scores in the admissions process varies from institution to institution.
- As a rule, the ACT and SAT are not required for non-U.S. institutions. However, international admissions tutors are familiar with the ACT and SAT, so a solid score could be helpful to your application.
- Most English-language higher education programs around the world require students whose first language is NOT English to take the **TOEFL or IELTS**. **Duolingo** is also widely accepted at institutions around the world.
- TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo scores are **not a substitute** for SAT or ACT scores. In combination with an SAT or ACT score, the TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo gives admissions officers a better understanding of the students' English language ability.
- Not all institutions require the same tests or the same number of tests. ***It is very important that you check the testing requirements of each institution you are interested in and that you register for and take the appropriate tests.***
- Students with officially documented learning challenges (i.e. dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, ADD/ADHD) may qualify for testing accommodations including extra time, use of a computer or calculator. Please see your Learning Support teacher and/or counsellor to apply for testing accommodations well in advance of when you intend to take the test.
- It is to your advantage to take practice tests for the SAT **and** the ACT at least once. The exams are somewhat different and give you an opportunity to demonstrate different academic strengths. After taking both practice tests, you can decide which test format suits you best and then continue your practice and review for that test.
- A variety of **FREE** practice resources for both tests are available online, including practice tests. [Khan Academy is the Official SAT Test Practice](https://www.khanacademy.org/sat) site, while the [ACT Academy](https://www.actstudent.org) is the go-to place to get personalized ACT practice.
- Each Spring, ISD partners with Academic Services International to offer a 4-day (two weekends) [ACT/SAT Preparation Course](#) at ISD. The course focusses on understanding the test structure and format and test-taking strategies.
- Plan to take the SAT and/or ACT at least twice, but not more than three times. Be mindful of taking the exams multiple times. Although you select which sitting(s) you would like to send, institutions will still see the scores for each individual section for that sitting. In any case, *most* institutions will use the highest score you achieve in each section of the test from all the test sittings you submit.
- Most **Early Decision/Early Action** admission routes require that you complete all standardized testing by October or November of grade 12.
- Registration deadlines will be announced in the Weekly Announcements, Google Classroom, and on the Counselling Department Facebook and Twitter pages. Students must register through the appropriate site:
SAT www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register | **ACT** www.actstudent.org | **Duolingo** www.englishtest.duolingo.com/ | **TOEFL** www.ets.org/toefl | **IELTS** www.ielts.org
- If you are a U.S. citizen or resident and do not have a **social security number**, you should apply for one now. This number is used to identify you on higher education applications and testing materials.
- Fill out the test registration forms in 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 institutions you will be applying to, write the **CEEB** code for each institution on your registration form so that your scores will be sent to them directly as soon as they are available. ***Institutions require official score reports directly from the testing agency. You are responsible for sending your official score reports to each institution.***
- Always review your test admission ticket for errors and if necessary, fill out the correction form.

U.S. standardized testing schedule (2023)

SAT (**Some test sittings may not be offered at ISD!)

Test Dates	Test	Registration Deadline
March 11, 2023	*SAT Digital	February 24, 2023
*April 22, 2023	*PSAT 10	*To be announced
May 6, 2023	*SAT Digital	April 21, 2023
June 3, 2023	*SAT Digital	May 19, 2023
August 26, 2023	*SAT Digital	August 11, 2023
October 7, 2023	*SAT Digital	September 23, 2023
*October 14, 2023	*PSAT	*To be announced
November 4, 2023	*SAT Digital	October 20, 2023
December 2, 2023	*SAT Digital	November 17, 2023

[Register online](#) | ISD Test Centre: 57655 | ISD School Code (CEEB): 734315

*PSAT 10 & PSAT/NMSQT registration is done internally, through ISD.

ACT (**ISD is not an ACT Test Centre!)

Test Dates	Test	Registration Deadline
February 11, 2023	ACT	January 13, 2023
April 15, 2023	ACT	March 17, 2023
June 10, 2023	ACT	May 12, 2023
July 15, 2023	ACT	June 16, 2023
September 9, 2023	ACT	To be announced
October 21, 2023	ACT	To be announced
December 9, 2023	ACT	To be announced

IMPORTANT NOTE

ISD is an SAT test centre, however, not all sittings may be available on the ISD campus due to school and/or national holidays. When not offered at ISD, students must register with another test centre in Germany, The Netherlands or Belgium.

SAT

You should take the SAT for the first time in March of grade 11 *at the latest*. Students applying to selective institutions should begin testing in December of grade 11 *at the latest*. If necessary, you will be able to take the SAT again in October and/or December of grade 12.

www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register

ACT

You should take the ACT in February or April of grade 11 and if necessary, take it again in September, October and/or December of grade 12. Some institutions that accept that ACT will only do so with the writing section. Registration is done through the ACT website at www.my.act.org/account/signin?location=https://my.act.org.

TOEFL/IELTS/Duolingo English Test

The TOEFL and IELTS tests are offered at fixed dates throughout the year, while the [Duolingo English Test](#) can be completed online anytime. The Düsseldorf TOEFL test centre fills very quickly, so it is important to register as far in advance as possible online at www.ets.org/toefl. To register for the IELTS visit www.ielts.org.

OFFICIAL SCORE REPORTS

Higher Education institutions only accept official score reports directly from the testing agency. **As the owner of your test scores, you must arrange with the testing agency to have your scores sent to the institution(s) of your choice.**

The U.S. application essay

Essays are a key part of the application process. The questions will be as varied as the applications themselves. Some institutions will ask you to answer a specific question, while others will let you select your own topic. The purpose of the essay is to add a personal dimension to your application and to demonstrate your writing abilities. When an admissions officer reads your essay, they are 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. It is an opportunity to make your application come alive by providing the institution with some insight into your character and personality. Take it seriously, start early and revise, revise, revise!

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS

Common Application Essay Prompts (Choose **one**)

www.commonapp.org/apply/essay-prompts

- *Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.*
- *The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?*
- *Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?*
- *Reflect on something that someone has done for you that has made you happy or thankful in a surprising way. How has this gratitude affected or motivated you?*
- *Describe a topic, idea, or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more?*
- *Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.*

Coalition Application Essay Prompts (Choose **one**)

<http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org/essays.html>

- *Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.*
- *What interests or excites you? How does it shape who you are now or who you might become in the future?*
- *Describe a time when you had a positive impact on others. What were the challenges? What were the rewards?*
- *Has there been a time when an idea or belief of yours was questioned? How did you respond? What did you learn?*
- *What success have you achieved or obstacle have you faced? What advice would you give a sibling or friend going through a similar experience?*

University of California Personal Insight Questions (Choose **4 of 8** prompts)

www.admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/how-to-apply/applying-as-a-freshman/personal-insight-questions.html

- *Describe an example of your leadership experience in which you have positively influenced others, helped resolve disputes or contributed to group efforts over time.*
- *What would you say is your greatest talent or skill? How have you developed and demonstrated that talent?*
- *What have you done to make your school or your community a better place?*

University of Chicago Supplemental Essay Questions

www.collegeadmissions.uchicago.edu/apply/uchicago-supplemental-essay-questions

- *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.*
- *Were pH an expression of personality, what would be your pH and why?*
- *So where is Waldo, really?*
- *What advice would a wisdom tooth have?*

Columbia University Application Questions

www.undergrad.admissions.columbia.edu/apply/writing-supplement

- *Write an essay that 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.*

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 10 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 challenges?
- 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 reflect on who you are. 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 person reading your application.	Do not 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?	Do not write a 1,000-word essay if the limit is 1,000 characters .
Do write your own application essay. Your work should be original and entirely your own.	Do not 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.	Do not 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.	Do not seek too much help. The essay should be your work and represent your voice.
Do start early and revise, revise, revise!	Do not use the same essay for every application.
Do write about something that is personal and that you feel passionate about.	Do not 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.	Do not 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 institution, making note of the limit in words or characters .	Do not draw attention to the negative.
Do get feedback from your counsellor, friends, and parents. Be sure to proofread for content, grammar, structure and spelling.	Do not use exclamation points and do not use a thesaurus for every word.
Do talk about your strengths or how you have overcome a weakness or obstacle.	Do not 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.	Do not use the essay to excuse poor grades or low SAT scores.

ESSAY ADVICE FROM ADMISSIONS OFFICERS

From the National Association of College Admission Counsellors (NACAC)

- 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 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 sometimes 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 Admissions 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 favourites. 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 favourite 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 Admissions and Financial Aid

The following are two of Connecticut College's "Essays That Worked".
For additional samples visit 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.

U.S. Financial aid information

www.nacacnet.org/student/paying-for-college/

- The **total cost** of attending a U.S. institution varies from institution to institution, with prices of 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 at public institutions, the fees can be much less.
www.bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-for-college/college-costs
- U.S. citizens/residents are eligible to receive some form of financial aid, either from the federal government, or from the individual institution. Financial aid is monetary assistance given to a student and his or her family to help meet the total cost of attending the institution (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, institutions, 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 institution and the money earned goes towards the total cost of education.
- **Financial aid** can be **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 based on *need*. Most need-based aid comes from the U.S. government. Need is simply the difference between the cost of attending a particular institution 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 www.studentaid.gov/fafsa. **This form should be completed in grade 12 as soon as it becomes available on October 1st.** 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)**.
www.fsapartners.ed.gov/expected-family-contribution-efc
- 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 your higher education. This financial information is collected through the FAFSA form. Your EFC is used to determine your *financial need* and is reported directly to the institutions to which you apply. *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 institution. If there is a gap between what you are expected to contribute and the full cost of attendance, you have financial *need*.
- Financial aid packages will vary from institution to institution 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 institution based solely on the *sticker price*. Although the cost of your chosen institutions may vary, your EFC remains constant. If you qualify for aid, the institution with the high *sticker price* just might be able to provide you with a financial aid package that helps to make that institution affordable.
- In addition to the **FAFSA**, many private institutions also require the **College Scholarship Service PROFILE** form and/or their own financial aid form. Many institutions 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 institution to which you want the information sent.
www.cssprofile.collegeboard.org/
- Check the financial aid policies, procedures, and deadlines for *every* institution on your list. For specific questions regarding the FAFSA or the CSS PROFILE form, contact the Financial Aid Administrators at the institutions where you have applied.

U.S. Financial aid – International students

- Financial aid for international students wanting to attend a U.S. institution is limited. Some institutions have a clear policy stating that they do not offer any financial aid for international students. **The College Board [Higher Education Financial Aid for International Students](#) is a fantastic resource.**
- International students should contact the Financial Aid Office at each institution they are interested in for information about the availability of funds for international students and the policies and procedures for applying for aid.
- **Jennie Kent** and **Jeff Levy** have compiled a detailed list of institutions that offer financial aid to Non-resident Alien Undergraduates (international students):
www.bigjeducationalconsulting.com/resources
- The **National Association of International Educators** website may also be helpful:
www.nafsa.org/students.sec/financial_aid_for_undergraduate
- For those institutions that do provide aid, most will require the College Board **International Student Financial Aid Application**. This form is designed for non-U.S. citizens seeking financial assistance to U.S. institutions.
www.bates.edu/financial-services/International-Student-Financial-Aid-Application-ISFAA.pdf
- In the U.S., a study visa 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 institution.** These forms are typically verified by an employer or a bank official and inform the institution that the family is financially able to pay the full amount for tuition, books and expenses for one academic year.
www.austincollege.edu/2023-24-International-Student-Certification-of-Finances.pdf

U.S. Financial aid – Questions for financial aid officers

- What is the total cost of attending your institution (tuition, room and board, books, fees, supplies, etc.)?
- 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 my 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 institution do for me in that case?
- How can I find out about available scholarship or grants from your institution?
- 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 institution offer payment plans or payment schedules?

CANADA

An overview of the admissions process

INSTITUTIONS & DEGREES

- There are **98** member institutions and colleges in the **Universities Canada Association**.
- Canada is the second largest country in the world, with 10 provinces and 3 territories. The largest cities are Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver. Other major cities include Victoria, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, Halifax, and St. John's.
- 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 institution.
- 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.
- Universities Canada highlights **8 reasons why university studies in Canada make sense**: World-class universities; Affordability; A wealth of options; Open to the world; Experiential learning; Support services; Cultural diversity; Opportunity to stay in Canada after graduation.
- 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, particularly in some of the smaller cities.
- 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 institutions offer both accelerated **3-year** and regular **4-year** Bachelor degree programs.
- 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.

TUITION FEES

www.univcan.ca/universities/facts-and-stats/tuition-fees-by-university/

- According to the data from **Universities Canada**, undergraduate **Canadian** students will pay between **\$2,650-\$11,760** per year in tuition fees.
- Undergraduate **international** students will pay between **\$10,620-\$61,350** per year in tuition fees.
- An agreement between the governments of **France** and **Québec** allows **French citizens** registered in a degree programme at a Québec institution to be **exempted** from the international student supplement. **These students will be charged Canadian tuition fees.**
- Canadian citizens or permanent residents are eligible for government loans and grants to help with tuition fees. Some institutions offer merit-based scholarships. Athletic scholarships may also be available.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- Admission requirements vary. Each institution assesses candidates on an individual basis according to their standards.
- Academic achievement is the most important factor in the admission decision, but non-academic information may also be considered in some cases.
- **For IB Diploma Programme candidates, admission 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 institutions, consult the IBO's [Guide for IB students applying to Canadian institutions](#).
- **Selective** institutions and programs are generally looking for scores between **36-38** points (some institutions include bonus points while others do not).
- For non-native English speakers, the TOEFL, IELTS or Duolingo test is required unless you have studied the last 3-4 years of high school in English, in which case an exemption may be granted.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Application **deadlines** vary but tend to be later than in the U.S., typically from **January to March**.
- 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. Institutions admit to a program not a specific concentration.
- Applications are assessed on a **rolling** basis from February through April (some institutions send decisions later). It is therefore in the best interest of the student to submit their application as early as possible.
- Interviews, essays, and letters of recommendation are generally **not** required. Competitive programs at the more selective institutions (McGill, UBC, Queen's, University of Toronto, for example) may require these supplemental materials.
- Students interested in applying to institutions in Ontario must apply through the **Ontario Institutions' Application Centre. OUAC** then forwards your application on to your chosen institution(s). www.ouac.on.ca/
- Students interested in applying to institutions in **British Columbia** must apply through the **EducationPlannerBC** website. **EPBC** then forwards your application on to your chosen institution(s). www.apply.educationplannerbc.ca/
- Students interested in applying to multiple institutions in **Alberta** may use Apply Alberta or apply directly to the institution through the institution website. www.applyalberta.ca/
- Once applications are submitted, institutions 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...). **Check your email regularly and respond immediately to any requests to upload additional materials.**
- A wide range of support is available for international students who choose to attend a Canadian institution. Most institutions offer academic, career and personal counselling, international student advisors, help in finding off-campus housing, health services and scholarships.

Useful Websites:

- Universities Canada: www.univcan.ca
- Universities Canada – Search Programs: www.universitystudy.ca/search-programs/
- EduCanada: www.educanada.ca/index.aspx
- Study in Canada: www.studyincanada.com
- Study in Ontario: www.ouac.on.ca | www.ontario.ca/page/study-ontario-international-students
- Study in Nova Scotia: www.edunova.ca
- Study in Alberta: www.studyinalberta.ca
- Study in British Columbia: www.studyinbc.com/
- British Columbia Council for International Education: www.bccie.bc.ca
- Maclean's Magazine: www.macleans.ca/education-hub/
- Canadian University Report: www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/education/canadian-university-report/

**Information provided by Universities Canada*

Factors that influence Canadian admissions 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 application carefully and answer all questions fully.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

The most important factor in the admissions decision at Canadian institutions is proven academic achievement as demonstrated by your grade 9-12 ISD Senior School Transcript. 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 a trend that demonstrates an improvement over time. Do not be discouraged by a few low grades; institutions consider the overall record in context and appreciate an upward trend. Senior grades are important. Institutions 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 and been admitted – admissions officers will notice and may rescind your admission offer or any scholarships you have earned.

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME COURSES AND PREDICTED GRADES

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

ESSAYS/SHORT ANSWER PROFILE

For more competitive programs at some Canadian institutions, the essay and/or personal profile can be a critical factor in the admission 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.

RECOMMENDATION LETTER

Though not normally required by Canadian institutions, we may send the teacher and/or counsellor recommendation, especially for admission to more competitive Bachelor programs as it is to your advantage in the application process. As your primary advocates, we aim to present an assessment that is fair, honest, and accurate and that emphasizes your unique achievements and talents. This comprehensive letter includes information about your academic programme and achievement, 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. In other words, the 3 D's: Depth | Diversity | Dedication. 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 campus 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... Institutions want to enrol students who they believe will make a meaningful contribution to their campus community.

THE "YOU" FACTOR

Institutions value such qualities as personal integrity, leadership abilities, compassion, independence, originality, etc. They are looking for individuals who will contribute to their institution. 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 DEMONSTRATED INTEREST FACTOR

Institutions want to admit those students whom they believe will attend their institution if admitted. Some institutions consider your "demonstrated interest". You may demonstrate interest in many ways: A campus visit, contacting the admissions office, communicating with a department representative, or meeting with a representative in the area.

UNITED KINGDOM

An overview of the admissions process

- **In the UK, you apply for a specific course that you declare at the time you submit your application.** It makes sense, therefore, for you to choose your course first and then research institutions that offer your course of interest. You are accepted to a particular course within the institution and the modules you will be required to take will be related to your chosen subject area. www.ucas.com/explore/subjects
- **The most popular courses by application in the UK in 2022 were:** Subjects allied to Medicine; Business & Management Studies; Biological Sciences; Creative Arts & Design; Social Studies; Engineering; Law; Computer Science; Physical Sciences; Medicine & Dentistry; Education.
- **Once you have started your studies, changing to a different course 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 (www.ucas.com) is the most comprehensive source of information for students interested in studying in the UK.** Through this website you will find information about the more than **36,000** undergraduate courses available at over **370** providers in the UK. Through the UCAS website you may search a database of available subjects, learn about entry requirements and link to institutions.
- **The IBO has prepared a very useful [Guide for IB students applying to UK institutions](#).**
- **Most Bachelor programs in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland can be completed in 3 years.** However, a **Bachelor degree in Scotland typically takes 4 years.** Scottish degree programs are flexible. Like the U.S. and Canada, the first 1-2 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 up to **three** subject areas. 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 work experience in the relevant 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 DP point **and** subject requirements set by each institution /course you are interested in. ***Although this information can be found on the UCAS website, you should always verify DP point requirements directly with the institution you are interested in applying to.***
- **For institution ranking, course ranking and league tables,** refer to the online version of the [Complete University Guide](#) and/or [The Guardian University Guide](#).
- **In the UK, Law and Medicine are undergraduate degrees.** Five years of medical studies will qualify you to begin working as a doctor (there are further requirements for qualification). However, a three-year Law degree does not qualify a student to become a lawyer. That requires further training. Please note that some institutions will require students to take a pre-admission entrance examination in these subject areas (BMAT | UCAT | LNAT).
- **In the UK, you apply to institutions through your Universities and Colleges Admission Services (UCAS) Hub account.** You may apply to a maximum of **5** institutions/courses.
- **If you are applying to courses in Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science, you can apply to a maximum of 4 institutions/courses.** You may use your **5th** choice to apply to a medical-related course. ***These courses are extremely competitive. Thousands of highly qualified students are rejected each year.***

- Some institutions require students to take an admissions test when applying to certain courses. **You are expected to know the testing requirements of all the institutions on your final list, including registration dates and deadlines.** Some of the more common tests are:
 - **Medicine:** BioMedical Admissions Test | www.bmat.org.uk | University Clinical Aptitude Test | www.ucat.ac.uk
 - **Law:** National Law Admissions Test | <https://lnat.ac.uk/>
 - **Cambridge:** Modern and Medieval Languages applicants take the Modern and Medieval Languages Test (MML). Mathematics applicants must take the Sixth Term Examination Papers (STEP). Computer Science, Natural Sciences, Engineering and Economics applicants must take the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA). www.undergraduate.study.cam.ac.uk/applying/admission-assessments
 - **Oxford:** Modern History applicants must take the History Aptitude Test (HAT). Philosophy, Politics & Economics (PPE) applicants must take the Thinking Skills Assessment (TSA). English applicants must take the English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT). www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/tests
- **After submitting your application, you will receive a Welcome Email from UCAS confirming your personal details and course choices.** It is important to check this information carefully and contact UCAS if there are any mistakes. Also listed in this letter are your UCAS personal ID and username, which you will need to when you log in to UCAS Hub to amend personal details, check the progress of your applications, and respond to offers.
- **Once your application has been processed by UCAS, institutions can access it online.** Subject tutors can view your entire application but will not be able to see where else you have applied. In the UK, the subject tutors make admissions decisions, which are then forwarded to UCAS and posted to your UCAS Hub account.
- **If necessary, you can change an institution choice in UCAS Hub within 14 days from the date of your Welcome Letter.** If you do not want to change your institution but wish to change the course code or year of entry you must write to the institution directly.
- **UCAS accepts applications from September 1 – January 31, with earlier deadlines for Oxford and Cambridge and courses for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Science (October 16).** Students may apply to either Oxford or Cambridge, but not to both. **Internal ISD deadlines are earlier than those set by UCAS.**
- **Applications for courses in Medicine, Veterinary Medicine, or Dentistry may be submitted to UCAS from 1 September with a deadline of 16 October. Internal ISD deadlines are earlier than those set by UCAS.**
- **We encourage students who are planning to take a gap year to apply in their senior year between 1 September and 31 January.** You can then ask to defer your entry after being accepted by the institution, although it is not guaranteed that the institution will grant your request.
- **On the UCAS application** students list their DP subjects and the results of any DP exams or standardized tests they have already taken or are planning to take.
- **A critical part of the UCAS application is the personal statement.** You have **4,000 characters** (not words!) to discuss your reasons for choosing a particular course, current knowledge of your chosen subject, career aspirations, any work-related experience, as well as your interests and involvement in extra-curricular activities.
- **The final section of the UCAS application is the school reference.** The reference is a comprehensive letter written by your counsellor after gathering information from you, your teachers, and your parents. It includes academic and personal information about you and lists your predicted DP results.
- **All admission decisions are communicated through UCAS Hub.** You will receive one of three decisions:
 - **Conditional offer:** You have been offered a place contingent upon meeting 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.
 - **Unconditional offer:** You have met all academic entry requirements and are being offered a guaranteed place. This is common for applicants who have taken a gap year and are applying with their final IB Diploma results.
 - **Unsuccessful:** The institution has decided not to admit you.
- **Depending on when you submitted your application, most admissions decisions will be made between 1 December and 31 March.** If you have applied by **31 January**, institutions must communicate their decisions by **18 May at the latest**, otherwise UCAS will make any outstanding choices 'unsuccessful' on your behalf.

- **Once all of the institutions on your list have made their decision regarding your application, you will reply to your offers via your UCAS Hub account.** At this point, you will be able accept two offers from the institutions that have admitted you: A **Firm acceptance** and an **Insurance acceptance**. It is important to choose an **Insurance** course that has slightly lower requirements than your **Firm** choice as this improves your chances of gaining a place if your DP results do not meet expectations. You must also decline all other offers at this time.
www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/replying-your-ucas-undergraduate-offers
- **You must respond to your offers by the date displayed in your UCAS Hub account. If you do not reply by the date shown, your offers will be withdrawn.** Your individual reply by date is based on when you received the last decision from your institutions. Students who receive all decisions from their institutions/colleges by **18 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 when you receive your final DP results, contact your counsellor immediately.**
- **Students who have received decisions from all five courses/institutions and were not accepted** or who have declined all offers will be able to use **Extra** to find a place. Available from 23 February to 4 July, *Extra* allows students to make additional course choices **one at a time**. Available courses will be listed on the [UCAS search tool](#). Institutions will make decisions within **21** days.
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/after-you-apply/types-offer/extra-choices#what-happens-next>
- **From 5 July to 17 October, students who do not meet their offers or received no offers will be eligible for Clearing,** which helps students find places on courses with available spaces. Students will know they are in Clearing if their application status says, 'You are in Clearing' or 'Clearing has started'.
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing>
- **Clearing Plus** automatically matches students with universities that have courses available based on their original choices, educational qualifications, and grades. Students will find a 'See matches' button in their UCAS Hub account, which they can click to see their top 50 matches.
- **Every year, some applicants pass their DP exams with better results than expected.** Some students will have met or exceeded the conditions of their firm choice. In this case, students holding a **firm unconditional** offer can seek a place on another course with higher point requirements by releasing themselves into **Clearing** via the 'Decline your place' button. **Only use this button if you are 100% sure that you no longer want your place!**
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing/what-clearing-plus>
<https://www.ucas.com/undergraduate/results-confirmation-and-clearing/what-clearing/declining-your-firm-place>

Higher education fees in the United Kingdom

[www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Eligibility rules for home fee status and student finance for 2021 to 22.pdf](http://www.assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/Eligibility%20rules%20for%20home%20fee%20status%20and%20student%20finance%20for%202021%20to%2022.pdf)
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1swTpb9ZwizvoPtmIYWkr6WMAqMFcdLUK/view?usp=share link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1swTpb9ZwizvoPtmIYWkr6WMAqMFcdLUK/view?usp=share_link)

- **Brexit** became official on January 1, 2021. Students are now classified into two categories for tuition fees in the UK: **Home** and **EU/International**. You are entitled to **Home** fees if you are from England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.
- **UK nationals** and their family members who were living in the EEA or Switzerland on 31 December 2020 will generally be eligible for **Home fee status**, tuition fee, and maintenance support for courses starting on or after 1 August 2021 and **before** 1 January 2028. See the link above for specific details.
- **Institutions in England, Northern Ireland and Wales charge Home students up to £9,250 per year for their courses.** The actual tuition fee may vary between courses, as well as between different institutions.
- If you are from **Scotland**, the standard yearly tuition fee is **£1,820**. However, if you meet the eligibility conditions, you may be entitled to **free** tuition at Scottish universities, in which case your fees will be paid direct to the institution by the Scottish government. *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 the free fees at www.saas.gov.uk.
- **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 institution. Please visit the 'Fees and Funding' page of each individual institution for more specific information.
- **Home students are eligible for tuition fee loans at institutions in England, Northern Ireland, and Wales.** Interest is charged from the time of the first payment to the institution 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 must pay back any loans plus interest upon graduation, once their income is over **£480 a week, £2,083 a month or £25,000 a year** (before tax and other deductions), at which time they will pay **9%** of the amount earned over the weekly, monthly or yearly income threshold. Students do not have to pay back grants, scholarships, or bursaries. www.gov.uk/apply-for-student-finance
- **The Welsh Government will allow Welsh students a maximum fee loan of £9,250.** Welsh students will therefore pay the same fees as other students for the course at their chosen institution. They will receive assistance from the Welsh Government towards the costs. www.studentfinancewales.co.uk/
- **Scottish students studying in England, Wales or Northern Ireland are liable for 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 the amount earned over the **£25,375** salary threshold. For information regarding higher education fees in Scotland, visit the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) | www.saas.gov.uk/full_time/ug/young/funding_available.htm
- **From 1 August 2021, EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals** and their family members who are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreements are **no longer be eligible for home fee status**, undergraduate and postgraduate financial support and loans from Student Finance England.
- **EU/International students are considered private finance students and will pay higher tuition fees** that are set by the individual institutions. The following are **approximate examples** of tuition costs per year. Visit the course pages of the institution websites for the most up to date fees: Foundation: £4,000-£12,000; Humanities/Social Sciences: £7,000-£18,000; Sciences & Engineering: £7,600-£25,000; Medical & Clinical courses: £9,600-£63,990.
- Several UK institutions have established **scholarships for EU/International** students: docs.google.com/document/d/1WZTfqhO1CmTwG0gozbtb_K_OvpvjYFfX06ukMkaUgdNU/edit?usp=sharing
- **Students are also responsible for living costs such as rent, food, books, transportation, and entertainment.** Living expenses 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 institution. UK students studying full-time are eligible to receive Maintenance Loans and Maintenance Grants for their living costs. www.university.which.co.uk/advice/student-finance/student-fees-and-finance-for-where-you-live

Factors that influence UK admissions decisions

IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME / IB DIPLOMA COURSES (CERTIFICATES) SUBJECT REQUIREMENTS

First and foremost, admissions tutors are 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. 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. Admissions tutors look closely at the suitability of your high school courses for your intended area of study, particularly at the Higher Level.

EXAMINATION/TEST RESULTS ALREADY ACHIEVED

The TOEFL, IELTS or Duolingo test may be required for non-native English speakers. Although not required for admission to UK institutions, admissions tutors may consider the results of any standardized testing such as the SAT, and/or ACT.

PREDICTED IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME POINTS

As mentioned above, institutions 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 essential that you select courses where you meet the minimum DP requirements and where you have taken the prerequisite DP courses. **Your counsellor will request DP predicted grades from your teachers between September-December of your senior year, depending on when you are ready to apply.**

PERSONAL STATEMENT

The personal statement plays a critical factor in the admission 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 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 successful in the course you have chosen.

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 relevant, meaningful activities. They are looking for students who will make a genuine commitment and contribution to the campus community and to the course they have chosen.

INTERVIEWS, AUDITIONS, AND/OR PORTFOLIOS

Interviews are required for applicants to 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 institution.**

CONFIDENTIAL SCHOOL RECOMMENDATION

Your counsellor will write the school recommendation incorporating feedback from your DP teachers. As your primary advocate, we aim to present an assessment that is fair, accurate and that emphasizes your special achievements and talents. This comprehensive letter includes information about your academic programme and achievement, DP predictions, suitability for your chosen course, extra-curricular involvement, work experience, as well as information about your personal qualities and strengths. To preserve the integrity of the letter, it is **confidential** and not shared with students.

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

Institutions value such qualities as personal integrity, leadership abilities, compassion, independence, originality, etc. They are looking for individuals who will contribute to their campus community. Your character, enthusiasm for learning, motivation, unique background and experiences, talents, interests and contributions to your school, family and community are all taken into consideration.

The UCAS personal statement

www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/when-apply/writing-personal-statement
www.ucas.com/personal-statement-guides

The personal statement is a critical part of the UCAS application. It is your opportunity to tell admissions 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 course you have chosen. They will be looking at your motivation to study your chosen 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. **Admissions tutors look 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 institutions.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING

- Why have you chosen the course 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? Have you participated in any extra-curricular, work experience, placement or voluntary work related to your chosen course?
- What interests do you have in your current studies? What are your favourite DP subjects? Why?
- What have you gained from studying the DP and attending an international school?
- What is your background? What have you learned or gained from your experience living in different countries? How many languages do you speak?
- What academic honours, awards and/or special recognitions can you highlight?
- 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.)?
- Is your DP Extended Essay relevant to your chosen course? 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 C|A|S experience and what you have taken from your learning experiences.
- 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 on to higher education?

UCAS Personal statement advice from Durham University

WRITING 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 institution should select your application over those of other candidates. ***It is primarily an academic statement and you must target it specifically towards the course(s) in which you are interested***, although an institution 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 course(s) you have chosen?
2. What have you done in the past that makes you particularly suitable to study the course(s)?
3. What else have you done that would contribute to your suitability for the course and the campus community, and what makes you an interesting and unique individual?

WHY THIS COURSE?

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 course. You might want to think about these questions and areas:

- Why does the course 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 course 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 course 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 about your motivation for becoming a teacher. When writing this section, you will need to think about and quote evidence from:

- Your academic programme and achievement.
- Volunteer work.
- Your hobbies and interests.
- Things you have learned from books, newspapers, podcasts, websites, and so on.
- Experiences in your gap year (if you are taking one).
- Any **relevant** work experience (e.g. Medicine, Physiotherapy).
- Project work during your studies (Praktikum, MYP Personal Project, DP Extended Essay).

ARE YOU INTERESTING AND UNIQUE?

Finally, you should write about your unique interests and qualities, with a focus on your engagement in the activities and experiences that will enable you to bring something extra to the community of the institution you want to join. The key to highlighting these experiences is **to reflect on the skills and lessons you have learned, how you have grown and developed, and to write about how you can take what you have learned and apply it to being successful in the course.** 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 focus on the skills you learned and how that will support your success in the course.

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. It is possible to write a personal statement that covers two related subject 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 course and trying to do that for several different subject areas in one personal statement of just 4,000 characters may not work.

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

A. You should only mention the most recent activities that will support your application. Picking one or two activities and writing about the skills you learned through them is much more impressive than a long list of activities 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 6.

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. Your statement should be 70% academic and 30% personal.**

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 more about you and what you will bring to their institution.

Q. Do I need to use big words and sophisticated language to impress the Admissions Tutor?

A. No! An Admissions Tutor will be impressed with 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.

ISD Personal Statement Guide:

drive.google.com/file/d/1ICisHyvq7waqXGuGXw8zDEY33x5WCXcH/view?usp=sharing

From the Durham University undergraduate admissions website:

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/apply/personalstatement/>

University of Essex Personal Statement Guide:

<https://www.essex.ac.uk/undergraduate/applying-to-essex/personal-statement> (PDF)

THE NETHERLANDS

An overview of the admissions process

INSTITUTIONS & DEGREES

- Institutions in The Netherlands offer more than **430 English-taught study programs at the Bachelor level**.
- **The Times Higher Education Supplement ranks all 13 research universities in The Netherlands among the top 250 in the world:** Amsterdam; Utrecht; Leiden; TU Delft; Maastricht; Erasmus; TU Eindhoven; Wageningen; Groningen; VU Amsterdam; Twente; Radboud; Tilburg.
www.timeshighereducation.com/student/best-universities/best-universities-netherlands
- **Dutch institutions 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 institutions 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 analyse and solve practical problems independently through emphasis on self-study and self-discipline.
- **The Netherlands has 13 Research Universities, including 3 Universities of Technology.** Leiden University is the oldest (1575). The University of Amsterdam and The University of Utrecht are the largest institutions, with about 30,000 students each. Average enrolment at a Dutch research institution is 12,000. Research institutions offer **3-year Bachelor** degrees that can be followed with a **Master** degree taking another **1-2** years depending on the study field.
www.studyinholland.nl/dutch-education/research-universities
- **There are 10 Liberal Arts and Sciences colleges (research university honours college) that offer English-taught Bachelor programs with a more broad-based focus.** Like North American-style undergraduate education, LAS programs offer courses in the Humanities, Social Sciences and Natural Sciences. The flexible curriculum gives students more freedom to decide which academic fields they would like to explore. LAS colleges offer **3-year Bachelor** degrees that can be followed with a **Master** degree taking another **1-2** years depending on the study field.
- **The Netherlands has 36 Universities of Applied Sciences offering higher professional education Bachelor degrees.** These institutions deliver **applied** and **practice-oriented** education, as well as **applied research** and **innovation** that prepares students directly for careers in several sectors: Economics, Finance and Business Administration; Engineering and Technology; Leisure and Tourism; Marketing; 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 degree qualifies students for admission to several types of further study, including shortened study programs leading to **Master** degree programs.
www.studyinholland.nl/education-system/dutch-institutions/institutions-of-applied-sciences
- **One can earn the following degrees at a Dutch Institution:**
 - Bachelor and/or Master degrees at [Universities of Applied Sciences \(Hogescholen\)](#)
 - Bachelor and/or Master degrees at [Research Universities](#)
 - Bachelor degrees at [Liberal Arts and Sciences Colleges](#) (Research University Honours College)
 - PhD degrees at Research Institutions or at special international post-university institutions
- **Higher Education in Holland (2022):**
 - Total number of students enrolled: 832,000
 - Research Institutions: 340,000 students enrolled
 - Applied Science Institutions: 492,000 students enrolled
 - Total number of international students: 115,000
- **Most Popular fields of study:**
 - Research Institutions: 1. Economics & Business 2. Behaviour & Society 3. Engineering 4. Language & Culture
 - Applied Science Institutions: 1. Economics 2. Language & Culture 3. Behaviour & Society 4. Engineering

TUITION FEES

- The Dutch government is committed to supporting the internationalization of institutions 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.
- Annual tuition fees are between €2,314 – €4,800 per year for EU students. Tuition fees for non-EU students are generally higher, usually between €6,000 – €15,000 per year.
- The Dutch government has halved tuition fees for Dutch/EU students in their first year of higher education, to €1,157 per year. In years two and three, students will pay the full statutory tuition fee of €2,314.
- Non-EU students may qualify for the lower Dutch/EU tuition fee if you have a Type V Long-term resident EC Visa (Daueraufenthalt – EG). If you have a Type II Permanent resident Visa, your entitlement to the Dutch/EU tuition fee depends on the reason or restriction stated on your residence permit.
www.ind.nl/en/Pages/long-term-resident-ec
- Non-EU students 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.
www.studyinholland.nl/study/scholarships/find-a-scholarship
- Living expenses in The Netherlands average between €800 – €1,100 per month. In total, one year of study can cost between €10,000 – €25,000 (inclusive of living expenses) depending on your tuition fee status.

APPLICATION PROCESS

www.studyinholland.nl/plan-your-stay/how-to-apply#numerus-fixus-programmes (PDF)

- The IBO has published a [Guide for IB students considering higher education in the Netherlands](#).
- For most programmes, applicants must first register 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 need to apply via Studielink, you must do this by 15 January for some programmes.
- Students may submit up to 4 enrolment applications in Studielink. Of these, no more than 2 may be a Numerus Fixus (NF) selection procedure. Medicine, Dentistry, Dental hygiene, and Physiotherapy programmes are an exception; for these programmes you can only submit 1 application per programme per academic year. For example, you cannot apply for Medicine at two different institutions, 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 & DECISIONS

- Application deadlines for programs without a Numerus Fixus vary from institution to institution. For EU-students this can range from 1 March to 1 July. Non-EU students may have an earlier deadline 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 very important that students pay particular attention to the deadlines that apply to them.*
- Numerus Fixus applicants 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 must accept this place via Studielink within two weeks. If you do not accept the place within two weeks, your place will be automatically assigned to another student.
- If you are not offered a place on April 15th, there is still a 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 students does not accept, their place will be offered to the person with ranking number 101, and so on.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Study in NL: www.studyinnl.org/
- Study in Holland: www.studyinholland.co.uk/students.html
- Studiekeuze 124 (in Dutch): www.studiekeuze123.nl
- Dutch Higher Education Open Days: www.dutchopendays.com/
- Open Dagen (in Dutch): <https://www.studiekeuze123.nl/open-dagen>
- Grantfinder: www.studyinholland.nl/scholarships/find-a-scholarship
- DUO (Student Finance): www.duo.nl/particulier/international-student/
- Studielink Application Service: www.studielink.nl/

TIMELINES

Grade 11 planning timeline

AUGUST – DECEMBER (FALL)

- Register for challenging DP courses. **The most important factor in U.S. and Canadian admission decisions is the quality and rigour of your ISD Senior School Transcript.**
- Start strong, stay organized, and achieve the best academic record possible. **Grade 11 is the last full academic year that U.S., Canadian, and Dutch admissions officers will see when they review your application in the fall of Grade 12.**
- Many **UK, Dutch, and EU** institutions require the **full IB Diploma (DP)** for admission to a Bachelor degree program. ***It is critical that you are enrolled in DP courses that will fulfil the requirements for the courses and institutions you are interested in.***
- **Entrance requirements vary** widely from one institution to another, and even from program to program at the same institution. It is important to be aware of any **subject specific** requirements. Check with your counsellor to for more information. For example:
 - If you wish to study Chemical Engineering in the **UK** at the University of Bath or the University of Birmingham, they require HL Mathematics and HL Chemistry. However, Imperial College London requires HL Mathematics, HL Chemistry **and** HL Physics **or** HL Biology.
 - In **The Netherlands**, **DP Math A&A SL** keeps the door open to the greatest number of degree courses. **Math A&A SL** is acceptable in some cases, particularly for **Arts/Humanities** degrees, however, you may be required to demonstrate your proficiency in mathematics via a test administered by the institution.
- **Considering the U.S.?**
 - Register for the **October** PSAT/NMSQT. In December, you will receive a score report highlighting your strengths and opportunities, giving you an opportunity to better prepare for the SAT. For **U.S. citizens/residents**, your PSAT score may qualify you for the National Merit Scholarship programme.
 - If you began your ACT and/or SAT preparation in 10th grade, you may wish to register for one of the fall SAT test dates. **Early Action/Early Decision applicants are strongly encouraged to take the SAT for the first time in December!** www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register | www.act.org/registration
 - If you are a **U.S. citizen** and you do not already have one, apply for a **social security number**. This number is required for most applications, standardized testing registration forms, and FAFSA.
 - **Demonstrate interest!** Begin contacting institutions to request information regarding admissions, DP credit policies, financial aid, subject/course offerings, extra-curricular activities, etc. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Instagram, Twitter, Tik Tok, and/or Snapchat. If contacting institutions by email, make sure you have a professional-sounding email address.
- **Know yourself!** The first step in the higher education admissions process is **self-assessment**. Consider your academic strengths and opportunities, skills, interests, values and goals. The key to choosing an institution and course that is **right for you** is understanding your unique needs, preferences and abilities.
- **Get involved!** Focus on two or three **extra-curricular activities** to pursue in depth. If you have been a long-time member of a team, club or organization, explore the possibility of taking on a **leadership** position.
- Use the **Portfolio** feature in [MaiaLearning](#) to begin/continue building a **resume** of your in-school and out-of-school activities, as well as a list of any academic or extra-curricular honours or special recognitions that you have received.
- Attend all higher education visits, workshops, and presentations offered by the ISD Counselling Department.
- Take every opportunity to meet with higher education representatives visiting ISD. Attend ISD's annual **International College Night in September**.
- Explore the higher education reference section in the North Building LRC.
- Talk to your counsellor, teachers, parents, friends and former ISD students about your higher education options.
- Complete the **Junior Information Form Part I** and the **'Personality' assessment** in **November**. Both are available in MaiaLearning.
- Unsure about what to study? Take the **'MyUniChoices'** assessment in **December**. This **FREE** assessment matches students with potential degree courses and majors.
- If possible, plan to **visit institutions** during Fall Break and/or Winter Break.

JANUARY – FEBRUARY (EARLY SPRING)

- At the end of January, you will be invited to schedule a **Junior Conference**. This 1-hour **student-parent-counsellor** meeting is an opportunity to review your ISD Senior School Transcript, discuss your educational/career interests, review admissions policies and procedures, and develop a timetable to help you achieve your higher education goals.
- Complete the **Junior Information Form Part II** and the **'Personality'** assessment in MaiaLearning. Then use your counsellor's booking calendar to schedule your **Junior Conference**.
- Continue to check MaiaLearning, the Weekly Announcements, Google Classroom, and/or the Counselling Department Facebook or Twitter pages for information about institutions who are visiting ISD.
- **Do your research!** Visit the higher education reference section in the North Building LRC, search online, talk to your counsellor, parents, teachers, former ISD students and meet with institution representatives visiting ISD.
- **Develop a prospective list** of institutions you would like to explore based on the most important factors to you: Size, location, majors, activities, DP recognition policies, etc. **Add these choices to your prospective list of institutions in MaiaLearning under the 'universities' and 'considering' tabs.**
- As your list of institutions develops, contact the institutions to **demonstrate interest**. Request course information, financial aid and scholarship information, or any other information that is important to you. Like them on Facebook and follow them on Tik Tok, Snapchat, Instagram and/or Twitter. If you are making contact by email, be sure to have an appropriate, professional-sounding email address.
- **Plan to visit** institutions during the Ski Week vacation.
- **U.S. Applicants**
 - Research the testing requirements for each institution you are considering (SAT|ACT|TOEFL|IELTS|Duolingo).
 - Review your PSAT score report, concentrating on those areas where you had the most difficulty and use the **FREE Khan Academy** and **ACT Academy** practice resources.
 - Continue preparing for the ACT and/or SAT. Take your first sitting in **March** (SAT) or **April** (ACT) **at the latest**.
 - **Academic Services International** offers an **SAT/ACT preparation course** at ISD in the Spring.
 - Register to take the ACT or SAT later in the Spring.
www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register | www.act.org/register

MARCH – JUNE (LATE SPRING)

- **Keep your grades up!** Remember that **Grade 11 is the last full academic year U.S., Canadian, and Dutch admissions officers will see before reviewing your application for admission in the fall of Grade 12.**
- After your Junior Conference, continue to meet regularly with your counsellor to discuss your higher education plans and academic progress. You should have a general idea of how your academic profile, test scores and extra-curricular involvement compares to first year applicants to the institutions you are considering.
- Continue to **research the entry requirements** for the institutions and course(s) you are interested in. It is important that you **meet** or **exceed** the DP requirements both in terms of overall points and subject specific requirements.
- Check the Weekly Announcements, MaiaLearning, Google Classroom, and/or the Counselling Department Facebook and Twitter pages for information about higher education visits. **Attend the ISD Higher Education Fair in March.**
- Plan to **visit** institutions during **Spring Break**.
- If required, **U.S. applicants** should plan to take the **ACT** and/or **SAT** in the Spring.
- If you are a **non-native English** speaker, you may need to take the TOEFL, IELTS or Duolingo test. **If you will enter the UK as an international student, you will REQUIRE the IELTS in order to obtain your Tier 4 study visa.**
www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/knowledge-of-english
- Continue to explore potential institutions based on the most important factors to you: Size, location, majors offered, activity offerings, etc. Update your **'considering'** list in MaiaLearning.
- Consider doing a **summer internship** to gain some **work experience** in your chosen subject. Some subjects such as Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Science, expect **practical experience** – especially in the **UK**.
- Research summer travel, study, volunteer, and community service program opportunities. Information is available from the counsellors and on the Counselling Department website.
www.isdcounselling.org/summer-programs.html
- Continue building a resume of your in-school and out-of-school activities, as well as a list of any academic or extra-curricular honours or special recognitions that you have received. Use the **Portfolio** feature in [MaiaLearning](#).

JULY – AUGUST (SUMMER)

- **Continue researching** your higher education options using the Junior Conference resources prepared by your counsellor. Consider admission selectivity, admission requirements, and the differences between the various academic programs. Update your **'considering'** list in **MaiaLearning** as you go along.
- **Connect with potential institutions** on Facebook, Snapchat, YouTube, Instagram and/or Tik Tok. Institutions appreciate students who show a **'demonstrated interest'** in their campus. The more contact you make with an institution, the more that signals to them that you are serious about being admitted.
- **Visit institutions** and schedule campus interviews. Visit a variety of institutions in terms of size and location. Attend official Open Days or contact the Admissions Office to arrange a campus tour and an interview.
- Review your **'considering'** list and determine the final list of institutions you will apply to in the fall.
- Some institutions have suggested **summer reading** lists. Find books that interest you and start reading! You can mention any additional reading in your personal statement and/or letter of motivation.
- Enrol in a summer academic program, take a mid-DP preparation course, or take an online course related to the subject or major area of interest you are considering. Keep in mind that attending a summer program at a specific institution is not your ticket "in" to that institution. It gives you a glimpse into life on campus, allows you to take some classes and provides you with some fun opportunities, but it certainly does not guarantee admission to that institution.
- Do an **internship** or gain **work experience** in a career field that interests you. If you are interested in studying Law, try to get a position working in a law office. Thinking about Medicine? Take the initiative to gain experience. The key is to find an experience that relates to what you think you might like to study in the future.
- Participate in a **community service** or **volunteer** project. Dedicate your time to a cause that is important to you.
- Begin working on your **UCAS** personal statement (UK), your **Letter of Motivation** (NL), and/or your **Personal Essay** or **Supplemental Essays** (U.S.).
- If required, **U.K.** applicants should practice for the **BMAT**, **UCAT**, the **LNAT**, or any **Oxbridge** admissions tests you will take in the fall. If possible, register for the tests you need to take.
www.ucas.com/ucas/undergraduate/getting-started/entry-requirements/admissions-tests
- If required, practice for the SAT | ACT | TOEFL | IELTS | Duolingo. Plan your testing timeline and register for any tests that you need to take.
- Use the **'Portfolio'** feature in **MaiaLearning** to create a professional-looking resume or curriculum vitae (CV). Include the in-school and out-of-school activities that you have participated in since grade 9, any academic awards or recognitions you have received, additional courses you have taken, and volunteer or work experience you have gained. Write a brief description of each activity/award and be sure to note any leadership roles and honours achieved.

TIMELINES

Grade 12 application timeline

AUGUST

- **Commit to a successful grade 12 year.** Institutions will review your **ISD Senior School Transcript** looking for a strong academic record that meets their admission requirements.
- Review your **ISD Senior School Transcript** and make sure it is correct and up to date with your most recent achievement.
- Update your **resume** in **MaiaLearning** with any relevant activities from the summer.
- Complete the '**Senior Questionnaire**'. Parents may also complete the '**Parent Questionnaire**'. These two surveys provide your counsellor with valuable information they will use to write a recommendation letter for you.
- **Confirm your final application list** by moving institutions from '**Considering**' to '**Applying**' in MaiaLearning. Consider the course content/structure; entry requirements; size of the institution; location; cost; accommodation; extra-curricular opportunities. Remember, you *must* fulfil all academic requirements. Your DP scores must meet or exceed the minimum overall and subject specific requirements for each institution you have chosen.
- Create a **master calendar** to keep track of all application, testing, financial aid, scholarship, and housing deadlines.
- Meet with your counsellor. **If you are applying to Oxford or Cambridge, to Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine, Veterinary Science or Art and Design in the UK, or Early Action/Early Decision to the U.S., make an appointment to meet with your counsellor before the end of August.** These courses have different application procedures and earlier application deadlines.
- **Begin the first draft your UK personal statement and/or your NL Letter of Motivation.** Admissions tutors will look for: Suitability for the courses you have chosen; motivation; academic qualifications and how you have explored the subject; career aspirations and any work experience you may have. In short, they will be looking for a clear and concise statement about the experiences that have led you to choose their institution and course.
- **UK applicants** should attend the **UCAS Hub** group registration session.
- **U.S. Applicants:**
 - Your final list should include **8-12** institutions. Choose a range of selectivity: **Reach | Target | Likely**
 - Work on your **application essay(s)** and any required **supplemental essay(s)**.
 - If required, take the ACT or SAT and/or register for one of the upcoming fall test dates.
www.collegereadiness.collegeboard.org/sat/register | www.act.org/register.
 - Looking for **scholarships**? Visit **FastWeb** use the scholarship links in **MaiaLearning**.
www.fastweb.com

SEPTEMBER

- **Meet regularly with your counsellor** to review and discuss your final list of institutions.
- Work on draft copies of your applications. Make a note of all **usernames** and **passwords**!
- **UK applications are accepted by UCAS from September 1 - January 31. The ISD internal deadline for all UCAS applications is December 1st.** Over half of all UCAS applications are submitted in **December**. The sheer volume of applications creates delays with processing the application forms. This delay, in combination with the winter holidays, may mean that applications submitted during this time might not be read by an admissions tutor until late January.
- Using the factors most important to you (size, location, course content/structure, extra-curricular offerings, etc.) **and** the entrance requirements outlined by the institutions, narrow your final list of institutions down to **5 UK** institutions and **4 Dutch** institutions. Update your '**applying**' list in MaiaLearning.
- Work on your **UCAS Hub** application and review each section together with your counsellor.
- If applying to the **UK** for Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine or Veterinary Science you may only choose **4** courses in these areas and **1** additional related subject. Applications must be submitted to UCAS by October 16th. **The ISD internal deadline for these applications is September 30th.**
- If you are applying to **Oxford or Cambridge**, these applications must be submitted to UCAS by October 16th. **The ISD internal deadline for completing the Oxford or Cambridge application is October 1st.**
- Register for any additional tests that need to take (LNAT | UCAT | BMAT | Oxbridge)
- **U.S. Applicants:**
 - **Early Decision/Early Action** applicants should request teacher recommendations using the official form provided by your counsellor. Allow teachers at least two weeks to write a reference.
 - **If applying Early Decision/Early Action, you should be preparing your application now. Most ED/EA applications are due between November 1-15.**
 - **If applying to the University of California, you should be preparing your application now. These applications are due November 1-30.**

OCTOBER

- Check the ISD Counselling Department Event Calendar, MaiaLearning, Google Classroom, Facebook and/or Twitter for higher education visits.
- **Plan to visit** institutions where you have applied or will apply during the **Fall Break**.
- Applicants to **The Netherlands** should attend the **Studielink** group registration session. You may begin submitting enrolment applications on **1 October**. You may be limited in the number of enrolment applications you can submit at any one time depending on the application process of the institution and whether they use a selection procedure.
- The **UK UCAS** application deadline for **Oxford** or **Cambridge** applicants is **16 October**.
- The **UK UCAS** application deadline for **Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine/Science** applicants is **16 October**.
- For regular applicants, continue working on your **UK personal statement** and/or your **Letter of Motivation (NL)**. Revise and edit your work with the help of your counsellor and one or two of your DP teachers.
- **Meet with your counsellor** to review each completed application together, starting with the earliest deadlines first.
- **Non-native English** speakers may need to take the **TOEFL, IELTS** or **Duolingo** test. Verify with your counsellor.
- If you are applying to **Canada**, check the admission deadlines for each institution you are considering. **Although deadlines typically range from January onwards, the ISD internal deadline will be December 1st.**
- **U.S. Applicants:**
 - Check the **financial aid** requirements and deadlines for each institution on your final list. If applying ED/EA, some institutions require the **CSS PROFILE** to award private, non-federal student aid.
www.cssprofile.collegeboard.org/
 - **U.S. citizens/residents are eligible for federal financial aid. Your parents should complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as soon as possible after October 1.**
www.studentaid.gov/fafsa
 - Be ready to submit all **Early Decision/Early Action** and **University of California** applications this month.
 - If you are applying to any institutions with a **rolling admission** plan you should submit your application as early as possible. **Institutions with rolling admission plans fill available places on a first-come, first-served basis.**
 - **Know your other deadlines, including scholarship, honours programmes, and housing!** Many applications for 'selective' institutions are due during the Winter Break and should therefore be complete and ready for review by **December 1st**.
 - **Continue revising your application essays.** Share them with your counsellor for feedback.
 - Regular decision applicants should **request teacher recommendations** using the official form provided by your counsellor. Teachers require **two weeks** to write a reference.
 - If necessary, (re) take the ACT or SAT this month.

NOVEMBER

- **Keep working hard!** Admissions officers will receive your **ISD Senior School Transcript** with your Grade 12 1st Semester grades by January 31st.
- Continue working on your applications. Make an appointment with your counsellor to review each completed application before submitting it.
- Applications to **Liberal Arts & Sciences** programs in **The Netherlands** are due starting **December 1st**. Be prepared!
- **U.S. Applicants:**
 - If you are applying **Early Decision/Early Action** and you have not already submitted your application, you must do so this month. **Most ED/EA applications are due between November 1-15.**
 - **University of California and California State University applications are due between November 1-30.**
 - Once submitted, check each application account for missing documents. Inform your counsellor immediately if your application is incomplete for any reason.
 - Note the financial aid/scholarship deadlines and requirements for each institution on your final list. Submit materials well before stated deadlines.
 - If the institutions you have applied to require the College Board's **CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE** form and you have not done so already, register online at www.cssprofile.collegeboard.org/

DECEMBER

- **ALL regular applications must be ready for review by your counsellor by December 1st, the ISD INTERNAL deadline.**
- **Plan to visit** institutions where you have applied/will apply during the **Winter Break**.
- Check each application you have submitted for missing documents. Inform your counsellor immediately if your application is incomplete for any reason.
- If required, interviews for UK institutions usually take place sometime in late November or early December for Oxbridge applicants, as well as applicants to Medicine, Dentistry and Veterinary Science/Medicine courses. Interviews for Art and Design applicants usually take place between January and April.
- **January 31st is the final deadline for UCAS applications.** If you submit your application in January, it can take up to six weeks to process. UCAS will send you an acknowledgement email confirming that your application has been processed. This email will include a list of the courses and institutions to which you have applied as well as your **UCAS Personal ID** number.
- **U.S. Applicants:**
 - If you applied **Early Decision/Early Action**, you should receive an admission decision this month. If accepted **Early Decision** to an institution you **must** withdraw all other applications.
 - If necessary, (re)take the ACT and/or SAT. This will be the **last opportunity** for regular decision applicants to sit this test. Send your scores to each of the institutions on your final list.

JANUARY

- Continue to research **scholarship** opportunities.
- You may receive additional information and/or document requests from the institutions to which you have applied. Respond to requests as quickly as possible. See your counsellor immediately if you have any questions.
- Check each application account to make sure your application is complete and ready for review. Inform your counsellor immediately if your application is incomplete for any reason.
- **U.S. Applicants:**
 - If any institutions on your list require the College Board's **CSS PROFILE** form, you should complete that now.
 - International students may need to submit the **Certification of Finances** form. This document is required for Visa purposes.
 - Your counsellor will send a **Mid-year report** to each institution. Be sure to notify your counsellor of any significant changes to your academic or extra-curricular profile (awards, honours, grade changes, etc.).

FEBRUARY

- Begin preparing for your **DP exams!**
- **Plan to visit** institutions where you have applied/will apply during **Ski Week** and/or **Spring Break**.
- If you have applied to **Liberal Arts & Sciences** programs in **The Netherlands**, interviews will take place from February to April. After the interview, students will usually receive an admission decision within 2-4 weeks.
- Applications to all other Dutch institutions should be complete before the start of Ski Week. Many Dutch institutions admit students on a **rolling** basis, meaning that they admit qualified students as they receive applications. Spaces are filled on a **first-come, first-served** basis, until the program is full. Most decisions are made within 6-8 weeks after the application is submitted.
- **Most UK conditional offers are made via UCAS Hub between February and March 31st** (apart from some Art & Design courses). You may be asked to achieve a certain number of points overall, a specific number of points in certain HL/SL subjects, or a combination of both. For example:
 - This offer is subject to your obtaining a total of 32 points overall with a 5 in Physics and Math
 - This offer is subject to your obtaining 30 points, 14 at Higher Level and a 5 in English and Math
 - This offer is subject to your obtaining 35 points overall with a 6/6/5 in English, Maths and Physics in any order
- After March 31st, UCAS will send you a **Final Decision Letter**. This letter verifies the decisions that have been made by the institutions and states the deadline by which you must reply to the offers (usually in early May). This information will also be posted in your UCAS Hub account. You are allowed to accept only **one** offer as your firm (first) choice and **one** offer as your insurance (second) choice. **Please make an appointment with your counsellor to discuss your firm and insurance choices.**
- Complete your application for **on-campus housing**. Verify the deadlines and submit your application as early as possible to have the best choice of accommodation options.
- **UK citizens/residents** who intend to apply for loans to pay their tuition fees in the UK should visit the relevant **Student Finance** website (England/Scotland/Wales/Northern Ireland) to complete the application.

MARCH

- **Check your (e)mailboxes!** Many regular decision institutions begin notifying applicants of admission decisions beginning in March.
- If applying for **scholarships**, keep track of deadlines.
- Keep track of all correspondence with the financial aid offices and financial aid form processors.
- Share each admissions decision with your counsellor. Forward all decisions you receive by email.
- **Plan to visit** institutions where you have applied/will apply during **Spring Break**.
- **Contact the DP Coordinator** to arrange for your **final DP results** to be sent electronically to each institution as required.

APRIL

- Final preparations for your **DP exams**.
- Waitlisted applicants should write to the institution to state their intentions. If possible, send additional supporting documentation.
- Forward copies of all admission decision emails to your counsellor.
- Review financial aid awards from the institutions that have accepted you.
- Wait until you have received all admission and financial aid decisions *before* committing to one institution.

MAY

- **DP Exams** – Good luck!!!
- **Select and notify the **ONE** institution you plan to attend by May 1 (U.S.) or June 1 (Canada).**
- **Notify your counsellor** of the institution you have chosen to attend so we can send a final copy of ISD Senior School Transcript. **Remember, an acceptance can be withdrawn if there is a major change in your grades and/or final DP results.**
- Notify all other institutions that admitted you of your final decision. By **declining** your other offers, you are giving another deserving applicant who may have been placed on the waiting list an opportunity be admitted.
- Accept the financial aid award at the institution of your choice and reject all others in writing.
- **International students!** Apply for your study visa. Complete your application well in advance or you may not be able to begin your program.

United Kingdom: www.gov.uk/tier-4-general-visa/overview

The Netherlands: www.studyinholland.nl/plan-your-stay/do-you-need-a-visa

United States: www.travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/study.html

Canada: www.visa.vfsglobal.com/deu/en/can

JUNE

- **Graduation!** Congratulations!!
- Your counsellor will send your final transcript to the **ONE U.S.** or **Canadian** institution that you have selected to attend.

JULY

- **Check your (e)mailboxes!** You will receive information from your chosen institution about housing, course selection, new student orientation, etc. Keep track of all deadlines and reply to all information requests.
- If possible, contact your new **roommate**.
- **DP Exam results!**
 - **UK applicants:** If you have met the conditions of your **firm** or **insurance** offer, UCAS will confirm your place within 10 working days. **If you have not met the conditions of your offers, email your counsellor immediately!**
 - **Other applicants:** Your **final DP results** will be forwarded electronically to the institution that you have decided to attend. You may be granted credit for your DP work. Check with your chosen institution for further information or visit the International Baccalaureate website to find out more about institution credit policies.
www.ibo.org/university-admission/ib-recognition-resources-and-document-library/

AUGUST – OCTOBER

- **Good luck** and have a great first year!
- **Keep in touch!** We look forward to hearing about your higher education experiences. Consider returning to ISD to share your knowledge about the higher education admissions process with those just starting the process or provide us with your email address so we may share it with students interested in the institution you have chosen to attend.