

DIA College Counselling Handbook

For Student & Parents

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Philosophy of College Counselling

Our belief is that students must understand themselves before they can successfully navigate the college search. With that in mind, our counselors lead them through a process that's as much about self-discovery as campus tours. The result: they go to colleges where they feel that they belong and where they thrive.

For students in Years 12 and 13, the university application process is the first step towards individual independence. It is a complicated, demanding and time-consuming process. It can also be an exciting and revealing experience. You will have to do a lot of research and spend a lot of time filling out applications and writing personal essays, however, this will give you a chance to look at who you are, what you value, and what you might want to do with your life. You will have to make some important decisions, develop self-reliance and confidence, and perhaps for the first time think about life on your own, outside the environment of your family life.

The DIA counselors emphasize that the student is the focus and in control of the university application process, supported by a team of counselors, teachers, and of course, parents. Wherever you decide to apply in the world, we agree with the Dean of Admissions to the University of Pennsylvania, Eric J. Furda, that "selecting the ideal college (university) requires a good deal of hard work. You should think about your goals and aspirations. It is important for you to assess the elements of an education that will assure your success. It is an active process that requires you to read and to question and to visit various campuses."

At DIA College Counseling:

- Encourages students' comprehensive, honest, and fruitful self-evaluation and discovery.
- Emphasizes the importance of "fit" at every stage of the college search process.
- Recognizes and cultivates the value of a collaborative approach in which each student is supported by and coordinates with college counselors, parents, and teachers toward the successful fulfillment of a common goal.
- Provides the best possible college search experience for each student.
- Introduces and connects students to a broad range of colleges and universities across the country and the world by way of one-on-one counseling, opportunities to meet with college representatives on our school's campus, ample programming and events, and more.
- Seeks, above all else, to help each student discover and enroll at an institution of higher education that is well suited to foster his or her intellectual and personal development and success.

The college application process presents an opportunity for personal growth, self-reflection, and self-discovery. We seek to provide you with the tools you will need to navigate the different pathways of college admissions. While the outcomes are important, we believe that college admission is one of discovering good matches between students and colleges. Our role is therefore to support and guide you and your families as you engage in this sometimes-daunting process.

Please keep the College Counsellors informed about all your applications, recommenders, answers from the universities, and if any external counselors are being consulted.

Choosing the right college? Is there really a college for everyone? How does one start and complete the task of applying to, and selecting, a college? As we look to find answers to these and countless other college-related questions, DIA's College Counseling Office has compiled the following handbook for juniors, seniors,

and their parents. Written with the intent to minimize the pressure associated with the college application process, this “how to” manual strives to guide students and families.

While embarking on the college selection process, it is important to remember that the college counseling program is an extension of our educational program. We believe strongly that students should carry the responsibility for as much of the process as possible. Collecting information, soliciting recommendations, and organizing components of the application are all good learning experiences for college-bound students.

Counselling Services

Our dedicated college counseling team is comprised of experienced, knowledgeable, caring counselors working to assist parents and students at every stage of the college search, beginning as early as Year 10.

- Each College Counselor gets to know students personally, helps nurture students' relationships with the colleges on their lists and ensures that they have both a balance of schools and a plan for maximizing their chances for admission.
- Throughout the process, the College Counselors meet frequently as a team, ensuring a collaborative approach toward the development of informational programming, the creation of college lists, and the navigation of the highly complex and ever-changing college admissions landscape.

The College Counseling Office is an office that:

- **helps** create a college list for each student.
- **hosts** admissions representatives from more than 200 colleges and universities.
- **provides** pertinent information regarding application responsibilities.
- **holds** individual meetings with students.
- **presents** college informational sessions throughout the year.
- **offers** ongoing support and advocacy.

Our comprehensive counseling program guides and supports students throughout the university application process, beginning in Year 10 and continuing throughout Year 13. The program includes:

1. A university awareness session for Year 10 and 11 parents and students that provides a general overview of the university application process and requirements.
2. University presentations for Year 11, 12 and 13 students and parents detailing all aspects of the university application process.
3. Consultations with students to select a list of university courses or discipline and schools as well as the choice of countries (and academic systems).
4. Providing information and materials such as university brochures, catalogs, guides, and the BridgeU counseling platform as resources for students in their university search.
5. Offering the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) at ISP to Year 10 and 11 students every October.
6. Advice on standardized testing, including the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude/Assessment Test), the ACT (American College Test), the AP (Advanced Placement), the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and the IELTS (International English Language Testing System).
7. Identifying schools that are a good fit depending on the student's interests, academic strengths, athletic skills, and other factors relevant to the student.
8. Assistance and guidance in preparation of applications including personal statements, essays, mock interviews, and contact with university representatives.
9. Counselor/referee letters of recommendation that strongly support student's candidature to appropriate universities.
10. Workshops in term 2 of Year 12 and term 1 of Year 13 on conducting university research and selection as well as preparing applications, essays, and interviews.
11. Advice on extracurricular and summer activities from Year 10 onwards.
12. Counsel on how students can effectively communicate with universities in all aspects of the application process.
13. Guidance on financial aid.
14. Maintaining relationships with universities and contacting representatives to support individual applications.

15. Organization of college visits from university representatives from the U.K., continental Europe, U.S., Canada, and other countries.
16. "Best Fit" advice after conditional offers and acceptances in the Spring
17. Advice on Wait List situations in the U.S. and Canada.
18. Guidance on "Clearing" and "Adjustment" in the U.K. system.

Responsibilities

The college search is a team effort, the successful navigation of which requires appropriate engagement on the part of all those involved. Below we have listed the primary expectations and responsibilities of students, parents, and counselors.

Students are responsible for:

- Taking the time to reflect and evaluate goals and values, assess academic strengths, special talents, skills and other aspects that distinguish you. This assessment is necessary in determining schools that offer an excellent university environment in which you will be most productive and happy (and therefore, successful).
 - Researching appropriate courses, programs, and schools so that your applications are effective and fulfill your specific academic, athletic, musical, social, and any other elements that are important to you as well as your future objectives.
 - Being aware of the academic profiles required by highly selective colleges and universities. If the student does not have the academic record necessary to be competitive for acceptance, ISP will not be able to fully support the student's candidature to the university.
 - Attending all required individual and group college counseling meetings.
 - Maintaining their BridgeU accounts, which should include an up-to-date list of colleges under consideration and/or colleges to which they are applying.
 - Paying attention to College Counseling announcements during all-school assemblies and class meetings.
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- Being responsible, assertive, and engaged. (This includes, among other things: signing up for standardized test dates on time; asking teachers, in person, for letters of recommendation in a timely and polite manner; keeping track of application requirements and deadlines; taking measures to ensure a thoughtful, well-informed college decision by attending college representative presentations, meeting regularly with a college counselor, and, when possible, visiting college campuses.)
 - Ultimately taking the reins in the college search, application, and decision processes. In the end, it is the student who will be going to college and, therefore, the student who should take ownership of this exciting journey. (While college counselors, parents, teachers, and admissions representatives are all important individuals --who can serve as sounding boards, emotional supports, informative resources and more – they support rather than lead this process.)
 - Verifying your correct name on all official documents and use the same name on all documents (the name on your passport).
 - Notifying schools of any changes in email address as well as using the school email address for applications.
 - Notifying counselors of your application results and your final choice. Complete any necessary final forms requested by the counselor or IB coordinator in order to have your final transcript sent as well as your IB results accessible to your university

Parents are responsible for:

- Supporting students throughout the college search and decision processes by providing positive, constructive encouragement and feedback.
- Whenever possible, attending college counseling Parent Nights and individual college counseling parent meetings and providing candid information to the College Counseling team so that, in return, they can most effectively assist students in finding a good academic, social, and financial fit.
- Maintaining open and productive communication with college counselors throughout the process.
- Promptly and thoroughly completing any necessary parent forms, such as Early Decision agreements or the FAFSA and CSS Profile, during the application and financial aid processes.

College Counselors are responsible for:

- Providing honest, caring, and well-informed counsel to students and parents from beginning to end of the college search.
- Representing DIA and each individual student to colleges, universities, professional networks, and the public in a manner that is professional and positive, and that best serves the interests of the student and the School.
- Advocating on behalf of each student, including but not limited to providing supportive letters of recommendation that convey a thorough understanding of each student's unique strengths, goals, and personal qualities.
- Cultivating healthy, trustful relationships with college and university admission offices.
- Remaining knowledgeable and informed regarding colleges and universities, including their application procedures and review processes; standardized testing practices; issues pertaining to financial aid; and best practices in college counseling.
- Being mindful of required materials and information associated with each student's application and providing them to colleges in a timely manner.
- Supporting each DIA student as he or she navigates this exciting, at times daunting, process of searching for, applying to, and choosing a good-fit institution of higher education.

College Counselling Timeline

Year 10

- ❖ Receive information on your college counselor assignment for BridgeU.
- ❖ Develop a good relationship with your advisor, as well as other teachers – ask lots of questions if you need help!
- ❖ Build strong study and time management skills.
- ❖ Find ways to be an active citizen in your school and community.
- ❖ Continue interests you have already established through clubs, athletics, etc. Now is also a great time to explore some new pursuits.
- ❖ Students and parents should feel free to introduce themselves to the college counseling team at any point during the year.
- ❖ Attend required group and/or individual sessions with college counselors.
- ❖ Consider taking the PSAT in October
- ❖ Find time to read, including for pleasure.
- ❖ Explore options for community service; begin identifying a community service project to which you wish to commit.
- ❖ Find fun and meaningful ways to use your summer break.

NOTE: *Quantity - Academic Grades is non-negotiable. Marks will be sent to Universities from Year 10 for application process. Quality – Extra-curricular Activities highlight your personal traits, skills, motivation, interest, passions, talents which will distinguish you from other applicants.*

Year 11

- ❖ Continue to be an active citizen in your school and community; begin taking on leadership roles and identifying those activities you wish you to pursue.
- ❖ Feel free to explore new activities or interests as well – just don't spread yourself too thin!
- ❖ Continue group and/or individual sessions with college counselors.
- ❖ Try to attend at least one university visit if your schedule permits; these meetings will help you learn more about colleges without ever leaving campus and will help you become accustomed to speaking with college representatives.
- ❖ In the spring, consider taking any SAT's.
- ❖ Over summer (or spring break if you are eager), you may wish to begin touring a handful of colleges to get a sense of types of institutions.
- ❖ Include meaningful, productive experiences in your summer plans.

NOTE: *Maintain Quality and Quantity for application process.*

Year 12

Sept- Dec.

- ❖ Meet with visiting college admissions representatives. We recommend attending at least 2-3 of these.
- ❖ Work on Academic Performance, Get used to the IBDP requirements, methodology, assessment criteria, etc.

- ❖ Take SAT / ACT if appropriate.
- ❖ Register for AP
- ❖ Use Winter Break to research universities and update BridgeU

Jan -March

- ❖ Start thinking about SAT Subject Tests and decide when you want to take them, and when/how you will prepare.
- ❖ Register for a winter or spring sitting of the ACT and/or SAT.
- ❖ Attend small group college counseling sessions as scheduled.
- ❖ Make appointments for individual counselling and begin reviewing ideas for Common App essays and Personal Statements.
- ❖ Begin Brag Sheets - Teacher and Counsellor Questionnaires
- ❖ Begin Common Application account and start exploring. You may wish to take a look at questions asked by colleges you are considering and begin brainstorming your answer.

April- June

- ❖ Consider visiting colleges over spring break.
- ❖ Meet with your college counselor in the first few weeks of school to check in, discuss college visits
- ❖ Take any AP exams and SAT II Subject Tests for which you have completed relevant coursework.
- ❖ Take the ACT and/or SAT if relevant
- ❖ Attend essay writing workshop offered near end of school year.
- ❖ Continue meeting regularly with your College Counselor
- ❖ Finalizing which teacher(s) you would like to write letters of recommendation for you and ask them, in person, prior to summer break.
- ❖ Share Brag Sheets with relevant teachers and College Counselling Office
- ❖ Complete all required surveys sent and required by College Counselling Office

July- August of Year 12

- ❖ Tour colleges as time and plans permit. Keep notes or a journal of your thoughts and reflections for your own reference and so that you can share these with your college counselor in the fall.
- ❖ Keep BridgeU updated with colleges under consideration.
- ❖ Continue working on and/or completing Clubs and Extra Activities
- ❖ All Common App essays. Personal Statements and Motivation Letter should be completed or in the final stage.

NOTE: *Maintain Quality and Quantity for application process.*

Year 13

Fall -- Sept- Dec.

- ❖ Follow up with teachers from whom you have requested recommendations. Provide specific deadlines as well as an up-to-date list of schools to which you will be applying.
- ❖ Meet with visiting college admissions representatives

- ❖ Work on application essays. Submit drafts to and meet with your college counselor for feedback
- ❖ Submit applications to colleges with “rolling admissions”/Early Decisions/Early Action.
- ❖ Attend small group college counseling meetings as scheduled.
- ❖ Complete CSS/Financial Aid Profile, if required by colleges. Deadline dates will vary by institution and application process. Available October 1st each year.
- ❖ If accepted Early Decision to a school, you must withdraw any other applications you have submitted.

Jan -March

- ❖ Receive admissions decisions and financial aid offers via mail, email, or online notification.
- ❖ Inform your college counselor of each of these decisions as they arrive.
- ❖ If accepted Early Decision to a school, you must withdraw any other applications you have submitted.

April- June

- ❖ By May 1st submit enrollment deposit to chosen school.
- ❖ Check mail and email regularly for updates on “next steps” such as pre- registration, housing forms, required immunizations, etc.
- ❖ If you are on the Wait List for any University, meet with the College Counsellor for updates

July- August

- ❖ Complete visa application process if applicable.
- ❖ Shop and pack!
- ❖ Enjoy time with your friends before many of you part ways.

A NOTE ABOUT TIMELINES: Each student starts the process at a different point, and each student progresses at a different rate. College counselors meet students where they are in the process and help them along the way.

Choosing a College/University

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A PERFECT COLLEGE!

There is only a reasonably perfect match between you and one or more colleges. There are literally thousands of educational institutions around the world. Remember that there is no perfect university. Even MIT and Oxford are not “perfect.” It takes time and effort to select the most suitable match between you and the college.

Do not limit yourself to only one college. Apply to two if you are applying locally and more if you are applying abroad: 5 for the UK and 3-10 in the USA. Last but not least, have you chosen colleges that match your qualifications and abilities.

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

The first questions are:

- ❖ Do I want to apply to a local university or to a university abroad?
- ❖ What is the difference between the various colleges and their requirements?
- ❖ Have I included my parents in my explorations?
- ❖ What is the best match for me (my interests, my abilities, my qualifications)? This last question is the trickiest one.

How do you choose which universities to apply to?

- 1. Make a list** of all the ones you might be interested (see the college counselor for guidance)
- 2. Narrow down your list**, possibly basing yourself on some of the following factors:
 - ❖ Location (geography, urban/rural, etc.)
 - ❖ Size (physical and number of students)
 - ❖ Majors and variety of academic programs offered
 - ❖ Special programs, such as study abroad
 - ❖ Clubs and activities on campus
 - ❖ Housing options
 - ❖ Available facilities, such as labs, theaters and gyms
- 3. Sort Your List:** Once you have a list of colleges you think you will be satisfied attending, sort it into three categories:

- ❖ **Safeties (1 to 2):** These are colleges that you feel you have a very good chance of getting into and that you think you can afford to attend. They should also be colleges you would be happy to attend.
- ❖ **Good matches (2 to 4):** These are colleges that you feel you have a good chance of getting into and that are good matches for you overall.
- ❖ **Reaches (1 to 2):** These are colleges that you think may be more of a challenge to get into. Getting in is not a sure thing, but it's realistic enough to be worth the effort of applying.

Some self-assessments questions to ask:

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

What are my goals and values?

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

Academic related considerations

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

Activities, Interests, and Character

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

Defining your Own University Selection Criteria

Once you have evaluated yourself, it now becomes clearer what considerations you may be looking for at university. While you are researching courses and universities as well as visiting or talking with representatives, the following list of considerations may help you compare your findings with your criteria. You may think of many other concerns that are important to you when looking at universities.

University Characteristics

Appearance of campus Size of student body, number of undergraduate students and graduate students
Atmosphere: satisfaction level of current students with undergraduate experience. Student retention rate and graduation percentage
Facilities: library, sports, dormitories

Public or private

- ❖ Degree of selectivity in admissions
- ❖ Diversity of students
- ❖ Geographic location: Specific country and area of country as well as urban versus rural or suburban: enclosed campus versus an open-city integrated setting.
- ❖ Climate
- ❖ Proximity to family or friends

Academic Environment

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

Student Life/Campus Culture

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

Expenses

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

Entrance requirements

Can I get in? Do I have the academic record or special talents (if applying to art or music schools) that are competitive with the specific university student profile? Does an objective appraisal to determine if you are an eligible candidate? Although DIA counselors are your advocates, we will not be able to fully support your application to universities that are not a good fit for you academically. For example, Oxford and Cambridge courses require a minimum of 41 IB predicted points for entry consideration.

Life after Graduation

- ❖ Job placement record for graduates
- ❖ General academic reputation
- ❖ Alumni accomplishments
- ❖ Admission to graduate programs
- ❖ Career planning and placement program
- ❖ Visit the Career Services Office.

College Visit

One of the most important parts of your college search is the campus visit. Visiting colleges on your list will give you a firsthand impression of the students, faculty, staff, facilities and programs. On a visit you can learn what the admissions office is looking for in its applicants, gain a feeling for the academic and social atmosphere, see the study/living/recreation facilities, talk with students and get a sense of the surrounding community. We encourage college visits starting in Year 11 and 12.

Why Visit?

A college website, catalog or view book can only show you so much. To get a feel for the school, you need to walk around the campus, sit in a class, and visit the dorms. It's also an opportunity to see and experience everyday life on campus.

When to Visit?

Admissions offices are open all year but visiting when classes are in session is best. Check a university's website for visit information; many ask you to sign up online for tours and information sessions.

- ❖ One of the best times to visit is spring break of Year 12. We suggest you visit one large, one medium and one small university to get a feeling for each. If possible, include a large state and a small private university on your tour for comparison.
- ❖ Some universities offer special visit days. These are usually day-long programs that will introduce you to many areas of the school.

Planning Your Visit

Things to do or consider in your plan:

- ❖ **A good campus visit** takes 2-4 hours, including time to get a sense of the surrounding town or area. Don't try to visit more than two schools in one day.
- ❖ **Contact the admissions office** or visit the school's website for tour information.
- ❖ **In addition to a campus tour** and information session, you may want to include an admissions interview, a meeting with a faculty member in your area of interest, a meeting with a coach, and attending a class (allow extra time to schedule these).
- ❖ **Take lots of pictures.** You'll be amazed by how much information you'll collect from photos. Having a camera and jotting down a few notes and impressions will help you distinguish schools from one another. Remember, a picture is worth a thousand words!
- ❖ **Contact former DIA students** you might know at the school before you plan to visit. They'll give you an insider's look at the campus.
- ❖ **Before you go,** make a list of items that are important to you, so you know what to evaluate: Start thinking about location, size, diversity, academic programs, social atmosphere.

What to Do When You Visit

Keep these things in mind:

- ❖ Focus on the people, place and programs. Engage as many people as possible in conversation about the school.
- ❖ Look at campus publications to get more information about the community at large. A college newspaper will give you a sense of what the students are concerned about – something a tour guide is not likely to share.
- ❖ Wander through the student center, cafés, and bookstore and observe how students interact with each other.
- ❖ Go on an admissions tour and attend an information session. Think about questions that you may want to ask. Listen to the tour guide, but don't jump to conclusions about a school based solely on your experience with the tour guide.

Sit In a Class:

- ❖ Do the professors seem knowledgeable? Are they accessible for questions or concerns?
- ❖ What is the roll of a Teaching Assistant (TA) in the classroom? Do they replace the professor or assist the professor?
- ❖ Are the students participating in classroom discussion? Are they engaged? Disengaged?
- ❖ What kinds of work are the students doing?
- ❖ Are they conducting advanced research?
- ❖ What size are the classes? Is this representative of all classes on campus (intro courses tend to be bigger than advanced)?

Speak With Current Students:

- ❖ What is their opinion of the professors? Do they find that they can approach their professors?
- ❖ Do the professors spend time with students to be sure they understand the material?
- ❖ How much time is expected for studying and other work outside of class?
- ❖ What do they like most/least about the school?
- ❖ How do they spend their free time? Ask a student what he or she did the previous weekend (was it balanced between social activities and academics? Did he or she remain on campus?).

Speak With an Admission Counselor:

- ❖ Does the school offer Early Action (EA) or Early Decision (ED) options to students?
- ❖ Do I need to declare a major on my application?
- ❖ What unique programs does the school offer? Is there an honors program?
- ❖ Are internships available? In the community? For credit during the school year? During the summer?
- ❖ Based on my academic information, do I fit within the range of your profiled students?
- ❖ Are there any unique admissions requirements? Is the Common Application accepted? Is there a supplement?

Speak with a Financial Aid Counselor:

- ❖ Are there any school-specific scholarships available? How do I apply?
- ❖ What is the total cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books, supplies, incidentals, parking, travel, and health insurance?
- ❖ When is tuition due? Is there a payment plan?
- ❖ What types of financial aid do you offer? Is financial aid need-based, merit-based or both? What percentage of aid is in the form of loans? Grants? Scholarships? Work-Study awards?
- ❖ What financial aid forms and/or scholarship applications do you require?
- ❖ What is the average financial aid award?
- ❖ When do you notify families about their financial aid award?

- ❖ Is the CSS Profile form required for Financial aid for international students?

After the Visit

- ❖ Fill out a college comparison information table you have created to help you remember the university.
- ❖ Write a thank you note to any admissions persons you met during your visit. This makes a valuable impression.

Roles and Responsibilities of Student and Parent

During the College Process we encourage students and parents to abide by the following precepts.

Student Roles and Responsibilities

- ❖ Know yourself
- ❖ You are in the driver's seat
- ❖ Be an informed consumer
- ❖ Do your research
- ❖ Don't let this process affect your self-esteem
- ❖ Focus on your needs
- ❖ Avoid the "rumor mill"
- ❖ Be mindful of deadlines
- ❖ You represent more than yourself in this process
- ❖ Communicate

Parent Roles and Responsibilities

- ❖ Be realistic
- ❖ You are in the passenger seat
- ❖ Focus on the right fit
- ❖ Use many sources to research colleges
- ❖ Help your child think about who he/she is
- ❖ Avoid the "rumor mill"
- ❖ Avoid pronoun confusion ("We are applying")
- ❖ Value and celebrate these last two years
- ❖ If you had gone through the college process, recognize that both the schools and the process are different.
- ❖ Which university your student is admitted to is not a reflection of your parenting
- ❖ Communicate

Admissions Interview

There will be many opportunities for students to meet with university representatives in Years 12 and 13 and gather information which will help in deciding where to apply. Each year, DIA hosts university representatives from around the world; in addition, students may also meet with university alumni who live in Dubai.

If you are being considered as a candidate for Oxford or Cambridge, you will be invited for an interview (please be aware that DIA provides mock interviews for Oxbridge). Other courses in the U.K., such as medicine and some art programs may also require interviews. The interview will not make or break your chances for acceptance; the purpose of the interview is to give the interviewer an idea of the candidate's suitability for the university and also to provide information to the candidate about the school and program.

Few schools in the U.S. require interviews for admittance and many may not offer them on campus, however, students are still encouraged to schedule interviews, if given the opportunity.

Here are some general suggestions to think about when meeting with university representatives, whether it is a college visit, meeting with alumni, or an interview at a university. Additional materials on interviewing are available in the counseling office.

- i. Be on time.
- ii. Be respectful: Do not chew gum, slouch, or use "informal, inarticulate language", turn off your cell phone and do not text message.
- iii. Look directly at the representative during the entire conversation or presentation. If the representative hands out brochures, do not read the brochure and stop paying attention to the presentation!
- iv. Research the college or university, be aware of requirements, programs of study and be prepared to state why you are interested in the school.
- v. Try not to have vague questions such as, "Tell me about your university." Be specific with questions, such as, "Could you tell me about class spirit? Can you give me examples of some campus traditions? In my first semester what will my class sizes probably be? What is the college's greatest asset? How would you describe the student body?" and any other questions regarding courses, financial aid, scholarships, or student life that are important to you.
- vi. Be sincere in your answers, questions, and attitudes. You don't want to be boastful, but don't be over-modest either. Speak to the point concisely and completely without monopolizing the conversation.
- vii. Practice answering questions, such as, "Why do you want to attend this university/college? What is your intended area of study, why? What do you like to read? Whom do you admire? What do you enjoy doing outside of your academic work?"
- viii. Wait for the interviewer to begin, listen attentively without interrupting, and answer all questions tactfully, firmly, honestly, and to the best of your ability. Don't be afraid to ask questions that you

feel are important. Don't be afraid to say you don't know the answer to a question you may be asked.

- ix. Always thank your interviewer for his time and interest.
- x. Within 48 hours of the interview, write a thank-you note.

The Admissions Interview

Although interviews are far less common than they once were, some colleges continue to conduct individual interviews with prospective students as part of the admission process. These may be required or optional, on-campus or off-campus, with members of the admission staff or with alumni or even students. Be sure to review interview options and requirements for each school to which you plan to apply well in advance of admission deadlines so you can schedule interviews as necessary.

What purpose do interviews serve?

Interviews are a two-way street – they can benefit both you and the college. For you, interviews are an opportunity to show who you really are as a person; a chance to learn more about the institution by asking thoughtful, specific questions; and a way to demonstrate and expressly articulate your interest in the college. For the college, interviews allow admissions representatives to get to know you beyond your application, and to better assess “fit” with the college, and to understand how interested you are in their college.

What should I expect?

Admissions interviews may be “informational” or “evaluative.” Informational interviews primarily focus on the exchange of information – you receive further information about the college, while the admissions representative receives further information about you. These interviews tend to be optional and play a less substantial role in the admissions decision process. Evaluative interviews, on the other hand, put greater emphasis on the evaluation of the applicant, and this feedback often serves a formal function in the decision process. When arranging interviews, you may wish to ask whether they are informational or evaluative. Regardless, note that positive impressions are important even during informational interviews.

What if they are optional?

Just because interviews are optional does not mean that they are not encouraged. The personal contact interviews provide with a representative of the college or university can be important, and a positive interview can help you stand out in a crowd of otherwise comparable applicants. At the same time, interviews can provide you with a wealth of information from an admission representative or alumnus/ae about academics, student life, the admissions process, etc.

How should I prepare?

Update your resume so that it accurately conveys your accomplishments and interests. Research the school in advance so you can articulate how it specifically aligns with your interests and goals.

Application Process & it's parts

Tests

The best preparation for college entrance examinations is to build a very strong academic foundation, by preparing assignments to the best of your abilities throughout your schooling and by extensively reading books/magazines with a rich vocabulary and that are well written – in addition to the books you are required to read for class. Short-term preparation will help you become more familiar and feel at ease, but experience has proven that the student who perform extremely well and get high scores are not the ones who rely on crash courses or practice tests alone.

The requirements will vary for students from the different programs and for universities in different countries. You will have to consult with the CCO to verify which exams you will need to take for the various universities to which you are applying. These are some of the most common ones, but this list is not exhaustive:

1. **SAT** (Critical Reading, Mathematics; Writing component is optional) (required by most US colleges, some Canadian, not UK)
2. **SAT** Subject tests (required by some US colleges only)
3. **TOEFL** Language proficiency test most used in USA
4. **IELTS** Language proficiency test most used in UK
5. **IELTS- UKVI** version is needed for visa for UK
6. **LNAT** (for studying law in the UK)
7. **BMAT** (for studying medicine in the UK)
8. **ACT** an alternative to the SAT for US colleges Some colleges have their own entrance tests.

You are responsible for registering for the tests. This is done and submitted online. Remember to request that your scores be sent to the universities. Each college has different testing requirements. Carefully check which tests are required and the latest test date they will accept. Allow 3- 4 weeks after your test date for college to receive your scores.

Advice on Communicating with Colleges

- i. Remember that your email message might be attached to your application file.
- ii. Use a reasonable email address, preferably your DIA email address. Avoid personal addresses like partygirl@gmail.com or hatetostudy@yahoo.com.
- iii. Give your full name, application number (if you have been given one), and high school name (and code for UCAS or Common App) in every message.
- iv. The subject line should be your candidate name and number.
- v. Use salutations like “Dear Admissions Officer” and avoid greetings like “Yo” or “Hey”.
- vi. Be polite and formal. You are not chatting or blogging with someone your own age. Check your spelling and punctuation.
- vii. Before asking a lot of questions, check the college’s website to see if your answer is already available. If it is and you have asked that same question, it will not reflect well on you.

- viii. Monitor what is placed on your social networking website to ensure that photos and comments are appropriate and respectful.
- ix. Don't use all lowercase or all uppercase letters.
- x. Do not use "Please Read" or "Urgent Reply Needed" in your subject line, as your email will probably end up in JUNK or SPAM.
- xi. Don't add admissions officers as Friends on your social network. Keep the contact professional.
- xii. Don't post inappropriate or offensive messages about any university on any website.

Requesting Recommendations/ References

A letter of recommendations (US) or reference (UK) is a requirement for almost all university applications. This document should be requested at least 6 weeks in advance from someone who knows you well enough to write a meaningful one!

Talk to the teacher/s you want to request this document from and ask them if they are willing to write your recommendation. Remember that this is a request, which means it can be accepted or denied. Most teachers will accept to write one but expect glowing recommendations only if you have earned them.

It is important that your teacher knows you well.

IMPORTANT: Most US colleges will also require a recommendation from the college counselor. Be sure that the CCO knows you well enough to write a meaningful recommendation. Also remember that your disciplinary record should be clear if you want a good one. Students must complete a brag sheet for a counselor recommendation.

Requesting School Documents

In addition to your application form and the recommendation, colleges will also ask for other documents. Some of these might include:

- i. Predicted grades on your official Baccalaureate exam
- ii. School transcript
- iii. Proof of a language proficiency
- iv. Copy of Diploma - (if required- once you receive your results)
- v. School profile (information about DIA)

Because the requirements will vary from one college/country to another, be sure to know:

- i. Which documents are needed
- ii. Whether you need them electronically or in print
- iii. If they should be signed, stamped, and sealed by a school official
- iv. If they are confidential or can be viewed by you.

WE CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH YOUR DOCUMENTS ONLY IF YOU INFORM US AND GIVE US ENOUGH TIME TO PROCESS THE REQUEST. THE MINIMUM IS THREE WEEKS ADVANCE NOTICE.

The Transcript

What is it?

The transcript is widely regarded as the most important component of a student's application, as it tells a detailed story of his or her academic record. The transcript lists all completed coursework, all semester and year-end grades, and the courses currently in progress as well as those to be taken in the coming semester of that academic year.

Who is responsible for sending transcripts to colleges?

The student's College Counselor sends the student's transcript to each college the student applies to. Transcripts are generally sent electronically which maintains a record of submissions for each student.

What is assessed?

The admissions team uses this document to assess rigor of curriculum, classroom performance, and any relevant trends (such as an upward grade trend or consistently lower or higher grades in a particular academic discipline).

Tips:

The transcript is created over the entirety of a student's high school career. To ensure that it reflects your abilities and work ethic in a way that works for you, note that:

- All four years count.
- The goal is to achieve a balance between rigor and achievement - challenge yourself but only to the point that the quality of your work is not severely compromised.

The Application

What is it?

Typically, an online form of some kind (e.g., the Common App), the application itself collects a wide variety of information regarding the student's demographics, family background, schooling, activities and involvement, writing ability, disciplinary history, etc.

Who is responsible for completing/submitting it?

Students complete their applications independently, with consultation from parents (especially for the family background section) and guidance from their College Counselor. The College Counselors appreciate the opportunity to review all applications before they are submitted to ensure that the application portrays the student in the best and most accurate form.

What do colleges look for?

Colleges will universally say that the transcript is the most important piece of a college application. Colleges look for evidence that you have taken advantage of an appropriately challenging curriculum and the community. Their goal is to get a strong sense of who you are as an individual (this includes your personality and voice), as a student, and to establish context into which to place your academic and extra-curricular achievements.

Tips:

- The application is often the college's first introduction to you, so be sure to put your best and most polished foot forward. You never want to submit an application in a rush. Take your time when completing it, be thorough, and pay attention to detail
- When listing your activities and involvements, be sure to list them in order of their importance to you, not chronologically or alphabetically.
- All students should participate in a detailed and updated workshop on completing applications, as well as receiving individual application guidance from the College Counsellor.

Applying to UK Universities

The United Kingdom (UK) is comprised of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The application process is consistent throughout Great Britain, but what you experience as a student would be different, depending on whether you enroll in Scotland or elsewhere in the UK. Most degrees in the UK can be completed in three years, whereas in Scotland, the usual length is four years.

If you are applying in the UK, you are required to indicate your course of study at the time you apply. Unlike the US, where students can apply without having decided about their major, there is no such thing as "undecided" at UK universities. If you like the idea of studying in the UK, you must be prepared to launch into quite a specific course of study, and to stay with it for three years until you complete your degree. If you change your mind about your course, you have to reapply to a different course, and unless it's a closely related field, you may have to begin your degree over from the beginning. For this reason, students who are not certain of their interests may not be a good match for studying in the UK, unless the course is very broad and more multi-disciplinary.

Researching Courses and Universities. The UCAS (Universities and Colleges Admissions Service) website is the best place to begin the research process. Go to the UCAS website at www.ucas.com and click on "Course Search." You can then search by course or by university. As you find courses of interest, you will notice the letters "EP" listed after many course titles. These initials indicate the university has registered an entry profile on the website, and by clicking on the course title, you will be able to view the profile. Entry profiles contain information about why one would study a course, what are the key skills and qualities sought in applicants (which is important as you write your personal statement!), where to obtain more information, what academic qualifications are needed, and a great deal of information about the course itself. The most important information in the Entry Profile includes the "Entry Qualification" required for the course. This indicates the predicted points needed in the IB diploma to be given an offer for this course. In addition, the EP will indicate exactly what classes you will be required to take during each year of the course, which will help you decide if this subject is realistic for you. Entry profiles are a great place to start the research process

Once you've decided on a course, you could consult Unistats, www.unistats.com, a website that allows you to compare a particular course. You also have access to student satisfaction data, based on a survey of students in their final year of the course. Finally, Unistats also reports the percentage of graduates who are employed or enrolled in post-graduate degree courses within six months of graduation.

There are numerous other resources available for investigating courses. Many students have found the Higher Education League Tables, published by the major British newspapers such as The Guardian and Times to be very helpful.

Application Process

UCAS serves as the central clearinghouse for university applications in the UK. Applicants fill out a single online form, a reference is added, and once the form is submitted, UCAS forwards the application to the universities that the student has indicated. Each university then makes a decision about the application, forwards that information to UCAS, and it is then posted in the student's UCAS account, under TRACK. The UCAS application limits you to a maximum of five university choices, or four choices in clinical areas such as medicine or dentistry.

Step-by-step guide to filling in the online UCAS application form

Please complete filling the UCAS form by end of June in Year 12. You can add the Personal Statement later in September once it is ready after you have included your summer activity, if relevant. Before embarking on the details of the online application, do your research. First, work on your choice of subject, then find out which universities offer your course, paying particular attention to content and entry requirements. Next, compose your personal statement justifying your choice.

Registering online is the easy bit.

Go to the UCAS website (ucas.ac.uk), go into "Apply" and click on "Register". In this first section, you'll be asked for personal details. Make sure your name is how it appears on your exam entries and certificates, to avoid any issues later. Your mobile number and email address are useful to include, as both universities and UCAS increasingly use these to contact you.

Next comes the security bit. You'll be asked for a password (some schools and colleges will provide these for you) and some security questions. Remember

- ★ Don't forget your password
- ★ Keep the username generated safe;
- ★ You may need to know the answers to all your security questions in future.

You'll now be asked if you are applying through your school or college. You must select school and next you will have to enter a buzzword. Make sure the correct school or college appears next. Finally, you'll be asked to verify your email address. UCAS will then send you a verification code to enable you to complete the form.

Two hints here:

- ★ The code email sometimes does not come through immediately, so patience may be required
- ★ **Please complete UCAS using your school email address.**

Now you're ready to complete the other parts of the form. Remember that it doesn't all have to be done in one go; you can save at any point and come back to it another time.

Personal details

This section covers information about where you live, your nationality and your status for assessing your entitlement to student grants, loans and fees payment. The drop-down menus are clear enough, but here are a few things that may help:

- ★ Nationality: Add your Nationality
- ★ Residential category: if unsure, answer the questions in the help box;
- ★ Student support: Fee code - 01 Private finance
- ★ Unique Learner Number: you may not have one of these - if so leave blank.
- ★ For the "nominated access" question - list Mrs. Rachana Sippy - who will act on your behalf at any stage.
- ★ You must complete the disability/special needs section even if you don't have a disability (in which case choose "none"). Consider this question carefully - if there is anything to identify (e.g. dyslexia) it should go in this section.

Additional information

Additional information. **This is for UK applicants only** and includes equality questions and details about any preparation for higher education such as summer schools and tasters. Enter information about these here even if you are going to say more about them in your personal statement later.

Education

It's a good idea to wrap up this section before completing your choices and the statement. It's easy to make mistakes or miss things out, and the drop-down menus won't always correct errors. Here you'll record where you've been educated since you were in Year 11, as well as the qualifications you've gained and those you're currently studying for.

First, enter all the institutions you've attended, making sure you get the dates correct. If in doubt, check! Clicking on "Find" and "Search" should produce your school or college and the exam centre numbers. If you took exams, make sure you say "yes" when asked if you have taken qualifications. Occasionally you may need to enter the institution and exam centre number yourself.

Once you've made sure all your schools/colleges are listed, you can start to fill in all your qualifications to date. For most it will be end of the Year 11 MYP or GCSE or the CBSE/ICSE final exam results. You will only add the 6 subjects and the core components of the DP course later.

- ★ Include your final MYP/GCSE/ICSE/CBSE/American grade 10/Year11 results;
- ★ For Year 13 add all 6 subjects including TOK/EE too. In the grades section select pending in the drop-down box.

Hints: have your certificates or result slips in front of you so there's no confusion about exam boards, dates or grades.

Some students will have to include additional entrance tests in this section, such as BMAT or UKCAT for medicine or LNAT for law.

Choices

You can enter your choices in any order here - there is no preference order as they will be automatically sorted alphabetically. It's a good idea to put in and save those choices that are definite in your mind first and add the others later. This should help you focus on what you really want. Make sure you're choosing both the correct institution and the course when you click and pay close attention to the campus code.

Occasionally, the course is not taking place where you thought. It may be on a different site or be franchised out to another college and be miles away from the main site, potentially affecting your choice.

Those intending to take a gap year and go for deferred entry for 2020 can identify their intentions here. Remember to outline your plans in your personal statement.

Employment

This section is all about paid work (part-time or full-time jobs past and present) not voluntary or work experience. These can be included in your personal statement, especially if relevant to your chosen course and career plans.

Personal statement

Don't type straight into the "Apply" section - use a word processor or similar, using the spell-check facility, and copy and paste over when you're ready. For the sake of compatibility, use Times New Roman font, size 12. Keep an eye on the length: more than 4,000 characters with spaces means trouble. You can use 47 lines, but UCAS advises that the last line can go missing in transmission to the universities, so beware of this.

Once imported into the apply section, you'll see how much space you have left or if you are over the limit. Remember: you don't have to use all the space just because it's there. Be concise, don't waffle. And make sure it's all your own work.

When you think it's finished, click "Preview" to see what it will look like when an admissions selector sees it. Click on "Edit" if you want to make any changes.

Once reviewed, Pay and submit.

When you submit your UCAS application form it will be received by your College Counsellor/UCAS Coordinator.

Predicted Grades & Reference.

The predicted grades and the reference letter are added by your College Counsellor. It is mandatory to apply through your school, your reference will be written for you and you won't have access to it. Your school or college will submit the application form with the reference and predicted grades included on to UCAS on your behalf.

Some general hints

- ★ Save as you fill the UCAS
- ★ At any stage, you can check your progress by clicking "View All Details"
- ★ Mark each section off as "complete" when you're ready.
- ★ Your school will add the predicted grades and reference letter and submit the UCAS. You will be notified by UCAS when your application is submitted.
- ★ Finally, you're done!

Common mistakes to look out for

- ★ Previous surname at 16th birthday - don't fill in if it's the same as now.
- ★ Home address: don't fill in if it's the same as your postal address.
- ★ Email address: remember – to add your school email address.

- ★ Dual nationality: only fill in if you have a passport of a second country.
- ★ Permanent residence/student support: the name of your local authority.
- ★ Fee code: usually depends on your status.
- ★ Further details section on Choices section: usually leave blank, but check if university needs completion (e.g. subjects for a combined degree).
- ★ Education: check for missing exams, including those to be taken, and ensure that all dates are included.
- ★ Include other admissions tests.

What happens after you submit your UCAS application?

Once you submit your UCAS, DIA College Counsellor receives it. Predicted grades and a reference letter is added by the College Counsellor and the UCAS is submitted finally via school by the College Counsellor. Your application will be sent to all the universities and colleges you have applied to. None of them will know where else you have applied. Whenever any of them make a decision you need to know about, such as inviting you to interview, you'll receive an email so you know you have to check your application in Track. You will receive an email explaining how to use the Track service to check on the progress of your application.

Personal Statement

Your personal statement is your chance to make a convincing case for your admission. The personal statement cannot be longer than 47 lines or 4000 characters, including spaces, and should focus on why you have chosen to study the courses you have listed, and what interests you about your subject. Details about what you have studied, read, or experienced in relation to your course will help the admissions tutors assess your suitability for admission. Tutors are looking for intellectual ability, potential, commitment and determination as it relates to your selected course. The UCAS website has a section on writing the personal statement. University websites also offer advice on what they are looking for in candidates for specific courses.

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

The Reference

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

from you. Students who have decided to apply to UK universities are therefore required to complete the "Counsellor Questionnaire" emailed to you on Managebac.

After Applying

After your application has been reviewed, you will be informed of your admission decisions through a section of the UCAS website called "Track." at www.ucas.com/students/track/.

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

Each time a UK university decides on one of your applications, UCAS will post the offer in your Track account, including all the details. You will also eventually receive a formal offer in the mail. You cannot respond to any offers until you receive all of them. When the last decision is posted, discuss your choices with the counselor and then use your Track account to reply to your offers. You will be asked to code all your offers (you could have as many as five) as "Firm," "Insurance" or "Decline." Choose one firm and one insurance offer; all others must be declined. Since most offers are conditional upon examination scores and you will not have received the exam results, this can be a difficult decision, so speak with your counselor. Once you have made a commitment to particular courses, you cannot change your mind.

If you did not receive any offers, you can participate in a process in February called "Extra" in which you can apply one at a time to additional courses until you receive an offer. See the counselor for help with this process. Students who receive offers, but do not make the scores required by their firm or insurance offer can enter a process called "Clearing" in which they can compete for available places based on their actual IB scores. Clearing begins in mid-August, when the British A Level results are received. Recently, the universities have developed Adjustment, a system for allowing students who have performed higher on their IB diploma than predicted to re-apply for a course that they may now qualify. If students are eligible for Adjustment, UCAS will contact them directly through TRACK on the UCAS site.

Interviews and Mock Interviews

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

Preparing for a UK-style Interview

- ★ What attracts you to this particular course?
- ★ Why do you want to attend?
- ★ Why do you want to study this field?
- ★ What is the value of studying?
- ★ What do you expect to gain from your time here, apart from a qualification (diploma)?
- ★ What can you offer this institution?
- ★ What have you done to find out about this field before applying?
- ★ How have you found your information?

- ★ What books/ films/plays/have you read/seen recently? Which is one that impressed you?
- ★ What grades do you expect to get on your diploma?
- ★ Where do you see yourself in 5- or 10-years' time?
- ★ What do you think are your strengths? Your weaknesses?

You might be asked if you have any questions. Avoid remaining silent. Some suggestions might be:

- ★ What are career prospects?
- ★ Opportunities for post-graduate research?
- ★ Study facilities? Libraries? Electronic documents?
- ★ Is the course taught in labs, tutorials, lecture halls, etc?
- ★ Is there an advisor for each student?
- ★ What is life in the residences like?

Interesting Research Links for U.K. Universities

- ★ www.ucas.com – The universities and colleges admissions service website for the U.K.
- ★ www.unistats.com – Course comparisons at universities.
- ★ www.thestudentsurvey.com – Students views on the quality of the education they have received in their subject area at their institution. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/universityguide> - The Guardian online newspaper with U.K university rankings and other useful information. http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/gooduniversity_guide/ - The Times online newspaper with U.K. university information
- ★ www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk
- ★ <https://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/standout-toolkit--> The voice of universities

Important UK University Deadlines

- ★ Oxbridge application deadline- 15 October
- ★ Medicine application- 15 October
- ★ Regular applications – 15 Jan.
- ★ COPA-- The Cambridge Online Preliminary Application (COPA) is a questionnaire that allows us to collect useful information that isn't part of your UCAS application, and to make arrangements for overseas interviews and Organ Trials. It is a required part of the admissions process for anyone applying from outside the United Kingdom (UK)/European Union (EU), and/or who wishes to be considered for an [Organ Scholarship](#), or an [overseas interview](#). Deadline to Submit COPA is 19 Oct. and to submit SAQ is 22 Oct.

Tests to be taken

- ★ Oxbridge Tests- Please check if your course requires you to take any test for the course you will be applying to.
- ★ Medicine- UCAT/BMAT test is a requirement. Please ensure which universities require which test
- ★ LNAT test for Law is required by few universities only. Please check it out.

- ★ Step 1 Math test – if required by the university.
- ★ IELTS Language proficiency test most commonly used in UK
- ★ Once you get your conditional offer you will be informed if IELTS or TOEFL is required.
- ★ IELTS- UKVI version - Students applying to the Foundations courses will need to take the test as it is a visa requirement.

UK University Application Timeline

Year 12 students

September – December

- ★ Focus on your studies and perform to the best of your abilities.
- ★ Participate and get involved in extracurricular activities in areas of interest to you.
- ★ Read books, online papers, journals beyond your syllabus in major you would like to study, take online courses, do a research paper, help a professor in his/her research or take internship to expand your knowledge in your major you would like to study in.

January- June

- ★ Continue to concentrate on your studies and be engaged in your classes and activities.
- ★ Schedule an individual college counselor meeting and a parent/student counselor meeting.
- ★ Explore personal qualities, abilities, academic goals, and special interests. Research specific universities. Learn about the UCAS admission process and specific course requirements. Sources include: <http://wwwucas.com/>, university websites, teachers, alumni, friends, relatives, and contacts.
- ★ Complete and submit the "Counsellor Questionnaire" by May15th.
- ★ Register online at UCAS, if you have not already opened an account in June.
- ★ Write a draft of your personal statement.
- ★ Develop an initial list of potential universities.
- ★ Write your Extended Essay on a topic related to your course area for which you plan to apply.
- ★ Plan summer university visits, check Open Days on the UCAS site, and consider taking summer programs or other enriching activities related to your course area.
- ★ Notify the counselor if you are interested in applying to Oxford, Cambridge, or courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and veterinary medicine, which must be submitted to UCAS by October 15th.

July- August -Summers

- ★ Visit schools, if possible, and continue researching courses and universities.
- ★ Check Entry Profile for universities and any requirements for the course, such as special tests or interviews.
- ★ Pursue activities or internships related to your course interests, especially if you are applying for medicine courses, which require practical experience.

Year 13 students

September- Early Applicants

- ★ Complete your final draft of your personal statement and your list of universities by second week of September
- ★ Attend university visits either virtual or campus visits.
- ★ Students applying to Oxbridge or courses in medicine, dentistry, veterinary science, and veterinary medicine, must meet with the Counselor in the first two weeks of school.

October- December

- ★ Applications for Oxbridge and medicine, dentistry, veterinary science courses must be completed on UCAS along with any required supplements by October 1st. The UCAS submit deadline is October 15th. **But DIA deadline is 5 October.**
- ★ Check if there are any special tests or written work that must be submitted for courses. Meet periodically with the counselor over the next few months.
- ★ Complete your course research and finalize your university choices. Complete your UCAS application and discuss it with the Counselor.
- ★ Complete your final personal statement and put on your UCAS application before the mid of November. Your reference cannot be started until your personal statement is completed.
- ★ The DIA deadline for submitting all UCAS applications is November 20th. Although the UCAS deadline is January 15th, due to the winter holidays, you must finish your UCAS application by November 20th. After you have checked and completed all sections, you may pay the fees by credit card and then send to the referee (the counselor) online.
- ★ Students who have applied to Oxbridge or medical courses may be invited for interviews and additional testing in December.
- ★ Students invited to interviews should schedule mock interviews with DÍA faculty.
- ★ Plan to visit universities you have applied to, if possible, during the winter break.
- ★ Talk with visiting DIA alumni, friends, and teachers about their university experiences.

January- February

- ★ The Counsellor will be submitting your UCAS application by 10 January.
- ★ Students who have applied to medical courses may continue to be invited for interviews.

March- June

- ★ Universities usually are expected to have sent all decisions by March 31st. You cannot give your response until you have received all offers, unless you delete the course from your choices.
- ★ The UCAS "Extra" begins in February. If you have not received any offers, you may use Extra to select additional courses.
- ★ Discuss your choices with your counselor and others and select your Firm, Insurance, and Declined choices. Fill in any forms regarding finance and accommodations as soon as possible.
- ★ Focus on your studies and prepare for the IB examinations. Your acceptance is contingent upon completing your IB diploma at the level of your offer and meeting the conditional offer.
- ★ Indicate your Firm, Insurance, and Declined choices on the UCAS Track website no later than the first week in May (the deadline will be indicated by UCAS). The earlier you can respond the better for your choices of accommodations.
- ★ Take the IB examinations.
- ★ Make sure you arrange with the IB Coordinator to have your IB diploma results sent to the university.

July-August

- ★ Get your IB examination results and hope that you have met your offers (Firm, or if necessary, Insurance)
- ★ If you do not make either choice, you can write letters to the course admissions departments and contact the counselor and we will write letters and call them. If you miss your offer by 1 or 2 points they may still accept you, although if the course is very competitive, they may not. You may have to wait until mid-August after the British A level results to have an answer on your acceptance
- ★ UCAS will automatically contact you through Track. Make sure you continue to look on Track!

- ★ Mid-August is the start of vacancy information for courses, known as CLEARING, if you did not meet your IB points for your Firm or Insurance offer.
- ★ Once you have accepted the offer you will receive a CAS number—unconditional offer to apply for your visa.

Applying to USA Universities

Applying to Colleges and Universities in the U.S.

There are over 3000 institutions of post-secondary education in the U.S., about 1500 of which are bonafide 4-year schools offering bachelor's degrees. Even considering only the "top level" schools, there are still at least 150 or more institutions from which to choose. Making the right choice of schools to apply to is probably the most important part of the application process. Amongst all of these institutions, there will be many, perhaps hundreds which would be appropriate schools for you, however, you do not have the time to apply to 100 schools, not even 50 or 20. So the problem is not to choose six to eight schools out of 3000, but out of 100. Going from 3000 to 100 is much easier than you might think. To help you eliminate many schools which would not interest you, review the criteria listed in this guide on Selecting "Best Fit" Universities. Think about them when researching schools and making your list and when you meet with the counselor, your choices of the criteria will help you to shorten the list of schools.

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

A few very important points:

Your list should include "eight first choices" of schools that you have researched and know you want to go there. Applying to more than eight suggests you have not done your research well.

The US application process is very time-consuming and requires a lot of effort in filling out forms and completing essays. Your applications will be much stronger if you concentrate on a reasonable number to produce excellent results. In addition, you need to keep up with your schoolwork which may be difficult if you are not well organized and are spending too much time filling out applications.

Schools admit students who are likely to enroll. This means you need to show you are interested in attending the university by attending ISP school visits, requesting information, visiting the campus, and writing the admissions officers with thoughtful questions about academics, extra-curricular activities, sports, campus life, and any other areas you are interested. You need to have a correspondence - a relationship - with the admissions officer of each school where you are interested in applying!

How an applicant is assessed for admission

This is the question that many students and parents ponder: How does a U.S. college or university decide who gets admitted? Admittance to U.S. institutions is much more complicated than for other systems. Each college may ask for a different set of information and each one weighs application components differently. The following is a list of most schools' decision-making criteria. The US takes a holistic approach in reviewing each applicant and no single factor is considered in isolation.

Academic Record

All university admission officers give major importance to your semester grades as recorded on the transcript. Your grades are the best predictor of college success, and therefore, colleges look at grades earned since Year 10. Of course, admissions are impressed with an improvement in grades over the years with Year 11, 12 and CA1 of Year 13 being the most important. Schools are interested if the student is taking the most challenging courses and the IB provides the rigorous pre-university program universities value.

DIA does not rank students or calculate GPA, which is typical of many independent and international schools. The IB assessments also do not promote calculating a GPA. In any case, each university has its own system of calculating a GPA or reviewing grades.

Standardized Tests

Most universities are interested in standardized test scores, although they are evaluated in the total context of a student's school performance and make up one part of your application. The more selective the institutions, the more interest there seems to be on scores since all of the applicants have top grades. There are more than 300 universities that have made standardized tests optional (see www.fairtest.org for the list). In addition, colleges and universities may not require standardized tests from students attending high school outside of the U.S. Make sure to check the testing policy of each school! Test-blind colleges do not accept the SAT or ACT in the admissions process, even if scores are submitted. Far more colleges are test optional, which means they consider the test scores of students who submit them.

Extra-curricular Involvement

Schools are looking for students who are members of a learning community and get involved outside the classroom. Quality of involvement, commitment, and leadership in activities are important. Community Service is highly recommended and valued as an indicator the student will contribute to the university community and beyond. CAS credits also help strengthen the student's application.

Essays

College essays allow the student to come alive and show who you are, how you write, and what distinguishes you.

Counselor and Teacher Recommendations

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

Individual Factors & Character

Admission officers also look at individual factors that can play a role in acceptance, such as unusual talents or achievements, alumni affiliations, ethnic background or the X-factor (Wow Factor). Never underestimate the role that character plays in your application and how you distinguish yourself. Does your application have evidence that you possess individuality, responsibility, a concern for others, and self-reliance?

The Application Process

The student begins an online application by creating an account – make sure you remember your password and username! The Common Application, used by many colleges and universities, is available at www.commonapp.org. Some colleges use Coalition App. Please check to see Answer all questions accurately, with correct spelling and grammar.

The Application

Most colleges and universities encourage online applications. The student begins an online application by creating an account – make sure you remember your password and username! The Common Application, used by many colleges and universities, is available at www.commonapp.org Answer all questions accurately, with correct spelling and grammar.

The components of the Common App (the most common application form in the USA) are:

- Online application (Common App or the university's unique application)
- A student essay (topics available on the application website)
- Initial transcript (Grades 9 – 11)
- Midyear transcript (Grades 9 -11 plus 1st semester of Grade 12)
- Final transcript (9 – 12)
- School Profile (found on IC website) provided by the CCO
- Predicted grades if you are a Baccalaureate student
- Counselor recommendations letter and form
- Teacher recommendation and forms (the number will vary)
- SAT, sometimes SAT II (Subject test) or ACT test
- Interview (Sometimes)

Admission officer want to know how you spend your summers but attending a summer program is not guarantee of admission at all

If you hold dual citizenship, indicate both nationalities, but list the American one as your primary nationality, if you hold a US passport; that way you are not considered an international applicant.

Make sure to check the deadline for the colleges to which you are applying as they can vary quite a bit. Also make sure to check how the colleges want the supporting documents provided. For example, UC asks you to self-report your grades in the online application. If you are accepted then you must mail the printed transcript in a sealed, signed, and stamped envelope. Most colleges accept documents uploaded and submitted through our online software, but others have their own portals.

Some helpful tips

- Essay questions should be completed offline as word documents, then cut and pasted. The essay is probably the most important element of the student’s part of the application. (See the section on “The Essay”)
- Do not include your standardized test scores on your Common Application, especially if you are applying to test optional schools.
- Keep a copy of your online application.

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

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

Students are responsible for the following:

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

The Essay

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

US University Applications Timeline

Year 12 Timeline

September - January

- Focus on your studies and perform to the best of your abilities. Plan and pursue your CAS activities.
- Participate and be involved in extra-curricular activities in areas of interest to you.
- Participate in meetings with university/college admissions representatives visiting DIA.
- Research colleges on websites, publications, university view-books, virtual visits and campus visits.

- Explore personal qualities, abilities, academic goals, and special interests.

February - June

- Continue to concentrate on your studies and be engaged in your classes and activities.
- Schedule an individual college counselor meeting and a parent/student counselor meeting.
- Register online and take in March, May and June the SAT's, and/or the ACT in April, and if necessary, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), which is scheduled regularly at test centers.
- Continue exploring personal qualities, abilities, academic goals, and special interests.
- Research specific colleges and universities. Learn about the admission process and specific requirements. Good sources include college counselor, college websites, college visits at DIA, publications: guidebooks and alumni, friends, relatives, contacts.
- Create a efficient system to organize your college search, testing, and application information.
- Complete and submit the "Counsellor and Techer Questionnaire" to the counseling office and respective teacher who will be writing your reference letters. Give the Teachers and Counsellors minimum three weeks to write your reference letters.
- Start the drafts of your college essays/Personal Statements and create your tentative list of universities based on final exams grades.
- Develop an initial list of potential colleges (ideally not more than 12) and contact for additional information.
- Plan summer college visits, consider summer programs or other enriching activities, including a summer job or an internship.
- It is the student's responsibility to obtain recommendations from two teachers. These letters and forms are confidential and should be turned in by the teacher directly to the counselor.
- Requests for teacher recommendations and the forms (online or paper) should be submitted to teachers at least three weeks before the college application deadline (not including vacation days).

July- August

- Visit campuses, research schools of interest, contact schools with relevant questions and express interest in programs.
- Check requirements and application documents for schools, i.e., Common Application, Supplemental forms, essays, standardized tests.
- Write drafts of required essays.
- Begin completing applications online, especially if an application is for Early Decision or Early Action, which may have application deadlines as early as November 1st. Notify the counselor of your intention to apply Early Decision or Early Action.
- Attend a summer program, internship, volunteer, get a job, or actively pursue an interest or an activity that is unique to you and can strengthen your application.

Year 13 Timeline

September-October

- Register for the SAT's you would like to take in October, November, or December, if you are not satisfied with your previous test scores. If you are taking the ACT, register for the October, ACT Plus Writing test. Take the TOEFL, if necessary.

- Attend University fair/visits and talk with the colleges you are interested in making applications.
- Narrow college choices to a maximum of eight.
- Periodically meet with the counselor over the next few months.
- Take the October SAT, SAT Subject tests, or ACT Plus Writing (if you haven't already).
- Send SAT/ACT/TOEFL/IELTS/AP scores online to meet Early Decision/Early Action deadlines by 10th October.
- Early Action/Early Decision applications should be finished this month with the appropriate deadlines met for teacher recommendations and counselor report forms.
- Continue to meet college representatives visiting DIA and your Counselor

November- December

- All applications across the world with deadlines in early December and January must be finished and submitted between December 1st - 5th Dec. It is the student's responsibility to check and meet deadlines for all colleges, as well as submit all required student forms and materials (whether paper or online).
- Take the SAT's, if necessary. November may be the only month the SAT Language with Listening Subject Tests is offered.
- Send SAT scores online to meet Early Decision/Early Action deadlines.
- Students applying to public universities in California and other public universities should submit applications by November 25th.
- Complete CSS/Financial Aid PROFILE, if required, at www.collegeboard.org/css
- If you will need a student visa (non-U.S. citizen) to attend college in the U.S., download the financial certification form from each college website and ask your parents to start obtaining the required documents from their bank.
- Take the December SAT, if needed.
- Talk with visiting DIA alumni about their college experiences.
- Make certain you send your official SAT, ACT, and/or TOEFL or IELTS scores directly to the colleges by end of December for Regular Decision.

January and February

- Complete the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) financial aid form if you are a U.S. citizen and will be requesting financial aid. Your parents must figure their U.S. taxes (but they do not need to file their taxes) to complete this form. The FAFSA should be completed online and only submitted after January 1st. See www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Continue to complete all applications with later deadlines or with rolling admissions policies.
- Go to the college's web page to check the status of your application. Check that all supporting documents have been received.
- If you do not receive confirmation that your application was received, contact the college.
- Midyear reports go out by the last week in January or first week February to most colleges.

March and April

- Focus on your studies and prepare for the IB examinations. Your acceptance is contingent upon your completion of Year 13 with acceptable grades. If your grades drop, your acceptance can and will be withdrawn.

- Letters of acceptance begin to arrive depending on the schedule used by each college. As you receive decisions, please email your counselor so our files can be updated.
- Review college acceptances and financial aid packages; talk with college financial aid officers.
- Strategize acceptances (unless Early Decision).
- You have until May 1st to make your final decision (except in the case of Early Decision applications). Notify the chosen college of your decision to attend and send a deposit to hold your acceptance. If your reply is not postmarked by May 1st, your acceptance can be withdrawn.
- Once you have made your decision, notify all other schools from where you have received an offer that you regret not to join so they can offer admission to others.
- If you are placed on a “waitlist” see your counselor to review your options.

May

- Complete last admission requirements (deposits, dorm selection, etc.)
- Take the IB examinations.
- Tell your counselor and IB Coordinator what school you have chosen so that your Final Report with your transcript and your official IB diploma results will be sent to the appropriate university or college.
- Secure I-20 application form from university and apply for the student visa.

Improving Your Chances for waitlisted offers.

- If your waitlist school is clearly your first choice, you should communicate that information. Colleges like a sure thing. If they end up using the waitlist, they’d rather offer acceptance to the students who are most likely to enroll.
- If a student has any significant, positive changes since their application was submitted, they should send a letter and include any documentation that demonstrates these changes. Sending additional recommendations is an option, but third-party letters don’t carry as much weight as stellar senior grades or a prize - winning performance in the regional competition. It’s best to keep communications short and sweet; there is no need to send more than one or two emails or letters.
- The best strategy, then, is to work with your Counselor to choose and make a deposit at a good second choice; get as much information from the waitlist college as you can; let the admissions office know that the college is your first choice; and strengthen your application, if possible.

Interesting research links for the US

- www.commonapp.org – The Common Application website
- www.princetonreview.com – The Princeton Review site for college information.
- www.chronicl.com/students - The Chronicle of Higher Education publication website.
- www.nacac.com – The National Association for College Admission Counselors
- www.unigo.com – An interesting research website from the students’ perspective.
- <http://collegeprowler.com> – College guides written by students covering every aspect of college.
- www.cappex.com -- Compare Colleges & Research College
- <https://www.fastweb.com/>
- (<http://www.campusreel.org/>
- <https://www.niche.com/>

- <https://www.petersons.com/>
- <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/>
- <https://college-insight.org/>
- <https://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator/>
- www.toefl.org
- ❖ www.ielts.org

Applying to Canadian Universities

In Canada, there is a distinction between a university and a college. Universities grant undergraduate bachelors and advanced degrees while colleges focus on vocational and technical training. The academic approach is similar to the US curriculum and organization. Universities are organized within faculties (schools), such as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences or the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

Canadian universities actively seek IB diploma students and widely recognize the value of the diploma. At some schools, students with the IB begin their university program in the second year; therefore, an undergraduate degree may be completed in three years. Generally, the SAT is required for students not completing an IB diploma. A TOEFL is often requested for international students if they have not been in an English-speaking school for at least four years. This requirement can be waived if the student meets the English language proficiency requirements, which usually includes a letter from the counselor.

For students with the IB diploma, the application process is very stream-lined and simple. Students apply online directly to the university, except for universities in Ontario. Universities in Ontario use a centralized application process called Ontario Universities Application Centre (OUAC). Students submit a single application to OUAC, which is then forwarded to students' chosen universities. Students are encouraged to file the OUAC by first week of November or early December, in time to process and reach the universities. Other Canadian universities may have later deadlines; however, it is recommended if students are applying to Toronto to complete the online application by 1st Nov. And if students are applying to British Columbia and McGill to complete the online application no later than 1st December. Each university will list the qualifications you need for specific majors. Read these carefully; they are not the same for all universities.

The universities' online applications request basic background information of the student as well as an online fee payment of approximately 100 CAD. **Letters of recommendation are not required.** Supplemental essays may be required which will be informed to the students in the welcome email. Canadian students seeking financial aid may be required to provide additional materials. After applying, each university will send an email or letter acknowledging receipt of your application and requesting transcripts and IB predicted grades. The letter will also contain your personal student number, which is important to include on all documents, so please provide this to the Counselor. Transcripts, predicted IB grades, and a school profile are sent to Canadian universities after the mid-term grades are reported (usually the fourth week in January). Students need to provide the Counsellor with the list of names of the universities where they are

applying. Final transcripts will be sent via IB directly and students should inform the IB Coordinator which university should have access to their final IB results.

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

For further information, check the University website, speak with the Counselor and talk to visiting Canadian university representatives.

Interesting research links for Canada

- ✓ The Study in Canada site is a useful guide for higher education in Canada.
- ✓ A Directory of all Canadian Universities is available from the Association of Universities and Colleges in Canada. They provide information for Canadian and international students, along with a search engine to identify universities with programs of study.
- ✓ A list of all Canadian universities and their homepages is also available from the University of Waterloo.
- ✓ Macleans magazine conducts an annual ranking and review of Canadian universities.
- ✓ The Ontario Universities Application Center, <http://www.ouac.on.ca/> is the standard on-line application site for Ontario universities.
- ✓ <https://www.scholarshipscanada.com/> is Canada's most comprehensive scholarship portal. This extensive database can help find scholarships, student awards, bursaries and grants, in addition to information about student loans, applications and budget planning.
- ✓ Additional sources for financial aid for international and Canadian students can be found on the eduPASS site, www.edupass.org/finaid/canadian.phtml, FinAid <http://www.finaid.org>, and the Canlearn interactive site <http://www.canlearn.ca/>
- ✓ Information on the Millennium Excellence Awards for Canadians can be found at <http://www.millenniumscholarships.ca/>

University application process for Dutch universities

The admissions calendar in the Netherlands usually opens the first week of October for the following academic year. There are very few English-taught programmes that have admission in the spring semester.

The deadline for applying varies depending on the type of university you apply for and any entry restrictions such as **Numerus Fixus**. The deadlines also vary for EU and non-EU applicants.

For 2021 admission, the deadline for most courses is 1st May 2021. However, even here there are exceptions, so it is worth checking directly with the university you are interested in. Some universities have their own selection processes, and you will need to adhere to their terms and conditions. In all cases, however, you need to have set up your account on **Studielink** by 1st May 2020.

For courses with Numerus Fixus, the deadline will be 15th January 2021. For each academic year you can submit an application for a maximum of two numerus fixus programmes. The institution decides how many times you can participate in the selection of a specific programme. Medicine, Dentistry, Dental Hygiene and Physiotherapy programmes are an exception; for these programmes you can only submit one application per programme per academic year. For example; you can't apply for Medicine at two different universities, but you are allowed to apply for Medicine and Dentistry.

The entry process at University Colleges is completely different as prospective students may have to attend an interview in person. This has a significant impact on a student's likely chances of gaining a place. University Colleges are much smaller institutions with much clearer limits to student numbers. As all students are required to live on campus, there is a physical limit to the number of students they can recruit. Typically, students should apply to University Colleges in time for a January deadline. Applicants may then be invited to interview in February.

Dutch universities usually give offers that will be conditional on you passing the IB to meet the minimum entry requirement. You will need to produce originals of your certificates at some point during your first term but most Dutch universities understand that there is a time lag involved in your receiving this official documentation. (Most universities will accept a letter from your school as proof of your IB grades but the University of Amsterdam is an exception - you must pay attention to their instructions if you are planning on studying there.)

If you are applying to a course without Numerus Fixus it is possible that you could receive an offer within four weeks of applying. If your course is subject to Numerus Fixus then you may have to wait until the application deadline before the selection process can even start.

If you do not meet the minimum IB grades required for your course, you will not be able to enroll but in all other circumstances once you have your offer you are guaranteed a place at the university of your choice. It is quite common for universities to issue offers that would be classed as unconditional in the United Kingdom (EEE). However, when you receive notification of your offer through Studielinek it will describe your offer as conditional. Passing your IB is the only condition. It is important to note that this is in no way a reflection on quality.

There are excellent universities in the Netherlands but they have a very different entry philosophy. Generally speaking if you have the necessary grades then you are entitled to prove you can cope with a university education. The first year at a Dutch university is seen as a probationary period. You will take

regular exams and if you fail them, you will be asked to leave. This contrasts quite markedly with the UK situation and it is something that you need to be fully aware of if you are planning to study in Holland.

It is also worth pointing out that the Dutch higher education system is different from the British system. In the Netherlands only 15-20% take the appropriate high school leaving certificate for going to a Research University (VWO). The majority of students take HAVO which gives them direct access to Universities of Applied Sciences but not directly to Research Universities. We would advise students to think very seriously about whether they would be able to cope at a Dutch Research University with their IB grades.

Important websites to research.

- ◆ https://www.studyinholland.co.uk/application_process.html
- ◆ https://www.studyinholland.co.uk/numerus_fixus.html
- ◆ https://www.studyinholland.co.uk/admissions_information.html
- ◆ <https://www.studyinholland.nl/plan-your-stay/how-to-apply>

Procedure to request a Reference Letters

- The Counsellor writes a reference letter which has to give a holistic picture about the student to the universities.
- The students need to email the Counselling Office the **Counsellor Questionnaire** in May of Year 12 which will assist the Counsellor write a holistic reference letter.
- The students in May of Year 12 will approach the teachers directly requesting them to write the reference letters. It is upon the teachers' discretion to write the reference letter or not for the particular student who has approached them.
- Once the teacher agrees to write the reference letters the students must email the **Teacher Questionnaire** to their respective teachers. Based on this information provided in the Questionnaire and class engagement teachers will write the reference letters;
- Students need to give the teachers minimum 3 weeks' time to write their reference letters.
- Teacher's references usually focus more on classroom-based activities and academic curiosity in their respective subjects in and outside school, class participation, leadership skills demonstrated in the class, student's attitude towards peers and staff, subject knowledge, punctuality in submitting assignments and attending classes, and include any significant and relevant information that you think will make the student's application strong.

University Timeline:

Because the dates of the timeline change each year – this document will be emailed to the Parents and students in Year 12 and in September of Year 13.

Teacher - Reference Letter Questionnaire

Teacher name: _____

Dear Student kindly note

- This is a working document, if there are changes made to this questionnaire during summer then please update it and email the teacher.
- After a teacher agrees to write the reference letter for you, please thoughtfully complete this form and email it to the teacher (named on the top).
- If some questions require information to be filled during summer, please write it and keep the teacher informed that an updated version will be sent to him/her later.
- Deadline to send this Teacher Questionnaire to your respective teachers is 28th May.
- Teacher must be informed where to upload the reference letter (Common app, Coalition or on the university link sent).

Teacher Instructions

- If a college uses the Common Application, the student will send you a recommendation request via email.
- Deadline to submit the reference letter to the Counsellor is 25th June.
- Please include relevant points (listed below to assist you) in the reference letters: student's intellectual abilities; his/her attitude towards learning; specific and relevant personal qualities, like empathy, creativity, or leadership skills; particular instances where the student has demonstrated their strengths; anecdotes that can prove/enhance/validate the student's conduct and/or performance in class; EE Topic if you are his/her EE supervisor.

Student Profile to be completed by the student

Full legal name: _____

School email: _____

Completing (please tick): IB Diploma: _____ IB Diploma Courses _____

Subject taught by the teacher (complete where applicable)

Year: 10 _____

Year: 11 _____

Year: 12 _____

Year: 13 _____

Information to give the teacher:

Complete the Questions to the fullest

- ✚ What was it about your experience in the teacher's class or your interactions with him/her that lead you to request a letter of recommendation?
- ✚ What do you believe were your strengths in the teacher's class that you would like him/her to highlight (please use specific examples, if possible)?
- ✚ Which lesson(s) in the teacher's class especially intrigued you?
- ✚ Were there any projects or essays you completed in the teacher's class of which you are particularly proud?
- ✚ How did you see yourself grow in the teacher's subject?
- ✚ List any extra activities that you have participated in **related to the subject** the teacher teaches, please give all the details?
- ✚ Do you believe your academic record (test scores) in the class provides an accurate representation of you as a student? Why or why not?
- ✚ How do/did you contribute to the learning and community in the classroom? What is/was your role in the class?
- ✚ List the colleges you are applying to and a brief explanation as to why they interest you.
- ✚ Which major(s) do you intend to pursue in college, and why?
- ✚ What's your current life dream? Could be your ideal job, ideal environment, etc. Essentially, what/who do you want to be after college?
- ✚ How have you grown or changed in your years in High School?
- ✚ Are there any obstacles or struggles you've had to overcome in your High School career?
- ✚ What are 10 words or phrases you would use to describe yourself and why? (This will give the teacher a small insight into who you are.)
- ✚ Do you have a life philosophy? Discuss an event in your life that has had a significant impact on you and your academics.)
- ✚ Is there any additional pertinent information that you would like the teacher to know that would help him/her write a strong recommendation for you?

Letter of Reference - Counsellor Questionnaire

Letter of reference from the College Counsellor gives an overall picture of the student's

- Personal characteristics;
- Academic Performance;
- List of extracurricular activities, the position held and responsibilities undertaken;
- Awards—academic/activities/sports
- Strengths;
- Capabilities;
- Leadership activities;
- Work Experiences:
- Skills learnt from participating in the all the activities.

Please fill out in detail to ensure a good reference letter.

Student's Name _____ DOB _____

Email address _____ Cell phone _____

- ✚ What is your Citizenship and Nationality please list all.
- ✚ Where were you born?
- ✚ Where do you call home?
- ✚ In which countries have you attended school in the last four years, list all? If you have attended different schools in one country please list all the schools along with which grades you have attended in each school.
- ✚ In which grade did you join DIA?
- ✚ In which grade did you primarily start studying in English?
- ✚ Please provide some details about your family and cultural diversity.
- ✚ What are your strengths?
- ✚ What are your weakness (es) and challenges?
- ✚ What are four of your positive qualities? Please provide some evidence in a story form why you have these qualities?
- ✚ Which University (ies) are you applying ED/EA to and why?
- ✚ Which college majors have you considered?
- ✚ What potential careers have you considered?
- ✚ What fascinates you about the course you are applying to?
- ✚ What is unique to you that should make the university select you?
- ✚ Do you have a dream company you would like to work with? Why?
- ✚ Have you undertaken any internships in the last four summers? List them.
- ✚ How has the internship mentioned above helped you in the intended course you will be applying to?
- ✚ Can you give examples of the ways in which you have challenged yourself by taking rigorous and challenging courses in or outside school?

- ✚ Have you done any extra reading or online courses or have additional knowledge about the subject you intend applying at university?
- ✚ The acceptance in top universities often depends upon extras such as unusual artistic, athletic or musical talent; a good hobby pursued in depth; leadership, community service etc. Which talents accomplishments or characteristics do you have that make you stand out? (**Do not be Modest!!!**)
- ✚ Describe any special circumstances in your life that might have affected your high school achievement.
- ✚ If you could change one thing about what or how you did during high school, what it would be?
- ✚ What have you learnt from the activities you have mentioned below in the table? Give a detailed account of it.
- ✚ What EE subject have you selected and why?
- ✚ Is there anything that your counsellor must know before they write your reference letter?

Make a list of 21 details from your life, interesting facts that describe a small part of who you are. (See how each is a little tiny glimpse into my world? It's impossible to capture all of who you are in 25 or even 500 words, but with a few, carefully chosen details, a portrait begins to emerge. Think of these 21 details as a collage. It does not have to be 21 details can be less too.)

My 21 details:

Summer Activities/Spring activities

<u>Year</u>	<u>Spring and /or Winter Activities</u>	<u>Summer Activities</u>
Year 10		
Year 11		
Year 12		

Please add this information on BridgeU as well.

Activity Sheet (inside and outside of high school)

Activity	Positions held & Awards	Yr. 10	Yr. 11	Yr. 12	Yr. 13
Sports/Music/Theatre/ Drama					

Clubs & Organizations					
Community Services					
Other Activities including - Online Courses/Research/ Internships etc					
Other Honors and Awards (in school for subjects)					

College Counselling Tips and links for subject selection

To decide which three subject's student's need to take at Higher level and which three at Standard level, students should consider his/her vision of future university education (which country to study in and at which university), the subject specification, personal interests and strong skills.

Identify current and potential interests.

To select the right IB courses, begin by:

- Identifying those subjects that interest you.
- Consider both the areas you know from experience that you enjoy, and the areas you have not yet studied but would like to explore.
- If you have a specific higher education course and/or career in mind you must check that the combination of IB subjects you are considering is suitable. This applies particularly in the sciences, engineering and medicine.
- If in any doubt you should refer to University and College Entrance: the Official Guide, which contain most of the information required or on their website which states all the information clearly. It is desirable, but not essential, that you should have begun to narrow down your choice of higher education course and career by the time you make your subject choices by mid-Year 11.
- If you have no firm ideas regarding your future, it is probably best for you to choose a sensible combination of your strongest subjects with the highest MYP grades. Fortunately, DIA offers array of courses you can immerse yourself in theatre, music economics, foreign languages like French and Spanish, Information technology in a global society and many other disciplines.
- Because the IB diploma program enables students to learn across a range of subjects, students can showcase a balanced academic profile when you apply to college.

It is a good idea to speak to your teachers to determine which HL classes they recommend for you. Your teachers can let you know what to expect in certain IB courses, which can support your overall academic goals. Enrolling in the right IB DP courses for you is a preliminary step to ensuring your academic success. If you still have doubts after considering the above tips, be sure to speak to your Diploma Coordinator and the College Counselling team.

Recommended Courses and Requirements:

Intended Course of Study	Required Combination of Subjects choice
Medicine	Chemistry & Biology HL, Math AA-SL Some institutions prefer/accept Physics HL
Engineering Courses	Physics-HL and a second Science – Chem or Bio- SL HL, Math AA HL
Bio(Sciences) STEM	Biology and Chemistry –HL , Math AA SL
Computer Science Degree	Math AA HL/SL, Computer Sc HL
Pure Economics	Math AA-HL and Economics HL
Environmental Sciences	Biology HL/SL or /ESS SL, Math AA SL

Business Management	Math AA SL IA-HL and SL accepted and Business S/HL
Accountancy	Math AA-SL or IA-HL and SL and Business HL
Finance	Math AA SL or AI HL/SL and Economics HL
Psychology	Math AA-SL, IA-HL and SL accepted
History/Politics	Recommended- History –HL. Economics –HL/SL
Law	Recommended- English HL & History -HL
Media/Communication, Journalism.	Recommended- English HL
Visual Art	Math AI SL and ART HL with a portfolio
Architecture	Physics HL/SL and Math AA HL- recommended ART HL
Interior Design	DT HL, Math AI SL and ART HL
Industrial Design	Math AA HL or SL, recommended ART HL and Physics HL

Math Courses linked to Career Choices

Applications & interpretations SL	Analysis & Approaches SL	Analysis & Approaches HL Applications & interpretations HL
History, Politics, International Relations, Languages, Sociology, Philosophy, BA in Psychology, Business – UK/Canada/US	Medicine, Biology, Chemistry, Biomedicine, Biochemistry. Engineering- US/Canada Computer Science- US/Canada Business- UK/NL BSc in Psychology Germany and Switzerland	Mathematics & Physics Engineering- UK/NL Computer Science-UK/NL Pure Economics- UK/NL

Disclaimer:

Due to the fact that the requirements of individual universities or countries are constantly changing, it is the sole responsibility of students and their parents to verify the university/country requirements prior to initiating the IBD Programme.

The IB website provides a searchable database of countries and their recognition policies. It is strongly recommended that parents contact the universities directly to verify that the information is up to date. Visit the International Baccalaureate Organization's website <http://www.ibo.org/university-admission/recognition-of-the-ib-diploma-by-countries-and-universities/country-recognition-statements/> for more details.