



# **SAINT GEORGE SCHOOL**

**FOUNDED 1965**

**SCHOOL COLLEGE**

**COUNSELING HANDBOOK**

**2018-2019**

# **SGS College Counseling Handbook**

The Saint George School Counseling Department is committed to helping all students make the best possible use of their educational opportunities. For each student, this involves an ongoing examination of the self in a changing world. It means carefully selecting university and/or post-secondary options and then answering the question, "How does it all fit together for me and where do I want to go with it?"

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**CEEB Code:** 842366

**IB School #:** 0849

## Table of Content

I.	<b><u>School Information/ Administration</u></b> .....	1
II.	<b><u>Introduction</u></b> .....	5
	a. Student College Counseling Services.....	5
	b. Student responsibilities.....	6
III.	<b><u>Chapter 1 University Visits / Important Dates</u></b> .....	8
	a. SGS College Counseling Calendar.....	8
	b. Senior Year Timetable.....	9
IV.	<b><u>Chapter 2 Getting Ready</u></b> .....	14
	a. Developing your College List.....	14
	b. College Visits/ Interviews.....	14
	c. Extra/Co-Curricular Activities.....	15
	d. Financial Aid.....	15
V.	<b><u>Chapter 3 Application / Admission</u></b> .....	18
	a. Application Form.....	18
	b. Main Type of College Admission Options.....	19
	c. Letters of Recommendations.....	20
	d. Essays.....	2
	1	
	e. Admission Decisions.....	22
	<b><u>Chapter 4 International Baccalaureate</u></b> .....	24
	f. Introduction.....	24
	g. Diploma Candidates.....	24
	h. Certificate Candidates.....	24
	i. Legalization/ Records Sent to University.....	25
VI.	<b><u>Chapter 5 Standardized Tests</u></b> .....	26
	a. SAT.....	26
	b. SAT Subject Test.....	27
	c. IELTS.....	27
	d. TOEFL iBT.....	28
VII.	<b><u>Chapter 6 Applying to Universities in Canada</u></b> .....	29
	a. Applications .....	29
	b. Decisions.....	29
VIII.	<b><u>Chapter 7 Applying to Universities in the United Kingdom</u></b> .....	30
	a. What to Study.....	30
	b. Researching Courses and Universities.....	30
	c. Application Process.....	31

	d. The Application (UCAS).....	31
	e. Personal Statement.....	32
	f. The Reference.....	32
	g. After Applying.....	32
<b>IX.</b>	<b><u>Chapter 8</u>            <u>Applying to Universities in Other Countries</u>.....</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>X.</b>	<b><u>Appendix 1</u>            <u>Glossary of College Counseling Terms</u>.....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>XI.</b>	<b><u>Appendix 2</u>            <u>High School Counseling Resource Webpages</u>...</b>	<b>40</b>

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **SGS College Counseling Services**

Our comprehensive counseling program guides and supports students throughout the university application process, formally beginning in 5<sup>th</sup> Form ( grade 11)and continuing throughout 6<sup>th</sup> Form ( grade 12). Some highlights of the program include:

- A general university evening organized for all interested parents and students that provides a general overview of the university application process.
- Organization of SGS university visits from admissions representatives in the UK, continental Europe, USA, Canada, and other countries.
- Initial individual student consultations in Semester 2 of 5<sup>th</sup> Form followed by meetings with both students and parents in 5<sup>th</sup> Form and throughout 6<sup>th</sup> Form
- Consultations with students to discuss their choice of countries and the different academic systems in them, as well as the selection of schools, university courses and/or disciplines, depending on the system.
- Providing information and materials such as university brochures, catalogs, guides, and the SGS counseling webpage as resources for students in their university search
- Offering the PSAT (Preliminary SAT) at SGS to Grade 10 and 11 students every October.
- Advice on standardized testing, including the SAT (Scholastic Aptitude/Assessment Test) and SAT Subject Tests., the TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), and the IELTS (International English Language Testing System).
- Identifying schools that are a good fit depending on the student's interests, academic strengths, athletic skills, and other factors relevant to the student.
- Assistance and guidance in preparation of applications including personal statements, essays, mock interviews, and contact with university representatives.
- Counselor/referee letters of recommendation that strongly support student's candidature to appropriate universities.
- ☑ Advice on extracurricular and summer activities.
- Counsel on how students can effectively communicate with universities in all aspects of the application process.
- Guidance on financial aid, if requested.
- Maintaining relationships with universities and contacting representatives to support individual applications.
- "Best Fit" advice after conditional offers and acceptances in the spring.
- Advice on Wait List situations in the US and Canada.
- 1-2-3 Let Go presentation for grades 6<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> in Spring Semester.

### **Student Responsibilities in the University Application Process**

For students in Grades 11 and 12, 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 SGS Counseling Department emphasizes 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, 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, if possible, to visit various campuses.”

**In working towards these goals, you—the student—must accept the following responsibilities:**

- Take the time to reflect and evaluate your goals and values, assess your academic strengths, your 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).
- Research appropriate courses, programs, and schools so that your applications are effective and fulfill your specific academic, athletic, musical, social interests and any other elements that are important to you, as well as your future objectives.
- Be 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, SGS will not be able to fully support the student’s candidature to the university.
- Meet application deadlines both for universities and SGS when submitting application materials and requesting letters of recommendation and transcripts. **Please note that universities have different deadlines depending on countries and application systems.**
- Be aware of any required tests. Register online with respect to the deadlines for taking standardized tests, such as the, SAT, ACT, TOEFL, or IELTS.
- Submit all required forms and request all testing organizations to submit official standardized test results to universities via appropriate websites. SGS or the student **CAN NOT** send standardized test scores directly to the university.
- Verify your correct name on all official documents and use the same name on all documents (the name on your passport). **Please remember that universities in the USA do not use mother’s maiden name in the student’s official name.**

- Notify schools of any changes in your home address or email address as well as maintain an email address that is appropriate for applications.
- Notify counselor 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.
- Send HANDWRITTEN Thank You notes to recommenders.

## CHAPTER 1

### 2017 -18 University Visit/ Important Dates

#### **A. SGS College Counseling Calendar.**

August 30	3:00 pm	European University Consortium Tour
September 26	9:30 am – 3:00pm	SRT College Fair
October 6	7:30 am – 1:00pm	SAT
October 23	<b>Final deadline for VV revision of Early Action and Early Decision</b>	
November 1	-----	<b>Early Decision applications due</b>
November 22		<b>LAST DAY TO REQUEST TEACHER RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
December 1	-----	<b>Financial Aid Forms due</b>
		<b>( check individual websites)</b>
December 1	7:30 am – 1:00 pm	SAT
December 15		<b>LAST DAY FOR VV TO CHECK JANUARY APPLICATIONS</b>
January 1		Regular Applications due ( check individual websites)
January 15		Regular Applications due ( check individual websites) UCAS application due
March 9	7:30 am – 1:00 pm	SAT
April 1		<b>Last day to receive admission decisions</b>
May 1		<b>Last day to accept admissions offer</b>
May 4	7:30 am – 1:00 pm	SAT



## **B. Senior Year Timetable**

During your senior year, you will finalize your college choice. This year is filled with admission applications, scholarship essays, financial aid information and the need to meet deadlines. Throughout your senior year, continue to build your resume by achieving academic success, as well as participating in extracurricular activities. Colleges are very interested in well-rounded students.

The college preparation that takes place during your senior year is filled with a lot of details and paperwork.

**It is very important that you involve your parents with this process.**

### **Senior Calendar**

#### **August**

- Make appointment to meet with College Counselor
- Review your career plans and decide which type of postsecondary school is best for you.
- List your top college choices.
- Request admissions information and school catalogs.
- Determine which teachers will write your letters of recommendation to include with your college applications.
- Start brainstorming about ideas for your college essays.
- Stay focused on maintaining or increasing your GPA.
- Register for October SAT test dates for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and/or ACT assessment.
- Revise CV with summer activities

#### **September**

- Mark your calendar with registration, admissions, and financial aid deadlines and fees.
- Create separate folders for each of the schools that interest you and keep the materials organized.
- Begin writing drafts of your college essays.
- Start completing early admission college applications.
- Meet with university I representatives who visit your high school.

- Look at virtual tours of college campuses online.
- If you haven't already taken the SAT and TOEFL register for the test(s).
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- Ask employers, teachers, and guidance counselors for letters of recommendation to accompany your admissions applications.
- (US Citizens) Set up your FSA ID (and your parent will need one, too) and start gathering information so you can complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as early as October 1.

### **October**

- Take the SAT
- Continue working on your admissions essays.
- ( US Citizens) If you haven't already done so, sign up for an FSA ID, to complete your FAFSA online. (Also let your parents know that they will need an FSA ID.) Make sure to protect your FSA ID and keep it in a secure place so that you will have it later when you need it. Keep copies of all financial aid and enrollment documents in a file.
- (US Citizens) Complete your FAFSA online to determine your financial aid eligibility.
- (US Citizens) Watch for the e-mail notice indicating your Student Aid Report (SAR) is ready.
- (US Citizens) Review your SAR for errors and make any corrections as indicated.
- Attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- Contact the universities financial aid offices to determine which forms they require. Some schools may require special forms.
- Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent if required for admission.

### **November**

- Complete admissions applications by their deadlines.
- If you have not already done so, attend college planning and/or financial aid information nights and college fairs.
- If necessary, register to retake the SAT
- Request financial aid forms and applications. Double check the deadlines for submission.

- Complete applications for every scholarship for which you may be eligible.
- Follow up to ensure your teachers, and guidance counselors send letters of recommendation.
- Stay focused on maintaining and increasing your GPA.

### **December**

- Finalize admission applications.
- Research and apply for other financial aid, including grants and scholarships.
- Watch for early admissions notices.
- Research deadlines at the college you plan to attend, such as for housing applications, school-specific financial aid applications and deadlines.
- Organize scholarships, certificates, articles, etc. to illustrate your achievements and create a portfolio to display them.

### **January**

- Keep a watch out for scholarship applications and make notes of the deadlines. Getting an early start completing them.
- Do not let senioritis get a grip on you this semester, finish strong on your last semester of high school.

### **February**

- Be mindful of deadlines. Always submit information on time.
- Rank your top school choices.
- Research local scholarships and apply as applications are available.

### **March**

- Check with the financial aid offices to ensure your paperwork is complete. Submit tax forms if they request them.
- Narrow your school choices and make campus visits if possible.
- Be on the lookout for acceptance letters.

### **April**

- Compare financial aid award letters.
- Make your final school decision and mail deposits, as required.
- Check with the school you've chosen about returning financial aid award letters.
- Notify the schools you have chosen NOT to attend.
- Plan for registration, orientation, and housing, and mark your calendar with important dates.

### **May**

- Be aware of any summer orientation sessions that you must attend at the school in which you will enroll, and make plans accordingly.
- Follow up with your high school to ensure the counselor forwards your final school transcripts to the college.
- Request college transcripts for any dual credit courses you took in high school, a copy for you and a copy for the college you plan to attend.
- Notify your high school guidance office of your college selection and any scholarships received.

### **June**

- Plan for college transportation.
- Follow up with the financial aid office to ensure all paperwork is complete.
- Attend or register to attend college orientation.
- Make sure thank you notes for graduation gifts are written.
- Work with your parents or guardians on things that you need to know how to do, or how to do better, while at college, like doing laundry, taking care of your car, balancing your bank account.

### **July**

- Send “thank you notes” to everyone who helped you plan and prepare for college.
- Make copies of your financial aid forms, health forms, etc. for your files to aid in resolving future issues.

- Register for the fall semester.
- Prepare a contact list with addresses of friends and family members and make labels with your new address, some for you and some to share with others.
- Prepare for the new adventures that await you on campus!

**Congratulations! It's time to get ready to start college**

## CHAPTER 2

### GETTING READY

#### **A. Developing Your College List**

Finding colleges that fit you best begins with self-discovery — that means getting to know your interests, your goals and what's most important to you.

The following five steps will get you started on the right path using the Big Future in your College Board account. ([bigfuture.collegeboard.org](http://bigfuture.collegeboard.org))

1. Ask yourself some questions. Answering questions like these will help you focus your college search:  
What am I interested in?  
How do I spend my free time?  
What do I feel passionate about?  
How do I learn best?  
What do I think I want to do in the future?
2. Get to know the options. Research on the internet universities of interest. Ask parent, friends, family, counselor, etc. for advice.
3. Decide what matters most to you. For some students, sports and activities are very important. Other students want a challenging academic environment.
4. Search for colleges by location, majors, size and more. There's guidance on the internet to help you along the way.
5. Add colleges to your list

Check out individual profiles of the colleges that come up in your College Search results. When you see a college you like, click "Add to List" to save it to a favorites list. You can return to it later and refine your list as you go along.

#### **B. College Visits/Interviews**

It is important to visit universities in which you have the greatest interest. It is an opportunity for you and your family to get the "feel" of the institution—to experience the intangibles. From four to six college visits will usually be enough for helpful comparisons; any more may just confuse matters. **The spring/ summer of your junior year is a good time to visit colleges.** Most colleges offer tours and interviews in the summer and fall. When you visit, make sure that you are prepared.

Call or register via internet before you visit to find out the schedule for tours and interviews. Most tours and interviews take an hour each. You should allow about three hours for a campus visit. An ideal visit would include a tour, an interview and then free time. The last would allow you time to check out parts of the campus that hold special appeal or interest. **If you have a special talent or interest, you may want to meet with the appropriate person on campus.** This may only be possible when the college is in session. Usually the admissions office can help you make these arrangements by calling a coach or a professor.

After you have sent your application, a representative may contact you for an interview.. Universities also may offer personal interviews when they visit the country or school. Make sure you do your research before the visit.

### **C. Extra/Co-Curricular Activities**

Universities are interested in a student's extracurricular activities — in other words, how you spend your time outside of classes. Colleges care about the character of people they admit; therefore, what you do after school, during weekends and over summers tells them a lot about the kind of person you are. When you think about it, you *are* what you do every day, every month, every year.

#### **Remember: Quality of Activities Is More Important Than Quantity**

Begin recording all activities as of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. You may save the activities in internet programs such as [www.zeemee.com](http://www.zeemee.com).

### **D. Financial Aid**

Financial Aid Need based Financial Aid: FAFSA ( US Citizens) : In October of every year, the U. S. Government opens access to the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the upcoming school year. The proper website is [www.fafsa.gov](http://www.fafsa.gov). There are many websites out there that will try to charge you money; if you are ever asked for money to fill out the FAFSA, you are on the wrong site! It is, as the name says, a free application!

If filing the FAFSA, both the parent/guardian and the child can get the federal PIN at any time by going to [www.pin.ed.gov](http://www.pin.ed.gov). Both a parent/guardian and the student need to apply for separate PINs which will be used to sign the FAFSA.

The FAFSA should be completed as soon as possible after the first of the year. The form requires tax information from the year immediately preceding filing of the FAFS (a 2013 tax return for a 2014 FAFSA), although families may initially estimate based on the tax information from a year before (2012) and update/verify as necessary. Most people, however, will do their taxes first to save the step and avoid potential problems; the FAFSA center processes hundreds of thousands of applications each year, so the less paperwork they have, the less likely it is that a mistake will be made.

By filling out the FAFSA, students become eligible for federal student aid programs such as subsidized loans, work-study positions, and grants. Some colleges also use the FAFSA to determine if a student is eligible for a school-sponsored need based scholarship or other school-sponsored financial aid packages or programs.

Please make sure to carefully read the instructions from each college in order to meet deadlines (this is critical!) and to know which forms need to be submitted. Many colleges only require the FAFSA, but some also need the College Board PROFILE form and some have their own institutional forms. In addition, some colleges may request a copy of the parents' current tax returns.

**CSS/PROFILE ( US citizens and International Students)**: This is a supplemental financial aid form required by about 300 colleges (mostly smaller private schools) that use it to make decisions in distributing financial aid. The form is found at:

<https://profileonline.collegeboard.com/prf/index.jsp>.

First register by entering the names of the colleges that require the form. The Profile is then customized with the questions needed by each college. The Profile does cost money, with a flat registration fee and an amount for each college that receives the information; however, schools will provide more aid if this form is filled out.

**Help and hints for filling out the CSS/Profile can be found at:**

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/pay-forcollege/financial-aid-101/how-to-complete-the-css-financial-aid-profile>

**MERIT BASED AID: SCHOLARSHIPS:**

**School Specific Scholarships:** Please make sure to look at the scholarship information on each college's website. Most colleges automatically award merit aid based on the admissions application with no further action needed from the student. However, some scholarships require a separate application and/or interview. Pay attention to deadlines! Don't miss out on free money because something wasn't submitted on time.

**Outside Scholarships:** There are thousands of scholarships available to college students. In the College Counseling office there are several books available for students to use as well as files with information sent by a variety of agencies that offer scholarships. Finally, there are several websites that list scholarships; these are a great resource. It's worth a bit of research.

Deadlines will vary according to the agency; many fall in the late winter and spring, but some happen as early as the autumn. Applications require anything from a simple one-page form up to a lengthy process which could involve essays, interviews, or other time-consuming work. The amounts also vary from a couple hundred dollars to several thousand. Even though a scholarship may not seem "worth it" if it is for a smaller amount, they do add up.

Here are some websites that are worth checking out:



- [www.Fastweb.com](http://www.Fastweb.com)
- [www.Scholarships.com](http://www.Scholarships.com)
- [www.meritaid.com](http://www.meritaid.com)
- [www.moolahspot.com](http://www.moolahspot.com)
- [www.Finaid.org](http://www.Finaid.org)
- [www.studentscholarshipsearch.com](http://www.studentscholarshipsearch.com)
- [www.collegexpress.com/scholarships/search](http://www.collegexpress.com/scholarships/search)

Many of these websites make it easy to search for scholarships based on particular criteria, and many will ask questions to help guide students and families towards appropriate scholarships.

Take some time to look at the variety of options: scholarships are offered not just for academic or athletic merit! They're given for a variety of reasons: religious affiliation, ethnic/racial background, state or county of residence, participation in Scouting or other groups, parents' jobs, and even for such things as being left-handed, red-haired, or a twin. We encourage the seniors and families to come in and work with us to help search for scholarships. We're happy to help.

## CHAPTER 3

### APPLICATION / ADMISSION

#### **A. Application Forms**

US universities generally offer prospective students a variety of ways to submit applications. After you've narrowed down your choices, check the admissions policy and deadline for each school on your university list. Understanding how these policies work will guide your application process and help you determine your university planning timeline. The following are different applications and methods you may use to apply:

#### **Common Application**

The Common Application is used for undergraduate admissions by nearly **700 colleges and universities**. The Common Application is an electronic college application system that collects a wide range of information: personal data, educational data, standardized test scores, family information, academic honors, extracurricular activities, work experience, and a personal essay.

To open your account and begin your college search and application , please refer to the following link:

[www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org)

#### **Coalition Application**

The Coalition for Access, Affordability, and Success was developed to improve the college application process for all students as they search for and apply to their perfect college. The platform provides a single, centralized toolkit for students to organize, build, and refine their applications to numerous institutions.

In addition, Coalition members hold values and beliefs that align with recent research which, among other things, demonstrates that students thinking about college early in high school begets higher application rates. Students can open their account as early as 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

With the Coalition platform, you can find out more about Coalition schools, share your locker with counselors, teachers, and mentors, and submit applications with ease.

For more information about universities that accept the Coalition Application and how to apply, see the following link:

<http://www.coalitionforcollegeaccess.org>

### **State Application Systems ( specific for California and Texas universities)**

Some states require that you apply through their state wide system. A general application is completed and then one indicates which universities, within the system, you want to apply to. Texas and California are the states that most use this system. Please refer to the university webpage to see if one needs to use this type of application. In addition, please check deadlines carefully as usually these systems have a December 1 deadline due to the high number of in state applications they receive.

For further information please refer to:

California State Universities : <http://www.calstate.edu>

Texas State Universities: [www.applytexas.org](http://www.applytexas.org)

### **Individual University Website Applications**

Some universities do not use any of the above mentioned application systems. One must open an account on the university webpage and follow all instructions for application requirements.

**IMPORTANT: KEEP A RECORD OF ALL USERNAME AND PASSWORDS FOR YOUR ACCOUNTS. YOU MAY BE USING MORE THAN ONE ACCOUNT TO APPLY TO ALL THE UNIVERSITIES ON YOUR LIST.**

## **B. The Main Types of College Admissions Options**

Different types of schools generally offer various types of college admissions options.:

### Regular Admission

This is the most common option for four-year colleges and universities. All students must submit their applications by a specific date, usually between November and January. The admissions board then reviews all the applications and sends out acceptances and rejection letters on the same date.

### Early Decision .

A widely-used term in which the application is usually made by November 1 and indicated as a first choice with the understanding and commitment that an acceptance obligates the applicant to withdraw all other applications and enroll in that institution; notification is usually in mid-December. ED2 has a later timetable.

### Early Action

A procedure identical to EA, except that the student may only apply to one institution as SCEA; all other applications must be regular decision

### Restricted Early Action ( REA)

REA is a non-binding early action admission option in which a student may not apply to any other private schools' early program, except:

- A college outside of the US
- A non-binding rolling admission program
- A public college or university whose admission is not binding.
- An ED II program, if notification of admission occurs after January 1

Like EA applicants, a student has until May 1 to decide if she/he wants to attend the college or university. Schools that offer REA programs are Boston College, Harvard, Princeton, Stanford, and Yale. Applicants are asked to sign a statement stipulating that they agree to file only one early application

### Rolling Admission

A plan of reviewing applications as they are received by admissions offices. Decisions are usually returned within four to six weeks of submission.

## Deferred Admission.

Response to early decision or early action candidate indicating that the student is not accepted, but will be reviewed as a regular applicant.

## **C. Letters of Recommendations**

### Teacher Recommendations

One of the most important parts of your college application isn't written by you: the letter of recommendation. Get the best recommendation you can to make a winning impression. The teacher who writes your recommendation should not be from SGS a High School. Most universities prefer teachers from 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

Give your recommenders enough time to write thoughtful and articulate letters. At the beginning of your senior year, make a list of people who could write positive recommendations based on your personal character and academic qualities.

Many college applications are due in January, so start asking for recommendations in November. Make an appointment to speak with your recommenders at least two months before the application deadline.

Your recommender can probably comment on your positive qualities and merits, but the most persuasive letters give specific information about your strengths and weaknesses. Make sure your recommenders have everything they need to write your letter and submit it on time. **( See Teacher Recommendation Form)**, Do not assume teachers will write you a recommendation, speak to them first before giving them the form.

**Remember, your recommenders are doing you a favor. Show your appreciation by sending a thank-you note.**

### Other Recommenders

Universities may allow students to submit a limited number of other recommendations. Make sure an extra letter adds something substantial to your application and comes from an authoritative source, like a community supervisor or spiritual leader with whom you've worked closely. Another circumstance in which an extra letter could be a good idea is if you are new to the school and haven't gotten to know your teachers or counselor very well. Make sure an extra letter adds something substantial to your application and comes from an authoritative source, like a community supervisor or spiritual leader with whom you've worked closely.

### **C. Essays**

Unlike every other aspect of the application, you control your essay. Make sure that the glimpse you give the admission committee into your character, background, and writing ability is the very best possible. College essays are important because they let you reveal your personality your essays reveal something important about you that your grades and tests scores cannot speak for you personality.

If you are applying through the Common Application, then you will be required to write one essay (500 - 600 words) from the prompts provided on the Common Application site. Please note that once you determine the universities you apply to and enter them into the MY College section of Common Application, you will then be able to see ADDITIONAL writing required for each university.

The 2017-18 Common Application writing prompts are available at:

<http://www.commonapp.org/whats-appening/application-updates/common-application-announces-2017-2018-essay-prompts>

Please check individual applications for writing prompts if you are not using the Common Application.

### **D. The Admission Decision**

There's no magic formula when it comes to college admission decisions. Students can use College Search to find profiles for colleges of interest. College Search provides information on the college's first-year students, including the admitted students' SAT® ranges and the percentage of students in the top of their class.

A college's statistics should never be taken as rules for admission. Students should know that many factors influence admission decisions, including:

- Courses taken
- Grades received
- Class rank
- Standardized test scores
- Personal statements and essays
- Recommendations
- Extracurricular activities
- Interviews

Depending which application deadline you used ( Early Action, Early Decision, Regular Admissions or Rolling Admissions) to complete your application, will depend on when you will receive an admission decision. Please consult the university website for these dates but generally, they are as following. However, all universities have sent their decisions by April 1. Early action and Early Decision will notify before December.

## **The deadline to accept an offer is MAY 1 !**

If you are put on a wait list please be advised that you will only be accepted for enrollment if a significant number of students who are admitted choose not to enroll. Since some waitlists are longer than others, you should not be overconfident that you will get in. Discuss your waitlist options with your guidance counselor or advisor as soon as possible for help in deciding whether it makes sense to accept a waitlist offer. Many times the student is not advised of admission, from a waitlist, until after the May 1 deadline and may lose its place at an already accepted university

If you decide to stay on the waitlist, return the card indicating your intent promptly. You might also want to write a letter to the Director of Admissions to express how much you want to attend the college and share any honors or achievements you have earned since submitting your college application.

Once you have received your decision notifications, congratulations, you will again become an active part of the college admissions process! The next step is to transform from an admitted student to an enrolled student. You will need to choose among the colleges and universities that have admitted you or placed you on their waitlist and decide where you will enroll

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE (IB)**

#### **A. Introduction**

International Baccalaureate® (IB) students undertake one of the most challenging education programs available to them. They are ambitious, and well-prepared for success — in further study, and in life beyond.

By studying in the IB, students develop core skills for success at university. Through our programs, students develop:

- an understanding of and appreciation for research
- presentation and communication skills
- critical thinking skills
- report writing skills
- a sense of international mindedness and cultural understanding
- time management skills.

The International Baccalaureate® (IB), and the Diploma Programme (DP) in particular, enjoys a high level of respect and recognition among the world's higher education institutions. For students, success in the IB often results in advanced standing, course credit, scholarships, and other admissions related benefits at many universities.

**Each university has its own IB politics so the student must research the requirements and benefits in the universities web page.**

#### **B. Diploma Candidates**

Literally thousands of higher education institutions have published policies recognizing the DP— however, most also have minimum entry requirements. In some cases the courses students select while in the DP can have nearly as much impact as their overall performance.

However, evidence does show that DP students tend to go on to tertiary study at higher rates than their peers, are admitted more often to selective institutions, and tend to perform better in their post-secondary studies, including higher rates of post-secondary completion.

#### **C. Certificate Candidates**

Many universities may also give credit for individual certificates of IB Subjects. These classes usually must be HL with a score of 5+.

#### **D. Legalization / Records Sent to Universities**

In some countries, the IB document “diploma results” will not be valid unless it is legalized in Geneva, Switzerland, by the relevant embassy or consulate. It is the responsibility of the Diploma Programme coordinator to inform students of this requirement. The diploma itself is only legalized in exceptional circumstances when required. For further information, please contact [legalization@ibo.org](mailto:legalization@ibo.org).

For each candidate requiring the legalization service, the Diploma Programme coordinator should submit a request to the IB no later than June 1 for May examination—about three weeks after the examinations. Legalized diploma results will be sent to the appropriate schools and normally arrive by the end of September (May sessions) The IB charges a fee for this service.

The link below provides policy summaries for universities and colleges within a specific country and state. IB recognition is spreading and improving, and these policies are periodically updated, so be sure to check directly with the university under consideration

<http://www.ibo.org/recognition/university/index.cfm>

For further information, please see the following web page.

<http://www.ibo.org/contentassets/5895a05412144fe890312bad52b17044/recognition---international-student-guide-us--march2016---eng.pdf.pdf>



## CHAPTER 5

### STANDARDIZED TESTING

There are a couple of different standardized college admission tests. The word *standardized* means that the test measures the same thing in the same way for everyone who takes it. The results of these tests help colleges determine how well prepared you are for college-level work.

- Most students take the SAT for the first time in the spring of junior year.
- Students who choose to take the SAT a second time typically do so in the fall of senior year.
- SAT Subject Tests are best taken directly following relevant courses, while the material from class is still fresh in your mind. But you can take them at any time during high school.
- Most four-year colleges consider applicants' scores on college admission tests when deciding whom to accept. Test scores are just one part of your college application. College admission officers give the most weight and importance to your high school grades and whether you're challenging yourself.
- More and more schools are de-emphasizing SAT scores as part of your application with "test optional" and "test flexible" policies.

**Make sure you check the requirements for EACH University.**

#### A. SAT

Created by the College Board, the SAT is an entrance exam used by most colleges and universities to make admissions decisions. The idea (in theory, at least) is to provide colleges with one common criterion that can be used to compare all applicants.

**Registration for SAT / SAT Subject Tests is done through Collegeboard.org**

All students must have a College Board account so that they can officially register for tests and send scores to the universities. Scores are only official if sent directly from College Board to admissions office of each university you are applying to.

## **SAT Quick Facts**

<b>Frequency</b>	7 times/year
<b>Duration</b>	3 hours, 50 minutes
<b>Sections</b>	Math, Evidence-Based Reading and Writing, Optional Essay
<b>Max. Score</b>	800/section (Essay reported separately)

### **B. SAT Subject Tests**

Subject Tests are hour-long, content-based tests that allow you to showcase achievement in specific subject areas. There are 20 SAT Subject Tests in five general subject areas: English, history, languages, math and science.

Some colleges require or recommend that you take SAT Subject Tests. Even if a college does not recommend Subject Tests, you can use them to enhance your application and demonstrate knowledge you've gained outside the classroom.

Please check schedule of exams to see when it is offered.

### **C. Cambridge Exams IELTS**

The IELTS Academic test is suitable for entry to study at undergraduate or postgraduate programs at worldwide universities. It assesses whether you are ready to begin studying or training in an environment where English language is used, and reflects some of the features of language used in academic study

Students can choose up to five organizations to which their IELTS test results will be sent automatically and free of charge. There is a fee for sending results to additional universities. You can request your center to send your results as long as your IELTS scores are valid.

Students considering studying in Europe must take this test for English Proficiency. Most countries in Europe and the UK do not accept the TOEFL.

Saint George School is an official IELTS testing center. To register for the test please follow directions on the following link: [www.ielts.org/book-a-test/how-do-i-register](http://www.ielts.org/book-a-test/how-do-i-register)

**D. TOEFL iBT Test**

The TOEFL test is a highly respected English language proficiency test, used for admission and visa purposes at academic institutions throughout the world. The test is delivered via the internet. It measures your ability to use and understand English at the university level as well as it evaluates how well you combine your reading, listening, speaking and writing skills to perform academic tasks.

The test has over 50 test dates per year at authorized test centers around the world. You can retake the test as many times as you wish, but you cannot take it more than once in a 12-day period. If you already have a test appointment, you cannot register for another test date that is within 12 days of your existing appointment.

To register and find available test dates you must first open an account at [www.ets.org](http://www.ets.org)

## CHAPTER 6

### Applying to Universities in Canada

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 system takes a liberal arts approach, where students can study across disciplines before deciding on a concentration or major. Most universities are organized within faculties (schools), such as the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences or the Faculty of Applied Sciences and students make their application to a specific faculty or program.

#### **A. Application**

For students completing 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' selected universities.

The universities' online applications request basic background information as well as an online fee payment of approximately 100 CAD. Letters of recommendation and personal statements usually are not required. Some universities, such as McGill and Concordia, request that students upload their transcripts and predicted grades electronically and if accepted the transcripts are then officially sent by SGS. If you are uploading your transcript to the application, please request a copy of your transcript. Other schools require that transcripts and predicted grades be mailed directly by the school, after the student has completed the online application.

Please provide the counselor with a list of the Canadian schools where you are applying along with the correct Admissions Office mailing address, if transcripts and predicted grades need to be sent via mail. Also, please provide your personal student candidate number, such as the OUAC Student ID#, given to you by the university when you apply which is important to include on all documents. Transcripts, predicted IB grades, and a school profile will be sent to Canadian universities in early January and will include the first semester grades from Grade 12. Final transcripts will be sent at the end of the second semester and students should inform the IB Coordinator which university should have access to the final IB Diploma exams.

Deadlines vary for schools so please check each university and program for specific dates. The earliest deadline is **January 15** for McGill University.

#### **B. Decisions**

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.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **Applying to Universities/ Colleges in the United Kingdom**

The country known as the United Kingdom (UK) is comprised of England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. Universities in all four of these lands are subject to the same government regulations and processes, but the system of education in Scotland is different from that in the other parts of the UK. Thus 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.

#### **A. What to Study?**

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. The word “course” is used to describe the subject of study, including all the specific classes that a student will take over the three or four years of enrollment. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the course of study is usually quite specific—for example, “Psychology” at the University of Durham, or a joint course such as “Business Management with French” at Queen Mary University. Once your studies begin, all courses relate to that subject area, or two subject areas in a joint 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 England, unless the course is very broad and more multi-disciplinary. Universities in Scotland offer a more liberal arts based program in which students have more electives and flexibility in their courses.

#### **B. 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.ac.uk](http://www.ucas.ac.uk) and click on “Course Search.” You can then enter a search by courses. As you find courses of interest, you will notice that all the universities offering a specific course will be listed. You can click on the specific university to find more information about the course as well as the “entry requirements” required for the course. Each university listing contains information about why one would study a course, what are the key skills and qualities sought in applicants (which are important as you write your personal statement!), where to obtain more information, and what academic qualifications are needed. The required predicted points for the IB Diploma indicate what is needed to be given an offer for the course. In addition, the information under each university as well as the university’s website 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.

### **C. 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 University counseling handbook 2017-2018 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 courses, or four choices in clinical areas such as medicine or dentistry. These course choices could be at five different universities, or two courses or more could be chosen at the same university (e.g., one course called Psychology and another called Social Psychology at University College of London would make up two course choices).

### **D. The Application**

Once you have set up an account (registration begins in June), you can begin completing the UCAS form. It requests demographic information, a list of courses to which you are applying, a list of your IB courses with a pending completion date of June 2018, and a one page personal statement which is described below. You pay the application fee online by credit card when you submit your form.

Since the UCAS application deadline is January 15, our school deadline for your completed application is December 15, so the reference can be added and the application submitted before school closes for the winter holiday. It is highly recommended that students complete their applications by early November.

There are earlier deadlines for specific universities and courses. Students applying to Oxford or Cambridge or medicine and veterinary courses must submit the UCAS form by October 15 to UCAS. If you plan to apply to Oxford or Cambridge, discuss this with the counselor at the end of Grade 11 in order to begin planning for submission of the work samples and tests which are often required by these two institutions. Students applying to Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Science, and Veterinary Medicine courses must complete their applications by **October 1** in order for the reference to be completed and the application to be sent to UCAS by the October 15 deadline.

### **E. Personal Statement**

Your personal statement is your chance to make a convincing case for your admission. The personal statement can be no longer than 47 lines or 4,000 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.

#### **F. 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 could 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 University counseling handbook 2017-2018 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 **Teacher Recommendation Form**.

#### **G. 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".

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 would need to be taking Chemistry HL and Math HL or SL and earn particular scores on both exams.

Each time a UK university makes a decision on one of your applications, UCAS will post the your 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 of 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 please be sure to select an "Insurance" choice that requires less points than your "Firm". Please discuss your choices with your counselor, if you have any concerns.

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. Universities have also 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.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **Applying to Universities in Other Countries**

Students are responsible for checking admission requirements for each country. The university websites will indicate the requirements for international students or citizens who have studied outside of the country.

Please refer to the following links for individual country information:

**Spain:**            <http://www.studying-in-spain.com/how-to-apply-at-a-university-in-spain/>

**Italy:**             <http://www.mastersportal.eu/articles/1615/how-to-apply-to-an-international-university-in-italy-in-2017.html>

**Germany:**        <https://www.studying-in-germany.org/how-to-apply-at-a-german-university/>

**Colombia:**        <https://www.topuniversities.com/where-to-study/latin-america/colombia/guide>

**Asia:**              <https://www.topuniversities.com/where-to-study/region/asia/guide>



## **Appendix 1**

### **Glossary of College Counseling terms:**

American College Test (ACT): a test which measures aptitude and skill in English, mathematics, reading and natural science. The ACT is more often used in the Midwest, South and Far West.

Application Fees: Each application requires an application fee, with these fees ranging from \$25- \$100 per application. Some colleges will accept fee waivers from students who have a demonstrated financial need. Students that think they qualify for a fee waiver should check with the guidance office. If a student used a fee waiver for the SAT test, they should have received 4 fee waivers directly from the testing center to the email they used when registering for the SAT test. Check with the guidance office if you have questions.

Associate Degree: a degree granted by a college or university for a program that requires two years of full-time study.

CEEB Code (school code): A six-digit code assigned to each school by ETS (Educational Testing Services) that must be included on all applications and all standardized testing forms. **The CEEB School Code for Saint George School is 842366**

Certificate of Finance ( International students) : International students are responsible for all educational and personal expenses for the duration of their F-1 status at a US university. . In order to issue an I-20, which is needed to obtain a F-1 student visa, the university is required by the United States government to maintain records that demonstrate that you have at least the funds necessary to cover your tuition, fees, and living expenses for your first year of study (12 months).

Common Application: an application form developed and widely accepted by participating colleges and universities.

Cooperative Education (Co-op) Program: a program integration classroom study and work experience and offering credit and salary.

CSS Profile: The College Scholarship Search Profile is a common financial aid form used by many private and some public colleges and universities. It is used in addition to the FAFSA form. The form can be found at collegeboard.com/profile. Unlike the FAFSA, the CSS profile is generally available by October of the senior year. Colleges and universities may also require their own financial aid forms. Be aware of deadlines at each college / university for the financial forms listed above. If a college / university requires any of these items they will not consider an application complete until they are received. Net Price Calculator: As of November 2011, the federal

Deferred Admission: an accepted student can delay entrance by a year (or a semester).

Early Action permits you to apply to a college or university of your choice and receive a decision early in the senior year, well in advance of the normal spring response dates. Though you will hear early regarding your admission, you are not committed to attend and you may apply to other colleges. If you are applying for financial aid, you will follow the aid application deadlines set by the institution.

You are not required to make a commitment before May 1, but you are encouraged to do so as soon as a final choice is made.

Early Decision requires you to commit to a college or university at the time of application that, if admitted, you will enroll. You should apply under an Early Decision plan only if you know that you can make a well reasoned, first choice decision. Upon admission the institution will require a nonrefundable deposit well before May 1. If admitted, you must enroll unless the financial aid award is inadequate.

Expected Family Contribution (EFC): the total amount the federal government expects students and their families to pay toward college costs from their income and assets.

Fee Waiver: permits eligible students to submit college applications or test registration forms without the fee. A limited number are available through guidance counselors and educational agencies for students who qualify.

Financial aid package/award: a combination of grants/scholarships, loans and work-study that the college is able to offer you to meet your financial need.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA): the primary form used to determine your eligibility for financial aid. Should be filled out in January or February of your senior year. **(US Citizens only)**

Federal Work Study Program: an award of on-campus part-time employment for students who demonstrate financial need. The maximum amount a student can earn under this program is determined by financial need.

Grade Point Average (G.P.A.): a system used to evaluate academic performance. The most frequently used system of numerical values for grades is A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, and F=0. The G.P.A. is reached by multiplying the number of credits given for a course by the grade received in the course.

A weighted GPA takes the difficulty of your classes into account along with your grades

An unweighted GPA is solely based on grades and not on the difficulty of your classes)

Grants: Financial aid that is a gift from the college or university.

Interview: an interview with you and a representative from college. You will be able to demonstrate qualities that don't show up on your application and to find out more about the college.

Loans: Financial aid that must be repaid, either by the student or parents

Merit-based aid: Financial aid that is based on factors other than income, such as SAT or ACT scores, GPA or community service.

National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA): an athletic governing body to which approximately 500 small four year colleges and universities belong. The NAIA governs athletic recruitment and scholarship awarding policies.

National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA): an athletic governing body to which approximately 800 colleges and universities belong. Each school chooses a general division 1, 2, or 3 and is required to follow the policies regarding recruitment and scholarship awards that have been established for that division.

National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (NMQST): scores from the PSAT's given in October are used to determine if a student qualifies for a National Merit Scholarship.

Need-based aid: Financial aid that is given based on the student and his or her family's income

Need-Blind admissions policy: a college or university will admit students regardless of their ability to pay, and for any students that cannot afford the price tag, full-need means the university awards scholarships and other institutional aid to make up the difference

Net Price Calculator: As of November 2011, the federal government has mandated that all college and university websites include a net price calculator, a tool which allows prospective students to obtain an estimate of the real cost of attending a particular institution. Net price calculators (and the information required to use them) will vary by institution, so students should complete the process at each college or university.

Open Admissions: the college admits all applicants. ( Community Colleges)

Preliminary Scholastic Assessment Test (PSAT): this test is an abbreviated form of the SAT Reasoning Test and is designed to give juniors an opportunity to practice taking a test which is similar but shorter (1 hour) than the SAT Reasoning Test. It is given in October of the junior year. Some sophomore elect to take the PSAT as well.

Private Institutions: These colleges and universities are run primarily through the use of tuition, donations, and endowments

Profile: The high school profile is prepared by the high school and will accompany each student's transcript when it is sent to a college or university. The profile describes both the school as a whole and the particular graduating class. The profile will also include a grade grid, or other reporting tool, with information about the current graduating class's performance over the first six semesters of high school.

Public Universities: Public universities are run primarily through the use of state and federal funds that are supplemented by tuition, fees, donations and endowments. In general, public institutions are less expensive than private institutions, but tuition is paid at two levels:

→ State Residents: (students who can prove that they live in a particular state) pay a lower tuition because it is assumed that their families' taxes support the institution.

→ Out-of-State Students: (who reside in other states or internationally) pay a higher tuition.

Regular Decision: most colleges have an early winter application deadline (January 1 or 15 or February 1); they generally notify candidates between March 1 and April 12. Students then have until May 1 (the common reply date) to respond to the colleges.

Restricted Early Action: This plan is a hybrid of the Early Decision and Early Action plans. While the decision from the college is non-binding, students who apply to college under a Restricted Early Action are limited in terms of other applications that they may file simultaneously. Restricted Early Action policies vary greatly, so it is important to read them carefully.

Rolling Admission is a term used to describe the application process in which an institution reviews applications as they are received and offers decisions to students soon after they are made. If you are applying for financial aid, you will follow aid application deadlines set by the school. You may apply to other colleges and you will not be required to make a decision regarding enrolling before May 1.

Scholarship: a form of financial assistance that does not require repayment and is usually made to a student who shows potential for distinction, usually in academic performance.

SAT Reasoning Test: this test, graded on a scale from 200 to 800, measures students' mathematical and verbal ability and writing skill.

SAT Subject Tests: one hour tests offered in subjects such as English literature, foreign languages, science, history, and mathematics. Required by selective competitive colleges in order to gain admission.

Student Aid Report (SAR): reports the information from your FAFSA.

Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL): a test used to evaluate the English proficiency of students whose first language is not English.

Universal Decision Date: Colleges and universities, that are members of NACAC and have deadlines, use **May 1st** as their reply deadline for accepting offers of admission and requests to stay on the wait list. No college or university belonging to NACAC can require a non-refundable deposit before May 1st. Students must let the college / university that they plan to attend know of their decision by the May 1st deadline and pay their deposit. If a student does not complete this step by May 1st, they could lose their spot and scholarships that have been awarded. Students should also let any schools that they have been accepted to, but do not plan to attend, know that they will not be attending these schools. This could open a spot for other students that may have been waitlisted and is a common courtesy.

Unmet Need: difference between the cost of education, the total financial aid award + expected family contributions.

Visa ( F1): The "F" visa is for academic studies. An **F1 visa** is issued to students who are attending an academic program or English Language Program. F1 visas are by far the most common form of international student visa in the U.S. F1 students must maintain the minimum course load for full-

time student status. F-1 status allows for part-time, on-campus employment (fewer than 20 hours per week). Additionally, students can work on [optional practical training \(OPT\)](#) for up to one year after completion of their academic program. Students are expected to complete their studies by the expiration date on the I-20 form (Certificate of Eligibility for Nonimmigrant Student Status).

Wait List is a term used by institutions to describe a process in which they may initially delay offering or denying admission, but rather extend the possibility of admission in the future. Colleges offer admission to wait list candidates if insufficient numbers of regularly admitted candidates accept their offers of admission.

Work Study: A federal program that gives students financial aid based on campus employment.

## **Appendix 2**

### **High School Counseling Resource Webpages:**

<https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/college-admissions/applying-to-college/admissions-essays/a/writing-tips-and-techniques-for-your-college-essay>

<https://www.petersons.com/college-search/application-essay-tips.aspx>

<http://www.nacacnet.org/globalassets/documents/knowledge-center/international/guidetoia2.pdf>

<http://aacpsschools.org/asp/stem/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/IB-USA-Universities-policies.pdf>

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/15e4d53189d11756?projector=1>