

# **ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL**

## **COLLEGE COUNSELLING HANDBOOK**

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## **INTRODUCTION:**

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Association International School is a College/University Preparatory School and thus prepares students for studies in post-secondary institutions worldwide. The Counseling department provides a wide range of services to its students. These services include:

- University selection and applications
- Guest lecture and speaker series
- Accommodation advice
- Visa counselling
- ACT/SAT tutorials
- Scholarship/financial aid applications
- Campus tours
- Career guidance
- University fairs and visits
- Internships

College counseling starts with students from grades 7-12. Students are advised on their course selections based on where their career interests lie.

This College Counselling Handbook has been prepared to steer you through the complex and exciting process of college selection and application. The handbook outlines a comprehensive and detailed guidelines and timelines that will help you understand the college application processes.

As you embark on the transition from the High School to college/university, it would be helpful to take advantage of the information this handbook contains. This is a helpful resource to have on hand.

As always, the Counselling Department is ready to assist whenever needed. Do not hesitate to contact us if you need any further clarifications.

We wish you the best as we embark on a new year and look forward to helping you along the way as we navigate this process

## **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

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It is very important that you, the College Counsellors as well as your parents/guardians know that they all have specific roles to play in the College/University counselling processes. It is a partnership, and it is crucial that members of the partnership clearly understand and accept their roles and responsibilities. Below are the roles:

### **1.0 Student Responsibilities:**

- Read and understand the College Counseling Handbook
- Read all communications from the College Counseling Office
- Carefully follow the rules and expectations of the school
- Check your email on a daily basis.
- Participate fully in the life of the school.
- Attend all of your scheduled college counseling classes.
- Schedule and attend meetings with your assigned counsellor.
- Keep your counsellor up to date on your plans, progress and results. Communicate regularly with your counselor.
- Research the basic admissions criteria at the colleges you are considering.
- Register for SAT/ACT testing.
- Plan to visit colleges during Christmas break and on summer vacation.
- Attend all College Fairs, visits and workshops
- Request letters of recommendation from your teachers
- Complete applications honestly and accurately noting deadlines.
- Meet college representatives visiting Association International School during the school year.

### **2.0 Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:**

- Be open with your child. Discuss college plans, including the financial picture and any restrictions, openly and honestly with your child early in the process. Share these thoughts with the college counselor either by phone, in writing, or in person.
  - Support and communicate with your child and his or her counselor.
  - Be aware of deadlines and other commitments.
  - Help your child send out test scores to colleges. The student, not the college office, is responsible for sending test scores to the colleges that require them.
  - Plan visits. Assist your child in visiting colleges if possible.
  - Fill out and file financial aid forms, if applying for financial aid
  - Keep talking with your child. Check with your him/her periodically about the progress of his/her college application process, testing, and information distributed at school. But please remember, too, that your child should own the college admission process.
  - Help your child to recognize and celebrate strengths. A weekly college check-in between parents and students is a good way to balance the need to stay on top of the process with the goal of encouraging students to take responsibility for the process.

- Be familiar with the policies and recommendations in the College Counseling Handbook.
- Communicate with the College Counseling Office. We are here to support and help you too.

### **3.0 College Counsellor Responsibilities:**

- Work hard to get to know our students – to understand and appreciate their goals, talents, and interests.
- Discuss college planning with the student and the parents and help the child to develop a schedule, testing plan, and, eventually, a balanced list that represents good matches.
- Provide information about the chances of admission to particular colleges.
- Provide resources and opportunities for students and families to learn about various colleges.
- Be effective advocates for our students, presenting their transcripts and official school recommendations to the colleges so that they have the strongest chance of being given favorable consideration.
- Listen to, learn from, and communicate with parents. Personalize the process to each individual student.
- Treat the college process as an opportunity for growth and self-evaluation that will ensure that students leave the process with a better understanding of themselves.
- Make students aware of information about visitations, special events, open houses at colleges, deadlines, scholarships and testing.
- Prepare and send transcripts to colleges.
- Prepare a well-written school statement that portrays the candidate in a positive and honest light with an emphasis on strengths and patterns of growth where appropriate.
- Send final grade reports to the colleges.

## COLLEGE PLANNING TIMELINES:

The following timeline has been prepared to help you stay focused and organised during the university application process.

DP 1	DP 2
<b>August – October:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent/Guardian Presentation</li> <li>- Cv workshop</li> <li>- Plan your DP2 Courses</li> <li>- Prepare for the SAT/ACT:</li> <li>- Register for the SAT/ACT</li> <li>- Take an ACT/SAT Practice Test</li> <li>- Start researching schools</li> <li>- Talk to your parents/guardians about financial aid</li> </ul>	<b>August:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parent/Guardian Presentation</li> <li>- Submission of final college list</li> <li>- Individual meeting with college Counselor</li> <li>- SAT registration (Nov. &amp; Dec. tests)</li> <li>- Teacher recommendation form due</li> <li>- College Essay Workshop 3</li> </ul>
<b>November - January:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- College Essay workshop 1</li> <li>- Meet with college counselor</li> <li>- Research colleges</li> <li>- Full-length practice ACT/SAT</li> <li>*ACT/SAT prep course (additional fee applies)</li> </ul>	<b>September - October:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Application to colleges starts</li> <li>- SAT (on-campus)</li> <li>- Research funding</li> <li>- Final college essay due</li> <li>- Application closes by end of October</li> </ul>
<b>February:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meet with college counselor</li> <li>- Research/visit colleges</li> <li>- Junior Parent Coffee</li> <li>- College fair</li> </ul>	<b>November – December:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- FAFSA (parents) application begins</li> <li>- CSS/Profile form (parents) begins</li> <li>- Predicted grades given by teachers</li> <li>- December SAT exams</li> <li>- Predicted grades given by teachers</li> <li>- Finish all financial aid applications before break</li> <li>- Most Early Decision/Early Action decisions arrive</li> </ul>
<b>March – May:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research/visit colleges</li> <li>- Meet with College Counselor and parents</li> <li>- College Essay Workshop 2</li> <li>- SAT</li> <li>- Meet with college counselor and parents</li> <li>- Teacher recommendation list</li> </ul>	<b>January – March:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Submission of predicted grades</li> <li>- Meet with College Counsellor to submit supplemental documents</li> <li>- Decisions begin to arrive</li> <li>- Review financial aid packages</li> <li>- Make a pro/con list of schools you are accepted to.</li> </ul>

<p><b>June:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Internship</li> <li>- Visit colleges</li> <li>- Prepare college essay</li> <li>- Register for senior fall testing (SAT and/or ACT)</li> </ul>	<p><b>April – May:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Make sure your College Counsellor is aware of any acceptances, denials and waitlist decisions.</li> <li>- Final selection of college</li> <li>- Enrollment deposit due to college where attending the following fall</li> </ul>
	<p><b>June:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enrolling processes begin</li> <li>- Pre-Departure briefing</li> </ul>

## **TYPES OF COLLEGES:**

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There are different types of colleges and universities and the types of courses of study and degrees offered. At your level (High School student), you would be going for an undergraduate study at the university. Below is the breakdown of the types of colleges:

- **Private:**

Private colleges and universities are funded through tuition, fees, private gifts, corporate contributions and endowments. Particularly in the U.S., private schools are typically more expensive than publicly funded institutions but may provide better financial aid. Examples: Wellesley College, Emory University, Bowdoin College, Yale University.

- **Public:**

Public colleges and universities are partially funded by tax dollars; typically, they cost less than private schools. However, they may not provide as much financial aid. Examples: University College London, University of Toronto, McGill University, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)

### **College/University Living Options:**

- **Commuter:**

A commuter is a college or university student who generally lives locally and drives or takes public transportation to campus every day. Commuter students are usually local residents, although any student who lives off campus may be considered a commuter. Commuter students are not bound to the same rules that govern campus residents. While commuting may seem like a less expensive option for college, keep in mind that some colleges take into account on-campus living expenses in determining financial aid.

- **Residential:**

A residential student is one who lives on a college campus, in a dormitory, college-run apartment building or other setting. By living on campus with other students, you will be part of a living/ learning environment. NOTE: Students who live on campus statistically have higher GPAs and complete more college credits each semester than their off campus counterparts; students who live on campus are more likely to graduate on time, and get involved in campus activities, both extracurricular and academic.

## **Types of Majors/Courses of Study:**

- **Liberal Arts:**

A liberal arts education refers to studies in a college or university intended to provide a broad base of knowledge and develop intellectual capacities. A liberal arts education prepares students to work in a variety of jobs. Liberal arts majors are often described as majors that “teach you how to think.” Examples of liberal arts majors include: language, philosophy, mathematics, history, literature, psychology. This is different from other types of education where students develop professional or skills for a specific job. If you are undecided about what you want to study, it is best to pursue a liberal arts degree.

- **Pre-Professional:**

These are majors that prepare students for one specific field. Because they are focused majors, there is typically less flexibility in picking courses. But for students who know what they want to study, a Pre-Professional major will provide them with the skills and training necessary to enter a particular career. Some Pre-Professional majors include: engineering, business, and nursing.

- **Two-year undergraduate (Associate’s Degree):**

These degrees are typically granted for two years of fulltime college study.

- **Four-year undergraduate (Bachelor’s Degree):**

Colleges and universities give these degrees for four (and in some cases three) years of full-time study. Some students pursue their Bachelor’s degree after completing their Associate’s Degree while some students directly pursue their Bachelor’s degree after secondary school.

- **Graduate:**

A professional degree that a student obtains after completing a Bachelor’s degree. Graduate degrees typically prepare students to enter a specific field with very specialised training. For example, a student intending to become a doctor must complete medical school to earn an MD. Some other kinds of graduate degrees include Master’s Degrees and PhDs (Doctoral Degrees).

- **Choosing a Course/ Major:**

Choosing a course/major is very crucial as it determines which career path you would want to follow. The below factors should be taken into consideration when choosing a course/major:

### **Choose a Course that:**

- Aligns with your HL subjects and you have all the pre-requisites for
- You are interested in studying for 4 years
- Will prepare you well for what you want to do in the future
- You might like, a course that aligns with your passions and interests.

## THE RIGHT FIT COLLEGE

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A right fit college is when a college meets a student's needs and wants academically, socially, and financially. Good college fits will meet most, if not all, of the student's preferences in a college.

There are manifold factors to consider in selecting the right fit university. The below factors that can be used to evaluate and ultimately choose a college, though some may be more pertinent than others in your search.

### **Student Enrollment:**

- ENROLLMENT – Small (1,000-3,000), medium (3,000-7,000), large (10,000-15,000). Freshman class size. % Undergraduate students.
- RETENTION - % of freshmen that eventually graduate or return for their sophomore year.
- BACKGROUND - Male/female ratio. % Commuter / resident. Geographic origin. % minority. % on financial aid.

### **Location and Surroundings:**

- LOCATION – US, Canada, Australia, UK, etc. Distance from home. Travel costs and convenience.
- SETTING - Urban/Suburban/Rural. Weather. Nearest city or countryside. Recreational opportunities.
- FACILITIES - Library. Laboratories. Study and practice rooms. Student center. Athletic complex. Art studios. Theater. Bookstore. Food sources.

### **College Type and Philosophy:**

- TYPE - 2/4 year. Religious/public/private/historically Black. Coed/Single-sex.

### **College/university:**

- PURPOSE - Liberal arts. Technical/vocational institute. Conservatory. Art /design college. Pre-professional for business, education, engineering, fine arts. Degrees offered.
- PHILOSOPHY - Traditional/progressive. Deeply scholarly/career oriented.
- CALENDAR - Semester/trimester/quarter/module. Inter-term program. Accelerated.

### **Curriculum:**

- ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS - Proportion of study dedicated to core requirements/major/electives. Required freshman courses.
- ACADEMIC OFFERINGS – Majors/minors offered in your areas of interest. Breadth and depth of courses offered in your areas of interest. Interdisciplinary courses. Strong departments.

- INDEPENDENT STUDY - Individual tutorials. Seminars. Research opportunities.
- SPECIAL STUDY PROGRAMES - Field work. Internships. Exchange programs. Semester/year abroad study. Joint degree programs. Cooperative work/study plan. Pre-professional programs.
- STANDARDS - Accreditation. Degree requirements. Grading system. Grading/distribution. Honor system.
- COURSE DESCRIPTION - Introductory/advanced/specialized courses. Courses for majors/non-majors. Number of courses required for major/Course availability

#### **Academic Environment:**

- FACULTY - % with Ph.D. Origin of degrees earned. Original faculty research/scholarship. Teaching course load. Expectations for teaching/scholarship/advising and other college service. Emphasis on undergraduate teaching and learning.
- FACULTY-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS - Faculty-student ratio. Advising. Accessibility for conferences, assistance. Departmental clubs, colloquia, committees with student representatives. Class size, average. Classes under 20 students, over 50 students. Opportunities for discussion/student presentation/exchange of ideas.
- ACADEMIC DEMANDS - Workload. Course expectations. Type of assignments.

#### **Academic pressure/competition:**

- INTELLECTUAL VITALITY - Student attitude toward learning. Flexibility/structure for learning. Exchange of ideas. Interest in political, social, or world issues.

#### **Campus and Student Life:**

- TYPES OF STUDENTS - Diversity and response to differences. Typical/offbeat student. Importance of money/material possessions/social appearances.
- COMMUNITY TYPE - Homogeneous. Pluralistic. Cohesive. Fragmented. School spirit. Controversial campus issues. Liberal/directive/restrictive social regulations. Political climate.
- LIVING ARRANGEMENTS - Predominantly large dorms/housing clusters/small houses. Availability of single rooms/doubles/suites/multiple rooms. System of housing allocation/roommate selection. Centralized/decentralized dining. Alternate dining programs. Single sex/co-ed dorms. Housing guaranteed.
- CAMPUS ACTIVITIES - Activities related to your interests. Emphasis on social life, fraternities or sororities, sports, or other dominant interests. Clubs and organizations traditional/creative/competitive issue oriented. Presence of religious, ethnic or cultural groups. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community.

### **Admissions:**

- DEADLINES - Application. Notification of decision. Deadline to reply to offer of admission.
- APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS - Fee. Information forms. Specific high school courses. Secondary school report. Recommendations. Interview. Common Application supplements.
- SAT/ACT/SUBJECT TESTS - What are the college's testing requirements?
- ADMISSION SELECTIVITY - % of applicants offered admission. Average SAT/ACT scores of freshmen. % of freshmen ranked in top 10% of high school class. Freshman class profile.
- FINANCIAL – Need blind or need considered?

### **Costs and Financial Aid:**

- COSTS - Minimum-maximum total costs per year. Student budget for tuition and fees/room and board/books and personal expenses/travel costs. Admission and enrollment fees.
- FAMILY RESOURCES - What can your family pay toward college expenses? Your earnings and savings.
- AWARDS - % of students receiving aid. Range of awards. Average award.
- FINANCIAL AID - Based on need/merit/or funds available. Loan and job expectations. Off-campus work opportunities.
- APPLICATION - Which forms are required? Deadlines.

### **Intangibles:**

- Does the atmosphere of the institution appeal to me?

## **REACHES, TARGETS, AND SAFETIES:**

It is salient to be strategic in choosing which universities you apply to. When making your university list include schools that fit into each of these three categories: **Reach, Target, Safety**. In order to figure out what category a school falls into, you will have to do some research. Make sure to only apply to schools that you would actually want to attend.

### **1.0 REACH:**

A **“REACH”** school is one that you dream of going to, but that might be a little out of your reach. Their average student might have predicted IB scores or SAT/ACT scores above yours OR it might just be an extremely selective school. Think MIT, Harvard, Cornell, etc.

### **2.0 TARGET:**

The majority of your schools should be in this section. A **“TARGET”** school is one that you really want to attend AND that fits academically. For example, your predicted IB scores and standardised test scores are the same as their average student.

### **3.0 SAFETY:**

A “SAFETY” school is one that you can fall back on. Your grades/scores should be well above the school’s average student and you should be fairly certain that you will be accepted.

### **KEY QUESTIONS TO ASK WHEN THINKING OF THE RIGHT FIT UNIVERSITY:**

#### **1 Kinds of Colleges and Universities:**

a. What kind of degree do I want? Associates? Bachelors?

#### **2 Location:**

a. What country do I want to be in?

b. How far away do I want to be from home?

i. Where do I have a support system?

ii. What are my financial limitations?

#### **3 Campus Setting:**

a. Do I want to be in a city? What climates can I handle?

b. Do I want to live on campus and have a campus community?

c. Do I care about sports? Activism? Religious community?

d. What size school do I want?

i. Small (<2000)      ii. Medium (2000-15,000)      iii. Large (>15,000)

#### **4 Cost:**

a. Do I know the actual\* cost of the schools I’m looking at?

i. Don’t shy away from “expensive” schools just because of the cost. In fact, some private non-profit schools in the U.S., while the most expensive, may also offer the most aid if you qualify.

b. Will I qualify for financial aid? Do they offer financial aid to international students?

c. Am I eligible for scholarships? (From the college, state, government, etc.)

#### **5 Major/Area of Study:**

a. What are my interests? Are they offered?

i. Even if you don’t know what you want to major in, pay attention to what the college offers. If you’re mostly interested in humanities/social science, you probably shouldn’t apply to a technical school!

## **6 Learning Environment:**

a. Do I prefer small classroom discussions or large lectures? Do I want to work closely with my professors? Do I want to be at a research university?

b. Would I benefit from going to a liberal arts college?

## THE APPLICATION PROCESS:

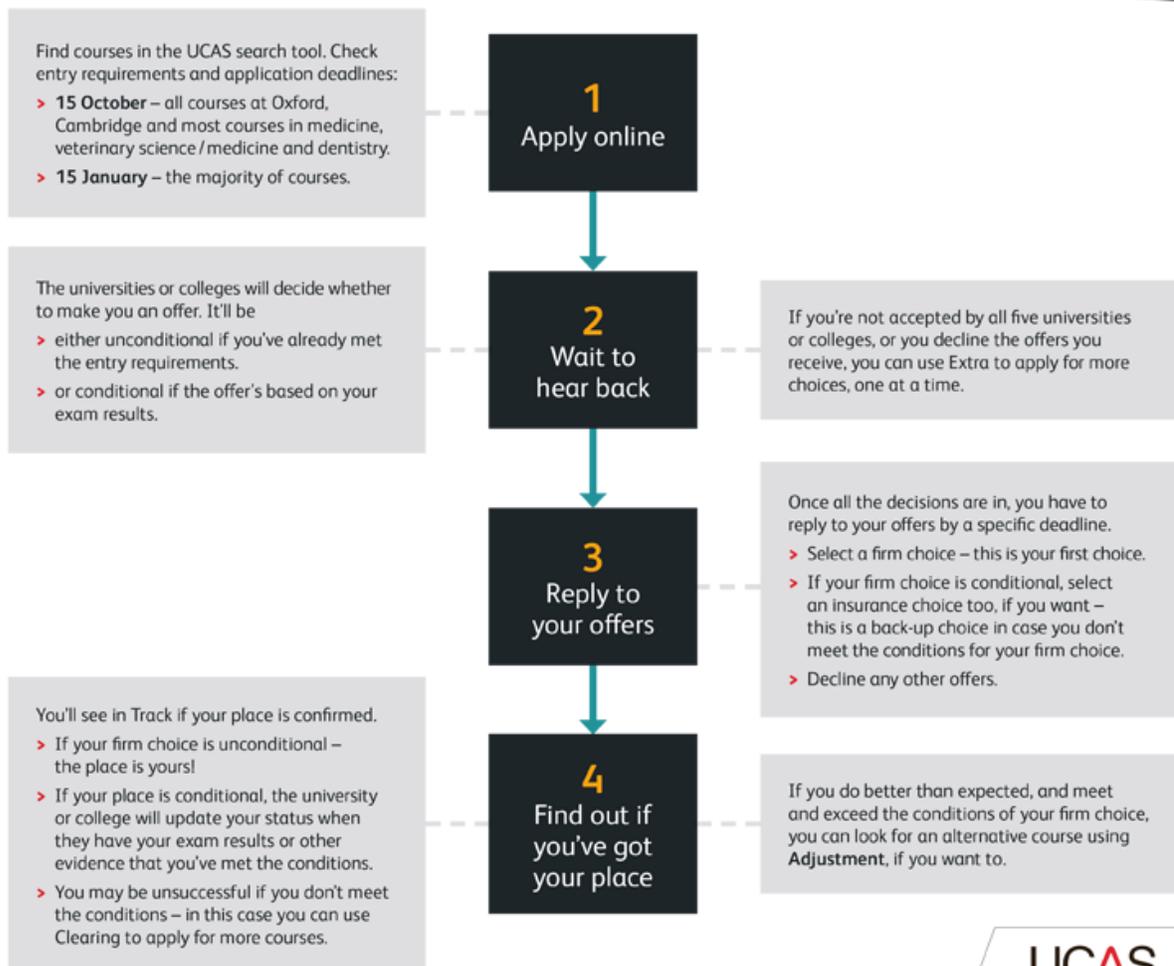


### THE UK APPLICATION PROCESS:

In the UK, universities conduct admission through ONE online system called UCAS ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)).

#### How it works:

# HOW IT WORKS: Applying to a UK university or college





## THE US APPLICATION PROCESS:

There are two ways students apply to US universities:

1 Common Application ([www.commonapp.org](http://www.commonapp.org))

2 Individual university's application- available online through the university's website  
Information on Applying

### **A. The common application allows students to apply to multiple US universities with one application. It has several parts:**

- The General Application which includes basic demographic information
- The School Specific Supplement which is an additional document provided by each university with more specific questions about why you would like to attend that specific school
- You must also submit a transcript up to two (2) teacher recommendation letters, and a counsellor recommendation

### **B. US Universities evaluate applications through a holistic review process. The following things are strongly considered when reviewing an applicant:**

- Grades & Curriculum

Since we are on the IB system, universities will consider your IB points and overall performance in SL and HL subjects from grade 9 onward

#### **Standardised Testing Scores SATs or ACTs**

These scores are a requirement for admission to most US colleges/universities and having high scores will make you a competitive applicant

- Personal Statement

This is where your personality will be revealed. Your essay should be thoughtful, unique, and personal. Be creative and write something that reveals your personality

- Extracurricular Activities

US universities are looking for applicants who will make contributions to the campus community beyond the classroom. The depth and/or breadth of your activities provide a better picture of you as a whole.

- Recommendation Letters (2 from teachers, 1 from counsellor)

Your recommendation letters from your teachers further enhance your application. Carefully select teachers who know you well inside and outside of the classroom to write your recommendations. Get to know your university counsellor well to aid in this process.

## APPLICATION OPTIONS FOR US:

### **Early Decision:**

ED applications are due much earlier than regular decision applications—typically in November. Applying ED is a BINDING application, which means you MUST attend that university if you are admitted (there are some exceptions made for financial aid reasons) ED applicants will receive their admissions quite early, typically in December or January.

You should only apply ED if you are 100% sure you want to attend the school—you will have to WITHDRAW all of your other applications if you choose to attend. You may want to wait for RD if you think your year 12 grades will improve your chances OR if you are really counting on financial aid. Since applying ED is binding, you won't be able to compare financial aid packages. For some schools ED admission rates are higher, but this is not the case for every school. Do your research.

### **Early Action:**

EA applications are similar to ED, but are NON-BINDING. The same drawbacks apply with regards to grades from year 12. The great thing about EA is that you are allowed to keep your RD applications active and can wait until (in the US) May 1st to make your decision. Basically, applying EA just allows you to hear back early from a school.

### **Regular Decision:**

RD applications are just that – regular! You will go through the normal application process. Keep in mind that there are hard admissions deadlines (i.e. “all RD applications are due January 15th”) and there are rolling admissions deadlines (i.e. they accept applications in waves and/or continuously accept them up until a certain date and will send out admission/rejection letters as they come).



## THE CANADIAN APPLICATION PROCESSES:

There are 2 ways to apply to Canadian Universities- these depend on which province the university is located in.

### 1. OUAC (Ontario University Application Centre [www.ouac.on.ca](http://www.ouac.on.ca))

OUAC serves as a universal application system for students to apply to schools in Ontario. Students only need to submit one application to apply for many Ontario universities. These include:

- Ryerson University
- University of Waterloo
- University of Western Ontario
- McMaster University
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT)
- University of Toronto
- Wilfred Laurier University
- Ontario College of Art and Design (OCAD)
- York University

### 2. For universities outside of Ontario, students must go to the individual universities' websites to apply or Apply BC. These include, but are not limited to:

- University of British Columbia (both campuses)
- University of Alberta
- McGill University
- Mt. Allison
- University of Victoria
- Simon Fraser University

#### Application Components

- Ontario University applications only require basic information initially. They do not require essays or recommendation letters at first.

- However, upon receiving this basic application, the university may require you to write additional essays, provide a portfolio, or submit recommendation letters.

- Canadian universities do NOT require the SAT, ACT, or any other standardised test scores

**Application Timeline:**

- Students may start applying in November
- Applications are accepted (depending on the university) until *May/June*- but it is preferred for students to submit their applications by January 15th
- Decisions are rolling, meaning they come out when your application has been reviewed.



## **THE AUSTRALIAN APPLICATION PROCESS:**

There are three ways to apply to Australian higher education institutions.

### **- Direct application:**

Students from outside of Australia can apply directly to an institution, following that institution's application procedures. In this case, students must fill out separate applications for each course and institution to which they are applying.

### **- Education Agents:**

Students can also apply through a licensed Australian education agent. There are various agents in Australia, and each institution might be partnered with one or several of these agents. Institutions typically list which agent(s) they partner with on their websites. Agents help students put together their applications and supporting documents and send the application materials to the institution(s). Students might choose to work with agents if they need help with the admissions process, obtaining student visas or preparing to study in Australia. IDP Education is one of the largest agent organizations and is co-owned by 38 Australian universities.

### **- Tertiary Admissions Centres:**

Finally, there are offices called Tertiary Admissions Centres (TAC) that process applications to a number of institutions within a particular state or group of states. Check the individual TAC sites to see which institutions they cover. TACs provide students with relevant application information, as well as facilitate the application and offer processes. Some institutions might not accept a TAC's international application process, so international students should check whether the course they are interested in encourages direct application from international students.

## **Choosing an area of study:**

To study at an Australian university, students typically apply to specific courses within a university. A course is a particular area of study, such as psychology or biology, and most classes a student takes will be related to this course. Thus, it is important that applicants are clear about what they would like to study at the time of their university application.

## **Information for IB Students:**

The IB diploma is recognised by all major tertiary institutions in Australia. Some universities offer advanced placement, credit and bonus schemes for Diploma Programme (DP) students. Most Australian higher education institutions accept IB diploma results as an equivalent to an Australian Year 12 qualification, and students' IB results will be used as a ranking system.

## **Anticipated, predicted and final IB scores:**

Due to the application timeline, offers may be made based on anticipated IB scores submitted directly by the student's school to the university or by predicted IB scores the student's school submits to the IB and the IB in turn reports to the university. To confirm an offer, final IB results may need to be submitted either to the TAC or directly to the institution.

### **Receiving and Accepting Offers:**

After applying students might receive offers from the university directly or through a TAC, depending on how they applied. Offers can be unconditional, meaning the student has been accepted to study at the institution. Conditional offers are contingent upon the student fulfilling certain conditions, such as a minimum number of points for IB diploma results and a minimum score on specific IB subjects. A university might choose to decline an application rather than giving an offer.

Once final IB results have been sent to the institution and the requirements of conditional offers are met, students must respond to the offers and pay the required fees by the set deadline. At this point, students are officially enrolled in a course and on track to begin study at the institution. There are several deadlines and fees throughout this process, so it is important for students to be aware of important dates and communications with the institution or TAC.



## THE EUROPEAN APPLICATION PROCESS:

Students wanting to study in English will typically consider English-speaking study destinations like the UK, the US, Canada, and Australia. However, many of the options in these popular locations can be expensive, particularly for international students. For students concerned about costs, or who would like to consider alternative options for other reasons, many nations in Europe offer a range of English-language programs, even in countries where English is not the local language. Until recently, English-taught courses in non-English speaking countries were rare, particularly at the bachelor's level, but there has recently been a dramatic increase in the number of English-taught bachelor's degrees available.

NOTE: While studying in Europe can often be very affordable, there are additional costs to consider. Tuition fees at public universities are generally low, but students must make sure to account for the cost of living, which includes housing, meals, transportation, and other expenses.

NOTE: There are multiple ways to apply to universities in Europe. Application procedures may vary by country, institution and type of programme. It is critical to conduct significant research on European options, including being knowledgeable about requirements, costs, deadlines, and application processes.

Below is a sampling of different European nationalities and what to expect in terms of applying as an international student.

### **Germany**

Around 70% of Germany's population speaks English, and German universities offer some undergraduate level, English-taught courses. There are no tuition fees for most undergraduate degrees at public universities in Germany. Private universities in Germany will charge tuition fees, but these are often still less than the international average. In order to find out more about studying in Germany in English and the costs of studying in Germany, the official website offers a searchable database of programs: <https://www.study-in.de/en/>

### **The Netherlands**

Approximately 90% of Dutch residents are English speakers. There's also an increasing array of English taught courses in Holland. For example, most of the programs at Maastricht University (undergraduate and postgraduate) are taught in English. In fact, it was one of the earlier international universities to adopt an English-dominant curriculum. Almost half of students at Maastricht are international students, which creates a vibrant multicultural environment.

Although tuition is not free in the Netherlands, fees are much less than the average for English-speaking countries. Non-EU can expect to pay at least €8,000 (~US\$9,400) per year, depending on subject. The government agency Study in Holland offers a searchable database of available courses: <https://www.studyfinder.nl/>

## Austria

Teaching in Austria is mostly conducted in German, but there are some programs available in English. This is another country with a high percentage (73%) of English speakers. Students from non-EU countries can expect to pay €726.72 (~US\$855) per semester. The Studienwahl website has a search tool to help students find a course taught partially or fully in English: <https://www.studienwahl.at/en>

## Sweden

Nearly 100 international bachelor's programmes are taught in English in Sweden. University is free for Swedish citizens and citizens of EU countries. However, non-EU students pay fees. These are set by each university; students can expect to pay somewhere between SEK80,000 and SEK190,000 (around US\$9,830-23,350) per year depending on subject and degree level. The official website offers more information: <https://studyinsweden.se/>

## Finland

Finland is another destination worth considering to study abroad in English. Finnish institutions provide over 400 courses in English, and there are no tuition fees for EU students. Non-EU students pay tuition fees of approximately €5,000-20,000 (~US\$5,900-23,550) per year. Again, there are many English language speakers among the nationals of this country (70%). English language courses are more common at universities of applied sciences and polytechnics, and only a small number of English-taught courses at bachelor's degree level are available at general universities. A database of English courses can be found on the following website: <https://studyinfo.fi/wp2/en/>

## Norway

The only Nordic country continuing to offer free tuition to all students (regardless of nationality), Norway offers a good range of English-taught programs, mainly at master's level, and the vast majority of residents know English. At the University of Oslo (the country's highest ranked university) there are a wide range of English-taught programs at all study levels. Students will still need to pay a student welfare organization fee each semester, which is typically no more than NOK600 (~US\$75). <https://www.studyinnorway.no/study-in-norway>

## Denmark

Although most teaching in universities in Denmark is conducted in Danish, there are internationally recognized programs taught in English, and 86% of the country's residents can speak English. You can find study programs in English via the study in Europe website. Students from outside the EU/EEA, will be required to pay fees, which on average cost €6,000-16,000 per year (US\$7,070-18,850). <http://studyindenmark.dk/>

## Greece

Around half of Greece's citizens can speak English. While teaching at universities is mainly in Greek, specialized study programs are also available in English at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. Students from non-EU countries will pay around €1,500 (~US\$1,770) per year, often including course textbooks. <http://www.studyingreece.gr/> To help you plan your budget and make wise decisions on where to study and which country provides the best tuition according to your budget, below is chart of the tuition fees of the countries compiled by the website: [www.study.eu.org](http://www.study.eu.org)

## THE ASIAN APPLICATION PROCESS

Many students seeking a university course taught in English will initially pursue higher education in typical English-speaking countries – the UK, the US, Canada, Australia. Many of these popular English-speaking study destinations gravitate towards the expensive side though, particularly for international students.

If you're concerned about costs, or simply like the idea of studying somewhere different, read on for a selection of alternative destinations where you can study abroad in English and maybe save some money at the same time. In fact, many nations in Asia offer a range of English-language programs, even in countries where English is not the official language.

NOTE: There are multiple ways to apply to universities in Asia. Application procedures may vary by country, institution and type of programme. It is critical to conduct significant research on different options, including being knowledgeable about requirements, costs, deadlines, and application processes.

Below is a sampling of different Asian nationalities and what to expect in terms of applying as an international student.

### **Hong Kong**

Hong Kong, located to the southeast of the Mainland of China, is an international city where both English and Chinese are official languages. The city was a British colony from 1842 to 1997; then China assumed sovereignty of Hong Kong. One of the world's leading international financial centres, Hong Kong mixes eastern and western cultures, with English widely used in both daily life and higher education – almost all university-level teaching is conducted in English. The city itself is a vibrant cosmopolitan melting pot that offers a unique setting for university studies. In Hong Kong, there are 21 local degree-awarding institutions (9 publicly-funded and 12 privately-funded ones), and undergraduate degree programmes last four years.

As an international student, your tuition fee of studying in Hong Kong varies according to your level of study and your choice of programme. Of course, other than tuition fee, you need to allow for other expenses during your study, for example, course materials, examination fee, and graduation fee, etc.

International students are welcome to apply for the following scholarships and awards offered by the Hong Kong government -

- The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government Scholarship recognises the achievements of outstanding local and non-local students studying in the eight University Grants Committee-funded universities, the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, and the Vocational Training Council. The scholarship is HK\$80,000 (approximately US\$10,300) per year for non-local students. Additionally, up to ten scholarships are offered to first-year non-local full-time students from

ASEAN countries, India and Korea, who are enrolled in publicly-funded degree programmes in Hong Kong. The scholarship covers the full tuition fee of the awardees.

- The Self-financing Post-Secondary Education Fund provides scholarships to outstanding local and non-local students pursuing full-time locally-accredited private sub-degree or bachelor's degree programmes. The scholarship is HK\$80,000 (approximately US\$10,300) per year for non-local recipients of Outstanding Performance Scholarship.

In order to find out more about studying in Hong Kong and the costs of different programmes, refer to the official website that offers comprehensive information: <https://www.studyinhongkong.edu.hk/en/>

### Singapore

A vibrant and multicultural city state, Singapore includes some of the most prestigious universities in the world, with Nanyang Technological University (NTU) and Singapore National University both ranked among the top 15 in the QS World University Rankings. If you want to study in English in Singapore, the good news is that English is one of its official languages, with around 80% of the population fluent, and it's also the official language of instruction at universities. However, costs in Singapore are relatively high – you can expect to pay around US\$10,000 per year for tuition fees, and the high standard of living is matched by high living costs. To learn more about educational options in Singapore, the Ministry of Education offers a comprehensive website: <https://www.moe.gov.sg/education/post-secondary/>

### Malaysia

Malaysia is quickly becoming a popular study destination for international students, and has recently invested heavily in the higher education sector, for example by welcoming international branch campuses, which are run by universities based in other countries. Existing branch campuses include those operated by the UK's University of Nottingham and Australia's Monash University. However, the country's own universities also offer many rigorous programmes in a great range of academic disciplines. English is the language of instruction at private colleges and some government universities, and is also commonly used among Malaysians. One of many reasons why international students choose Malaysia is because of its cost-effective, high quality tertiary education. The cost of living for international students in Malaysia is as low as US\$5,000 per year. For more information on studying in Malaysia, visit the official website: [www.studymalaysia.com](http://www.studymalaysia.com)



## FINANCIAL AID AND SCHOLARSHIPS:

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International students **MUST** do their research to find out if their preferred college offers financial aid to students (International students). Don't assume that if a school says it is "needs blind" that this applies to you -- check for specific information on international student admissions.

Generally, there are two types of financial aid: **need-based and merit-based**. When you are awarded **need-based** financial aid, the university or scholarship committee looks at your family's financial circumstances to determine your eligibility for aid.

When you are awarded **merit-based aid**, the university or scholarship committee considers your academics, special talents, or other appealing characteristics and offers you scholarship to entice you to attend their particular school. Some scholarships are both need-based and merit-based.

### Major Terms:

- **Expected Family Contribution (EFC):**

This is the amount that a university expects a family to pay towards the cost of education. The university determines a family's EFC by evaluating a family's income, assets, and other relevant information. Generally speaking, an EFC is the amount that a family can be reasonably expected to pay for the cost of education, given the family's financial profile.

- **Need Aware Admissions:**

The school will take into account your financial situation when evaluating your application.

- **Need Blind Admissions:**

The school will, supposedly, not take into account your financial need when admitting you. Meets 100% of Demonstrated Financial Need: If you are admitted, the college or university will help you get to their school. However, keep in mind that the amount of aid they offer you is what they think meets your needs, not how much you request. Most of the schools that do this are private institutions.

- **Grants:**

Also called gift aid, grants do not have to be repaid and you do not need to work to earn them. Grant aid usually comes from governments or individual colleges. At US schools, non-US citizens are not eligible for US federal or state grants, but still may receive grants from the university.

- **Scholarships:**

Like grants, scholarships are basically free money. Scholarships can be given by schools, organisations, people, governments, businesses, etc. AND, scholarships can be for ANYTHING; they don't have to be based on financial need. For example, there might be a scholarship for "Students from Sub-Saharan Africa" or "First generation students from Bangladesh." Check what scholarships the school offers (i.e. "President's Scholarship" or "Merit Scholarship") and do an online search for other scholarships for people like you. Students may have to submit an extra application in order to be considered for scholarships at universities. Some scholarships require that the student be nominated by the school as a candidate, while others are open for all students to apply to.

- **Loans:**

Loans are a last resort, but a reality for most college students. The majority of college students, particularly in the US, end up with loans --- that is just the way it is. Even if you receive financial aid, you may need to borrow money. College loans allow you to borrow money and then pay it back gradually after your graduate.

- **Work Study or On Campus Jobs:**

Every school will have a different policy regarding work for international students, but most campuses DO offer opportunities. However, working may be limited to ON-CAMPUS jobs. For example, international students at Bowdoin College (just like domestic students) can work at jobs in the library or bookstore. Since students will be making minimum wage or more, this is a great way to cover living expenses. Also, when a student is offered "Work Study" as part of a financial aid package in the U.S., that amount is what a student is expected to earn over the course of the year. Being offered "Work Study" on a financial package does not mean that you are guaranteed a job; rather, you must find a job and work regularly at an hourly wage. Also, in the US, work study earnings are not applied directly to your tuition and fees. Students who are awarded work study receive the funds in a paycheck as they earn them, based on hours worked, just like a normal job. These earnings are generally meant to help with the day to day expenses that students have and are not meant to cover large costs like tuition and housing.

- **Financial Aid Gap:**

When a university does not provide enough financial aid for the student to attend, there is a gap. Many students seek outside funding to try to fill this gap. However, outside funding for international students is very rare and is often awarded only in small amounts.

## **FORMS AND DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR FINANCIAL AID:**

To determine your eligibility for need-based financial aid, universities request information about your family's finances such as tax information, as well as other documentation of your family's income and assets.

### **CSS Profile and ISFAA:**

In the US, the CSS Profile form is often used by private colleges and universities to evaluate how much a student will need in financial aid. The ISFAA is another form that is sometimes used and serves a similar purpose. Both applications, distributed by the College Board, allow students to apply for financial aid. The CSS Profile is much more detailed than the ISFAA. While ISFAA can be filled out offline and later sent to colleges or universities via email, the CSS Profile needs to be filled out online. Each CSS Profile costs a fee, varying from year to year, but ISFAA is free of cost. It is important to check the financial aid website of each college or university you are applying to, in order to determine the process, forms, and documents required to complete your application for aid.

### **Required Documentation:**

To apply for need-based financial aid, you must submit verification of family income and assets, such as:

- Income tax statements
- Salary statements/slips and bank statements
- Annual tax and other mandatory deductions from salary
- Savings, mutual funds, and stocks related summaries
- Income statements of businesses owned, part holding in companies
- Bills (estimate of annual food, utility, medical bills)
- Estimate of costs spent on education of student and siblings
- Estimate of any scholarships or earnings of the student
- Parents who do not file a tax return should submit documentation of their income, such as a letter from an employer

### **The CSS Profile Form:**

If you are applying for financial aid at private U.S. universities, you will likely have to complete the CSS Profile form including a certification of finances form. You can fill out the CSS Profile by signing up on the College Board website, which includes detailed instructions. When you sign up choose the year that is relevant to the first year of your university studies.

- Students register for the CSS Profile service online and indicate the colleges to which they will apply.
- Based on registration information and college choices, each student receives a personalized CSS Profile application online.
- Once submitted, the application is processed by the College Board and an electronic data file containing the student application data is sent to each college.

- College or university financial aid offices may still request that you send individual copies of tax documents or income verification so it is critical that you follow all the steps outlined by each college/ university.
- Many universities that use the CSS Profile will also request non-custodial parent information if your biological parents are divorced or never married. Talk to your university counsellor if obtaining this information will pose a problem. In some cases your counsellor can write a letter to waive this information.

## HOW CAN I GET A SCHOLARSHIP? WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES SCHOLARSHIPS?

The below websites provide information on scholarships:

<http://www.fundingusstudy.org/>

<https://www.unigo.com/scholarships>

<http://www.iefap.org>

<http://www.internationalscholarships.com/>

There are certain merit-based scholarships that require internal nominations from the school. In order to be considered, it is critical to follow the dates and deadlines that your university counsellors share with you. Some of these nominations require that you write an essay, or provide other supporting materials. In order for your university counsellors to put your name forth for any of the scholarships that require nominations, you must submit your materials to the university counselling office with the required documents by the deadline.

The Scholarship Committees of the various universities consider the following:

- Academic performance
- Letter of Intent
- CAS portfolio- leadership and community service involvement
- General embodiment of the IB learner profile as an ambassador for the school



## COLLEGE ESSAYS / PERSONAL STATEMENTS

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The college essays / personal statement is an important part of your application and it has the ability to set you apart from other applicants. It is the only piece of your application that can convey your personality to the admissions officers. Therefore, it is salient for you spend a good amount of time on your personal statement. It takes time, creativity, and focus to write a personal statement that shows your personality and interest in the university.

Below are the specific requirements for the various destinations:

### **UNITED KINGDOM:**

Only 1 essay is required on UCAS: 47 lines and it is limited to 4,000 characters including spaces.

#### **What it entails:**

- Are solely focused on the course which you are applying for
- Include co-curricular activities, but only if they are related to the course you are applying for
- Include your qualifications that make you suitable for the course you are applying for
- Divided so that 70% of it is academic based and 30% is co-curricular based.

### **USA:**

Applicants will write 1 long essay for the Common Application. The long essay should be 250-650 words long. Additionally, universities may ask for supplemental essays in which applicants explain why they want to attend a particular university, or what activity has been most meaningful to them.

#### **What it entails:**

- Are more creative
- Focus on something that you are passionate about
- Do not have to do with the major/ concentration you are thinking of declaring
- Really exhibit your personality
- Show how you are going to contribute to the university

### **CANADA:**

Applicants are not required to write a personal statement initially, but most likely will be asked to respond to specific questions. You WILL be asked for an essay if you are applying for a scholarship.

### **What it entails:**

- Are more creative
- Focus on something that you are passionate about
- Do not have to do with the major/ concentration you are thinking of declaring
- Really exhibit your personality
- Show how you are going to contribute to the university

### **All College Essays / Personal Statements:**

- Must be well written with correct spelling and grammar
- Should be clear and concise- you only have a limited number of words so they must be effective.
- Aim to show how you are unique and will allow you to stand out among others.

### **WHAT DO COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES LOOK FOR IN YOUR ESSAY?**

- Whatever your topic, it should reflect your true concerns and perspective. As you consider topics with whatever mix of seriousness, humour, confidence, or confusion, remember that the search for material to write about is an extension of the normal process of thoughtful reflection. Simply sorting out your thoughts, thinking, talking with friends, or daydreaming often leads to useful topics.
- Be ready to surprise yourself; your best writing and thinking may come from unexpected sources.
- A short passage in a long essay you carefully planned may include material far stronger than the rest and/or a whole new, productive direction. Be flexible; don't carry out your plan while overlooking unexpected ideas or writing with greater freshness or potential.
- Your prose style should be as impressive as the content of your essay. Write clearly; don't inflate your style. Use a thesaurus only to search for a more exact or accurate word; avoid language you wouldn't normally use.
- Some applicants underestimate the quality of their ideas. There's nothing more frustrating than believing that none of your topics are good enough; this belief is seldom justified. In fact, some of the best application essays stem from common events or experiences; what is remarkable is the writer's treatment of the topic. An idea may only seem "bad" because you haven't yet begun the draft that brings it to life. If several topics seem at all promising, pick one and begin writing. Even an unsuccessful draft may eventually lead you to your final product.
- Having a good idea for an essay is not the same as having finished the essay. Great topics will not excuse technical faults, uneven development, stylistic awkwardness, or other problems. Sometimes ideas that seem great in the abstract may really be gimmicks. Be objective about your topic; for example, does your draft stand up to multiple readings? Does it reveal a substantial insight about yourself or your world view? Is it witty, or touching? If so, your essay's foundation is probably strong.



## THE ADMISSION DECISIONS:

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Your admission decision would be one of the following: Deferred, Rejected/Denied, Waitlisted, Accepted, Late Acceptance.

### **Deferred:**

This only applies to Early Decision (ED)/ Early Action (EA) applications and just means that your application has been moved to the Regular Decision (RD) round. For ED applications, you are now in a non-binding round of admissions.

### **Rejected/Denied:**

This one is pretty self-explanatory. A rejection letter is basically a “sorry, you’re not coming here” letter from the school.

### **Waitlisted:**

You almost got in and you still might! Basically, you are their backup option. They are waiting to see how many of their first-choice applications accept their offer. Then, if there is space, they might just send you another letter that says “accepted” on it.

### **Conditional Acceptance:**

You have been admitted, but only if you meet the terms set forth in your acceptance letter. The conditions often specify that you must earn a minimum number of IB Points to retain your acceptance. Universities in the UK and Canada often conditionally accept students.

### **Accepted:**

Hurray! You did it! You’ve been accepted to the school. However, keep in mind that a lot of acceptances are conditional. This means that you cannot slack off for the rest of the year. Colleges and universities will be monitoring your final grades!

### **Late Acceptance:**

You got in, just not for August/September. Sometimes schools, especially large ones, have students who enter during the second semester/trimester/quarter. They are pretty much forcing you to take a gap semester. This is fairly common with some of the University of California schools.

## THE FINAL DESTINATION (CHOOSING WHERE TO STUDY):

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To settle on your final choice of university to attend, consider these questions:

- Which school offered me a better financial aid package? Which has the overall lowest cost?
- What is the retention rate/graduation rate of each school? Will I graduate on time?
- Which school has everything I want?!? Where do I want to live?
- Which acceptance letter made me jump for joy?

Basically, you need to talk to your family and discuss your priorities. You might have the luxury of choosing the more exciting school, or you may need to choose the cheapest. Either way, make a pro/con chart for each school. This will help you determine what is most important to you. If you have the option, visit the schools.

### WHAT NEXT?

Once you have settled on your final choice, you would have to be extra diligent about checking your email and online student portals over the next few months because you will have a lot of forms to fill out.

Here are just a few things to make sure you do:

- Make sure you officially accepted a university's offer
- Submit your deposit
- Find information on housing and/or meal plans (especially if you are living on campus)
- Contact the International Student office about visa application procedures
- Apply for your student visa on time, as processing can take time and often requires an in-person appointment. To apply for a student visa, you can contact the Counselling department for assistance.
- Maintain your grades and do well to meet the conditions on your offer.

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