



ST. STEPHEN'S SCHOOL

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE APPLICATIONS HANDBOOK

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Section 1

Responsibilities During the University/College Selection and Application Process

Gaining admission to a college or university is a complex process, which can become even more so from abroad. If done effectively, it takes a considerable amount of time, energy, and discipline. For the student to be as successful as we would like him or her to be, special assistance must be provided.

The St. Stephen's faculty and staff will be as supportive as possible during this exciting period in the student's life. Nevertheless, we view the entire process as a team effort. In the past, St. Stephen's students have been successful in their college and university choices. By working together, we will have continued success.

Student Responsibilities

- Give the college counselor as much information about yourself as possible.
- Submit your answers to the Student Questionnaire before your first college meeting.
- Make sure to give your CV to the counselor.
- Get all of your forms in on time.
- Set up a meeting with the college counselor to initiate your university/college search.
- Be ready to share your ideas and work out an individualized program to research the right college options for you.
- Be organized.
- Keep good files and folders of important information and deadlines. Often, Excel spreadsheets or electronic calendars can be very useful for keeping track of deadlines.
- Keep your teachers informed of your progress and give them the information they need. Many of you will need a teacher recommendation letter, and so your teachers need to be aware of their deadlines; they also might need your CV for further information about you.
- Keep your parents informed of what you are doing. Your parents are an integral part of this process, and it is important that they are involved in the university/college selection process. If they are not able to attend your meeting with the college counselor, share with them the information on colleges you received.
- Throughout the year, share information from the college counselor with your parents. Make sure they know about college fairs, open houses, and parent evenings at the school.
- Keep the college counselor informed of what you are doing. Students and the college counselor work together to complete applications. The college counselor needs to be aware of where you are applying and what your deadlines are in order to make sure applications are completed on time and properly. This process is tracked through Unifrog, so students are expected to use Unifrog regularly.

Parent Responsibilities

- Continue to be loving, caring, supportive, and understanding. If your child does not seem to be taking an active approach, it can be tempting for parents to step in and take charge. Instead, try contacting the counselor for advice on how to motivate the student.
- Try to stand back a bit. Although it may not always be easy, we urge parents to encourage the student to take the lead in this process.

- Help out where you can. Parents can help by staying informed about deadlines (including financial aid deadlines, in which parents are responsible for filling out the forms), attending meetings, communicating with the counselor, and, let us not forget, providing credit card details for application fees and standardized tests!
- Visit schools. Parents can also help by taking their children to visit colleges. We find that students often return with new impressions about places that they knew only from written materials, photos, the web, and what people had told them.

College counselor responsibilities

- Get to know the students while providing a positive, constructive, and supportive approach throughout the university/college selection process.
- Conduct individual and group sessions on pertinent topics concerning the university/college selection.
- Write counselor reports and Secondary School Reports for each student.
- Submit supporting documentation to colleges (transcripts, recommendation letters, IB predictions, etc.).
- Keep as up-to-date as possible on information relating to the university/college search.
- Advise the student on the most appropriate academic program for university/college admissions.
- Advise parents on issues of cost and financial aid.
- Communicate with parents in meetings, via email, and through the website.
- Communicate with students during morning meetings; update them weekly and via regular e-mail.
- Be available to students and parents for drop-in and scheduled appointments

Section 2

Applying to Universities - International Applications

The United States

The US has a complex set of systems when it comes to the university application process, with each state organizing its system slightly differently.

That said, there are a few common types of universities in the USA that are worth exploring.

Public universities

Public universities are at least partially funded by the state in which they are based (usually through general taxation). This means that state universities will generally offer students lower fees. They are often bigger and may offer a wider range of courses and majors than their private counterparts.

International students will fall under the category of “out of state” students and will have to pay higher fees than their domestic counterparts.

Examples: University of Texas, Austin; Ohio State University

Private universities

Private universities do not receive state funding, and therefore, students can expect higher tuition fees overall. They tend to be smaller in size and offer less variety in terms of courses and majors (although this isn't always the case). Students can generally expect smaller classes and possibly more contact time with staff and faculty.

Examples: Harvard University, New York University, University of Chicago

Liberal arts colleges

Liberal arts colleges are institutions offering a broad education in subjects ranging from arts, humanities, and sciences. Liberal arts colleges are normally separate institutions, but they can form part of or be affiliated with, larger universities.

Liberal arts colleges are normally smaller than universities, and this means that students can expect smaller classes and more one-to-one contact time with academic staff.

Examples: Amherst College, Pomona College

Technical institutes and professional schools

These are institutes that prepare students for a certain career path, including engineering, technical sciences, fine art, film, and music. These are worthwhile options to consider if you have students who are sure about their career path and want to hone the necessary skills.

Examples: Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT); Savannah College of Art and Design

Things for students to consider when researching the USA

Location and geography

- Some students might have their heart set on a particular university because of its reputation or ranking. But remember, they're spending the next four years at university. Do they love discovering big, sprawling cities? Do they like being able to escape into a quieter/ country area?
- The US is vast and diverse. This means that international students will need to think about logistics such as the closest airport, whether they will need a car to get around (in some states, this is a necessity), and the general public transport links to and from campus.

Sports and athletics

- Sports and athletics in the USA are a big deal (400,000 student athletes participate in college sports every year!). Perhaps more than any other system in the world, playing competitive sport could be a significant factor in your students' decision-making when they shortlist a US university.

More generalist degrees

- US university degrees are credit based. Students choose a major to specialize in, and throughout their time at university, they will have to gain a number of credits in this subject. However, depending on which university they study at, they may also be expected to take a certain amount of "general education" courses that do not relate to their chosen major. If students are not sure what they want to specialize in, they can spend their first two years taking general education courses and choose their major at a later date.
- Degrees in the USA offer students a lot of flexibility, but might not be the best option for a student who might wish to specialize in a particular subject discipline.

The United Kingdom

University institutions in the UK differ widely in terms of their age, size, and structure. For example, older collegiate universities such as Oxford and Cambridge are over 800 years old; meanwhile newer ones were founded as recently as the mid-20th century.

Collegiate universities

The collegiate universities in the UK include Oxford, Cambridge and Durham. Most are in the prestigious Russell Group of universities and have strong academic reputations across all faculties and departments. The term "collegiate" refers to the fact that these universities are broken up into smaller colleges, in which students live and socialize. It's not uncommon for these universities to be located in historic smaller cities and student towns. Different colleges have their own traditions and reputations. Some newer universities (see the Plate Glass section below), like Lancaster University, have borrowed the Collegiate model.

Red Brick universities

The term “red brick” refers to a family of historic universities that are typically located in the major cities of the UK. These include Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Manchester and Southampton. A number of Red Brick universities are, like Collegiate universities, part of the Russell Group.

Plate Glass universities

These are more modern universities such as York, Warwick, and Sussex. Many were only granted university status as recently as the 1960s, but several are now highly ranked within the Russell Group of universities. The term “plate-glass” was given to these universities due to their more modern architectural design. Many of these universities are located on self-contained campuses outside of major towns and cities.

New universities

New universities are typically institutions which were once classed as polytechnics. They are often located in the same city as older, more established universities (for example, Manchester Metropolitan neighbors the University of Manchester; Oxford Brookes neighbors Oxford University). These universities can be a good option to consider for vocational study in the UK, or for those students interested in taking a degree level apprenticeship.

Things to consider for students researching UK universities

- UK degrees are more specialized, with students more likely to focus on a particular subject discipline over 3-4 years.
- The UK system is heavily centralized, with the vast majority of applications being processed through the UCAS system
- The UK also offers high quality training degrees for students wishing to study Medicine, Veterinary Sciences and Architecture. These degree courses are normally longer (a minimum of five years) and often more competitive.
- Students wishing to study for subjects such as Medicine and Law must sit extra exams - the BMAT/UCAT for Medicine and the LNAT for law applicants.
- Students can apply for a maximum of five university courses in the UK.

Canada

Like the USA, Canada is a vast and diverse country for university study. Universities will have their own entrance criteria and the university systems across the different provinces of Canada vary greatly.

Universities

Like the US, Canadian universities are split into public and private institutions, offering a range of degree courses and pathways. A degree from a Canadian university is normally completed in four years. Canadian universities also offer shorter diplomas and career-based programmes.

Colleges and polytechnic institutes These institutions offer a range of technical diplomas and applied degrees. They don't award degrees in the same way as Canadian universities.

Liberal arts colleges

Similar to American liberal arts colleges, these have a particular emphasis on undergraduate courses in the liberal arts, namely the humanities but also including the social, natural and formal sciences.

Things to consider for students researching Canadian universities

- Canada sits in what could be called a sweet spot between the US system and the UK system of higher education. This means that, like the British system, applicants apply to a specific course of study, but they have the flexibility to make their own path to the degree (more like the US).
- Some provinces have a centralized application system, but students will often be required to apply directly to their chosen university

The Netherlands

The Netherlands is another popular European destination for international students. The thriving international student community in the Netherlands means that new undergraduates will feel right at home! The Netherlands university system has a rich array of academic and vocational choices.

Research universities

Research degrees in the Netherlands are comparable to UK university degrees. In short, the research universities in the Netherlands offer students a specialized path into a certain degree discipline. So for students who have a fairly good idea of where they want to specialize after high school, a research university pathway is worth consideration.

Universities of Applied Science

There are 41 universities of Applied Science in the Netherlands. As in Germany, a UAS will offer a more applied/practical degree path. A UAS degree will normally involve a work experience or study abroad element. The types of subjects offered at a UAS in the Netherlands will include Hotel Management, Process and Food Technology and Teacher Training. The majority of UAS degrees are four years in length.

University colleges

University colleges in the Netherlands are similar to the liberal arts colleges in North America. These institutions are better suited to students who are looking for a more generalist, holistic type of education. Students work with their tutors and professors to design their own interdisciplinary curriculum.

Students who attend a university college can expect a strong emphasis on community building. Many university colleges operate residential campuses, meaning that students are expected to live on campus. University colleges aim to create a small, close-knit learning environment.

For international students, the strong community focus of university colleges, coupled with the fact that many of their degree courses are taught in English, means that they can look forward to a university experience that combines academic rigor with a good social life.

Things to consider for students researching the Netherlands

- The Netherlands offers a good mix of academic, vocational and liberal arts courses, so offers students a wealth of equally exciting pathways.
- Some courses in the Netherlands are what is known as “numerus fixus”, meaning that select courses will have a limited number of places. The application deadline for these courses is earlier in the academic year (January, as opposed to May).

Italy

The Italian higher education system is a binary system, divided into two large sectors or compartments, institutionally and functionally different: the University sector and the Higher Education for Fine Arts, Music and Dance sector, known succinctly as the AFAM sector (Alta Formazione Artistica, Musicale e Coreutica).

The university sector

The Italian university sector comprises higher education institutions divided thus:

- public universities
- legally recognised non-public universities- private universities
- on-line universities
- higher schools and institutions with special charter

Examples of public universities: Università La Sapienza di Roma, Politecnico di Milano, Università di Bologna, Università Ca Foscari Venezia.

Examples of private universities: Bocconi University , Luiss University, Università Cattolica, John Cabot University, Istituto Marangoni.

Things to consider for students researching Italian universities

Italy was not traditionally a popular destination for international students in the past due to the language gap. However, the university system has undergone significant changes recently, with a substantial increase in the availability of English-taught courses in both public and private universities. Italy's fantastic weather, cuisine, and vibrant lifestyle are now attracting new students, while those already studying in Italy find it appealing to continue their education there. Private university costs are affordable, and public university tuition fees are structured to ensure accessibility to university education for everyone. In both cases, the academic strength of the institutions is noteworthy.

Other Destinations

The information above details the most common choices for St Stephen's students choosing to apply to universities. However, this is not an exhaustive list of the destinations that our alumni have chosen to pursue. This is where the College Counseling Office is useful - we have a wealth of information available on different pathways, so it is important to raise this in your 1:1 meeting with your counselor to gain more information.

Section 3

Applying to US Universities

Activities to assist you in beginning your research

You are about to enter a period of self-examination, research, and planning that will lead to a decision that will have a marked impact on your future. This is a two-pronged decision: deciding which colleges you will apply to and deciding which college you will attend.

Examine yourself:

How do your dreams and views of yourself match what you have done?

What subjects do you like best? In what courses do you do well?

What are your hobbies or interests outside of school? What talents or skills do you use?

What are your strong points? Do you have strong organizational skills? Leadership ability? Creative ability?

What are your values? Are you competitive? Adventurous? Do you aspire to fame? Money? Power? Are family life, service to others, religion, etc., important to you?

Many of you may have taken the career assessment test that helped you identify your future career and course interests. Another step in examining yourself was in answering the questions in the initial Student Questionnaire. Answering these questions and articulating your ideas in writing help you clarify your needs.

Research to determine your college choices:

There are several criteria that may influence your decision about the colleges that you consider:

Size: small (less than 4,000), medium (4,000-10,000), large (more than 10,000).

Location: metropolitan area, a suburb of a big city, small town, rural area, compact campus or different centers in the same city, convenience and distance from home, weather, nearby and off-campus recreation, and opportunities.

Country or region: Italy, United Kingdom, East Coast (US) or West Coast (US), etc.

Type of Institution: Public or private, religious or non-sectarian, co-ed or single-sex, comprehensive university, liberal arts college, art school, technical school, traditional or progressive.

Academic Program: Liberal arts offerings, majors offered, pre-professional programs, cooperative programs (work/study), wide range of offerings vs. specialized courses, strict requirements or wide freedom in study program, freshman seminar programs, research opportunities, Advanced Placement / International Baccalaureate credit or advanced standing, study abroad program.

Facilities: On-campus housing available? Guaranteed? Required? Sports facilities (intramural possibilities or only competitive sports)? Library facilities (adequate resources in area of interest, hours, easy access to books and periodicals)? Computer facilities in residence halls, in the main library, in the academic department?

Students: Homogeneous vs. diverse backgrounds, high percent of commuters (live at home), fraternity /sorority influence on student life, % of international students, minority students, or non-traditional students (older, often part-time).

Student Life: Large residence halls, apartments, houses. Availability of rooms, system of housing allocation, meal plans. Campus activities, clubs, and organizations. Cultural opportunities on campus or in community.

Atmosphere: Competitive? Relaxed? Religious emphasis? Artsy? Strong social consciousness? How tough will the work be? Will I be at the top or the bottom of the class? Career or graduate school oriented?

Cost: Can I afford it? Is it worth it? What financial aid is available? Are there non-institutional scholarships available for which I'm eligible? Loans vs. work/study?

Getting in: How competitive is admission? How have other St. Stephen's graduates fared in the past? Do I have any family ties to the university/college? What kind of recommendations will I get from my teachers and college counselor? What kind of external examination results do I expect? How are my standardized tests e.g. SAT? Do I have a strong activities and/or community service record? What special talents or abilities can I present to strengthen my application?

Take your research further

- Meet with the college counselor to review your academic credentials, set a schedule for taking college entrance tests and develop a preliminary list of colleges.
- Become familiar with the resources in the College Office.
- Meet with visiting college representatives who are an excellent source of firsthand information about their colleges.
- Find out if you can have an interview at the colleges you are interested in.

Plan your college search

Follow these logical steps:

- Write or email colleges that interest you.
- Review college guidebooks and websites about the colleges.
- Decide which colleges you would like to visit.
- Schedule campus visits and interviews where possible.
- Prepare for visits and interviews.
- Discuss your impressions of the college visits with the college counselor.
- Review application materials.
- Decide upon the final list of colleges.

How many colleges should a student apply to?

As the process of college selection is an individual one, based on the student's interests, accomplishments, and needs, there is no one answer that applies to everyone. However, applying to more than eight colleges may be superfluous.

Although the schools to which you will be applying may vary in selectivity, each should meet the general criteria that you have established. **There are four broad categories into which colleges under consideration should be placed:**

SUPER REACH – These are schools that are extremely difficult even for the student with straight A's and perfect SAT scores. Think Harvard, Yale, and Princeton. If you are a possible candidate, go ahead and put one on your list, but do not put more than two, and do not stack your list with Ivy League or other schools that accept only up to 10% of their applicant pool.

REACH – The most selective schools representing your ideal choice, a possible risk, but still within a realistic range for you in terms of academic survival at college.

TARGET – Schools that usually accept students whose credentials tend to match yours. To determine which schools fit into this category, you should carry out some research.

LIKELY – A school that still embodies all the qualities you are seeking but is a confident choice in terms of the type of student that the college tends to admit.

As a general rule, applying to two “reaches,” three or four “targets,” and at least one “likely” college should be sufficient. Students applying to the US may decide to apply to one or two more, for a total of eight schools.

Selectivity: Choosing and being chosen.

What is a “good” college or university? Too often, it is equated with a handful of names and great competition for admission. Competition for admission and quality of education are not necessarily synonymous, and there are numerous examples of well-regarded colleges that accept 40%, 50%, 60% of their applicant pools as opposed to the 6%-25% accepted by most highly selective institutions.

If you work on matching the institution to your preferences, interests, and abilities, you will find that you will have a list of very good choices that range across selectivity criteria but are all a good fit for you. Making these matches asks for active investigation by you and by your counselor, but it is this approach that will generate six or seven sensible application choices next fall, all of which are colleges or universities you would be happy to attend.

What is most important in the selection process?

The following is a short list of the major criteria used by selective colleges in the United States in a general rank order. Keep in mind, however, since there are no standardized criteria for schools to follow, individual institutions may differ concerning which of these areas they consider to be of

greater importance than others. UK universities consider the same criteria overall, except that they do not generally look at transcripts; instead, they consider International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, and SAT scores.

The candidate's academic transcript record.

(grade point average, approximate rank in class, rigor of course load).

US college applicants normally have to present their transcripts for grades 9 through 12, from which their GPA (grade point average) may be calculated. St. Stephen's uses the conversion: (grades of A+ and F+ are not given).

Letter Grade	GPA	Letter Grade	GPA
A	4.0	C	2.0
A-	3.7	C-	1.7
B+	3.3	D+	1.3
B	2.7	D	1.0
B-	2.3	D-	0.7
C+	2.0	F	0

Each grade on the student's transcript can be converted to a number according to this scheme, and the average is then computable. St. Stephen's does not rank students by GPA. Small class sizes, high rates of turnover among international school students, and the wide variety of marking systems from which our students come to us make meaningful ranking impossible. In lieu of a ranking scheme, we prepare a grade distribution chart of classes that the juniors took, showing the grades that were received in each class. This chart is included in the school profile and sent out to schools with the other supporting documentation (transcript, recommendation letters).

The Essay.

Here, you have an important opportunity to say something about yourself that moves beyond lists and more quantified data. It is the single aspect of the process over which you have total control. Think about it as a way to add a new dimension to your application. Write about something important to you. Use your own voice. Small incidents yield powerful stories. Exploring the seemingly mundane in your essay can reveal telling and significant insights to both the reader and writer. It is short, so make every word count. **There is no forgiveness for essays that are not very well-written, carefully edited, and proofread.**

SAT scores

These standardized tests are widely used by college admissions officers as a kind of control or verifier in conjunction with transcript grades. While they are not by themselves crucial to a candidate's admissions chances at a selective college, SAT scores for a successful candidate usually fall within a band or range that the college demands of its applicants.

It is important to note that many colleges have now begun to state that they are ‘test optional’. This means that they do not require students to apply using their SAT score. Our general advice here is that unless your SAT score makes you an outstanding candidate, i.e. you are above the average for the college, then you should not include your score as a part of your application.

Recommendations from teachers, advisors, and others.

Many, but by no means all, colleges require a written assessment from the student’s recent teachers or others who have known the student well. In addition, many of these colleges request a statement from the college counselor, which at St. Stephen’s takes the form of a “summary appraisal,” a composite portrait and judgment written by the college counselor reflecting the views of the faculty about the candidate. In general, it is not advisable for candidates to supply too many endorsements to any one college. Inundating an admissions committee with unsolicited recommendations is likely to merely annoy the committee, which has literally tens of thousands of pieces of paper to contend with annually.

Extracurricular activities.

Colleges and universities are usually very interested in the degree of so-called “extracurricular” work and involvement of their candidates. This may consist of student clubs and student council work, hobbies or interests in which the student invests considerable time and/or where the achievement of the student is noteworthy, community service work, special talents (in music, art, theater, etc.), achievement in sports, interesting background (travel abroad, unusual work experience, etc.), foreign language fluency, and the like. Overall, the purpose is to discover what, if anything, may distinguish two otherwise similar candidates, to determine whether a student is likely to contribute to the extracurricular life of this potential college and to see if any given student’s academic record is that of a narrow drudge or that of a lively, multi-faceted personality.

The alumni/ae connection.

Many private colleges in the US give some preference, on the margin, to candidates who are the children of their alumni/ae. Loyal alumni organizations and the maintenance of substantial alumni giving to a college are obvious motives here. However, children of alumni/ae who do not meet the general criteria for admission are just as unlikely to be admitted as other applicants with academic profiles that are not in line with the college’s expectations.

Residents of a given state of the US

For the state-supported colleges and universities, some preference will usually be given to applicants whose parents are residents of the state in which the student is applying; as a corollary, some state universities have numerical quotas for the numbers of out-of-state students they can accept. In addition, it is worth noting here that costs at state universities for “in-state” students are significantly lower than for out-of-state students. Warning: many public universities have strict rules about determining residency status – often they want the student to have lived in a state for a certain number of years immediately prior to attending the institution, so read the fine print carefully.

Interview

Many of the most prestigious US colleges require interviews face-to-face with their applicants. For St. Stephen's students, this may be done either in the summer of the junior year on a visit to their prospective colleges or here in Rome for those colleges that have alumni or their representatives interviewing for them. More and more colleges are also using Skype to conduct interviews and host virtual tours and question-and-answer sessions via the web. For the great majority of colleges, however, interviewing, especially candidates overseas, is not a requirement, and not having an interview will not prejudice a student's admission prospects. It is up to you to find out the policies of each of the colleges you are considering.

English Language Proficiency

Some US colleges and universities require that non-US nationals whose mother tongue is not English submit the results of the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). This requirement applies despite the fact that, as a St. Stephen's student, you should have been working and studying in the English language for at least some of your secondary school career. Make sure to verify that the college or university won't take an alternative test like the SAT, or the IB. There are now many different platforms, such as Duolingo, which offer English Language Proficiency tests. Your college counselor can advise on the best one to complete as a part of your application if necessary.

Section 4

Applying to UK Universities

Courses

Careful choice of the subject and the course is very important. You may choose to:

- Continue with a familiar academic subject previously taken at IB level. Please note that there may be specific course prerequisites which you must have completed, for example for an engineering course the university may specifically require Mathematics Analysis and Approaches at HL within the IB. This should form an integral part of your search.
- Try a new academic subject.
- Take a combined studies course, which leaves options open for a delayed choice of the final year subject. “Combined sciences” and “combined studies” at universities and modular programs at “new universities” allow for later choice and specialization.
- Choose a subject with direct career links, such as business studies, finance and accounting, management, or engineering.
- Pick a “sandwich course” that mixes periods of full-time study at college with work experience in industry or commerce.
- Choose a course that offers a year abroad, which often adds a year to the program.

Qualifications

In assessing a student’s chances of getting a place at a higher education institution, the student’s IB results or predicted results have to be weighed. It is well known, for example, that it is very difficult to get an offer in medicine or veterinary science. The reason is that there are a restricted number of places on first-degree courses in these subjects, and the number of potential applicants far outnumbers the available places. Therefore, the universities can ask for and expect the highest grades. Equally high grades are expected for courses such as law and business, which are very popular, as well as entry to Oxford and Cambridge for almost any course.

It is wise to have some idea of the requirements expected for the course that a student is considering. Clearly, if the applicant’s expectations of IB results are modest (24 points), it would be impractical to apply for a degree course in a popular subject at a university. (IB students should see the counselor in the second semester of junior year to obtain early prediction information, which will help in selecting an appropriate selection of courses.)

Before applying, **every candidate should check the university website and the UCAS website to determine whether they have the correct entry qualifications in terms of IB subjects.**

Degrees

These include Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BSc), Bachelor of Engineering (BEng), Bachelor of Commerce (BComm) and Bachelor of Education (BEd). The universities give their own degrees.

Duration of study

England/Wales: 3 years (nine 10-week terms)

Scotland: 4 years (eight 15-week terms), although there are some options for direct entry to second year available.

Sandwich and foundation course degree programs: 4/5 years

Tuition fees and living costs

Tuition fees are usually set by the academic institutions themselves. Fees are divided into two categories: home and overseas.

The decision as to whether you pay “home” or “overseas” fees rests entirely with individual institutions and government regulations.

UCAS

UCAS stands for the Universities and Colleges Admissions System for the UK. All applications are processed via UCAS. The applicant can list on the UCAS application up to **five choices** of courses at different institutions.

After the application has been processed, UCAS issues an acknowledgement letter confirming the applicant’s choices and providing the **UCAS number**. At the same time copies of the application are sent to each of the institutions that the candidate has listed. Each institution considers the application independently and sends its decision to the applicant via UCAS. Students track their offers through the UCAS site. **Decisions** may come in any order and the times taken to make them may vary. Offers may be either **unconditional or conditional** upon forthcoming examination results. With the last decision the applicant will receive a **statement of decisions** with instructions on how to reply to all offers that have been received. The applicant can accept one offer firmly and, if the offer is conditional, can hold one other offer as insurance. Following publication of **examination results**, institutions will make final decisions on applicants who are holding conditional offers by comparing their results with the offers made. UCAS will send **confirmation of offers** to successful applicants and details of the options open to those who have been unsuccessful.

Applicants whose places are confirmed are **committed** to them unless they withdraw completely from UCAS. If applicants are made an offer at Confirmation for a changed course, year and/or, point of entry, they are not obliged to accept it and will be sent a letter giving details of the courses of action open to them. If applicants are unsuccessful at Confirmation, or hold no offers from their original application, or apply after 30 June, they are eligible to enter Clearing.

The object of **Clearing** is to fill any remaining vacancies in institutions and to place suitable applicants who have been unsuccessful so far or who have applied late.

UCAS Extra allows for students who have not received an offer from any of their choices or who have decided to decline all offers to choose another school to which to apply. Students can only choose one university at a time.

Section 5

College planning calendar

Grade 11

FEB

- Complete Student Questionnaire before family meeting with college counselor, parents should also complete Parent Questionnaire before the meeting
- Complete Student CV/Résumé (mandatory before family meeting with college counselor)
- Attend college planning evening with parents Schedule family meeting(s) with college counselor Date(s)
- Students and parents log-in to Unifrog and begin creating university longlists

MAR

- Meet with college counselor
- Generate a long list of colleges to research - these should be a range of safer, on target and reach schools
- Attend college workshops during grade level meetings (these will cover topics such as writing successful applications, the Common Application, UCAS, Studielink, summer schools and the super curriculum)

APR

- Complete first drafts of college essay(s)

MAY

- Deadline for June SAT registration
- Early May is deadline to confirm early US applications
- Meet with counselor for update on summer plans
- Discuss teacher recommendation letter/subject reference choices with counselor

JUN

- Request reference from teachers

JUL / AUG

- Summer job/internship
- Complete draft of college essays/letter of motivation/personal statement

Grade 12

SEPT

- Early September deadline for October SAT/SAT Subject Test registration
- Meet with counselor to update and prepare final list
- Personal Statement workshops during first two weeks of school – all students complete final versions
- Inform counselor of ED/EA intentions (internal deadline – must be respected); confirm teacher recommenders; enter colleges on Unifrog; inform counselor of plans for Early Entry (Oxbridge) in the UK

OCT

- Second week of October, ED & EA and Early Entry predictions submitted to counselor by teachers
- Deadline for students to complete ED/EA applications to US and Early Entry applications to the UK for counselor review (internal deadline)
- End of October, deadline for all seniors to have met with counselor to finalize college lists

NOV

- Deadline for all remaining students to submit final college list on Unifrog and have completed all needed documents
- End of November student deadline to complete US and UK Applications for counselor review (internal deadline)
- End of November student deadline to complete documents for applying to the Netherlands and Spain

JAN

- January 1: Opening date to file financial aid forms
- January 1 or 15: Applications due at majority of international institutions

FEB

- Send any remaining applications (with later deadlines)